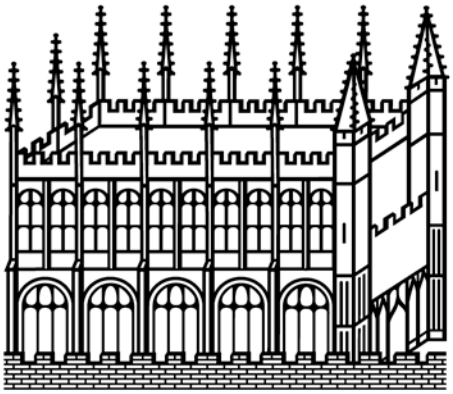

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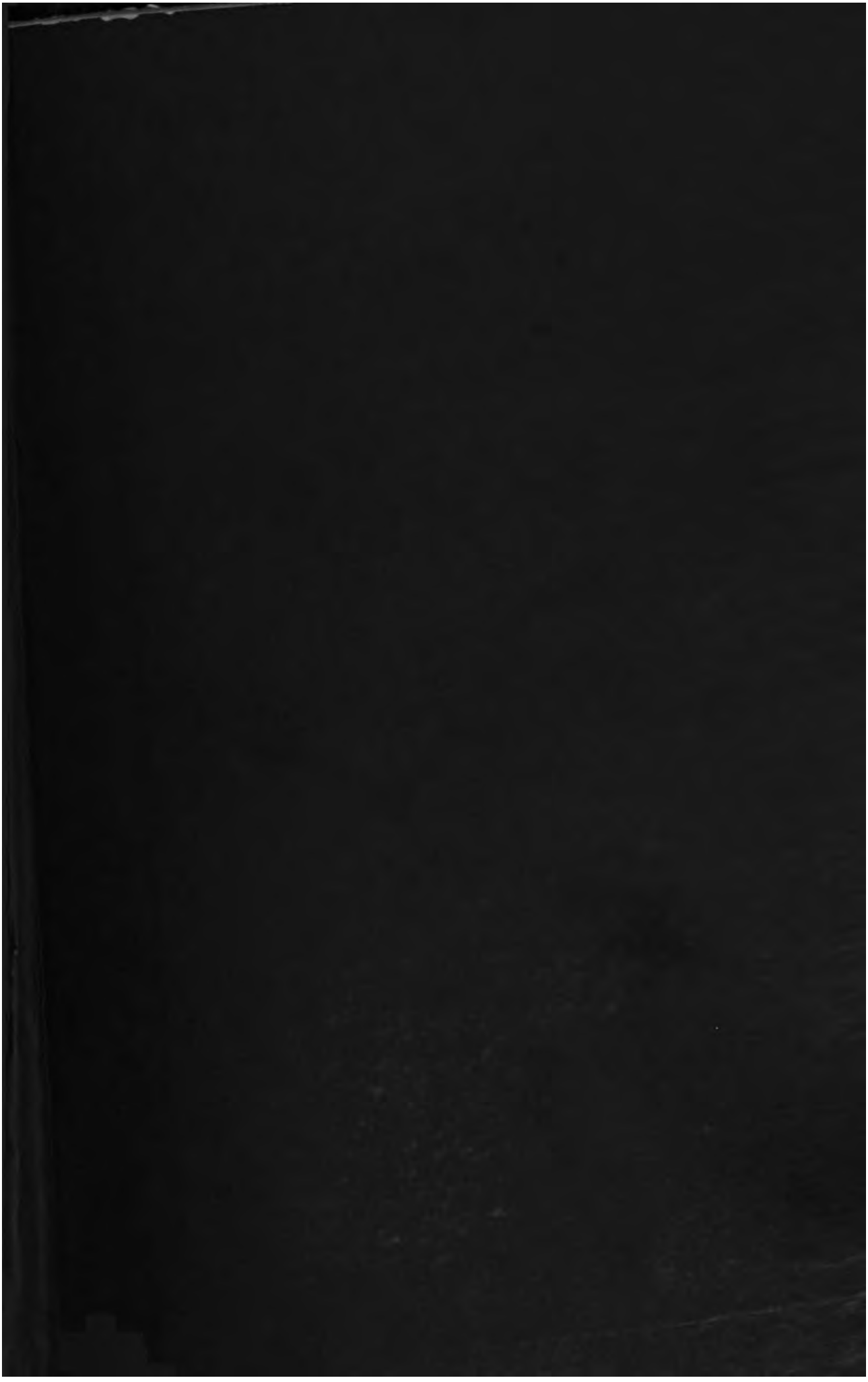

LECTURES

ON THE

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

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LECTURES

ON THE

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

BY THE LATE

WILLIAM LINDSAY, D.D.,

PROFESSOR OF EXEGETICAL THEOLOGY IN THE
UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

DR. LINDSAY was often solicited to publish these Lectures on the Epistle to the Hebrews. He declined to do so, and assigned as the reason of the refusal, his wish to devote a whole year of uninterrupted leisure to their revision. Part of the manuscript bears marks of having been prepared by him fully for the press; the rest has not received the benefit of his final correction. I have thought it my duty to present the book to the public as nearly as possible in the form in which he has left it. I have added nothing. I have altered nothing, except where the exigence of the place suggested alteration. I have omitted only such matter as seemed intended to be amplified in the free conversation of the class-room. Although it does not belong to me to anticipate the award of the critical reader, I may be permitted to state how much the perusal of these Lectures has exalted my estimate both of the scholarship and the piety of their author. Having carefully, not to say anxiously, compared them with the Lectures of Dr. Brown, I must congratulate the United Presbyterian Church on its possession of two commentaries of so high yet varied excellence on the Epistle to the Hebrews.

GEORGE BROOKS.

EAST U. P. MANSE, JOHNSTONE,
April 15, 1867.

PRELIMINARY LECTURE.

THE Epistle to the Hebrews is one of the most important books of the New Testament. It contains a minute exposition of some of the leading doctrines of Christianity; the plan of it is constructed with great beauty and logical accuracy; and it is written in finer Greek than any other book in the sacred volume.

No part of the New Testament has given rise to more controversy. The questions that have been raised respecting it, however, do not relate so much to its contents, as to the designation of it, the author, and the language in which it was originally written.

The designation of it, Epistle to the Hebrews, has proved the occasion of considerable difference of opinion. It has even been questioned whether it should be styled an epistle at all; and it has been argued, that treatise or discourse would be a much more appropriate title. The chief reason for this opinion is the want of an initiatory formula, similar to what occurs in all the other epistles of the New Testament, as in Romans, "Paul, an apostle, to all that be in Rome;" in Third John, "The elder unto the well-beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth;" and so in all the rest. But the peculiar commencement of the Epistle to the Hebrews furnishes no sufficient objection to its epistolary character; for there are several passages in which circumstances are mentioned, which demonstrate that it was a letter sent from one place to another, and addressed to particular individuals, as chap. xiii. 23, 24: "Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty, with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you. Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you. Grace be with you all. Amen."

It has also been disputed whether this epistle was originally addressed to all Hebrews wherever they might reside, or to some particular church composed of the descendants of Abraham. But the fact that the writer of it expresses the hope (see chap. xiii. 19) of being speedily restored to the persons to whom he wrote, clearly demonstrates that the letter must have been designed for some particular place; for such a hope or wish would be preposterous in reference to all the Jews scattered over the world. To what church, then, or place, or country, was this epistle originally sent? Very various opinions have been entertained on this question. Some have advocated the claims of Galatia, some of Thessalonica, some of Corinth, some of Rome, some of Spain, some of Asia Minor; and plausible arguments have been constructed in favour of each of these places. It is impossible, however, that we can afford time to enter upon so wide a field of discussion as the claims of all these places: you will find the arguments stated in Stuart and Michaelis. I have only to say, that after a careful consideration of them all, I deem the opinion by far the most probable, that Palestine was the country to which it was sent, and in all likelihood Jerusalem the particular church.

One strong argument in defence of the claims of Palestine is the inscription, Epistle to the Hebrews, which, though the same antiquity cannot be pleaded for it as for the epistle itself, is yet allowed to be very ancient; and it shows the opinion that was held at a time when there was a better opportunity of ascertaining the facts than there can be now. The word Hebrew is not applied in the New Testament to all Jews, but only to those who were more thoroughly of Jewish origin and habits, and spoke the vernacular language of the country; and other Jews, on account of their connection with the Greeks and acquaintance with the Greek language, were styled Hellenists. This distinction between Hebrew Jews and Hellenistic Jews is plainly laid down in the Acts of the Apostles (vi. 1); and so much did this restricted use of the word Hebrew prevail, that Eusebius, speaking of the Jewish Christians of Asia Minor, styles them not Hebrews, but ἐξ Ἑβραίων ὄντες (De Wette, 256). It has indeed been affirmed, that Hellenist did not signify a Greek-speaking Jew, but a proselyte from the Gentiles; but the

extreme improbability of this opinion I have had occasion elsewhere to show. If the word Hebrews, then, denoted in the apostolic times those Jews who retained the language of Palestine, as distinguished from those who adopted the language of the Greeks, where can we suppose a church of such Jews to be found so naturally as in Palestine? Nowhere else would there be any church consisting mainly of Hebrews. And accordingly the ancient tradition was, that the Epistle to the Hebrews was sent to Jerusalem. Chrysostom says in the preface to his exposition of it: *ποῦ δὲ οὖσιν ἐπέστελλεν; ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις καὶ Παλαιστίνῃ.*

The contents of the epistle have also been appealed to, as furnishing strong confirmation of the same view. We find continual comparisons of the doctrines and institutions of Christianity with the laws and customs of Moses; and though such comparisons are also to be found in other epistles, yet they are much more minute and detailed in the Epistle to the Hebrews than in any other part of the New Testament. The references in other books to the Mosaic law are mostly to those parts of it which could be observed abroad, such as circumcision and the distinction of meats; but in the Epistle to the Hebrews the whole temple service is brought into view; and there is supposed in the persons addressed such an acquaintance with the minutiæ of ritual observances, as could scarcely be expected abroad, but was quite natural in Palestine, and especially in Jerusalem. And further, in the thirteenth chapter, meats and offerings are mentioned in such a manner as conveys the impression that they were offered where the receivers of this epistle resided, and that they were in danger of being expelled from the city on account of the neglect of them; which the apostle exhorts them to submit to rather than defile their consciences, reminding them that they would only the more resemble Jesus, who suffered without the gates of Jerusalem.

Another argument in defence of the Palestinian destination of this epistle, has been founded upon the fact, that the persons to whom it is addressed are represented as exposed to persecution, and lying under strong temptations to apostatize: indeed, it seems as if some had already yielded to the temptation, and blasphemed the name of Christ; while others, through a sinful

fear, were absenting themselves from the assemblies of the saints (x. 25, 29, vi. 6). Now, such a state of things can scarcely be supposed to have existed at the time this epistle was written in any other country than Palestine. For it was not till after this period that the first of the heathen persecutions took place. The Roman laws, till the time of Nero, granted a free toleration to the Christians, and protected them, as is plain from the history of Paul's own life, from the violence of their enemies. But we find, from the Acts of the Apostles, that in Palestine, the jealous attachment of the Jews to the law of Moses led them from the very first to take strong measures against the followers of Christ; and though even there they were restrained by the Roman authorities, still they possessed the power, within certain limits, of greatly annoying their opponents. The trial of Christ Himself furnishes an illustration, both of the fierceness of the Jews in defence of Moses, and of the manner in which, when their passions were excited, they could evade the restraints of the Roman power. De Wette, an eminent critic, however, mentions (255) several circumstances in the Epistle to the Hebrews which seem to him unfavourable to the supposition that it was sent to Palestine; such as, that the persons addressed are said not yet to have resisted unto blood (xii. 4), though we know that blood was shed in Jerusalem; that they are highly commended for their liberality and hospitality (vi. 10, x. 23, xiii. 16), though we know that the churches in Palestine rather received than gave help; and finally, that they are represented as not being near the fountain-head of Christianity (ii. 3, v. 12). But it does not appear that any blood was shed in Palestine by persecution after the martyrdom of Stephen; and as the epistle was not written for a number of years after that period, it might be said, to those to whom it was written, that in the persecution with which they were at the time tried, they had not yet suffered unto blood, but had only endured insult, reproach, or the loss of property. And again, though it is quite true that the church in Jerusalem did receive, during the time of a famine, help from the churches abroad, this fact does not militate against the supposition, that they might at other times be noted for their kindness and hospitality: yea, the very help which they had themselves received from foreign churches would make them

the more attentive to strangers when they visited Jerusalem. And as to the last consideration, founded upon the verse which says that "the gospel began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him," it was just as true in Palestine as anywhere else, that the second generation of Christians heard the gospel tidings of mercy, not from the lips of Christ, but from those whom He had instructed and sent forth to preach. And indeed De Wette himself acknowledges, that the other circumstances characteristic of the epistle, such as the thoroughly Jewish character of those to whom it is addressed, the persecutions which they were enduring, and the consequent risk of their apostasy, outweigh the considerations which have just now been mentioned, and render the ancient opinion, upon the whole, the most probable, that Palestine was its destination.

But the most important questions which have been agitated respecting the Epistle to the Hebrews, relate to the authorship of it, and the language in which it was originally written. Many have denied that Paul was the author of it, ascribing it either to Barnabas, or Luke, or Clement; and many also have maintained that it was originally composed in Hebrew, and was afterwards translated into Greek. These are questions which touch the canonical authority and inspiration of the book; for if we know not who wrote it, then we know not whether it was one of those men to whom Christ promised divine assistance, and who therefore spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; and if an apostle first wrote it in Hebrew, but some unknown hand afterwards translated it into Greek, then the Greek version we now have can possess no more authority than any other version, either ancient or modern.

The evidence by which the question of the authorship must be decided is partly external and partly internal: the external consisting of the testimony of the ancient church, and such notices as are to be found in the fathers; the internal derived from circumstances which are mentioned in the epistle itself, and from the style of it. There has been a very general agreement from the earliest times in ascribing this important letter to Paul, though, as his name is not mentioned in it, there have always been some who have doubted his claim, and who have

supported the claims of others. The decided preponderance, however, has always been on the side of Paul; and certainly the evidence in support of this view is the most weighty and convincing.

It is agreed that the eastern churches, the churches of Palestine and Syria, from the very first unanimously ascribed this epistle to the pen of Paul, and inserted it in their list of inspired writings. Now, it is plain that their testimony on this point is deserving of much greater weight than the testimony of any other ancient churches, because the letter was immediately sent to them; and they, at the time of receiving it, would have means of ascertaining from whom it came, such as no others could possess. In fact, it is obvious from the circumstances which are mentioned in the letter itself, such as salutations and promises of a speedy visit, that though the name of the writer is not inserted in the body of the letter, it must have been communicated to the church in Palestine, perhaps through the person who carried the letter; or at least there must have been some circumstance by which the writer knew they would at once discover from whom it came. It cannot be doubted that the church to whom it was addressed would know at the time the author of it. Now this church, and all the churches in that region, have from the very first ascribed the Epistle to the Hebrews to the pen of Paul; nor does it appear that any doubts respecting this matter ever spontaneously sprang up within these churches themselves. And this testimony I cannot but regard as sufficient to outweigh the testimony of all foreign churches, even if all foreign churches had denied the authenticity of the letter; for in the order of things it would come to them much later than it came to Palestine, and they would not have the same means of knowing who it was that wrote it. Many names might be mentioned of authors in the oriental churches who refer to Paul as the author; but it is unnecessary: you will find a long list of them in Lardner, vi. 392. The only one whom I shall mention is Eusebius of Cæsarea, the celebrated ecclesiastical historian, who was at great pains to ascertain the evidence on which every book was inserted in the canon of Scripture, and who speaks thus: *τοῦ δὲ Παύλου πρόδηλοι καὶ σαφεῖς αἱ δεκατέσσαρες· ὅτι γε μήν τινες ἠθετήκασι τὴν πρὸς*

Ἑβραίους πρὸς τῆς Ῥωμαίων ἐκκλησίας ὡς μὴ Παύλου οὖσαν αὐτὴν ἀντιλέγεσθαι φήσαντες οὐ δίκαιον ἀγνοεῖν (*Hist. Eccl.* iii. 3): whence it is clear that Eusebius himself was fully persuaded of the Pauline origin of the Epistle to the Hebrews; that the same opinion prevailed throughout the eastern churches; and that if any individuals were of a different opinion, they were influenced by the sentiments of the church of Rome, and not by any respectable authority among the eastern churches themselves.

The canonical authority and Pauline origin of the Epistle to the Hebrews were generally acknowledged also by the Alexandrian church. There is a passage quoted by Eusebius the historian from a lost work of Clement of Alexandria, from which it appears that both Clement himself, and Pantænus, his predecessor, whose learning and accuracy he greatly extols, regarded Paul as the author of this epistle. They were aware, it is true, of the doubts which had been entertained on this point, but they did not regard them as sufficient to overthrow the generally received opinion; and the want of the apostle's signature, from which all these doubts had taken their rise, they attempted to account for in various ways. Origen, too, who succeeded Clement at Alexandria, and who was one of the most learned of the fathers, both expressly declares that the Epistle to the Hebrews had been handed down by the ancients as the work of Paul, and also avows his own concurrence in the same view. He likewise was aware of the objections which had been made to the Pauline origin of the epistle; and he was so far influenced by them, as to suppose that, while Paul contrived the plan and provided the materials of the book, some one of his attendants had under his eye reduced the whole to writing. This supposition, however, let it be observed, is merely a conjecture of his own, which he had formed with the view of meeting the objections founded upon the difference between the style of the Hebrews and the other writings of Paul: what he says was handed down as historic truth from the ancients, was the simple statement, unclogged by any such supposition, that the letter was the production of Paul. After the age of Origen, too, the Pauline origin of the Epistle to the Hebrews continued without any variation to be recognised by the church at Alexandria. A list of persons is given by Lardner, whose testimony to this

effect is recorded either in works of their own, or in the works of others who refer to them.

The views that prevailed in the western church were more unfavourable to the Pauline origin of the Epistle to the Hebrews. There were many who ascribed it to Barnabas or Luke, and it was not regarded as entitled to the same respect as the other writings of Paul. Among those who denied that Paul was the author, were Irenæus, bishop of Lyons in France; Cyprian, bishop of Carthage; Tertullian, one of the Latin fathers; and Caius and Novatus, presbyters of the church of Rome. It deserves to be noticed, however, that all these testimonies against the Pauline authorship of the epistle belong to the third and fourth centuries. Before those days there is reason to believe that the epistle was recognised as canonical and apostolic even in Rome; for Clement, bishop of that city, quotes it as Scripture before the close of the first century, and the old Latin version, translated during the second century, contains it. And again, towards the close of the fourth century, it regained even in the western church all its former credit, and continued thenceforward to be regarded as the production of the Apostle Paul. The testimony of Jerome, the greatest of the Latin fathers who flourished in the fourth century, is most explicit and valuable. In his epistle to Dardanus, he says: "Illud nostris dicendum est, hanc epistolam quæ inscribitur ad Hebræos non solum ab ecclesiis orientis, sed ab omnibus retro ecclesiasticis Græcæ sermonis scriptoribus quasi apostoli Pauli suscipi; licet plerique Latini eam vel Barnabæ vel Clementis arbitrentur;" and in his epistle to Evagrius: "Quam epistolam ad Hebræos omnes Græci recipiunt et nonnulli Latinorum." There is reason, therefore, to suppose that some temporary cause had occasioned the rejection of the Epistle to the Hebrews during the third and fourth centuries among the western churches; and Philastrius says it was the keen disputes that were carried on at Rome with the Novatians or Montanists, who opposed the restoration into the church of professing Christians who had lapsed into idolatry, though ever so penitent. In defence of their views they appealed to the sixth and tenth chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews, which they regarded as furnishing an unanswerable argument; and therefore it is said the credit of

this epistle, the more especially as no apostle's name was affixed to it, and doubts had been expressed about the authorship of it, fell greatly for a time.

From what has been said, it must be apparent that the great preponderance of the evidence is in favour of the Pauline origin of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The eastern and Alexandrian churches, who had, as has been mentioned, the best opportunities of knowing the facts, were from the first unanimous in ascribing the letter to Paul; and even in the western church there were always some, as Jerome's language implies, who were of the same opinion, and this opinion in the end completely prevailed even there. With respect, moreover, to the doubts which were entertained respecting the authorship, it is plain from the quotations that have been made that they first of all took their rise in the difference of the style from Paul's other epistles, and not in the competing claims of any other author. Other names were indeed mentioned, but there was no testimony or tradition alleged in support of their claims, but mere conjecture. And certainly the language of this epistle is better Greek, and it has more of the periodic structure, than any other part of Paul's writings, or indeed of the whole New Testament. But there is not force in the argument founded upon this fact sufficient to counterbalance the ascription of the letter to Paul by the churches of Palestine, who could not but know from whom they received it. Moreover, let it be noted that this letter was written, as we shall see immediately, near the close of the apostle's career, after he had visited the most famous Greek cities, and held intercourse with multitudes of native Greeks, and spoken and written in the Greek language for many a year; and certainly it is not surprising that these circumstances should have exerted an influence upon the apostle's style; not to mention that different subjects are naturally handled by the same writer in rather a different style, according to their respective natures and object.

And besides the evidence which has been already adduced in support of Paul's claims, the contents of the epistle itself may be successfully appealed to in proof of the same position. There are several circumstances referred to which exactly correspond to well-known events in the life of Paul; and there is not one

circumstance which is inconsistent with any part of the apostle's history.

The time and place of writing the Epistle to the Hebrews, as they may be gathered from circumstances mentioned in the epistle itself, are such as agree well with the supposition that Paul was the author of it. There are, it is true, passages which clearly imply that it was not written immediately after the death of Christ (ii. 3, v. 12, x. 32, xiii. 7): for the persons addressed are spoken of as having for a good while been acquainted with the gospel, as having witnessed the departure of their first teachers; and there is mention made of the former times of their Christian profession, as distinguished from the present. But, on the other hand, there are passages (viii. 4, ix. 6, 7, xiii. 11–13) which as plainly imply that the epistle was written before the destruction of Jerusalem and the cessation of the temple service; for the writer refers to the Mosaic institutions as still existing, and the ordinances and rites of the law as still observed. It is long since Chrysostom made the remark, ἔτι γὰρ ὁ ναὸς εἱστήκει, καὶ τὰ τῶν θυσιῶν, διὸ καὶ ἔλεγεν. Τοίνυν ἐξερχώμεθα ἔξω τὸν ὀνειδισμὸν αὐτοῦ φέροντες (xii. 6, E); and Spanhemius has greatly increased the force of the observation by adding, that if the destruction of Jerusalem had already taken place, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews would not have failed to avail himself of the great weight which that event would have added to his argument against the permanency of the Mosaic institutions. Now we know that the city and temple of Jerusalem were destroyed in the year 70; and therefore this epistle must have been written and transmitted to Jerusalem some time previous to that date. There is a passage in Josephus (*Antiq.* xx. 9, 1) which Bertholdt, comparing with a passage in the Hebrews, "but ye have not yet resisted unto blood," regards as furnishing data for fixing the date still more accurately: for the martyrdom of James the Less is described by the Jewish historian as happening under the procuratorship of Albinus, who succeeded Festus in the year 63; and therefore, in all probability, this epistle was written before the author of it heard of the martyrdom of James, though it is clear, from the other circumstances which have been mentioned, that it could only be but a very short

time earlier, probably in 62 or the early part of 63. Now we know that Paul was liberated from his imprisonment in Rome in this very year 63, and that for some time before his liberation he was expecting it. But the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews expresses the hope that he may be enabled speedily to visit them, and requests their prayers that he may be restored to them the sooner (Heb. xiii. 19, 23). How natural the supposition, therefore, that it was written by Paul just at the expiration of his captivity, part of it perhaps in prison, and part of it after he was restored to freedom in the year 63!

And this supposition accords well with the only indication which is given in the epistle itself of the place where it was written: *ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰταλίας* (xiii. 24). Some indeed have supposed that this sentence is inconsistent with the supposition that the letter was written at Rome, for in this case they allege the salutations would have been sent as from Rome itself; to which it is sufficient to reply, that though in writing from one town to another in the same kingdom you naturally mention, if sending salutations, the name of the town itself, yet in writing to a distant country you may with equal propriety mention the name of the country from which you are yourself writing. But Eichhorn and De Wette and others have even denied that this verse implies the letter was written in Italy at all; for, say they, *οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰταλίας*, though it denotes Italians, rather indicates that at the time they are out of Italy; but though *ἀπό* undoubtedly is used where departure or distance from a place is meant, it is equally certain that it is also used like our word "of," where simple connection with a place is denoted, as a circumlocution for a Gentile or national designation, as in Acts xvii. 13, *οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Θησσαλονίκης*, the Thessalonians.

But besides the date and place of writing, there are other circumstances which agree well with the supposition that this epistle is the production of Paul. The writer of it says, in chap. x. 34, *καὶ γὰρ τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου συνεπαθήσατε*,—words which may be supposed to contain a grateful reference to the kindness which the Hebrew believers had shown to Paul during his two years' imprisonment at Cæsarea. Griesbach, it is true, and some other critics, have decided that *δεσμίοις*, prisoners, is

the true reading of this passage; and if it be so, the argument under review loses much of its power.

But of all the circumstantial evidence in defence of the Pauline origin of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the most important is the reference made in chap. xiii. 23 to Timothy: *γινώσκετε τὸν Τιμόθεον ἀπολελυμένον· μεθ' οὗ, ἐὰν τάχιον ἔρχηται ὄψομαι ὑμᾶς*. Now it is known to every reader of the Scriptures that Paul and Timothy lived on the strictest terms of friendship and affection, that they often accompanied each other on their journeys, and that Paul was in the habit of styling Timothy, his son, his dear son. Nor is there any other individual with whom either the one or the other of them stood on the same intimate terms. Yea, further, it is manifest from the Epistles to the Philippians and Colossians, which were also written during Paul's imprisonment, that Timothy was with him in Rome, and was employed by him on important messages. And the suitableness of this passage to the known relations and circumstances of Paul will appear still more striking, when it is remembered that *ἀπολελυμένον*, translated set at liberty, denotes also as frequently sent away, which some have regarded as the better translation, there being no mention made of any imprisonment of Timothy. Now we know that Paul, in the letter he wrote to the Philippians (ii. 19) during his imprisonment, mentioned to them his design of sending Timothy to them: "But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort when I know your state." How perfectly adapted, therefore, to all the circumstances, is the supposition that in the Epistle to the Hebrews, written, as we have seen on other grounds, at the very time when Paul's captivity terminated, he should mention to them that Timothy was away on some message, but that if he returned speedily, according to expectation, they would come together! And even if it be supposed the *ἀπολελυμένον* must mean liberated from captivity, which perhaps is more consistent with Greek usage, still the whole passage continues to speak powerfully in favour of the Pauline origin of the epistle. Even Eichhorn, who attributes the authorship of the epistle to another, concedes the force of this argument. It is true, says he, that when the author of the epistle promises to visit his readers in company with Timothy,

who does not, seeing Timothy was his companion for many years, immediately think of Paul as the chief traveller? But still who could assume that he *must* be so? Certainly it is allowed that the argument is not demonstrative: if it were so, all controversy would have ceased; but undoubtedly it possesses very great weight.

It is necessary, however, to mention that, while there are these circumstantial evidences in favour of Paul, there is one in chap. ii. 3 which has appeared to many to furnish a powerful argument on the other side: "How shall we," etc., and *ὑπὸ τῶν ἀκουσάντων εἰς ἡμᾶς ἐβεβαιώθη*. Now here it is said the writer of this epistle attributes his knowledge of the gospel not to the teaching of Christ, but to the instructions of those who had themselves learned from Christ; whereas Paul was ever ready to assert his claims to divine revelation, and challenged for himself a place not inferior to the highest apostles (Gal. i. 11, 16, ii. 6; 2 Cor. xi. 5, xii. 1–5). This argument appeared quite conclusive to Calvin, whose language is: Cæterum hic locus indicio est, epistolam a Paulo non fuisse compositam; neque enim tam humiliter loqui solet, ut se unum fateatur ex apostolorum discipulis (vii. 527). And Luther took the very same view of the subject, not only denying that Paul could be the author, but ascribing it to Apollos. Beza, however, suggests a solution which seems to render the verse in question quite consistent with the supposition that Paul wrote the epistle, viz. that by the rhetorical figure of *ἀνακοίνωσις* the writer includes himself among his readers, though it is to them only the statement properly refers. Nothing is more common than this practice in all addresses, whether spoken or written, and you find examples of it in this very epistle (vi. 1–3, x. 24–26, xii. 1, 2); so that we may quite naturally regard the present passage too as a case of the same kind. And there is one consideration which greatly confirms this view of the subject, viz. that it is precisely in such passages as this, passages of warm and earnest exhortation, where the writer or speaker, feeling his own need of watchfulness and care, employs the figure that has been mentioned, and includes himself among those whom he warns. "If the word," etc., "how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation," etc. It is true that the

particular clause on which the objection is founded is a historical statement, and not an advice; but then it is a subordinate member of a hortative sentence, and having begun in the first person—"how shall we escape"—the writer could scarcely fail to preserve the same form of speech to the end of it.

An argument of very great weight in defence of the claims of Paul, may be derived from the doctrines and views which prevail in the epistle. It is long since Origen remarked that the *νοήματα*, or thoughts of this epistle, all bore the peculiar stamp of Paul's mind, though the language was *Ἑλληνικωτέρα*, purer Greek than his. There are many views and representations of things and images, which are to be found in the acknowledged writings of Paul, and also in the Epistle to the Hebrews, but occur nowhere else in the New Testament. Compare at your leisure—

Heb. i. 1–3		with	2 Cor. iv. 4; Col. i. 15, 16.
,,	i. 4, ii. 9	,,	Phil. ii. 8, 9.
,,	ii. 14	,,	1 Cor. xv. 54–57.
,,	vii. 26	,,	Eph. iv. 10.
,,	x. 12, 13	,,	1 Cor. xv. 25.
,,	viii. 5, x. 1	,,	Col. ii. 17.
,,	vii. 16, 18, 19	,,	Rom. ii. 29; Gal. iii. 3, 24.

So striking, indeed, have the resemblances appeared between the views and images of Paul and those of the Epistle to the Hebrews, that even De Wette and Bleek, who both take the negative side in this question, acknowledge that the epistle has a much greater resemblance to the undoubted writings of Paul than to any other part of the New Testament; and they have concluded on this ground that it must have been written by some one who was a disciple of Paul's, and who by constant intercourse with him had imbibed all his leading views. But surely the juster conclusion from such premises is, that Paul himself was the author.

Those who deny the Pauline origin of the epistle before us, appeal with greatest triumph to the qualities of the style in which it is written. And there can be no doubt that the general aspect and dress of the epistle are characterized by some peculiarities which differ considerably from the acknowledged writings of Paul. I do not refer to the occurrence of single

words and phrases, which are nowhere else to be found in the apostle's other letters; for though Schulz and Seyfarth have both produced long lists of such words with great triumph, yet Mr Stuart completely demolishes the argument founded upon them, by taking the First Epistle to the Corinthians, and gathering from it as long a list of words and phrases which are unknown to the other books. Indeed it is clear, that of any two works written by the very same author, each will contain words and phrases which are not in the other, just because the different subjects and occasions require different words. It is not therefore such differences which can furnish any argument in a question of authorship; but it is the use of the same word in different senses to which we are to look, or the use of different words to express what appears precisely the same idea. And yet every instance of such difference is not to be closely urged; for an author may designedly vary his phraseology, and different circumstances and connections may lead to the selection of new words where the idea is the same. But after all these abatements are made, there still remain some peculiarities of style by which the Epistle to the Hebrews is distinguished: the general flow of the language, *e.g.*, is more rhythmical: there is a greater abundance of sonorous words: the connective particles are more classically chosen: some favourite expressions of Paul's are supplanted by others—*μακροθυμία*, for example, occurs (vi. 12, 15) in the sense of perseverance, though *ὑπομονὴ* is the word Paul elsewhere uses. And to give a single instance of a minute but very remarkable difference, I may refer to the word *σκότος*. This word, in the ancient Attic, was always masculine, and belonged to the second declension; in the later Greek it became neuter, and passed into the third declension. In the New Testament, excepting the Epistle to the Hebrews, it occurs twenty-eight times, and is always neuter: in the acknowledged epistles of Paul it occurs eleven times, and is always neuter: in the Epistle to the Hebrews it occurs but once; and the remarkable point is, that it has the ancient Attic gender, the masculine (Heb. xii. 18).

Various methods have been employed to account for the peculiarities of the Epistle to the Hebrews consistently with the ascription of its authorship to Paul. Origen adopted the

hypothesis, that it was first written in the Hebrew or Aramaic language, and afterwards translated by some accomplished Grecian. Others have supposed that it was dictated by Paul himself to an amanuensis, perhaps Luke, whose style approaches nearest to that of the Hebrews; and that he, with the apostle's concurrence, rounded the periods somewhat, and occasionally substituted a more classical word, though always under the supervision of the master mind. But there does not seem to be any occasion to have recourse to either of these suppositions. The peculiar nature of the epistle, the leisure and deliberation with which it appears to have been written, and the fact that it must have been the last of Paul's productions, are quite sufficient to account for the greater polish with which it is adorned, and the calm dignity which reigns throughout the whole of it. Dr Gotlob Paulus, whose opinion on a question like this is the more valuable, as he belongs to the Neologists, who generally take the other side, after describing the rhetorical excellence and methodical arrangement of the Epistle to the Hebrews, makes the following observation: "But all this shows only the difference between what Paul could effect when merely dictating a letter, and when composing a methodical deduction according to a settled plan. On the other hand, the matter contained, down to the smallest particulars, is all so genuinely Pauline, that certainly no other person, if even the apostle had furnished him with the sentiments, could possibly have introduced so much of the characteristic peculiarity."

There is another question respecting the Epistle to the Hebrews to which it will be necessary shortly to advert. The opinion was very anciently advanced, that it was written, not in Greek, but in Hebrew, or rather Aramaic, the language which prevailed in Palestine. Clement, Eusebius, Jerome, and others, plainly mention this tradition, and seem to regard it with decided approbation. Clement's language is: "*καὶ τὴν πρὸς Ἑβραίους δὲ ἐπιστολὴν Παύλου μὲν εἶναί φησι, γεγράφθαι δὲ Ἑβραίοις Ἑβραϊκῇ φωνῇ, Λουκᾶν δὲ φιλοτίμως αὐτὴν μεθερμηνεύσαντα ἐκδοῦναι τοῖς Ἕλλησιν*" (De Wette, 248, etc. etc.). And Jerome says: Scripserat ut Hebræus Hebraice, id est suo eloquio disertissime, ut ea quæ eloquentius scripta fuerant in Hebræo, eloquentius verterentur in Græcum, et nauce causam

esse quod a cæteris Pauli epistolis discrepare videatur (De Wette, 250). But if this epistle was really written at first in Hebrew, it is certainly remarkable that the original should have so speedily disappeared, that no evidence can be produced to show it was ever seen by any individual. Moreover, it is clear that the ancient opinion referred to did not rest upon any historical basis, but originated in the attempt to account for the difference of the Greek from Paul's usual style, and in the supposition that a letter written to Hebrews would very probably be written in their own tongue. But no ancient writer says he ever saw the original, or heard of any who had seen it.

In modern times a difference of opinion has prevailed on this subject. Michaelis very strongly maintains that Hebrew was the original; but the opposite opinion is now becoming by far the most prevalent, both among those who deny and among those who acknowledge the Pauline origin of the epistle. The most convincing proof that Greek was the original of it, is the style in which it is written—pure, copious, and flowing. Of all the books of the New Testament, it is the one which has the least resemblance to a translation: the whole structure of the sentences, and the choice of words, and the occasional paranomasias that are to be found in it, exhibit the true marks of an original writing. Moreover, it is worthy of remark, that all the quotations which are made from the Old Testament are introduced in the precise words of the Septuagint, even in those cases where the Septuagint has departed somewhat from the ancient Hebrew, which seems to argue that the author wrote in Greek, and had a copy of the Septuagint by him. And if it be said that, as the epistle was written to Hebrews residing in Palestine, it was the more likely that the author would employ the Aramaic or Hebrew, it is a sufficient answer to this objection, that Greek was not only the language which prevailed most widely through the world, but that even in Palestine it was very generally understood. This has been very conclusively established by Hug, in opposition to De Rossi and others, who maintained that Aramaic or Syro-Chaldaic was almost exclusively used. And indeed there is one passage in the Acts (xxi. 40) which furnishes as convincing an argument as could well be desired. When an uproar is raised against Paul in Jerusalem, he steps forward to address

the tumultuous throng, and we are told that they expected him to address them in Greek; but he spoke in Aramaic, and they were pleased, and listened with the greater attention. Now, if this passage certainly proves that they preferred the Aramaic, it at least as plainly proves that they were sufficiently acquainted with the Greek to understand it when spoken; and the parties mentioned are not a few learned individuals, but a promiscuous crowd. A letter, therefore, written to the Hebrews in Greek, would be quite well understood by them; and the writer might be influenced to employ this language, by the consideration that, while they would understand it perhaps as well as Aramaic, it would be much more intelligible to all the other churches among whom, according to the common custom, it might be circulated. It is clear from Col. iv. 16, that Paul desired the churches to communicate to others the apostolic letters that were sent to them; and would not the prospect of such more extended circulation be a sufficient reason for preferring the Greek to the Aramaic, even in writing to the Hebrews, since, as we have seen, they were sufficiently acquainted with the Greek to understand it when spoken to them? On the whole, therefore, it may be affirmed that the Greek original of the Epistle to the Hebrews may now be regarded as a settled question.

OBJECT AND SCOPE OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

In studying any book of the Bible, the first thing which you should do is to read it completely through in the original. And your object at this first reading should be, not so much to master every difficulty which may present itself, as to acquire a clear conception of the general scope and plan of the whole. And when you have thus examined the greater outlines of the plan, and gathered all the information which you can find respecting the author, and age, and destination of the book, then you are prepared to enter upon the minute examination of every passage; and you will be able, with the blessing of God, both to see the meaning of the separate parts, and to trace their relation to the entire design. Indeed, you will form juster ideas of any object, whether it be a complicated piece of machinery, or a spacious building, or an extended district of country, by

first taking a general view of the whole, and then applying yourself to the examination of all the parts in detail.

If you have read, then, the Epistle to the Hebrews with any degree of attention, you must have perceived that the main object of it is to illustrate the superiority of the gospel dispensation to the ancient dispensation of Moses. And the special reason why the apostle has taken up this subject, and handled it in the form which it assumes in this letter, is to be found in the risk of apostasy to which the Christians of Palestine were exposed, in consequence both of the powerful influence which Judaism still exerted over their own feelings, and of the reproach and persecution which were daily heaped upon them by their unbelieving countrymen.

The change of dispensation which was introduced when our Saviour came to this world, excited, like every other extensive public change, the hostility of multitudes. There was a strong attachment in the breasts of the Jews to the institutions of Moses. All the prejudices of education, all the associations of country, all the splendid achievements of their nation, conspired to strengthen the tie which bound them to the religion of their forefathers. Their law had been promulgated under circumstances of peculiar splendour; their system of government had been established by the authority of Jehovah Himself; and in numerous cases of difficulty, when human aid availed not to relieve them, they had received the most signal manifestations of the divine presence and favour. But when the new dispensation of the gospel appeared among them, advancing claims to their regard, it exhibited to their view a very different external appearance, and meanness seemed to them its prevailing characteristic. There was nothing in it imposing to the eye of sense: its Founder was so poor, that He had not where to lay His head; through life He had been a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and His career had terminated in what seemed to the world a scene of disgrace and shame. The contrast, therefore, of outward appearance which existed between the religion of Jesus and the ancient rites of the law, appeared so striking to the Jews, that all their most powerful prejudices were arrayed against Christianity. The new system seemed to them divested of all glory. They judged it unworthy to come

into the room of the splendid services of the temple; and affected to persuade themselves that it could not derive its origin from that God who had spoken to their fathers at Sinai with audible voice, in the midst of thunder, and tempest, and lightning.

Nor were these feelings of attachment to the law of Moses confined entirely to those Jews who rejected the Saviour. Even among those who professed to receive Jesus as the Messiah, the same state of feeling continued in much force; and it was with reluctance that they consented to renounce the rites and ceremonies prescribed to them by their ancient legislator. They wished to retain not only circumcision, like their countrymen abroad, but also all those peculiar services which could only be observed in Palestine; and they seemed to fancy that Christianity was incomplete, unless it were blended with the rites and traditions which they had received from their fathers. And even when these feelings might have died away, as the converts became habituated to their new profession, they were continually kept alive by the violent outcry of those who adhered to the national religion. The apostates, as the Christian Jews were deemed by their unbelieving countrymen, were exposed to continual trouble; and many of the less decided among them, tired of the disagreeable position which they occupied in society, were either strongly tempted to return to Judaism, or wished to effect a compromise, by assimilating the religion of Jesus as much as possible to the law of Moses. For they could scarcely persuade themselves, that ceremonies which their fathers had once practised by the authority of Heaven, could now be disagreeable to Jehovah.

Such were the views and feelings which prevailed to an alarming extent among the Jewish converts in Palestine. And the great object of Paul in writing the Epistle to the Hebrews, is to warn them of the sin and danger of apostasy, to correct the errors into which they had fallen, to enlarge their views of Christianity, to demonstrate the superiority of the gospel dispensation to the abrogated dispensation of the law. The Christian revelation is therefore represented as the completed system, the Mosaic as the preparatory; and the relation between them is that of archetype to type. Were the institutions of Moses

a glorious system, founded and protected by the authority of Heaven? But the religion of Jesus, rejoins the apostle, was more glorious still, inasmuch as it was the consummation and perfection of the former, and the end to which all its ceremonies tended. Were the ancient prophets who spoke to the fathers invested with high dignity? Christ, who hath spoken to us, is the Son of God, Creator and Lord of all. Were the angels who were employed at the giving of the law exalted and powerful beings? Christ is possessed of a dignity and elevation immeasurably superior to theirs. Was Moses an inspired legislator, commissioned by the Almighty to rule and to judge His people on earth? Christ is invested with an authority as much superior to that of Moses as the son and heir is superior to the most favoured and most worthy servant. Was Aaron a great high priest appointed by Jehovah to offer up sacrifices for the sins of the people? Jesus was a priest of a loftier order still, holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, made higher than the heavens, whose one sacrifice of Himself was of more value than all the incense which had burned, and all the victims which had bled, for thousands of years upon the altars of the tabernacle and temple. These are the topics to which the apostle directs the attention of the Christian Jews, in illustration of the superior dignity of the gospel dispensation; and the discussion is so conducted, that at every step exhortations and warnings are intertwined with the various branches of the argument.

Christ is compared first of all with the ancient prophets (i. 1–3); then with the angels who ministered at the giving of the law (i. 4–ii. 18); then with Moses the servant of God (iii. 1–6); when there follows a powerful appeal in reference to the danger of apostasy, extending from iii. 7 to iv. 13. Christ is next compared with Aaron, the ancient high priest; and this is the most extended part of the whole epistle. The priestly office of the Saviour is first treated somewhat generally from iv. 14 to v. 10; when there occurs an earnest admonition to be attentive to the sublimer truths of religion, and another warning of the danger of apostasy, reaching from v. 11 to vi. 20. The subject of the priesthood is then resumed with more particularity in vii.; and the superiority of Christ as a priest to the Aaronic priests

is illustrated from the heavenly sanctuary in which He ministers, from the better covenant of which He is the Mediator, and from the real propitiation which His blood effects. These topics extend from the beginning of the seventh chapter to the 18th verse of the tenth, where the argumentative part of the epistle ends; and the remaining three chapters and a half are occupied with admonitions, and warnings, and encouragements, intermixed with some new illustrations from the Old Testament.

In this epistle the relation between the Old Testament and the New is admirably illustrated. The germs of truth scattered by Moses and the prophets are quickened in their growth, and expand their branches on every side: prophetic and typical indications, which we could never otherwise have understood, are explained; and the harmony of all the divine dispensations is thus clearly pointed out. The Latin couplet of Augustine furnishes a fine motto to the Epistle to the Hebrews, and beautifully describes what this epistle so much turns upon—the connection between the Old Testament and the New:

"Novum Testamentum in vetere latet,
Vetus Testamentum in novo patet."

CHAPTER I.

IN subserviency to his main design, which has been already described, the apostle commences the Epistle to the Hebrews with a *brief* comparison between the old dispensation and the new, which naturally leads him to the Son, of whose dignity and glory he is first of all to exhibit the proof, as the foundation of his subsequent reasonings. He describes the *mode* and the *channel* of those revelations which God had made to His ancient people, declaring that He spoke to them πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως. These words are often employed synonymously, and some are disposed to view them here as only indicating one idea. Chrysostom represents them both by διαφόρως. But it is not Paul's manner to employ superfluous words; and as there is an obvious etymological difference between these terms, it is undoubtedly best to view them as used in the appropriate senses which they are fitted to express. The first seems to refer to the separate *portions* in which God gave the Old Testament to the Israelites. The whole of it was not sent to them at once: a thousand years intervened between Moses and Malachi. God's messengers came to them at different times: one prophet was raised up after another, who each increased the brilliancy of the light which his predecessor had kindled, and each left room for brighter displays of heavenly wisdom. And as the different portions, the πολλὰ μέρεα, of the Old Testament were thus given the Jews at different periods of time, the word πολυμερῶς, though not closely, is yet very justly rendered in our version, "at sundry times." The other term, πολυτρόπως, clearly refers to the variety of ways in which God made known His will in the times of old. The angel of the covenant appeared to Abraham in human form, and told him

of the approaching destruction of Sodom. God spoke to Moses in the wilderness out of the bush that burned and yet was not consumed: He spoke to him on Sinai's summit, in the midst of thunder, and tempest, and lightning. An audible voice fell upon the ears of the young Samuel during the silence of night, and startling disclosures were made to him. The prophets were often rapt in ecstatic vision; and scenes of splendour and glory, or of darkness and desolation, passed in review before them, too magnificent, too dreadful for mortal to contemplate, without fainting heart and failing limbs. The word of the Lord was in them like a fire that consumed their bones and unstrung their joints. They were compelled to give utterance to their feelings, or the pent-up torrent would have burst their hearts. Dreams were employed as the vehicles of divine instruction. By the high priest's Urim and Thummim God gave intimation of His will. Types and shadows, ceremonies and sacrifices, were the instituted teachers of doctrine and duty. Jehovah spoke to the fathers πολυτρόπως, *variously*.

The individuals through whom divine communications were made to the Jews are styled prophets. And as this term is plainly employed as a general designation of all the ancient sacred penmen, it is clear that it is applied to them not simply as the announcers of future events, but as the bearers of a message from God. The latter, indeed, is the predominating idea connected with the word in the New Testament. The communication of religious instruction, the proclamation of God's will respecting duty, was the principal part of the prophet's office; and the power of predicting future events was superadded, for the sake of authenticating to all future generations the messages that were delivered.

The government of ἐν τοῖς προφήταις supplies an example of Hebraism. The classic expression for the idea which is here indicated would be διὰ τῶν προφητῶν. But the prefix בְּ in Hebrew is used with great latitude of signification, denoting generally indeed the same as the Greek ἐν, but frequently bearing very different senses; and the consequence has been, that the writers of the Septuagint and of the New Testament have employed ἐν in the same extent and variety of signification: "God spoke," etc.

The wisdom of the apostle is strikingly displayed in the manner of commencing this letter. He is writing to Jews for the purpose of removing their misconceptions and allaying their prejudices; and the line of argument which he intends to pursue, requires him first of all to treat of the native and essential dignity of Jesus Christ. But he so constructs the opening sentence of his letter, that on the very fore-front of it there stands a spontaneous acknowledgment of the heavenly origin of the system which they so much admired. The Jews were apt to imagine that Christians undervalued the ancient institutions. Paul does not wait to state his views afterwards in the shape of a concession; but the very first words that flow from his pen do homage to Moses and the prophets. In dealing with an adversary, if it is your wish to persuade him, if you are not merely actuated by the empty desire of gaining a triumph over him, by all means frankly and at once acknowledge whatever you believe to be good and sound in his views. The same acknowledgment, afterwards made and viewed as a concession, will not produce the same effect. The Scriptures display a profound knowledge of human nature.

The same God, the apostle assures us, who spoke unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us. And his words clearly imply that the whole scheme of redemption, from first to last, is to be ascribed to God as its author. It is not a means employed by another to gain Him over, that He might be merciful to man; but it is a scheme contrived by Himself, in the exercise of boundless mercy, and carried into effect under the direction of infinite wisdom, that guilty man might be pardoned, without infringing upon the sacred laws of the divine government. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16). The love of God is the original fountain: the plan of mercy is a copious stream which flows from it.

In speaking of the two great portions of divine revelation, the apostle contrasts the time, the manner, the destination, and the channel of them.

Ἐπ' ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν τούτων is opposed to *πάλαι*. *Πάλαι* denotes anciently, and refers to the times of the old dispensation.

Ἐπ' ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν τούτων is a complex phrase, whose general meaning is abundantly clear from the connection in which it stands; but its form and origin require some consideration. *Ἐπ' ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν*, without the *τούτων*, very frequently occurs in the Septuagint, where it is employed, as well as the similar phrase, *ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις*, to represent the Hebrew phrase אַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים. Now all these expressions, it is plain, viewed simply in themselves, merely denote the end of days, or the last days; but as they occurred most frequently in the Messianic prophecies, describing the great Deliverer's advent at a far distant day, they naturally passed into a designation of the Messiah's times: and this was the idea they most readily suggested to the mind of an ancient Jew. "It shall come to pass," says Isaiah (ii. 2), "in the last days (בְּאַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים; *ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις*, LXX.), that the mountain of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it." And when Peter, accordingly, is explaining to assembled thousands the marvellous events which happened on the day of Pentecost, he distinctly makes the application to those commencing times of the gospel, of similar phraseology in Joel ii. 28 (וְהָיָה אַחֲרֵי־כֵן): "For," says he (Acts ii. 17), "this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, *καὶ ἔσται ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις, λέγει ὁ Θεός, ἐκχέω ἀπὸ τοῦ Πνεύματός μου ἐπὶ πᾶσαν σάρκα.*"

It deserves to be noted, however, that it is only in the plural number these words are employed as a technical designation of the times of the Messiah. In the singular the same peculiarity does not adhere to them; but they are used to denote any last day, as the last day of the feast (John vii. 37), the last day of the world (John vi. 39, 40, xi. 24). Moses Stuart, in adverting to these passages, says that the meaning of the phrase in them is different, because it is accompanied by the word *ἀνάστασις*, which of course carries forward the mind to the end of the world; but this is not the ground of the distinction: it is only a mark by which in these passages the time referred to is determined. The true ground of the distinction, which Mr Stuart overlooks, is that the usage of the Old Testament only occasioned the plural number *ἔσχαται ἡμέραι* to acquire a speciality of application to the days of

Christ. It is not meant, however, that this phrase was so restricted to this application that it could not be employed to indicate any other times; for it occurs in 2 Tim. iii. 1, Jas. v. 3, 1 Tim. iv. 1, *ὕστεροι καιροί*, as descriptive of the last times of the world; but it is a remarkable fact, that in each of these cases it is without the article, as if for the purpose of indicating a departure from the special meaning which usage had given to the phrase. Nor do I mean to affirm that no word denoting time is ever applied in the singular to the time of Christ; for John says of his own day (1 John ii. 18), "Little children, it is *ἐσχάτη ὥρα*, the last time." What I mean is, that no phrase in the singular, and certainly none of which *ἡμέρα* was a part, had passed into a technical designation of the times or days of the Messiah.

And why is *τούτων* added to the usual phrase in the passage before us—*ἐπ' ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν τούτων*? Plainly to indicate that the days referred to had already begun. They were styled *αἱ ἡμέραι ἔσχαται* from the most ancient times; but now, says Paul, they are *αἱ ἡμέραι ἔσχαται αὗται*, these last days, because the long-expected Messiah has at length appeared.

And as *ἐπ' ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν τούτων* is opposed to *πάλαι*, so *ἡμῖν* is opposed to *πατράσιν*: the latter denoting the fathers, or those who lived under the old dispensation; and the former those who have the happiness to live under the glorious dispensation of the gospel. *Ἐν υἱῷ* is in like manner opposed to *ἐν τοῖς προφήταις*, and means "by the Son," as the other means "by the prophets," the same Hebraism occurring in both expressions.

You will remark that, in the comparison instituted by the apostle, there is no counterpart mentioned to *πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως*; but it is plainly implied that, while the revelations of God under the old economy extended over hundreds of years, and were given in a great variety of ways, it was to be something different with the new revelations of the gospel era. The canon of Scripture was now to be speedily closed, and accordingly the new portion of holy writ was completed by the first generation of Christ's disciples. And with respect to the variety of mode which had characterized the old (ancient revela tions had been given by dreams and visions, types and emblems),

it seems to be the superior plainness of the gospel that is indicated by the apostle as a contrast to it. The mind of God was made known in one clear unbroken stream by the direct preaching of Jesus Christ and His apostles. "We use great plainness of speech," says Paul (2 Cor. iii. 12); "and not as Moses, who put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not look stedfastly to the end of that which is abolished: but their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament; which veil is done away in Christ."

The inspiration of the Scriptures is distinctly affirmed in this opening verse of the Epistle to the Hebrews: it was God who spake to men by the prophets and by his Son; and therefore the penmen of the Old Testament, and those who were employed under Christ to write the New, were infallibly directed by the wisdom of Heaven; and what they have written is the truth of God. Of course you do not understand me as affirming, that whenever a person chooses to say of himself that he is heaven-directed in all he writes, he is for that very reason deserving of implicit credit as a religious guide. No; there are certain previous steps leading to the conclusion I have stated, which it does not fall in with my present purpose separately fully to consider, but which I for the present take for granted. The reality, for example, of Christ's heavenly mission must first of all be proved by miracles, and by the fulfilment of ancient prophecies in Him; and then the genuineness and authenticity of the several books which bear the names of His disciples must be established by the evidence appropriate to such an inquiry. But still, after all this is done, and done to your entire satisfaction, it still remains a question, What is the nature of these writings, and what is the amount of authority as religious guides which they must be supposed to possess? Now this is a question which must be settled by the books themselves. After we are once satisfied with respect to the previous questions referred to, then we must allow the Bible to be just what it says that it is. If it claims inspiration, if it claims infallibility, we must concede the claim. Now it is this step of the argument alone which I contemplate, when I say that the inspiration of the sacred oracles is proved by the declaration of the apostle in

the passage before us. The words of the prophets are God's words; the words of Christ are God's words; and the words of the men sent forth by Christ are God's words.

Having so disposed the sentence, that the brief comparison made between the ancient and the new revelations ends with the mention of the *Son*, of whom the epistle was mainly to treat, the apostle proceeds, in one continuous flow of thought, to describe His greatness, and dignity, and glory. *Ὃν ἔθηκε κληρονόμον πάντων*, whom He hath appointed heir of all things. It is clear that *κληρονόμος*, as applied to Christ, cannot denote an heir with all the accessory ideas connected with that word among men, the death of the previous possessor being the usual condition on which the succession of the heir depends. Every such idea must be separated from the word in the case of Christ; and when this is done, when the human materials are removed, it will be found that all that remains is the general idea of Possessor, Lord, Sovereign; and, indeed, the substratum or essence of the idea included in *κληρονόμος* is represented in Gal. iv. 1 as being *κύριος πάντων*. This use of the word *κληρονόμος* both Stuart and Ernesti derive from the use of the Hebrew word יָרַשׁ, which not only denotes to inherit, but also to acquire in any way, and to possess. But though the use of the Greek word certainly accords with the use of the Hebrew one, there is no occasion to have recourse to the Hebrew for an explanation of the Greek, or to derive the use of the latter from the use of the former. Hebraism in signification is only to be acknowledged where a Greek word has derived, from contact with Jewish minds, a meaning which it never bears in approved classic authors; but *κληρονόμος* is employed in common Greek in the same variety and extent of signification as יוֹרֵשׁ in Hebrew. It denotes primarily, as its etymology (*κλῆρος*, *sors*; *νέμω*, *tribuo*) shows, one who procures by lot, or who receives a share: it also denotes an heir in the strict sense of that word, as in Lucian: *ἐπεθύμεις κληρονομεῖν ἀποθανόντος ἐμοῦ τὰ χρήματα*—you are longing to receive the possessions when I am dead. But this strict idea of inheritance is not inherent in the word: it is an accessory derived from the fact that possessions are frequently acquired among men in this way; and accordingly the term is as often employed in the simple sense

of acquiring and possessing, as in Demosthenes: *οὗτοι κληρονομοῦσι τῶν ὑμετέρων ἀγαθῶν, ὑμεῖς δὲ μάρτυρές ἐστε τῶν ἑτέρων ἀγαθῶν*—they possess your goods, and ye are only the witnesses of other men's prosperity (690, 14); *ταύτης γὰρ οὐκέτι τῆς αἰσχύνης κληρονομῶ*—for I no longer share this disgrace (444, 13). In fact, neither *κληρονόμος* nor even the Hebrew יָרַשׁ primarily denotes an heir in our sense of the word: heir is a secondary sense in both languages; so that it is not merely unnecessary, it is preposterous, to have recourse to Hebrew usage for a warrant to understand in this place *κληρονόμος* in the simple sense of Possessor or Lord, for that is its primary and most appropriate meaning. When Christ is styled *κληρονόμος πάντον*, the plain sense is that He is the possessor of all things, the Lord of the universe, the Sovereign of heaven and earth. The explanation given in Galatians, *κύριος πάντων*, Lord of all, exactly accords with the common use of the Greek word.

And as Christ is invested with authority so transcendently great, so He is entirely fitted to sustain it with dignity and effect: *He* must be able to rule the universe who made the universe. And it is plainly with the view of demonstrating the propriety of Christ's appointment to universal dominion, that the apostle adds the following clause, *δι' οὗ καὶ τοὺς αἰῶνας ἐποίησεν*—by whom also He made the worlds.

Αἰὼν in classic Greek refers only to time, denoting age, generation, eternity; and the same, for the most part, is its signification in the New Testament also. But there are a few passages where *αἰῶνες* must be understood to denote the visible universe of created beings, as Heb. xi. 3, *πίστει νοοῦμεν κατηρτίσθαι τοὺς αἰῶνας ῥήματι Θεοῦ, εἰς τὸ μὴ ἐκ φαινομένων τὰ βλεπόμενα γεγονέναι*—"through (by) faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear;" and 1 Tim. i. 17, *τῷ βασιλεῖ τῶν αἰώνων*—"to the Sovereign of the universe." It seems, however, to be only in the plural that the word came to be used in a sense so remote from its original meaning. Schleusner, indeed, contends that the singular too is used in the same manner; but there is not one of the passages which he produces as proof, where the idea of time is not just

as appropriate as the idea of world; and the ordinary sense in such a case is clearly entitled to the preference. In Matt. xxiv. 3, for example, *καὶ τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος*—"the end of time," "the end of the world's duration"—seems to be the very idea the scope of the passage requires. The rule, therefore, seems to be that the word *αἰὼν*, either in the singular or in the plural, denotes time, ages; but that it is only in the plural that it has acquired the additional signification of worlds. And what is the origin of a use so remarkable? It can scarcely be traced up to the Hebrew, for עוֹלָם, which *αἰὼν* in the Septuagint almost always represents, invariably bears in the Hebrew Bible the signification of time, as age, generation, eternity, with one single exception in Eccles. iii. 11; but even there, however, it is still a disputed point whether the word bears the common idea of time or the new idea of world (Glass, i. 63). It is certain, however, that after the close of the Old Testament canon, the word עוֹלָם, passing into another form in the Aramaic spoken by the later Jews, came to denote both the lower world, the middle region of the air, and the residence of God and angels. And there can be no question that it was in this way the Greek word *αἰών*, coming into contact with Jewish minds, acquired among them the same extent of signification as the corresponding Aramaic word. I may mention in passing, that it is from this word so used that the term æons is formed, of such frequent occurrence in the Gnostic philosophy.

It has been supposed by Grotius and others, that in this clause, *δι' οὗ καὶ τοὺς αἰῶνας ἐποίησεν*, the preposition *διὰ* denotes the instrumental or the final, and not the efficient cause, and therefore ascribes the creation to Christ in some inferior sense. But though *διὰ*, governing the genitive, does sometimes denote the instrumental or the final cause, it is as certain that it also denotes the efficient cause; as in Heb. ii. 10, where God the Father is spoken of: "It became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom, *δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα*, are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings;" and in 1 Cor. i. 9, *πιστὸς ὁ Θεὸς, δι' οὗ ἐκλήθητε εἰς κοινωνίαν τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ*—faithful is God, by whom ye were called into the fellowship of His Son. Now, if the passage before us were the only one in which the creation

was ascribed to Christ, there might be some plausible reason for doubting which sense the preposition διὰ should be regarded as bearing in it; but there are other passages where, in varied forms of expression, the same great work is ascribed to the Son of God. In John's Gospel (i. 1) we are told that "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο—"all things were made by Him;" and as if to remove all ground of dubiety, the important clause is added, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν ὃ γέγονεν. And the same truth is taught in different language in Col. i. 16, ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ ἐκτίσθη τὰ πάντα—"for by Him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers;" and, as if labouring for language sufficiently strong to express the unlimited sense in which He ascribed the creation of all things to Christ, the apostle adds another clause in a different form, τὰ πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν ἔκτισται, where both efficient and final cause are conjoined. How explicit, too, is the declaration made respecting Christ in the concluding verses of this first chapter of Hebrews: "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thy hands!"

Before leaving this clause, "by whom also He made the worlds," I may advert to a peculiarity in the construction of it, by which it is distinguished from all the others that I have quoted. Observe the statement is, that God made all things by Christ,—a form of expression which has occasioned difficulty to some minds, and led them to pry into the kind of co-operation there was between God and Christ in creating the universe. Now, I would have you beware of prying too curiously into such a matter: it is a territory which lies beyond the precincts of human knowledge. Rest satisfied with the broad facts of the case. God is declared in the most unequivocal and unlimited terms to have created all things; Christ is declared in language equally unequivocal and unlimited to have created all things; and in the passage before us God is said to have created the worlds by Christ. Now, undoubtedly the great harmonizing principle of these several declarations is the doctrine of the divine unity—a unity not merely of counsel, but also of essence.

The Father is God, and Christ is God, but there is only one God. There is diversity in the divine nature, for there are Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: there is unity in the divine nature, for we are expressly assured that there is only one God. The three are the same in substance, equal in power and glory. It is vain, however, for man to attempt the elucidation of the precise nature of the unity and diversity that are found in God; and all the endeavours that have been made, by analogies drawn from created objects, to illustrate the relations subsisting between the three divine persons, only tend to involve the subject in thicker darkness. The short line of man's intellect is altogether inadequate to fathom the boundless depths of the divine nature. Where angels tremble and adore, let not presumptuous man intrude with his speculations.

The apostle proceeds with his description of the greatness and glory of the Son of God: *Ὃς ὢν ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης, καὶ χαρακτὴρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ.* These are sublime and lofty expressions, and deserve minute investigation.

Δόξα in classic Greek signifies opinion, report, reputation, honour; but having been employed in the Septuagint to represent more frequently the Hebrew word כָּבוֹד, it has acquired in Hellenistic Greek the same extent of signification, denoting, like that word, magnificence, splendour, glory, the pillar of fire and cloud in which Jehovah displayed His presence. And accordingly, *ἡ δόξα τοῦ Θεοῦ* denotes the majesty of God, His infinite perfections, His glorious attributes. *Ἀπαύγασμα* signifies effulgence, radiation of splendour; and the two words, therefore, as joined together by the apostle, express the idea of the effulgence of the divine glory. In such a connection *ἀπαύγασμα* is plainly tropical, and it is necessary to investigate the proper idea which it is employed to express. But the word does not occur in any other part of the New Testament, nor throughout the whole of the translation of the Old Testament. It occurs, however, once in the apocryphal books, which, though of no authority in settling doctrines, are yet as valuable as any other human compositions for showing the sense in which Greek words were employed anciently among the Jews. In the Wisd. of Solomon (vii. 26), the following description is given of wisdom: *ἀπαύγασμα γάρ ἐστι*

φωτὸς ἀϊδίου, καὶ ἔσοπτρον ἀκηλίδωτον τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐνεργείας, καὶ εἰκὼν τῆς ἀγαθότητος αὐτοῦ—effulgence of eternal light, spotless mirror of God's power, and image of His goodness. And Philo, using the word ἀπαύγασμα, in comparing two objects together, subjoins the explanation μίμημα ἀρχετύπου—representation of an archetype. Undoubtedly, then, the idea conveyed by ἀπαύγασμα is representation, clear and perfect exhibition; and as the Son is a person, and not merely a quality, we are plainly taught the doctrine that the divine glory is perfectly displayed in Him. The majesty of God, His boundless perfections, His glorious attributes, exist in the Son, without the slightest obscuration of their splendour. As the image thrown to the eye from a clear and spotless mirror exactly corresponds in every lineament to the object which it represents, so the divine perfections of the Son are the exact counterpart of the glory and majesty that belong to the Father. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God is seen in the face of Jesus Christ. Ezek. i. 26–28.

The other part of the description is similar in its nature, and equally instructive: χαρακτὴρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ. Ὑπόστασις denotes primarily foundation, that upon which something is built; and secondarily, substance or essence, the substratum in which qualities inhere. Undoubtedly it is in this last sense that it is used in the passage before us, and where it must be viewed as denoting the essence of the divine nature, the very substance or being of God, God Himself, the centre and basis of all those glorious perfections which characterize the eternal. Χαρακτήρ, from χαράσσω, *insculpo*, denotes the impression or figure that is left by a seal upon any object fitted to receive it, and metaphorically any resemblance that is complete. When Christ therefore is styled χαρακτὴρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως τοῦ Θεοῦ, it is impossible to attach to the words any other idea, than that He is the perfect likeness of God, the image of the divine substance, identically the same in essence with the Father. The declaration of our text is well illustrated by two passages in Colossians, of which the one (i. 15) styles Christ εἰκὼν τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου—the image of the invisible God; and the other (ii. 9) declares, ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ κατοικεῖ πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς θεότητος σωματικῶς—that in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the

Godhead, of the divine nature, bodily, substantially, really. As the glorious perfections of the Father are displayed with all their brightness in the Son, so the very essence of the divine nature exists in Him unchanged in its absolute perfection. Ὁ χαρακτὴρ, says Chrysostom, τὸ ἀπαράλλακτον δηλοῖ (absence of diversity from that of which it is the impression), οὔκ ἐστι χαρακτὴρ, τὸ ὅμοιον (resemblance), κατὰ πάντα (xii. 23, D.). Ὥσπερ ἔστιν ὁ πατὴρ ἐνυπόστατος (exists personally), καὶ πρὸς ὑπόστασιν οὐδένος δεόμενος· οὕτω καὶ ὁ υἱός. Ἐνταῦθα γὰρ τὸ ἀπαράλλακτον δείκνυς τοῦτό φησι καὶ πρὸς τὸν ἰδιάζοντα χαρακτῆρα τοῦ πρωτοτύπου παραπέμπων σε, καὶ διδάσκων ὡς ἐν ὑποστάσει ἔστι (exists personally), καθ' ἑαυτόν (by himself), (xii. 19, B.). Mark, then, the conclusion to which we are brought. The Scriptures undoubtedly teach, that there is only one divine essence—boundless, infinite, undivided. However incomprehensible, therefore, the subject may be, and far removed beyond the grasp of human intellect, we must hold, on the one hand, that the essence of God and the essence of Christ are not specifically, but generically, the same—identical—one; and yet, on the other hand, that in this undivided and boundless essence there is a distinction of personality; for otherwise there would be no place at all for the comparisons of the apostle. These comparisons *imply* personal diversity, but *prove* essential unity. Distinction of persons, unity of essence in the Godhead, is the doctrine of Scripture.

Mr. Stuart has raised some very needless speculations upon these two clauses, whether they refer to the divine nature of Christ; but certainly the difficulty is to see how they can be regarded as referring to anything else. Do not, however, misunderstand me. Mr. Stuart does not mean to deny that they prove the divine nature of Christ, but only to affirm that, as descriptions of Him, they are derived from the fact of His incarnation. Now certainly it was the incarnation which made us acquainted with the glory of Christ and the glory of the Father; but it was not the incarnation which gave to Christ the power of displaying that glory, or imparted to Him the perfect resemblance to God which the text describes. That power, that resemblance, existed from all eternity. And though the Son of God had never appeared in our world at all, He might have

been known to the angels as the brightness of His Father's glory, and the express image of His person; and though neither men nor angels had ever existed, His relation of perfect resemblance to the Father would have been the same. Does the sun of our lower heavens cease to shine when we shut our eyes? Yea, might he not shine as brightly though the whole human race were buried in the dust? The removal of a cloud, that for a brief time may have covered his face, reveals him to our delighted view; but he shone all the while above that cloud with the full splendour of his rays: so the incarnation of Christ removed the veil that hid His glory from our view; but that glory was equally resplendent, and shone as the glory of God, before human eye beheld its brightness.

Now Mr. Stuart's notion derives any show of plausibility that it has entirely from the first of the two clauses, the *ἀπαύγασμα*, the shining, the radiance, which might be inconsiderately supposed to derive its origin from the fact that the rays of heaven's glory shot down to this world when Jesus came. But if the view be untenable, as I have endeavoured to show, even when applied to the first phrase, it is utterly preposterous to name it in connection with the second; for it, carrying back our minds to the very substance, the very essence of God, utterly refuses to acknowledge as its source any event, however illustrious, that happened in time. I ask you to try if you can form, by any effort of imagination, the conception of a reason that would warrant Christ to be styled the express image of God, the counterpart of Himself, the exact image of His substance, as Mr. Stuart himself translates the phrase; which reason would not remain equally valid, though you were to go back into the remotest depths of eternity. The incarnation could not be the reason why Christ is described, in the sublime language of our text, to be *χαρακτὴρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως τοῦ Θεοῦ*. Is it said that an impression exists to be seen, and to display the nature of the object which it resembles? But that is irrelevant. Christ certainly does display to us the image of God; but the real question is, Was that image first stamped upon Him when He came to this world? Preposterous, monstrous—a created God! No; the exact resemblance of Christ to His Father could not be a fact, without being an eternal fact; and the description of

that resemblance is totally independent of the incarnation, and would have been equally just and appropriate though no incarnation had ever taken place.

The apostle has now declared that Christ is the sovereign Lord of the universe, the Creator of all things; that He is invested with the same attributes and possesses the same nature as God the Father; and he adds a clause which ascribes to Him the preservation of all things: *φέρων τε τὰ πάντα τῷ ῥήματι τῆς δύναμεως αὐτοῦ.* The meaning of this clause is abundantly clear. The *τὰ πάντα* plainly correspond to the *τοὺς αἰῶνας* which He made, the *τὰ πάντα* which John says were created by Him. *Φέρων* signifies bearing, upholding, preserving; and Schleusner well illustrates its meaning, by referring to the use of the corresponding Hebrew word in Isa. lxiii. 9, where it is said that God bare His people, and carried them all the days of old. It is the idea of preservation, plainly, that is conveyed in our text—the same as in Col. i. 16, "By Him all things do consist," or stand together. Chrysostom's remark on *φέρων* is worthy of attention: *Φέρων τε γάρ, φησί, τὰ πάντα, τουτέστι, κυβερνῶν, τὰ διαπίπτοντα* (fall to pieces), *συγκρατῶν* (holden together). *Τοῦ γὰρ ποιῆσαι τὸν κόσμον οὐχ ἧττόν ἐστι τὸ συγκρατεῖν, ἀλλ', εἰ δεῖ τι καὶ θαυμαστὸν εἰπεῖν, καὶ μείζον. Τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων ἐστί τι παράγειν· τὸ δέ, τὰ γεγονότα εἰς τὸ μὴ εἶναι μέλλοντα ἀναχωρεῖν, συνέχειν τε καὶ συνάπτειν πρὸς ἄλληλα διαστασιάζοντα, τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ μέγα καὶ θαυμαστὸν καὶ πολλῆς δυνάμεως τεκμήριον* (Chrys. xii. 25, A.). The preservation of the universe, indeed, requires the continual exercise of the very same power which first brought it into being; and if the sustaining arm of Christ were for one moment withdrawn, the innumerable suns and systems which people space would crumble into dust, and return to the nothing from which they sprang.

And does Christ labour under the magnitude of the task which thus momently devolves upon Him? Is it almost too much for His power? No; the passage conveys the idea that it is done without effort. He upholds all things, *τῷ ῥήματι τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ*, by the word of His power, or by His powerful word,—a form of speech very common in Hebrew, and thence borrowed by the writers of the New Testament, but

denoting simply, powerful word. He speaks, and it is done: He commands, and all things stand fast.

You will observe that the pronoun has the *spiritus asper*, *αὑτοῦ*, and refers therefore to Christ Himself. The Socinians remove the aspirate, and read *αὐτοῦ*, understanding the phrase to mean, by the powerful word of Him, viz. the Father. But all existing manuscripts have the *spiritus;* and though it be a debated point whether marks of this kind existed in primitive times, yet it is clear from the ancient versions, and from the comments of the fathers, that the reading of the text which they employed was *αὑτοῦ*, in whatever manner you suppose the *spiritus* to have been indicated. Chrysostom, for example, turning this passage against the Arians, who were always saying, "The Father commands, the Son obeys," exclaims, *Ἀλλ' ἰδοῦ καὶ ἐνταῦθα ῥήματι αὐτὸς ποιεῖ*—but behold here the Son also works by His word! clearly showing that *αὑτοῦ* must have been the reading his manuscript exhibited to him.

These five clauses following the word *υἱὸν* furnish as powerful a demonstration of the divinity of Christ as could well be conceived; and it is certainly surprising that any person, after calmly reading them, can deny that this is the doctrine which they teach. The utmost violence must be done to the passage before it can be made to speak a different language; and it would certainly be better to reject the Scriptures at once, than to pretend to own their authority, and at the same time to bend all their statements into conformity with your own notions.

You will observe that these clauses are introduced by the apostle as descriptions of the native dignity of Christ, by whom he had said, that God was in these last days speaking unto the world; and now, therefore, he proceeds to describe what the Saviour did as the messenger of God to man: *δι' ἑαυτοῦ καθαρισμὸν ποιησάμενος τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν, ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τῆς μεγαλωσύνης ἐν ὑψηλοῖς.*

Καθαρισμὸς does not denote, either in the New Testament or in the Septuagint, that internal cleansing which we denominate sanctification. It is most generally employed to signify the ceremonial purifications connected with the law of Moses—the expiations of guilt that were made by the blood of slain beasts; and by a natural step from this sense it is applied to the

expiation or atonement that was made by Christ, which undoubtedly is its meaning in the passage before us. The purification of the believer from moral defilement is never completed till death, nor will the purification of the church as a whole be completed till the end of time; but the *καθαρισμὸς* mentioned by Paul was completed in His own person by the Son of God, before He ascended to heaven. *Καθαρισμὸς* therefore here means expiation. And the apostle tells us that this expiation was made *δι' ἑαυτοῦ*, which undoubtedly means by Himself dying as the sacrifice for sin. The manner in which He made expiation is fully stated by the apostle in ix. 26: "But now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin, *διὰ τῆς θυσίας αὐτοῦ*, by the sacrifice of Himself," which is just the apostle's own explanation of what he means by *δι' ἑαυτοῦ* in our text.

When the Saviour had thus made expiation for sin by His own death, the apostle tells us that He *ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τῆς μεγαλωσύνης ἐν ὑψηλοῖς*. The right hand has ever been esteemed the post of honour; and the phrase, to sit on one's right hand, has thus come tropically to denote elevation to honour and dignity. The language of the apostle is closely similar to the language of Ps. cx., of which indeed it records the fulfilment: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on my right hand, until I make Thy foes Thy footstool;" and it is plain that the application of this language to Christ imports not merely honour and dignity, but the participation of supreme dominion. For the apostle, in 1 Cor. xv. 25, quoting this very passage from the book of Psalms, to illustrate the extent of the Saviour's power, says, *δεῖ γὰρ αὐτὸν βασιλεύειν*—until He have put all enemies under His feet; where it is manifest that sitting at the right hand of God is explained to mean *βασιλεύειν*, which imports the exercise of supreme authority. This elevation of Christ to the seat of sovereign power undoubtedly refers to what has been styled the mediatorial kingdom, as distinguished from the power that belonged to Him from eternity; for it is described as having resulted out of His expiatory sacrifice: having made expiation, He sat down. The connection between the sacrificial work of Christ and His elevation to the mediatorial throne is most explicitly stated in Phil. ii. 7: "He made Him-

self of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth."

Μεγαλωσύνη occurs only three times in the New Testament, and it is always applied to God. In the Septuagint it answers to the Hebrew word גְּדֻלָּה, which signifies majesty; and it is most frequently employed to denote the majesty of God; and when it is applied to men, it is only used where kingly authority is described. It plainly, therefore, answers to our English word majesty, and appropriately signifies supreme authority and power. *Ὑψηλοῖς* is an adjective, to which *οὐρανοῖς* must be understood; and *μεγαλωσύνη ἐν ὑψηλοῖς*, the majesty in the highest heavens, denotes, of course, the supreme authority of the universe.

The apostle proceeds: *τοσούτῳ κρείττων γενόμενος τῶν ἀγγέλων, ὅσῳ διαφορώτερον παρ' αὐτοὺς κεκληρονόμηκεν ὄνομα.* This fourth verse is plainly a member of the foregoing sentence, its leading verb being merely a participle. It hangs upon the third verse, and has respect to the Saviour's session at the right hand of the Majesty on high. He hath ascended to the seat of sovereign power, and by that elevation hath manifestly been made *κρείττων τῶν ἀγγέλων*, greater than the angels, immeasurably superior in authority and influence. *Κρείττων* is rendered "better" in our version, which is not a happy translation; for the apostle clearly refers to the power with which the Mediator is invested; and this is indeed the idea which the word is best fitted to express, for it is derived from *κράτος*, power, strength.

And why does the apostle, in the very act of placing Christ upon the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, glance aside to the angels that are bending prostrate before Him, and make a formal comparison between them? It is to meet a favourite objection of the Jews. Their law, Stephen tells us, had been given by the disposition of angels: "the law," says Paul, "was

ordained by angels in the hands of a Mediator:" "the chariots of God," says the Psalmist, "are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as *in Sinai*, in the holy place" (Ps. lxviii. 17). Now the Jews prided themselves greatly on the fact, that thousands of angels had been employed in the establishment of their law; and on this ground, among others, they cherished towards it the strongest attachment, and even went the length of supposing, that given as it had been by the ministration of beings so glorious, it should never in this world be abrogated, nor give place to another. Paul does not deny their premises, but he assails their conclusion. Having followed Christ from the work of expiation to the throne of power on which He has been placed, he turns round upon the Jews, and assures them, that He by whom the new dispensation was introduced and still superintended, was immeasurably superior in authority and power to all the angels; and whatever glory, therefore, the old dispensation might have acquired from the ministration of angels, a vastly superior glory could the new dispensation challenge from the administration of her mediatorial King.

And the apostle not only states the superior power and authority of the Saviour, as compared with the angels, but he also supplies a measure whereby the Jews might form some idea of the vast extent of the Saviour's superiority. He is by so much superior in power, by how much *διαφορώτερον παρ' αὐτοὺς κεκληρονόμηκεν ὄνομα.*

This comparison is the key to the remaining part of the chapter: it is to illustrate it that all the following passages from the Old Testament are quoted; and according to the view which we form of it, must be our decision of several important questions. It has been much disputed whether the word *ὄνομα* bears here its simple sense of name, or the tropical sense of fame, character, excellence. The word is often employed, like our own English name, in both these senses; and so far as evidence external to the passage itself is concerned, it would be quite consistent with Greek usage to give it either the sense of renown or the sense of name. It is the scope of the passage, therefore, which must determine which sense is here the true one. Now it has been argued, in defence of the simple sense of *name*, that the following verse, which is adduced as an illustra-

tion of the apostle's statement, does actually contain one of the names of Christ, viz. Son of God; and that we ought therefore undoubtedly to conclude, both that he meant name in the fourth verse, and that this is the name referred to produced as an evidence of Christ's superiority (a more excellent name, certainly, than any that was ever given to angel). But it is a sufficient reply to this argument, that all the other quotations, to the end of the chapter, as well as the fifth verse, are adduced as evidence of the concluding statement of the fourth; and the greater part of the passages quoted have no reference to any name of Christ, but describe, some of them the worship due to Him, and some the creative energy by which He produced the world. A sense, therefore, must be given to *ὄνομα* such as will comport with the spirit of all the passages quoted from the Old Testament to illustrate it; and such a sense we find in the tropical one of renown, dignity, excellence. This sense fits the fifth verse, and also all the rest; whereas the sense of name fits only the fifth verse, and none of the rest. The statement is, Christ hath *διαφορώτερον ὄνομα*: if *ὄνομα* means name, the fifth verse alone proves the point, and the rest are foreign to the subject: if *ὄνομα* means renown, excellence, then all the passages adduced are pointed illustrations of the position laid down.

But it may be alleged, on the other hand, that though, by giving a tropical sense to *ὄνομα*, you certainly do harmonize the concluding statement of the fourth verse with all the subsequent illustrations of it; yet the harmony is gained at the expense of introducing disorder among the several parts of the fourth verse itself, viewed as a whole. The point of it (say they) is destroyed: you make it an identical proposition: you make the apostle say that Christ has been made so much more glorious and powerful than the angels, as He hath obtained higher glory and renown. Now I have placed this objection in the most plausible shape, that you may see its full force; but I have no hesitation in pronouncing it invalid. For observe that *κρείττων γενόμενος*, the first clause of the verse, connected as it is participially with *ἐκάθισεν*, which describes Christ's session at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, unquestionably refers to the authority and power with which as Mediator God-man He is invested;

but *διαφορώτερον ὄνομα* does not refer to the same event, but rather to the antecedent character of Christ, to the qualities which fitted Him for being raised to that seat of power. And the statement of the apostle is, that some conception of the greatness of the power which the head of the new dispensation wields may be formed from a consideration of all the qualities which the Son of God had long before been renowned or celebrated by the ancient prophets as possessing. The apostle is looking to the Jews. You talk of the power and authority of the angels: you have only to look to the accounts given in your own sacred writings of the promised Deliverer, to be able to form some idea of the unparalleled majesty of our mediatorial King. As much as the accounts given of the person of the Messiah, of what He is in Himself, are more wonderful than what was ever said of the angels; as much as the general *ὄνομα*, the general character ascribed to Him in the Old Testament, is superior to the renown of angels, so much, be assured, is the actual power with which our anointed King is now invested as Mediator, superior to any power that ever belonged to angels. And for a clear proof that the *διαφορώτερον ὄνομα* does not refer directly to the mediatorial dignity, but rather to the antecedent qualities which fitted Christ for that dignity, you have only to cast your eyes down the chapter, and observe the general character of the quotations that are adduced in its illustration. One of them, for example, is that Christ laid the foundations of the earth, and that the heavens are the workmanship of His hands, which no person will say was a work that belonged to the mediatorial office of Christ the Redeemer.

This *διαφορώτερον ὄνομα*, the apostle tells us, Christ *κεκληρονόμηκεν*; which our version renders, "hath by inheritance obtained." I have already shown you that the idea of inheritance is only a secondary sense of *κληρονομέω*, and that its primary and most frequent signification is "acquire," or simply hold in possession, as Lord and Master, which undoubtedly is its meaning here. The verb is in the perfect tense; and it is of importance that you should remember the precise use of this tense. It differs widely from the imperfect or the aorist: it always, in fact, has respect to the present time; it denotes a present and permanent state, which has resulted out of something that is

now quite past: it is, in fact, just a present tense, but it describes something that shoots back indefinitely far into the past. "My son," says the centurion to our Lord (Matt. viii. 6), "*βέβληται ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ παραλυτικός, δεινῶς βασανιζόμενος*"—lies at home, hath been struck, and therefore now lies. So Acts xxvi. 6, *ἕστηκα*. The full force, therefore, of *κεκληρονόμηκεν* is—hath securely in his possession. The *διαφορώτερον ὄνομα* belongs to Him, says the apostle; but His possession of it is not a thing of yesterday, as the writings of Moses and the prophets testify.

There is one grammatical peculiarity in this verse which is worthy of your notice. *Διαφορώτερον παρ' αὐτοὺς* is a very unusual phrase: it is a double comparative, combining in one both the Greek and the Hebrew mode at once. The classic comparative would be *διαφορώτερον ὀνόματος αὐτῶν*, the Hebrew form by itself would be *διάφορον παρ' αὐτῶν*; but this mingles the two together. Both forms are of frequent occurrence throughout the New Testament, but it is only in the Epistle to the Hebrews where they are amalgamated in this manner; and there are only other two instances besides the one before us, viz. ix. 23, xi. 4.

Now, before we proceed to consider the apostle's argument as pursued to the end of the chapter, I would have you form a clear idea of what it is he is going to prove or illustrate. Is it the greatness of the mediatorial authority? No, it is not; at least not directly. That is indeed the ultimate object of the argument; but, in order to reach that point, he takes an intermediate step: he employs a medium of proof which contemplates the original dignity of Christ, and it is that medium of proof which is itself the subject of illustration to the end of the chapter. *Κρείττων γενόμενος* refers to the greatness of the mediatorial power; but *διαφορώτερον ὄνομα*, the medium of proof, does not of course mean the same thing: it refers to the antecedent character of Christ—to all, in short, that had ever been said or named or celebrated by prophets concerning Him. Now it is this subordinate position—I do not mean subordinate in respect of intrinsic importance, but subordinate in respect of its position in the argument—which alone the apostle illustrates to the end of the chapter; and when he has succeeded in propping up this, of course the other which he had laid upon it

stands secure. This complexity in the structure of the apostle's argument is sometimes overlooked; and the consequence is, that confused ideas are formed of many of his statements, and their true bearing upon his argument is not seen. It is in consequence of such misapprehension, for example, that Mr. Stuart derives from the following verse an argument to prove that the title Son of God is not descriptive of Christ's original dignity, but is derived from His mediatorial office: "for," says Mr. Stuart, "the apostle is discoursing of His mediatorial authority and power consequent upon His finished atonement;" and he draws an argument from the title Son of God, which must therefore be a mediatorial designation. True, the apostle is discoursing of the authority and dignity of the mediatorial office; but then he is drawing arguments from the antecedent dignity of the person who is invested with it, and that antecedent dignity goes back into the remotest depths of eternity.

The first illustration which the apostle brings forward of the διαφορώτερον ὄνομα which belongs to Christ, is taken from the second Psalm: τίνι γὰρ εἶπέν ποτε τῶν ἀγγέλων· υἱός μου εἶ συ, ἐγὼ σήμερον γεγέννηκά σε; I may simply remark in reference to the second Psalm, that it is impossible to read the splendid description it contains of the King who sits on the holy hill of Zion, to whom the heathen are given for inheritance, and whom kings and judges are exhorted to serve, without feeling persuaded that it is descriptive of a greater than David himself, even David's Lord, of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did all speak. And indeed the Jews universally agreed in referring it to their expected Messiah; so that the apostle's argument, resting upon principles which they acknowledged, was calculated to produce its full effect upon their minds.

The import of the term υἱὸς in this passage has been the subject of much discussion. Two opinions have been entertained respecting the relation which it describes as subsisting between God and Christ; some viewing it as the appropriate title of His divine nature, and others regarding it as an official designation, like the terms Christ and Messiah. The question between these two parties is not whether Christ be a divine person; that is acknowledged by both: but the question is, whether the title Son of God was applicable to Him altogether

irrespectively of His mission to this world, or whether it took its rise, like some of His other names, from events that happened during His stay upon earth. Is it a natural or an official title? Mr. Stuart at once boldly decides that it is a designation of office: for, says he, the apostle is here describing the mediatorial office of Christ; and surely the passages quoted in illustration of its dignity must be understood as having an especial reference to it. If Christ's official superiority be proved by His being called the Son of God, that title must be one of office. The edge of this argument has been already sufficiently blunted; and if more needs to be said on this point, I here only add, that since all the passages quoted by the apostle to the end of the chapter are illustrations of the very same point, whatever connected with the general nature of the argument warrants you to conclude respecting any one of the passages, that it must be exclusively official in its complexion, will equally demonstrate the same with respect to all the rest. But one of them runs thus: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." Mr. Stuart indeed allows, in accordance with his general view of the apostle's argument, that even the term God in this verse must be understood as an official designation of Christ. The unsoundness both of this conclusion, and of the other respecting the word Son, is completely demonstrated by the last quotation in the tenth verse: "And Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thine hands: they shall perish, but Thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail." No one certainly will maintain that the original creation of the universe was a work which Christ performed in His mediatorial capacity. The conclusion, therefore, does not hold, that every work and every title quoted by the apostle in illustration of the Saviour's mediatorial dignity, must necessarily be viewed as having originated in that dignity. They may have been antecedent to it, and many of them were. Let it be observed, however, that this consideration only shows Mr. Stuart's argument for the official origin of the term Son of God to be invalid, but does not of itself establish the opposite conclusion. For it is equally suitable, as has been

shown, to the apostle's purpose, to quote any passages that are descriptive of Christ's glory, whether they relate to His native dignity or to His official elevation. It must be settled, therefore, on other grounds, whether the designation Son of God be a title of office or a title of nature.

The argument in defence of the official origin of this designation of Christ is founded upon the fact, that in various passages of Scripture it is specially connected with events in His mediatorial career. In Luke, for example (i. 35), we are informed that the angel said to Mary, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Now, here we are told that the designation was given to Christ on account of His miraculous conception; and therefore it is argued that it must be a title specially connected with His Messiahship. Again, we are reminded that, in Acts xiii. 32, 33, there is a passage which explains it as originating in the resurrection of Christ: "We declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that He hath raised up Jesus again, as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee." And again, it is argued that, in Heb. v. 5, the Saviour's installation into the office of the priesthood is given as the reason of His being named the Son of God: "So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made an high priest; but He that said unto Him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten Thee." And the inference is therefore drawn from the whole, that the designation is to be viewed as descriptive not of Christ's original dignity, but of His official station.

This conclusion, however, does not by any means hold good. Indeed, the very opposite inference seems to me most naturally to flow from the premises. The very fact that the Sonship of Christ is connected with several different events considerably separated from one another, at once suggests the idea that these different events are to be regarded rather as declaratory of whatever the Sonship is, than as giving origin to it. For if it was by the miraculous conception that Christ was made the Son of God, then it could not be also by His resurrection; nor

could it be by His ascension, nor by His installation into the priesthood. Sonship is not progressive in its nature: a man of twenty years is neither more nor less his father's son than he was when he was born. If Christ, then, was made the Son of God by His miraculous conception, He never needed to be made the Son of God at any subsequent period. But He might be declared to be the Son of God by any number of events. Does not this consideration then give great weight to the supposition, that it was neither by the miraculous conception, nor yet by the resurrection, nor yet by the ascension, nor yet by the installation into the priesthood, that Christ was constituted the Son of God; but that by all these events He was declared or shown to stand in this relation to the Supreme Being? And this view of the subject is completely established by the fact that Paul, in Rom. i. 4, gives the very explanation which has now been indicated of the connection between Christ's resurrection and Sonship: "He was declared (ὁρισθέντος υἱοῦ Θεοῦ) to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." And, indeed, it is plain from the facts of the case, that it could only be the declaration, and not the constitution, of the Saviour's Sonship which took place at His resurrection; for He bore the title of the Son of God long before. Did not the voice from heaven both at His baptism and at His transfiguration say, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him?" Now, let it be noted that the passage already quoted from the Acts of the Apostles connects as strongly and definitely the Sonship of Christ with His resurrection, as others connect it with His miraculous conception and installation into the office of the priesthood; and therefore we are justified in regarding them all as merely adducing these several events in proof or illustration of a previously existing relationship. And what could that relationship be but the relationship of Christ as a divine person to God the Father? And this view of the subject is confirmed by that large class of passages which speak of God's sending His Son into the world: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish" (John iii. 16); "God sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John iv. 9); "the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom

of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John i. 18); which all imply that Christ was the Son of God before He came to this world, and by no means quadrate with the supposition that He was made the Son of God by coming. The very terms, too, son and father, suggest the idea of a natural, and not of an official relationship; and it is plain that the Jews understood them in this sense: for when Christ said, "I and my Father are one," they took up stones to stone Him for blasphemy, "because," say they, "that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." And it is plain, too, that Christ Himself understood them in this sense; for, proceeding to reprehend the Jews—not, be it observed, for saying He made Himself God, but for charging Him with blasphemy—He says, "Say ye, Thou blasphemest, because I said I am the Son of God?" Now it is worthy of notice that these were not the exact words which He had used before: what He had said was this, "I and my Father are one;" whence it is clear to demonstration that He understood the phrase the Son of God as descriptive of that relation, in virtue of which He was one with the Father, and in virtue of which He was truly and properly God. To be one with the Father, to be God, to be the Son of God, are used by Christ Himself as convertible phrases in this passage (John x. 30-36). It admits, therefore, of no reasonable doubt, that when Christ is styled the Son of God, it is not on account of any event connected with His Messiahship, but on account of the natural and original relation in which as God He stood to God the Father, and stood of course from all eternity.

And if this be the meaning of the phrase Son of God, as applied to Christ, why, it will be asked, does the Father say, Thou art my Son, *σήμερον γεγέννηκά σε*, this day have I begotten Thee? Augustine affirms that *σήμερον*, when applied to God, must mean from eternity, on the same principle, apparently, as the schoolmen style the duration of God an eternal now; but Calvin very justly observes, that such a use of the word is wholly unprecedented. Neither *σήμερον*, nor the Hebrew הַיּוֹם, of which it is here the translation, ever bears this sense, but always refers to some definite period, as to-day, now, at this time. There is not, however, any real difficulty connected with *σήμερον*; for the already quoted comment of Paul upon

the resurrection of Christ, to which this same verse of the second Psalm is applied in the Acts of the Apostles, suggests the true explanation, and leads us to regard *σήμερον* as referring not to the constitution of Christ's Sonship, but to the time of its announcement. Paul, in a discourse delivered at Antioch, says that these words of the second Psalm, *ἐγὼ σήμερον γεγέννηκά σε*, were fulfilled when Christ rose from the dead; but the same Paul says, in Rom. i. 4, that Christ was declared to be the Son of God when He rose from the dead; and we know that Christ styled Himself the Son of God before He died at all. Who then can doubt that these words, *σήμερον γεγέννηκά σε*, mean, I this day declare myself Thy father? Rosenmüller's version exactly expresses the true sense: tu es meus filius, nunc declaro me esse tuum patrem. And let it be remembered, that the words of our text are a translation from the Hebrew, in which it is by no means an uncommon idiom to use a verb in the sense of *declaring* the action or state which the verb literally denotes. Jeremiah, for example, as a prophet of the Lord, receives a commission to root out nations and kingdoms, and to pull down and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant,—undoubtedly meaning that he was commissioned to announce such catastrophes as impending upon the nations and kingdoms of the earth (Jer. i. 10). Another example of the same idiom I may adduce from the book of Leviticus (xiii. 3, 8), where the verb טָמֵא, to be unclean, to make unclean, is frequently used in the sense of pronouncing unclean: the priest shall look upon him וְטִמְּא אֹתוֹ, and pronounce him unclean.

The other quotation, which is contained in the fifth verse of our text, *καὶ πάλιν· ἐγὼ ἔσομαι αὐτῷ εἰς πατέρα, καὶ αὐτὸς ἔσται μοι εἰς υἱόν*, is taken from 2 Sam. vii. 14 or 1 Cor. xvii. 13. It corresponds, word for word, to the Septuagint version; and the Septuagint is a most exact and literal interpretation of the Hebrew. Here, therefore, we have, in the apostle's language, an unquestionable case of Hebraism in construction. The classic Greek would be, *ἐγὼ ἔσομαι αὐτοῦ πατήρ*, or *αὐτῷ πατὴρ καὶ αὐτὸς ἔσται μου υἱός*, or *μοῖ υἱός*.

This quotation from Samuel has been the subject of much discussion. The passage in which it occurs is the record of the message which the Lord sent by Nathan the prophet to David,

when that monarch, triumphant over all his enemies, had formed the design of building a temple for the services of religion. God approved of his pious resolution, but was pleased to intimate to him, that the task of erecting the building should be left to his son, whose reign would be one of peace and prosperity, and better fitted for so great an undertaking. "And when thy days," etc. (2 Sam. vii. 12–19).

Some have supposed that this passage refers exclusively to Solomon, the immediate successor of David, who, in accordance with the intimation here given by the Almighty, built, after his father's death, the famous temple of Jerusalem, for the reception of the ark. But there are some circumstances in the passage, and there are allusions to it made by other prophets, which clearly show that it contemplated also the more remote and more illustrious descendant of David—the great Messiah. Not only is it declared that David's house should be invested with dominion for ever, which certainly was not the case with their temporal sovereignty of Palestine; but it is also said in the record of this same divine message, contained in 1 Chron. xvii. 14, that one of his descendants should reign for ever: "I will be His Father, and He shall be my Son: I will settle Him in mine house and in my kingdom for ever; and His throne shall be established for evermore," which certainly did not receive its fulfilment in the duration of Solomon's reign. There is a passage, too, in Jeremiah (xxxiii. 15), where the prophet, predicting the appearance of the Lord our righteousness, the Branch of righteousness that was to grow up unto David, confirms the certainty of His advent, by appealing to the promise which God gave to David of an enduring kingdom; "for thus saith the Lord, David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel." Besides, there is a clause in the reply which David made to the message Nathan brought him, of which no consistent explanation can be given, if you suppose that no reference is made in the whole passage to the Messiah. This clause runs thus in 2 Sam. vii. 19, "Thou hast spoken also of Thy servant's house for a great while to come,"—וְזֹאת תּוֹרַת הָאָדָם אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה, rendered in our version with very little propriety, "And is this the manner of man, O Lord God?" And the same clause occurs in a slightly different form in 1 Chron.

xvii. 16, 17: "Thou hast also spoken of Thy servant's house for a great while to come,"—וַתַּרְאֵנִי כְּתוֹר הָאָדָם הַמַּעֲלָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים, rendered in our version, with even less propriety than the preceding, "And hast regarded me according to the estate of a man of high degree, O Lord God." In fact, there are scarcely any two verses in the whole Bible that have occasioned more perplexity to interpreters than these, or have been translated and explained in more different and inconsistent ways. But when they are viewed according to the plan first proposed by Cocceius, as referring directly to the Messiah, and translated quite literally, they yield a sense beautifully harmonizing with the whole scope of the prophecy: "Thou hast spoken also," etc.; וְזֹאת, "and this is the law of the Adam," or of the already spoken-of man, "O Lord Jehovah;" where, you observe, David first speaks of the vast duration of the promised kingdom, and then, by implication, contrasts its law, or characteristic, or principle in this respect, with the transitory nature of other dominions: A great while to come, for ever—this, viz. permanency, is the law or characteristic of the man, the man promised. The other clause is still more striking: "Thou hast spoken also," etc.; וַתַּרְאֵנִי, "and Thou hast regarded me according to the order of the man from on high," or the man pre-eminent; where David is expressing his gratitude to God that he should be honoured to stand in connection with the illustrious Adam from above, and have given him the honour coveted by all Israel, of being the stock from which the great Messiah should spring. "All human affairs are subjected to the changes of fortune. Nothing is permanent: at least reigning families are not. Not one of those which now occupy any of the thrones of Europe (and the European thrones have been for the most part more regular and stable than any other) is a thousand years old. It is plainly, therefore, contrary to the course of all human affairs, that to the family of David an everlasting throne should be promised. In fact, it was not to be brought to pass in the ordinary course of things, but was to be accomplished in that Everlasting King who is celebrated in the 72d and the 110th Psalms."[1]

It is abundantly clear, therefore, that Nathan's message to David was designed to give intimations of the great King whom

[1] Michaelis, *Anmerk. üb.* 2 Sam. vii. 19.

God was to set upon the holy hill of Zion; and when Paul employed a part of it to illustrate the glory of the Messiah's reign, the Jews would allow the justice of the application which he made. The apostle was too good a logician to reason with men upon any other principles than those which they themselves allowed. But though it were less clear, from the nature of the prophecy itself, than it is, that it refers to the Christ, Paul's authority would be sufficient for us to show that it must have this application. Still, it is only in so far as its designed reference to the Messiah can be shown on grounds antecedent to the quotation of it in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that its force as an argument fitted to convince the Jews can be appreciated.

You are not to suppose, however, that Nathan's message from God had no reference at all to Solomon, the immediate successor of David. It plainly mentions the building of the illustrious temple of Jerusalem, as a work which David's son was to execute; and it also describes the greater permanency of Solomon's royal house, as compared with the house of Saul. Solomon accordingly, at the dedication of the temple, blessed God that He had fulfilled the promise given to his father David, that "a son who should come forth of his loins should build the house for God's name" (2 Chron. vi. 9). There is one clause, too, which is quite inapplicable to the Messiah: "If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men" (2 Sam. vii. 14); though it is proper to mention that a different translation has been proposed of this clause. The original, "For if he commit iniquity," is בְּהַעֲוֹתוֹ, of which the root is עָוָה, to bend; and the Hiphil therefore signifies to make crooked, to act crookedly, to do wrong. Now בְּהַעֲוֹתוֹ is the infinitive Hiphil, with the preposition ב and the pron. affix ו, and therefore signifies "in his acting wrong," or "when he does wrong." But if you disregard the Masoretic punctuation, the same consonants may be the infinitive Niphal, and may therefore well be translated, "in his being bent down," or "when he is bent down, I will chastise him with the rod of men;" in which sense they might be viewed as indicating, that during Christ's humiliation the hostile hands of men would be allowed to fall upon Him.

It is sufficiently clear, however, from what has been said, that Nathan's prophecy refers partly to Solomon and partly to Christ. And this intermixture of the predictions of different events, widely separated from each other in time, but connected together by some link of causation or some feature of resemblance, is quite in the manner of the prophets. Such events are often grouped together in one picture, for the sake of mutual illustration, but chiefly that the fulfilment of the earlier may furnish a pledge that the later, too, shall in due time receive their accomplishment. You have a striking instance of this in Isaiah's prophecy of the defeat of the combination formed against Ahab by the kings of Israel and Syria, in the very heart of which there is embodied the famous prediction, that a virgin should conceive and bring forth a son,—a glorious event, which, by the speedy triumph of Judah over Pekah and Rezin, was in all succeeding ages of the Jewish commonwealth rendered sure to the faithful.

The apostle adduces another passage from the Old Testament in illustration of the *διαφορώτερον ὄνομα*, the distinguished glory which has been attributed to Christ: *Ὅταν δὲ πάλιν εἰσαγάγῃ τὸν πρωτότοκον εἰς τὴν οἰκουμένην, λέγει· καὶ προσκυνησάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες ἄγγελοι Θεοῦ.* The position of the word *πάλιν* in this sentence has given rise to some discussion. It has been doubted whether it qualifies the verb *εἰσαγάγῃ*, so as to make it express the idea of a second introduction into the world, viz. by the resurrection; or whether it merely serves the purpose of indicating that the apostle is about to make a new citation. But there seems to be no good reason for supposing that it is used differently from the same word in the preceding verse, where it indicates another quotation. That it comes after *ὅταν δέ*, may be merely to vary the phraseology: *Ὅταν δὲ πάλιν*, And when again, to give another instance in another place. Rosenmüller and Storr, indeed, give it the sense of *ex adverso*, on the other hand, supposing that it marks a difference between the two quotations, as the former directly respected Christ, and the present directly respects the angels: "Let the angels worship Him." The simple sense of *again*, however, is preferable.

Πρωτότοκος literally signifies first-born, and it is applied in

this sense to the first-born of any family. It also came, in consequence of the privileges that were connected with primogeniture, to be used tropically in the sense of highly favoured, and invested with authority and power. When it is applied to Christ, it always carries with it the ideas of pre-eminence, dignity, or sovereignty. In some cases it seems to be applied to the Saviour, for the purpose of indicating that He was the first who rose from the dead, never more to die: ὁ πρωτότοκος ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν (Rev. i. 5); "the first-begotten from the dead, that in all things He might have the pre-eminence" (Col. i. 18). But there are other cases where it has plainly no connection with the resurrection from the dead, nor with aught that happened in this world, but where it seems to describe the original relation of Christ to the Father. In Col. i. 15 the Saviour is styled "the image of the invisible God," πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως, "the first-born of the whole creation," which the Socinians interpret, the first of created beings; but the reason immediately subjoined by the apostle is utterly at variance with such an idea. He is πρωτότοκος: for, says Paul, "By Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him." This reason has led some to imagine that πρωτότοκος must here bear an active signification, and denote first producer; and certainly there are cases in classic authors (Homer, *Il.* xvii. 5) where the word, differently accented (πρωτοτόκος), is applied to a mother who has produced offspring for the first time. But the great objection to an active sense is, that it makes the apostle assign a thing as the reason of itself: the statement becomes this: "He is the first producer of all things; for all things were at first produced by Him." Undoubtedly, therefore, πρωτότοκος here expresses the relation in which Christ stood to God the Father before the creation of the universe, and therefore implies what has not inaptly been styled the eternal generation of the Son. Abreschius, indeed, maintains that it is always descriptive of something mediatorial; but this is plainly a mistake. That it is sometimes so, is clear from the phrase πρωτότοκος ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν; but the reason given in Colossians for the application of it to Christ, viz. that He created all things, clearly

demonstrates that it belonged to Him independently of His mediatorial office, and antecedently even to the creation of the universe. It is, in fact, descriptive of the same relation as the phrase ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, and is analogous to the favourite and peculiar expression of John, ὁ μονογενὴς υἱός, the only-begotten Son of God, whose appropriate place is the bosom of the Father, and who, having come forth thence for a time, declared the Father unto us.

The introduction, mentioned in our text, of the eternal Son of God into the world, relates undoubtedly to His incarnation. God sent His Son into the world. Some, supposing that πάλιν qualifies εἰσαγάγῃ, have understood the apostle to refer to Christ's resurrection, or second introduction into the world. And so far as πρωτότοκον is concerned, this exegesis is not devoid of plausibility; for we have seen that this word is sometimes employed to describe the Saviour as the first-fruits of the resurrection. But the great objection to this view of the passage is, that it makes the apostle of set purpose exclude Christ from the homage of angels at His first appearance: he not only in this view mentions the resurrection as a period when Christ was worshipped, which he certainly might do as well as any other period; but he mentions it in such terms as unavoidably to carry back the mind to a former appearance of Christ, and you feel as if the studious selection of the second were a virtual denial that the statement applied to the first. But we know, that if angels attended the Saviour when He returned from His conquest of death and the grave, it is equally true that the adoring hosts of heaven thronged round the place of His birth; and as Emmanuel, God with us, He was the proper object of worship. Besides, as we have seen, πάλιν is most naturally viewed as serving the same purpose in this verse as in the preceding, where it indicates a new citation; and a new citation accordingly follows: καὶ προσκυνησάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες ἄγγελοι Θεοῦ.

This quotation has occasioned considerable controversy. Where is it taken from? The very words occur in the Septuagint, in Deut. xxxii. 43; but there is no corresponding clause in the Hebrew text, nor in any other of the ancient versions, and therefore the genuineness of the passage cannot

be admitted. The other passage from which the apostle has been supposed to quote is Ps. xcvii. 7, הִשְׁתַּחֲווּ לוֹ כָּל־אֱלֹהִים, rendered in our version, "Worship Him, all ye gods," and in the Septuagint, *προσκυνήσατε αὐτῷ πάντες ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ*, which, though slightly different in form, is the same in substance as the clause in Hebrews, and therefore in all probability the passage which the apostle had in view.

Some have doubted whether there be evidence in Ps. xcvii. itself that it was designed to describe the reign of the Messiah. But the doubt is unreasonable. The very first verse demonstrates its Messianic reference: "The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof." But the reign of God, irrespectively of the Messiah, is not to sinners a ground of rejoicing, but a just reason for alarm and dismay. Undoubtedly, therefore, the Lord here mentioned is the Messiah, whose reign brings glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good-will towards men. And it is of importance to observe, that the context in the psalm of the passage quoted, corresponds very accurately to the description which the apostle has given of the circumstances in which the command was issued to angels. Of the illustrious King celebrated by the Psalmist, the heavens are described as declaring His righteousness; and all the people are said to see His glory, referring doubtless to the manifestation of the Messiah in the fulness of time. And then this manifestation is described as calculated to put an end to the idolatry of the nations: "Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols." And then the command comes in, "Worship Him, all ye gods;" after which, the Lord having now come, the church is described as rejoicing in the glorious intelligence: "Zion heard, and was glad; and the daughters of Judah rejoiced because of Thy judgments, O Lord."

You will observe that the word translated *ἄγγελοι*, both by the LXX. and by Paul, is אֱלֹהִים. This word, though it generally signifies God, yet is sometimes employed in the sense of ruler, and in a very few cases it denotes angels. Calvin's observation on this use of this word in the psalm before us is exceedingly good: Sed minime dubium quin de angelis loquatur propheta: quia sensus est, nullam esse tam sublimem potentiam

quæ non subjici debeat hujus regis imperio, cujus adventus totum orbem exhilarare debet (Calvin, vii. 520).

The apostle proceeds in the seventh verse to give another illustration of his argument: *καὶ πρὸς μὲν τοὺς ἀγγέλους λέγει ὁ ποιῶν τοὺς ἀγγέλους αὐτοῦ πνεύματα, καὶ τοὺς λειτουργοὺς αὐτοῦ πυρὸς φλόγα.* Of course *πρὸς* does not here indicate a direct address to the angels, but is used in the sense of concerning, in reference to, as in Luke xx. 19: *ἔγνωσαν γάρ, ὅτι πρὸς αὐτοὺς τὴν παραβολὴν ταύτην εἶπεν.* This preposition is not unfrequently used in the classic authors in the sense of *quod attinet ad*, so far as respects, *πρὸς μὲν τοὺς ῥήτορας, πρὸς μὲν τοὺς φιλοσόφους.* The nominative to *λέγει* must be *ἡ γραφὴ* understood; for it is not God who speaks in the quotation that follows, but the writer of the psalm telling us what God does. And as respects the angels, the Scripture saith, "Who maketh," etc.

This quotation is taken from Ps. civ. 4, and it is exactly the same as the Greek of the Septuagint, with the exception of the last two words, which in the Epistle to the Hebrews are *πυρὸς φλόγα*, but in the LXX. *πῦρ φλέγον*—identically the same, however, in meaning. The Hebrew text, which is עֹשֶׂה מַלְאָכָיו רוּחוֹת מְשָׁרְתָיו אֵשׁ לֹהֵט, has given rise to much discussion. Many have contended that the psalm refers only to the glory of God as displayed in the visible universe; and that therefore רוּחוֹת, in the sense of winds, and אֵשׁ לֹהֵט, flaming fire or lightning, must be viewed as the subjects of the proposition; the affirmation being that storms and lightnings are employed as מַלְאָכָיו, God's messengers—a sense which the word certainly bears—and מְשָׁרְתָיו, His ministers or servants. And they suppose the force of the apostle's argument for the inferiority of angels to lie in this, that even winds and fire, inanimate parts of nature, receive the same title as they do—messengers and servants of God. This is the interpretation which even Calvin and Principal Campbell adopt. But there is no good ground for the assertion that it is only the visible majesty of God that is described by the Psalmist: the clause in a preceding verse, "Thou art clothed with honour and majesty," certainly carries us into the invisible world; and it is quite natural that the Psalmist, in describing the providential workings of God, should refer to His employ-

ment of angels, as well as to His control of other departments of nature. And, indeed, the construction of the disputed verse in the Hebrew naturally leads us to regard מַלְאָכָיו as the subject of the proposition: it occupies the position which the subject usually has, and רוחות stands in the place of the predicate. And even though the Hebrew clause were less definite than it is, let it be remembered that the Apostle Paul determines the sense of the proposition; for he places the article before *ἀγγέλους*, and leaves *πνεύματα* anarthrous, thus demonstrating that *τοὺς ἀγγέλους* is the subject, and *πνεύματα* the predicate. Principal Campbell adverts to this objection against his view of the Psalm; but he meets it in a very strange style. He allows that *τοὺς ἀγγέλους*, having the article, must be understood as the subject, and that *πνεύματα*, having no article, must be the predicate. "But," says he, "let it be remarked, that the article is found only in the translation of the LXX., which is copied by the apostle. In the Hebrew neither term has the article; the subject, therefore, must be determined by the scope of the place." Very true, if the Hebrew verse were the only authority we had on the subject; but when an inspired apostle has put the article to *ἀγγέλους*, whether he copied from the LXX. or not, are we at liberty to disregard his comment? But even the Hebrew, as we have seen already, is so constructed that מַלְאָכָיו occupies the appropriate place of the subject; and this is the interpretation which the ancient version of the LXX. gives, and also the Chaldee.

Still, however, it remains to be settled what is the import of the statement made respecting the angels. He maketh His angels רוחות, *πνεύματα*, translated in our version "spirits." Now, both the Hebrew and the Greek words have two senses: they denote primarily winds, and secondarily living spirits. Which of these senses is the one they bear in the passage before us? Beyond all reasonable doubt, it is the primary sense of winds, analogous to אֵשׁ לֹהֵט, flaming fire or lightning. Principal Campbell is right in saying that the phrase, "He maketh His angels spirits," is unintelligible in the connection in which it stands: it would have an obvious sense if it were the original creation of the angels that was the subject of the proposition; but it is not their original creation, but the manner of their

employment in providence as the ministers of God's will. The whole psalm describes, not the act of creation, but the providential workings of the Almighty. There is a good comment upon the passage in the closing verses of the preceding psalm: "Bless the Lord, ye His angels, that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word. Bless ye the Lord, all ye His hosts; ye ministers of His, that do His pleasure." And the import undoubtedly of the verse under consideration is, that the angels are the servants of the Almighty, like all the powers and principles of nature, and are employed by Him, like fire and storm, to execute whate'er His pleasure is. Some have supposed that the comparison of the angels to winds and lightning is not merely designed to describe them as under the control of the Great Supreme, like the mightiest agencies of nature, but also to indicate the efficiency with which they perform the several tasks that are allotted to them. This is the view given in the Chaldee Targum, which paraphrases the verse thus: "Who maketh His angels swift like the wind, and powerful like lightning." And certainly this view of the subject, while it greatly tends to exalt the angels in our estimation, is quite consistent with the purpose for which the apostle cites the passage; for however powerful and swift the angels may be, still they are described as but the servants of the Almighty, while very different is the language that is employed respecting the Son.

And accordingly the apostle proceeds, in pursuance of his general argument, to give another specimen of the manner in which Christ is spoken of in the Old Testament: *πρὸς δὲ τὸν υἱόν· Ὁ θρόνος σου, ὁ Θεός, εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος· ῥάβδος εὐθύτητος ἡ ῥάβδος τῆς βασιλείας σου· ἠγάπησας δικαιοσύνην, καὶ ἐμίσησας ἀνομίαν· διὰ τοῦτο ἔχρισέ σε, ὁ Θεός, ὁ Θεός σου, ἔλαιον ἀγαλλιάσεως παρὰ τοὺς μετόχους σου.* The preposition *πρὸς* might here bear the sense of "to," as the citation quoted is a direct address to the Son; but as this and the foregoing passage are similarly cited, and placed in opposition by the conjunctions *μὲν* and *δὲ*, perhaps it is better to give the preposition the same sense in both cases: *πρὸς μὲν τοὺς ἀγγέλους*—in reference to the angels indeed He saith; *πρὸς δὲ τὸν υἱόν*—but in reference to the Son.

The quotation here made by the apostle is taken from Ps. xlv. 7; and the words of the LXX. are employed without any variation, excepting the insertion of the article before *αἰῶνα* and *αἰῶνος*, which, however, makes no difference in the sense. The reference of this psalm to the Messiah is as obvious as that of any part of the Old Testament. Grotius and Calvin have indeed supposed that it primarily refers to Solomon and his queen, and then in a higher sense to Christ and His bride the church. But the most distinguished critics now agree in holding that it never had any reference of any kind to Solomon, but was originally composed as a prediction of the glorious reign of the great Messiah. "Hunc psalmum neque Davidi neque Salomoni accommodari posse," says Michälis, "quippe neuter eorum fuit Deus, neutrius solium fuit perenne ac perpetuum, et clausula (v. 18) psalmi majorem laudis pollicitationem continet quam vel Salomoni vel ulli terrenorum regum tribui potest ac debet" (Rosen. *Ps.* 1010, 1011). Indeed, you cannot read the psalm, even in the most cursory manner, without feeling persuaded that the lofty descriptions it contains of the king who rides prosperously in majesty, whose dominion endures for ever, and who bears the title of God, are applicable to none of Judah's earthly kings, but are prophetic of the righteous and enduring reign of God's own Son.

The interpretation both of the Hebrew psalm and of the Greek translation has given rise to considerable discussion. The so-called improved version of the Unitarians renders *Ὁ θρόνος σου, ὁ Θεός*, God is thy throne; making *ὁ Θεὸς* the subject of the proposition, and thus avoiding the application of the term *ὁ Θεὸς* to Christ. But such a translation is an absurdity; for, according to their own views, it places the creature above the Creator. The throne is inferior in dignity and importance to him who sits upon it; and therefore to make God the throne of Christ, and Christ a creature, is a monstrous violation of the plainest dictates of common sense. Undoubtedly *ὁ Θεὸς* is here the vocative case, applied as an address to the Messiah: "Thy throne, O God!" And let it be remembered that this is the form in which the vocative of *Θεὸς* appears almost invariably throughout the whole of the Septuagint and the New Testament: the other form *Θεὲ* only occurs about four or five times in the whole Scrip-

tures. And it is of importance to remark that Θεὲ never occurs in the Psalms of the LXX., whereas ὁ Θεὸς as a vocative is to be found in almost every other page. In a passage, therefore, quoted from the Psalms, as the one before us is, no other vocative than ὁ Θεὸς was at all to be expected. The true meaning, therefore, beyond all possibility of doubt, is, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever."

The Hebrew, of which Paul's language is a translation, is the following: כִּסְאֲךָ אֱלֹהִים עוֹלָם וָעֶד—Thy throne, O God, is for ever and onwards; which cannot without manifest violence be understood in any other sense than this. כִּסְאֲךָ—Thy throne, etc. Gesenius, indeed, has proposed two other translations of this clause; but the avowed object of them is to avoid the necessity of applying the term אֱלֹהִים to the Messiah, whom he supposes to be celebrated in this psalm only under the character of a king; and אלהים, as he justly observes, is never applied to an individual ruler, to designate kingly authority. The first of these translations was proposed in his *Hebrew-German Lexicon*, and is founded upon the principle that כִּסֵּא governs two genitives, the genitive of the possessor and the genitive of the giver: the throne possessed by thee, but given to thee by God, thy God's throne, thy throne of God,—a most forced and preposterous construction. And accordingly, in the Latin quarto edition, he proposes another version, the same in result, but brought out rather differently, being founded upon the supposition that there is an ellipse of כִּסֵּא. כִּסְאֲךָ כִּסֵּא אֱלֹהִים: solium tuum est solium Dei in æternum, imperium tuum a Deo fundatum est et stabit in æternum. But no principle of interpretation could be more clear than this, that you are never warranted to have recourse to elliptical and arbitrary constructions, excepting when the words as they stand will admit of no tolerable sense; which is immeasurably far from being the case in the passage before us. The construction is confessedly simple and easy and natural, and, according to the strictest principles of Hebrew syntax, reads without any ellipse, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever;" and accordingly the ancient versions all translate in this manner. The Chaldee Targum reads (Rosenm. 1023), כּוּרְסֵי יְקָרָךְ יְיָ קַיָם לְעָלְמֵי עָלְמִין; and Aquila has, *ὁ θρόνος σου, Θεέ, εἰς αἰῶνα καὶ ἔτι*, where, you will observe, he

uses that form of the vocative which admits of no ambiguity. And why then, you will ask, all this anxiety to find another translation? Gesenius declares it is because he thinks the word אלהים inapplicable to the Messiah as a king. It is the substance, then, of the statement, and not any ambiguity in the words of the construction, which leads to the supposition that it must have been another statement the Psalmist intended to make. But it is our part to receive in all humility the statements of the Bible as we find them, and not to sit in judgment upon what they ought to have been, or to stretch them upon the rack, that a different confession may be wrung from their lips.

And now we are prepared for a very important question: In what sense is the word *ὁ Θεὸς* applied to Christ by the apostle in the verse before us? Mr. Stuart says, as I had occasion to hint in a former lecture, that since both in the psalm and in the epistle it is the mediatorial reign of the Messiah which is described, therefore the word *Θεὸς* must be viewed as applied to Him not on account of His divine nature, but on account of His kingly authority. But Mr. Stuart himself supplies abundant refutation of his own conclusion; for while he argues, and argues justly, that Elohim in some few cases is applied to magistrates and rulers as a class, he allows that it never is employed to designate one individual king or magistrate. Well, then, surely the obvious conclusion is, it does not here mean king, but God. No, says Mr. Stuart, it must here mean king, and it means king only in the case of Christ; and he supposes that there is a special exception from the general rule made in favour of Christ, on account of His pre-eminent excellence as a ruler. But the obvious reply is, Why seek any other ground for the application of Elohim to Christ in a manner in which it is confessedly never applied to any other individual ruler, than the fact that it belongs to Him in a sense in which it belongs to no other? If He is truly and properly God, as Mr. Stuart allows, what better reason could you have for styling Him Elohim and *Θεός*? And as to the difficulties Mr. Stuart fancies to lie in the way of such a sense in this passage, they are purely imaginary. There is no inconsistency in supposing that, in the very midst of a description of Christ's mediatorial

authority, pointed reference may be made to His divine nature. He did not cease to be God when He became the Messiah: His divinity, indeed, is essential to the exercise of His mediatorial functions. Who feels any inconsistency in the phrase Divine Redeemer? Yet the epithet divine belongs to Christ on one ground, and the title Redeemer on another. He was divine from all eternity, but He was not the Redeemer from all eternity. Mr. Stuart appeals to the word μετόχους in support of his view. "*As divine*," says he,—"*as divine*, who are μέτοχοι with the Saviour?" But the question is sufficiently met by another: As *mediatorial* king, who are μέτοχοι with the Saviour? He has as few fellows in the one capacity as in the other. The import of μετόχους we shall see immediately.

The true force of the word Θεὸς in the passage before us must be gathered, it is plain, from the psalm whence the quotation is taken. Now I would call your attention to a very important principle in Scripture interpretation. In judging of the force of particular words, it is necessary not simply to consider the usage of them that prevails throughout the Bible, but even more especially the usage that prevails in particular books. And with respect to the word Elohim, a very singular usage prevails in the book of Psalms (Ges. 97). In the first forty-one psalms, and cxx.–cxxxiv., Elohim almost never occurs. It is יְהוָה that is almost invariably (250 times) used to designate God. But in the next thirty-nine psalms, and especially in the Korahitic psalms, the very opposite usage prevails: יְהוָה seldom occurs, and Elohim is almost invariably (170) used as the designation of the Divine Being. Elohim, in short, as the name of the one true God, is a favourite word in the Korahitic psalms; and I have not been able to find, after a diligent search, a single instance in one of these psalms where the word occurs in any of its metaphorical uses as applied to magistrates or angels. Now it so happens that this fact has a most important bearing: the forty-fifth psalm is a Korahitic psalm, and there the idea of any subordinate sense of the word Elohim is the very last thing to be thought of; and it is the full conviction of this on the part of Gesenius, which leads him to torture the 7th verse, as we have seen he does, for the purpose of escaping the necessity of applying the word Elohim even to the Messiah. And if

the word Elohim in the psalm must so manifestly mean the one true God, then it is equally plain that Θεὸς in the epistle must bear the very same signification, for the one passage is just the translation of the other. It fills me with amazement, therefore, to find Mr. Stuart contending for an inferior sense of Θεὸς in the passage before us: the true character of the Korahitic psalms must have entirely escaped his notice. I should say that, if there is one passage more than another in the New Testament where the term Θεὸς is applied to Christ in all its extent and emphasis of meaning, that passage is the 8th verse of the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. I regard this verse as furnishing one of the clearest and strongest proofs of the divinity of our blessed Lord that is anywhere to be found.

The Divine Saviour is described in the passage before us in His mediatorial character. And as such He is a King. He possesses a throne, and He wields a sceptre: θρόνος and ῥάβδος are both used metaphorically as the emblems of sovereign power. Of the θρόνος it is said, that it is εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος, which means that the dominion of Christ is to endure for ever. Of the ῥάβδος it is said, that it is ῥάβδος εὐθύτητος, equivalent to a sceptre of righteousness, or a righteous sceptre, which means that the government of Christ is one of perfect equity: He rules in righteousness and truth. No act of His administration can be justly charged with the smallest deviation from the principles of perfect rectitude.

And the righteousness of the Saviour's mediatorial rule proceeds from His innate love of righteousness and innate hatred of evil: ἠγάπησας δικαιοσύνην καὶ ἐμίσησας ἀνομίαν. The moral loveliness of the Saviour's character is perfect. Every excellence adorned His life, and lynx-eyed malice could detect no flaw in His conduct. His death, too, endured to satisfy divine justice, presented an illustrious manifestation of His love of holiness, and demonstrated that the foundations of His mediatorial sovereignty, so beneficent, so merciful, were laid with the strictest regard to every holy and righteous principle.

And the Saviour's spotlessness of character, His love of righteousness shown by such marvellous proofs, is given as the reason why He has been exalted to the right hand of the Majesty

in the heavens, and invested with supreme dominion: *διὰ τοῦτο ἔχρισέ σε ὁ Θεός, ὁ Θεός σου, ἔλαιον ἀγαλλιάσεως παρὰ τοὺς μετόχους σου.* It was because Christ fulfilled all righteousness, because He perfectly performed the work which the Father had given Him to do, that He was raised to the throne of glory in the highest. This great elevation is plainly described in other passages of Scripture as the reward of His perfect obedience, His obedience unto death: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name," etc. (Phil. ii. 5–9). The anointing, therefore, of Christ with the oil, mentioned in our text, is undoubtedly to be viewed as referring to His installation into the throne of His mediatorial dignity. The expression is metaphorical, being founded upon the practice which prevailed among the Jews, of anointing their kings with oil when they entered upon office; and forasmuch as the oil was viewed as an emblem of those rich gifts and graces which the priest, when he poured it upon the head of the king, supplicated the Almighty to bestow upon him, that his reign might prove a blessing to the nation, the oil with which Christ was anointed denotes at the same time the possession by Him of all those qualifications which are necessary to fit Him for the government of a boundless empire. God gave not the Spirit by measure unto Him (John iii. 34).

And the oil with which the Saviour was anointed is styled *ἔλαιον ἀγαλλιάσεως*, because, as the coronation of kings is generally celebrated with public rejoicings, so Christ's elevation to the mediatorial throne would be hailed, we may well believe, with loud acclaim by all the heavenly hosts. It was the reward which He received on His return from the full accomplishment of that illustrious work, which angels at His birth had celebrated as bringing glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good-will towards men.

Some have alleged that *ἔλαιον ἀγαλλιάσεως* cannot here

mean the oil of consecration to office, because in the preceding clauses the Saviour is described as already discharging, and discharging well, the functions of His mediatorial dignity. But this objection betrays a confused view of the mutual dependence of the several clauses of the quotation. The first clause describes generally the duration and the righteousness of Christ's mediatorial government; and the second clause describes, as the source of this righteous rule, the righteous personal character which belongs to the Saviour; and then the third clause goes on to state that it was this righteous character on account of which He was raised to the throne. The very scope of the passage, therefore, as well as the obvious import of the emblem employed, not to mention again the evidence of the perfectly parallel passage already cited from Philippians, plainly directs us to the period of the Saviour's installation into the throne of His mediatorial kingdom, as the time when He was anointed with the oil of gladness.

It is God, you will observe, who is represented as anointing Christ: ἔχρισέ σε ὁ Θεός, ὁ Θεός σου. There are two ways of reading this clause: the first Θεὸς may either be the vocative or the nominative,—"O God, thy God," or "God, thy God,"—and interpreters are pretty much divided between them. Our English version puts both in the nominative, and therefore applies them both to God the Father: "God, even thy God." It might be argued in defence of the vocative, that ὁ Θεὸς is so used already, beyond all reasonable doubt, in this very passage, and applied to Christ: "Thy throne, O God." It might also be asked with much apparent plausibility, Why should two nominatives be used, and those two the very same word? The version of the psalm by Symmachus, too, it might be said, represents the first as a vocative, using the form that has no ambiguity: Θεέ, ὁ Θεός σου. Now these arguments would lead me at once to a decided conclusion, but for one consideration, which I am surprised the advocates of two nominatives have not availed themselves of, at least so far as I know—and that is the use of the word Elohim in the Korahitic psalms. So great a favourite is this word in these psalms, that where intensity of feeling is to be expressed, instead of using two different names of God, as is done in all other parts of Scripture ("The Lord God," or

"The Lord thy God"), they sometimes exhibit, for these common phrases, repetitions of the one favourite word Elohim, as "God, my God" (xliii. 4), both being in the vocative, and "God, our God, shall bless us" (lxvii. 7), both in the nominative. It is quite consistent, therefore, with the character of the psalms of Korah, to suppose that אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהֶיךָ may be both nominatives in the forty-fifth Psalm; and if this be the case there, then *ὁ Θεός*, *ὁ Θεός σου*, must also in the epistle be both nominatives. This much at least, then, is clear, that the case before us is one of those which cannot be very positively decided either way. On the whole, however, I rather incline to the first opinion, that the first *Θεὸς* is a vocative, on the ground that the same word is undeniably applied to the mediatorial King at the beginning of the passage in a form precisely the same.

And to whom does the word *μετόχους* refer? It is plain that this question must be decided not so much by the scope of the apostle's argument, as by the scope of the psalm. To whom does חֲבֶרֶיךָ, then, refer? It is most generally supposed that it means other kings—those who, like Christ, are invested with kingly authority; and the proposition is supposed to be, that Christ's power and dignity are far superior to the might of all other dominions. He sits upon an eternal throne: His rule is one of perfect righteousness: He sits as God upon the mediatorial throne. Such a comparison certainly yields a good and consistent sense. Yet I must confess that I rather incline to the ancient interpretation of the fathers: *Τίνες δέ* (says Chrysost. xii. 37, B) *εἰσιν οἱ μέτοχοι, ἀλλ' ἢ οἱ ἄνθρωποι; Τούτεστι τὸ πνεῦμα οὐκ ἐκ μέτρου ἔλαβεν ὁ Χριστός.* This is all Chrysostom says on the subject, from which perhaps we may infer that no other interpretation prevailed in his day. Now, in support of this view of the passage, it may be argued, that though Christ is described as a king, yet there is no direct comparison made between Him and other kings; but there is a direct comparison made between Him and the children of men as a race of beings. The Psalmist, after stating that he intended to speak of the King, commences thus: "Thou art fairer than the children of men," יָפְיְפִיתָ מִבְּנֵי אָדָם; which means, Thou art fair before the sons of men; that is, Thou art by far the fairest of them all, being however Himself, it is implied, one

of them: "Grace is poured into Thy lips: therefore God hath blessed Thee for ever." Now, these statements are the germ of the whole psalm, and all the rest of it is just an expansion of these sentiments. Who, then, are the fellows of Christ? The sons of men. They are *μέτοχοι* with Him, as sharers of the same human nature; *μέτοχος*, meaning *particeps*, and חָבֵר, allied together, from חָבַר, to bind: "Forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same;" and, what is more to our present purpose, the humanity of the Divine King is recognised, as we have seen, at the beginning of this very psalm. Christ's people, accordingly, are described as His brethren; He is not ashamed to call them by this name, and He Himself is known in heaven as our Elder Brother. But is it not implied, you will say, in the text, that the *μέτοχοι*, the companions or brethren, are anointed as well as Christ? Certainly. And the brethren of Christ do receive the anointing of the Holy Ghost, yea, they are made kings and priests unto God; and the children of the church are described in this psalm as made princes in all the earth. But Christ received the Spirit without measure, we by measure. All holy qualifications and graces exist in Christ, the mediatorial King, in boundless perfection; but His brethren also receive the same gifts and graces in a subordinate measure. Believers, says Paul, were predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's Son, that He might be the first-born, the chief, among many brethren. While the Son of Mary trod this vale of tears, His pre-eminent excellence indeed might not be recognised by casual observers; but when He ascended to glory, to receive the reward of His humiliation and sufferings, then His transcendent superiority to the rest of the race of whom He had become one, and among He had toiled and suffered, was gloriously displayed. He was shown to be by far the fairest of all the sons of men. And this view of the comparison, you will observe, brings out finely the whole nature of the mediatorial King. His divinity, His humanity, are both recognised in the psalm. He is God upon His throne: He is man upon His throne. The Mediator is God-man.

The next quotation is taken by the apostle from Ps. cii.: *Καί· Σὺ κατ' ἀρχάς, Κύριε, τὴν γῆν ἐθεμελίωσας, καὶ ἔργα τῶν*

χειρῶν σού εἰσιν οἱ οὐρανοί· αὐτοὶ ἀπολοῦνται, σὺ δὲ διαμένεις, καὶ πάντες ὡς ἱμάτιον παλαιωθήσονται, καὶ ὡσεὶ περιβόλαιον ἑλίξεις αὐτούς, καὶ ἀλλαγήσονται· σὺ δε ὁ αὐτὸς εἶ, καὶ τὰ ἔτη σου οὐκ ἐκλείψουσιν. Some have supposed that this language is employed by Paul as an address to the Father. But the conjunction καὶ, with which it is introduced, connecting it with the several quotations which have been already made, and the whole scope of the argument of which it is plainly a part, demonstrate the utter folly of such a supposition. Most undoubtedly the words are an address to the Son, and in this view alone have they any relevancy to the point in hand. Others have supposed that the original passage in the psalm certainly relates only to God the Father; and they have rested their defence of the apostle's consistency and fairness on the principle, that he does not quote the passage as originally applied to Christ, but only as one that is quite applicable to Him. This supposition, however, is equally inconsistent with the nature of the argument which Paul is conducting. He is not merely quoting passages from the Old Testament, and alleging that, whatever might be their original meaning, they nevertheless contain accurate descriptions of what the Messiah is. But throughout the whole chapter he is bringing forward passages from the Jewish Scriptures, for the purpose of showing that they had ascribed high dignity and glory to the Messiah; and it is clearly implied, therefore, that he viewed every passage which he quotes as having been originally designed to describe the King of Zion. Any other supposition than this reduces his whole argument to a nullity. Though no evidence, therefore, could be found in the psalm itself that it contained any reference to the Messiah, still the authority of the apostle would be quite sufficient with Christians to prove that this must have been its original design.

But besides the authority of the apostle, the contents of the psalm itself go far to prove its Messianic character. It seems to have been written towards the close of the Babylonish captivity, and commences with a description of the depressed and forlorn condition of the people of God. They are represented as sighing for deliverance; and the writer of the psalm expresses the confident expectation that the Lord will "arise and have

mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come." And the favour thus shown to Zion is described as resulting in the conversion of the heathen: "So the heathen shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth Thy glory. When the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His glory." And though the writer bethinks himself for a moment of his own mortality, as precluding the hope of his witnessing these splendid scenes, he immediately takes refuge in the thought of the great Deliverer's unchanging power and grace, and rejoices that posterity at least shall continue to enjoy the signal blessings resulting from the appearance of the Lord in Zion: "But Thou art the same, and Thy years shall have no end. The children of Thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before Thee." Now, undoubtedly, it is most consonant with the whole structure of the Old Testament prophecies, to suppose that the deliverer who is described in this psalm is the Messiah, the anointed King of Zion, through whom all blessings are bestowed upon the church; and most certainly no other supposition is consistent with the validity of the apostle's argument in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

The passage taken by the apostle from this psalm is quoted in the words of the Septuagint.

Κατ' ἀρχὰς is the translation of the Hebrew word לְפָנִים, which signifies of old, formerly, and which the Seventy have rightly regarded as synonymous here with בְּרֵאשִׁית (in the beginning), the word employed in the first verse of Genesis.

Κύριε is the translation of אֵל, which does not differ in sense from אֱלֹהִים, though there are some peculiarities connected with the use of it. אֱלֹהִים occurs equally in all kinds of discourse; but אֵל is seldom found in prose, and perhaps never without the addition of some epithet, as אֵל עֶלְיוֹן, most high God; חַי, living God; עוֹלָם, eternal God. אֵל is a favourite word in poetry, where it is used with great frequency as the name of God, without any qualifying phrase or epithet. It is scarcely necessary to add, that the application of this divine name to the Messiah furnishes a clear argument in support of His divinity.

Τὴν γῆν ἐθεμελίωσας. This is a metaphorical expression taken from architecture, and employed to describe the original

creation of the world; and it clearly indicates that not merely the arrangement of materials, but the very act of their creation, was the work of Christ. The origin of the work is ascribed to Him. He laid the very foundation.

Καὶ ἔργα τῶν χειρῶν σού εἰσιν οἱ οὐρανοί. *Οὐρανοί* here denotes, as in Genesis, the whole host of heaven—the sun, the moon, and the stars. The whole universe therefore, in short, was produced by Christ. It is the Saviour, of course, in His divine nature that is here spoken of, and not the son of Joseph and Mary; and therefore the word "hands" is a metaphorical expression for energy, power, derived from the fact that hands are the instruments of man's activity in performing labours.

Αὐτοὶ ἀπολοῦνται. *Αὐτοὶ* includes both *γῆ* and *οὐρανοί*. The earth shall be burned up, and all the works of men's hands: "The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat."

Σὺ δὲ διαμένεις. *Διαμένεις* may either be the present or the future tense, and some manuscripts accordingly put the circumflex upon the last syllable, and some the accent upon the middle. Perhaps the future deserves the preference, as there is plainly an opposition between *ἀπολοῦνται* and *διαμένεις*; and the Hebrew words corresponding to both are in the future—יֹאבֵדוּ and תַּעֲמֹד: they shall fall, but Thou shalt stand. The permanent duration of Christ is illustrated by contrast with the limited duration of the most durable objects with which man is acquainted.

Καὶ πάντες ὡς ἱμάτιον παλαιωθήσονται, καὶ ὡσεὶ περιβόλαιον ἑλίξεις αὐτούς, καὶ ἀλλαγήσονται. The termination of the present scene of things is here illustrated by a tropical expression, borrowed from the decay and change of raiment. The visible universe is to wax old like a garment; and the same power which originally created and adorned it—the power of Christ—is to roll it together and lay it aside. *Ἱμάτιον* and *περιβόλαιον* are used here synonymously. There is indeed a shade of difference between them in their strict signification, the former denoting an outer garment or robe, and the latter an inner garment or vest. But this difference has no influence upon the sense of the passage before us: both words carry with them merely the general meaning of raiment or dress. For *ἑλίξεις*,

" thou shalt roll," some manuscrips read *ἀλλάξεις*, " thou shalt change," which corresponds more nearly to the Hebrew word תַּחֲלִיף; but the weight of manuscript authority is in favour of the common reading, *ἑλίξεις*, which expresses not the change itself, but a circumstance connected with the change of raiment. Both words, however, yield substantially the same idea—the laying aside of a garment which has become too old for use.

Σὺ δὲ ὁ αὐτὸς εἶ, καὶ τὰ ἔτη σου οὐκ ἐκλείψουσιν—But Thou art He, Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail. The Hebrew is very expressive: וְאַתָּה הוּא וּשְׁנוֹתֶיךָ לֹא יִתַּמּוּ (and Thy years shall never be completed). The present order of things shall come to a close, but Christ is immutable and eternal. The solid earth shall tremble to its base; the sun himself shall grow dim with age, and all the host of heaven shall be shaken; but amid the universal wreck, the Messiah, the Creator and Lord of all, shall remain unchanged, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, stamped with the clear impress of divinity.

When it is said of the earth and the heavens that they shall perish, it is not necessarily implied that the very matter of which they are composed is to be annihilated. It seems to be the doctrine of Scripture, that at the day of judgment the present form and order of things shall be completely overturned. The earth shall be burned up, and all the things that are therein: the earth and the heavens shall be robed in one sheet of flame. But the fire, while it obliterates every monument of the past, and destroys all the works and labours of men, shall be the means of preparing the materials for a new order of things; and from the purified ruins of the old world shall emerge, at the command of God, another world of surpassing loveliness and beauty. The very language of our text seems to imply this; for when one vesture is laid aside on account of its age, it is that another may be assumed in its stead. And the Apostle Peter, after describing in striking language the dissolution of the heavens and the earth in the great day of the Lord, adds this declaration, " Nevertheless we look for a new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pet. iii. 10–13). *Ἀπολοῦνται*, accordingly, is rendered in the ancient glossaries *μετασχηματισθήσονται ἐκ τῆς νῦν ὄψεως*.

The statements which are made in this quotation respecting

the natural attributes of Christ, clearly prove the accuracy of the view we formerly gave of the apostle's general argument, that though its ultimate object is to show the official superiority of Christ to angels, yet the medium of proof by which that ultimate conclusion is supported—the διαφορώτερον ὄνομα of Christ—embraces everything that is affirmed of Him in the Old Testament, whether descriptive of His mediatorial dignity or of those original qualities which fitted Him for that high dignity. The greatness of the Mediator's power is illustrated by the greatness of the power and glory which originally belonged to Him who now is the Mediator.

Mr. Stuart rightly explains this last quotation of the creative energy of Christ, but he does not make a single observation respecting the bearing of the passage upon the apostle's argument. And indeed it is plain, that, according to the view he gives of the scope of the chapter, the passage taken from Ps. cii. is quite irrelevant; for it does not say one word that must be understood as describing something which Christ did in His mediatorial character. Nothing can be more obvious than this, that if the scope of the apostle's argument really required Mr. Stuart to understand the word Θεός, in the 8th verse, in the sense of mediatorial King, then the very same reason must oblige him either to explain the laying of the foundations of the earth of some mediatorial work, or to pronounce the passage foreign to the purpose for which it is cited. It is clear, therefore, that Mr. Stuart has misapprehended the structure of the apostle's argument.

The quotation before us describes the native and personal dignity which belonged to Christ; and the qualities and works which are ascribed to Him demonstrate His true and proper divinity. No higher terms are employed to describe the power, and eternity, and immutability of God the Father, than are here used to describe these attributes of Christ. And this passage, accordingly, has sorely perplexed those who deny the divinity of the Saviour. Some have supposed that the words of the Psalmist are quoted by the apostle as an address to the Father; but the whole structure of the chapter forbids such a supposition. Others have alleged that ἐθεμελίωσας means, "Thou art the cause on account of which the earth was founded;"

but such a sense is utterly unprecedented, and is chargeable with the grossest extravagance. Others, again, have argued, that it is not the physical creation of the universe that is spoken of, but the moral renovation of human society; but such an idea is quite gratuitous, and quite unsuitable to the scope of the passage. It is true Christ is the author of the moral renovation of the world; but there is not the shadow of a ground for supposing that it is such renovation that is here spoken of. Besides, let it be remembered by those who are averse to ascribe the creation to Christ, that there are passages of Scripture where both the physical and the moral creation are ascribed to Christ, and where, therefore, there is no room for explaining the first as metaphorical language which really means the second. "For by Him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him; and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." Let no one say that these terms may be a metaphorical description of the moral changes effected by the Saviour; for the apostle immediately goes on to describe His relation to the moral world as another instance of His pre-eminent dignity: "And He is the Head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence" (Col. i. 16–18).

The apostle brings forward another quotation, for the purpose of showing that the Old Testament ascribes to the Messiah a pre-eminence and a dignity which are never mentioned in connection with the angels: *πρὸς τίνα δὲ τῶν ἀγγέλων εἴρηκέ ποτε· Κάθου ἐκ δεξιῶν μου, ἕως ἂν θῶ τοὺς ἐχθρούς σου ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν σου;* No instance can be found where such language is addressed to any one of the angels; but it is addressed to the Messiah in Ps. cx. This psalm is one of those passages of Scripture of whose Messianic reference the evidence is most complete and decisive. The writer of it is David, who describes the illustrious King whom he celebrates as his own superior and Lord: "The Lord said unto my Lord," which completely overturns the opinion of those who suppose that David himself, or Hezekiah, or some other of the kings of Israel, was the subject of the psalm. Moreover, the regal and the sacerdotal offices

are combined in the illustrious personage who is here described: He is a conquering King, and He is a Priest for ever, according to the order of Melchizedek; but none of the kings of Israel united these offices in his own person. Again, the subject of this psalm is styled both אָדוֹן and אֲדֹנָי. Now, though the former of these words signifies lord generally, and is applied even to an earthly superior, yet the latter, אֲדֹנָי, is never applied but to the living and true God. It is abundantly clear, too, from the New Testament, that Jesus applied this psalm to Himself, and also that the Jews of His time universally understood it as a prediction of the Messiah; for we are told in Matt. xxii. 41, that "while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is He? They say unto Him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call Him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on my right hand, till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool?" And the Pharisees, we find, were silenced; but an answer would have been easy, if they had not regarded it as an established principle, that the psalm referred to the Messiah.

And what is the import of the phrase, *κάθου ἐκ δεξιῶν μου*, in the Hebrew שֵׁב לִימִינִי? The right hand has been esteemed in all ages the position of honour and dignity; and therefore, when one person is said to be seated at the right hand of another, the language denotes that respect and honour are shown to him. And in the case of a king who sits to rule and to judge, the language is not always limited to mere honour, but frequently includes the participation, on the part of the assessor, of the authority and power which the king possesses. The son of the king may be *σύνθρονος* or *σύνεδρος*. This use of the phrase is to be found even in the classic authors; and there can be no question, that in the passage before us it is regal power and authority which are denoted by the session of Christ at the right hand of God. In the psalm from which the phrase is quoted, the great personage who sits at the right hand of God is described as having a sceptre of strength, as ruling in the midst of His enemies, as striking through kings in the day of His wrath, as judging among the heathen; and Paul, in 1 Cor. xv. 25, translates the phrase by the word *βασιλεύειν*: "for He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet."

The rule described by the phrase *κάθου ἐκ δεξιῶν μου*, appears always to denote the mediatorial authority of Christ, as distinguished from the power and authority which belonged to Him before He was born as a man. The phraseology is always connected with His resurrection or ascension to heaven, and describes the dominion which was given to Him by His Father, which in the language of theologians is technically styled the mediatorial kingdom or constitution. "This Jesus," says Peter on the day of Pentecost, "hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens; but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on my right hand, until I make Thy foes Thy footstool" (Acts ii. 32–35). And Paul says, "But this man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool" (Heb. x. 12, 13. See also Heb. xii. 2; Phil. ii. 8, 9; 1 Pet. iii. 22).

The mediatorial authority of Christ, denoted by the phrase *κάθου ἐκ δεξιῶν μου*, is unlimited. It extends to the whole created universe: good and bad angels are under His control; the righteous and the wicked in this world are the subjects of His government. He has been made head over all things to the church: thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, are subject to Him. And nothing can withstand the sceptre which He wields: His rule is resistless; He sits at the right hand of God, *ἕως ἂν θῶ τοὺς ἐχθρούς σου ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν σου*; in the Hebrew, עַד־אָשִׁית אֹיְבֶיךָ הֲדֹם לְרַגְלֶיךָ. This figure is borrowed from the practice which prevailed in ancient times of treading upon the necks of subjugated enemies, as was done *e.g.* by Joshua to the five kings that warred against Gibeon (Josh. x. 24); and the language is designed to express complete and certain victory. Christ, the mediatorial King, is invested with boundless power, and all His enemies shall be laid prostrate before Him. His cause may be opposed in the world: the kings of the earth may set themselves, and princes combine against Him, and their efforts may sometimes seem on the point

of prevailing. But the gospel is destined to enjoy a complete and lasting victory: the friends of Christ shall all be conducted to glory, and His enemies shall be involved in irremediable ruin.

The question may be asked, whether the quotation from the psalm, "Sit on my right hand, *until* I make Thine enemies Thy footstool," implies that after that period the mediatorial rule is to cease, or merely refers to the completeness of the antecedent victories, without making any statement respecting what is to follow. And certainly both the Hebrew particle עַד and the Greek ἕως ἂν are often employed so as to refer exclusively to the time which precedes a certain point, without implying that any different result will appear thereafter. God says to Jacob (Gen. xxviii. 15), "I will not leave thee, *until* I have done that which I have spoken to thee of;" but this by no means implies that God would leave him after all that was done. Again God says to the Israelites when they were entering Canaan (Deut. vii. 24), "There shall no man be able to stand before thee, *until* thou have destroyed them;" but certainly, if they were not able to resist the Israelites before they were destroyed, much less would they be able to do so afterwards. The truth, however, is, that the particles in question, according to the nature of the propositions in which they occur, sometimes affirm continuance only to a certain period, denying it with respect to the time following; while in other cases they merely affirm it to the period specified, but make no denial with respect to the time that is to follow. And in the case before us, if we had nothing to guide us but the proposition itself, we should rather incline to the conclusion, that since it describes progress to complete victory, it implied that the triumphant reign described would continue undisturbed after that victory was achieved. Yet the apostle, in the Epistle to the Corinthians, seems to teach (xv. 28) that the mediatorial reign is to terminate when all enemies are vanquished, and that matters are then to revert to the position in which they stood before the mediatorial scheme was brought into operation at all. "Then," says he, "cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power: for He must reign till He hath put all

enemies under His feet." The kingdom which the Son thus delivers up to the Father is the mediatorial kingdom—the kingdom which He received from the Father as the Saviour of men —the peculiar authority which we have seen the phrase, "sitting at the right hand of God," is always employed to denote. But whatever be the manner in which the peculiar constitution connected with the recovery of fallen man is finally wound up, this, it is plain, must be entirely without prejudice to whatever authority and power Christ antecedently possessed as the second person in the ever-blessed Trinity. The utmost which the apostle's language can mean is, that the mode of conducting the government of the universe shall, after the present order of things terminates, again become what it was before the scheme of mercy was brought into actual operation.

Having thus described in the language of the Old Testament the regal dignity and authority of the Messiah, the apostle contrasts with this elevated glory the position and employments of the angels. And he proposes the affirmation respecting the angels in the form of a question, to which there could only be one answer, as he had already sufficiently proved the point by the quotation made in the 7th verse, to which he does not esteem it necessary to add another: *οὐχὶ πάντες εἰσὶ λειτουργικὰ πνεύματα, εἰς διακονίαν ἀποστέλλομενα διὰ τοὺς μέλλοντας κληρονομεῖν σωτηρίαν;* Christ is the mediatorial King, invested with supreme authority, and the angels are His servants sent forth from His presence to execute His commands; and their services are employed in furthering the great ends of the gospel among them that believe. Christ is head over the angels, as over all things, for the benefit of His church.

The angels are styled *λειτουργικὰ πνεύματα.* The substantive *λειτουργία*, derived from *λεῖτος* or *λήϊτος*, *publicus*, and *ἔργον*, *opus*, denotes any office or function discharged for the benefit of the public: it is frequently applied to the duties that were performed by the priests under the old dispensation, and also to the labours of the apostles in preaching the gospel and superintending the churches. The phrase *λειτουργικὰ πνεύματα*, therefore, is well rendered in our version "ministering spirits:" it describes the angels as performing services for the church under the authority of Christ, its great Head. And accordingly

they are immediately represented as *εἰς διακονίαν ἀποστελλόμενα*, sent forth on service or duty. *Διακονία* denotes ministry, service, office, but chiefly that which is performed with the view of bringing help to another, or in the execution of a command. It is applied to the servile duties of a household, to the supply of another's wants, to the distribution of alms, to the discharge of the apostolic and other ecclesiastical functions in the church; and therefore it is plain, that when used in connection with the angels, it is fitted to express anything they may do under the command of Christ for the benefit of His followers. The objects of their care, accordingly, are next mentioned; and the description given of them is worthy of attention: *διὰ τοὺς μέλλοντας κληρονομεῖν σωτηρίαν*—for, on account of, those who are to inherit salvation.

Σωτηρία denotes preservation, deliverance from any calamity, deliverance from sin and its consequences, the eternal happiness believers are to receive, and also the system of truth which unfolds the means of salvation. In this verse undoubtedly the word denotes eternal life or happiness. Schleusner indeed, and others, state that it must here be understood as signifying temporal deliverance, because it is such deliverance only that the angels are represented as the means of bestowing. But the conclusion does not follow from the premises; for the clause before us is not designed to describe the kind of help which the angels give, but to point out the persons to whom they give it. Now, if you suppose *σωτηρίαν* to denote temporal deliverance, then the statement of the whole verse becomes this, that the angels give temporal deliverance to those persons who are to obtain temporal deliverance; which, if not exactly a tautology, at least gives no definite information respecting the objects of the angels' care, but leaves it undecided whether they are saints or sinners. The words, too, which accompany *σωτηρίαν*—*μέλλοντας κληρονομεῖν σωτηρίαν*—most naturally carry forward the mind to the future reward of the Christian; and the persons, therefore, for whom the angels minister, are clearly defined to be those who are to inherit eternal salvation—believers—the people of Christ, whom He has engaged to conduct to eternal felicity and glory.

And what are the kinds of service which the angels perform

for the heirs of glory? They are not mentioned here by the apostle, but various instances are recorded in other parts of Scripture, from which a conclusion may be drawn. You may consult Acts xii. 3–11; Ps. xci.; Matt. xxiv. 30, 31; 1 Thess. iv. 16.

CHAPTER II.

THE first four verses of the second chapter are a digression from the main scope of the apostle's argument, made for the purpose of enforcing an important practical lesson. He has shown, by arguments drawn from a source whose value the Jews could not deny, the vast superiority of Christ to the angels; and therefore he takes the opportunity of declaring that the words of so distinguished a teacher merit the most attentive regard. When He speaks who is the brightness of God's glory and the express image of His person, all should reverently listen to His voice: *διὰ τοῦτο δεῖ περισσοτέρως ἡμᾶς προσέχειν τοῖς ἀκουσθεῖσι, μήποτε παραῤῥυῶμεν.*

Διὰ τοῦτο refers to the whole preceding chapter, and employs the great principle which that chapter has established, viz. the dignity of Christ, as the foundation of a further conclusion. Did the Jews regard the law of Moses with reverence and respect, because it had been given by the ministration of angels? How much deeper reverence, then, was due to the gospel, when the Son of God Himself, the maker and monarch of all, had come down from heaven to introduce it! *Διὰ τοῦτο*—Therefore, etc.

Προσέχειν is an elliptical expression, and the full form is *προσέχειν τὸν νοῦν* or *τὴν διάνοιαν*, which means to apply the mind, to give close attention. The adverb *περισσοτέρως*, comparative of *περισσόν*, abundantly, vehemently, is added to express the intensity of the application which the mind should make to the truths propounded by Christ.

Ἀκουσθεῖσι, the things heard, governed by *προσέχειν*, denotes the doctrines of the gospel, those glorious truths which men first

heard from the lips of Christ Himself, and which the apostles were afterwards commissioned to proclaim. The dignity of the Teacher should convince us that it must be a most important message which we hear from His lips, and that the neglect of it on our part must be highly sinful and eminently perilous.

And the injunction to attend to the things which we have heard, is enforced by a consideration of the tendency which there is in men to neglect religious concerns: *μήποτε παραῤῥυῶμεν*, translated in our version, "lest at any time we let them slip." The meaning of *παραῤῥυῶμεν* has been much contested. It is compounded of *παρὰ* and *ῥύω*, and signifies literally to flow by, to flow out; and if the verb were in the third person, there would be no difficulty; for the things spoken of would be the nominative, and the meaning would be, "lest they should flow out of our minds," *i.e.* should be forgotten or disregarded. But it is persons, and not things, that form the nominative to the verb: *μήποτε παραῤῥυῶμεν*, "lest we flow by." Heinrichsius has supposed that the metaphor is taken from the idea of a ship sailing past the place of destination, missing the harbour, and being dashed therefore upon rocks, whence he infers that the phrase means, "lest we perish." And this is the interpretation given by almost all the fathers, though they do not employ this metaphor to bring out the sense. Chrysostom simply says: *μήποτε παραῤῥυῶμεν, τουτέστι, μὴ ἀπολώμεθα, μὴ ἐκπέσωμεν.* But the great objection to this interpretation is, that though the word is one of frequent occurrence in the later Greek, no other instance can be produced in which it bears the sense of perishing. Wherever it is used metaphorically, the meaning attached to it is that of neglecting or escaping the attention; though it is more frequently predicated of the thing forgotten than of the person who overlooks it, the object being said *παραρρύειν*, to flow out of the mind of the person, rather than the person *παραρρύειν*, to flow by or neglect the object. Yet there are instances of the latter mode of application. The only other place, besides our text, where the word occurs in Scripture, is Prov. iii. 21 in the Septuagint, where it seems plain that we have an example of this use: *υἱὲ μὴ παραῤῥυῇς, τήρησον δὲ ἐμὴν βουλὴν καὶ ἔννοιαν*, "My son, do not go by or disregard, but observe my counsel and advice." Ernesti has quoted a passage also from Clemens

Alexandrinus, where the same shade of meaning is obviously affixed to the word: *ἵνα μὴ παραῤῥυῶσι τῆς ἀληθείας διὰ χαυνότητα*, "that they may not glide beyond the truth through weakness." And undoubtedly this is the sense which we must attach to the word in the passage before us: *μήποτε παραῤῥυῶμεν*, "lest at any time we go by, neglect, or disregard the things spoken." The sense, "lest we perish," though it suits the context pretty well, is unsupported by a single example of similar usage; while the other sense both has usage in its favour, and suits the context at least as well, perhaps better. The counsel is given by the apostle both positively and negatively, as is often done where deep earnestness is felt: witness the passage quoted above from Proverbs, "My son, neglect not, but keep my counsel;" and then follows in the two next verses the threatening of punishment, subjoined with the view of enforcing the apostle's earnest and repeated admonition.

Εἰ γὰρ ὁ δι' ἀγγέλων λαληθεὶς λόγος ἐγενετο βέβαιος, καὶ πᾶσα παράβασις καὶ παρακοὴ ἔλαβεν ἔνδικον μισθαποδοσίαν· πῶς ἡμεῖς ἐκφευξόμεθα τηλικαύτης ἀμελήσαντες σωτηρίας ; etc.

These words, proposed in the form of a question, describe even more forcibly than a positive statement would have done, the certainty and greatness of the punishment to which negligence of the gospel shall expose; and the various circumstances are detailed which aggravate the sin of such negligence, viz. the dignity of the first publisher of the gospel, the full confirmation of the truth given by those who heard it from His lips, and the miracles by which God Himself bore testimony to the preaching of the word.

Ὁ δι' ἀγγέλων λαληθεὶς λόγος, "the word spoken by angels," denotes, there can be little doubt, the law of Moses, which was given by the ministry of angels. We are told, indeed, that God Himself spake unto the people, and unto Moses face to face (Ex. xx. 19, 22; Deut. v. 4); and some have therefore supposed that it is not the law which was given on Sinai to which the apostle here refers, but the various messages with which the angels are recorded in the Old Testament to have been sent at different times to different individuals, as when they threatened the destruction of Sodom. But the scope of the apostle's argument, and the parallel passages in the tenth and twelfth chapters

of this very epistle, where similar comparisons are undeniably made between neglect of the law of Moses and neglect of the gospel, place it beyond all doubt that the word spoken by angels denotes the law of Moses. And the force of the objection to this view above mentioned, is completely neutralized by the fact that in the Acts of the Apostles (vii. 53) the ancient Jews are said to have received the law by the disposition of angels: *εἰς διαταγὰς ἀγγέλων*, "by the promulgation or appointment of angels;" and in Gal. iii. 19 we are told that "the law was ordained by angels in the hands of a Mediator:" *διαταγεὶς δι' ἀγγέλων*, promulgated, appointed; which passages clearly show that, while the law of course proceeded from God the supreme legislator, it came to the Jews through the instrumentality, in some shape or other, of the angels. In the Old Testament, too, there are references to the fact that, when the law was given at Sinai, multitudes of angels were present. See Deut. xxxiii. 2 and Ps. lxviii. 17, from which passages the Jews had themselves drawn the very conclusion which we have supposed to be embodied in the apostle's language. Josephus has a passage (*Antiq.* xv. 5, 3)—*ἡμῶν τὰ κάλλιστα τῶν δογμάτων καὶ τὰ ὁσιώτατα τῶν ἐν τοῖς νόμοις δι' ἀγγέλων παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ μαθέντων*, "we have received the finest institutions and the holiest laws by angels from God"—which shows the common opinion that prevailed among the Jews of the share the angels had in the giving of the law. And the importance attached by the Jews on this very account to the institutions of Moses, was no doubt the reason why the apostle was at so much pains in the first chapter to establish the superiority of the Messiah to all the angels. And having made out that point in the most satisfactory manner, what more natural description could he now give of the law, when comparing it with the institutions of Christ, than what is contained in the passage before us: *ὁ λόγος δι' ἀγγέλων λαληθείς*?

This ancient law, the apostle tells us, was *βέβαιος*, firm, maintained in efficiency, duly ratified.

Καὶ πᾶσα παράβασις καὶ παρακοή—and every transgression and disobedience. These words are often used synonymously; yet, when they are employed together by such a writer as Paul, we must suppose that there is some shade of difference between them. And the difference seems to correspond to a distinction

made in the Mosaic law between ordinary transgressions, and wilful, presumptuous acts of disobedience. (See Lev. iv. 2, Num. xv. 24, and Deut. xvii. 12.) Now the word *παρακοή*, the second word in the scale, seems fitted to denote the latter kind of transgression, contumacious sin—*παρακοή*, the refusal to hear; and it corresponds to the language of the Septuagint in Deut. xvii. 12: "And the man that will do presumptuously, *ὥστε μὴ ὑπακοῦσαι τοῦ ἱερέως*, so as not to listen to the priest, *ἀποθανεῖται*." But do not suppose I mean to affirm that this distinction is always observed between the words. When they are used singly, they are often quite synonymous, and simply denote transgression. But we can scarcely suppose Paul would use both without any shade of difference; and we know that the difference above referred to was recognised in the very law which Paul is describing.

Μισθαποδοσίαν, the giving of recompense, is used both in the New Testament and in profane authors in a bad sense as well as in a good sense, though the latter is the most frequent. The word is not to be found in the Septuagint at all; and it occurs in no other part of the New Testament but the Epistle to the Hebrews, where it appears three times, in two of which cases it denotes the reward of righteous conduct, and in the other, which is the one before us, it plainly signifies the punishment of transgression. The Jews, when they violated the Mosaic law, were visited with righteous retribution; and many cases of such punishment are recorded in the Old Testament as a warning to sinners.

And if this was the case with the law of Moses, how can we suppose, asks the apostle, *πῶς ἐκφευξόμεθα* (supply *μισθαποδοσίαν*) *τηλικαύτης ἀμελήσαντες σωτηρίας*;—how shall we? No; escape shall be impossible: retribution shall as surely follow the neglect or contempt of the gospel as it followed the transgression of Moses' law—retribution certain and severe.

Σωτηρία is opposed to *λόγος δι' ἀγγέλων λαληθείς*; and as the latter denotes the dispensation of Moses, the former must denote the gospel or Christian dispensation, which may well be named *σωτηρία*, from its leading characteristic, which is the proclamation of mercy through Christ. The same sense is given to the word in Rom. xi. 11: *ἡ σωτηρία τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἐγενετο*—

"salvation hath come to the Gentiles," meaning the gospel, which proclaimeth salvation.

The argument drawn from the analogy of the Mosaic law to prove the certainty of the infliction of punishment upon all who neglect and despise the gospel, the apostle strengthens by various considerations, such as the illustrious nature of the system itself, which must render the sin of neglecting it the greater—*τηλικαύτης ἀμελήσαντες σωτηρίας*; the exalted dignity of the messenger who first brought to us the glad tidings—*ἥτις ἀρχὴν λαβοῦσα λαλεῖσθαι διὰ τοῦ Κυρίου*· the secure transmission of the truth to subsequent times—*ὑπὸ τῶν ἀκουσάντων εἰς ἡμᾶς ἐβεβαιώθη*; and the miraculous evidence with which God Himself accompanied the preaching of the word—*συνεπιμαρτυροῦντος τοῦ Θεοῦ σημείοις τε καὶ τέρασι, καὶ ποικίλαις δυνάμεσιν, καὶ Πνεύματος ἁγίου μερισμοῖς, κατὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ θέλησιν.*

The gospel itself is a most illustrious system. The apostle compendiously expresses his admiration of its mercy, by styling it "so great salvation." It delivers from sin; it arms against the power of death; it covers up the pit of hell; it bestows a title to eternal life in heaven.

The gospel was first promulgated by an illustrious messenger, the Lord from heaven. *Ἥτις ἀρχὴν λαβοῦσα λαλεῖσθαι διὰ τοῦ Κυρίου*—taking a beginning to be spoken—though a singular form of expression to us, is not unusual in the later Greek. It occurs repeatedly in Polybius and Ælian, as Raphelius has shown. It is also to be found in Philo, *de vita Mosis*, lib. i. p. 614: *ἀρχὴν λαβοῦσα τοῦ, γένεσθαι ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ* —taking a beginning to be, originating in Egypt.

The doctrines of the gospel were securely handed down after the death of Christ, their first teacher: *ἥτις εἰς ἡμᾶς ἐβεβαιώθη.* It is plain, from the connection of this clause with the foregoing, that it cannot refer to any additional confirmation which was given to the truth by the apostles, but to its safe transmission through their testimony; for otherwise the meaning of the whole would be, that the truth was merely *declared* by Christ, but was confirmed by the apostles, as if their word was entitled to greater credit than His. The meaning undoubtedly is, that the truth first received from the lips of the Saviour, was handed down by the apostles safe and entire to posterity.

This use of ἐβεβαιώθη resembles a common idiom of the Hebrew language, where in one word two significations are made, for the sake of brevity, to concur (Glass, i. 185). Chrysostom explains ἐβεβαιώθη in this manner: τί ἔστιν εβεβαιωθη ; ἐπιστεύθη ἢ ἐξέβη· τὸν γὰρ ἀῤῥαβῶνά φησιν ἔχομεν τουτέστιν οὐκ ἐσβέσθη, οὐκ ἔληξεν, ἀλλὰ κρατεῖ καὶ περίγεται (xii. 45, 46). Theophylact's exposition is the same, but more pointedly expressed: διεπορθμεύθη εἰς ἡμᾶς βεβαιῶς καὶ πιστῶς—was transmitted to us firmly and faithfully. The preface to Luke's Gospel supplies a good comment on the passage before us.

And the divine testimony, it is further added, accompanied the preaching of the gospel: συνεπιμαρτυροῦντος τοῦ Θεοῦ σημείοις τε καὶ τέρασιν, etc.

Συνεπιμαρτυρέω occurs nowhere else in the sacred volume; but the meaning is quite clear, from the usage of the common Greek: it denotes to give testimony in support of another.

Σημεῖα and τέρατα are words that are nearly synonymous, and they are often applied to the very same events; but σημεῖα rather exhibits the objects to which it is applied as signs or proofs of some doctrine given by God, and τέρατα represents them as fitted to excite the astonishment and wonder of beholders. They are often used together in the Septuagint as translations of the two Hebrew words אותות ומופתים, which denote for the most part events of a portentous and alarming kind; and Abreschius has therefore supposed, with much probability, that these words denote those Christian miracles which bore a resemblance to the severe and striking miracles of the Mosaic dispensation, such as the rending of the rocks at Christ's death, the quaking of the earth, the darkening of the sun. On the other hand, as δυνάμεις, the next word, is never employed by the Septuagint to represent the Hebrew words we have mentioned, but yet is the word currently applied in the New Testament to the miracles of Christ and His apostles, the same critic supposes, that in the passage before us it describes that kind of miracles, more beneficial and humane, which peculiarly characterized the gospel scheme, such as miracles of healing. It is at least unlikely that so many words should be used by the apostle without any shade of difference; and the difference that has been indicated seems to rest upon scriptural usage.

Μερισμοῖς Πνεύματος ἁγίου, "distributions of the Holy Ghost," denote those extraordinary powers and graces which the evangelic history tells us were bestowed by the Spirit of God upon the early Christians, for the purpose of promoting the advancement of the gospel. These gifts—gifts of healing, of prophecy, of tongues—were bestowed by the Spirit *κατὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ θέλησιν*, "according to His own will;" which is illustrated by a similar statement in 1 Cor. xii. 11: "But all these," viz. diversities of gifts already described, "worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will."

How impressive and clear, then, must all these considerations mentioned by Paul render the great lesson which he is teaching in these verses! Surely, if a system which was given to the world by the ministry of angels was maintained in efficiency by the arm of God, and the neglect of which was punished with much severity, it is impossible we can suppose that a system which was introduced by the ministry of God's own Son, and supported by such extraordinary displays of power, should be left undefended by Heaven, and all men be permitted to insult it with impunity. The sin of neglecting the gospel, both on account of the dignity of its Founder and the clearness of its revelations, is most aggravated; and the punishment which it will incur will be correspondingly severe. But perhaps some may question the validity of the apostle's argument, on the ground that, though certainly the law was given by the ministration of angels, yet it came, as well as the gospel, ultimately from God, the Supreme Ruler of the universe. Why, then, should the breach or neglect of either be more or less sinful than the neglect of the other? Nay, further, we may be reminded that the Messiah Himself, the Angel of the covenant, was present at the giving of the law, and accompanied the children of Israel through the wilderness; and the question may be asked, What glory can be claimed for the gospel, on the ground of the Messiah's presence, which must not equally have belonged to the law? and what reason can there be for severer punishment of neglect of the one than of neglect of the other? But let it be remembered that, though God is the same at all times, and entitled to universal reverence, yet at some occasions

He reveals Himself more clearly and strikingly to the world than before, and then certainly our obligations to love and serve Him are greatly increased; not that He is greater in Himself, but that we are better apprised of His greatness, and should therefore know and feel our duty the more sensibly. And the same principle meets also the second objection to the apostle's argument: for though Christ, as the Angel of the covenant, was present on Sinai at the giving of the law, yet He was not openly revealed, but remained under a covering, and the ministry of angels was employed in making the communications to the Israelites; but when the fulness of the time came, it was not angels who were sent to the world, but Christ Himself appeared before the eyes of men, and taught the truths of religion with His own lips, and performed innumerable works of wonder in the open face of day. So unprecedented and marvellous a manifestation certainly lays us under greater obligations than were connected with the ancient law.

Having thus inculcated the duty of giving immediate and persevering attention to the great salvation of the gospel, the apostle proceeds in the following verses formally to establish a principle which is taken for granted in this practical digression. Now observe at this point of transition the exact state of the argument. The apostle has proved the vast superiority of Christ to the angels: he has assumed as a point conceded by the Jews, the connection of the angels with the old dispensation; and he has also assumed, as a point which he intends immediately to prove, the headship of Christ over the new dispensation; and on these three principles he has grounded the paramount claim of the gospel, so eloquently enforced in the first four verses of this chapter. Of course, therefore, he at once proceeds to the establishment of the exclusive and supreme headship of Christ; and the connection being such as we have shown, he necessarily employs the conjunction *γάρ*: *οὐ γὰρ ἀγγέλοις ὑπέταξε τὴν οἰκουμένην τὴν μέλλουσαν, περὶ ἧς λαλοῦμεν.*

The phrase *τὴν οἰκουμένην* is the one upon which the meaning of the verse chiefly hinges. Two interpretations have been put upon it. It has been supposed to mean the future world, the state of blessedness beyond death; and it has also been supposed to mean the new economy, or the gospel dispensation.

The word *οἰκουμένη* literally means world or habitable globe, and it was applied to the four great monarchies of ancient times, on account of their vast extent (LXX. Isa. xiii. 5, 9); and as Daniel predicted that the kingdom of God was to be established in the earth during the days of the last of these kingdoms, and was to surpass them all in extent, the same term naturally came to be applied to it. Accordingly, the Jews styled the state of matters previous to the Messiah עוֹלָם הַזֶּה—this world; and the state which the Messiah was to introduce, עוֹלָם הַבָּא—the world to come. Now there are very weighty arguments to prove that it is the Messianic dispensation which the phrase denotes in our text. This interpretation seems to be required by the scope of the passage. It makes the verse furnish a solid reason for the preference which the apostle had claimed for the gospel; whereas if you make the phrase refer to the state of blessedness in heaven, then the verse seems to imply that in this world, under the gospel as well as under the law, the angels are invested with all the authority they ever had, which is contrary to the clear implication of the second verse. Besides, the phrase *περὶ ἧς λαλοῦμεν* seems to shut us up to the same conclusion; for the apostle has not been discoursing of a future state, but clearly he has been treating of the new order of things which God introduced when in these last days He sent His Son into the world.

On the other hand, however, there is an argument of considerable force against our interpretation, founded upon grammatical considerations. It is quite true, it may be said, that *οἰκουμένη* may mean dispensation or kingdom, and it is also quite true that the Jews before the advent spoke of עוֹלָם הַבָּא; but it does not therefore follow that such a description, perfectly applicable to it before Christ came, would continue equally applicable after He had actually arrived. And in confirmation of this argument several cases have been produced from the New Testament, where the analogous phrase *αἰὼν μέλλων* is undeniably used of the future state posterior to death: *οὔτε ἐν τούτῳ αἰῶνι οὔτε ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι* (Matt. xii. 32, xiii. 40; Luke xx. 34, 35; Eph. i. 21). This argument, I confess, had well-nigh brought me round to the other interpretation, until I stumbled upon a passage in Chrysostom where the true solution is unquestionably

given : *πῶς οὖν αὐτὴν μέλλουσαν καλεῖ ; ὥσπερ καὶ ἑτέρωθί φησιν, ὅς ἐστι τύπος τοῦ μέλλοντος, περὶ τοῦ Ἀδὰμ καὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ λέγων ἐν τῇ πρὸς Ῥωμαίους ἐπιστολῇ πρὸς τοὺς χρόνους τοῦ Ἀδὰμ μέλλοντα τὸν κατὰ σάρκα Χριστὸν καλῶν (καὶ γὰρ ἔμελλεν)* (Chrys. xii. 56, *c*). Now if Christ is styled *μέλλων* in Romans, when his relation to Adam is considered, the new dispensation, or *οἰκουμένη*, may be styled *μέλλουσα* when it is viewed in connection with the old, as it necessarily is in this verse, on account of the mention of the angels. And the parenthesis *καὶ γὰρ ἔμελλεν* suggests the reason : the participle belongs to the imperfect time, and not to the present.

The meaning, therefore, beyond all doubt, of the fifth verse is, that God hath put in subjection the world that was to come, not to the angels, but to Christ. And this is the principle the apostle now proceeds to prove. In confirmation of it, he appeals to a passage in the Old Testament: *διεμαρτύρατο δέ πού τις λέγων.* The person referred to is David, the place is the eighth Psalm, and the testimony or proof referred to is the following: *τί ἐστιν ἄνθρωπος, ὅτι μιμνήσκῃ αὐτοῦ, ἢ υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου ὅτι ἐπισκέπτῃ αὐτόν ; ἠλάττωσας αὐτὸν βραχύ τι παρ' ἀγγέλους, δόξῃ καὶ τιμῇ ἐστεφάνωσας αὐτόν, πάντα ὑπέταξας ὑποκάτω τῶν ποδῶν αὐτοῦ.* This quotation is taken word for word from the Septuagint, with the exception of one clause, which the apostle has omitted, because it is the same in sense as the last clause. The whole reference has given rise to much controversy. Undoubtedly, when you read the eighth Psalm by itself, you would scarcely suppose that it had any reference to Christ, but would view it as a description of the place which the Creator has assigned to man in this lower world, giving him dominion over the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air. And many, accordingly, have supposed that the apostle does not mean to say that the passage was originally designed to apply to the Saviour, but only that he employs the words because they are applicable and well fitted to express his own ideas. Now, certainly, there are cases where words are quoted not as predictions, but as maxims or statements, of which the subject under review may happen to furnish another illustration ; but we cannot allow the quotation before us to be one of that kind. For the apostle not only quotes the words, but he reasons very

minutely upon them, and draws a conclusion in proof of the extent of Christ's dominion, which would be mere trifling if the words had no reference to Christ. Undoubtedly, therefore, the psalm must have been originally designed by the Spirit of God to refer to the Messiah; and the Jews must have viewed it in this light, otherwise the apostle would never have employed such an argument.

But it may be objected, and with much apparent force, Why, then, if Christ be the person referred to, should David express wonder that God should be mindful of His own Son, the pure and holy Saviour? But if you take a right view of the psalm, you will see that this objection has no weight. The reference to the Saviour is of a very peculiar kind. The Psalmist is not speaking exclusively of Christ: he is not referring at the outset to any individual, but to the species, and is expressing his admiration of the great goodness with which God, who has a boundless empire to superintend, has been pleased to visit mankind. That there is a reference to the physical advantages with which God has surrounded us, need not be denied; but the comment of the apostle leads us to conclude—what indeed we might naturally have expected—that the Psalmist, guided by the Spirit of God, had an eye in praising the Almighty to all the blessings which His goodness had bestowed upon man. He has truly raised human nature to honour and dignity in Christ His Son. Apart from the Saviour, the crown of man's glory lay soiled in the dust; but God has raised man in His Son to the most exalted position of honour. This princely elevation of the human nature we see only in Jesus Christ: "Thou hast crowned Him with glory and honour."

Ἄνθρωπος and *υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου* both denote man in general: they are repeated, to form a poetic parallelism. *Μιμνήσκῃ* and *ἐπισκέπτῃ* denote likewise very nearly the same thing, though the latter rises in signification above the former.

Ἠλάττωσας βραχύ τι may refer either to time or degree (Luke xxii. 58; Acts v. 34); but the prevailing idea is, that in the passage before us it indicates time, referring to the period of the Saviour's humiliation. The corresponding clause in the Hebrew, וַתְּחַסְּרֵהוּ מְעַט, is liable to the same ambiguity (Ex. xvii. 4, Job xxiv. 24); and accordingly Doederlinius translates the

psalm thus: "Inferiore angelis loco constituisti hominem per breve tempus." Most suppose that the adverb has the one sense in the psalm, viz. of degree, and the other in the Hebrews, viz. of time; but this charges the apostle needlessly with changing the sense of the words he is quoting. Either sense suits his purpose; and whatever, therefore, the psalm requires may be adopted. On the whole, perhaps the preference should be given to the idea of time—a little while; for even the psalm, according to the view which we have given of it, describes in the very next clause the exaltation of the human nature above the angelic in the person of the Messiah.

In the eighth verse the apostle proceeds to offer a comment upon the quotation which he has made from the Old Testament, with the view of showing its pertinency to the point in hand: *ἐν γὰρ τῷ ὑποτάξαι αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα, οὐδὲν ἀφῆκεν αὐτῷ ἀνυπότακτον.* The comment commences very abruptly. To what does *γὰρ* refer? Clearly to a proposition not stated, but implied. It is as if the apostle had said: Now the quotation before us proves the gospel economy to be under the authority of Christ; for in that God hath put all things under His feet, it is clearly implied that there is nothing left unsubjected to Him, and of course the *οἰκουμένη μέλλουσα* must likewise own His sway. He is the King in Zion; and angels, principalities, and powers, are subject to Him.

The apostle subjoins another remark: *νῦν δὲ οὔπω ὁρῶμεν αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα ὑποτεταγμένα.* Some suppose that this clause is designed as an argument to prove the propriety of applying the psalm to Christ, founded upon the fact that we do not see it fulfilled in other men. But such an interpretation is wholly inadmissible; for it would imply that *αὐτῷ* in the former clause applied to Christ, and *αὐτῷ* in this to other men, while there is not the slightest intimation given of any change of person.

But how, then, it may be rejoined, can it be said that all things are not yet put under Christ, when the foregoing clause affirmed that all things were under His feet? The two assertions are quite consistent. Christ has received universal dominion. He is King of kings and Lord of lords. He sits upon the mediatorial throne, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named (Eph. i.

21, 22; 1 Pet. iii. 22). But though the Saviour is thus a sovereign both in right and in fact, yet all His enemies are not yet actually subdued. Satan, sin, and death, still enjoy some measure of triumph; but then the very words, "we see not yet," clearly imply that the period of His complete triumph will in due season arrive. The things which are *οὔπω ὑποτεταγμένα* are described in 1 Cor. xv. 25, 26, Heb. x. 12, 13.

As the eighth verse adverts to something which we do not yet see fulfilled in Christ, so the ninth describes what we already see accomplished; and the latter is plainly introduced with the view of furnishing a pledge that the former two shall at the appointed time receive its completion: *νῦν δὲ οὔπω ὁρῶμεν αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα ὑποτεταγμένα. Τὸν δὲ βραχύ τι παρ' ἀγγέλους ἠλαττωμένον βλέπομεν Ἰησοῦν διὰ τὸ πάθημα τοῦ θανάτου δόξῃ καὶ τιμῇ ἐστεφανωμένον· ὅπως χάριτι Θεοῦ ὑπὲρ παντὸς γεύσηται θανάτου.* The triumph of Christ has already begun; and as certainly as the dawn ushers in the noon-day splendour, so surely will the Saviour's triumph in the end be complete, and all things be put under His feet. The meaning of all the parts of this verse is sufficiently clear, yet there are few passages which have given rise to more discussion. The difficulties do not lie in any single phrases, but in the arrangement of the several members of the verse, which are regarded by most interpreters as transposed out of their natural order. The connection of the verse with the foregoing verses renders it clear that *τὸν ἠλαττωμένον*, with which *Ἰησοῦν* is joined by apposition, forms the subject of the statement, and *ἐστεφανωμένον* the predicate; and the affirmation made is, that we behold the humbled One spoken of, viz. Jesus, crowned with glory and honour: *τὸν δέ*, etc.—but Him, the man humbled, we descry, etc. And undoubtedly the reference is to the elevation of Christ to the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, where He sits exalted as a prince and a Saviour,—an elevation which exhibits the true fulfilment of the words of the Psalmist, and fully proves to us that all things shall yet be put under the feet of Christ.

The apostle has plainly in his view, throughout all this passage, the objections which would be offered by the Jews to the statements he had made of Christ's superiority to the angels, viz. that He was a man—a man of humble rank—a man of

suffering and sorrow. And he meets them here, but more fully afterwards, by connecting the elevation of Christ with the very sufferings which He had endured, which are thus shown not to detract from the lustre of His glory: ἐστεφανωμένον—crowned for the suffering of death with glory and honour. The connection, it is true, of διὰ τὸ πάθημα τοῦ θανάτου, has been much disputed. Some say it is connected with ἠλαττωμένον; but though it is perfectly true, as the statement would then mean, that Christ was humbled in order to suffer death, yet this does not seem to be the truth here taught by the apostle: for both the position of the clause, and the object of the statement, and the natural import of διά, all point out διὰ τὸ πάθημα as standing in connection with ἐστεφανωμένον—crowned on account of His endurance of death. Analogous passages occur in x. 12, xii. 2 of this epistle, and in Phil. ii. 8–11, where the exaltation of Christ is described as resulting out of His sufferings.

But the most difficult part of the verse is the last clause: ὅπως χάριτι Θεοῦ ὑπὲρ παντὸς γεύσηται θανάτου; not that there is any difficulty in the clause when viewed by itself, but the nature of its connection with the rest of the verse is involved in some uncertainty. As translated in our version, it plainly cannot stand in connection with ἐστεφανωμένον; for Christ was not crowned in order that He might die, but His death preceded His exaltation, and prepared the way for it. It has therefore been commonly supposed that ὅπως χάριτι, etc., connects with ἠλαττωμένον—humbled that He might die; but the position of the words seems to raise up an insurmountable barrier against the adoption of this view; for if even διὰ τὸ πάθημα cannot well be connected with ἠλαττωμένον, much less can ὅπως γεύσηται. Besides, the purpose of the statement does not seem to be to tell us that Christ was humbled that He might die, but rather that, humbled and afflicted and distressed as He was, He was raised out of all His troubles to the highest exaltation. The middle clause tells us that Jesus, for the suffering of death, was crowned with glory and honour. But why should He for dying be raised to such dignity? Do not multitudes die every day, and many, too, a violent death? The last clause seems designed to explain why His endurance of death should have been followed by such consequences; and the reason which it

assigns is, that He met death not as the ordinary lot of mortality, but that He voluntarily encountered it as a sacrifice for the guilty. He laid down His life not merely for one individual, or for His own nation, but for the world, and therefore He well deserved to be crowned with glory and honour. *Ὅπως χάριτι*, etc., therefore, seems most naturally to connect with *διὰ τὸ πάθημα*, etc., as a further elucidation of the reason suggested by it for the Saviour's exaltation.

But still there is a difficulty connected with the word *ὅπως*; for how, then, it will be asked, will you read the verse? I feel constrained to adopt the rendering suggested by Schleusner: "We see Jesus, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, after that, or when, by the grace of God, He had (*postquam gratia Dei pro nobis mortem gustavit*) tasted death for all." Now it must be allowed, that *ὅπως* far most frequently signifies that, or so that, and indicates the final cause; but there are cases where it undeniably means when, or after, as in Acts iii. 19: *μετανοήσατε οὖν καὶ ἐπιστρέψατε, εἰς τὸ ἐξαλειφθῆναι ὑμῶν τὰς ἁμαρτίας, ὅπως ἂν ἔλθωσιν καιροὶ ἀναψύξεως ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ Κυρίου*; and in Homer, *Il.* xii. 208:

> Τρῶες δ' ἐρρίγησαν, ὅπως ἴδον αἰόλον ὄφιν
> Κείμενον ἐν μέσσοισι.

Now, as *γεύσηται* is the subj. 1 aor. mid., it may be viewed as referring to past time; and taking *ὅπως* in the sense of when or after, the clause may be rendered, "when He had tasted death." Luther's version, which is one of the best of modern ones, has *auf dass er schmeckte den Tod*—for that He tasted.

The phrase *χάριτι Θεοῦ* means, it is plain, "by the gracious appointment of God." Our gratitude is not due to Christ merely, but also to the Father; for if Christ acted as Mediator, it was God who appointed Him to the office: "God so loved the world," etc. See also Rom. v. 15, Titus iii. 7.

It has been supposed by many that there is emphasis in the *γεύσηται θανάτου*; and Chrysostom makes it refer to the shortness of the Saviour's continuance in the grave. He illustrates the phrase by the case of a physician who slightly tastes the potion he administers, that the patient may be encouraged to drink it freely (Chrys. xii. 59, A.). Others, again, have supposed that the very opposite is the true force

of the phrase, and that it imports tasting all the bitterness of death. The probability is, that it simply denotes dying. See Calvin.

The apostle has now shown that the gospel kingdom is not under the control of angels, but under the control of Christ; and that though the Saviour was placed for a period beneath the angels, and suffered and died, He has been crowned with glory and honour, and is now at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool. Now the Jews had no idea of a suffering Messiah, and therefore much objection would be made by them to such statements. Was it to be supposed, they might ask, that God would permit His own Son to die a cursed and shameful death? Was it to be supposed that the great Personage, to whom for ages their ancestors had looked, would appear in so mean and humble a situation as Jesus? Could the son of Mary, the despised and persecuted Galilean, be the person who was described in Scripture as superior to the angels, and appointed to universal dominion? These objections are not formally stated by the apostle, but nothing can be plainer than that he has them in his eye; and therefore he proceeds in the following verses to show, that so far were the sufferings of Christ from being inconsistent with His mediatorial dignity, that they were necessary to the attainment of the great ends of His mission: *ἔπρεπεν γὰρ αὐτῷ, δι' ὃν τὰ πάντα, καὶ δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα, πολλοὺς υἱοὺς εἰς δόξαν ἀγαγόντα, τὸν ἀρχηγὸν τῆς σωτηρίας αὐτῶν διὰ παθημάτων τελειῶσαι.*

The pronoun *αὐτῷ*, and the description with which it is accompanied, *δι' ὃν*, etc., plainly refer to God the Father, for the person so described is distinguished from the *ἀρχηγὸν σωτηρίας*. The description represents the Almighty as the first cause and the last end of the whole created universe: *δι' ὃν*, meaning on whose account, *i.e.* for the promotion of whose glory; and *δι' οὗ*, through whom, or by whose creative energy. The whole expression is a favourite one with the Apostle Paul, and is sometimes applied by him to the Son, and sometimes to the Father; and it is worthy of remark, that the same idea by which you bound at once from the origin to the end of all things, does not occur in any of the other apostles,—a circum-

stance which furnishes a very strong argument in defence of the Pauline origin of the Epistle to the Hebrews. *Δι' ὃν*, etc., is quite in Paul's style of thinking. It is worthy of remark, too, that among the repeated exhibitions which the apostle makes of this sublime thought in his writings, when he has occasion to apply it both to the Father and to the Son at once, he uses *ἐξ οὗ* in reference to the Father, and *δι' οὗ* in reference to the Son (Rom. xi. 36; 1 Cor. viii. 6).

With respect to *ἀγαγόντα*, it has been questioned whether it refers to the Father or to the Son—to the pronoun *αὐτῷ*, or to the noun *ἀρχηγόν*. If it were designed to refer to the Father, it might naturally have been supposed that it would be *ἀγαγόντι*, dative, to agree with *αὐτῷ*; but being in the accusative, it has been supposed by many that it must necessarily agree with *ἀρχηγόν*. Yet there is an objection of considerable force against this reference furnished by the pronoun *αὐτῶν*, which seems to imply that the word *ἀρχηγόν*, with which it is joined, denotes a different person from the one to whom *ἀγαγόντα* refers—bringing many sons, the Captain of their salvation. On the whole, therefore, it seems preferable to regard *ἀγαγόντα* as referring to the person described in the preceding clause, viz. God; nor is it a valid objection to this view of the subject, that the case is changed: for though it might have been *ἀγαγόντι*, to agree with *αὐτῷ*, it is quite grammatical to make it *ἀγαγόντα*, the accusative, before the infinitive *τελειῶσαι*: it was suitable to His character, that He, bringing, etc. Examples of the same construction you will find in other parts of Scripture, as in Acts xi. 12, *εἶπε δέ μοι τὸ Πνεῦμα συνελθεῖν αὐτοῖς, μηδὲν διακρινόμενον*, where *διακ.* is made accusative in connection with the infinitive *συνελθεῖν*. You may turn also to Acts xxv. 27, where we read thus: *ἄλογον γάρ μοι δοκεῖ, πέμποντα δέσμιον, μὴ καὶ τὰς κατ' αὐτοῦ αἰτίας σημᾶναι*, where the participle might have been in the dative, but is in the accusative. It is clear, therefore, that *ἀγαγόντα*, in the passage before us, may be understood to refer to the same person as *αὐτῷ*; and there can be no doubt that the scope of the passage, and the pronoun *αὐτῶν*, connected with *ἀρχηγόν*, require us to adopt this construction.

Ἔπρεπεν expresses the suitableness of what follows to the moral character of God. It is not an external necessity which

it indicates, but a necessity resulting from the nature and attributes of the Almighty. The same sentiment is expressed by the word δεῖ in Luke xvii. 25 : πρῶτον δὲ δεῖ αὐτὸν πολλὰ παθεῖν. We are taught, therefore, by the apostle, that there existed a moral necessity, if at least man was to be saved at all, that suffering should be endured by some one for him. It has been alleged, indeed, that though God is pleased to save us by a suffering Saviour, yet there was no antecedent necessity that He should adopt any such plan, but that He might have pardoned sinners on their simple repentance. But certainly the words of the apostle teach, that the moral character of God required the intervention of some reconciling agency. It became the Sovereign Ruler not to receive guilty man at once to glory, but to conduct him to that elevation by a suffering Saviour. Any other course would have tarnished the lustre of God's holy government.

And the thing which the apostle affirms it became God to do, was : τὸν ἀρχηγὸν τῆς σωτηρίας αὐτῶν διὰ παθημάτων τελειῶσαι. This clause Mr. Stuart regards as denoting to raise the Redeemer to consummate glory on account of His sufferings, supposing it to be quite synonymous with διὰ τὸ πάθημα ἐστεφανωμένον. But this exposition seems to me to fall far short of the true meaning of the words, and to miss, in fact, the chief point which they contemplate ; for the object of the apostle in this passage is not so much to account for the glory of Christ consistently with His sufferings, as to account for His sufferings consistently with what had been affirmed respecting His superangelic glory. The term ἔπρεπεν, it became God, respects the infliction of the sufferings fully as much as the bestowment of the glory. It became God to make Christ perfect through sufferings—to subject Him first to sufferings, and then to raise Him to the mediatorial throne. And this double reference of ἔπρεπεν is secured by the government of παθημάτων in the genitive by διά, which phrase seems studiously varied for this very purpose from διὰ τὸ πάθημα in the foregoing verse,—a difference which Mr. Stuart must have overlooked when he affirmed that the one clause expressed exactly the same idea as the other. The one declares that Christ was crowned on account of His sufferings, and the other affirms that it was meet He

should thus pass through sufferings to the mediatorial dignity. The same sentiment is expressed in Luke xxiv. 26: *οὐχὶ ταῦτα ἔδει παθεῖν τὸν Χριστόν, καὶ εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ;* where the necessity applies to the sufferings as well as to the glory.

Ἀρχηγὸν is well explained by Chrysostom and Theophylact to mean *αἴτιον τῆς σωτηρίας*, author, cause of salvation. Many examples might be quoted from the classics to show that this is the common and natural meaning of *ἀρχηγός*, as *ὁ τοῦ γένους ἡμῶν ἀρχηγός*—(Isocrates), the author or founder of our family: *πολλῶν ἀρχηγὸν κακῶν*, Joseph. *Antiq.* vii. 9, 4. See a good account of the word in Pye Smith, *Disc.* iv. p. 120.

And what is meant by the *τελείωσις* of the Author of salvation? It is clear that *τελειῶσαι* denotes advancement, or elevation of some kind, though much difference of opinion has prevailed as to the precise nature of it. There are two ideas which this verb is frequently employed to indicate; and these are, to consecrate, to instal, or to induct into an office; and to complete, to accomplish, to make perfect. The former meaning is frequent in the LXX., the word being employed to represent the Hebrew מִלֵּא, which describes the ceremonies employed at the consecration of the priests (Ex. xxix. 9); and therefore it has been supposed that it may very naturally denote in the passage before us the consecration of Christ to the office of the priesthood, which He exercises now in the sanctuary above. But this meaning does not seem so suitable either to the context of this passage, or to the context of any of the passages in Hebrews where the word occurs, as the more common meaning of perfecting or raising to dignity: you will find the word nine times in this book; and in no case does there seem to be any necessity for supposing any reference to consecration. Besides, the analogy on which the idea of consecration is founded does not hold in the case before us. For Aaron was consecrated to the office of the priesthood by various ceremonial rites and sacrifices, and then as a priest he killed and presented the great sacrifice of atonement that was to cover the sins of the people; but Christ's death was the very sacrifice by which full atonement was made for sin; and therefore we must view it not as His consecration to the priesthood, but as the principal

act of His priestly office. His installation surely must be past before the chief duties of his office are entered upon. *Τελειῶσαι*, therefore, it can scarcely be doubted, refers to the perfect glory to which the Saviour was elevated after His death; and as the preceding verse tells us that He was crowned on account of His sufferings, this gives us the additional information, that it was required by the moral character of God that He should pass through sufferings before He could sit upon the mediatorial throne. The cross was the indispensable harbinger of the crown.

The 10th verse, we have seen, lays down a principle of the very highest importance, declaring that there is a necessary connection between the moral character of God and the scheme of redemption. This principle, so valuable for repelling the objections made by the Jews to the idea of a suffering Saviour, the apostle intends to confirm by some appropriate arguments, and he does so towards the close of the chapter; but it is clear that the three following verses do not contain the proof of this point. They are designed to illustrate the connection between Christ and those whom He conducts to glory; and they are suggested by the description given of believers as *υἱοὶ Θεοῦ*. *Ὁ τε γὰρ ἁγιάζων*, continues the apostle, referring, it is plain, not to the body of the proposition contained in the 10th verse, but to the word *υἱοί*. Believers are the sons of God, and Christ also is the Son of God. *Ὁ τε γὰρ ἁγιάζων καὶ ἁγιαζόμενοι ἐξ ἑνὸς πάντες*.

The reference of *ἐξ ἑνὸς* has been much disputed. Chrysostom, and the Greek fathers generally, suppose *Θεοῦ* to be the substantive that must be understood to agree with *ἑνός*, of one Father, viz. God; but many others argue that Adam or Abraham is the person whose paternal relation to believers and Christ is referred to. According to the one supplement, it is the elevation of believers to be the sons of God that is the idea which the apostle contemplates; according to the other, it is the depression of the Saviour to be a child of the dust that is the point which the verse sets before us. Now both ideas are quite scriptural; and the question is, Which is most consonant to the scope of the apostle's argument? I have no hesitation in saying it is the former. It is plain that, since *γὰρ* introduces

the 11th verse, we must find the guiding thread by which we are to be led through it in the foregoing verse; and *υἱούς*, there can be little doubt, is the word to which *γὰρ* refers. Now the *υἱοὶ* are spoken of in connection with God: they are the sons whom God is conducting to glory: they are the sons of God. The 11th verse, therefore, seems plainly designed to justify the application of this title to believers; for, says he, the reconciler and the reconciled are all of one, they are the children of the same Father. The reconciled are elevated by Christ to a new position: they are made meet to be His brethren; and the term *υἱοὺς* properly belongs to them.

And that this is the course of thought contained in vers. 11, 12, and 13, is clear from ver. 14, where the participation of Christ in flesh and blood is brought into view: *ἐπεὶ οὖν τὰ παιδία*, etc. Now, if you suppose *ἑνὸς* in ver. 11 to refer to Adam, then this same truth has not only been stated already in ver. 11, but it is now in ver. 14 stated again as an inference from itself. Christ and His people are all the children of Adam—possess the same human nature. "Since, then, the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself took part of the same;" which certainly seems a line of thought you would not expect from Paul. But if you suppose *ἑνὸς* to refer to God, and vers. 11, 12, 13, to describe the elevation which it was the design of the Almighty those children should receive whom He gave to Christ, then it is most naturally stated in ver. 14, that, for the purpose of effecting this elevation, the Saviour first descended to the level of those whom He was about to raise. Since the children, the children given to Him by God, were partakers of flesh, etc.

Having thus indicated the general stream of thought, let us examine more minutely the individual statements of the apostle.

The word *ἁγιάζω* does not mean, either in this verse or in any other part of the Epistle to the Hebrews, what we commonly understand by the term sanctify. In some parts of the New Testament, it is true, it bears this sense, as in John xvii. 17, 19, *ἁγίασον αὐτοὺς ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ σου*, where the moral renovation of the heart seems plainly to be the change contemplated; but in the Epistle to the Hebrews it has always a reference to the immediate effect of the sacrificial work of Christ, as you may

see by studying the other five places where it occurs, besides the text before us. In chap. ix. 13, for example, you find the following passage: *εἰ γὰρ τὸ αἷμα ταύρων*, etc., *ἁγιάζει πρὸς τὴν τῆς σαρκὸς καθαρότητα*; and in chap. x. 10, *ἐν ᾧ θελήματι ἡγιασμένοι ἐσμὲν διὰ τῆς προσφορᾶς τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐφάπαξ*. See also x. 14, 29, and xiii. 12. From all these passages, it is plain that *ἁγιάζω* means to make atonement or expiation for guilt; and this use of the word is derived from the fact that in the Septuagint it is employed to translate קדש and כפר in places where they evidently refer to the expiation made for sin by the blood of slain beasts (Ex. xix. 10, 14, xxix. 33; Josh. vii. 13, etc.). *Ὁ ἁγιάζων*, therefore, and *οἱ ἁγιαζόμενοι*, mean the person who expiates, and the persons for whom expiation is made—the reconciler and the reconciled; and these, says the apostle, are all of one Father, viz. God.

And this intimate relation between the Redeemer and the redeemed is declared by the apostle to be the reason why Christ readily acknowledges His people for brethren: *δι' ἣν αἰτίαν οὐκ ἐπαισχύνεται ἀδελφοὺς αὐτοὺς καλεῖν*. This clause furnishes an additional argument to prove that *Θεοῦ* is the proper supplement to *ἐξ ἑνὸς* in the foregoing clause, and not Adam or Abraham; for it seems to imply that the brethren are elevated so as to be made meet companions for Christ. He can acknowledge them as brethren, without prejudice to His own dignity. It is their spiritual relation to God, and not the mere possession of human nature, that is the ground of the fraternal relation described by the apostle as subsisting between them and Christ.

According to the apostle's usual practice in this epistle, he proceeds to cite from the Old Testament some passages in illustration of the fact that Christ recognises His people as brethren: *λέγων· Ἀπαγγελῶ τὸ ὄνομά σου τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς μου, ἐν μέσῳ ἐκκλησίας ὑμνήσω σε. Καὶ πάλιν· Ἐγὼ ἔσομαι πεποιθὼς ἐπ' αὐτῷ. Καὶ πάλιν· Ἰδού, ἐγὼ καὶ τὰ παιδία ἃ μοι ἔδωκεν ὁ Θεός.*

These three quotations—the first taken from Ps. xxii. 22, the second from Isaiah or Ps. xviii. 2, and the third from Isa. viii. 18—are all introduced for the one purpose of illustrating the fraternal relation between Christ and His people. The connection of the several passages from which these quotations are

taken with the promised Messiah, and the exact meaning of the cited clauses themselves, might all furnish room for considerable discussion; but we must for the present pass over these points. Suffice it to say, that the three clauses are all introduced for the purpose of illustrating the statement of ver. 11, that Christ is not ashamed to call His people brethren; and that statement itself grows out of the word *υἱοὺς* in ver. 10, which suggests the idea that Christ and His people stand in a similar relation to God.

And having thus adverted to the relationship between Christ and His people, the apostle next shows (ver. 14) how this rela tionship was constituted; and then proceeds to illustrate and confirm the body of the proposition laid down in ver. 10. It became God to make Christ pass through sufferings for the recovery of man, and to pass through them in the nature of man. The reasons and purposes of this appointment are stated in ver. 14, where the proof of the general proposition of ver. 10 commences: *ἐπεὶ οὖν τὰ παιδία κεκοινώνηκε σαρκὸς καὶ αἵματος, καὶ αὐτὸς παραπλησίως μετέσχεν τῶν αὐτῶν, ἵνα διὰ θανάτου καταργήσῃ τὸν τὸ κράτος ἔχοντα τοῦ θανάτου, τουτέστιν, τὸν διάβολον· καὶ ἀπαλλάξῃ τούτους ὅσοι φόβῳ θανάτου διὰ παντὸς τοῦ ζῆν ἔνοχοι ἦσαν δουλείας.* The children whom God had given to Christ, and whom He has styled His brethren, were partakers *σαρκὸς καὶ αἵματος*; and this was the reason why He likewise took part of them, or became a man. *Σὰρξ* and *αἷμα* seem here employed to denote human nature. Sometimes the idea of sinfulness is connected with these words, as in 1 Cor. xv. 50; but at other times it is merely the nature and powers of man they indicate, as in Gal. i. 16. Christ, we know, while He took our nature upon Him, was perfectly free from sin, and from all tendency to sin. He was a partaker of *σαρκὸς* and *αἵματος*, yet *χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας*. Yet *σὰρξ* and *αἷμα* seem always to carry along with them the idea of liability to suffering, and seem appropriate descriptions of human nature only in this world; for we are told they cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven (1 Cor. xv. 20), and that the days of Christ's earthly life were the days of His flesh (Heb. v. 7). It was a spiritual and glorified body in which He ascended to the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens.

The purpose of his assuming human nature is stated by the apostle: that He might die. Without becoming a partaker of flesh and blood, He could not have died, *ἵνα διὰ θανάτου*, that through death—*i.e.* by dying Himself—*καταργήσῃ*, He might destroy, or defeat, or render impotent. *Καταργέω* is a favourite word of Paul's, and is always used by him in the sense of defeating or rendering abortive. Its occurrence here supplies proof of the Pauline origin of this epistle.

The object on whom the action of *καταργέω* is here said to terminate is the devil, who is described as having the power of death. This can only mean that death, which reigns over mankind, is the consequence of that sin which was first introduced by the devil. The tempter seduced mankind into sin, whose wages are death, and Christ by His own death destroyed the works of the devil. He made expiation for sin; He implants in those who receive Him the principle of a new life. This new life, though it does not prevent us from dying, is yet immortal. It robs death of its sting; it makes the very grave but a resting-place for the believer; and like Christ Himself, the believer will rise from the grave with a glorified and immortal body. In consequence of the Saviour's triumph over the prince of darkness and the power of the grave, we can triumphantly exclaim, "O death, where is thy sting?" etc.

The Saviour's triumph over the devil is traced out to its consequences in ver. 15: *καὶ ἀπαλλάξῃ τούτους*, etc. It has been doubted whether *δουλείας* stands connected with *ἀπαλλάξῃ* or *ἔνοχοι*. The sense remains unaffected. The distance of *δουλείας* from *ἀπαλλάξῃ* seems opposed to their being connected; and *ἔνοχοι*, instead of the dative, sometimes governs the genitive, though *τοῦ ζῆν* is here used as a substantive. This is often the case with the infinitive, but it seldom happens that an adjective qualifies like a substantive.

The apostle has said that Christ became partaker of flesh and blood, like the children whom God had given Him, and ver. 16 stands connected with this idea: *οὐ γὰρ δήπου ἀγγέλων ἐπιλαμβάνεται, ἀλλὰ σπέρματος Ἀβραὰμ ἐπιλαμβάνεται.* Two views have been taken of the meanings of these words. They have been supposed to denote that Christ assumed not the angelic nature, but the human. This interpretation stood un-

challenged for centuries; but there can be little doubt that it does not give the meaning of the passage. *Ἐπιλαμβάνεσθαι*, coupled with the genitive of a person, denotes to lay hold of the person for the purpose of helping him, and hence simply to help, to assist, to support; and it cannot possibly mean to assume the nature of the person. The obvious sense of the verse is this: for indeed He helpeth not the angels, but He helpeth the seed of Abraham; and in this view the connection of thought is close. He became a partaker of flesh and blood; He assumed the nature of man, for it is not the angels, but it is mankind, whom He came to help. He took the nature of the beings whom it was His purpose to assist. But if you suppose that ver. 16 means, He took not on Him the nature of angels, but of men, then you make the assumption of humanity just the reason for assuming humanity. Besides, even if *ἐπιλαμβάνεσθαι*, with the genitive of the person, could denote taking the nature of that person, the past tense alone would suit here, for Christ's assumption of the human nature was a past event; but in the case of the help Christ furnishes to mankind the present tense is the most suitable, for it is not angels whom as Mediator He helps, but it is the seed of Abraham; which is just another expression for the *παιδία* mentioned in ver. 14, and said to be given to him by God.

The 17th verse is introduced in the shape of a deduction from the 16th: hence it is the seed of Abraham and not angels the Mediator helps: *ὅθεν ὤφειλε κατὰ πάντα τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς ὁμοιωθῆναι, ἵνα ἐλεήμων γένηται καὶ πιστὸς ἀρχιερεὺς τὰ πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, εἰς τὸ ἱλάσκεσθαι τὰς ἁμαρτίας τοῦ λαοῦ.* And the substance of the verse reverts to the 14th, and supplies a link there omitted. It was there said Christ became partaker of flesh and blood, that He might vanquish the devil. Here it is intimated that the Saviour, made flesh and blood, or made like to His brethren (for the expressions mean the same), acts the part of a priest, and expiates the guilt of sin; and this is the way we are now given to understand in which the conquest of the devil and death was effected. At the same time, while the assumption of humanity mainly looks to the expiation of guilt, and the consequent overthrow of the devil and death, there is a subordinate purpose mentioned by the apostle which it serves,

viz. the enabling of Christ to look upon His brethren with tender and brotherly feelings. He was made like . . . *ἵνα ἐλεήμων*; and the 18th verse points out the manner in which this result was produced: *ἐν ᾧ γὰρ πέπονθεν αὐτὸς πειρασθεὶς δύναται τοῖς πειραζομένοις βοηθῆσαι*—For inasmuch as He, etc. His own experience of trials in the days of His flesh, enables Him to sympathize with His people in their sorrows, and prompts Him to send relief. The subserviency of Christ's sufferings to the mercifulness and sympathy of His heart, is more fully handled in chap. iv., and may be then to more advantage considered.

CHAPTER III.

IN the preceding chapter, the apostle first enforces upon the Hebrew Christians the duty of giving attentive heed to the gospel system, affirming, that since Christ, as he had before shown, was superior to the angels, therefore the new economy was deserving of an uncommon and paramount regard: *διὰ τοῦτο δεῖ περισσοτέρως ἡμᾶς προσέχειν τοῖς ἀκουσθεῖσιν, μή ποτε*, etc. He next proceeds to establish a principle assumed in the foregoing exhortation, viz. that Christ is the Head of the gospel dispensation: *οὐ γὰρ ἀγγέλοις ὑπέταξε τὴν οἰκουμένην τήν*, etc. And in confirmation of this principle he adduces a passage from the Psalms of David: *τί ἐστιν ἄνθρωπος, ὅτι μιμνήσκῃ*,—a passage which, while it proves the Headship of Christ over the church, at the same time furnishes the materials for a short account of the scheme of redemption: *ἐν γὰρ τῷ ὑποτάξαι αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα*, etc. The apostle is thus led to assert, while commenting upon the passage quoted from the Old Testament, that the Messiah was made for a short time lower than the angels; that the purpose for which He endured this humiliation was that He might taste death for every man; and finally, that, in consequence of having suffered in such a cause, He has been raised again, and elevated to dignity and glory. Now, various objections would naturally be made by the Jews against this account of the scheme of redemption. Was it to be supposed, they might ask, that God would permit His own Son to die a cursed and shameful death? Was it to be supposed that the great Personage to whose coming their ancestors had for ages looked forward, would appear in a situation so mean and undignified as that occupied by Jesus? Could the meek and lowly son of

Mary be the person who was described as superior to the angels of God? These are the objections which the apostle proceeds in the end of the chapter to repel; and he endeavours to show that the scheme of redemption, such as he had described it, was altogether worthy of God, and admirably suited to the lost and helpless state of man: *ἔπρεπε γὰρ αὐτῷ, δι' ὃν τὰ πάντα.*

Having thus assigned most satisfactory reasons for the brief humiliation which Christ, though superior to the angels, had consented to endure,—having declared that He had become man for the express purpose of establishing between Himself and the human race the close and intimate relation of brotherhood, and that being man He had died to make reconciliation for the sins of the people,—the apostle proceeds in the third chapter to call upon the Hebrew Christians to fix their meditations upon the blessed Saviour: *ὅθεν, ἀδελφοὶ ἅγιοι, κλήσεως ἐπουρανίου μέτοχοι, κατανοήσατε τὸν ἀπόστολον καὶ ἀρχιερέα τῆς ὁμολογίας ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν.* Most interpreters regard these words as merely a parænetic appeal, a practical lesson, like the commencement of the second chapter, founded upon what has gone before; but while undoubtedly they are to be viewed in this light, it seems equally clear that they are designed to exhibit the subject which the apostle intends to discuss: they announce the subject, and they invite attention to it. For what else does the apostle handle to the very end of the epistle, but the apostolic and priestly offices of the Saviour? The first two chapters may be viewed as the introduction, designed to awaken an interest in the subject by displaying the greatness of the Saviour; the opening sentence of the third chapter states the subject, after full preparation has been made for it; and the rest of the epistle forms the body of a most logical and compact discourse on the very subject to which attention is here invited. *Ὅθεν . . . κατανοήσατε*—Wherefore, consider: what has been said shows the subject to be worthy of your closest attention: *ὅθεν, ἀντὶ τοῦ, διὰ τοῦτό φησι,* says Chrys. (xii. 79, B.).

The apostle styles the Hebrews *ἀδελφοὶ ἅγιοι, κλήσεως ἐπουρανίου μέτοχοι.* Michaelis supposes that the word *ἀδελφοὶ* is not here used as a designation of Christians in the usual sense, as the brethren of each other, but refers to the 13th verse of the preceding chapter, where Christ declares them to be His

own brethren. There does not, however, seem to be any good reason for the idea that the phrase wears any other aspect here than what usually belongs to it. Few designations of the followers of Christ are of more frequent occurrence in the New Testament than the one before us; and it plainly denotes that they are members of the same family, related to each other by the ties of grace, and knit together by the bonds of Christian charity and love. And the epithet *ἅγιοι* is added (see also 1 Thess. v. 27), to denote that they are a band of brothers, separated from the world, and set apart to the service of God. The ancient Jews were styled a holy people, because they were the peculiar people of God distinguished from all other nations; and similar language is applied to the Christian church not only by Paul, but likewise by Peter, who (1 Pet. ii. 9, 10) describes believers as *γένος ἐκλεκτόν, βασίλειον ἱεράτευμα, ἔθνος ἅγιον, λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν.* It is not necessary, however, to suppose that either Paul or Peter meant to affirm that every individual of the societies they respectively addressed was holy and good, and faithfully prosecuted a solemn dedication to God.

Κλῆσις is a favourite word of Paul's, and is almost peculiar to him, there being only one other of the sacred penmen who uses it, viz. Peter, and he only once. It literally denotes an invitation, whether it be accepted or not, and the classic authors employ it in this sense; but in the Scriptures it means generally an accepted invitation, and then by metonymy the blessings themselves which are proffered. It is not a mere offer that *κλῆσις* denotes, but rather what we theologically style effectual calling. For example, when Paul tells the Thessalonians that he prayed always for them (2 Thess. i. 11), *ἵνα ὑμᾶς ἀξιώσῃ τῆς κλήσεως ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν,* and fulfil all the good pleasure of His goodness, and the work of faith with power, it is plain that *κλῆσις* means much more than the general invitation which is given to men to come to Christ. See also 2 Pet. i. 10: *βεβαίαν ὑμῶν τὴν κλῆσιν καὶ ἐκλογὴν ποιεῖσθαι.* In the passage before us, in like manner, *κλήσεως ἐπουρανίου μέτοχοι,* there can be no doubt that the phrase means much more than merely participating in the hearing of the word, or listening to the offers of mercy: it means that the persons spoken of share the blessings which are bestowed through Christ.

And why is the κλῆσις of the Christian styled ἐπουράνιος? Whether is it because the call comes from heaven, or is designed to lead to heaven? It is manifest that, on either supposition, you are furnished with a perfectly sufficient reason for the epithet; and indeed I do not see any very valid ground for deciding authoritatively in favour of either view, to the exclusion of the other: for if the apostle, in discoursing of the believer's κλῆσις, sometimes refers to its origin, it is also a fact that he sometimes refers to its object. In 2 Tim. i. 9 he refers to its origin, when he tells us that God has called His people, κλήσει ἁγίᾳ, οὐ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα ἡμῶν, ἀλλὰ κατ' ἰδίαν πρόθεσιν, καὶ χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσαν ἡμῖν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ πρὸ χρόνων αἰωνίων; and in 1 Tim. vi. 12, Heb. ix. 15, he refers to its object, when he tells us that αἰώνιος ζωὴ is that to which believers are called, and αἰώνιος κληρονομία. Most interpreters take up the idea that it is the celestial blessings promised to the called which are the apostle's reason for the employment of the epithet under consideration. Chrysostom says: μηδὲν τοίνυν ἐνταῦθα ζητῆτε, εἰ ἐκεῖ κέκλησθε· ἐκεῖ γὰρ ὁ μισθός, ἐκεῖ ἡ ἀνταπόδοσις (xii. 79, B.). Either supposition, however, seems to me quite consistent with the scope of the passage, and either furnishes a good reason for the application of the term. Indeed, there is nothing unreasonable in supposing that the apostle might have both ideas in his mind; and might style the believers' calling a heavenly calling, both because it comes from heaven, and because it leads to heaven.

The apostle's exhortation to the holy brethren is this: κατανοήσατε τὸν ἀπόστολον καὶ ἀρχιερέα τῆς ὁμολογίας ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν —Consider, attentively regard, make the subject of your meditations, Jesus the Apostle and High Priest, etc. The force of κατανοήσατε is beautifully brought out in Acts vii. 31, προσερχομένου δὲ αὐτοῦ κατανοῆσαι—and when he (Moses) approached to *mark*, to *examine*, more narrowly the wonderful phenomenon of the burning bush; and Chrysostom, expounding the passage in Genesis where Abraham's messenger came to the well, and met Rebecca, says: αὐτὰ τὰ ῥήματα τῆς κόρης κατενόει, τὸ βλέμμα, τὴν βάδισιν, τὸ σχῆμα. The force of the word under consideration, it is plain, does not so naturally suggest the idea of an admonition or exhortation, as that of the formal proposition of a subject.

The subject to which the apostle invites the attention of the Hebrews is Jesus, whom he styles *τὸν ἀπόστολον καὶ ἀρχιερέα*, etc. Considerable difference of opinion has prevailed respecting this description. The word which has occasioned most controversy is *ἀπόστολον*, which in no other part of the New Testament but this is applied to Christ. The more ancient and common interpretation of the term views it as founded upon the fact so frequently mentioned in Scripture, that God sent (*ἀπέστειλεν*) His Son into the world (John iii. 34, v. 36, vi. 29, xx. 21; Gal. iv. 4); and therefore it denotes the legate or messenger of God sent forth to make known His will to mankind. Christ, like Moses, received a commission from God, and in virtue of it appeared as a public instructor. To this interpretation Tholuck objects, that if *ἀπόστολος* had thus been designed to describe Christ as the apostle of God, as the twelve were His apostles, then some such qualifying epithet as *θεῖος*, *τοῦ Θεοῦ*, or *οὐράνιος*, must have been added to distinguish Him from His own disciples, to mark so unwonted an application of the word; and also that the implied comparison which you must thus suppose between Christ and Moses, is inconsistent with the addition of the word *ἀρχιερέα*, whose place should rather have been occupied by *προφήτην*. He adopts therefore another exposition, first suggested, he says, by Braun, and followed by Wetstein, that Paul styles Christ *ἀπόστολος*, in allusion to the presiding officer of the synagogue, who the Talmud says was named בֵּית דִּין שְׁלִיחַ, *gesandter Vertreter des Synedriums*, commissioned intercessor. Hence it would appear that the high priest was saluted by the other members of the Sanhedrim as their deputy or commissioned intercessor to transact for them in the concerns of religion. Now, as he presided over the sacred building, and was deputed to present the prayers of his brethren to God (though Jahn indeed says (*Arch.* 434) that the legate of the synagogue was not the high priest, but one sent abroad on some mission), so Christ is the president or head of the Christian church, and the great intercessor with God on behalf of His people. *Ἀπόστολος*, therefore, according to this view, is synonymous with *ἔγγυος* and *μεσίτης*. And with the view of confirming this interpretation, Tholuck adopts the idea that *ὁμολογίας* means here covenant, and the whole phrase, of course

"Mediator and High Priest of our covenant;" though it must be allowed that, even were this translation of ὁμολογίας rejected, the view given of ἀπόστολος might be held in connection with the other sense of ὁμολογίας.

To the whole view, however, I must confess there seem to me to be very weighty objections. Ἀπόστολος never bears in any other part of the New Testament the sense ἔγγυος or μεσίτης, but always that of messenger, agreeably to its etymology. The same observation is applicable to ὁμολογίας, which bears, it is true, in the classic authors the sense of covenant, bargain, but not in the New Testament, where its meaning is always confession. And as to Tholuck's objection, that if ἀπόστολος had been designed to describe Christ as the Apostle of God, some word like θεῖος would have been added, undoubtedly such addition might have been made, but still it was not necessary; for the idea supposed to be awanting is fully expressed in the following clause, where Jesus the Apostle is described as faithful to Him that appointed Him. Besides, there seems to be a doubt whether the terms quoted from the Talmud, as applied to the Jewish high priest, be of sufficiently ancient a date to have given rise to the language of our text. But there is another argument which weighs more powerfully with me than any of the above considerations against Tholuck's exposition; and it is founded upon the connection between this verse and the preceding part of the epistle. After having stated in the first two chapters a number of things respecting Christ, the apostle thus proceeds in the verse before us: "Wherefore consider τὸν ἀπόστολον καί," etc.; which implies that the ideas involved in ἀπόστολον and ἀρχιερέα are not now brought out for the first time in the epistle, but have been already partially developed, and are now formally proposed, as deserving further consideration: they have been shown to be worthy of attention, and attention is accordingly invited to them. Now it is plain, that the peculiar idea which Tholuck attaches to ἀπόστολον here has not been adverted to in the two preceding chapters; but it is equally plain that Christ has been described both as the Messenger of God to the world, and as the High Priest of the church. Unquestionably, therefore, it is more agreeable both to the language and the logic of the passage, to regard ἀπόστο-

λον and *ἀρχιερέα* as denoting apostle or messenger, and high priest, and to view the Saviour as here exhibited to our contemplation in two lights; and accordingly Paul does, in fact, first compare Him with Moses, the apostle or messenger of God, and then with Aaron, the high priest of the Jews, which fully explains what Tholuck regards as a difficulty—the use of *ἀρχιερέα* rather than *προφήτην* in connection with *ἀπόστολον.*

Ὁμολογία, I have said, in classic Greek denotes a covenant, paction; but there is no undoubted instance where it bears this sense in the New Testament: there it denotes confession of the thing confessed; and apostle and high priest of our profession means apostle and high priest whom we profess, or apostle and high priest of our heavenly system. Perhaps the latter shade of meaning—thing professed—is to be adopted in preference to the other,—meaning, of course, the Christian religion, of which Christ is the Apostle, because He was sent from heaven to reveal it; of which He is the High Priest, because His mediation and sacrifice procure all the blessings of it.

In the 2d verse the apostle proceeds to compare Christ with Moses: *πιστὸν ὄντα τῷ ποιήσαντι αὐτόν, ὡς καὶ Μωσῆς ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ.* It is God, of course, to whom the apostle refers in the words *τῷ ποιήσαντι*; and what relation do they mark between the Father and the Son? Carpzovius supposes that *ποιήσαντι* describes a creative act on the part of God, and therefore renders the phrase *Deo patri*, appealing to a passage in Matt. xix. 4: *ποιήσας ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ ἐποίησεν.* And certainly it cannot be doubted that the verb *ποιεῖν* denotes to make, to form, and that the participle might be used to signify a creator; but it is a fact that this word is never used to denote either the eternal generation of Christ, or even the production of His human nature. Moreover, it is plain that the scope of the passage before us is quite hostile to such a sense: it is designation to an office, which is plainly the idea the nature of the statement suggests. And *ποιεῖν* frequently bears the sense of appointing to an office, at least in the Scriptures; as in Mark iii. 14: *καὶ ἐποίησε δώδεκα ἵνα ὦσι μετ' αὐτοῦ.* Acts ii. 36: *ὅτι καὶ Κύριον αὐτὸν καὶ Χριστὸν ὁ Θεὸς ἐποίησε, τοῦτον τὸν Ἰησοῦν, ὃν ὑμεῖς ἐσταυρώσατε.* This use of *ποιεῖν* is perhaps derived from the usage of the corresponding Hebrew word עָשָׂה,

which is frequently used in the sense of appointing, as in 1 Sam. xii. 6 : יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶת־אַהֲרֹן (see also 1 Kings xii. 31 and 2 Chron. xiii. 9).

And the word *ποιήσαντι* undoubtedly refers to the offices Christ has just now been represented as sustaining: faithful to Him that appointed Him to be, viz. *ἀπόστολον καὶ ἀρχιερέα.* Chrysostom supplies both words in filling up the ellipse. Some, however, suppose, that since the apostle, in the immediately subsequent part of his epistle, compares Christ, not with Aaron, but with Moses, therefore the commended fidelity of Christ, and the divine appointment mentioned, must have a special reference to the office in which He resembled Moses, and therefore they supply *ἀπόστολον* only. But though it be true that Paul first proceeds to discuss the apostolic office of Christ, it is equally true that he goes on immediately afterwards to the priestly; and since he has already formally proposed both as the subjects of discourse, it is not unreasonable to suppose that he contemplates both in stating the divine appointment. And in both offices we know that Christ was faithful to Him that appointed Him. As the Messenger of God, He spoke not of Himself, but only the commandment which the Father, who had sent Him, gave Him John xii. 49); and as the Priest of God, He cheerfully laid down His life, in compliance with the commandment which He had received from His Father (John x. 17, 18). He lived, He died, to execute the will of God.

Moses also, the apostle declares, was faithful unto God: *ὡς καὶ Μωσῆς ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ.* The testimony thus borne to the fidelity of Moses is founded upon the recorded declaration of Heaven; for we are told that, when Miriam and Aaron rebelled against him, and sought to undermine his authority, God Himself defended His servant, and said (Num. xii. 7), "My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all my house." Christ and Moses resembled each other, as they introduced each a new dispensation of religion, and were specially appointed by Heaven for this purpose; and they were both faithful in the discharge of their respective tasks, and enjoyed the peculiar favour and presence of God. Moses was distinguished above all other prophets by the intercourse he enjoyed with Heaven, and so was Christ.

Οἶκος, it is plain, denotes not the ancient temple, for that was not built in the days of Moses; nor yet the tabernacle of the ark, for over it Aaron, and not Moses, presided: it denotes here the living family or church of God, on the same principle that the term house is frequently employed in English to denote the inmates. This form of expression is by no means rare in Scripture. The Hebrew term בַּיִת is frequently to be found in this sense, as when mention is made of the house of Joseph, of Israel, of David; and the whole children of Israel, by an extension of the same figure, are styled the house of the Lord, of which you will find examples in Num. xii. 7, Jer. xii. 7, Hos. viii. 1, ix. 8, 15. From the appellation thus given to the whole Jewish nation in the Old Testament, is undoubtedly derived the analogous expression in the New, *οἶκος Θεοῦ*, which is explained in 1 Tim. iii. 15 to mean the church or people of God: *ἵνα εἰδῇς πῶς δεῖ ἐν οἴκῳ Θεοῦ ἀναστρέφεσθαι, ἥτις ἐστὶν ἐκκλησία Θεοῦ ζῶντος*. By a similar figure of speech the followers of Christ are likewise styled the temple of God and the temple of the Holy Ghost, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ also Himself being the chief corner stone; in whom the whole building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.

It may be made a question, to whom the pronoun *αὐτοῦ* relates; whether to God the Father, who appointed Christ, or to Christ Himself, to whom the preceding *αὐτὸν* relates. As Moses was faithful in all his house: is it God's house or Christ's house that is meant? The grammatical construction does not very decisively settle the question. In the passage in Num. xii. 7, from which the commendation of Moses is quoted, it is God who is introduced speaking respecting His own house; which seems to prove that, in the passage in Hebrews, *αὐτοῦ* refers to God. But still it must be remembered, that as the distinction between the Father and the Son is not brought out so clearly in the Old Testament as in the New, we often find that passages, which in the Old Testament seem to relate exclusively to God, are quoted in the New, and applied to the Son. The explanation in such cases seems to be, that the truth is stated in the Hebrew Scriptures in a general form; but the same truth is afterwards more fully brought out, and precise

information is given respecting the particular person in the Godhead to whom it referred. But whether *αὐτοῦ* be supposed in this verse to refer to God or to Christ, certain it is that the same spiritual house is described in the 6th verse as belonging to Christ: *Χριστὸς δὲ ὡς υἱὸς ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ, οὗ οἶκός ἐσμεν ἡμεῖς.* And indeed there is nothing to hinder us from supposing that the church may be styled by the apostle both the house of God and the house of Christ.

Having thus recognised the claims of Moses, and acknowledged that he was faithful as well as Christ, the apostle proceeds to compare them more narrowly, and to point out the superior dignity and glory of Christ. He shows that, great and faithful as Moses was, and worthy therefore of the remembrance and respect and gratitude of the Jewish nation, which he by no means desired to lessen, Christ was greater and more honourable still, and worthy of profounder gratitude, and reverence, and love: *πλείονος γὰρ δόξης οὗτος παρὰ Μωσῆν ἠξίωται, καθ' ὅσον πλείονα τιμὴν ἔχει τοῦ οἴκου ὁ κατασκευάσας αὐτόν.*

Γὰρ seems to mark the production of a new reason in connection with *κατανοήσατε.* Consider Jesus, who was *faithful*, like Moses: consider Jesus, *for* He was even superior to that ancient legislator.

Man is the supplement made in the English version to *οὗτος*: perhaps apostle or prophet would have suited better; but any of them makes good sense.

It is contended by Ernesti, that *ἠξίωται* merely expresses the idea of *receive*—hath received, or possesses—hath been dignified with. And there can be no doubt that, though the word etymologically expresses deserved reception, yet it is often used where the idea of merit has no place; as in a passage quoted from Basil by Ernesti: *τῆς ἐπιγνώσεως τοῦ ὄντος μὴ καταξιούμενος*—"not having obtained a knowledge of the real" (Ern. 198). But if cases can be produced where mere reception is all the word can fairly be supposed to imply, there are many others where the idea of desert, the radical idea of the word, is undoubtedly preserved. In Heb. x. 29, for example, we read, *πόσῳ, δοκεῖτε, χείρονος ἀξιωθήσεται τιμωρίας ὁ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ καταπατήσας,* which does not mean merely, "how much

greater punishment shall he receive;" but, "how much shall he receive as his just desert." And there is a passage which Ernesti quotes from Lysias in support of his opinion, which, when I turn to the Greek oration, seems to me rather to be a case of the opposite kind. It is in the oration against Eratosthenes, one of the thirty tyrants, whose misdeeds Lysias is recounting; and he mentions that the tyrant had always been most careful to preserve the appearance of fidelity to the people: *βουλόμενος τῷ πλήθει δοκεῖν πιστὸς εἶναι*; and then follows the passage, *τιμώμενος δὲ καὶ τῶν μεγίστων ἀξιούμενος αὐτὸς ἐπαγγειλάμενος σώσειν τὴν πόλιν αὐτὸς ἀπώλεσε*, where, though it is plain that Eratosthenes was undeserving of the honours to which he was raised, yet they had been bestowed upon him in the idea that he merited them (Lysias, *Orat. Att.* ii. 374, bottom). And as the idea of merit is generally retained in the verb *ἀξιούσθαι*, so also is it more congenial than the simple idea of reception to the whole scope of the passage before us, which describes the deserved elevation of Him who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. Christ hath deservedly received greater honour—hath been counted worthy of greater honour.

Παρὰ, marking the comparative degree, is a Hebraism. There is here a double comparative, like *διαφορώτερον παρ' αὐτοὺς*, chap. i. 4; for *πλείονος* is itself the comparative, and might have been followed by the genitive of *Μωσῆς*; or if *παρὰ* were retained, the positive of *πλείων* might have been used. It may have been the vastness of the Saviour's superiority to Moses which, rousing the apostle's feelings, led him to adopt a form of expression tantamount to a reiterated statement.

The sacred penman does not merely affirm the Saviour's superiority, but he subjoins a measure or illustration, by which the greatness of it may be estimated: *καθ' ὅσον πλείονα τιμὴν ἔχει τοῦ οἴκου ὁ κατασκευάσας αὐτόν.*

Very various opinions have been entertained respecting the nature of the illustration which the latter clause really gives of the former. I have no doubt that the English version contains a correct representation of the sense. The ground on which an objection has been raised against this interpretation is, that it is difficult to conceive how Moses should be styled a house, or

compared to a house,—the relation between Christ and Moses being, according to this view, represented by the relation between an architect and a building. And various attempts have therefore been made to bring out some other meaning from the words. Morus, for example, renders the verse thus "Doch hat jener einen grossen Vorzug vor dem Moses; aber in so fern dass der Stifter des Hauses (God) immer noch der vornehmere darinne ist;" which makes the latter clause not an illustration of the former, but something added by way of exception. And Storr translates it: "Denn sein Vorzug vor dem Moses ist um so grösser, je höher dieses Haus von seinem Urheber geschätzt wird;" which, though it makes the latter clause an illustration of the former, yet gives a turn to the words which the grammatical construction by no means seems to tolerate. All these interpretations, and others that might be mentioned, are chargeable with disregarding the close connection which *καθ' ὅσον* establishes between the two clauses, and introducing a new difficulty, by supposing *οἴκου* to be a harsh Hebrew construction for *ἐν οἴκῳ*. The one clause is manifestly to be viewed as the counterpart of the other; and as *ὁ κατασκευάσας* in the latter corresponds to *οὗτος*, viz. Christ, in the former, so must *οἴκου* correspond to *Μωσῆν*; for there is nothing else that can possibly supply another member for the comparison. *Οἴκου*, therefore, is the genitive, after the comparative *πλείονα*; and the sense is the same as if the phrase had been *παρὰ τὸν οἶκον*, agreeably to the construction of the former clause. Why the apostle should have employed different forms of the comparative in two perfectly analogous clauses, it is not easy to say, unless it be, that in speaking of Christ, he is impelled by the ardour of his feelings to employ a double comparative, while in the case of the mere illustration he is satisfied with a single one, and the word *πλείονα* having been already used, *οἴκου* alone thereafter was needed.

And to what does *οἴκου* refer? Manifestly to the same object as *οἴκῳ* in the preceding verse. It is the church that is the house of God. And the verb *κατασκευάσας*, employed by the apostle, describes the Saviour as constructing this house, as founding or raising this family, which imports what is elsewhere plainly declared, that He procured salvation for the children of

men—that He purchased the church with His own blood, and rules and governs it, and by His Spirit causeth it to grow into a holy temple unto the Lord. He alone is the ground of hope to man; and but for Him no church would ever have existed at all: He collects together the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and brings them home to God. If, therefore, you metaphorically style the redeemed a house, He is plainly the builder of it: if you style them a family, He is the founder of it. Now it is a clear principle, that the builder, architect, is more dignified than the building. And therefore Christ hath more glory than the whole collective body of His people. But what connection has all this with Moses? A manifest connection; for Moses himself was a constituent part of the church or house of God. Though he was invested with great authority and dignity, still he needed the same help from Christ as other men, and his sins as much required atonement. If Christ, then, possessed more honour and glory than the whole collective body of the faithful, *à fortiori*, He possessed much more than Moses. It is a characteristic of Paul's writing, to leave out occasionally some step of an argument, by which brevity and force are at once secured. And in the present case, too, you will observe that he proves far more than the exigencies of his argument required—not raising Christ merely above Moses, which would have sufficiently answered his purpose, but proving Him superior to the whole body of God's people, by which His dignity and glory are displayed with a superabundant lustre and brightness.

The next verse, πᾶς γὰρ οἶκος κατασκευάζεται ὑπὸ τινός, ὁ δὲ τὰ πάντα κατασκευάσας Θεός, is one which has given rise to much diversity of opinion. If these words stood by themselves, or in some other connection, there would be no difficulty connected with them: the first clause manifestly lays down a self-evident proposition, and the second seems to be an ascription of the creation of all things to God. But the connection between the verse, viewed in this light, and the scope of the apostle's argument, is very far from being apparent. Indeed, some expositors have proposed to leave out these clauses altogether, and Heinrichsius encloses them in brackets; nor can it be doubted that the fifth verse stands in quite a natural and logical

connection with the third, and no want is felt in passing from the one to the other. But the evidence of manuscripts in favour of the apostolic authority of the clauses in question is quite decisive, and they must be retained as part of the text.

The first clause is encumbered with the fewest difficulties. It may be viewed as connected in the way of illustration with the last clause of the preceding verse. The apostle had already made mention of a house, and in illustrating the superiority of Christ to Moses he had spoken both of a house and of the builder of it; and he now subjoins—apparently as a reason for the comparison, and to show the completeness of the analogy—the general truth, that every house must have some one who stands to it in the relation of a builder. Of this statement, it would seem, no doubt could possibly be entertained; and it arises out of the indefinite mention of *οἶκος* made in the preceding verse. And if any person raise the objection, that a statement so plain and self-evident was not needed in illustration of the third verse, the only answer I can think of is, that the apostle might have reference to some current misconception, some prevailing objection, which gave a point to the statement we cannot now discern.

But the great difficulty lies in the last clause of the verse. To what, for example, does *τὰ πάντα* refer? Viewed in connection merely with the clause in which it stands, it would seem most naturally to denote the universe. And many interpreters assign to it this sense, and suppose it is the creation of the material universe which the apostle is describing. But one can scarcely avoid feeling that such a sense would be quite unsuited to the scope of the argument, which has no relation to the origin of the universe. Moreover, it is worthy of notice that the verb *κατασκευάζω* is never applied in the New Testament to the creation of the world, but to such works as the building of the tabernacle and the ark (Heb. ix. 2, xi. 7), which certainly favours the idea that *τὰ πάντα* means something else than the universe. Many have therefore supposed it necessary to give to this phrase a sense conformable to the nature of the subject which the apostle is discussing, and to understand it as denoting the house of God, and everything connected with it—the church in all its states and dispensations. And it is difficult to perceive

how any other sense can at all be made to comport with the scope of the passage.

But the master difficulty of the verse lies in the word *Θεός*. To whom does it refer—to the Father or to the Son? Capellus supposes that the article *ὁ* is taken relatively, and that *ὁ δὲ*, referring to Christ, is the subject of the proposition, and *Θεὸς* the predicate: but He, viz. Christ, who built all, is divine, is God. This view of the clause would yield a clear and suitable sense, and one which would be highly conducive to the apostle's purpose of proving the superiority of Christ to Moses: if the fact that He built the house, of which Moses was merely a part, proves His superiority to the Jewish lawgiver, certainly the conclusion is greatly strengthened by the additional consideration, that He, the builder of the house, is a divine person. And the apostle surely had already in the first chapter adverted with sufficient plainness to the divinity of our Lord, to render such a pointed reference to that doctrine quite natural and intelligible. There seems, however, to be one objection to this view of the clause: it may be alleged, that if the article *ὁ* be relative, and look back to the person spoken of in the preceding verse, then another article would be indispensable before the participle, to place it in subordination to the subject: *ὁ δέ*, but this person, viz. Christ, *ὁ τὰ πάντα κατασκευάσας ἐστὶν Θεός*. And the force of this objection I am afraid must be allowed. There is a passage in Heb. vii. 6, which for some time I supposed (*ὁ δὲ μὴ γενεαλογούμενος ἐξ αὐτῶν δεδεκάτωκε τὸν Ἀβραάμ*) furnished an example where, in a case like the text, the article was not repeated; but the propositions, I am now persuaded, are not analogous: the *ὁ* here is not relative, but is itself the article of *γενεαλογούμενος*.

It seems, therefore, necessary to suppose that *Θεὸς* is the subject, and *ὁ τὰ πάντα κατασκευάσας* the predicate: "but God is the Maker of all;" "but it is God who hath made all." Now if this be the only translation which the grammatical construction of the verse allows, which I doubt is the case, what must we regard as the bearing of this statement upon Paul's argument? Tholuck's translation is: "irgend ein Wesen muss als Werkzeug ein Gebäude gründen, wenn gleich Gott immerhin als der höchste Begründer von allem anerkannt wird;" but this

rendering seems of set purpose to place God and Christ in opposition to one another, and to ascribe to the Father a creative energy that could not be claimed for the Son, which contradicts the statements of the first chapter. The idea of Abrescius seems greatly preferable, that the point of the apostle's remark, as bearing upon his general argument, lies in this, that what the Father does in the church He does by the Son, which is true indeed even of the material creation (Eph. ii. 10, iii. 9; Col. i. 17); and accordingly you will observe, that the house spoken of by the apostle is styled in the second verse the house of God, and yet in the third verse Christ is said to have founded it. Is it not a striking proof of Christ's dignity, of His great superiority to Moses, that His works and the Father's works are spoken of interchangeably,—that what God does Christ does, and what Christ does God does? The same works are ascribed to both.

Yet I must confess, after all, that I feel very great difficulty in coming to a decision respecting the true meaning of this verse. There is a view of it which has not been advocated, so far as I am aware, by any of the commentators, which has presented itself repeatedly to my mind, and which the difficulties connected with the expositions that have been given almost lead me to adopt. The fourth verse may perhaps be regarded rather as a passing inference from the last clause of the third verse, than as a necessary part of the apostle's argument. So far as the continuity of the reasoning is concerned, it is agreed on all hands that the fifth verse stands in quite a natural and close connection with the third. Now we may suppose that the apostle, having been led by the mention of a house to speak of the builder of it, took occasion, when the idea of cause and effect was in his mind, to assail, in passing, some prevalent infidel notion about creation, or chance, or the eternity of the world. And in this view the language of the fourth verse is such as is quite naturally suggested by the ideas and terms of the third; and the statement comes to have a point, which otherwise it is confessedly difficult to see in it. For let it be noted, observes the apostle, halting for a moment, that every house must have a builder. Now what is this but the leading principle of Paley's *Natural Theology*? A watch supposes a watchmaker: an edifice supposes an architect: design supposes a

designer. The universe, therefore, had a maker; and He that made all things is God.

Now I am not prepared to say that I adopt this interpretation; yet there are several arguments that might be pled in its defence. It is Paul's manner to glance aside, in a kind of parenthesis, from the immediate subject of discussion, to some related idea. The fourth verse is confessedly not needed to the completeness of the apostle's argument. The attempt to bring it into the chain compels you either to distort the syntax, or to put a constrained sense on some of the words. But if the verse be viewed as an inference in the manner described, you are enabled to give every word its obvious sense, and to follow the obvious construction. For though it be true, as has been already mentioned, that the verb *κατασκευάζω* is never applied in the New Testament to the creation, yet I find, on examination, that it is so applied at least twice in the Septuagint (Isa. xl. 28, xliii. 7); and supposing it was the apostle's design to speak of the creation, the manner in which the topic is suggested to him would naturally lead him to adopt the word he had already used, in preference to every other word.

The apostle proceeds, in the two following verses, to illustrate still further the superiority of Christ to Moses: *καὶ Μωσῆς μὲν πιστὸς ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ, ὡς θεράπων, εἰς μαρτύριον τῶν λαληθησομένων· Χριστὸς δέ, ὡς υἱὸς ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ.* Christ and Moses are both represented by the apostle as the *messengers* of God, as *connected with* the house of God, and as *faithful* to their trust; but still there are several points of contrast between them which must be observed.

Moses acts *ὡς θεράπων*, but Christ acts *ὡς υἱός*. This comparison concedes a high degree of dignity to Moses: for the word *θεράπων*, though it means a servant, denotes one of a superior order, who enjoys the confidence of the head of the house, and is entrusted with a good measure of authority; while *δοῦλος*, the other word of similar sense, is applied to a domestic of inferior standing. Eustathius, in a comment on *Odyssey*, first book (Ern. 212), thus expresses the difference between them: *οἱ δὲ θεράποντες ἁπλῶς ὑπήρεταί εἰσι φίλοι, οὐ μὴν κατὰ τοὺς δούλους.* And accordingly it is *θεράπων* that is employed in the Septuagint in translating the passage where

God so highly commends Moses: "My servant (ὁ θεράπων μου) Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house." Heinrichsius, indeed, doubts whether there be any peculiar emphasis in the word θεράπων here, on the ground that the object of the apostle is not to elevate Moses; but though undoubtedly his object is to elevate Christ, yet he only furthers his object, by choosing as the means of contrast one who is possessed of much dignity and elevation, to whom still he prefers the blessed Saviour; and since the θεράπων does signify a superior servant or steward, there seems no good reason for doubting that it is designedly selected to express the dignity of Moses. There is nothing in the whole argument of the apostle depreciatory of the ancient Jewish legislator, but everything of an opposite character. Great, however, and elevated as Moses was, Christ is vastly superior; for He is not θεράπων, but υἱός, the Son, the heir and Lord of all. The Son in a family is greatly distinguished above the most favoured servant.

Again, Moses is described as being ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ, but Christ is described as being ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον. Moses was *in* the family as a servant, but Christ is *over* it as a master.

It has been supposed that there is another point of contrast indicated by the apostle in the words αὐτοῦ and αὑτοῦ, as if he meant to say that Moses was in *God's* house, but Christ over *His own* house. The question is, whether the latter αυτου should have the aspirate or not. Most editions of the New Testament, and those, too, the best, present the word unaspirated; but still, as manuscript evidence in the case of mere points is not deemed so decisive as in the case of letters, it has been much disputed on grounds connected with the scope of the passage which reading is preferable. Now one thing is certain, that the house spoken of has been described in the preceding verses as the house of God; and the passage in Numbers to which the apostle refers, describes it in the same manner: which certainly supplies an argument of great weight in support of the same reading of the clause before us. Besides, let it be remembered that both Christ and Moses are described as having been faithful to God in their administration of the affairs of this house; which plainly implies that the house is spoken of as the house of God, and that from Him flowed their authority both in it

and over it. As the Mediator, Christ acted under His Father. Do not suppose, however, that there would be any impropriety in styling the church the house of Christ: it is His, for He hath purchased it with His blood; and it is styled His in many parts of Scripture. And, indeed, the term *υἱός*, according to Paul's conceptions, embodies the ideas of heir and Lord (Gal. iv. 1, 4, 7). The question which is suggested by the verse under consideration, is not whether the church really be the house of Christ, but whether in this particular case it be *styled* His house or the house of God.

In describing Moses as *θεράπων*, the apostle adds the qualifying phrase, *εἰς μαρτύριον τῶν λαληθησομένων*. The greater number of interpreters suppose that these words refer to things which Moses was himself, after the period of the signal testimony borne to him by Heaven, to reveal to the children of Israel. But the statement, viewed in this sense, seems to have but little meaning or pertinency: Moses was a servant for a witness of the things he was about to speak, or for testifying the things he was about to speak. A far more natural and sensible interpretation of the words is elicited, by viewing them as referring to the additional and ampler revelations of God's will that were to be given to the church in the fulness of time; and we know that the institutions of Moses bore witness to the truth of the Christian dispensation, and prepared the way for its approach. Indeed, there is no book of the New Testament where the relations between the old economy and the gospel of Christ are more fully or clearly developed than in this very epistle; and the words before us, therefore, may be viewed as the germ of those extensive and interesting comparisons which are drawn in the eighth, ninth, and tenth chapters between the Mosaic institutions and the Christian church. Moses indicated obscurely what was afterwards to be clearly revealed.

This clause, therefore, it is plain, adds another to the points of contrast between Moses and Christ which the verse under review has already exhibited. Moses was the harbinger, Christ the illustrious Prince Himself: the revelations of Moses were the faint twilight of the morning, those of Christ the full splendour of noonday: the institutions of Moses were the scaffolding, those of Christ the finished fabric of religious truth.

The latter part of the sixth verse contains a practical admonition of great importance: *οὗ οἶκός ἐσμεν ἡμεῖς, ἐάνπερ τὴν παῤῥησίαν καὶ τὸ καύχημα τῆς ἐλπίδος μέχρι τέλους βεβαίαν κατάσχωμεν.* Two questions have been raised respecting the phrase *οὗ οἶκος*. In the first place, it has been doubted whether this be the correct reading. A number of MSS. are cited by Griesbach as containing *ὃς οἶκος*, and some critics have preferred this reading; but the great preponderance of MSS. authority is in favour of *οὗ*; though, indeed, the meaning in either case is nearly the same. The objection which has been made to the common reading *οὗ*, is that it ought to have been followed by the article *ὁ* in connection with *οἶκος*, and on this ground alone some have adopted the other reading. But more importance has been attached to this objection than really belongs to it. It is true, indeed, that in such constructions the noun that follows the relative, and governs it, frequently has the article; but it is also equally true that it sometimes wants it, and the principle of the difference seems to be this, that the article is present where the governing word is the subject, but absent where the governing word is the predicate. In the following perfectly analogous passages the article is present: *οὗ ἡ φωνὴ τὴν γῆν ἐσάλευσεν* (Heb. xii. 26); *οὗ ἡ οἰκία ἦν συνομοροῦσα τῇ συναγωγῇ* (Acts xviii. 7); *οὗ ὁ ἔπαινος οὐκ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων* (Rom. ii. 29); but in all these cases it will be observed that the noun following the relative is manifestly the subject of the proposition. There are other cases, however, of the same construction where the article is awanting, as, *πόλιν ἧς τεχνίτης καὶ δημιουργὸς ὁ Θεός* (Heb. xi. 10); but here it is plain that *τεχνίτης*, which governs *ἧς*, is not the subject, but the predicate, of the proposition, and *Θεὸς* is the subject, which accordingly has the article: *οὗ Κύριος ὁ Θεός*—of whom God is the Lord, where it is equally plain that *Θεὸς* is the subject, and *Κύριος* the predicate. The first question, therefore, to be asked respecting the phrase before us, *οὗ οἶκός ἐσμεν ἡμεῖς*, is whether *οἶκος* be the subject or the predicate; and undoubtedly the answer must be that it is the predicate: the proposition is, that we are the house. The absence of the article, therefore, before *οἶκος*, is quite consistent with the principles of Greek construction.

Another question may be asked respecting the relative *οὗ* to

whom does it refer? To the remote antecedent *Χριστὸς*, or to the nearer word *αὐτοῦ*? No doubt it is generally the case, that the nearer word furnishes the more natural subject of reference; and if *Θεοῦ* had stood itself here instead of *αὐτοῦ*, we should very readily have viewed *οὗ* as standing related to it. But since *Χριστὸς* is the person who is the subject of the preceding proposition, and *αὐτοῦ* stands as a subordinate member of the sentence referring to a previous word, not unnaturally the relative that begins the new sentence is viewed as referring to *Χριστός*. And in this view the house mentioned, while it is styled the house of God, is also represented as the house of Christ; and well may it be so, for He laid the foundation of it, and superintends the building, "that it may grow into an holy temple in the Lord."

The concluding clause of this verse describes the perseverance necessary to all true members of the church: *ἐάνπερ τὴν παῤῥησίαν καὶ τὸ καύχημα τῆς ἐλπίδος μέχρι τέλους βεβαίαν κατάσχωμεν.*

Παῤῥησία literally denotes, according to its etymology, open intrepid speaking, without any fear of consequences; and in this sense it is frequently to be found in the classics, and also in the sacred writers. And since this freedom of speech may proceed from a mind confident in itself, and confident of the justice of the principles which it espouses, the word came also to be used—putting the cause for the effect—to denote confidence, firm expectation; and in this sense it is frequently to be found in the New Testament. That this is the sense of the word here, seems plain from the scope of the passage, and also from the perfectly similar exhortation contained in ver. 14, where *ὑποστάσεως* is used instead of *παῤῥησία*: *ἐάνπερ τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς ὑποστάσεως μέχρι τέλους βεβαίαν κατάσχωμεν.* The idea seems to be the same as is styled *πληροφορίᾳ τῆς πίστεως* in chap. x. 22.

Καύχημα, and all words of the same family, denote in the classics *boasting, glorying;* and they are also to be found in the same sense in the Scriptures. But there is another sense more frequent among the sacred writers, viz. that of rejoicing, which seems to have been derived from the fact that in the Septuagint Hebrew words denoting joy and gladness are very generally rendered by *καύχημα* and *καυχάομαι.* This sense, it is

plain, is the only one that suits the word in the passage before us.

Παῤῥησίαν and *καύχημα* are both connected in the way of government with *ἐλπίδος*, confidence and rejoicing of hope; and it is plain that they describe qualities of the believer's hope, and are to be viewed, according to the Hebrew idiom, as serving the same purpose as adjectives. The whole phrase means a confident and joyful hope. When nouns in government are thus made to qualify each other like substantive and adjective, it is sometimes the one in the genitive that is used adjectively, while the other denotes the object that is described, as *υἱὸς ἀγάπης αὐτοῦ*, Col. i. 13; *ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἁμαρτίας, ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας*, 2 Thess. ii. 3. But in the case before us, and in others that could be produced, the noun in the genitive is the subject, and the governing nouns are used adjectively.

Βεβαίαν, firm, stedfast, agrees with the first of the two accusatives, *παῤῥησίαν*, and not with *καύχημα*. Why select the more remote? A doubt may indeed be entertained whether it does not take its gender from *ἐλπίδος*, which is the object spoken of, the other nouns being merely used to describe qualities of the hope. Its case it could not take from *ἐλπίδος*, on account of the close connection in which it was required to stand with *κατάσχωμεν*.

Μέχρι τέλους denotes till the end of the Christian conflict. The present life is a scene of trial to the believer; and while glorious rewards are exhibited to his view, to stimulate his flagging zeal, he is plainly assured that it is only by perseverance he can rise to the actual enjoyment of heaven. The conflict may be severe, but he must fight to the very last; the road may be rough and rugged, but he must surmount every difficulty. If he turn aside from the right path, if he abandon the faith and hope of the gospel, he furnishes clear proof that he does not belong to that spiritual house which the Saviour came to erect in the world. We are his house, if we hold fast the confident and joyful hope firm unto the end. He that endureth to the end shall be saved.

The apostle has now illustrated by various considerations the official superiority of Christ to Moses; and as he had formerly, after showing the Saviour's superiority to angels, made that

doctrine the foundation of a practical lesson, so now does he follow the same practice. In the former case he had said *διὰ τοῦτο*—Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard; and now he says *διὸ*—Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts,—the conjunction in each case referring to the previously demonstrated superiority of the Saviour.

The admonition of the apostle in the passage before us is couched in language borrowed from the ninety-fifth Psalm; and the language of the epistle corresponds almost word for word to the language of the Septuagint, with the exception of the connective *διὸ*, by which it is attached to the body of his own discourse. Grotius and Heinrichs are both of opinion that this psalm was designed to be sung at the feast of tabernacles; and Rosenmüller thinks it was first composed when the ark was brought up in David's time, and placed with rejoicings in the tabernacle on Zion. The design of it is clearly to excite the people to the faithful service of God, to the heartfelt celebration of His praise; and an instance, borrowed from the severe punishment inflicted upon the disobedient Israelites in the wilderness, is brought in as an example to warn them of the danger of obstinate opposition to the divine will. This powerful appeal of the Psalmist is seen by the apostle to be perfectly adapted to the scope of his own discourse, and therefore he embodies the admonition which he addresses to the Hebrews in the language of the psalm. It is clear, however, that this citation stands upon a considerably different footing from those already made in the first chapter, which are adduced as proofs of a position, viz. the dignity of Christ, and which must, therefore, have been designed from the very first as descriptions of the promised Messiah. But the quotation before us is not brought forward as the proof of any point, and therefore there is no necessity for supposing that originally it was aught else than an address to the Jews of David's time, which Paul, finding pertinent to his purpose, employed as the vehicle of a similar appeal to the Hebrews of his own day. Yet Abreschius thinks that, while it was originally addressed to the ancient Israelites, it was at the same time designed by the Spirit of God as a prophetic appeal and remonstrance suited to the times of the Messiah; there being some

things in it which he deems less suitable to the age of David, and which he accounts for by supposing the sacred penman rapt into the future, and pouring forth strains more entirely adapted to the distant scene. The first part of the psalm exhibits the people of God exciting one another to zeal and fidelity in the service of Jehovah; and the latter part introduces God Himself displaying the dangers of apostasy and rebellion, and holding up the example of the Jews in the wilderness as a warning against disobedience—remonstrances and exhortations suited to all times.

The manner in which the apostle introduces this citation, *καθὼς λέγει τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον*, without any further remark, shows the settled views that were entertained in primitive times of the inspiration of Moses and the prophets. The writers of the Old Testament were regarded by the apostles as holy men of old, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. And if we are to form our views of inspiration from the Scriptures themselves, as there is manifestly no other quarter where we can find information on such a subject, then it is clear that it was not merely a general superintendence which was exercised over the sacred penmen, but such a minute superintendence that all their statements are to be viewed as the statements of the Spirit. It is not merely David who speaks in the ninety-fifth Psalm, but the apostle says it is the Holy Ghost; and if the Holy Ghost speaks, whose can even the words be but words of the Spirit?

In the Hebrew Bible, the expression, "To-day, if ye will hear His voice," stands, according to punctuation and accents, connected with the preceding clause, "we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand;" but Paul joins it with the following clause, "To-day, if, etc., *μὴ σκληρύνητε*, harden not your hearts;" and in this disposition of the words he follows the Septuagint. The points and accents were not an original part of the text, and though they are generally accurate, yet we are not tied down to them; and in the case before us, the change of person from the first to the second seems of itself sufficient to prove that the clause in question is connected in sense with the 8th verse, and not with the 7th: "*We* are . . . to-day if *ye* . . . harden not *your*." And Rosenmüller, accordingly, seems to regard it as certain, independently altogether of the Epistle to

the Hebrews, that this clause cannot stand in connection with what goes before, but must either be viewed as a separate clause, "Would that to-day ye would listen to His voice,"—there being cases where אִם denotes *utinam* (Ex. xxxii. 32; 1 Chron. iv. 10), —or must be regarded as connected with what follows, which undoubtedly is the proper arrangement.

Different views have been entertained respecting the general construction of the apostle's admonitory address. Calvin and Grotius suppose that the words from *καθὼς* to the end of the 11th verse are to be enclosed as a parenthesis, and that the conjunction *διὸ* in the 7th verse is connected with *βλέπετε* in the 12th, where the apostle's own admonition is supposed to commence: "Wherefore (as saith, etc.) take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart." The want of another conjunction beside *βλέπετε*, such as *δὲ*, seems to Abreschius to confirm this arrangement, *διὸ* being the only conjunction which it can have; but Tholuck justly observes, that *βλέπετε* is employed by itself in the same manner to introduce an exhortation in chap. xii. 25. The view which Tholuck himself takes of the passage is, that it is one of a class not uncommon in Scripture, where the apodosis or latter statement of a compound sentence is omitted, because it could easily be supplied from the protasis, thus: Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, harden not your hearts; so, brethren, I say, harden not your hearts. But I must confess that there is another view of the connection, which seems to me by far the most natural, that the apostle is to be viewed as borrowing the words of the Psalmist, and making them the vehicle of the instruction which he himself designed to give: "Wherefore, my brethren, that I may use the appropriate words of Scripture, most appropriate to the present occasion."

Καθὼς is a word which occurs with great frequency in the New Testament. It belongs to the later Greek. *Καθὰ*, the word which classic authors employ, is only to be found once in the New Testament; and *καθάπερ*, another classic word, is only to be found a few times in the writings of Paul. *Καθὼς*, the scriptural form, is supposed to have originated at Alexandria, though the preference which Philo shows for *καθὰ* may fairly be regarded as throwing some doubt upon this supposition.

The voice of which the apostle makes mention is the voice of God, that spoke to the children of Israel in ancient times, and that now speaks to us under the gospel, making known in both cases the same great truths, though exhibiting them in a somewhat different form. It is plainly a voice of merciful warning that is meant, which we lie under some temptations to neglect: it is, in fact, the great proclamation of the gospel: "Ho, every one," etc.; "Come unto me," etc.; "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye," etc. Dindorf, in his notes upon Ernesti, says (p. 234), that though the voice of God in the epistle denotes the salvation promised through Christ, yet in the psalm it denotes the promise given to the ancient Jews of the land of Canaan; but this interpretation betrays a strange inattention to the date of the psalm, and to the fuller explanation of the psalm given by the apostle in the following chapter. The children of Israel were in actual possession of Canaan ages before the psalm was penned; and there can be no doubt, therefore, that the blessings referred to by the Psalmist were spiritual blessings, of which the earthly Canaan was merely an emblem,—in a word, substantially the same blessings which are set before us in the gospel, which it is at our peril if we neglect.

The period when the voice of God, speaking to us in the Scriptures, is to be obeyed, is the present time—*σήμερον*. Some interpreters, including even Michaelis, led astray by inattention to the date of the psalm, have alleged, that since it was only at one period of the Jewish history, viz. the age of Moses and Joshua, that the Jews had the opportunity of entering into the land of Canaan, to which the to-day of the psalm applies; so the to-day of the apostle, in order to preserve the analogy, must be restricted to the first age after the birth of Christ. But the "to-day" of the Psalmist was applied by him to the men of his own age, centuries after Moses was gone; and as the psalm was employed in the public worship of Jehovah from generation to generation, being sung at the feast of tabernacles, "to-day" must have been applicable to every age of the Jewish history; and for the same reason the language of the apostle is applicable to us, and may be addressed to men to the very end of time. Chrysostom (xii. 90, D.) says: *τὸ γάρ, σήμερόν, φησιν, ἀεί ἐστιν, ἕως ἂν συνεστήκῃ ὁ κόσμος.* The great lesson taught by

this word is, that in every age immediate attention is due to the claims of religion. When you first hear the gospel, then you are to receive it. It is to-day, and not to-morrow, that you are to give ear to the voice of God. Procrastination in the concerns of religion is as ruinous as it is foolish. The present time alone is ours: we know not where we shall be on the morrow,—dead, or given over to the lusts of our own hearts.

Ἐὰν τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ ἀκούσητε is translated in our version, "if ye will hear His voice," meaning, if ye will listen to it. *Ἐὰν*, however, is frequently used in the New Testament in the same sense as *ὅταν ἐπάν*, *quum quando*, as in Matt. vi. 22, 23, Luke xi. 34, John vi. 62, etc.; and אִם, in the original Hebrew, bears the sense of *when* as well as of *if*. Now, as אִם in the psalm stands in close connection with הַיּוֹם, it is not unreasonable to suppose that it refers to time, and means "when:" When ye hear His voice, harden not your hearts. Rosenmüller thus expounds the psalm: Quando igitur audieritis vocem pastoris hujus, hodie et quamdiu sonat, vocantis, præcipientis, et ducentis vos, nolite ad hanc obdurare corda vestra.

Σκληρύνω is a form that belongs to the later Greek. The classic form is *σκληρόω*, which seems to have been employed to denote hardness only in the physical sense. *Σκληρύνω* is of very frequent occurrence in the writers of Alexandria; and it is almost always used in the moral sense, to denote hardening of the heart. You find it often in the Septuagint, where it is used as the rendering of a Hebrew word, which is employed to denote the obstinate resistance of the neck to the yoke of religion, and the hardening of the heart against the influence of the truth (see Prov. xxviii. 14; Ex. vii. 3; Ezek. iii. 7; Ex. viii. 32; Prov. xxix. 1). The corresponding expressions used in the Septuagint are: *σκληροκάρδιος*, *σκληροτράχηλος*, *σκληρύνειν τὴν καρδίαν*, *σκληρύνειν τὸν τράχηλαν*. This state of inveterate sinfulness is produced when men, in spite of the remonstrances of their own consciences, and the known declarations of the word of God, continue in the practice of iniquity. We harden our hearts when we shut our eyes to the evidence of the truth—when we hear the voice of God, and yet refuse to obey it—when we see the claims of religion, and yet dismiss them from our attention.

Against this dreadful danger the apostle warns the Hebrews, as the Psalmist had done the Jews of his day: he tells them, when they hear the voice of God, that they are not to harden their hearts by refusing to obey it. And to produce the deeper impression, he brings forward, as David had done before him, the example of the children of Israel in the wilderness, who, for their persevering opposition to the will of God, were punished with exclusion from the promised land: *ὡς ἐν τῷ παραπικρασμῷ, κατὰ τὴν ἡμέραν τοῦ πειρασμοῦ ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ· οὗ ἐπείρασάν με οἱ πατέρες ὑμῶν, ἐδοκίμασάν με, καὶ εἶδον τὰ ἔργα μου τεσσαράκοντα ἔτη.*

The children of Israel showed themselves in the wilderness to be a stiff-necked and rebellious people. It was with too much truth that Moses said to them, "Remember, and forget not, how thou provokedst the Lord thy God to wrath in the wilderness. From the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the Lord." Though they had seen the mighty wonders of God in the land of Egypt and in the Red Sea, and experienced a succession of deliverances of the most extraordinary kind, yet every new difficulty destroyed their confidence in God, and they disbelieved His most positive declarations. At Zin they murmured for want of bread, when, lo! manna fell down to them from the clouds. At Rephidim they murmured for want of water, when, lo! the flinty rock poured out a liquid stream. At Taberah they murmured for want of flesh, when, lo! myriads of fowls fluttered around the camp, and strewed the ground. Yet, after all these demonstrations of the power and goodness of God, they mistrusted His ability to protect them, and refused at Kadesh-Barnea to go up to take possession of the land of Canaan, saying one to another, "Wherefore hath the Lord brought us out into this wilderness, to kill us and our wives and children? Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt" (Num. xiv. 4). It was on this occasion the Lord sware that none of that generation, save Joshua and Caleb, should enter into the promised land, and that the host should wander in the wilderness for forty years, until all the rebels were dead. The great lesson which both the Psalmist and the apostle have it in view to enforce by appealing to the history of the Jews, is, that as unbelief and distrust of God

excluded them from the land of Canaan, so in every age the same evil dispositions will expose men to the displeasure of the Almighty, and occasion or ensure their exclusion from the Canaan that is above.

Παραπικρασμὸς is a word that belongs to the later Greek, though it is not of frequent occurrence even there. It denotes bitterness, contention, strife; and in such a case as the present, where God is the object against whom it was directed, it must plainly denote rebellion. *Πειρασμός*, derived from *πειράζω*, denotes in general, trial, experiment; and it is accompanied with different accessory ideas, according to the different circumstances in which it is used. It very frequently means solicitation to evil; and when it is applied to the conduct of men in reference to God, it denotes distrust of His power, disbelief of His wisdom and goodness, rebellion against His authority. And the word which *πειρασμὸς* is employed to represent is מַסָּה, which, derived from נָסָה, *tentare*, naturally means temptation, distrust of God's power and goodness. The word which *παραπικρασμὸς* is employed to represent in the psalm is מְרִיבָה, which, derived from רִיב, *litigare*, denotes strife of course, but not so here, for there is reason to suppose that מְרִיבָה is used by the Psalmist as the name of a place, as it certainly is in Ex. xvii. 7, being applied to the place where the people rebelled against God: "and he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah." Michaelis therefore thinks that the LXX. designed *παραπικρασμὸς* and also *πειρασμὸς* for proper names, it being no unusual practice among Greek writers, especially in Egypt, to translate proper names when their origin and signification were known; and the LXX. have done this with the same Hebrew words in Ex. xvii. 7, where no doubt can exist that places are meant: *καὶ ἐπωνόμασε τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ τόπου ἐκείνου, Πειρασμὸς καὶ Λοιδόρησις διὰ τὴν λοιδορίαν*, etc. In this view the admonition will be: Harden not your hearts, as at Meribah, as in the day of Massah in the wilderness, when your fathers, etc. The addition, it is true, of בְּיוֹם to מַסָּה may rather be regarded as favourable to the idea that מַסָּה is used as a common noun—in the day of temptation; though Tholuck very pertinently remarks that the same phrase is conjoined with the names of Midian and Egypt (Isa. ix. 3; Ezek. xxx. 9): as in the day of Midian, as in the

day of Egypt,—denoting a well-known period in the history of those places. After all, however, it is not a matter of much importance to the sense, whether you view these words as proper names or as common: for even when used as the names of places, they were so significant in the Hebrew, that they could scarcely ever be used without suggesting the causes which gave rise to them; and this is just what the words do when they are viewed as common nouns, and rendered strife, provocation, or temptation.

As the 8th verse adverts to the time and place of the rebellion, the ninth describes the rebellion itself: *οὗ ἐπείρασάν με οἱ πατέρες ὑμῶν, ἐδοκίμασάν με, καὶ εἶδον τὰ ἔργα μου τεσσαράκοντα ἔτη.*

Οὗ is used adverbially, and is translated in our version "when." It may be made a question, however, whether it relates to time or place. In itself, it is capable of either reference, because it is the genitive of the relative pronoun, and its sense must be determined by the antecedent to which it refers. Yet, in fact, it is very seldom made to refer to time. Wolf says never, though in this he is mistaken, for Schleusner produces one example. But undoubtedly, in the case before us, it is an adverb of place—*ἐρήμῳ*, the immediately preceding word, being the natural antecedent. The full expression is *ἐφ' οὗ τόπου.* There is a gloss quoted by Wetstein from one of his MSS., which shows the view taken of it in former times: *τὸ δὲ οὗ, ἀντὶ ὅπου, τουτέστιν ἐν τῇ ἐρημίᾳ.*

Ἐπείρασαν and *ἐδοκίμασαν* are words of nearly the same import; and they seem to have been joined together for the purpose of giving intensity to the description, and intimating the variety and frequency of the acts of rebellion of which the people had been guilty: they tempted and tried me. Men tempt God when they disbelieve His promises and threatenings, and act as if He were unable or unwilling to execute what He has announced; and the Jews carried this unbelieving spirit to a fearful extent in the wilderness. Though they had been repeatedly delivered from impending dangers, which their own energy could not surmount, by the mighty power and outstretched arm of God, yet every new difficulty obliterated all sense of former mercies; and they were as doubtful of the power and goodness of the Almighty, as if they had never

witnessed the manifest interposition of His arm. They were continually putting Him to the proof: of every new disaster they said, This at least is beyond His power to remedy; and they even gave utterance to the blasphemous idea, that He had brought them out with an evil design. "How long," says God, "will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have showed among them?" (Num. xiv. 11.) Their continual rebellion is strikingly illustrated by the repetitions of the Psalmist and the apostle: *ἐπείρασάν με, ἐδοκίμασάν με.*

Καὶ in the next clause corresponds to the Hebrew word גַּם, which has frequently the adversative sense of *but although;* and this, it is plain, is best suited to the connection here. Nor are cases awanting in other parts of the New Testament where *καὶ* is used in the same manner, as in John iii. 32, xviii. 25; and not unfrequently the same use is to be found in the classics, especially, as Tholuck remarks, in parenthetical clauses. Though the children of Israel *saw* God's works in the wilderness, they tempted Him again and again; and this was the great aggravation of their guilt. The works, too, which they saw were of no common character: the plagues of Egypt, the cleaving of the Red Sea, the manna from heaven, the gushing waters of the smitten rock, attested God's presence and goodness and power; and yet they doubted His word, and turned their faces to Egypt.

The apostle joins *τεσσαράκοντα ἔτη* with *εἶδον τὰ ἔργα μου*; for the conjunction *διὸ* shows that the following words form a new clause. But the Hebrew and the Septuagint connect the "forty years" with the next verse: "Forty years was I grieved with this generation." It is to be noticed, however, that both in the Hebrew and Septuagint the distribution of the words depends entirely upon the punctuation and the division into verses, which are not authoritative; and therefore in them the "forty years" may be read as naturally either in connection with what goes before or what follows after. Colomesius has proposed to omit the *διὸ* of the apostle, which is not in the Hebrew nor Septuagint, and to join the "forty years;" and there are some two or three MSS. that exhibit the text in this shape; but as Mill justly observes, the immense preponderance of evidence is in favour of the present reading, and therefore it must be

recognised as apostolic. Respecting the separation of the τεσσαράκοντα ἔτη from προσώχθισα by the insertion of διό, Calvin remarks: Scimus autem apostolos in citandis testimoniis magis attendere ad summam rei, quam de verbis esse sollicitos. And indeed it is plain from ver. 17 of this chapter, that Paul, in reading the Hebrew text, must have viewed the "forty years" as equally capable of being read with the one verse or with the other; for there he asks, "But with whom was He grieved forty years?" The rebellion, and the displeasure—their sight of the works of God, and His offence at their unbelief,—were coincident with each other in duration.

The next verse describes the displeasure of the Almighty against the Jews, and the dreadful judgment which He denounced against them: διὸ προσώχθισα τῇ γενεᾷ ἐκείνῃ καὶ εἶπον, ἀεὶ πλανῶνται τῇ καρδίᾳ· αὐτοὶ δὲ οὐκ ἔγνωσαν τὰς ὁδούς μου.

Προσοχθίζειν, compounded of πρὸς, and ὄχθη, *ripa*, a bank, denotes literally to strike against a bank, and is applied, says Suidas, to ships running ashore: ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐπινηχόμενα ταῖς ὄχθαις προσκρούεσθαι. Tropically, it is applied to the mind, and denotes the aversion or dislike which one person has to another when he comes in contact with him; though it seems to be only in the Septuagint and in the New Testament where this sense is to be found. The word is of pretty frequent occurrence in the Septuagint (about twenty times); and it is employed to represent Hebrew words, which all express, with different degrees of intensity, the same general idea of aversion, abhorrence, indignation. That this is the meaning of the word in the passage before us, and in the 17th verse of the same chapter, which is the only other place where the word occurs in the New Testament, does not admit of a moment's doubt, from the corresponding word in the psalm. God was displeased with the children of Israel: He was indignant at their continual rebellion; He was disgusted with their perverse wickedness. In our version, the word employed is *grieved*, which does not express the exact meaning of the original. The German translation is better: *Darum ich entrüstet ward*—Therefore I was angry, indignant, at that generation—indignant at their conduct. When such terms as grief, and anger, and indignation, are applied to the Divine Being, we must beware of supposing that these

feelings exist in Him in the same manner as they do in men, and display themselves by similar marks of excitement. The happiness of God suffers no interruption: the serenity of the divine mind is disturbed by no transports of passion. Yet there must be something in Him analogous to these feelings of men, otherwise the employment of such language would convey an erroneous impression. God is infinitely pure: sin is repugnant to His nature: He takes pleasure in seeing the obedience of His creatures: He is displeased when they abandon themselves to evil courses: He bestows happiness upon those who truly serve Him: and He consigns to destruction incorrigible offenders;—and all is done in perfect consistency with the principles of justice and holiness.

As the first clause of this verse describes the feeling which God entertained towards the children of Israel, so the second announces the decision which He pronounced respecting them: *καὶ εἶπον· ἀεὶ πλανῶνται τῇ καρδίᾳ· αὐτοὶ δὲ οὐκ ἔγνωσαν τὰς ὁδούς μου.*

Πλανάω denotes primarily to wander, and tropically to err, whether in opinion or in practice; to leave the road of truth, to leave the road of morality. Of all the three senses frequent examples are to be found in the classics, though the tropical sense of moral error is chiefly to be found in the later Greek: *πεπλάνηται οὗτος τῆς πρὸς εὐσέβειαν ὁδοῦ.* The three senses are also common in the Scriptures, but it is unnecessary to cite examples at large: see Matt. xviii. 12, where the word is applied to a sheep; John vii. 12, where it denotes the teaching of false doctrine; and 2 Pet. ii. 15, where it is applied to persons who imitate Balaam, who loved the wages of unrighteousness. Not a few have alleged, that in the case before us it is error of the intellect that is meant—the adoption of wrong views of God's character; but there seems to be no good reason for so restricting the sense of the word. In fact, it seems plain that it is mainly moral declension that is meant. This idea is confirmed both by the circumstances of the history to which reference is made, and by the addition of the word *καρδία*, corresponding to the Hebrew word, which, though it is sometimes used to denote the intellect, yet is currently and chiefly employed to describe the affections. The Jews erred, it is true, in the views which

they entertained of the Divine Being; but their error of judgment arose from the depravity of their hearts, which led them to disregard the astonishing proofs which were given to them of the wisdom, and power, and goodness of God. And their wickedness was of a very aggravated character: it was not an act, but a fixed habit of disobedience, with which they were chargeable: their hearts were alienated from God, and they were *always* prone to error.

There is another clause added, descriptive of God's view of their character and state: *αὐτοὶ δὲ οὐκ ἔγνωσαν τὰς ὁδούς μου.* *Δὲ* generally has the adversative sense; here, however, it is simply conjunctive. *Καὶ* is more frequently used in such a case as the present, and *καὶ* is the word which the LXX. employ in this clause.

By the *ὁδοὶ Θεοῦ* some understand here the commandments of God, and others the dispensations of His providence, or ways of dealing with men. So far as usage is concerned, either sense would suit the word; for both the Greek *ὁδὸς* and the Hebrew דֶּרֶךְ, as applied to God, are employed to denote sometimes both the way in which God requires us to walk, and the mode of action which He Himself pursues. Of the former sense you have examples in Acts xviii. 25, "This man was instructed in the way of the Lord;" and in Ps. xxvii. 11, "Teach me Thy way, O Lord;" and of the latter in Rom. xi. 33, "How unsearchable are His ways!" and Ps. cxlv. 17, "The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works." Which of the two senses, then, are we to suppose the word bears here? The fact is, that either of them suits the exigencies of the passage pretty well; for the children of Israel undoubtedly did disrelish the commandments of God, and they also disregarded the works of wonder which He performed. Yet I rather incline to adopt the latter sense, on account of the connection of this clause with the declaration of the preceding verse, "They saw my works forty years; wherefore I said," etc. They had ample means of studying the principles of God's providence, but they had no relish for the employment, and they made no progress. This interpretation of the apostle's language is strikingly illustrated and confirmed by the similar representation which Moses gives in Deut. xxix. 2–4: "And Moses called

unto all Israel, and said unto them, Ye have seen all the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land; the great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signs, and those great miracles; yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day."

The verb *γινώσκω* is frequently employed in Scripture to denote something more than the bare knowledge of an object, or acquaintance with its properties. It partakes of the latitude of meaning which belongs to יָדַע, which signifies not only to know, but also to consider attentively, to be concerned for, to take care, as in Prov. xxvii. 23, "Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks;" Job ix. 21, "Yet I would not know (value) my soul: I would despise my life." The Greek word *γινώσκω* seems to be used in this sense in Luke xix. 42, *ὅτι εἰ ἔγνως τὰ πρὸς εἰρήνην σου*—if thou hadst known, or attentively considered and valued, the things which belong to thy peace; and in the passage before us, too, it is this sense which seems most suitable. The Jews knew undoubtedly God's methods of dealing with them in the wilderness; but they did not attentively consider them—they did not make them the subject of delighted study—they did not prize them as wonderful tokens of the divine favour. They were averse to the pious contemplation of the ways of Providence.

Ὡς is rendered by Grotius *itaque, quare,* and Raphelius quotes passages from Arrian in support of this sense; such as, *ὡς τόν γε ἐν Ταρτησσῷ πρὸς Ἰβήρων τιμώμενον Ἡρακλέα δοκῶ ἐγὼ τὸν Τύριον εἶναι Ἡρακλέα*[1]—Wherefore I think the Hercules worshipped in Tartessus by the Iberians is the Tyrian Hercules. Yet undoubtedly this sense is of rare occurrence; and since the more usual sense of "so that" suits the passage pretty well, it seems more reasonable to adopt it here, as indicating a consequence that naturally resulted from a previous cause. After all, however, it does not greatly matter whether, in translating, you employ the conjunction "wherefore" or "so that;" for both mark a consequence, though with a slight shade of difference. The very word ὡς, however you understand it, is unusual in such a construction as the present.

[1] Arrian, *Exped. Alexandri*, ii. 16.

In consequence of the use of this word, there is an apparent discrepancy between the language of the apostle and the facts of the history. You would suppose, from the conclusion stated here, that the oath of the Almighty took place at the end of the forty years' rebellion, and was the punishment of that long-continued obstinacy; but it is plain from the history, that the oath was sworn at the commencement of the rebellion, and that the forty years' wandering in the wilderness was the consequence of the oath (see Num. xiv. 21–29; Deut. i. 34–46). Within a short period of their departure from Egypt, the children of Israel grievously offended the Almighty by their disbelief of His word; for which reason it was unalterably determined that they should never enter into the land of promise, but should wander in the wilderness till all the men of that generation, with two exceptions, should fall under the stroke of death. Yet their distrust of God continued during all their journeyings through the wilderness; and they repented not of the sin which had entailed upon them this mark of God's displeasure. The apostle therefore says most truly, that God was displeased with them for the long space of forty years; but though he immediately proceeds to describe the oath of exclusion as resulting from this displeasure, yet there is nothing to prevent us from supposing that he looks, in consistency with the history, to the commencement of the displeasure for the ground of the oath.

When God is said to swear in His wrath, the language must plainly be viewed as used in accommodation to the ideas of men; and we must beware of degrading the Divine Being by the grossness of our notions. The simple promise and the simple threatening of God are quite certain, for the pure Jehovah cannot lie; but since an oath among men carries with it the idea of greater solemnity, we find that in several cases God superadds an oath to His simple declaration, in order to produce the deeper impression of certainty upon the minds of men. The wrath of God denotes His displeasure against sin, and the severe sufferings with which in His righteous administration it is always punished. There are no such transports of anger in God as men sometimes display; but since His hatred of sin and unbending rectitude of rule lead Him to connect suffering with the violation of His laws, these views or dispositions may, with

sufficient accuracy and with great force, be styled anger or wrath.

The substance of the oath which the Almighty pronounced is this: *εἰ εἰσελεύσονται εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσίν μου.* The expression is elliptical, and the meaning must be gathered from the Hebrew form of swearing. The conjunction אִם, denoting if, when, was generally employed for this purpose; and in some cases the whole thought was fully expressed, but in others there was the same ellipse as in the passage before us. The full form of the expression occurs in 1 Sam. xxv. 22, "So may God do unto the enemies of David, and more also, *if* I leave off all that pertain to him," etc.; and in Ps. vii. 4–6, "If I have done this, if there be iniquity in my hands, if I have rewarded evil," etc., "may an enemy overtake my soul," etc. From these examples, the nature of the Hebrew asseveration is abundantly plain; and no difficulty can be felt in supplying what is to be understood where the expression is elliptical. Grotius justly observes that the supplement, where it is needed, must correspond to the nature and circumstances of the individual who swears: when men are the parties, something like this must be understood—*male mihi faciat Deus;* but when God interposes with the solemnity of an oath, the supplement must be, *ne pro Deo habear*—may I no longer, etc.; as I live, saith the Lord. The oath quoted by the apostle runs thus in Deut. i. 35, "The Lord was wroth, and sware, saying, If one of these evil men of this generation shall see that good land;" and thus in Ps. xcv. 11, "That they should not enter into my rest;" to both of which the language of the apostle is quite analogous—"if they shall enter into my rest." Some lexicographers have said that the particles are to be understood in such cases as denoting *not, by no means;* but though it is quite true that they constitute the strongest possible negation, yet their power of denial does not lie in themselves simply considered, but in their connection with a suppressed clause; and therefore it would be a perversion of the language to say that they ever mean "not."

Κατάπαυσις manifestly refers here to the land of Canaan, which God promised to the children of Israel as a secure habitation, where they might rest after the slavery of Egypt and the

toilsome wanderings of the wilderness. That the Psalmist designed also to allude to the heavenly rest, of which the earthly Canaan was merely a type, seems likewise abundantly clear; for the apostle's reasoning in the next chapter, as we shall see more fully when we come to it, infers from the psalm the existence of another rest besides the inheritance of Canaan. And in perfect harmony with this view, we know that Abraham, the father of the faithful, looked forward to another, a better country, even an heavenly. The earthly was the type of the heavenly, and the promise of the one embodied to the faithful the promise of the other.

The personal pronoun *μοῦ* is added to *κατάπαυσιν*—my rest, *i.e.* God's rest—to indicate that the rest referred to was provided by God, and promised by Him to the children of Israel. Grotius, however, thinks that the land of Canaan might be styled the rest of God, not only because God gave it to the children of Israel, but also because the ark, the symbol of the divine presence, was to find rest in Zion after being carried hither and thither through the wilderness for so long a period. And certainly there is a passage in the book of Psalms (cxxxii. 13) which gives much countenance to this idea: "For the Lord hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His habitation. This is my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it." And the same twofold reference of *μοῦ*, as denoting both the rest which God gives and the rest which God enjoys, may be conceived as existing when *κατάπαυσις* is viewed as denoting emblematically the heavenly rest of which the earthly Canaan was a type.

The admonition quoted from the book of Psalms, founded upon the unbelief of the Jews in the wilderness, and the severe punishment with which they were visited, the apostle follows up with an admonition in his own language: *βλέπετε, ἀδελφοὶ, μήποτε ἔσται ἔν τινι ὑμῶν καρδία πονηρὰ ἀπιστίας, ἐν τῷ ἀποστῆναι ἀπὸ Θεοῦ ζῶντος.*

Βλέπετε—See, beware, take heed.

Μήποτε, in the sense in which it is here used, is more frequently joined to the subjunctive mood, as in ver. 1 of following chapter. Yet there are cases, both in the classics and in the Scriptures, where it is followed by the indicative mood for the

most part in the future tense, though sometimes also in the past. In Mark xiv. 2 we read, *μήποτε θόρυβος ἔσται τοῦ λαοῦ.* And the same is the case with *μὴ*, especially after verbs of fearing, watching, guarding, as in Col. ii. 8, *βλέπετε μή τις ἔσται ὑμᾶς συλαγωγῶν.*

Καρδία πονηρὰ ἀπιστίας is generally supposed to be a phrase formed on the Hebrew principle of making one substantive in government with another supply the place of an adjective to it; *καρδία ἀπιστίας* standing for *καρδία ἄπιστος*. Such constructions are of very frequent occurrence both in the Old Testament and in the New. Yet I do not recollect to have seen any example of this kind of Hebraism precisely similar to the present, in which one quality of the object spoken of is expressed by an adjective, and another by a substantive in government with it,—a heart evil and unbelieving being styled *καρδία πονηρὰ ἀπιστίας*. One would rather have supposed that either two adjectives would be employed to express the two qualities, *καρδία πονηρὰ καὶ ἄπιστος*, or two substantives in Hebraistic government with the object described, *καρδία τῆς πονηρίας καὶ τῆς ἀπιστίας*, and that the two methods would not have been intermixed. I suppose it is for this reason that Tholuck—though, indeed, he does not state this or any reason at all—prefers to regard *ἀπιστίας* as not a case of Hebraism at all, but as standing in government with *πονηρά*—a heart evil with unbelief; analogous, he says, to the expression of 2 Pet. ii. 14, *καρδίαν γεγυμνασμένην πλεονεξίαις ἔκοντες*, or that of Jas. i. 13, *Θεὸς ἀπείραστος κακῶν*. But whatever be the dependence of the Greek words, the general meaning of the expression is abundantly clear: it is a heart chargeable with the aggravated guilt of distrusting and disbelieving the pure and holy Jehovah.

Ἐν τῷ ἀποστῆναι ἀπὸ Θεοῦ ζῶντος describes the dreadful and ruinous termination to which cherished unbelief or distrust of God naturally tends to lead. Beware lest there arise in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, leading you to apostatize from God, displaying itself in the desertion of God's service. The Jews in the wilderness apostatized from God, by refusing through unbelief to go up to the land of Canaan, and rather preferring to return to Egypt. And the Hebrews to whom this epistle is directed were in danger of apostatizing, by forsaking the service

of Christ, through doubt whether God was able to defend them from the persecutions of the world. Ample evidence in both cases was given of the power, and presence, and purposes of God; and distrust, therefore, or unbelief, was the greatest sin of which they could be guilty. The greatness of the sin in the former case was demonstrated by the greatness and irreversibleness of the punishment; and earnest warning is therefore addressed to the Hebrews, to beware lest they should apostatize in the same manner, through the deceitfulness of sin. Such desertion of the service of God, after one has known the truth and studied its evidence, is a most heinous offence, and recovery is more hopeless than conversion from a life of uniform carelessness. Nor are there any persons who have greater need of watchfulness and prayer than students of theology, whose familiar and professional acquaintance with the records of Christianity exposes them to the hazard of making religion too little a matter of heartfelt experience, and thus perhaps departing entirely in the end from the true and contrite worship of God.

Why does the apostle select the epithet ζῶντος to qualify Θεοῦ in this particular place, in preference to many others which are employed to describe the attributes of God? If the Hebrews had been in any danger when they did apostatize of exchanging Christianity for the false gods of the heathens, then one might have supposed that ζῶντος was here designed to distinguish the living and true God from the dumb idols of the nations, as in 1 Thess. i. 9: ἐπεστρέψατε πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν ἀπὸ τῶν εἰδώλων δουλεύειν Θεῷ ζῶντι καὶ ἀληθινῷ. But as idolatry was not the course of error into which the Hebrews were liable to fall, but rather infidelity, perhaps we should view the epithet in question as merely designed to suggest the idea that God, the living and eternal God, is ever prompt and powerful to avenge the insults that are thrown upon His government, to execute the threatenings of His word against apostasy. And that this is the force and purpose of the expression, seems to be rendered extremely probable, by the employment of the word in a very similar passage in this very epistle (x. 31): φοβερὸν τὸ ἐμπεσεῖν εἰς χεῖρας Θεοῦ ζῶντος. Moreover, as the apostle has been commenting upon a solemn oath,—and in an oath there is either an

expressed or understood reference to the fact that God lives to maintain the cause of justice and truth,—he might very naturally be led, in warning against apostasy, to employ the epithet ζῶντος for the purpose of describing God as the living and perpetual arbiter of right and wrong, and avenger of that which is evil.

As the Hebrews were in danger of apostatizing from the gospel, and exposing themselves to the wrath of a living and powerful God, the apostle proceeds in his exhortation to point out a method by which they might contribute to establish and confirm each other in the love and practice of the truth: ἀλλὰ παρακαλεῖτε ἑαυτοὺς καθ' ἑκάστην ἡμέραν, ἄχρις οὗ τὸ σήμερον καλεῖται· ἵνα μὴ σκληρυνθῇ ἐξ ὑμῶν τις ἀπάτῃ τῆς ἁμαρτίας.

Mutual admonition, based upon brotherly affection and love, is the method which the apostle recommends the Hebrews to employ for promoting each other's stedfastness. They were to look not simply every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others; and when one saw a Christian brother in danger of falling into sin or deserting the gospel, he was to warn him of the dreadful consequences of the course to which he was turning, and to allure him back to the love and practice of religion. By such faithful dealing they were to stir each other up to diligence in the service of God. The full amount of what is implied in παρακαλεῖτε ἑαυτούς—which is the same as παρακαλεῖτε ἀλλήλους, ἑαυτοὺς being often so used both in the classics and in the Scriptures—is very strikingly expressed in 1 Thess. v. 11–14: "Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men." All this is implied in the mutual exhortation which is incumbent upon believers. It is from the word παρακαλέω that παράκλητος, the title so frequently given to the Holy Ghost, is derived; of which it is by far too confined an idea that the English word comforter conveys. Doubtless consolation is one of the ideas, it is part of the office which a παράκλητος will have to discharge, and in a world of suffering and sorrow like this no inconsiderable part; but it is not the only one, nor is it even the one to which either the etymology or the use of the word mainly points. The excitement of the indolent, the reclaiming of the wander-

ing, the instruction of the ignorant, are all ideas more naturally suggested by the word than consolation: instructor, adviser, counsellor—these seem to be the English words best fitted to express the full sense of παράκλητος. And indeed Christ Himself, in the very passage where He first gives this title to the Holy Ghost, explains it in this sense: "When the Holy Ghost, the παράκλητος, is come, διδάξει, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have spoken. He shall testify of me, He will guide you into all truth, He will show you things to come" (John xiv. 26, xv. 26, xvi. 13).

The mutual admonitions—παρακλήσεις—of believers are to be continually and faithfully employed; καθ' ἑκάστην ἡμέραν, daily, every day, as opportunity offers or need requires. We are to take an unflagging interest in each other's spiritual improvement. Paul's own example, as described in 2 Cor. xi. 28, 29, furnishes a noble illustration of the advice which he here gives: "Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?"

The exhortation to mutual counsel and advice Paul enforces by two considerations; the one founded upon the limited time granted for repentance and amendment of life, and the other drawn from the deceitful and ensnaring character of sin.

But exhort one another daily, ἄχρις οὗ τὸ σήμερον καλεῖται. Ἄχρις οὗ denotes here the same as ἐφ' ὅσον, which latter is of more frequent occurrence—time during which, while; and the time referred to is the present life, which, on account of its brevity and uncertainty, may well be styled a day. The present moment alone is ours: we know not what shall be on the morrow; and if we waste our day of merciful visitation, we can have no future opportunity of turning to the Lord, and rising to glory. The article τὸ prefixed to σήμερον is manifestly designed to show that the apostle is alluding to the language of the Psalmist, "To-day, if ye will hear," etc.; and we are thus forcibly reminded, that in every age it is the present time alone which we can call our own. The duration of the world is the day of grace to mankind, and the τὸ σήμερον of the Psalmist shall be proclaimed from age to age; but to the individual this

very *τὸ σήμερον* declares that it is the passing day alone on which he can with safety calculate. "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation."

Besides the brevity of life, the apostle adduces the insidious nature of sin as another inducement to mutual watchfulness and care: *ἵνα μὴ σκληρυνθῇ ἐξ ὑμῶν τις ἀπάτῃ τῆς ἁμαρτίας.* *Σκληρυνθῇ*, derived from *σκληρός*, *durus*, expresses here a state of hardened unbelief, of obstinate opposition to God's holy word, of wilful neglect of God's holy laws. It is manifestly used by the apostle as interchangeable with *ἀποστῆναι* in the preceding verse; not that the two words mean precisely the same thing, but that both might be properly employed to describe the dreadful result to which he feared some might be led by the ensnaring temptations of the devil. This position of confirmed apostasy, of hardened unbelief, is never reached by any all at once: it is a depth of degradation to which the descent is gradual, though some slide down with greater rapidity than others. And the slope in all cases by which the descent is made is what is here mentioned by the apostle, *ἀπάτῃ ἁμαρτίας*. Abreschius supposes that *ἁμαρτία* must here denote in an especial manner the sin of unbelief, because it is of apostasy the apostle is speaking in the associate clauses. But the conclusion by no means follows; yea, the very opposite is plainly true: for if *ἀποστῆναι* and *σκληρυνθῇ* describe a state of hardened unbelief, as undoubtedly they do, then *ἁμαρτία* cannot mean the same thing, unless you suppose the apostle to confound the cause with the effect. *Ἁμαρτία* may properly, therefore, be viewed as used in its utmost latitude of meaning, as denoting sin of any description,—whatever, in short, has a tendency to alienate the mind from God—the love of pleasure, or worldly-mindedness, or the fear of suffering for conscience' sake. And the quality of sin which gives it its power of seducing men to apostasy is its deceitfulness. One act of transgression prepares the way for another, and habit strengthens the love of evil, and the consequent disrelish of God's word begets the wish that it were false, and suspicions arise, and plausible objections are entertained, and the love of sinful pleasure and the fear of worldly loss in times of difficulty now operate with greater power; and the result after a time may be, that the

service of God is renounced, and the hopes of the gospel are abandoned as a fable. Hence it is declared in Scripture, that the understanding of the sinner is darkened: the eyes of his mind are obscured by the mists of sin: he is blinded by the god of this world. He wanders to destruction, led astray by the deceitfulness of sin.

The apostle proceeds to enforce his admonition by exhibiting to the view of the Hebrews the absolute necessity of perseverance: *μέτοχοι γὰρ τοῦ Χριστοῦ γεγόναμεν, ἐάνπερ τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς ὑποστάσεως μέχρι τέλους βεβαίαν κατάσχωμεν.*

This verse bears a strong resemblance to the 6th verse of this same chapter; and undoubtedly it expresses the same general sentiment, though in language slightly varied. The phrase *μέτοχοι τοῦ Χριστοῦ* corresponds to *οὗ οἶκός ἐσμεν ἡμεῖς*; and they both denote individuals, persons who possess a saving interest in Jesus Christ, who share the blessings which He came to bestow, who belong to the household of faith which He superintends as head. The language of our text is illustrated by the phrases *μέτοχοι κλήσεως ἐπουρανίου* in iii. 1, and *μετόχους Πνεύματος ἁγίου* in vi. 4. *Γεγόναμεν*, the perf. mid., is frequently employed as a present tense; but in the case before us the idea of past time suits the statement of the apostle much better than that of present. Indeed, the perfect always carries with it the idea both of past and present time, for it denotes an action done some time ago, and the effect of which remains complete and undisturbed to the present moment; and according as the mind is more or less occupied with the beginning or the end of the action, it may be used as a past or as a present tense. Here it is the fact of having been united to Christ that is made the subject of question; and therefore past time is the predominating idea. The Hebrews had now for a long time been acquainted with the gospel: they had long professed to be the disciples of Jesus Christ, and they might with unquestioning confidence be supposing that all was safe and secure, and that no reason existed for suspicion of themselves. But Paul tells them that the reality of their union to Christ, the fact of their having ever truly believed, remains an open question, to be judged of continually down to the very end of life. For we have been made partakers of Christ: what is

necessary to establish this proposition respecting the past? If we hold fast the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end. But if we apostatize, then it follows that we do not merely fall short of heaven, but that we have never at all been truly united to Christ. This verse I consider to be one of the strongest proofs of the doctrine of the saints' perseverance. It connects the reality of a supposed past event with events that are yet to transpire. The statement is not merely, that if we fall away from the profession and practice of religion, we shall be excluded from heaven, which is true; but the statement is, that on this supposition we have never at all been truly made partakers of Christ. The principle is the same as is laid down by John in his first epistle (ii. 19): "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." *Γεγόναμεν*—We have been made partakers of Christ, and are so accordingly at the present time,—the exact force of the *tempus perfectum*,—if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence.

Ὑπόστασις is a word respecting the use of which, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, considerable difference of opinion prevails. It denotes primarily, and in accordance with its etymology, the foundation of a building; and this sense occurs both in the Septuagint and in the classics—as in Ezek. xliii. 11, *διαγράψεις τὸν οἶκον καὶ τὰς ἐξόδους αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν ὑπόστασιν αὐτοῦ*, and as in Diod. xiii. 203, *κατὰ τὸ μέγεθος τῆς ὑποστάσεως*—of a temple. From this sense a tropical use of the word very naturally takes its rise, which is also to be found both in the classics and in the Scriptures, viz. moral firmness, confidence, perseverance. In Diod. xvii. 69, xx. 78, *e.g.*, a man who maintains his positions firmly is styled *ἀνὴρ ὑποστατικός*: and Diodorus (iv. 50) says, in describing the constancy of the Byzantines, *οἱ δὲ Ῥόδιοι θεωροῦντες τὴν τῶν Βυζαντίων ὑπόστασιν.* There is a third sense of the word, viz. substance, essence, person, which undoubtedly is its meaning in the 3d verse of the first chapter, and which some also suppose to be the sense of it in the eleventh chapter; but the second sense is the meaning to be assigned to it in the passage before us—confidence, constancy. This sense the word repeatedly bears in the Old Testament, as in Ruth

i. 12, where it expresses a small degree of hope, *ὅτι εἶπα ὅτι ἐστί μοι ὑπόστασις τοῦ γενηθῆναί με ἀνδρὶ καὶ τέξομαι υἱούς*; and in Ps. xxxviii. 7, where it denotes a strong confidence and hope—*καὶ ἡ ὑπόστασίς μου παρὰ σοί ἐστιν.*

Τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς ὑποστάσεως, the beginning of the confidence, denotes the same confidence which they had at the first, and which they are to persevere in cherishing to the last. The expression partakes something of the nature of a Hebraism; and the form, in all probability, which it would have assumed in the mouth of a classic would have been, *τὴν ὑπόστασιν τὴν ἐξ ἀρχῆς*, or *ἣν ἤρξασθε ἔχειν*, or *τὴν πρώτην ὑπόστασιν.* It is the very same idea which is expressed in 1 Tim. v. 12, but the construction of the phrase is more conformed to the classic model, *ἔχουσαι κρῖμα, ὅτι τὴν πρώτην πίστιν ἠθέτησαν, i.e.* they have not held fast the beginning of their confidence.

The remaining verses of this chapter are plainly designed to draw the closer attention of the Hebrews to the dreadful punishment inflicted upon their rebellious forefathers, and to exhibit in a clearer light the precise nature of the sin of which they had been guilty. It was a warning that claimed more than a passing notice; it deserved to be seriously and deliberately pondered by all.

The 15th verse, therefore, renews the reference to the passage quoted from the book of Psalms: *ἐν τῷ λέγεσθαι· Σήμερον, ἐὰν τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ ἀκούσητε, μὴ σκληρύνητε τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν, ὡς ἐν τῷ παραπικρασμῷ.* There is scarcely anything in this verse, viewed by itself, which needs consideration. *Ἐν τῷ λέγεσθαι* is the language of reference, denoting in its being said, when it is said, and is quite analogous to *ἐν τῷ λέγειν* in viii. 13: *ἐν τῷ λέγειν καινήν, πεπαλαίωκε τὴν πρώτην.* They both refer to a saying, for the purpose of making a remark upon it.

The difficulty lies in deciding the connection in which the verse stands with others. Taken by itself, it is incomplete, being merely the member of a sentence. Some, indeed, have proposed to make the sentence a complete one, by viewing the first clause only as the quotation, *σήμερον ἐὰν τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ ἀκούσητε*, and the last as the apostle's admonition founded thereon; but since both clauses are equally the language of the psalm, it is reasonable to suppose that they both equally stand in subordi-

nation to *ἐν τῷ λέγεσθαι*, the mark of reference. Chrysostom supposes that vers. 16–19 are a parenthesis, and that the 1st verse of the next chapter—*φοβηθῶμεν οὖν*—is the conclusion or apodosis of the verse before us: "When it is said," . . . "let us therefore fear;" but such a parenthesis is not to be admitted, if a more natural and simple and direct explanation can be found; and, moreover, the conjunction *οὖν* rather marks the commencement of a new sentence founded upon prior matter, than the resolution of an old one. Others have supposed that the 14th verse is to be viewed as a parenthesis, and that the 15th stands in connection with the 13th as part of the same sentence: "But exhort one another daily while it is called To-day, lest any be hardened (perseverance is necessary); when it is said to-day," etc.; but such a repetition could not but appear destitute of all power and force. The only other views that have been taken of the passage are those which, throwing aside all parentheses, connect the 15th verse either with the 14th or with the 16th, as the conclusion of the one, or as the commencement of the other. According to the former supposition, the meaning of the language is this: For we are partakers of Christ if we persevere to the last, during its being said, or while it continues to be said to us, *σήμερον ἐὰν τῆς φωνῆς ἀκούσητε*,—the 15th verse being supposed to define the period during which probation lasts. The objections that strike me against this arrangement are, that *μέχρι τέλους* seems of itself sufficiently to define the period of probation, without the long appendage of the following verse, added solely for that purpose, and that *ἐν τῷ λέγεσθαι* does not so naturally denote time during which, as time when. Perhaps, therefore, upon the whole, the other view is to be preferred, which makes the 15th verse the commencement of another sentence, proposing anew the quotation from the Psalmist as the subject of remark, and the following verses the remarks which accordingly are made upon it. The preceding verse comes to a full and natural close; and besides this, the phrase *ἐν τῷ λέγεσθαι*, denoting when it is said, forms a natural commencement for a new sentence, like the one already referred to: *ἐν τῷ λέγειν καινήν, πεπαλαίωκε τὴν πρώτην*—When it is said, "To-day, if ye will hearken to his voice, harden," etc. Then what follows?

Τίνες γὰρ ἀκούσαντες παρεπίκραναν, ἀλλ' οὐ πάντες οἱ ἐξελθόντες ἐξ Αἰγύπτου διὰ Μωσέως ;

This verse, the structure and dependence of the whole passage lead us to regard as the apodosis of the foregoing verse. It has been quite differently viewed by our English translators, who render these words thus : "For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses." And there can be no doubt that, viewed by themselves, they quite naturally bear this sense. But it has always been felt that, when taken in connection with the whole scope of the passage, they assume in this sense a disjointed appearance. It seems quite inconsistent with the facts of the history, that the immense multitude of transgressors mentioned in the writings of Moses should be described by the extenuating phrase *some*, as if it were only a few individuals that had exposed themselves to the charge of rebellion. In contemplating such a statement as this, that some of the people rebelled, but not all of them, one would naturally suppose that there was a great number, perhaps a majority, who were entirely free from blame, whereas there were only Caleb and Joshua. It has been said, indeed, that the disproportion of the language to the facts of the case will appear the less, if you suppose that the phrase *οὐ πάντες*, not all, refers not merely to Caleb and Joshua, but also to the thousands who were under twenty years of age at the time of the departure from Egypt. But still one would scarcely suppose that, when the entire body of those who were come to the years of discretion were implicated in the rebellion, the apostle would speak of them under the modified phraseology of *some*. His design did not require him to allude to the children at all. Nay, his design did not require him to allude to any but those who were actually guilty.

Many have therefore supposed that the word *τινες* ought not to be accented upon the last syllable, as denoting *some*, but upon the first syllable, as denoting *who* interrogatively. It is accented upon the first syllable in the two following verses—*τίσι δὲ προσώχθισεν, τίσι δὲ ὤμοσεν ;* and the probability, therefore, is, that the same should be the case in the verse before us, so as to make the three form a series of questions. Griesbach, accordingly, so accentuates the word in his edition of the Greek

Testament. It is certain, too, that Theodoret understood the verse in this sense; and the same seems to have been Chrysostom's view, though it is not so decidedly expressed: "Who, then, were the persons that, hearing the voice of the Lord, rebelled against Him?" *Γὰρ*, it is well known, often just marks interrogation, without adding anything to the sense, as in the address of the town-clerk of Ephesus: *ἄνδρες Ἐφέσιοι, τίς γάρ ἐστιν ἄνθρωπος ὃς οὐ γινώσκει τὴν Ἐφεσίων πόλιν*, etc. (Acts xix. 35).

The apostle's question, "Who now were the persons," etc., is plainly designed to draw the attention of his readers closer to the characters of the persons whom he is holding up as a warning. He is entering upon a more minute analysis of the passage quoted from the book of Psalms, with the view of exhibiting the precise nature of the sin which the ancient Jews had committed, that their descendants might learn the dangers to which they too were exposed, and be led to adopt all necessary measures of precaution. "Who now were the persons that, having heard, did provoke?"

It is plain, that if the first clause of this verse, *τίνες γὰρ ἀκούσαντες παρεπίκραναν*, be a question, the second must be a question too: *ἀλλ' οὐ πάντες οἱ ἐξελθόντες ἐξ Αἰγύπτου διὰ Μωσέως;* who rebelled? were they not those, etc. *Ἀλλὰ* is not to be understood here adversatively or restrictively, but rather intensively. It often, both when standing by itself and when coupled with *οὐ* or *οὐκ*, has the sense of *indeed, truly, certainly, nay more*, as in 2 Cor. vii. 11, *πόσην κατειργάσατο ὑμῖν σπουδήν· ἀλλὰ ἀπολογίαν, ἀλλὰ ἀγανάκτησιν, ἀλλὰ φόβον*, etc., and Phil. i. 18, *καὶ ἐν τούτῳ χαίρω, ἀλλὰ καὶ χαρήσομαι.*

Πάντες, if it be supposed to refer to the number of the rebels, must not be understood with mathematical precision; for Caleb and Joshua continued faithful to God. "Who were the persons, etc.? Were they not *all* that came out of Egypt by Moses?" The whole nation that were of mature years, with two solitary exceptions, provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger. Nor are the cases rare where general and universal expressions are used, even although many exceptions may exist to limit their application. "All men came to Jesus, to be baptized of Him." We need not wonder, therefore, that in a

case like the present "all" should be used without any qualifying clause.

Yet, perhaps, after all, this last clause may rather require a somewhat different shade of meaning. There may be no reference at all to the number of the persons spoken of, but solely to their circumstances; and this idea is more suitable to the scope of the passage. The former question was, not *how many* had rebelled, but *who* had rebelled; and the second question embodies the answer to the first in an interrogative form. Well, then, who were they? "Were they not all persons who had come out of Egypt under the direction of Moses?" Observe the statement is, not that all who came out of Egypt rebelled, but that all the rebels were persons who had come out of Egypt; and these two ideas are very different from one another. The latter defines not the number, but the character and circumstances, of the rebels: they had been all brought out of Egypt under the leadership of Moses. And why describe them by this circumstance? Because it was this circumstance that constituted the main ingredient of their guilt, and most strikingly displayed their hardened obstinacy and unbelief. They had seen the wonders of God in the land of Egypt: they had witnessed the plagues with which Jehovah visited the tyranny of Pharaoh: they had beheld the Red Sea part its waters to make a way for them: they had tasted the liquid stream that gushed from the flinty rock;—and yet, in spite of all the wonders which their eyes had seen, and all the favours which their hearts had experienced, they rebelled against God, and refused to believe that He could cast out the inhabitants of Canaan before them. Who were the rebels? The very men whom Moses had brought out of Egypt. All of them had witnessed the miraculous discomfiture of Egypt's king, and walked upon the bottom of the Red Sea. What a proof of obstinate and confirmed unbelief!

The question proposed in the 17th verse, *τίσι δὲ προσώχθισε τεσσεράκοντα ἔτη;* stands quite parallel to the one already considered, and serves the very same purpose. Its design is to bring out still more clearly the precise nature of the sin which brought down such vengeance upon the heads of the ancient Israelites: *τίσι δέ*, etc.

Οὐχὶ τοῖς ἁμαρτήσασιν; ὧν τὰ κῶλα ἔπεσεν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ— Was it not, etc. It is sin that is the object of God's supreme displeasure; and it is sinners against whom His fierce anger is directed. It has been imagined that *ἁμαρτήσασι* in this verse must denote unbelieving, being guilty of the specific sin of unbelief; because in the last verse the conclusion that is drawn from the whole comment points to unbelief as the grand barrier which excluded from the promised rest. But it is forgotten that the conclusion in question is the ultimate point reached after several steps, and that the answers to the three questions rise above one another. They do not each, therefore, bear exactly the same shade of meaning. They define the subject more and more closely: they hem in the object of pursuit until it is comprehended in a narrow space, and seized. The first answer describes the rebels as enjoying the privilege of being conducted out of Egypt by Moses: this laid a foundation for their aggravated guilt, if they should decline from the service. The second describes them as having sinned against God,—a generic term being used to indicate their guilt. And the third describes them as disbelieving and disobeying the positive promises and injunctions of God.

The verse under consideration describes also the punishment which was inflicted upon the ancient Israelites: *ὧν τὰ κῶλα ἔπεσεν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ.* The word *κῶλα* literally signifies members, limbs, bones; and it is here, by a very common figure,—a part being put for the whole,—employed to denote bodies, *corpora, cadavera.* This use of it, however, is not made in classic authors, who would have preferred the word *πτώματα* or *σώματα.* The apostle has borrowed the expression from the Septuagint (Num. xiv. 29), where this very punishment is threatened: *ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ ταύτῃ πεσεῖται τὰ κῶλα ὑμῶν.* The idea has been started, that this word might be chosen to convey the idea that the dismembered bodies of the Israelites might be seen scattered over the wilderness, their bones bleaching in the sun, as a monument of the divine displeasure. It cannot be said that the idea is far-fetched or unnatural; but still it does not seem to be supported by the Hebrew text, where the word employed is פְּגָרִים, carcases.

Ἔπεσε corresponds to יִפְּלוּ, from נָפַל, *cadere*, which is very

frequently employed to denote death by violence, death by the sword, death by famine or pestilence. It carries with it the idea of some disastrous occurrence, or judgment inflicted in the course of divine providence; and the same accessory ideas are often associated with the Greek word *πίπτω*. The Israelites fell in the case before us under the avenging arm of God: the curse of heaven alighted upon them for their sins; and their bodies strewed the wilderness as the monuments of God's justice. They are a warning to all ages of the guilt and danger of forsaking the right path, and of mistrusting the power, and promise, and providence of the Almighty.

The third question stands parallel with the other two, and serves the very same purpose. The object of them all is to bring out strongly and clearly the precise nature of the sin which exposed the Israelites to the dreadful displeasure of the Almighty: *τίσι δὲ ὤμοσε μὴ εἰσελεύσεσθαι εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσιν αὐτοῦ, εἰ μὴ τοῖς ἀπειθήσασιν ;*

Ἀπειθεῖν is employed in Scripture to express the ideas both of disbelieving and disobeying. Disbelieving seems to be the primary sense of the word, as the etymology indicates; and it is perhaps the sense that is of most frequent occurrence. In John iii. 36, *e.g.*, *ὁ ἀπειθῶν τῷ υἱῷ* is opposed to *τῷ πιστεύοντι εἰς τὸν υἱόν*. In Acts xix. 8, 9, we are informed that Paul appeared in the synagogue *πείθων τὰ περὶ τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ Θεοῦ*; and then we are told that some *ἐσκληρύνοντο καὶ ἀπείθουν*: he persuaded them, but they remained unpersuaded by him: they disbelieved (see also Rom. xi. 30, 31; 1 Pet. ii. 7, 8). In the passage before us, too, it is plain that "disbelieve" is the sense of the word. The apostle has now completed his inquiry into the nature of the sin which excluded the children of Israel from the land of Canaan. He has reached the ultimate point to which he was tending; and the idea therefore involved in *ἀπειθήσασι* must be the same as that which he formally states in the next verse as the result of his inquiry: *καὶ βλέπομεν ὅτι οὐκ ἠδυνήθησαν εἰσελθεῖν δι' ἀπιστίαν.*

This last verse embodies the conclusion to which the apostle comes,—a conclusion which he immediately proceeds to apply to the state of the Hebrews; and the conjunction *καὶ* is employed in the drawing of it: *καὶ βλέπομεν*—We see therefore,

so we see. *Καὶ* is not very frequently employed standing alone, as an illative conjunction. Yet there are several passages where it seems to be employed very much in the manner in which it is here used. In Gal. ii. 16 we find this passage: *εἰδότες δὲ ὅτι οὐ δικαιοῦται ἄνθρωπος ἐξ ἔργων νόμου, ἐὰν μὴ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν,* etc.; and in John iv. 24: *Πνεῦμα ὁ Θεός, καὶ τοὺς προσκυνοῦντας αὐτὸν ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ δεῖ προσκυνεῖν*: in both of which examples *καὶ* undoubtedly has an illative force. And the same is the case in the passage before us: *καὶ βλέπομεν*—so, therefore, thus.

The conclusion of the apostle is just an embodiment of the declarations of the Old Testament on the same subject: "How long will it be ere they *believe* me, for all the signs which I have showed among them?" (Num. xiv. 11.) "Then I said, The Lord your God, which goeth before you, He shall fight for you. Yet in this thing ye did not believe the Lord your God, who went in the way before you, to search out a place to pitch your tents in, in fire by night, to show you what way ye should go, and in a cloud by day" (Deut. i. 30–33). God said that He would conduct them forward in triumph, but they would not believe His word. He had frequently interfered for them before with mighty power and with an outstretched arm; yet they doubted His faithfulness, and they questioned His power to overcome the Canaanites—men of stature, and strength, and renown. God therefore, for their unbelief, condemned them to die in the wilderness; whence it appears that disbelief of God's promises is guilt of the most aggravated kind. Faith is an indispensable condition of the enjoyment of God's favour, and of the reception of the promised blessings of His word. Without faith it is impossible to please God.

The apostle says, *οὐκ ἠδυνήθησαν εἰσελθεῖν.* Does this declaration refer to the want of will or the want of power? Undoubtedly unbelief is always connected with an evil disposition of heart: it springs from a depraved state of the will; it is the fault, and not the misfortune, of those who cherish it. Yet settled unbelief opposes as strong a barrier to the pursuit of a right course of conduct, as the want of physical power to advance does: while the unbelief lasts, it presents as strong an

obstacle as walls of brass to the feeble arm of man; and therefore we find that, in the Greek as well as in our own language, words which were originally descriptive of physical ability and inability, are employed to denote that inability or inaptitude which springs from the state of the heart. This is the case with the word *δύναμαι*. It is employed with a negative in Luke xi. 7, to express an extreme degree of reluctance: *ἤδη ἡ θύρα κέκλεισται, καὶ τὰ παιδία μου μετ' ἐμοῦ εἰς τὴν κοίτην εἰσίν· οὐ δύναμαι ἀναστὰς δοῦναί σοι.* In Mark vi. 5 we are told that Christ *οὐκ ἠδύνατο ἐκεῖ οὐδεμίαν δύναμιν ποιῆσαι, διὰ τὴν ἀπιστίαν αὐτῶν.* In Acts iv. 20 we read, *οὐ δυνάμεθα γὰρ ἡμεῖς, ἃ εἴδομεν καὶ ἠκούσαμεν, μὴ λαλεῖν*; and in 2 Cor. xiii. 8, *οὐ γὰρ δυνάμεθά τι κατὰ τῆς ἀληθείας, ἀλλὰ ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀληθείας.* Our text therefore might mean, that the Jews would not march forward to possess the land; that their distrust of God wholly disinclined them to such a step; and that they obstinately resisted the authority of Moses, commanding them to move. Perhaps, however, the language of the apostle may rather refer to the sentence of exclusion from the promised land which God pronounced against them for their unbelief. They would not believe God, nor advance when He commanded them; and then God sware that they should never be permitted to enter the land of promise; and after that they were no longer able to take possession of the country. They were debarred all access to it. They afterwards wished to march forward, but God's blessing had forsaken them, and they were discomfited before the enemy. It was too late; the decree was passed, and they could not enter. Unbelief was the cause of their ruin. Unbelief excluded from the possession of a land flowing with milk and honey.

The important principle thus established respecting faith is conspicuously brought forward by the apostle in the following chapter, and applied to the great truths of the Christian revelation.

CHAPTER IV.

IN the preceding chapter, the apostle, having shown by various considerations the vast superiority of Christ to Moses, enforces upon his countrymen the duty of faithfully obeying the injunctions of so great a personage. If the laws of Moses were binding upon their forefathers, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, with how much greater alacrity was it incumbent upon them to obey the laws of Christ, and how much greater punishment might they expect if they refused to listen to His voice! The force of the argument is undeniable; and to give it the greater weight, the apostle expresses it in language borrowed from the Psalms of David. He exhorts the Hebrews to take warning from the example of their forefathers, who, on account of their rebellious disposition, were punished with exclusion from the land of promise. And by several pointed queries, the apostle traces up the guilt of the Jews, and their consequent punishment, to a want of faith in the divine promise.

In the chapter before us, the apostle proceeds to enforce upon the Hebrews the duty of serving Christ in faith and sincerity, that they might not be excluded from the rest promised to God's people as their fathers had been. The promised rest has reference to us as well as to the ancients, and therefore we should strive to enter into it.

Φοβηθῶμεν οὖν, μήποτε καταλειπομένης ἐπαγγελίας εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσιν αὐτοῦ, δοκῇ τις ἐξ ὑμῶν ὑστερηκέναι.

Φοβηθῶμεν expresses the idea of care, diligence, circumspection, a holy dread of falling short of the promise. It is used in the same sense as *φυλαττώμεθα, ἐπισκοπῶμεν, βλέπωμεν.*

The thing to be dreaded is *μήποτε—δοκῇ τις ἐξ ὑμῶν ὑστε-*

ρηκέναι. Ὑστερεῖν denotes to arrive on the following day, to be too late, to fall behind, to be thrown into the shade. It also denotes tropically to be destitute of something, to fail of attaining, as 1 Cor. i. 7, ὥστε ὑμᾶς μὴ ὑστερεῖσθαι ἐν μηδενὶ χαρίσματι; and this seems to be the sense of the word in the passage before us, though there may, as Carpzov first conjectured, be an allusion in the very selection of this word to the σήμερον of the Psalmist.

Δοκῇ does not materially influence the sense of the clause. The apostle does not mean, by the use of this word, to intimate that it is the semblance only of deficiency which they are to dread: Δοκεῖν is often employed redundantly, the sole apparent use of the word being to soften somewhat the asperity of the language, as in 1 Cor. xi. 16, εἰ δέ τις δοκεῖ φιλόνεικος εἶναι, where the meaning doubtless is, if any one be contentious. The same usage prevails in other authors, as in Josephus, *Antiq.* ii. 6, 10, οὐδ' ὧν εἰς ἐμὲ δοκεῖτε ἁμαρτεῖν, ἔτι μνημονεύω; and the extent of the usage is strikingly illustrated by a phrase in Athanasius, which declares of God that He δικαιότατος εἶναι δοκεῖ. *Videtur* occurs in Latin in the same manner.

Καταλειπομένης ἐπαγγελίας is capable of two senses. Καταλείπειν denotes to neglect, to disregard, as 2 Pet. ii. 15, καταλιπόντες εὐθεῖαν ὁδὸν ἐπλανήθησαν. Many have supposed this to be the sense of the word in the passage before us: Beware lest any of you fall short of the promise, disregarded, or through disregard. But though this view of the passage makes good sense, there is another which perhaps is more suitable to the scope of the apostle's argument. Καταλείπειν denotes also to leave behind, to leave over, to leave to others. This sense of the word is of frequent occurrence in the Septuagint, as καταλείπειν τὰ ἀγαθὰ ἑτέροις (Sirach xi. 18). It is also to be found in the New Testament, as in Rom. xi. 4, κατέλιπον ἐμαυτῷ ἑπτακισχιλίους ἄνδρας οἵτινες, etc. And you often meet with it in the later Greek, as Polyb. p. 730, μηδεμιᾶς ἄλλης ἐλπίδος ἔτι καταλειπομένης πρὸς σωτηρίαν—no other hope of safety remaining. If you adopt this sense of καταλείπειν, you make the apostle's language to mean: Beware lest, a promise of rest being left to us, any of you should come short of it. And certainly this latter view of the verse harmonizes better with the scope of the argu-

ment; for the fact that a rest still remains to the people of God, is the topic which the apostle immediately proceeds to handle.

The first verse, while it enjoins diligence and watchfulness, makes the assumption that there is still the promise of a rest, from which it is possible to be debarred. And this assumption is plainly made in such a manner as to indicate that good ground had been given for it in the foregoing chapter. But the promise cited in the foregoing chapter referred directly to the possession of the land of Canaan. We are therefore driven to the conclusion that Paul conceived the promise of a higher and a nobler rest to be included in the promise of the earthly Canaan. The promise given to the ancient people of God was not exhausted by their entrance into the land that flowed with milk and honey. Some have, indeed, affirmed that the ancient Jews knew nothing of promises that related to life and immortality, and that it is only by a kind of accommodation that the apostle passes from the consideration of an earthly to the consideration of a heavenly rest. But this idea by no means suits the exigencies of his argument. Besides, we are plainly told in other parts of Scripture, that the saints of old were acquainted with the heavenly rest. Paul expressly declares in this very epistle, that Abraham looked for another, a better country, even an heavenly. The earthly Canaan, therefore, was known to the ancient believers as a type of the Canaan that is above; and the promise of the one included to the faithful a promise of the other. The apostle therefore here exhibits, in the form of an assumption, the idea typically involved in the historical example of the foregoing chapter. "A promise, therefore, being left us of entering into rest, let us," etc.; and the argument which he immediately proceeds to adduce in support of this assumption is wholly founded upon the Old Testament, and to a great extent upon the very language cited from the Psalms of David.

The next clause takes up the assumption of the first verse, and presents it in the form of a proposition: *καὶ γάρ ἐσμεν εὐηγγελισμένοι, καθάπερ κακεῖνοι.* The English translation of these words throws the whole passage into confusion: "for unto us was the gospel preached as well as unto them." You would suppose from this version, that what we technically style the gospel was clearly and indisputably known to the ancients, but

that some doubts were entertained whether it was known as well to the moderns, which doubts the apostle was trying to remove. It is needless to say how entirely opposite is the real state of the case. *Εὐαγγέλιον* has two senses—a primary and a secondary; the primary, good news, intelligence of any description; the secondary, that particular good news which is contained in Scripture, and which we style the gospel. The verb *εὐαγγελίζω* has also the same latitude of meaning, and there can be no doubt that it is the primary or general sense which it bears in this passage: For we have been favoured with good news as well as they, we have received a promise as well as they. A rest was promised to them, a rest is promised to us; or, in the language of the assumption, a promise remains to us of entering into rest. What rest? a carnal Jew might ask. Have not we Hebrews been living all along in the promised rest of God? True; but the promise was not all exhausted by the possession of Canaan: the entrance of the Jews into Palestine never constituted the complete fulfilment of it: all along there was another rest which the promise contemplated, and which still remains to us. Now this is a point which the apostle spends some time in proving, and his arguments are all drawn from the Old Testament. They reach forward to the 11th verse.

The treatment given to the promise by the ancient Jews is again adverted to, on account of the vast importance of the principle which it involves: *ἀλλ' οὐκ ὠφέλησεν ὁ λόγος τῆς ἀκοῆς ἐκείνους, μὴ συγκεκραμένος τῇ πίστει τοῖς ἀκούσασιν.*

Ὁ λόγος τῆς ἀκοῆς plainly refers to the promise as given to the ancient Israelites: they heard it at least, if they did not believe it. The phrase "word of hearing" is a Hebraism for *ὁ ἀκουσθεὶς λόγος*—the word heard. This word proved of no service to them: they died in the wilderness under the avenging hand of God; and the reason is again stated by the apostle: *μὴ συγκεκραμένος τῇ πίστει τοῖς ἀκούσασιν*—not being mixed, says our version, with faith in them that heard it. The general meaning of this clause is abundantly obvious: faith is necessary to ensure the effect of the word. Without faith, it is as unprofitable to the soul, as an undigested mass of food loading the stomach is to the body. In the case of the persons here mentioned, the word of promise entered into their minds; but it

met there with no faith with which it might be combined, so as to be converted into wholesome nutrition for the soul. Yet very various views have been formed of the dependence of the several parts of this clause. The verb *συγκεράννυμι* is frequently joined with the dative of a person, and it is also frequently joined with the dative of a thing; of both which usages numerous examples are cited by Wetstein in his *New Testament.* The question therefore naturally arises, whether *συγκεκραμένος* be joined in government with *τῇ πίστει* or with *τοῖς ἀκούσασιν.* In the former case the meaning is, "not being combined with faith in the hearers," the *τοῖς ἀκούσασιν* being either supposed dependent upon *πίστει,* or there being supposed an ellipse of the preposition *ἐν.* In the latter case, again, the meaning is, "not being combined with the hearers," that is, not forming a union with their hearts by faith, the *τοῖς ἀκούσασιν* being governed by *συγκεκραμένος,* and the *τῇ πίστει* being put in the dative by the rule, "cause, manner, and instrument." In the one case the word and faith are viewed as mixed with one another, and the heart is the place where the mixture is effected; in the other, the word and the heart are the two objects viewed as brought into close and intimate union, and faith is the bond by which they are united. Either idea is just and striking, yet I must say that I prefer the latter; the more especially as it arises out of the words, without the supposition of any ellipse or unusual construction. Another turn has been given to the expression, the *τῇ πίστει* being supposed to qualify *ἀκούσασιν*: The word did not profit, not being combined, not coming to close contact, with persons hearing in faith. The meaning is substantially the same, yet this peculiar shade of idea would have required that *τῇ πίστει* should come between *τοῖς* and *ἀκούσασιν*: *μὴ συγκεκραμένος τοῖς τῇ πίστει ἀκούσασιν.*

Besides the differences of opinion respecting the meaning of the clause as it stands in the received text, there are also differences of opinion as to what the true reading really is. Instead of *συγκεκραμένος,* Wetstein's edition exhibits *συγκεκραμένους,* and so also does that of Matthaei; and Griesbach, though he retains the common reading, yet puts the other in the inner margin with a high mark of probability. And what sense would the passage bear with this reading? *Συγκεκραμένους*

must agree with ἐκείνους, and the meaning be: The word did not profit them, they not being associated by faith with the hearers. Ἀκούσασιν is supposed by those who adopt this reading to mean obedient faithful hearing, and to refer to Joshua and Caleb. Those who died in the wilderness were not enumerated or associated in faith with the obedient hearers of the promise, and therefore they derived no benefit from the word, but perished. But Beza justly remarks that ἀκούειν through this whole passage means simple hearing, and not obedient faithful hearing, and that it stands accordingly in opposition to πιστεύω in the third verse. Ἀκούσασιν, therefore, cannot of itself describe the faithful hearers of the promise. To get over this difficulty, some have proposed to connect τῇ πίστει with ἀκούσασι to qualify it, and make it descriptive of the parties whom it must mean, if συγκεκραμένους be the true reading: they were not profited by the word, not being associated with those who heard it in faith; they stood apart from the faithful hearers, and therefore died under the curse. But τῇ πίστει, as we already remarked, would in this case require to stand between τοῖς and ἀκούσασιν. Tholuck regards the sense which ἀκούσασιν must bear, as of itself sufficient to show that the received reading (συγκεκραμένος) is the right one; and he supposes that the other reading, though supported by numerous and weighty authorities, has originally taken its rise from the similar ending of the preceding word ἐκείνους.

The fact that the unbelief of the ancient Jews rendered the promise nugatory to them, is thrown in the 3d verse into the shape of a general principle: εἰσερχόμεθα γὰρ εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσιν οἱ πιστεύσαντες. This clause is viewed by many as exhibiting a contrast between believers under the gospel dispensation and the rebellious Israelites of old. And accordingly Mr. Stuart proposes to translate γὰρ "but, yet still,"—senses which are quite foreign to its proper acceptation. But the words rather seem to me to embody a general principle which is applicable to all times; and they are advanced by the apostle as the reason of the preceding statement, and γὰρ in this way retains its proper acceptation. "The word of promise proved fruitless to the Jews through unbelief; for we enter the rest believing:" it is only as believers that we can enjoy the divine promises: faith is

indispensably necessary to their full effect. And if the words thus state a general principle, it is with perfect propriety that the verb is in the present tense; and there is no occasion to suppose, as some have done, that the present is put for the future, *εἰσελευσόμεθα*. The first person, too, is chosen for the sake of the effect upon the Hebrews of Paul's day, that they might feel he was laying down a principle in which they were as much concerned as the ancient Israelites, whose case he had considered. That the clause we have just now examined embodies a principle applicable to all times, and is not a description of modern believers, as contrasted with the ancient Jews, appears plain from the quarter whence the illustration of it is drawn in the following words: *καθὼς εἴρηκεν· ὡς ὤμοσα ἐν τῇ ὀργῇ μου· εἰ εἰσελεύσονται εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσίν μου.* It is the conduct of the ancient Jews, already so frequently referred to, that is adduced as the proof. God swore in their case to exclude them for their unbelief: it is as believers only, therefore, that either then or now we can enter into the enjoyment of the rest of God.

The concluding clause of this verse, *καίτοι τῶν ἔργων ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου γενηθέντων*, and the two following verses, are involved in much difficulty. Very various opinions have been entertained respecting them. The course of the argument is very brief and condensed; and doubtless there is an obscurity to us, which would not be felt by the parties to whom the letter originally came. In all probability, there is a reference to some false views which were entertained by many of the Jews in that age respecting the Sabbath-day, which would be perfectly intelligible at the time, but which we find some difficulty in apprehending. The obscurity of ancient documents is far more frequently occasioned by our ignorance of multitudes of things, then so familiarly known, that a passing allusion only was needed to present a vivid picture, than by any difficulties connected with the language itself.

The apostle's object in referring to the rest of God at the completion of the work of creation, and the institution of the Sabbath-day, is differently estimated by different individuals. Some suppose his design is to illustrate, by way of example, the nature of the rest from which unbelief excludes, and which the Psalmist exhorted the men of his day earnestly to desire,

and diligently to prepare for. This rest is not a carnal or earthly rest: it is spiritual and heavenly: it is like the rest which God Himself is said to have enjoyed when the work of creation was finished. Others have supposed that his design is to show in these verses, that the creation rest—or, in other words, the Sabbath-day—is not the rest of which the Psalmist speaks, and which God promises to His faithful and obedient people. And there might be notions prevalent respecting the Sabbath and the blessedness of the land of Canaan, which would render such a course of argument highly necessary.

The conjunction *καίτοι* has two senses; and according as you adopt the one or the other of these views, it needs to be differently rendered. It means *et quidem, nempe, sane;* and some adopt this sense, and suppose an ellipse of *κατάπαυσιν* before *ἔργων*: "They shall not enter into my rest," viz. the rest from the works of creation: *εἴρηκε γάρ που περὶ τῆς ἑβδόμης οὕτω· Καὶ κατέπαυσεν ὁ Θεὸς ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἑβδόμῃ ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ.* But would not the words, according to this translation, most naturally mean that the rest of the Sabbath-day, the seventh day, was the rest into which the impenitent were not to be permitted to enter? which is quite different from the sentiment the apostle is defending. This, however, is not the sense put upon them by those who translate *καίτοι*, viz., they suppose the apostle's reference to be not to the Sabbath-day as an institution for man, but to the rest which God enjoyed when the works of creation were finished—divine, heavenly rest: "They shall not enter into my rest," viz. rest from the works of creation—such rest as God enjoys. It is not an earthly, but a heavenly rest, like that of God Himself, which the Psalmist exhorts us to seek. Doubtless this sentiment is quite consistent with the scope of the apostle's argument: my only ground of hesitation is, that it does not arise very naturally from the language of the text.

The other sense of *καίτοι* is adversative, *and yet, although, though*, the word employed in the English version. This sense the word frequently bears, as in Acts xvii. 27: *ζητεῖτε τὸν Θεόν, εἰ ἄρα γε ψηλαφήσειαν αὐτὸν καὶ εὕροιεν· καίτοιγε οὐ μακρὰν ἀπὸ ἑνὸς ἑκάστου ἡμῶν ὑπάρχοντα.* If this sense be adopted, no word needs to be supplied: *ἔργων* and *γενηθέντων* are in the

genitive absolute, and the connection is the following: God hath sworn, They shall not enter into my rest, although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. God declares: They shall not enter into my rest; the works nevertheless having been finished from the foundation of the world, and the Sabbath-day having been instituted, according to the passage quoted from Genesis, when God rested from all His works. Now, according to this translation, which is quite close, the apostle must be conceived as referring to some notions which the Jews entertained respecting the rest promised in the Old Testament to the people of God,—as, for example, perhaps, that there was no other promise mentioned in the Scriptures but the rest of the Sabbath-day, and the rest of the land of God. Now it is undeniable that the apostle is attempting to prove from the Old Testament the existence of a third rest, different from both of these; and it is certain, as we shall see immediately, that he does so in part in vers. 6, 7, 8, by showing that the language of David cannot possibly be understood of the land of Canaan. And that he is doing so also in the verses before us, by showing that the same language is inapplicable to the original rest of the Sabbath, both the grammatical construction and the general symmetry of his argument render in the highest degree probable: You say there are only two rests mentioned in the Old Testament—the rest of the Sabbath and the rest of Canaan. No, there are three: there is also the rest of heaven. Here is a passage from David, which you will find it impossible to explain either of the one or of the other of the rests to which you have referred. God sware that the rebellious Israelites should never enter into His rest, though the works were finished from the foundation of the world; and He rested on the seventh day, and instituted the Sabbath then, and sanctified it. It could not be this rest, therefore, into which, centuries afterwards, God sware that He would not permit the Israelites to enter; for they had enjoyed it all along: the Sabbath had existed among them from the very origin of their nation.

The passage from Gen. ii. 1 is quoted, merely to show that the Sabbath was instituted at the very commencement of the world—εἴρηκε γάρ που. The citations from the Old Testament in the New are all indefinite, because the divisions of chapters and

verses did not then exist: *ἐν Δαβίδ, ἐν προφήταις, που*, etc., are the forms of reference that are used. *Εἴρηκε γάρ που περὶ ἑβδόμης οὕτω*, etc. And the passage on which he has been commenting is repeated once more in the 5th verse, apparently with the view of rendering the contrast the more obvious and striking: *καὶ ἐν τούτῳ πάλιν, εἰ εἰσελεύσονται εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσίν μου.* He speaks in Genesis of the creation rest, and here again of another. Can they possibly be the same? No, they are quite different: the one has been long possessed, the other is still to come.

It is this interpretation which Chrysostom gives of this passage: *τρεῖς φησι καταπαύσεις εἶναι· μίαν τὴν τοῦ σαββάτου, ἐν ᾗ ὁ Θεὸς κατέπαυσεν ἀπὸ τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ· δευτέραν τὴν τῆς Παλαιστίνης εἰς ἣν εἰσελθόντες οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἔμελλον ἀναπαύσεσθαι ἀπὸ τῆς ταλαιπωρίας τῆς πολλῆς καὶ τῶν πόνων· τρίτην τὴν καὶ ὄντως ἀνάπαυσιν τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν, ἧς οἱ τυχόντες ἀναπαύονται ἀληθῶς τῶν κόπων καὶ τῶν μόχθων. Τῶν τριῶν τοίνυν ἐνταῦθα μέμνηται. Καὶ τίνος ἕνεκεν περὶ τῆς μιᾶς διαλεγόμενος, τῶν τριῶν ἐμνημόνευσεν; ἵνα δείξῃ τὸν προφήτην περὶ ταύτης λέγοντα. Περὶ μὲν γὰρ τῆς πρώτης οὐκ εἶπε, φησί. Πῶς γὰρ, τῆς πάλαι γεγενημένος; Ἀλλ' οὐδὲ περὶ τῆς δευτέρας τῆς ἐν Παλαιστίνῃ· πῶς γὰρ; καὶ αὐτῆς τέλος ἤδη λαβούσης· λείπεται δὴ περὶ τῆς τρίτης αὐτὸν λέγειν λοιπόν* (Chrys. xii. 88, A. B.).

At the 6th verse a new step in the argument commences, of which the manifest design is, as has already been hinted, to show that the rest mentioned by the Psalmist cannot be the quiet possession of the land of Canaan: *ἐπεὶ οὖν ἀπολείπεται τινὰς εἰσελθεῖν εἰς αὐτήν, καὶ οἱ πρότερον εὐαγγελισθέντες οὐκ εἰσῆλθον δι' ἀπείθειαν· πάλιν τινὰ ὁρίζει ἡμέραν, σήμερον, ἐν Δαβὶδ λέγων, μετὰ τοσοῦτον χρόνον· (καθὼς εἴρηται) σήμερον, ἐὰν τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ ἀκούσητε, μὴ σκληρύνητε τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν.* The apostle here again returns to the fact that a rest has been promised in the Old Testament to the people of God: we enter into the rest as believers. And he assumes it as a point which cannot be doubted, that when God has provided a rest, the provision shall not be in vain. The table of the Lord shall not want guests: the heavenly country shall not want inhabitants. Sooner than this should be, the very stones would

be endowed with life, and utter forth the praises of God: if those who were first invited reject the invitation, God's house shall be furnished with guests from the streets and the lanes, and the waysides and bypaths. *Ἐπεὶ οὖν ἀπολείπεται τινὰς εἰσελθεῖν εἰς αὐτήν.* The idea is, that God will undoubtedly bring men to the enjoyment of the rest which He has provided. *Καὶ οἱ πρότερον εὐαγγελισθέντες οὐκ εἰσῆλθον δι' ἀπείθειαν*: and those who were formerly invited, who were first favoured with the intelligence of it, entered not in because of unbelief. They rebelled against God in the wilderness, and the curse of Heaven alighted upon them.

These two clauses, constituting the 6th verse, are evidently the commencement of a compound sentence, and something is necessary to complete the sense: Since, etc. Mr. Stuart supposes that the apodosis is wanting, and he supplies the imagined defect thus: Therefore it is plain we enter in by faith. But the course of the argument is quite deranged by such an addition. Moreover, it is a clear principle, that we are never to suppose the existence of ellipses, excepting when necessity compels us. But there is no necessity in the present case, for the 7th verse forms a natural conclusion to the sentence commenced in the 6th. The apostle has come down from the original institution of the Sabbath at the beginning of the world, to the rebellion of the Israelites in the wilderness, and he has found that at that time there was a rest into which they had not yet entered: for God sware, They shall not enter into my rest; which rest therefore manifestly could not be the creation or Sabbath rest. But might it not be the possession of the land of Canaan to which he referred, which was still future at the time of this oath? This objection the apostle now proceeds to consider; and as he had formerly passed from the institution of the Sabbath to the rebellion in the wilderness, so now he takes a step from the distressing scenes of the wilderness to the days of David. The 6th verse takes up the argument at the point of time to which the 5th had brought it down, viz. the rebellion in the world. Seeing, then, it remaineth, referring to that time, that some shall enter, and those formerly invited did not enter: *πάλιν τινὰ ὁρίζει ἡμέραν, σήμερον, ἐν Δαβὶδ λέγων, μετὰ τοσοῦτον χρόνον, (καθὼς εἴρηται) σήμερον, ἐὰν τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ ἀκούσητε,*

μὴ σκληρύνητε τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν. The repetitions contained in this verse are by no means unimportant: they seem to me to mark the apostle's triumphant sense of the undeniably and strikingly conclusive nature of the argument which he is advancing: "Again, He marketh out or proclaimeth a certain day, saying in David, σήμερον,—observe the long distance of time, μετὰ τοσοῦτον χρόνον, five hundred years after the punishment of the Israelites in the wilderness,—σήμερον, to-day, καθὼς εἴρηται, as it is said—this is the very word David uses—σήμερον, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." The idea plainly is, that a rest which David exhorted the men of his day to strive to attain, could not be that which they and their forefathers had already quietly possessed for a period of five hundred years. It is a future and heavenly rest, of which alone the Psalmist's language can be explained with any consistency.

The 8th verse affords a striking illustration of the nature of the whole argument, and justifies the view which we have given of it: εἰ γὰρ αὐτοὺς Ἰησοῦς κατέπαυσεν, οὐκ ἂν περὶ ἄλλης ἐλάλει μετὰ ταῦτα ἡμέρας. The English version contains a mistake that is utterly subversive of the sense of this passage: Ἰησοῦς is translated Jesus. It is not Jesus that is meant at all, but Joshua the son of Nun, whose name in the Greek is the same as Jesus, as you may see in the Septuagint and in Acts vii. 45. Accordingly, Theodoret reads Ἰησοῦς ὁ τοῦ Ναυῆ, and so does the Syriac; which addition, though doubtless a gloss inserted, yet shows the view that was taken of the passage. Indeed, there is no room for doubt. It was Joshua who, under the good providence of God, introduced the children of Israel into the land of Palestine, and gave them possession of the settlements which the Lord had promised. In all this, however, the apostle does not recognise a complete fulfilment of the promise of rest; for he holds it as undeniable, that if Joshua had given them all the rest that was ever designed for them, then the Spirit of God would not afterwards have spoken of another day, when efforts were to be made for the attainment of rest.

Κατέπαυσεν has here the same peculiar force as the Hiphil form of a Hebrew verb, to cause to rest, or to put in possession of rest. There is no Hebraism, however, in this use of the

word, for both the compound and the simple verb are used in common Greek in the same manner: *πανω, cessare facio.*

Needless difficulties have been raised about the conjunction *γάρ*, some alleging that it is used for *δέ*, and others like the English word *now*. But the use of *γὰρ* in its proper causal sense, in such a connection as the present, is quite consistent with the ancient modes of thinking, which frequently leave out, for the sake of brevity and force, some step in an argument, and the *γὰρ* often refers to the omitted thought: "Again, He limiteth a day," etc.,—a clear proof that the possession of Canaan did not completely fulfil the promise; FOR if Joshua had given them all the rest which the promise contemplated, then certainly there would have been no subsequent mention of a rest still in prospect to the faithful.

The course of the apostle's argument renders it plain, not only that the gospel has disclosed to the eye of faith a glorious rest in heaven, but also that the promise given to the ancient Israelites typically foreshadowed or included the same blessedness. The idea that the Jews of old knew nothing of a future state, but contemplated only temporal blessings as included in the promise, is as utterly inconsistent with the scope of the argument before us, as it is with the plain declaration that Abraham looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God (Heb. xi. 10). Agreeably to the symbolical character of the old dispensation, which was full of types and emblems, the promise of the earthly Canaan included a promise of the heavenly; and as the eyes of the faithful saw the day of Christ afar off through the bleeding bulls and goats of their own time, so did they see the spiritual glory of heaven dimly shadowed forth by the land that flowed with milk and honey. And those who rebelled against God in the wilderness, and refused to believe His promise, incurred the forfeiture —as many of them at least as died in their unbelief—not only of the earthly Canaan, but also of the heavenly. Is there anything less than this implied in the 6th verse: *ἐπεὶ οὖν ἀπολείπεται τινὰς εἰσελθεῖν εἰς αὐτήν, καὶ οἱ πρότερον εὐαγγελισθέντες οὐκ εἰσῆλθον δι' ἀπείθειαν· πάλιν τινὰ ὁρίζει ἡμέραν*, etc. Undoubtedly, in penning this passage, the apostle must have had in his mind the idea of the exclusion of the unfaithful among

ancient Israel from that rest which still remaineth for the people of God—the spiritual and eternal rest of heaven.

The 9th verse contains the conclusion of the apostle's argument. At the beginning of the chapter he exhibits a principle which his eye saw to be embodied in the language quoted from David; and from the 3d to the 8th verse his object is to establish this position; and the formal announcement of the important conclusion comes in at the 9th verse: *ἄρα ἀπολείπεται σαββατισμὸς τῷ λαῷ τοῦ Θεοῦ.*

Ἀπολείπεται is used I think in somewhat the same sense as *καταλειπομένης* in the first verse. Yet there seems to be a slight shade of difference between them, which renders them respectively suitable to the different circumstances in which they are used. In the case of *καταλειπόμενος* it is the *promise* to which it is applied, which has been handed *down* from ancient times, which is the very shade of thought that *κατα* is fitted to express. In the case of *ἀπολείπεται*, it is the rest itself in connection with which it is used, of which it may be said that it *remains over* for us as a blessing still future, to which we may aspire to attain. This milder idea the preposition *ἀπὸ* is better fitted to express. If there be any difference, *καταλείπεται* is better applied to the promise, and *ἀπολείπεται* to the rest.

Τῷ λαῷ τοῦ Θεοῦ in the conclusion corresponds to *οἱ πιστεύσαντες* in the original statement of the proposition to be proved: *εἰσερχόμεθα γὰρ εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσιν οἱ πιστεύσαντες.* The people of God, therefore, are those who believe. Faith is an essential requisite in the Christian character: without faith it is impossible to please God. Ancient Israel, as a nation, were styled the people of God; but under the gospel this title is applied to all in every country and nation who truly serve the Lord. It is the *οἱ πιστεύσαντες* who now are the *ὁ λαὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ.*

Σαββατισμὸς in the conclusion corresponds to *κατάπαυσις* in the original statement of the principle to be established. And why, it may be asked, this change of phraseology? Something, perhaps, may be allowed for variety of phrase, to which we may see, from the example cited above just now considered, the apostle was not inattentive; but in all probability the chief design of the new word is to convey some idea of the nature of

the rest whose existence has been proved. The argument is finished; and the apostle therefore takes care to notify that it is a spiritual and heavenly rest which the faithful are to expect. It is not a mere cessation from labour; it is not a mere ending of their troubles; it is the celebration of a glorious and endless Sabbath in heaven. *Σαββατισμὸς* is not the common word used for Sabbath in Scripture; it is formed from *σαββατίζειν*, and denotes the celebration of a Sabbath, or the joyful rest of a Sabbath. The verb occurs repeatedly in the Septuagint, but the noun is to be found in no other part of Scripture than the one before us. The idea, doubtless, of a Sabbath's rest as a designation for heaven, is suggested to the apostle by the mention that is made in the 4th verse of the institution of the Sabbath; and he would the more readily entertain this conception, as the Sabbath was a familiar image among the Jews of the blessedness and glory of heaven. Schœtgenius, in his *Horæ Hebraicæ*, has illustrated this position from the Talmud at some length, and among the passages which he quotes are the following: לעולם שכולו שבת—for eternity is all a Sabbath; אתשאר שבת אחרא—there remains another Sabbath.

Dr. Wardlaw, in his treatise on the Sabbath, takes quite a different view of this verse. He supposes the apostle's argument, upon the whole, in the preceding verses, to be the same as we have represented it, the third verse being the formal statement of the point to be proved, and the five following verses being the evidence; but he is of opinion that the conclusion of the argument is not formally stated at all. The whole argument completely ends with the 8th verse, and the 9th is supposed to be a corollary, deduced not from the general principle established, but from one branch of the proof—the mention that is made of the seventh-day rest, the meaning being that a Sabbath-day remains to us under the gospel as well as to the Jews of old; the Sabbath was not abolished with the old economy. As if the apostle's idea were this: Over and above, my friends, it is plain that there is still a Sabbath-day, though changed from the seventh to the first, to be observed by the followers of Christ. And the 10th verse, which is supposed to refer directly to Christ, Dr. Wardlaw regards as intended to give the reason of this additional deduction: For the Saviour,

who has entered into His rest, hath ceased from His works, as God did from His. And as God's resting from the works of creation gave rise to the ancient Sabbath, so Christ's completion of the work of redemption gave rise to the Sabbath which is now observed in the church.

This interpretation, however, I must confess, appears to me to be far-fetched. It does not naturally suggest itself to the mind, nor would one out of a hundred think of it in merely reading the passage. The conjunction ἄρα, following the several steps of a compact argument, as naturally suggests the idea of the conclusion of the whole, as the Q.E.D. of a proposition in Euclid. Moreover, there is no mention made of Christ in any of the preceding verses; but the whole passage speaks of believers as the people of God, and of faith as necessary to entering into God's rest; and therefore the 10th verse, in which no new name occurs, is most naturally understood not of Christ, but of the believer, to whom the whole passage relates. But Dr. Wardlaw alleges, that if σαββατισμὸς be viewed as denoting the believer's rest in heaven, then there is no proper connection between the 9th and the 10th verses, though they are joined together by γάρ; for the believer's cessation from his works, says he, on entering the heavenly rest, is no reason why that rest remaineth to him. What kind of argument is imputed to the inspired writer when he is made to say, "There remaineth therefore the heavenly rest to the people of God;" for the believer who enters into that rest, ceases from his own works, as God did from His! Certainly this is neither a reason nor a proof (p. 127). And undoubtedly it must be allowed, that the 10th verse is not a proof of the proposition contained in the 9th, nor was it needed for this purpose: the 9th verse is the conclusion of an argument, whose grounds of proof have been already fully stated, and no further evidence is required. The 10th verse accordingly seems to be designed, not as a reason for the general statement of the 9th, but as a reason for the peculiar description which it gives us of heaven: There remaineth therefore unto the people of God a rest, a σαββατισμὸς I may call it; for he that hath entered into his rest hath ceased from his labours, as God did from His. The word σαββατισμὸς is suggested by the reference made in the 4th verse to the

institution of the Sabbath, and here, therefore, it could only first occur; and the use of *σαββατισμὸς* leads to a statement of the analogy upon which it is founded. The believer enters into a rest like God's rest; he enjoys a Sabbath's blessing in heaven. And if it be esteemed a very bold comparison to liken a believer ceasing from his toils and sorrows on earth, to God ceasing from the stupendous work of the creation (p. 126, Wardlaw), let it be remembered that the ground of the comparison does not lie in any imagined approach of the one work or labour to the other in dignity or importance, but in the simple and undeniable fact, that God is said to have rested from the work of creation (Gen. ii. 2), and that the believer also is said to rest from his labours, and his works do follow him (Rev. xiv. 13). There is an undeniable analogy; and both ideas beautifully concur in harmonizing with the idea of *σαββατισμός*.

By the *ἔργα*, from which believers are to cease when they enter into the rest of God, are not to be understood *evil works*, for there is no permission to continue in them even for a day; nor yet *good works*, considered simply as such, for good works of some kind or other shall engage their hands for ever; but the *ἔργα* mentioned by the apostle refer to those peculiar labours, and trials, and conflicts, which are assigned to believers in this world for the exercise of their faith. The patient endurance of appointed tribulations—the resistance of temptations from without—the suppression of evil desires arising within—the performance of duty in the midst of obloquy and scorn,—these all go to make up that fight of faith which characterizes the believer's life on earth, and from which death shall set him free. *Μακάριοι οἱ νεκροὶ οἱ ἐν Κυρίῳ ἀποθνήσκοντες ἀπάρτι· ναί, λέγει τὸ Πνεῦμα, ἵνα ἀναπαύσωνται ἐκ τῶν κόπων αὐτῶν·* where *κόπων*, toils, labours, is manifestly used to express the same idea as *ἔργα* in the passage before us (Rev. xiv. 13). But though toils and labours shall have no place in heaven, we are not to fancy that slothful inactivity shall be the delight of the inhabitants—absolute rest from all employment. Pain and sorrow, and trouble and toil, shall for ever cease; the most perfect happiness shall be enjoyed; but so far is true happiness from supposing a state of indolent inactivity, that it rather

requires the employment of the powers and faculties in appropriate pursuits. The exercise of whatever powers belong to us is a prime ingredient of happiness; and doubtless in heaven the redeemed shall have delightful employment in fully executing the commands of God, and contemplating the works and ways of the Divine King (Chrys. xii. 97, *c*).

At the commencement of this chapter, the apostle holds up the punishment of the ancient Israelites in the wilderness as a warning to the Hebrews of his own time, exhorting them to beware lest they should fall short of the rest promised by Jehovah; and as some of them might doubt whether the Old Testament warranted the expectation of such a rest, he pauses for a little, as we have seen, to establish the point. And now again, therefore, having proved the existence of a rest still future, he reverts to the topic with which the chapter commences, adverting to the example of the ancient Jews, and urging the necessity of strenuous endeavours to attain the promised rest. And he enforces the admonition with sundry considerations drawn from the nature of the word of God: *σπουδάσωμεν οὖν εἰσελθεῖν εἰς ἐκείνην τὴν κατάπαυσιν, ἵνα μὴ ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ τις ὑποδείγματι πέσῃ τῆς ἀπειθείας.*

Σπουδάζειν literally denotes to make haste: it also denotes, by a natural transition, to be assiduous in any pursuit—to be earnestly bent upon the attainment of some object. It prefers connection with a subsequent infinitive, to any union by means of conjunctions, as *σπουδάσωμεν εἰσελθεῖν*; and similar forms are frequently to be found, as 2 Tim. iv. 9, *σπούδασον ἐλθεῖν πρός με*, and Titus iii. 12, where the same expression occurs. It is the duty of earnestly endeavouring to enter into the rest of God which is here enforced: the way of proceeding is not noticed, but that is clearly pointed out in other parts of the epistle: we must go by that new and living way which Christ hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; for Christ is the way, the truth, and the life.

The enforcement of the admonition is this: *ἵνα μὴ ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ τις ὑποδείγματι πέσῃ τῆς ἀπειθείας.* The general meaning of these words is abundantly manifest; yet there is some difference of opinion as to the dependence of the several parts of the sentence. *Ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ ὑποδείγματι* is not a very common

expression, and the preposition must bear rather an unusual sense. Does the clause look backwards or forwards in respect of *πέσῃ*, with which it is connected? Heinrichsius supposes the latter, making it describe a result of what is implied in *πέσῃ*: Beware lest any of you fall for an example of unbelief, perish, and so become an example to the generations following. The Jews fell, and became an example to you; you may fall, and become a similar example to others. And Tholuck seems to have adopted this idea, for he quotes with approbation the words of De Wette: "Sehr richtig übersetst Schulz und nach ihm De Wette, damit nicht jemand als ein gleiches Beispiel der Widerspenstigkeit auch falle." Yet I rather think that the clause looks backward, referring to the special example of unbelief previously described; and that the apostle's idea is to beware of perishing, as the Jews formerly perished in the wilderness, impenitent and rebellious. This is the most natural idea; and moreover, *αὐτὸς* rather means *that, that very*, than similar, like: *αὐτῷ ὑποδείγματι, that, that same*, example of.

Πέσῃ is here placed absolutely or intransitively, and denotes *perish*, in all probability with allusion to the use of the word in the preceding chapter, *ὧν τὰ κῶλα ἔπεσεν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ*. The preposition *ἐν* is used in the best writers with considerable latitude of signification. Among other senses, Schleusner assigns to it the sense of *secundum, ad normam*, according to, in accordance with; and in support of this meaning he quotes a number of passages. Now this idea exactly suits the passage before us: Beware of perishing according to the example of the Jews. The word in the English version is the best that could be found —after that example.

Ὑπόδειγμα bears the same sense as *παράδειγμα*. The latter was reckoned the more classic word; *ὑπόδειγμα* belongs to the later form of the Greek tongue.

The example referred to by the apostle was peculiarly adapted to his purpose, writing as he was to the descendants of the very men who had perished. And such an example was the more needful to be held up to their view, as the Jews were very apt to pride themselves upon their descent from Abraham, and to suppose that, as the privileged people of God, they possessed some kind of security for their happiness, or ran less

hazard than others of being left to perish though they sinned. Here was an example which openly proclaimed to the world that Jew as well as Gentile should inevitably find impenitence result in their utter destruction. Outward privileges are no protection, if the heart be a stranger to genuine faith and godliness.

The duty of striving with earnestness and zeal to enter into the heavenly rest, and to shun the dreadful doom of impenitent transgressors, is enforced by a powerful, and impressive, and striking description of the word of God: *ζῶν γὰρ ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ ἐνεργὴς, καὶ τομώτερος ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν μάχαιραν δίστομον, καὶ διϊκνούμενος ἄχρι μερισμοῦ ψυχῆς τε καὶ πνεύματος, ἁρμῶν τε καὶ μυελῶν, καὶ κριτικὸς ἐνθυμήσεων καὶ ἐννοιῶν καρδίας.*

This description of the word of God is characterized alike by beauty and by power; it exhibits a striking picture to the mind. It was the general opinion of the ancient fathers that *ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ* means the Son of God, the Saviour being here described as the minister of God's vengeance to execute wrath upon the impenitent; and they appealed to the book of Wisdom (xviii. 15) for proof that the idea of the Logos as the avenger of justice was not unknown under the old dispensation: *ὁ παντοδύναμός σου λόγος ἀπ' οὐρανῶν ἐκ θρόνων βασιλειῶν ἀπότομος πολεμιστὴς εἰς μέσον τῆς ὀλεθρίας ἤλατο γῆς, ξίφος ὀξὺ τὴν ἀνυπόκριτον ἐπιταγήν σου φέρων.* For whatever *ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ* be understood to mean, the description given of it must be equally applicable to the judgment in the wilderness and to the punishment threatened to us, since the example and the warning are associated together when the mention of the *λόγος* is first introduced. Yet there are weighty reasons which seem to me to give a great preponderance of probability to the supposition that *λόγος* is here used as a common noun. It does not appear that this expression is used as a designation of Christ by any other of the writers of the New Testament than John. Moreover, there is no reference made in the preceding part of this epistle to Christ as having been concerned in the infliction of punishment upon the Jews in the wilderness; but there are repeated references to the word of God, as holding forth a threatening of punishment to those who rebelled. There is mention made of *ὁ λόγος τῆς ἀκοῆς*, the promise of God which

the Jews disbelieved; and again and again God is introduced as the author of the threatening λέγει, that the Jews should not enter into His rest. It is most natural, therefore, that the phrase ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ, introduced without any special description, or any intimation that it is a new topic, should be understood of the λόγος to which reference has already been made—the word of God, viz. the declaration which God made, that impenitence should inevitably be followed by punishment; and in this sense the whole verse is most pertinent and striking. The description given of the λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ comes in as a most powerful enforcement of the exhortation to strive to enter into the rest of God. It is a word which cannot fall to the ground. The threatenings of men may fail of their effect; but when God speaks, the declaration has a life and a power which it can never lose. And accordingly the several qualities attributed to the λόγος point out the severity, the unerring rectitude, and the inevitable certainty of whatever punishments are threatened by the Almighty against impenitence.

The λόγος is styled ζῶν. This and the other predicates are to be explained on the principle of personification. The word is described as a living judge, and the figure is beautifully sustained throughout the whole two verses. The very same figure occurs in John xii. 48, where Christ distinguishes the λόγος from Himself, and where no doubt therefore can be entertained that it is a divine declaration or word that is meant: ὁ ἀθετῶν ἐμὲ, καὶ μὴ λαμβάνων τὰ ῥήματά μου, ἔχει τὸν κρίνοντα αὐτόν· ὁ λόγος ὃν ἐλάλησα, ἐκεῖνος κρινεῖ αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ.

Ζῶν, as applied to a judge, suggests the idea of one who is not inert or dead, and who may therefore be insulted with impunity, but of one who is alive and active, and able to attend to the execution of his sentences. Certainty of result, therefore, seems plainly to be the idea that is involved in this epithet: the word endures—it falls not fruitless to the ground. The divine threatening had its full effect in the case of the ancient Israelites: it lives still, and its dreadful results will be as certainly experienced by the impenitent in every age.

Ἐνεργὴς is coupled with ζῶν, as an attribute of λόγος, and the one quality is the natural concomitant of the other: life is a condition requisite to energy. Ἐνεργὴς expresses the power

with which the majesty of God's law shall be upheld. The divine threatening shall descend with resistless power, with crushing severity, upon the heads of the impenitent. The λόγος remains in force—it is ζῶν; and it retains all its tremendous power—it is ἐνεργής.

The word is next compared to a sword, and is said to be τομώτερος ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν μάχαιραν δίστομον. As ζῶν and ἐνεργὴς describe the certainty and the severity with which the divine judgments are inflicted, so the reference to a sword seems designed to intimate the righteousness with which they are administered, or the searching nature of the trial to which all are subjected, before sentence is pronounced. As the results are so terrible, it is necessary that the trial should be most thorough, in order that there may be no hazard, to speak after the manner of men, of a wrong apportionment. Now, as a sword pierces to the inmost parts of the body, and separates bone from bone, and lays bare every secret organ, so the word of God, or the principle upon which judgment proceeds, looks not merely to the outward conduct, but to the thoughts and intents of the heart. The most secret purposes of the soul are scrutinized. Every feeling, every disposition, every desire, comes under the cognizance of the rule of judgment which God has constituted. Threatening destruction to impenitent transgressors, the divine declaration requires, as the ground of actual infliction, the discovery of the secret state of the soul. God sees the heart and tries the reins of the children of men, that He may give to every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings. The word or rule of judgment is sharper than any two-edged sword—τομώτερος.

This description of the λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ is regarded by many as referring to the powerful effects which are sometimes produced by the faithful preaching of the word, when the soul is awakened from its dream of sin, and the terrified conscience, appalled by the sense of its guilt, and by the prospect of punishment, flees to Jesus Christ for protection. Doubtless, in the view of such effects, the word of God might with great propriety be compared to a sword; and it is indeed represented as such in Eph. vi. 17, where the defensive armour of the Christian is described, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word

of God. But in the passage before us there can be little doubt that it is the threatening given forth against sin that is meant—the searching rule of judgment, by which the impenitent are to be tried, and all their secret thoughts and actions laid bare.

The comparison of a powerful word, more especially the word of a judge or a lawgiver, to a sword, is both natural, and by no means uncommon. In the book of Revelation (xix. 15) Christ is represented as smiting the nations with a sharp sword, which proceedeth out of His mouth; and Elsner quotes from Phocylides a line which contains the same figure: *ὅπλον τοι λόγος ἀνδρὶ τομώτερός ἐστι σιδήρου.* Speech, indeed, is a weapon sharper to a man than steel. To heighten the effect of the comparison, the apostle adds the epithet *δίστομον* as a description of the sword. We speak of the edge of a sword, which is the literal name of that part which cuts; but the Hebrews employed a figurative expression, and styled it the mouth, לְפִי חָרֶב, viewing the sword as a devouring monster; and of course the idea of a double mouth is fitted to convey the notion of doubly extensive and destructive ravages.

Τομώτερος ὑπὲρ μάχαιραν is a kind of double comparative. In similar cases already occurring in this epistle, we have found *παρὰ* so used (i. 4, ii. 7). An example of the use of *ὑπὲρ* in this connection you will find in Luke xvi. 8, where the design manifestly is to augment the force of the comparative.

As a consequence of its extreme sharpness, the word of God is described in the following clause as *διϊκνούμενος ἄχρι μερισμοῦ ψυχῆς τε καὶ πνεύματος, ἁρμῶν τε καὶ μυελῶν.* This description of the word is borrowed from the emblem of a sword which pierces through the body, and produces the most deadly results: soul and spirit are parted, joints and marrow.

Ψυχὴ and *πνεῦμα* are frequently used in the same sense to denote the soul, as distinguished from the body; but when they are used together, as here and in some other places, there must be some difference between them. *Ψυχή*, accordingly, seems to denote the animal life, and *πνεῦμα* the spiritual, or what we style the soul: in illustration of which distinction see also 1 Thess. v. 23, 1 Cor. ii. 14, xv. 44–46.

Ἁρμοὶ (*ἄρω, apto*) denotes the joints by which the bones are fastened together, and *μυελὸς* the marrow that fills them.

Griesbach mentions one various reading on this passage, μελῶν for μυελῶν, which some have treated with great favour, on the ground that joints and limbs are more homogeneous; but the common reading is supported by an immense preponderance of evidence, and is undoubtedly the correct one. By the penetration of the word like a sword through the soul and spirit, through the joints and marrow, we are to understand the alarm and terror which the divine threatening is fitted to inspire into the hearts of impenitent transgressors, striking the soul with anguish, and shaking every member of the body. It is a tremendous effect which the threatening word of God is fitted to produce: the mind once arrested, is overpowered with alarm; the whole man is overwhelmed with terror; and the consternation is as terrible as if a sword had pierced the body. Some have supposed that ἁρμῶν and μυελῶν must be understood figuratively, so as to denote the most secret recesses of the soul and mind; and doubtless there are examples of such a use, at least of μυελῶν, as when the nurse in Hippolytus speaks of the necessity of moderating earthly attachments: χρῆν γὰρ μέτριας εἰς ἀλλήλους φιλίας θνητοὺς ἀνακίρνασθαι, καὶ μὴ πρὸς ἄκρον μυελὸν ψυχῆς (Hipp. v. 255). But it may be fairly questioned whether, since the mind is sufficiently represented by ψυχὴ and πνεῦμα, the other two words are not designed to represent the body; the object being to intimate that the whole man, in every part of his complex constitution, shall be affected by the divine threatening. Otherwise, plainly, you make one part of the expression literal and the other tropical; and what is worse, the tropical comes to be the very same thing as the literal. It is the mind, in short, which the whole four words would thus denote.

But the striking language of the apostle seems not only designed to teach that the word of God is a judge whose threatening shakes both mind and body with alarm, but a judge whose sentences always take effect. The threatening of the Lord is not the idle demonstration of a brandished sword, but it is like a weapon that falls with unerring certainty. God cannot lie: He is of the same mind, and who shall change Him? What He has threatened He will undoubtedly in every instance carry into complete effect. "God is not mocked; for what a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

And well may the sinner be alarmed at the threatenings of God's word, and tremble at the terrific results that may be expected to follow; for the word of threatening—acting, as Christ says it will do, the part of judge—will bring into public view the most secret designs of the heart. Not only shall no act of guilt which the body may have been employed as the instrument of perpetrating remain concealed, but no sinful thought, no plotted wickedness, shall escape detection; for the apostle adds, in describing the word, *καὶ κριτικὸς ἐνθυμήσεων καὶ ἐννοιῶν καρδίας.*

The word throughout this passage is personified, and is spoken of in language properly applicable to God Himself. The word is a judge of the thoughts and intents of the heart—an able judge, for adjectives in *ικος* denote ability to do what the root denotes; and the sentences pronounced will all be proportioned not merely to the outward and apparent wickedness, but to the secret dispositions of the soul. *Ἐνθυμήσεις* and *ἔννοιαι* are words that bear nearly the same meaning—things in the mind, *ἐν θυμῷ, ἐν νοΐ.* They are conjoined in this passage merely for the purpose of indicating that thoughts of all kinds shall be brought into judgment: no secret wickedness shall escape detection. How admirably fitted is this whole description of the word of God to enforce the exhortation to which it is subjoined, to strive to enter into the promised rest of God!

It is disputed whether there be or be not a transition in the next verse from the word of God as the subject of discourse to God Himself: *καὶ οὐκ ἔστι κτίσις ἀφανὴς ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ· πάντα δὲ γυμνὰ καὶ τετραχηλισμένα τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς αὐτοῦ πρὸς ὃν ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος.* Moses Stuart says there is a transition, and contends that it is better to view it as commencing at *καὶ κριτικός.* But certainly this clause at least stands in close and natural connection with the preceding clauses, and the grammatical construction requires you to view it as a continued description of the *λόγος.* In any other connection it becomes a disjointed and defective fragment of a sentence. The idea of a transition at the 13th verse is more plausible; for the whole of that verse forms a harmonious description and a complete sentence, and the proposition it contains is strikingly applicable to God. Nevertheless, I rather incline to the idea that the

two verses are one continued description of the word of God, of course personified, as we have already seen must be supposed even in the 12th verse, where undoubtedly it is the word that is meant.

They who regard the 13th verse as referring directly to God, suppose that the pronoun *αὐτοῦ* relates not to λόγος, the subject of the preceding proposition, but to *Θεοῦ*, the genitive governed by it; but such an unprecise relation of the pronoun is quite unusual in the writings of Paul: undoubtedly in such a case the pronoun naturally carries back the mind to the subject of the foregoing statement, which is λόγος. And if it be objected that the phrase *τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς αὐτοῦ* more naturally suggests the idea of a person than of a word or declaration, let it be remembered that the whole passage contains a bold personification; and certainly of all the parts of the body, none could with more propriety be ascribed to a rule of judgment described under this figure than the eyes. But if any are still disposed to attach weight to this objection, then, quite consistently with the reference of the first *αὐτοῦ* to λόγος, the second, coupled with *ὀφθαλμοῖς*, may be viewed not as looking backward, but as having its reference defined by the accompanying clause—the eyes of him with whom we have to do; though in this case we should rather have expected the demonstrative pronoun.

Κτίσις means here, as in many other parts of the New Testament, *creature;* and the declaration is that no creature, no existing object, remains concealed from the judge.

The other clause contains the same affirmation, but presented in a positive shape: *πάντα δὲ γυμνά*, etc., all things naked, etc. *Τραχηλίζω*, derived from *τράχηλος*, *collum*, *cervix*, occurs in no other part of the New Testament. The connection in which it stands places its meaning beyond all reach of doubt, and accordingly the ancient versions all give it the sense of displayed, disclosed, unveiled; and Hesychius explains it by *πεφανερωμένα*, and Phavorinus by *ἀνακεκαλυμμένα*. All interpreters indeed agree in ascribing to it this sense, but no other example has yet been found of the same meaning; and much difference of opinion prevails as to the source or connection of ideas from which this signification is derived. The word fre-

quently denotes in classical authors to bend back the neck, as wrestlers strive to do with their antagonists; and some fancy that the metaphorical meaning of the word may spring out of this idea, because in such a case the whole countenance must be prominently exposed to view. Chrysostom explains the metaphor from the customs connected with sacrifice, for the priest laid the victim supine upon the altar, its neck bent back, and drew off the skin from the neck downward, and thus exposed to view the inmost parts of the animal: *τετραχηλισμένα εἶπεν ἀπὸ μεταφορᾶς τῶν δερμάτων τῶν ἀπὸ τῶν σφαζομένων ἱερείων ἐξελκομένων. Ὥσπερ γὰρ ἐκεῖνα, ἐπειδὰν σφάξας τις ἀπὸ τῆς σαρκὸς παρελκύσῃ τὸ δέρμα, πάντα τὰ ἔνδον ἀποκαλύπτεται καὶ δῆλα γίνεται τοῖς ἡμετέροις ὀφθαλμοῖς* (Chrys. 102, B.). There are several other explanations of the source of this sense of *τετραχηλισμένα*; but one thing is obvious, that the meaning itself is much more clear than the manner in which it has originated.

Two views have been taken of the last clause of this verse: *πρὸς ὃν ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος*. Some understand it to mean, of whom is our discourse, respecting whom we speak; but for this idea the author in two other places (ii. 5, v. 11) uses the phrase *περὶ οὗ*, certainly with more propriety. Besides, though *πρὸς ὃν* might be used in this sense, yet such an interpretation of the clause would be exceedingly tame. Chrysostom's explanation is vastly superior: *πρὸς ὃν ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος, ἀντὶ τοῦ, αὐτῷ μέλλομεν δοῦναι εὐθύνας τῶν πεπραγμένων* (104, C.); and to the same purpose Theophylact, who thus manifestly copied from Chrysostom: *ᾧ μέλλομεν δοῦναι τοὺς λόγους καὶ τὰς εὐθύνας τῶν πεπραγμένων* (Ern. 325). This interpretation is both more suitable to the construction and meaning of the words, and it is a great deal better adapted to the scope of the passage. It is of judgment the apostle is speaking; and the idea of Him to whom our account lies, with whom our reckoning is, forms a most appropriate conclusion of the whole argument. For the same use of *λόγος*, see Heb. xiii. 17.

The last three verses of this chapter commence a new subject; and instead of being appended to the fourth chapter, they should rather have been placed at the beginning of the fifth. In general, the division of the sacred text into chapters

is pretty well adapted to the connection; but here it is decidedly otherwise.

At the beginning of the third chapter the apostle proposes, as the subject of attentive consideration, Jesus *τὸν ἀπόστολον καὶ ἀρχιερέα*; and accordingly he has first compared the Saviour with Moses, the messenger of God to the Jews; and now he proceeds to compare Him with Aaron, the high priest of Jehovah: *Ἔχοντες οὖν ἀρχιερέα μέγαν, διεληλυθότα τοὺς οὐρανούς, Ἰησοῦν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, κρατῶμεν τῆς ὁμολογίας*. The *οὖν* at the commencement of this verse, it is plain, does not mark a deduction. It is not designed to intimate any connection with the immediately preceding topics; nor, indeed, is there anything in them to which it could be viewed as looking. Tholuck goes back as far as the 17th verse of the second chapter for the place to which *οὖν* refers; and he supposes, accordingly, that the whole of the third and fourth chapters constitute a hortatory digression, and are not the discussion of any branch of the apostle's argument; and it is on the same ground he questions whether *ἀπόστολος* and *ἀρχιερεύς* (in iii. 1) designate different ideas, and supposes that *προφήτην* might more naturally have been expected than *ἀρχιερέα*. But we have found reason to regard chap. iii. 1 as the formal announcement of the apostle's subject under a twofold aspect; and there being in the point to which we have now come forward a manifest break in the connection, we are naturally led to look back to chap. iii. 1 as the point to which any new reference will be made. Or, looking at the matter in a different light, when we meet with the words *ἔχοντες οὖν ἀρχιερέα* as the commencement of a new topic, how shall we settle their reference, but by going backwards until we come to a place where mention is made of *ἀρχιερεύς*? But the very first place of the kind you meet in your retrograde movement is chap. iii. 1; and as if to place it beyond all reach of doubt that this is the place to which *οὖν* refers, the apostle studiously selects again the very terms which he had there formerly employed. There he had said, *ὅθεν, ἀδελφοὶ ἅγιοι, κατανοήσατε τὸν ἀπόστολον καὶ ἀρχιερέα τῆς ὁμολογίας ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν*: here he says, *ἔχοντες οὖν ἀρχιερέα μέγαν*, etc.

It is with the high priest of the Jews that Christ in this epistle is compared; and therefore *μέγας* might be regarded as

merely expessing the supreme priestly dignity. Still, since this idea is involved in *ἀρχιερεὺς* itself, and since the apostle does not merely place Christ upon a level with the Jewish high priest, but raises Him to a much loftier position, the adjective *μέγας* may be not merely a technical designation for high priest, but may be designed to express the transcendent and matchless dignity of Christ as a priest, analogous to the phrase "that great Shepherd of the sheep" in Heb. xiii. 20. And this idea seems plainly to be confirmed by the following clause, *διεληλυθότα τοὺς οὐρανούς*, which comes in as an illustration of the peculiar dignity and glory of Christ's priesthood. He is no common priest: He is no ordinary high priest: He ministers not on earth, but in heaven; His sanctuary is the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

It has been disputed whether *διεληλυθότα τοὺς οὐρανοὺς* means passed *into* or *through* the heavens. That *διέρχομαι* is sometimes used to exhibit the sense of בּוֹא, הָלַךְ, and therefore to denote simply, go to, enter into, is undoubted; in which case the *διὰ* must be supposed to refer not to the place denoted by the following noun, but to the intervening space. And the same might be the case here: the phrase might mean entered into heaven; and the statement would be in perfect harmony with those passages which tell us that Christ ascended to the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens—ascended to heaven. Nevertheless, since there are passages in this very epistle which tell us that Christ has been elevated above the heavens, and that, too, as a priest,—"for such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (vii. 26),—it seems no unwarranted supposition that the etymological sense of the word should be here preserved, "passed through the heavens," and that the apostle's idea may be to exhibit the exceeding height of the elevation to which Christ has risen. Moreover, I find, both in the Septuagint and in the New Testament, that when *διέρχομαι* is employed to denote arrival at a place, another preposition is generally used besides *διὰ*, as *διέλθω εἰς τὴν γῆν* (Deut. iv. 21), *διελθεῖν εἰς τὴν Ἀχαΐαν* (Acts xviii. 27); and when no additional preposition is used, you are generally obliged to regard

the διὰ as governing the following noun, and to give it the sense of through, as διήρχετο τὴν Συρίαν—he went through Syria, confirming the churches (Acts xv. 41). If, therefore, the phrase διεληλυθότα τοὺς οὐρανοὺς meant, as most critics contend, entered into the heavens, one is at a loss to see why the preposition εἰς was not inserted: without that preposition the phrase most naturally means, passed through the heavens. The Saviour did not merely enter into heaven, but He passed through, and rose above the highest heavens, and assumed the most dignified position at the right hand of God.

Whether there be a designed allusion, as some have supposed, in the apostle's language, to the high priest passing through the various parts of the temple, until he reached the *sanctum sanctorum*, it is not easy to decide. The idea is not unnatural; it harmonizes pretty closely with the facts of the case, and yet it may be merely a refinement.

The concluding admonition, κρατῶμεν τῆς ὁμολογίας, is the same in substance as has already been repeatedly given, and it occurs repeatedly hereafter; which shows the apostle's sense of the danger to which the Hebrews were exposed, and his earnest desire for their stability in the profession and practice of the gospel. The heavenly system they are to grasp, as men who are in danger of losing their hold of that which can alone support them.

The exhortation to hold fast the profession of the gospel, is followed by a description of the character of Christ as a priest, admirably adapted to sustain and comfort the downcast, and to encourage the tempted to resist the solicitations of evil. The transcendent dignity of the Son of God might lead some to fancy that He would be the less concerned for creatures like us; but it is quite otherwise. From the elevated position to which He has been raised, He looks down with compassionate eye upon His people; He hears the voice of their earnest entreaty; and He grants them the aid which their circumstances may require. Οὐ γὰρ ἔχομεν ἀρχιερέα μὴ δυνάμενον συμπαθῆσαι ταῖς ἀσθενείαις ἡμῶν, πεπειρασμένον δὲ κατὰ πάντα καθ' ὁμοιότητα, χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας.

Γὰρ supplies a reason for the admonition of the foregoing verse: κρατῶμεν τῆς ὁμολογίας. Let us, amid all difficulties,

hold fast our profession; for exalted as our High Priest is, He is full of sympathy, and will aid us in every trial.

The two negatives, *οὐ, μή*, add great force to the exhibition of Christ's sympathy: He is most completely the reverse of not being able to sympathize. Our High Priest, though glorified in heaven, hath a heart full of tenderness, and He feels for the sorrows of His people as if they were His own. Perhaps, too, the negative form of expression may be designed to suggest a comparison between the ready and efficient sympathy of Christ with the afflicted, and the indifference felt by many of the Jewish priests, who laid burdens upon men grievous to be borne, which they themselves would not touch with one of their fingers.

Ἀσθένεια literally denotes weakness, infirmity; but here it has a greater extent of meaning. It denotes all afflictions, and trials, and sorrows, whether proceeding from our own weakness, or from the influence of objects external to ourselves. In some passages it means sin or moral infirmity, as in Heb. v. 2, vii. 28; but perhaps this idea must be excluded in the case before us, though doubtless Christ sympathizes with His people, as sinful beings who are struggling to gain the mastery over their evil affections.

The connection between the two members of this sentence, "We have not an High Priest not able, . . . but in all respects having been tempted like ourselves," is somewhat elliptical, yet very striking. The direct contrast would be, that we have a Priest perfectly able to sympathize and help; but instead of affirming Christ's ability in the second member of the sentence, the apostle, for the sake of brevity and force, rather exhibits the ground upon which that ability rests. Our High Priest was Himself tried with every variety of sorrow; and in consequence of His own experience of suffering, He is able to sympathize with the afflicted. His sympathy was nursed amid tears and sorrows of His own. It grew upon the stock of His own woes. What a mighty encouragement is this to trust to the compassion of Christ! Who can doubt His readiness to feel and to help, when he voluntarily exposed Himself to all trials for our sake? We have no sorrows which our High Priest did not Himself share.

The phrase *καθ' ὁμοιότητα* is elliptical, but there can be no doubt that *ἡμῶν* is the word to be supplied; and probably the reason of its omission was the fact of its occurrence in the parallel clause of the former member, *ταῖς ἀσθενείαις ἡμῶν*, from which it could easily be supplied.

The broad statement, that Christ was tempted in all respects like us, requires one limitation, and therefore the apostle adds the clause *χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας*. These words doubtless mean, that amid all the sorrows and trials the Saviour endured, and all the temptations to which He was exposed, He maintained His integrity. He neither sinned in thought, nor in word, nor in deed. And this perfect freedom from moral taint was indispensable to the efficiency of His sympathy; for however one sinful being may pity the distresses of another, he is altogether unable to be his surety to a holy God. Perhaps the distinct exception which the apostle here makes of sin, when speaking of the trials of Christ as compared with the trials of His people, requires us to suppose that *ἀσθενείαις*, in the preceding clause, includes not only calamities and sorrows, but also sins and failings. And how, it may be said, can Christ sympathize with these? He sympathizes with His people under them, not as approving of them, but as seeking to deliver them from their power. Would Christ refuse His sympathy to Paul when he exclaimed, "Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

In the 16th verse we are presented with an exhortation, grounded upon the sympathy of Christ. We have an High Priest whose bosom glows with tenderness and love, sinless Himself, and therefore of mighty power with God. The neglect of His proffered help would both show a singular blindness to our own best interests, and entail upon us great additional guilt: *προσερχώμεθα οὖν μετὰ παῤῥησίας τῷ θρόνῳ τῆς χάριτος, ἵνα λάβωμεν ἔλεον, καὶ χάριν εὕρωμεν εἰς εὔκαιρον βοήθειαν.*

The throne of God is naturally to the sinner the throne of judgment, from which he can only expect a sentence of death; but the great High Priest of the church being seated on God's right hand, to every one who applies through Him the throne of judgment becomes a throne of grace. Through Christ we have access to the Father, and are permitted to rejoice in hope

of the glory of God. With unwearied earnestness, therefore, we ought to avail ourselves of the privilege of entering into the divine presence.

The word *προσερχώμεθα* does not here describe the first turning of a sinner to God, but rather the approaches which believers are to make continually to their heavenly Father in the exercises of prayer and supplication. Tried by the sorrows and difficulties of their earthly warfare, they are to remember the sorrows endured by Christ; and trusting to His efficient sympathy and powerful intercession, they are to cry mightily to God for help; and they are to cry with confidence, as children to a father able and ready to help. *Μετὰ παῤῥησίας* means with liberty of speech, with boldness, with confidence, not a presumptuous familiarity, but a reverential and firm trust grounded upon the promises and work of Christ. It is opposed to that despondency and slavish fear which a just view of sin without any knowledge of a Saviour necessarily inspires. Believers see the evil of sin, but they see also the infinite worth of Christ's sacrifice, and therefore they can approach with filial confidence to a throne of grace; and the more they use this liberty, the more will they be fortified in the fear of God, and strengthened for the endurance of trial.

Most interpreters maintain that *λάβωμεν ἔλεον* and *χάριν εὕρωμεν* mean precisely the same thing, viz. the reception of grace to support under difficulties; for, say they, believers are the parties addressed, and they are addressed as exposed to trials which their own strength is unable to encounter. This is quite true, but it scarcely bears out the conclusion. For, in the first place, the words themselves, *ἔλεος* and *χάρις*, bear rather different shades of meaning. *Ἔλεος* is properly translated mercy, and it has a respect to the pardon of sin, as in Titus iii. 5, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy, *τὸν αὐτοῦ ἔλεον*, He hath saved us." *Χάρις*, again, is more frequently employed to denote divine influence infused into the mind, to strengthen it for the endurance of trial or the discharge of duty; and the words connected with it here, *εἰς εὔκαιρον βοήθειαν*, for timely assistance, show this to be its meaning in the passage before us. And further, as to the argument founded upon the scope of the passage, it is

quite true that it is not the first conversion of a sinner which is here spoken of, for the parties are exhorted to hold fast their profession; but it does not follow that believers have no need of pardoning mercy. They have reason every day they live to bewail their sins and shortcomings, and they continually need the sprinkling of Christ's blood. It is true their trials are the point mainly exhibited in this passage; but their sins are not obscurely hinted at in the description given of Christ, of whom it is said that He is *χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας*, to distinguish Him from them. Nay, we have seen that *ἀσθενείαις* probably includes sins as well as calamities. It is quite consistent, therefore, with the substance of the passage, to suppose that *λάβωμεν ἔλεον* may mean "receive mercy," that is, pardoning mercy, and *χάριν εὕρωμεν* "find grace," that is, helping grace; and surely, when the words themselves naturally suggest this difference, it is better to make the distinction, than to view the apostle as employing two phrases to express identically the same idea.

CHAPTER V.

AT the beginning of the fifth chapter, the apostle prosecutes the topic on which he has just entered, viz. the priesthood of Christ; and here we have an example of improper division of the text into chapters. The last three verses of the fourth chapter undoubtedly belong to the same general division of the argument that is handled in the fifth chapter, and therefore they should have stood at the commencement of this chapter. Not only indeed do they relate to the same general subject, viz. the office of the priesthood, but they seem to belong to the same subdivision of the argument as the first three verses, and they should therefore have stood in the closest connection with these verses. If you view the commencement of the fifth chapter as a new topic, then, since the 4th verse also is manifestly a new topic or point of comparison, you are obliged to regard the first three verses as forming a complete paragraph by themselves; but in this view they appear disjointed and incomplete, for they state no comparison between Christ and Aaron, but merely affirm a fact respecting the ancient priesthood. But when you view chap. iv. 14–16 and chap. v. 1–3 as forming one paragraph or section, they exhibit a complete comparison; and the one part affirms respecting Christ what the other affirms respecting the Aaronic priests. The idea brought out is this: both were characterized by sympathy; both had experience of the trials and sorrows of life; but Christ claims a decided superiority, as being *χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας*. And this view of the connection between the verses under review fully accounts for the use of *γὰρ* at the beginning of the fifth chapter; it is grounded upon the resemblance between the type and the antitype.

It is of the Aaronical priests only that the first three verses speak, and the phrase ἐξ ἀνθρώπων λαμβανόμενος seems designed to distinguish them as earthly from Christ as heavenly. Some indeed have supposed that λαμβανόμενος is the predicate of the proposition, and that the statement of the apostle is this: "Every high priest is taken from among men," which certainly is true even of Christ, who was bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh; but since there is a verb in the indicative mood, viz. καθίσταται, to complete the enunciation of thought, it is more natural to make λαμβανόμενος retain its participial power, and in this case of course it must be viewed as descriptive of the subject: "Every high priest taken from among men is appointed;" and there is now, therefore, the idea suggested that there is some other priest, of whom a different description might be given; and that other is Christ, who, while He is a man, and so connected with earth, is at the same time of heavenly origin. The contrast presented in chap. vii. 28, "For the law maketh *men* high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the *Son*, who is consecrated for evermore," illustrates and confirms the interpretation which has been given of this clause.

Καθίσταται is taken actively by Calvin, and also by Kypke, who understand it to mean, presides over, or regulates religious matters; and doubtless this sense is quite congruous to the scope of the passage, and cases may be produced where the passive voice of this verb has the force of the active. But the prevailing use of the word is different both in common Greek and in the sacred writers. In this very epistle, the appropriate power, both of the active voice and of the passive, is carefully preserved; as in chap. vii. 28, ὁ νόμος καθίστησιν, the law appointeth men; and in chap. viii. 3, καθίσταται εἰς τὸ προσφέρειν, is appointed to offer. There is no good ground, therefore, to doubt that the apostle's meaning is, "Every high priest is appointed;" and ἵνα, which describes the end of the appointment, requires this rendering.

Τὰ πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, in matters relating to God, τὰ being governed by κατά, understood, which is one of the most frequent ellipses in the language.

The priest is appointed ὑπὲρ ἀνθρώπων, for the benefit of

men; and what is he to do? He is to offer, *προσφέρειν*, to bring to the altar *δῶρά τε καὶ θυσίας*—gifts and sacrifices. These two words correspond to the Hebrew words זְבָחִים וּמִנְחוֹת, and there is a similar difference between them. *Θυσία*, in conformity with its etymology, is restricted to bloody sacrifices, offerings of slain beasts; while *δῶρα* is applied to free-will offerings, meat-offerings, and drink-offerings — offerings of thanksgiving. But though *θυσία* is restricted to bloody sacrifices, *δῶρον* is not restricted in the same manner to thank-offerings, but is sometimes applied to sacrifices of slain beasts. This is plain from chap. viii. 4, where the whole of the offerings these priests were to present, styled in the 3d verse *δῶρά τε καὶ θυσίας*, are comprehended under the one title of *δῶρα*: "*ὄντων τῶν ἱερέων τῶν προσφερόντων κατὰ τὸν νόμον τὰ δῶρα.*" See also Heb. xi. 4. *Δῶρα* therefore seems to be the generic word for all offerings, and *θυσία* the specific word for a sin-offering; but when they are used together, *δῶρα* is often employed to denote free-will offerings, as distinguished from sin-offerings. It is generally supposed that in this particular passage they must be used synonymously; but since it is not of Christ the heavenly Priest that the affirmation is made, but of the earthly, the priest *ἐξ ἀνθρώπων λαμβανόμενος*, there seems no good reason for supposing that the words do not denote the different kinds of offerings which the successors of Aaron presented. And I am the more confirmed in this idea by the fact that, when the sacrificial work of Christ is the direct subject of discourse, the two words are never employed together: when they do occur in conjunction, it is always to the offerings of the ancient priesthood they relate: see Heb. viii. 3, ix. 9.

Ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν stands in grammatical connection with *θυσίας* only, and is descriptive of the nature and design of these bloody offerings: they are sacrifices for sins, atoning sacrifices, expiatory offerings. The idea is the same as that of the phrase employed (chap. ii. 17) to describe the work of Christ as a priest, *εἰς τὸ ἱλάσκεσθαι τὰς ἁμαρτίας τοῦ λαοῦ*, to expiate the sins of the people, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. The ancient priest presented gifts and atoning sacrifices.

The state of feeling which it was proper the earthly priest

should cherish toward those in whose behalf the functions of his office were performed, is next described: *μετριοπαθεῖν δυνάμενος τοῖς ἀγνοοῦσι καὶ πλανωμένοις, ἐπεὶ καὶ αὐτὸς περίκειται ἀσθένειαν.*

Μετριοπαθεῖν occurs in no other part of the New Testament but this, and it is not to be found even once in the Septuagint. It belongs to the later Greek. It seems to have come into use shortly after the days of Aristotle, and it was used at first in opposition to the doctrine of the Stoics, who affirmed that a wise man should be entirely *ἀπαθής*, passionless. Stephens, in his *Thesaurus*, quotes a passage from Diogenes Laertes, *ἔφη δὲ τὸν σοφὸν μὴ εἶναι μὲν ἀπαθῆ, μετριοπαθῆ δέ*, which illustrates this use of the word; and it is plain that, according to this view, the verb *μετριοπαθεῖν* would convey the idea of cherishing certain affections. But when the word passed out of the schools of philosophy, it was placed in opposition, not, as formerly, to the absence of passion, but to what is of far more frequent occurrence in common life, the violent indulgence of it; and thus it came to convey the idea of moderating the violence of feeling, and restraining the affections within proper bounds. Of this sense many examples might be produced, as Dion Ernesti, 374, *ἀρετῇ ἄνθρωποι μετριοπαθεῖς γίνονται*—by virtue men become moderate, restrained; for it is immediately added, as explanatory: *καὶ τὸ φύγειν τὴν ἀμετρίαν*, and to shun immoderate passion, *αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἂν εἴη τοῦ σοφοῦ τὸ ἀγώνισμα*, that should be the effort of the wise. Doubtless, therefore, the general idea denoted by the word is to restrain or moderate the feelings, to confine them within proper limits; and in the passage before us, the feelings to be restrained must be such as error and misconduct are fitted to excite, viz. displeasure, anger. The priest is able to moderate his displeasure, to restrain his anger against the ignorant and erring: he can bear with them. The English phrase *bear with* seems best fitted to express the full force of the Greek word.

It is generally supposed that *συμπαθῆσαι*, in the first part of the comparison (chap. iv. 15), where Christ the heavenly Priest is described, should be viewed as indicating the idea which *μετριοπαθεῖν* is employed to express respecting the earthly priest. And doubtless they do convey the same general idea,

the idea of friendly feeling, of a favourable disposition towards the parties respectively mentioned. But still there is a difference between them. *Συμπαθῆσαι* indicates the positive indulgence of kindly feelings: *μετριοπαθεῖν* the suppression or restraint of unkindly feelings. They are like parties that meet in the same point, but they reach it from opposite quarters. And is it merely an accidental circumstance that *συμπαθῆσαι* is the word chosen where the feelings of the heavenly Priest are described, and *μετριοπαθεῖν* where those of the earthly are brought into view? Perhaps the selection of terms may have been designed to express the idea, that a more positive and a purer sympathy reigned in the breast of Christ,—a sympathy produced by no feeling of His own frailty, but resulting from the divine compassion of His nature. In the case of the earthly priest, the moderation of his feelings of displeasure against the sinner is produced by the consciousness of his own sinfulness. Why should he be censorious, why should he be bitter, when he himself is in the same condemnation? Let him restrain himself therefore from judging and acting harshly—the very idea which *μετριοπαθεῖν* is fitted to express; and the selection of the word will appear the more happy still, when it is recollected that men often have a tendency to censoriousness strong in the inverse ratio of their own goodness. The worst of the two thieves was the most bitter against Christ. The earthly priest, with all his sinfulness and imperfections, is more prone to harshness than the heavenly, and therefore he needs to restrain himself; and for this purpose he ought habitually to recollect that he is a sinner, like those for whom he ministers.

The objects of the priest's forbearance are styled *τοῖς ἀγνοοῦσι καὶ πλανωμένοις*. *Ἀγνοέω* literally signifies to be ignorant, and it often occurs in this simple sense; but the meaning of words is not always confined within the limits which etymology might have prescribed. In the Septuagint, this verb, and the nouns derived from it, are employed to represent Hebrew words which all convey the idea with more or less aggravation of sinful conduct, as in Ps. xxv. 7, where David bewails his past transgressions, *καὶ ἀγνοίας μου* (פשע) *μὴ μνησθῇς*: see also Hos. iv. 16. And in our own epistle, the only other place where any branch of this family occurs, presents an undoubted example of the

same signification (ix. 7) : *εἰς δὲ τὴν δευτέραν ἅπαξ τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ μόνος ὁ ἀρχιερεύς, οὐ χωρὶς αἵματος, ὃ προσφέρει ὑπὲρ ἑαυτοῦ καὶ τῶν τοῦ λαοῦ ἀγνοημάτων*—for the *sins* of the people. The transition in the sense of this word, from the idea of simple ignorance to that of sinfulness, might take place on this ground, that all sinfulness is more or less complicated with ignorance ; and, moreover, let it be remembered that this word is employed not as strictly synonymous with *sin*, but as indicating the additional idea, that there is the disposition in the speaker to take the most favourable view of the parties, whose conduct upon the whole is condemned. *Πλανωμένοις* seems to rise above *ἀγνοοῦσιν*, and to express the idea of a greater deviation from the path of rectitude ; though even *πλανωμένοις* is a mild word, and exhibits sinners as *wanderers*, for whom the sympathy of the priest should be excited. The Judge, when the hour of judgment comes, may pronounce the stern sentence of condemnation, " Depart," etc. ; but the Priest, while the day of mercy lasts, is to feel for the sinner, and to make every effort to reclaim him. The idea of Peirce, that the two words are employed together as a hendiadys, *τοῖς ἀγνοοῦσι καὶ πλανωμένοις*, for *τοῖς ἐξ ἀγνοίας πλανωμένοις*, to denote persons that err through ignorance, as distinguished from other sinners, is not for a moment to be admitted ; for who could expect forbearance, whether from the heavenly Priest or from the earthly, if all but sins of ignorance were irrevocably placed beyond the pale of pardon ? Stuart's idea is a very good one, that *ἀγνοοῦσι* and *πλανωμένοις* are to be viewed as an accumulation of descriptive words, employed in order to designate offenders of various kinds.

The conduct which became the ancient priest in reference to the Jews, is a model to be copied by ministers of the gospel in all ages. We are not, it is true, priests ; but, like priests, we should feel sympathy and compassion for perishing sinners. The attitude which becomes us is not one of proud defiance or of stern denunciation, but of affectionate sympathy and of earnest entreaty. " Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die, O house of Israel ?" We are not, indeed, to palliate sin ; we are not to shade the scriptural representations of its malignity ; but while we exhibit it in its true character, we are to address the sinner

not in wrath, but in pity. As the Saviour wept over Jerusalem, employing words strikingly analogous to those before us, "If thou hadst known" (Luke xix. 42), so are we to weep over perishing sinners, to address them in the language of kindness and sympathy, and to omit no labour that seems likely to reclaim them.

The ground which the earthly priest has for restraining his feelings when disposed to judge harshly of the sinner, is thus stated by the apostle: *ἐπεὶ καὶ αὐτὸς περίκειται ἀσθένειαν.* It is surprising that Michaelis should suppose the word *ἀσθένειαν* here means death. The exigencies of the passage undoubtedly require that it should be viewed as denoting sin or moral infirmity; and it is sometimes to be found in this sense, as in Rom. viii. 26, "the Spirit helpeth, *ταῖς ἀσθενείαις ἡμῶν*" (Rom. v. 6, etc.). And if ever the word means moral infirmity, it must be in this passage; for in the following verse we are informed, that on account of this *ἀσθένεια*, the priest was required to offer sacrifices, expiatory sacrifices, for himself as well as for the people. Œcumenius, therefore, justly makes the remark, that *ἀσθένειαν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἐκάλεσεν.*

Περίκειμαι is sometimes followed by the dative, but perhaps more frequently by the accusative, as here. The image is borrowed from clothing which lies closely round the body,—a favourite image with Paul, whether he is speaking of virtues or vices (Eph. vi. 13; Col. iii. 12). Abundant examples of the construction before us are to be found in the common Greek writers. The language of the apostle is well rendered in our English version: "he is compassed with infirmity:" infirmity or sinfulness cleaves to him as clothes do to the body. The image expresses very strikingly the closeness of the connection which now, alas, subsists between sin and the soul of man. It surrounds us like a dress; and a higher power than our own must divest us of the fatal covering, otherwise, like the robe of Hercules, it will in the end effect our destruction.

In the following verse the apostle states a consequence of the priest's own liability to err: *καὶ διὰ ταύτην ὀφείλει, καθὼς περὶ τοῦ λαοῦ, οὕτω καὶ περὶ ἑαυτοῦ προσφέρειν ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν.* *Ταύτην* refers to *ἀσθένειαν.* The Jewish priests were required by the law to offer sacrifices for themselves, before they pre-

sented any for the people; and if they had omitted their own offerings, their offerings for the people would have been of no avail. They were sinners as well as the rest of the nation, and they stood in the same need of pardon. But nowhere is it affirmed that Christ ever offered sacrifice for Himself: His whole priestly functions were performed for the benefit of others: "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed." Among many points of close resemblance, this is an instance of striking dissimilarity; and it takes its rise from the pure and holy character of Christ. He was sinless, *πεπειρασμένον*, says the apostle, *κατὰ πάντα καθ' ὁμοιότητα, χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας*. How much this difference conduces to the general object of the epistle, the establishment of the superiority of the new dispensation, it is unnecessary to spend time in showing.

These six verses, the last three of the preceding chapter and the first three of this, form a section by themselves; and their design is plainly to introduce the comparison of Christ as a priest with the priests of the ancient law. Whatever glory the old dispensation might derive from the dignity and services of the ancient priesthood, a greater glory does the new derive from the dignity and sacrificial work of Christ. Our High Priest hath passed into the heavens: His bosom is the seat of a purer sympathy than Aaron ever felt; and He is entirely free from moral delinquency or defect. No qualification possessed by the earthly priest is awanting in Christ, and He possesses other qualifications to which the earthly priest was an utter stranger.

At the 4th verse the apostle enters upon a new topic connected with the priesthood of Christ. Macknight supposes that this and the following verses contain the application to our Lord of those principles which are laid down generally in the first three verses; but this is plainly a mistake. It is the new topic of Christ's divine appointment to the office of the priesthood which here comes before us. In what connection this point stands with the succeeding discussion respecting Melchizedek, will afterwards appear.

Καὶ οὐχ ἑαυτῷ τις λαμβάνει τὴν τιμήν, ἀλλὰ καλούμενος

ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ, καθάπερ καὶ Ἀαρών. The priesthood being an office whose duties are connected with reconciliation to God, and the procurement of blessings to which we have no claim, it is plain that a priest who of his own accord assumes the office to himself, is entitled to no confidence. How can such a man be sure that his services will be acceptable to God? and how can others entrust their eternal interests to his care? It is the offended lawgiver who must dictate the terms of peace, and name the party who is to carry out the various steps of the transaction. Divine appointment, therefore, is an essential feature of a valid priesthood. Men may present the most costly sacrifices, they may offer the fruit of their body for the sin of their soul, they may show the anguish of their minds by sighs and tears, they may even wound and disfigure their persons, but they can have no ground for supposing that these or any similar measures will have the effect of cancelling the guilt of sin. No one taketh the honour to himself—that is, no one legitimately or allowably assumeth this honour; *λαμβάνει* being used in the same sense as the more common Greek expression *προσποιεῖται*, arrogateth, lays hold of for one's self. There have, indeed, been persons who have intruded themselves upon the discharge of the priestly functions, such as Korah, Dathan, Abiram, Uzziah, and the priests of the calves in Dan and Bethel; but the presumption entailed upon them a dreadful ruin: *οὐχ ἑαυτῷ τις λαμβάνει τὴν τιμήν.*

Tholuck justly remarks, that though the apostle here enters upon a new topic, yet in using *λαμβάνει* he glances back to *λαμβανόμενος* in the first verse, and therefore uses the conjunction *καὶ* in its common acceptation: And, indeed, no one taketh, but waits till he is taken, *λαμβανόμενος*, chosen, selected, called.

The priesthood is styled *τιμή*, because it is an honourable office, and in all ages has been held in the highest estimation. The use of this word to denote an important office is by no means unusual in the Greek authors. Herodotus says (lib. i. p. 25) that Pisistratus obtained supreme authority in Athens, *οὔτε τιμὰς τὰς ἐούσας συνταράξας οὔτε θέσμια μεταλλάξας*, having neither disturbed the existing offices or magistrates, nor changed the laws; and in the second book of the same historian (p. 128)

we find this expression, *παῖς παρὰ πατρὸς ἐκδέκεται την τιμήν* —the son receives the office after the father. Philo, too, calls the priesthood *τιμή*: *τιμὴ ἁρμόττουσα σοφῷ, θεραπεύειν τὸ πρὸς ἀλήθειαν, ἱερωσύνη δὲ θεραπεία τοῦ Θεοῦ*—It is an office befitting a wise man to serve the truth, but the priesthood is the service of God.

The statement contained in this verse is a general truth, applicable to both dispensations; and the case of Aaron is mentioned as an illustration, whose divine appointment to the priesthood is so explicitly stated by Moses (Lev. viii. 1, 2, 33, 34). Theophylact supposes that, by referring to the special case of Aaron, the apostle did not merely design to illustrate his general proposition, but likewise to glance at the Jewish priests of his own time, some of whom had obtained their offices through improper influence: *οἱ ἐνεπήδων τῇ τιμῇ, ὠνητὴν ταύτην κτώμενοι, καὶ τὸν νόμον διαφθείροντες* — who leaped into the honour, acquiring it venally, and corrupting the law. The supposition is by no means improbable, and certain it is that the priests lay open to such a thrust.

The 5th verse affirms that the general principle under which Aaron's case undoubtedly came, is as certainly applicable to Christ: *οὕτω καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς οὐχ ἑαυτὸν ἐδόξασε γενηθῆναι ἀρχιερέα, ἀλλ' ὁ λαλήσας πρὸς αὐτόν.* "Let not the Jews object to the Christian religion the want of a priesthood: let them not pride themselves on the tokens of divine favour which accompanied Aaron's entrance upon his office. We have a priest as well as they: we have a divinely appointed priest, whom God dignified with greater honour than ever Aaron possessed."

The phrase *οὐχ ἑαυτὸν ἐδόξασεν* manifestly agrees exactly in sense with the corresponding phrase in the preceding verse, *οὐχ ἑαυτῷ τις λαμβάνει τὴν τιμήν*: for they both state the same truth, the one being employed in the enunciation of the general, and the other in the enunciation of the particular. It does not mean that Christ did not possess, and claim too, the honour of being a priest; but it means that He had not of Himself unwarrantably assumed the dignity. He held the office, but it came to Him from God: He had received a divine call to it. Our Lord Himself, in describing His heavenly commission, employs the very same phraseology as Paul does, and one would

almost suppose that the apostle in this verse designedly alludes to the words of his Master, as recorded in John's Gospel, chap. viii. 54: *ἐὰν ἐγὼ δοξάζω ἐμαυτόν, ἡ δόξα μου οὐδέν ἐστιν· ἔστιν ὁ πατήρ μου, ὁ δοξάζων με, ὃν ὑμεῖς λέγετε, ὅτι Θεὸς ὑμῶν ἐστιν.*

The remaining part of this verse describes the source from which Christ derived His appointment to the office of the priesthood: *ἀλλ' ὁ λαλήσας πρὸς αὐτόν, Υἱός μου εἶ σύ, ἐγὼ σήμερον γεγέννηκά σε.* This is a clause which is encompassed with great difficulties. The question may be raised, whether these words were really designed by the apostle as a proof of the divine priesthood of Christ, to which they do not seem to have any natural reference; or whether they are to be regarded as merely describing the party from whom the Saviour's appointment comes. The latter view would greatly conduce to the removal of difficulties. Christ did not assume to Himself the glory of the priesthood, but he gave it to Him who is introduced in the second Psalm as saying, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee; that is, He received the priestly dignity from God: His Father bestowed upon Him the priestly dignity. According to this view, the quotation from the second Psalm is not adduced as the *proof* of Christ's divine appointment, but the whole verse is the apostle's own *statement* that Christ was not self-appointed, but appointed by His Father. It seems, however, to be a fatal objection to this view, that the undeniable proof contained in the next verse is introduced as the second proof, whereas, according to the idea in question, it could only be the first. *Καθὼς καὶ ἐν ἑτέρῳ λέγει*—He saith in one; and He also saith in another.

We seem, therefore, to be shut up to the idea that the quotation is designed as a proof of the apostle's declaration that Christ was divinely appointed to the office of the priesthood. Tholuck finds no difficulty in the passage, because he regards the terms *υἱὸς* and *γεγέννηκα* as describing, not the natural relation between the Father and Christ, but the official position which God has assigned Him as Mediator; in which case certainly the words might be adduced as a proof of the Saviour's priesthood, which is an essential feature of His mediatorial office. Calvin adopts nearly the same view: "Itaque non est hic mutua inter patrem et filium relatio: sed potius hominum

respectus habetur apud quos illustratus est. Nunc qualem nobis filium manifestavit Deus? imo ut inter se et homines mediator esset. Ergo sacerdotium continet genitura" (Calvin *in locum*).

But we have felt ourselves constrained by the whole usage of the New Testament to regard the phrase Son of God as denoting the natural and eternal relation between the Father and the Son, and as being therefore quite independent of any of the mediatorial offices. Christ was the Son of God before He was appointed to the mediatorial dignity; for the love of God in sending a Saviour is always represented as greatly enhanced by the consideration that it was His Son, His only-begotten Son, whom He sent (John iii. 16). And what is of great weight in the present case, we find that in the 9th verse of this chapter the idea of Christ's Sonship is introduced as illustrative of His condescension in submitting to suffering: *καίπερ ὢν υἱός*. But if son mean nothing more than mediator, then the wonder ceases; for it is nothing surprising that a mediator should do a mediator's work.

Now if the Sonship of Christ means the eternal relation subsisting between Him and God, where is the proof in the passage before us that the Father appointed Him to be a priest? There is no necessary relation between sonship and priesthood, unless you suppose that the Son of God was bound to die in the room of guilty rebels. The Sonship of Christ, considered simply in itself, will indeed prove His perfect *fitness* for discharging the functions of a priest, but it will not prove His actual appointment to the office.

What view, then, must we adopt of the bearing of this quotation upon the apostle's argument? The peculiar manner in which the words are cited does not seem unnaturally to suggest the idea, that we are rather referred for the proof to the place where this saying is recorded: it was He that said so who appointed Him. Is there aught, then, in the second Psalm that refers to the priestly functions of Christ? Yes, His authorized intercession is mentioned; His consequent reception of a people from God; His power to save from perishing; and the blessedness of all them that put their trust in Him. May not these, then, constitute the proofs to which the apostle refers?

Or if this be regarded as rather a far-fetched exposition of the passage, may not the one quotation (ver. 5) be designed to prove the perfect fitness of Christ for the office of the priesthood, and the other (ver. 6) to show His actual appointment to it,—the two together thus constituting a complete proof of His divine priestly dignity? If we duly consider the view that is taken by Paul of the priesthood of Christ, chap. vii. 3, 15, 24, 28, we shall be led to acknowledge that none is fit for the office but One, who is truly divine; and the reference to Christ's Sonship, therefore, will appear of material importance, as illustrative of His matchless qualifications to rescue and to reconcile. He is a divine, a perpetual priest.

The 6th verse contains the apostle's second scriptural illustration of Christ's divine priesthood: *καθὼς καὶ ἐν ἑτέρῳ λέγει· σὺ ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισεδέκ.*

Ἐν ἑτέρῳ of course must have *τόπῳ* understood; and the place referred to is the 110th Psalm. There is no part of the Old Testament whose application to our blessed Lord is supported by more decisive evidence than this psalm. The contents of the passage itself supply convincing evidence of its Messianic reference; for the kingly and priestly offices are represented as joined together in the same individual, which was a union not only unprecedented among the Israelites, but absolutely forbidden as unlawful. Unavoidably, therefore, we must suppose that the whole psalm refers to Christ, who was a priest upon His throne. And both our Lord Himself and His apostles frequently appeal to this psalm as predictive of His character and claims.

The citation made by the apostle most conclusively supports the position for which he brings it forward. The God of Israel recognises the priesthood of the great Messiah: Thou art a priest, etc. Instead of *ἀρχιερεύς*, which is more frequently applied to Christ in the Epistle to the Hebrews, *ἱερεὺς* is here employed, in accordance with the Septuagint, because the nature of the priesthood is sufficiently defined by the following clause. Moreover, Melchizedek was the only priest of his order, there being no inferior grades, as in the priesthood of Aaron; and therefore the simple term *ἱερεὺς* was sufficiently descriptive of his office, and it is the only one ever directly applied to him.

When the Saviour is compared with the priesthood of Aaron He is styled *ἀρχιερεύς*, to denote that He corresponded as antitype, not to the inferior orders of the priesthood, but to the head of the priesthood itself. And even when He is spoken of in connection with Melchizedek, this same term *ἀρχιερεὺς* is sometimes applied to Him, as in the 10th verse of this chapter, with the view of intimating that He is the greatest of all priests.

Κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισεδὲκ is the language of the Septuagint, and it there corresponds to the Hebrew phrase עַל־דִּבְרָתִי מַלְכִּי־צֶדֶק. A slight difference of opinion has prevailed as to the proper meaning of the word *τάξις* in this passage. It has been objected to the word *order*, by which it is rendered in our version after the Latin Vulgate, that there was properly no order in the priesthood of Melchizedek, for he had no predecessor, no successor; nor, while he lived, were there any subordinate priests under his control. He was the first, the last, the only priest of the kind now designated by his name. Plainly, therefore, if we use the word *order*, we must attach to it a somewhat different idea from what we indicate by it when we apply it to the priesthood of Aaron. And, indeed, the Hebrew word in the 110th Psalm is different from the one employed to describe the order and subordination of the priesthood instituted by Moses. דִּבְרָה (from דָּבַר) denotes reason, method, manner, case. And though *τάξις* may undoubtedly denote order, succession, and is in fact applied in Luke i. 8 to the order of priestly service in the temple; yet it is also explained by Stephanus, in his *Thesaurus*, to mean quality, kind. This sense appears the most conformable to the sense of the Hebrew word, which we must suppose the LXX. designed to express, and which therefore, in such a case as the present, should have more weight than even the common usage of the Greek word. Besides, Paul himself, in chap. vii. 15 (17), seems to give this explanation of the words quoted from the Septuagint; for he expresses their import by the phrase *κατὰ τὴν ὁμοιότητα Μελχισεδέκ*—according to the likeness of Melchizedek, of the same kind as Melchizedek. The Syriac version, too, reads "in the likeness of." Gesenius thus explains the psalm: "Secundum rationem Melchisedeci, *i.e.* eodem modo quo Melchisedeci qui

rex erat et sacerdos;" and Rosenmüller takes the same view of it: "Secundum rationem seu conditionem Melchisedeci, q. d. non vulgaris quidam, quales Aharonis, aut alius ex ejus posteris, Levitæ, sed singularis plane et eximiæ conditionis scilicet regiæ, sacerdos."

The duration of the Saviour's priesthood is said to be *εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα*, which is a translation of the Hebrew phrase לְעוֹלָם, for ever, to all eternity. Rosenmüller justly observes, that this one expression is sufficient to demonstrate that the 110th Psalm does not relate at all to David, but solely to David's Lord, the great Messiah. All previous priesthoods were preparatory and transient: Christ's is stable and enduring: no other is ever to come in its room. It is true that the actual exercise of the Saviour's priesthood is to cease when the whole redeemed and chosen people of God are gathered home to heaven; but still the priesthood may be justly styled eternal, when you consider that the one offering of Christ has procured eternal redemption for believers. The results of the Saviour's mediation are never to come to an end. It was but the temporary removal of ceremonial defilement which the Levitical offerings effected: it is the eternal removal of moral defilement which the sacrifice of Christ accomplishes. And that this is the ground on which the idea of eternity is connected with our Lord's priesthood, seems plain from the development of the apostle's thoughts, contained in the following verses, where we are informed, that by suffering He was *τελειωθείς*, and thus became, to all that obey Him, *αἴτιος σωτηρίας αἰωνίου*.

In the three following verses the apostle gives a brief description of the priestly work of Christ. This, however, is not to be regarded as his formal discussion of the subject: he returns to it again, and handles it at great length, in the eighth, ninth, and tenth chapters. The verses before us contain a short, condensed, striking statement, designed to awaken attention to the subject, and suggested apparently by the epithet *Son* applied to Christ in one of the quotations, and also by the general description of priesthood contained in the 3d verse. God, says the apostle, made Christ, His own Son, a priest; and He accordingly, though a Son, suffered the intensest anguish, and became, in consequence of His sufferings, the source of eternal salvation

to His people. He was a true Priest—a heaven-appointed Priest—a Priest who hath made complete reconciliation for sin. *Ὃς ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ, δεήσεις τε καὶ ἱκετηρίας πρὸς τὸν δυνάμενον σώζειν αὐτὸν ἐκ θανάτου, μετὰ κραυγῆς ἰσχυρᾶς καὶ δακρύων προσενέγκας, καὶ εἰσακουσθεὶς ἀπὸ τῆς εὐλαβείας (καίπερ ὢν υἱός), ἔμαθεν ἀφ' ὧν ἔπαθε τὴν ὑπακοήν. Καὶ τελειωθείς, ἐγένετο τοῖς ὑπακούουσιν αὐτῷ πᾶσιν αἴτιος σωτηρίας αἰωνίου.*

This is a complex sentence. *Ὃς*, referring of course, not to Melchizedek, but to Christ, is the subject of the general proposition, with two subordinate propositions participially connected with it before the verb makes its appearance.

The phrase, *ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ*, denotes, of course, the period of the Saviour's humiliation. *Σὰρξ* is put for human nature, and human nature in its present state of suffering and sorrow. There have been persons who have inferred from this passage that Christ has now no human body, having laid it aside when His humiliation ended. But we know that He retained His body after His resurrection; that He allowed Himself to be touched and handled by His disciples; that He said to them, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have;" and that, finally, He was seen ascending to glory. *Σάρξ*, therefore, cannot here mean human nature absolutely, but human nature in its frail and suffering state. And there is another limitation to which the meaning of the word must necessarily be subjected in this place. In many passages the predominant idea suggested by the word *σάρξ*, flesh, is sinfulness; but here, when applied to Christ, of whom the apostle but a few sentences before affirmed that He was *χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας*, every trace of this idea must be excluded, and we must view it as denoting the sinless infirmities of human nature, the sorrows and afflictions of life.

The Saviour, we are told, offered up *δεήσεις τε καὶ ἱκετηρίας*, prayers and supplications. It is attempted to draw a distinction between these two words, and perhaps there may be some shade of difference between them in their general use: at least we find that *ἱκετηρία* is employed on more formal occasions, as when ambassadors are sent with outward tokens of entreaty; and therefore probably the word denotes more earnest and submis-

sive entreaty. But in this passage probably nothing depends upon the difference between them; but the two are joined together for the sake of intensity, and they are often so joined in the Greek authors. I have observed, too, from a comparison of a number of examples, that they are sometimes placed in one order and sometimes in another, as *ἱκετηρίας πολλὰς καὶ δεήσεις ποιούμενοι* (Isocr. *de pace*); which seems to indicate that it is their union merely which is employed to express intensity of feeling.

The prayers and supplications of the Saviour were accompanied *μετὰ κραυγῆς ἰσχυρᾶς καὶ δακρύων.* These expressions undoubtedly refer to some particular occasion; and the affecting scene of Gethsemane's garden naturally presents itself to view. The agony which our Lord there endured is circumstantially described by three of the Evangelists, who tell us that He began to be sorrowful and very heavy, *ἤρξατο λυπεῖσθαι καὶ ἀδημονεῖν*; that His soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; that He was sore amazed, and fell upon the ground; that He was in an agony, and prayed more earnestly; and that His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground (Matt. xxvi. 38, 39; Mark xiv. 35, 36; Luke xxii. 44). The *κραυγὴ* mentioned by Paul finds its explanation in the repeated and increasingly urgent supplications which He presented to His Father; for Luke mentions that, after He had prayed twice, He fell into an agony, and *ἐκτενέστερον προσηύχετο*; and tears, though not mentioned by any of the Evangelists, are the natural accompaniment and expression of intense anguish. Some are led by the phrase *κραυγὴ ἰσχυρά* to regard the cross as the scene to which the apostle refers, where the Saviour cried out, "My God, my God! why hast Thou forsaken me?" and again uttered a great cry immediately before He gave up the ghost. But the agony in the garden best corresponds to the various circumstances mentioned by Paul,—the repeated supplications, for example; and if we were restricted to one scene, we should without hesitation fix upon it as the object of reference. It may afterwards appear doubtful, when we consider the answer to the prayers, whether both scenes may not have been present to the mind of the apostle when he penned these words. They both happened in the days of His flesh.

It is said that Christ presented His prayers *πρὸς τὸν δυνάμενον σώζειν αὐτὸν ἐκ θανάτου.* These words are a periphrasis for God, who possesses entire control over death, and can preserve whom He will alive. But why is this particular periphrasis here chosen? Doubtless it is designed to indicate the substance of the prayers and supplications. And does it mean that the Saviour actually prayed to be delivered from death?—that when the critical moment came, He repented of the purpose He had formed? To avoid anything approaching to such an idea, some persons understand *σώζειν ἐκ θανάτου* to mean *out of* death; that is, to raise from the dead, and thus make the prayer a prayer that He may not be left in the grave. But *σώζειν ἐκ* is a common expression for deliverance from an impending calamity; and this very phrase *σώζειν ἐκ θανάτου* is quoted by Wetstein as occurring in Plato, where it can only mean, save from dying, preserve alive. Besides, there is nothing in the history of Christ which corresponds to the language of the apostle, viewed in the other light; and Macknight, who adopts that interpretation, is obliged to suppose that Paul refers to some unrecorded agony of our blessed Lord, which is a very unsatisfactory supposition, the more especially as we find an actual scene which so perfectly corresponds to the whole description.

For what, then, did the Saviour pray? The answer to this question must be sought in the account given us of the affecting scene of Gethsemane. The three Evangelists who have described these terrors all mention that He repeatedly used the words, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." Now what is the cup? Doubtless it is the sufferings which were before Him, which He knew to be now quite near at hand, and which constituted the hour and power of darkness. Does His purpose then falter? Does He repent of His undertaking? Did He not know the full cost till now? Oh! it becomes us to tread cautiously on ground like this. Where Jesus trembled, a sacred awe should pervade our bosoms. That our Lord was divine, is a point which we have already seen clearly established by the evidence of this very epistle; but that He was also a man is clear from every page of Scripture; and His divinity did not prevent Him from experiencing all the innocent frailties of humanity, nor from feeling the pains and sorrows to which He

was exposed. Yea, He was exquisitely alive to suffering, and His very purity in a world like this laid Him open to sources of sorrow to which we are strangers. All, accordingly, we read in Scripture leads us to suppose that the closing scene of His life was accompanied with sufferings such as had never before been experienced in the world. It was no imaginary sorrow through which Christ passed; no mimic representation of woe; no formal pageant got up for mere effect, but a real, overwhelming, crushing agony. "Certum est," says Calvin, "in extremas angustias tunc fuisse coactum, ergo et veris doloribus pressus fuit, et serio oravit patrem ut sibi opem ferret" (ad locum). Now we know that the divine nature is incapable of suffering. It was the human nature of Christ alone which endured these sorrows; and certainly it must be pronounced impossible for human nature to bear the immediate prospect of such woe as Christ endured without great emotion. Yea, who does not feel, that if no such scene as Gethsemane were recorded in Scripture, we should be apt to suppose that somehow or other His divinity prevented Him from feeling the full agony which the burden that was upon Him was fitted to produce, and His example as a specimen of patient endurance would have lost all its weight? Besides, there was this peculiarity in the case of Christ, that He knew beforehand every step of the rugged road He was to tread. Sufferings that develop themselves gradually can never exert the same previous influence upon the mind as those whose minutest shades are foreseen from the first. Need we wonder, then, that the foreseen sorrows of Christ filled His soul with so great an agony? The sacred narrative plainly tells us that the prospect did excite the deepest anguish in His bosom; and we find that the nearer the scenes of Calvary approached, His mental struggle became the more severe. John is the only one of the four Evangelists who omits the agony in the garden, which is very remarkable, as he was the only one of the four who was near to Christ at the time; but he mentions a very similar occurrence which took place at a rather earlier time: "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name" (John xii. 27). The feeling displayed in the garden on the night before the crucifixion is

the same in kind, but greatly more intense. Now He falls upon the ground, is suffused with a bloody sweat, and exclaims, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." But though His mind as a man plainly recoils from the overwhelming sufferings which were before Him, and His heart trembled at the prospect, yet He does not for one moment pray absolutely for deliverance. His language is the expression of feelings which as a human being He felt at the prospect of suffering; but He displays throughout entire submission to God, and His prayer on each occasion is accompanied with these remarkable words: "Nevertheless, not my will, but Thine be done." What an example of patient endurance, of complete resignation to His Father's will! Nothing could be easier than to raise difficulties in connection with this subject, derived from the divine nature of Christ. But it should suffice us to recollect that we are ignorant of the manner in which the two natures unite in Christ; and we know, in point of fact, that throughout His whole life the divine nature did not prevent the human from feeling the trials and vicissitudes, and anguish and distress, incident to the present life; and, indeed, who does not see that, if such had been the case, the very purpose of the incarnation would have been defeated?

Having thus adverted to the Saviour's prayer of agony, the apostle next brings into view the answer which it received: *καὶ εἰσακουσθεὶς ἀπὸ τῆς εὐλαβείας*. Interpreters of Scripture are very much divided respecting the meaning of this clause: the ground of difference lies mainly in the word *εὐλαβείας*, which has two different significations. It denotes either religious fear, reverence, or the dread of some calamity. That both these significations belong to the word in classic authors, has been placed beyond all doubt by the numerous examples which have been collected by Wetstein and others; and that the LXX. employ the word in the sense of fear as well as in the sense of reverence, is clear from the fact that they use it to translate יראה and ירא (Prov. xii. 25; Ezek. iv. 16; Isa. lvii. 11). Two different views, accordingly, have been taken of the meaning of this clause: the Vulgate, followed by a large number of interpreters, translating it, "exauditus pro sua reverentia;" and the Italic, followed by as large a number perhaps on the other, taking it

to mean, "exauditus a metu vel exauditus et liberatus ab illo timore." The former interpretation was the most prevalent among the Greek and Latin fathers; the latter has been most in favour in modern times. The question, therefore, now comes to be, Which interpretation is most suitable to the construction of the words? And if this inquiry still leaves us in doubt, we must next consider which is most suitable to the scope of the passage. Against the first interpretation, it might be objected that not *ἀπό*, but *διά*, was to be expected in such a connection: *διὰ τὴν εὐλαβείαν*. But examples are not awanting in other places of the same use of *ἀπό*, as Acts xx. 9, *κατενεχθεὶς ἀπὸ τοῦ ὕπνου*; and Matt. xxviii. 4, *ἀπὸ τοῦ φόβου ἐσείσθησαν*. Tholuck regards the want of *αὐτοῦ* after *εὐλαβείαν* as unfavourable to the sense of piety; and indeed he attaches some importance to the fact that the epithet *εὐλαβὴς* in the sense of pious is never applied to the Saviour. According to the other interpretation, though *ἀπὸ τῆς εὐλαβείας* most properly means *from the fear*, yet there must be supposed an ellipse after *εἰσακουσθείς*, having been heard, and delivered from the fear. But it may be replied that this very ellipse is by no means uncommon in the Hebrew and in the Septuagint; and, in fact, it is accompanied with signal beauty and force, being founded upon the principle, that for God to give ear to a prayer (*εἰσακούειν*) is the same thing as to grant the blessing sought, there being no possible obstacle which can interfere between the purpose of God and its actual accomplishment. In Job xxxv. 12 we find this expression, וְלֹא יַעֲנֶה מִפְּנֵי גְאוֹן רָעִים; which the Septuagint renders thus: *καὶ οὐ μὴ εἰσακούσῃ ἀπὸ ὕβρεως πονηρῶν*,—an exact parallel to our text. In Ps. cxviii. 5 we find this expression, "I called upon the Lord in distress, מִן־הַמֵּצַר קָרָאתִי יָהּ;" which the LXX. render, *καὶ ἐπήκουσέ με εἰς πλατυσμόν*, "heard me, into a large place," or as our translators, "heard, and set me," etc. And Ps. xxii. 22 is appealed to by all the interpreters: וּמִקַּרְנֵי רֵמִים עֲנִיתָנִי, which the LXX. have thrown into utter confusion by making עֲנִיתָנִי a noun, *τὴν ταπείνωσίν μου*; the meaning plainly is, "Hear me," that is, deliver me, "from the horns of the unicorn," or rather bubalus, buffalo (Gesenius). In accordance with these examples, *εἰσακουσθεὶς ἀπὸ τῆς εὐλαβείας* may with great propriety and force be rendered: being delivered from the fear. And this

sense, I am fully persuaded, is most suitable to the scope of the passage, and to the facts of the history; for though "heard on account of his piety" be a scriptural sentiment, and exactly parallel to John ix. 31, *ἁμαρτωλῶν ὁ Θεὸς οὐκ ἀκούει, ἀλλ' ἐάν τις θεοσεβὴς ᾖ*, yet in this passage it seems to place the apostle in opposition to the Evangelists. The prayer of our Lord was this, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;" but the cup did not pass from Him: He drained it to the very dregs. Now, if you adopt the other rendering, "delivered from the fear," the extent is defined to which the prayer was answered; and that extent exactly harmonizes with the history: for we know that after Jesus prayed, "O my Father," etc., an angel appeared unto Him, strengthening Him; and His agony subsided, and He stepped forth with all His wonted calmness and dignity to His enemies, and said, "I am He! If ye seek me, let these go their way." And as in the scenes of Gethsemane we thus find what corresponds to the apostle's language, so something similar is presented to us upon the cross; for if at one period He exclaimed, in the overwhelming agony of His soul, "My God, my God," etc., and again uttered a piercing cry, we know that at the last (Luke xxiii. 46) He breathed out His soul in confiding prayer to God, and said, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit;" and having said thus, He gave up the ghost. And here it may be observed, that since the apostle's description of the answer to Christ's prayers finds a counterpart both in the scenes of Gethsemane and of Calvary, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the prayers and the supplications, the strong crying and tears, mentioned in the preceding clause, were designed to refer to both scenes of sorrow. Their reference, at all events, to the agony in the garden is undoubted.

What we have already considered, are the subordinate propositions participially expressed of this very striking period. The main proposition now comes before us, consisting of two members, which describe the results of what has gone before: *ἔμαθεν ἀφ' ὧν ἔπαθε τὴν ὑπακοήν, καὶ ἐγένετο*, etc. These clauses seem to justify the reference which we suppose to be made in the preceding clauses to the scenes of the cross as well as to the scene of the garden; for the things which He suffered are manifestly those in connection with which He

prayed; and these things doubtless included the agonizing pangs of Calvary, for they are described as the procuring cause of salvation.

Christ, says the apostle, learned obedience from His sufferings. That we must attach an idea to these words considerably different from what we should do if they related to a reclaimed sinner, is abundantly manifest. We are sometimes led by the trials and afflictions of life to bethink ourselves of our folly, to forsake our evil courses, and to supplicate the guiding grace of God. But Christ at no period committed sin: He always obeyed the laws of God, He delighted to do His Father's will; and no case can be pointed out in which He swerved one hair-breadth from the path of duty. Even when He prayed, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me," His prayer or entreaty was coupled with this condition, "Nevertheless, not my will, but Thine be done," which undoubtedly was a perfectly sinless prayer. Shutting out, therefore, from the words before us every idea which is incompatible with the known character of Christ, we must suppose their meaning to be, that He acquired the actual experience of what it is to obey in circumstances of overwhelming distress. A great work had been entrusted to Him by His Father: one difficulty after another rose up to oppose Him; unspeakable sufferings were accumulated upon His head near the close. His heart was overwhelmed with agony at the prospect, but He never once wavered in His purpose to obey God. With perfect resignation He met the hour and the power of darkness, and thus was His obedience tried to the very uttermost; and by sore experience He learned what it is to obey: how bitter, how trying, when suffering and death lie in the path of duty. And what heightens the marvel, as the apostle's language suggests, the agonizing sorrows of Calvary were heaped upon Him though He were a Son (*καίπερ ὢν υἱός*), that is, as has already been declared, the brightness of His Father's glory, and the express image of His person. Yes, He existed in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God; and yet, in obedience to His Father's will, He made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became

obedient to death, even the death of the cross. This is the obedience most marvellous and unparalleled to which our text refers.

And why, it may be asked, when the subject is viewed from another point, should a Father full of goodness and love have subjected His obedient and faithful Son to sufferings so intense? Why should He have laid upon Him a command which entailed such fearful woes? Every answer which can be given to these questions, short of admitting the propitiatory character of Christ's death, leaves the subject involved in inextricable mystery. The key to the true meaning of the cross, to the agony of its anticipation, the actual endurance of its fearful woes, and the piercing cry which broke from the lips of the sufferer, must be sought in the unprecedented object which the Saviour's death was designed to accomplish. His sufferings were not like the sufferings of other men. His death was not the ordinary lot of mortality. He was a propitiatory sacrifice laid upon the altar of divine justice for guilty man. He was bearing our sins when He was nailed to the accursed tree, and enduring in our room the expression of that displeasure which God ever testifies against transgressors of His law. Having taken our cause into His hands, it was necessary that the storm which had mustered its fury for us should descend upon His head; and in consequence, that sweet communion which from eternity had existed between Him and His Father, was now for a time suspended. Heaven frowned upon Him, and it was the consciousness of this dread deprivation which wrung from His lips the agonizing cry upon the cross. It was the hiding of His Father's countenance which proved the bitterest ingredient in the cup of woe the Saviour was required to drink; a calamity, an anguish, of whose nature we can form no conception at all, but respecting which we are capable of knowing this alone, that it was something more dreadful by far than the most dreadful of all human woes.

The supposition, moreover, that Christ by His death was making atonement for sin, and was therefore bearing other woes than those which met the eye, is the only one which satisfactorily accounts for His conduct during the closing scenes of His life. The mere bodily sufferings which He endured were not

greater than thousands had borne before Him, and thousands have since endured, with unshaken firmness. There have been martyrs who have gloried in tribulation, who have triumphed in the flames, whose dying words have been words of joy and rapture, whose souls have been upheld by the perfect assurance that the eye of Heaven beheld them with complacency. And yet Jesus, with whom it would be impiety to compare the worthiest martyr that ever perished at a stake; Jesus, whose life had been one continued, unbroken series of pure and holy and virtuous deeds; Jesus, whose bosom had ever glowed with love to God, and been the home of benevolence and kindness and charity,—this Jesus was left in darkness during the agony of His last moments,—this Jesus felt no raptures of holy joy under the pressure of His troubles,—this Jesus trembled at the approach of death, overwhelmed by the greatness of His woe. What is the reason of this striking difference, this strange anomaly? Oh, the reason lies in the sacrificial character of His death. When the dart of death entered the breast of the martyrs, its sting was taken out; but when it entered the soul of Jesus, it was poisoned with the sins of a guilty world. He bore the woes of others. "He was wounded" for others. The Lord of hosts had said to the sword of avenging justice, "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow: smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered" (Zech. xiii. 7).

The account we have given of the peculiar woes which agonized the breast of Jesus during the last dark scene of His life, is justified by the description which immediately follows of their glorious results: *καὶ τελειωθείς, ἐγένετο τοῖς ὑπακούουσιν αὐτῷ πᾶσιν αἴτιος σωτηρίας αἰωνίου.*

Τελειωθεὶς describes the effect produced in the person of Christ Himself by His sufferings and agony, and obedience unto death. The general idea which the word expresses at all times is to make perfect, to complete, to conduct to an intended end; but the nature of the perfection in any particular case depends, of course, upon the nature of the subject. In some cases it denotes the acquisition of consummate glory, and is employed to describe the elevation of the saints to the exalted blessedness of heaven, as in chap. xi. 40, xii. 23. At other times it is used

to indicate the completion of an internal process, as when believers are said to be made perfect in holiness or love, of which you have a clear example in 1 John iv. 17, 18. In this last sense it is of course inapplicable to Christ, who never needed any process of moral improvement. Still, however, it may be doubted whether, in the passage before us, the word denotes Christ's exaltation to the right hand of God, or whether it does not rather describe the completion of His priestly work, the acquisition of full ability to sympathize with the suffering, for that He Himself hath suffered, being tried,—of the full power of bestowing pardon in consequence of His all-perfect sacrifice. In fact, the word seems to describe not the reward of Christ's sufferings in His own personal elevation, but the virtue of them as enabling Him to give complete deliverance to others. This latter idea appears to me best to suit the train of thought; for it is not the Saviour's ascension the apostle is describing, but the termination of His sufferings, and His consequent power of giving salvation. Being by His sufferings made complete as a Saviour, He became, etc. Michaelis understands the word to denote here *consecrated;* but though this sense is frequent in the Septuagint, yet it does not seem so suitable to the apostle's argument: for consecration to an office precedes the discharge of its functions, whereas the death of Christ was the principal part of His priestly work. It is not consecration, therefore, that is meant, but the actual possession of full power to give pardon.

And accordingly we are informed that, in consequence of the presentation and acceptance of Christ's perfect oblation, He became *αἴτιος σωτηρίας αἰωνίου*—the author, the efficient cause, of eternal salvation,—equivalent, as Theophylact remarks, to *ἀρχηγὸν τῆς σωτηρίας* in chap. ii. 10.

In defining those who actually receive salvation through Christ, we must beware of giving too restricted a meaning to *ὑπακούουσιν.* We are not to suppose that it refers to *obedience,* as distinguished from *faith.* On the contrary, *faith* is a principal part of the obedience we are to give to the gospel. When we are informed by the sacred historian that a great company of the priests became obedient to the faith (Acts vi. 7), *πολύς τε ὄχλος ἱερέων ὑπήκουον τῇ πίστει,* the meaning of course is,

that they received the truth, that they believed in Christ. *Τοῖς ὑπακούουσιν* in the passage before us is equivalent to, is explained by (Rom. i. 16), *δύναμις γὰρ Θεοῦ ἐστὶν εἰς σωτηρίαν παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι.*

The 10th verse stands in apposition to the subject of the 9th: *προσαγορευθεὶς ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀρχιερεὺς κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισεδέκ.* The priestly work of Christ having been briefly described, and the eternal salvation also adverted to which He bestows upon sinners, the idea of His divine appointment to this office—a point already established—forms a natural close to the sentence, as accounting for these transcendent results.

Προσαγορευθεὶς occurs in no other part of the New Testament: it is to be found, however, repeatedly in the Septuagint; and it means named, styled, announced. Some conceive that it embodies the additional idea expressed by our word *called*, in the sense of *invited;* but from the examples which occur in the Septuagint, it seems plain that "named" or "styled" expresses its full meaning. But in the case of a title bestowed by God, *ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ*, the one expression substantially includes what is indicated by the other.

The apostle has now, from vers. 4–10 inclusive, proved not only that, like Aaron, Christ was divinely appointed to the office of the priesthood, but also that His priestly dignity was of a loftier order—even the order of Melchizedek. And he so constructs his argument, that the paragraph which contains it ends with the mention of Melchizedek's name. This topic, therefore, is the next which we should expect to come under review, that, from the discussion of the nature and dignity of Melchizedek's priesthood, arguments might be evolved illustrative of the nature and dignity of Christ's. But these important discussions are postponed for a time. And from the mention of Melchizedek's name, the apostle, adverting to the difficulties of the subject, takes occasion to reprove the Hebrews for their slow progress in Christian knowledge; and exhorts them to employ the full energies of their minds, that they may not simply apprehend the first principles of religion, but may learn those too which are more advanced and recondite. The hortatory, and in the main objurgatory, digression continues through the remainder of this chapter, and the whole of the next; after

which the apostle proceeds in chap. vii. to the discussion of Melchizedek's order of priesthood.

Περὶ οὗ πολὺς ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος καὶ δυσερμήνευτος λέγειν, ἐπεὶ νωθροὶ γεγόνατε ταῖς ἀκοαῖς. It has been doubted whether *οὗ* should be regarded as masculine or neuter, that is, whether it refers to the person spoken of, or to the subject, *πράγματος* being understood. In either view, the general sense of the passage remains unaffected; but it seems most natural to make the relative refer to Melchizedek, whose name immediately precedes it.

Λέγειν has been regarded by many as superfluous, the idea being, it is said, sufficiently expressed by *λόγος*. But though the absence of *λέγειν* would not destroy the sense of the passage, yet doubtless its presence effects a more complete enunciation of the thought. *Λόγος* seems to refer to the train of ideas, the argument or logic as existing in the apostle's mind, and *λέγειν* to the utterance of it: concerning whom I have much argument to expound, or much and difficult discourse to address to you. A phrase of the very same kind is quoted by Ernesti from Lysias, in *Pancleonem*, 534, 25, *ὅσα, μὲν οὖν αὐτόθι ἐῤῥήθη, πολὺς ἂν εἴη μοι λόγος διηγεῖσθαι*, which both illustrates the meaning of the apostle, and shows that his language is quite classic. Tholuck and many others suppose that *λέγειν* is connected with *δυσερμήνευτος*, difficult to expound; and that the apostle therefore refers, not to the difficulty the hearers would have in understanding, but to the difficulty he himself would have in explaining his sentiments—not to the *interpretatio lectoris*, but to the *elocutio auctoris*. And doubtless *ἑρμηνεία* does frequently denote, in classic Greek, the utterance of one's thoughts, the exposition of one's state of mind, as well as the interpretation of a written document; but the whole complexion of the passage before us makes it plain, that the apostle does not refer to any difficulty he felt in discussing the subject. The reason subjoined, "seeing ye are dull of hearing," gave good ground for fearing that they might be unable to comprehend what was stated, but contains not the shadow of a reason for supposing that Paul himself experienced any difficulty. The apostle was guided by the Holy Ghost to a full understanding of all those truths which it was necessary to unfold to the church.

The state of the Hebrews, by which they were prevented from fully comprehending the apostle's arguments, is described by the phrase *νωθροὶ γεγόνατε ταῖς ἀκοαῖς*. *Ἀκοὴ* literally denotes hearing with the external ear; but it is also employed tropically to denote hearing with the ear of the mind or understanding. The verb *ἀκούω*, in like manner, is often employed in the same sense as *μανθάνω*, to learn: "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." The whole phrase, therefore, *νωθροὶ ταῖς ἀκοαῖς*, means slow of spiritual apprehension, sluggish in mind; and *γεγόνατε* intimates that this was a state into which they had fallen, after having once occupied a different position. They had seen other days, and their long enjoyment of Christian privileges should have conducted them to very high spiritual attainments. *Γεγόνατε*, *ye have become*, and not *ye are*.

That it was through their own negligence they had fallen, the apostle next affirms, with the view of rousing them to a sense both of their danger and of their duty: *καὶ γὰρ ὀφείλοντες εἶναι διδάσκαλοι διὰ τὸν χρόνον, πάλιν χρείαν ἔχετε τοῦ διδάσκειν ὑμᾶς τίνα τὰ στοιχεῖα τῆς ἀρχῆς τῶν λογίων τοῦ Θεοῦ*. The Hebrews had long known the gospel of Christ. Many of them had received their religious instructions from the lips of the Saviour Himself, and all of them had listened to the preaching of more or fewer of the apostles. In consequence of these ample and long-continued opportunities, they ought now (*διὰ τὸν χρόνον*, considering the time) to have made such acquisitions in religious knowledge as to be fitted to act the part of teachers to others. But so far was this from being the case, that they were again themselves reduced to the position of needing instruction; not merely in the more difficult doctrines of religion, but in the simplest principles of revealed truth. And that he may touch the Hebrews the more nearly, and fill them with the greater shame, he does not merely write *στοιχεῖα*, but *στοιχεῖα τῆς ἀρχῆς*; which conveys the idea of the very first and simplest principles, the alphabet of revealed religion. It has been doubted whether *τινὰ* be the accusative singular in connection with *διδάσκειν*, so as to mean, *that some one teach you;* or the nominative plural neuter, agreeing with *τὰ στοιχεῖα*, so as to mean, "what are the first principles of religion." In this second view

Tholuck says διδάσκειν must be translated passively; and, indeed, Griesbach quotes a number of MSS. that exhibit διδάσκεσθαι: but διδάσκειν doubtless is the true reading; and instead of giving it a passive rendering, it seems better to suppose an ellipse of the accusative. Tholuck quotes two passages (from 1 Thess. iv. 9, v. 1) to prove that the infinitive active and infinitive passive are sometimes interchanged: οὐ χρείαν ἔχετε γράφειν ὑμῖν—οὐ χρείαν ἔχετε ὑμῖν γράφεσθαι. But though these phrases undoubtedly convey the same idea, yet the idea is differently brought out; and it by no means follows that the two infinitives have precisely the same force. In the one case, the accusative of a person must be understood: Ye have no need (με) that I write to you. In the other case, the accusative of a thing must be supplied: Ye have no need that *it* be written unto you. And on the same principle, διδάσκειν must be translated actively, and have the accusative of a person before it (με), as in the example quoted from Thessalonians, if τίνα be made to agree with στοιχεῖα: Ye have need that I teach you what, etc. After all, however, it seems to me much more natural to regard τινὰ as the accusative singular in connection with διδάσκειν: that some one teach you the first principles, etc. In this way there is no ellipse to be supplied; the contrast between διδάσκαλοι and διδάσκειν is better preserved; and certainly τὰ στοιχεῖα has no need of τίνα. The supposition of Bengelius, that τίνα was added to τὰ στοιχεῖα to indicate that the Hebrews had not only lost all accurate knowledge of the first principles, but did not even know what they were, what their names were, is extravagant. The English version seems to combine both methods of rendering this verse, translating τίνα twice: that *one* teach you *which* be the first principles.

Λογίων τοῦ Θεοῦ denotes statements proceeding from God—divine communications. The diminutive λόγιον, even in classic Greek, is restricted to the signification of oracle or divine response,—a restriction which in all probability originated in the fact that oracles were generally brief. It has been doubted whether the phrase in this passage be restricted to the Old Testament, or applied to the whole of the sacred oracles; and Rom. iii. 2 has been appealed to in support of the former idea, where it undoubtedly means only the Old Testament: "chiefly that

unto them were committed the oracles of God." But the restriction in this passage arises from the fact that, at the time referred to, the Old Testament only was in existence. The phrase in itself is fitted to describe any divine communications; and there can be no reasonable doubt, that in the place we are considering it denotes both portions of God's word. This is plain from the account given, at the beginning of the next chapter, of the nature of the first principles to which the apostle is referring. By styling the instructions which were given to the church *λόγια τοῦ Θεοῦ*, the apostle undoubtedly claims inspiration for the writings of himself and his associates; and the term *λόγια*, words, compact statements, rather favours the idea of verbal inspiration. An oracle is something that must be rehearsed with perfect accuracy.

The present weakly and backward state of the Hebrew Christians, the apostle illustrates by a reference to the condition of children, and to the kind of fare which is suitable for them: they needed milk for their nourishment, they were unable to digest strong solid food. This figure is of frequent occurrence; and it very strikingly exhibits the difference between Christians of greater and Christians of less experience. The same figure is to be found in profane authors, of which a very striking example is quoted by Raphelius from Arrian, which corresponds very closely to the language of the apostle: *οὐ θέλεις ἤδη, ὡς τὰ παιδία ἀπογαλακτισθῆναι, καὶ ἅπτεσθαι στερεᾶς τροφῆς*. The Hebrews are placed by the apostle among those who are only capable of receiving milk; and what attaches criminality to their situation, is the fact that they had brought themselves into this state: *γεγόνατε*—and ye have become.

Still employing the same figure, the apostle goes on to say: *πᾶς γὰρ ὁ μετέχων γάλακτος, ἄπειρος λόγου δικαιοσύνης· νήπιος γάρ ἐστιν*. There is very considerable difficulty in this verse. The meaning of the first clause, indeed, is sufficiently obvious: *πᾶς γὰρ ὁ μετέχων γάλακτος*, every one who partaketh of milk, or feedeth upon milk, denotes every one who is only capable of receiving the simplest religious instruction, every one whose attention is still confined to the rudiments of religious knowledge. Of every such person it is said that he is *ἄπειρος λόγου δικαιοσύνης*. What does *λόγου δικαιοσύνης* mean?

Macknight and others suppose that this phrase means the gospel, as distinguished from the Mosaic institutions; and accordingly they interpret γάλακτος as meaning the letter of the ancient revelations. Certainly the Old Testament and the New might not inaptly be exhibited as bearing to each other the relation of milk and strong meat. But this is not the contrast which the apostle is making; for he is not comparing the infancy of the church with the maturity of the church, but the infancy of individual Christians with the maturity of other Christians. And the enumeration, accordingly, which he gives of first principles, in the beginning of the following chapter—that is, of what he includes under the metaphor of milk—is by no means confined to ideas developed only in the Old Testament, but includes several that are peculiar to the gospel.

One is naturally led to suppose, that as γάλακτος and στερεᾶς τροφῆς are opposed to each other in the preceding verse, there must be the same opposition in the verse before us; for it is the same truth which the apostle is illustrating. Accordingly it has been argued, and with great apparent justice, that λόγου δικαιοσύνης must be regarded as expressing literally the very same idea which στερεᾶς τροφῆς had been employed to indicate tropically. But στερεᾶς τροφῆς undoubtedly meant the more difficult doctrines of religion, the full form of Christian doctrine, the complete system, as distinguished from mere rudiments or first principles. This, therefore, it is said, must be the meaning of λόγου δικαιοσύνης; and attempts have been made to show that it may bear this interpretation. It is supposed that λόγου δικαιοσύνης is a Hebraism for λόγου δικαίου; and δίκαιος, it is allowed, does sometimes mean *complete, perfect, finished in all its parts;* and λόγου δικαίου might therefore very properly denote complete doctrine of Christianity, the whole system (see Ernesti, 424).

There is considerable force in these reasons, and yet there is much ground for hesitation. The chief objection which I feel to this interpretation is, not only that the noun δικαιοσύνη itself is never employed in the manner here supposed, but also that in the writings of Paul it is so currently used to denote the specific idea of righteousness or justification, that if he had meant here to express so different an idea, he would scarcely

have used this word: he would rather have chosen some different expression, or at least would have annexed to δικαιοσύνη some modifying clause. When he does speak of perfect wisdom, complete doctrine, as in 1 Cor. ii. 6, he styles it σοφίαν ἐν τοῖς τελείοις, σοφία Θεοῦ. In Paul's mouth especially, one does feel constrained to attach the idea of righteousness or justification to δικαιοσύνη. The word occurs only six times in the Epistle to the Hebrews; but in every one of these cases it denotes either personal righteousness, or the gospel idea of justification, as in chap. xi. 7.

But then it is alleged that the mention of justification, or even of the more general idea of righteousness, is in no way suited to the scope of the apostle's discourse. It is not any particular doctrine one expects him to describe, as the counterpart of what he means by milk, but difficulties in general, or doctrines fitted for the maturest minds. Perhaps, however, the apostle is to be regarded as putting the species for the genus—as giving an example of a doctrine which he comprehended under the metaphorical expression στερεᾶς τροφῆς. And certainly there are difficulties connected with the doctrine of justification by faith, which claim for it a place beyond the mere milk of Christian instruction; and the apostle was naturally led to the mention of this doctrine, as an illustration of what he meant by the priesthood of Christ which he has been discussing. The priesthood is the great subject of which he is discoursing: it is the priesthood which gives rise to the rebuke he is administering to the Hebrews: it must have been the priesthood, therefore, which Paul had in view as a difficult subject, when he began to speak of milk and strong meat. And accordingly in the following chapter he does proceed, after stating that he intended to pass over certain simple principles, to discuss at great length the priesthood of Christ, which he styles "going on to perfection." But is not righteousness the great matter about which priesthood is concerned? Is not justification the great blessing which priesthood is designed to secure? Does not Christ sprinkle upon us the blood of His sacrifice, to purge our consciences from the defilement of sin? The doctrine of righteousness, therefore, or of justification, does seem pertinent enough to the scope of the apostle's discourse; and as the words λόγου

δικαιοσύνης most naturally bear this sense, considered in themselves, it seems to be the one which we must adopt. Every one that is weak useth only milk,—he is acquainted only with the rudiments of religion, is unskilled in the great doctrine of righteousness, the doctrine of the priesthood, whose object it is to make us righteous or to give us justification: νήπιος γάρ ἐστιν, for he is a babe, a babe in Christian knowledge, and does not yet comprehend the distinguishing features of the Christian system.

As the 13th verse gives a description of those who are weak and undisciplined, so the 14th exhibits to our view those who are strong and well instructed in the faith: τελείων δέ ἐστιν ἡ στερεὰ τροφή, τῶν διὰ τὴν ἕξιν τὰ αἰσθητήρια γεγυμνασμένα ἐχόντων πρὸς διάκρισιν καλοῦ τε καὶ κακοῦ. The meaning of this verse is sufficiently plain. As νήπιος literally denotes a babe, but tropically an uninstructed person, so τέλειος literally denotes a full-grown man, but tropically a person of mature and well-furnished mind. The opposition of these words in their tropical applications is of very frequent occurrence in the writings of Paul (1 Cor. xiv. 20, etc.). The adult uses strong and solid food, and so the man of cultivated mind readily apprehends the more deep and intricate truths. Conformably to the tropical signification of τελείων and στερεᾶς τροφῆς, αἰσθητήρια also, which literally denotes the organs of perception, τὰ μέλη δι' ὧν αἰσθανόμεθα, the senses, must be understood as denoting the spiritual senses, the perceptions, or rather faculties of the mind. These inward senses in the τέλειοι, the apostle tells us, are well exercised: διὰ τὴν ἕξιν γεγυμνασμένα, by habit exercised. Being frequently employed in meditating upon religious subjects, the faculties become greatly sharpened, and the mind sees at a glance the mutual dependence of the various parts of the system. Habituated to the comparison of different ideas, to the examination of evidence, to the separation of the false from the true, advanced Christians acquire a nice sense of discrimination, and may be expected, in general, to form a sound judgment, when they turn their minds to any point. This result of long-continued spiritual training the apostle describes, not in tropical language, but in terms appropriate to the mind: πρὸς διάκρισιν καλοῦ τε καὶ κακοῦ. These words the circum-

stances of the case require us to regard as referring not so much to the distinction between good and bad in conduct, as to the distinction between good and bad in doctrine, the true and the false. The phrase seems borrowed, not from the common Greek expression *τὸ καλὸν καὶ τὸ κακόν*, but from the Hebrew אשר לא ידע טוב ורע, which is employed (Deut. i. 39 ; Isa. vii. 15, 16) to denote a person rude, unskilled, inexperienced.

CHAPTER VI.

THE rebuke which the apostle has given to the Hebrews for their neglect of the doctrines of the gospel, and their slow progress in religious knowledge, he makes the ground of an admonition to bestir themselves to greater assiduity, and of a warning to beware of the fearful gulf into which continued negligence might plunge them. This topic occupies the first eight verses of the sixth chapter.

Διὸ ἀφέντες τὸν τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ λόγον, ἐπὶ τὴν τελειότητα φερώμεθα.

It has been made a question whether the apostle should here be viewed, while using the plural, as stating his own purpose of leaving the elementary principles of Christianity, and going on to the discussion of more difficult and recondite truths; or whether he is not rather exhorting the Hebrews, though by a common form of speech he includes himself among them, to make an effort to advance in Christian knowledge and experience. In defence of the former view *ἀφέντες* is appealed to the verb being frequently applied to a speaker or writer, when he omits certain points, and proceeds at once to the consideration of others: as in Demosthenes, *πάντα τὰ ἄλλα ἀφείς, ἃ πάντες ὑμεῖς ἴστε, ἐρῶ* (Bleek, 144). It is equally true, however, that this verb is just as applicable to an agent when he ceases to busy himself with one occupation for the purpose of applying his undivided energies to another, as in Xenophon, *καὶ ἀφεὶς ὃ ἔμελλε ποιεῖν, τὸ κελευόμενον ἔπραττεν* (Bleek, 145). Again, it is said that *θεμέλιον καταβαλλόμενοι*, "laying the foundation," are words peculiarly applicable to a teacher. The most powerful argument, perhaps, in favour of the first view is

that grounded by De Wette upon the mention of baptism, ver. 2. As this ordinance only needs to be administered once, there could hardly be occasion to admonish Christians not to lay the foundation again in respect of it, though a teacher might or might not, as he saw cause, make it the subject of repeated discourse. But perhaps it is a sufficient answer, that defective Christians, like those whom the apostle was addressing, might content themselves with the mere fact of being baptized, attaching undue importance to it; and this might be described as a working away at the foundation, without doing anything to raise the superstructure. And ver. 3 certainly seems to be one where the apostle speaks of something which he himself designs to do. Still there are considerations which make it obvious that it is not the progress of the discussion which this section refers to, but rather the efforts which the Hebrews should make, so as no longer to continue babes, but to rise to the condition of mature Christians. This is the idea undoubtedly suggested by the rebuke which closes the preceding chapter, and διὸ serves the purpose of connecting the two thoughts; whereas, according to the other view, the conjunction would have no force: for how could the apostle say, Because ye are babes, and can only digest milk, therefore I will not give you milk, but proceed to lay strong meat before you? But while censuring them for their indolence and slow progress, he might with the utmost propriety admonish them to put forth their powers and press on to perfection. So much is the force of this reason felt by Schlichting, that he has recourse to an unnatural method of making διὸ refer, not to the close of the preceding chapter, but to the eleventh verse. It is obvious, too, that φερώμεθα does not point so naturally to a proposed line of argument, as to efforts to be made upon a scene of action. And τελειότητα also rather describes the condition of the τέλειοι mentioned in chap. v. 14, than profound or recondite doctrines. It does not mean strong meat, but the condition of those who are capable of receiving strong meat. The most decisive argument, however, is furnished by the dreadful warning against apostasy exhibited in vers. 4-8; which would have no proper ground laid for it in a mere statement of the apostle, that he designed to consider some of the more difficult doctrines of the gospel, but which is

the natural and appropriate enforcement of an admonition to make efforts after progress.

Delitzsch endeavours to unite both views. He considers it quite beyond question that the words ἐπὶ τὴν τελειότητα φερώμεθα must refer mainly to the Hebrews, with inclusion of the apostle; but he argues that the participles ἀφέντες and καταβαλλόμενοι, though grammatically connected with φερώμεθα, refer mainly to the apostle himself. The grounds indicated for this singular opinion are, that though a teacher may consistently enough speak of leaving first principles, in the sense of not dwelling upon them; yet, if hearers were admonished to do so, there might be danger of their ceasing to recognise the inseparable connection between foundation and superstructure, between commencement and progress. But it is a sufficient reply to this argument, that leaving first principles does not in the case of the reader, any more than in the case of the teacher, mean deserting or disowning them. It only means not continuing exclusively occupied with them, while still they remain in the mind as objects of faith; and frequent reference may be made to them, with the view of testing more recondite principles, and tracing the connection between them. Calvin long ago anticipated this objection, and his words place the subject in a clear light: "Jubet autem omitti ejusmodi rudimenta, non quod eorum oblivisci unquam debeant fideles, sed quia in illis minime est hærendum. Quod melius patet ex fundamenti similitudine, quæ mox sequitur. Nam in exstruenda domo nunquam a fundamento discedere oportet; in eo tamen jaciendo semper laborare ridiculum est."

The phrase τὸν τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ λόγον corresponds in sense to the words in chap. v. 12, τὰ στοιχεῖα τῆς ἀρχῆς τῶν λογίων τοῦ Θεοῦ: they both designate the first principles of the Christian religion, what the apostle has tropically described as the milk of the word. Τῆς ἀρχῆς stands in government with λόγον, and, as is frequently the case with the Hebrew construct state, it serves nearly the same purpose as an adjective—the word of the beginning, that is, the word wherewith a beginning is made, the commencing or rudimentary doctrine. Then the genitive τοῦ Χριστοῦ is dependent upon the whole phrase τὸν τῆς ἀρχῆς λόγον, and designates the object regarding which the doctrine treats, the elementary doctrine of Christ, the first

principles of Christianity. Theophylact brings out the sense exceedingly well.

Those who understand the apostle as stating his own purpose with regard to the course of his argument, find it requisite to make τελειότης mean here complete doctrine, the more recondite principles of Christianity; and Grotius accordingly explains it of the true sense of Old Testament types, and Carpzov of the doctrine of Melchizedek's priesthood. But the connection of this verse with the conclusion of the foregoing chapter—where the νήπιοι and the τέλειοι, babes and full-grown, are contrasted with one another—makes it obvious that τελειότης must rather mean the condition or state of the τέλειοι, to which the Hebrews are exhorted to press forward. Still it remains a question whether the apostle has in view the state of the τέλειοι simply with respect to knowledge, or their state also with respect to moral and spiritual culture. Lunëmann takes the former view, on the ground that it is doctrine of which the apostle has been speaking. This is quite true. But it is also true, that in the last verse of the preceding chapter the τέλειοι are described as persons who, by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil—καλοῦ τε καὶ κακοῦ. Therefore the perfection spoken of and exhibited as an object of eager effort, must mean maturity in the Christian life, not simply as consisting in extended knowledge, but also as embracing a corresponding development of moral and religious feelings. We are never to pursue knowledge as a separate end, but are always in the very act of acquiring it to make it subservient to spiritual culture. And this view of the import of τελειότης here makes it bear very nearly the same meaning which it has in the only other passage of the New Testament where it occurs, viz. Col. iii. 14, τὴν ἀγάπην ἥτις ἐστὶ σύνδεσμος τῆς τελειότητος. Or if there be any difference between the use of the word in the two places, all that can be said is, that in Hebrews it looks more to the side of knowledge, though without exclusion of the influence knowledge should exert, while in Colossians it looks more to the side of spiritual feelings.

Now, advancement from the state of the νήπιοι to that of the τέλειοι, ought to be an object of earnest desire, and should call forth the most strenuous efforts. It is not with listless

steps we are to advance: it is not with torpid minds we are to study the sacred oracles. This idea is obviously expressed by the word φερώμεθα, which means more than is brought out in the English version, *let us go on*. As the middle voice of φέρω, it denotes, let us carry ourselves, let us make an effort, let us be borne forward, let us hasten on to perfection. The idea of rushing, of haste, of impulse, is frequently connected with the verb φέρω, especially in the middle and the passive, as in Acts ii. 2, 2 Pet. i. 21; and the same is the case with the passive of the Latin word *fero*, *ferri in aliquid*, to be impelled to something. The admonition is mainly designed for the Hebrews, though it includes the apostle himself, chiefly by way of mitigating the idea of assumed superiority, but perhaps also in part, because he really felt the need of striving.

The apostle next proceeds to enumerate certain principles, which are obviously to be viewed as included under what he had formerly designated milk: μὴ πάλιν θεμέλιον καταβαλλόμενοι μετανοίας ἀπὸ νεκρῶν ἔργων, καὶ πίστεως ἐπὶ Θεόν, βαπτισμῶν διδαχῆς, ἐπιθέσεώς τε χειρῶν, ἀναστάσεώς τε νεκρῶν, καὶ κρίματος αἰωνίου. The figure is here changed; but the thing meant is manifestly the same. And both figures are beautifully and strikingly fitted to express the apostle's idea: the diet of infancy stands in a similar relation to the diet of mature years, as the laying of a foundation does to the completion of the structure. And both figures suggest a powerful argument in defence of the admonition of the apostle; for while they aptly designate first principles, they at the same time intimate, that as it would be absurd to confine one's self through life to the use of milk, as it would be foolish to be always working at the foundation of a house, without going on to the other parts of the building, so it is equally absurd to rest satisfied with a knowledge of the first and simplest principles of Christianity. We must make constant advancement, we must explore every subject which the word of God brings under our notice. We must grow in knowledge and in grace all our days.

The view given by Chrysostom of the import of μὴ πάλιν θεμέλιον καταβαλλόμενοι, seems the only one suitable to the connection of these words with διὸ ἀφέντες, as epexegetic of them. Yet Ebrard maintains, that if we take φερώμεθα as an

admonition, then μὴ καταβαλλόμενοι must mean not throwing down, not destroying the foundation. But this is a mere conceit. True, καταβάλλειν in the active does signify to overturn, to throw down; but in the middle, coupled with θεμέλιον or any similar word, it only bears the sense of laying a foundation, and stands in contrast with ἐποικοδομεῖν, rearing a superstructure. Besides, this idea is alone suitable to the scope of the passage. How can it be imagined that the apostle would ever think it necessary to admonish his readers not to demolish the foundation upon which they were building? It was most pertinent, however, when urging them to advance, to say that they ought not to continue busying themselves with the foundation. True, it was to remain, and they might repair any defects in it; but their main business was to build.

Different views have been entertained of the six principles which the apostle enumerates. Pierce, Gill, Schmid, and others, have supposed that they are Jewish principles, as distinguished from Christian; but the whole scope of the argument leads to an opposite conclusion. If the apostle had been writing to Jews who still remained hostile to Christianity, then he might have assured them that their system was merely a preparation for Christianity, and he might have exhorted them to go on from the one system to the other; but he is writing to men who have already been initiated into Christian doctrine, and have professed their faith in Christ. Tholuck, again, though he allows that the six principles are Christian principles, yet argues that they are such principles as had the greatest affinity to Jewish principles, and were on that ground selected by the apostle. But though it is true, that since the new dispensation sprang out of the old, there are many principles which are common to both, and principles also which have greater and less degrees of resemblance to one another; yet there does not seem to be any good ground, either in the nature of the particular doctrines here specified, or in the general structure of the argument, for the supposition that the six principles are a kind of Mosaico-Christian creed. On the other hand, however, there is no necessity for maintaining that these principles are so entirely peculiar to the new dispensation, that they were all utterly unknown before the advent of Christ.

This was not so. On the contrary, repentance and faith, washings and imposition of hands, were ideas familiar to the Jews; and it is obvious from the prophets, that resurrection and future judgment also were not unknown to them. But all these principles, when transplanted to the soil of Christianity, acquired enlargement and expansion, and as Christian principles they presented themselves in new connections and relations. And, of course, it was as thus developed that they were the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, which always formed a part of the first instructions communicated to new converts to Christianity.

The question has been raised, whether this enumeration of first principles is to be regarded as complete. Calvin thinks it not improbable that the apostle may be referring to some catechetical compend of Christian doctrine which might be in use in the primitive church, arranged under these heads; and we know from the fathers, that such compends were early employed as the means of training the young and inexperienced. But whatever be the case in reference to this, there is one consideration, which seems to prove that the apostle is not to be viewed as exhibiting a complete synopsis of first principles, but rather as stating a few by way of example; and that is the fact, that in other parts of his writings there are several other principles mentioned, which the apostles were in the habit of stating when they *first preached* the gospel to perishing sinners (see Tit. ii. 11; 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4; 1 Thess. i. 9, 10).

This passage has given rise to a denomination of Christians in America styled the Six-Article Christians, who maintain that the points here mentioned are the only necessary principles of Christianity. The absurdity of such an idea, and its inconsistency with the very design of the apostle's statement, are too plain to need refutation. It might as well be affirmed, that the foundation of a house is of itself sufficient to serve for a permanent residence.

The genitive *μετανοίας*, and the others that follow dependent upon *θεμέλιον*, are what Winer designates genitives of apposition, and indicate the material of which the foundation consists. It has been usual to regard all the six as equally describing doctrines; but Hofmann draws attention to the fact, that

διδαχῆς first appears in connection with the third point; and therefore concludes, that the two first points are exhibited as changes in the life, and the last four as doctrines. For a true commencement of the Christian life there must be actual repentance and faith in God, and then there must immediately follow instruction regarding baptism and the laying on of hands, regarding the resurrection and the last judgment. Doubtless there must also be instruction regarding repentance and faith; but still the new life does not begin until repentance and faith be actually exercised, though it may begin before baptism and imposition of hands, and before the knowledge of resurrection and final judgment. It thus appears, that of the six points mentioned, the first two are the most fundamental of all. Not only the knowledge of them, but the actual experience of them, is indispensable to the very existence of Christian life. Repentance and faith thus occupy here the same commanding position which is assigned to them by Paul; and the argument grounded upon this passage against the Pauline authorship of this epistle, as if it made faith a thing merely for novices, rests upon a great mistake. Schlichting argues, that as the resurrection and the last judgment are not changes yet experienced by any, but are simply points of doctrine to all, therefore the whole six principles should, for consistency, be viewed in the same light; but this reasoning overlooks the position of διδαχῆς, and arbitrarily supplies it even to μετανοίας. And thus another decisive argument emerges in favour of the view, that the apostle is not to be considered as stating his plan of discourse, but as admonishing the Hebrews to move onward to perfection.

The first thing which the apostle mentions is, θεμέλιον μετανοίας ἀπὸ νεκρῶν ἔργων. Μετάνοια denotes a change of mind, an inward and spiritual change, a change in the very centre of our being; and in the New Testament it is restricted to such a change as leads to reformation of conduct. See Campb. *Diss.* vi. part 3. Accordingly the apostle subjoins to it the words ἀπὸ νεκρῶν ἔργων. The construction is the same as in Acts viii. 22, μετανόησον ἀπὸ τῆς κακίας σου ταύτης. Chrysostom, Œcumenius, also Storr, Michaelis, and others, conceive that the dead works spoken of mean defiling works, allusion being made to the defilement contracted from the touch of a dead body; but

this explanation is far-fetched. Bleek inclines to the idea that the works meant are the ceremonial observances of the Jewish law, which were dead, as without power to impart that life which multitudes expected from them; but this view is too restricted, and is, besides, inconsistent with chap. ix. 14, where the same phrase occurs, and where it must mean immoral and sinful views and actions, as distinguished from outward and ceremonial uncleanness. All deeds and services not acceptable to God must be included in the phrase; in short, everything from which the blood of Christ cleanses. And why are the works spoken of called dead? Some say because they are such works as naturally lead to misery and death; others, because they are destitute of the living principle of love to God. Wicked works are frequently exhibited to our view in Scripture in both these aspects, and neither of them is quite sufficient to account for the application of the term. If you suppose the apostle to refer to the fact that the end of these things is death, then the cause is metonymically described in language borrowed from the effect; or if you suppose him to refer to the state of the heart, from which evil works proceed, then the effect is metonymically described in language borrowed from the cause. Upon the whole, however, the latter idea deserves the preference, because it best serves to exhibit the internal character of the works themselves, and shows the kind of change which true repentance operates. Faith is a living principle, and Christians are spiritually alive; sinners are dead in trespasses and sins, and their works are dead, unholy, uninfluenced by a regard to the divine will, and by the habitual recognition of God's law as the rule of all our actions; and this doctrine, we know, was one of the first that was preached by the apostles wherever they went. Repentance is one of the first principles of Christianity (Mark i. 15; Luke iii. 3–15; Acts ii. 38, etc.).

The second point mentioned by the apostle stands in close connection with the first, and they are exhibited as one pair. So elsewhere repentance and faith are presented in conjunction (Mark i. 15; Acts xx. 21). *Πίστεως ἐπὶ Θεόν*, faith in God, does not simply mean belief in the existence of God, but trust reposed in God,—such a belief as draws the soul to God, and leads to dependence entirely on God. And the faith here men-

tioned by the apostle doubtless contemplates God as the author of the gospel, and is to be viewed as the belief of those things which God has revealed; in short, the acceptance of the method of salvation which God's word describes. It is obvious, therefore, that here faith in God includes faith in Christ; that, in short, it necessarily embraces the belief of what God has revealed respecting His Son as the Saviour of men. Faith in Christ is inseparable from faith in God as the God of the Scripture. The one principle is essentially embodied in the other, and flows from it. So our Lord says, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me" (John xiv. 1). Such a thing as trust in God irrespectively of Christ is certainly unknown to the gospel. And this view of the extent of meaning belonging by implication to *πίστεως ἐπὶ Θεὸν* here, removes the ground of the astonishment which has often been expressed, that among the first principles of the gospel the apostle should not have mentioned faith in Christ. The absence of direct reference to this point has been urged as one of the strongest arguments for the supposition already mentioned, that it is Mosaic principles the apostle is enumerating; but the above considerations quite neutralize the force of it, and we must abide by the view that it is the first principles of Christianity which the apostle is describing. Of these, doubtless, faith in God, or the disposition to receive whatever God teaches, must be regarded as one.

The next point mentioned by the apostle is *βαπτισμῶν διδαχῆς*. This clause has given rise to much difference of opinion. Some have divided it into two parts, making *βαπτισμῶν* and *διδαχῆς* both dependent upon *θεμέλιον*, and thus augmenting the number of principles from six to seven. But the construction of the whole sentence, in which the points are obviously exhibited in analogous pairs, and every member is expressed by means of two nouns, is quite opposed to this supposition; and besides, there would necessarily attach to *διδαχῆς* an extreme indefiniteness of meaning in this case. It could only signify elementary instruction imparted before or after baptism, and thus it would be just another name for the milk of the word; and it would of course include the other points which are here exhibited as the first principles of the oracles of Christ, so that everything like logical order would disappear from the arrange-

ment. Calvin throws this and the following clause into a parenthesis, making them stand in apposition with πίστεως, and thus conceiving that they are not adduced as separate principles, but rather as the means through which confession of the other principles is made; but, beyond all reasonable doubt, the whole six phrases are similarly dependent upon θεμέλιον, and form a continuous chain of principles, first of life and then of doctrine. Βαπτισμῶν διδαχῆς, then, must be considered as forming one article.

But now arises the question, Which of the two is the governing word? Bengel, Michaelis, and Winer render the phrase "baptisms of doctrine," and suppose it designed to distinguish Christian baptism from the washings which prevailed among the Jews, described in chap. ix. 10 as βαπτισμοὶ διαφόροις. One obvious objection to this view of the phrase is, that it presents nothing sufficiently discriminative of Christian baptism. The phrase forms no proper contrast. The Jews also received instructions in connection with their washings, and no proselytes were admitted by any rite into the Jewish church, without being taught the new duties that were to devolve upon them. Delitzsch well observes, that if the object had been to characterize Christian baptism by some added noun, παλιγγενεσίας or some similar word might have been expected—baptism of regeneration. Besides, according to this view, no good reason can be assigned why βαπτισμῶν should be in the plural, seeing it would refer to Christian baptism exclusively.

Without a doubt, therefore, διδαχῆς is the governing word; and the meaning is, doctrine of baptisms, or instruction regarding baptisms. De Wette expresses himself very strongly against this view, on the ground that such an inversion of arrangement nowhere else occurs in this epistle. But it is not at all uncommon for a genitive to stand before the word which governs it; and, in fact, there is an instance in chap. ii. 4, Πνεύματος ἁγίου μερισμοῖς. And there are good reasons why βαπτισμῶν should stand first in this passage, because it is the emphatic word, just as in the case of Πνεύματος ἁγίου μερισμοῖς, which is more expressive than μερισμοῖς ἁγίου Πνεύματος. Besides, the following clauses seem to be elliptical, requiring διδαχῆς to be supplied; and therefore it stands most naturally after βαπτισμῶν, the full phrase being, βαπτισμῶν διδαχῆς, διδαχῆς χειρῶν τε ἐπιθέσεως.

But to what, then, does *βαπτισμῶν* refer? Its position after repentance and faith shows that it must point to the ordinance of Christian baptism; for the apostles were commanded to preach to the world repentance and faith, and then, on the confession of men, to baptize them. But why, then, is the plural used? Is not baptism a single ordinance? Some say it is put for the singular, as *αἱμάτων*, John i. 13, *θυσίαις*, Heb. ix. 23; but this is not satisfactory in the case before us: for there is always some idea of eminence, or some notion of plurality, underlying such substitution. Chrysostom supposes that the apostle alludes to the backward state of the Hebrews, which had well-nigh rendered their former baptism invalid, and would almost require the repetition of the ordinance; but this explanation is altogether inadmissible. Calvin alleges that the apostle alludes to the solemn rites or stated days of baptizing: "Baptismos nominat solennes ritus vel statos baptizandi dies;" but neither does this idea furnish a satisfactory explanation. With more plausibility, Grotius conceives that the apostle refers to the baptism of the soul with the Holy Ghost as well as to the baptism of the body with water; and certainly they are both explicitly mentioned, and mentioned together, in various parts of the New Testament: *ὑμεῖς δὲ βαπτισθήσεσθε ἐν Πνεύματι ἁγίῳ* (Acts i. 5, xi. 16; Matt. iii. 11).

But the probability is, that while the apostle mainly refers to Christian baptism, he yet also has in his view the other washings which prevailed among the Jews, from which it would be needful to distinguish the baptism of the gospel. And this may be the reason why he does not use the neuter noun *βάπτισμα*, which is the current designation of the ordinance of baptism in the New Testament; but the masculine form, which is applied to all kinds of washings, whether of pots or persons (Heb. ix. 10; Mark vii. 4). And doubtless, if it was found requisite to distinguish Christian baptism from Jewish washings, it would be still more necessary to point out to novices the difference between it and the baptism of John, which, although not designed to be a standing ordinance of Christianity, yet came into very close contact with the new dispensation. And, besides, it is plain from various parts of Scripture that the two baptisms existed together for some time,—the disciples of John main-

taining the dignity and authority of his institution even after they should have allowed it to fall into disuse. While Paul was passing through Greece, Apollos came to Ephesus—a man powerful in the Scriptures; and we are told that, being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John (Acts xviii. 25, see also xix. 1–7). Thus the doctrine of the two baptisms, of their relations to one another, and their differences, would unavoidably force themselves into consideration at the very first; and if this was the case even at Ephesus, much more would it be so in Judea, where the baptism of John had so extensively prevailed; and there might be no small difficulty in persuading the Jews that the earlier baptism was designed to be temporary. Being a matter of practice, too, it would be imperatively necessary that the doctrine of the two baptisms should be properly settled and taught.

In connection with *βαπτισμῶν διδαχῆς*, the apostle mentions *ἐπιθέσεως χειρῶν*. The idea that these words refer to the imposition of the priests' hands upon the head of the sin-offering on the great day of annual atonement, is quite inadmissible (Lev. xvi. 21). In the New Testament, the laying on of hands is mentioned as taking place in three different kinds of circumstances: in the case of sick persons, to restore them to health; in the case of individuals appointed to office, with the view of setting them apart to it; and in the case of baptized individuals, in order to impart to them the Holy Ghost. Now the connection of the passage seems to point to the last of these, as what the apostle has mainly in view. He uses the conjunction *τέ*, which in the New Testament is almost confined to Luke and Paul and the Epistle to the Hebrews, and which does not so much couple things together that stand upon a level, as append one thing to another, more especially when it is viewed as a result or consequence. We are informed that, when Peter and John were sent down to Samaria to visit the converts there, they "prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost (for as yet He was fallen upon none of them; only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus): then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost" (Acts viii. 15). And a statement of the same kind is also made in Acts xix. 6.

Now this rite is mentioned by the apostle among first principles, because it existed from the very origin of Christianity, and was one of those things by which the Hebrews were convinced of the divine authority of the gospel. But here an important question presents itself, whether the imposition of hands invariably accompanied the administration of baptism. To this it may be answered, that in the *institution* of the ordinance there is no mention made of the laying on of hands. It may also be remarked, that though the act of baptizing is frequently recorded in the New Testament, there are only two instances where the imposition of hands is mentioned; and in both of these it was the apostles themselves who administered the ordinance, and in both of them the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost were immediately bestowed. In the one case we are told that Simon the sorcerer saw that the Holy Ghost was given, which implies that there were outward manifestations; and in the other it is stated that the parties spake with tongues, and prophesied (Acts xix. 6). The conclusion, therefore, seems to follow, that the imposition of hands was not a part of baptism, nor yet an invariable accompaniment of it, but was connected with it only when the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost were to be conferred. This practice was retained in the primitive church even after miracles ceased, and it gave rise after a time to much superstition. It was separated from baptism, in those cases where baptism was administered in infancy; and it became thus the origin of the ceremony of confirmation, which is regarded in some churches as a sacrament, or as possessing something of a sacramental character. Whether it should be retained in the church, depends altogether upon the question whether it really was a part of baptism, or at least a necessary sequel to it, or only an occasional and extraordinary accompaniment of it in the hands of the apostles. Delitzsch urges with much plausibility, that the inclusion of it among the first principles of the doctrine of Christ favours the former view. But, on the other hand, the historical facts which have been mentioned seem decidedly to lead to the opposite conclusion. And we must remember that the first principles spoken of by the apostle are not those principles which in a systematic exhibition of Christianity would be considered the most fundamental; for there are

many others which, in this point of view, would take precedence of them; but they are simply the principles with which it was considered necessary that babes in Christ should be made acquainted. And just as the distinction between Christian baptism and John's baptism and other Jewish washings would require to be pointed out to them, though these were no part of Christianity, so also it might be considered indispensable that the instructions imparted regarding baptism should embrace its connection with the laying on of hands, and all the more, perhaps, if the laying on of hands sometimes took place and sometimes not. So palpable a difference would demand explanation in the case of young Christians, though mature believers might readily comprehend its reasons.

The six principles of the apostle are arranged in pairs, which bear an affinity to each other. As he has now mentioned two internal changes, *repentance* and *faith*, and two outward rites, *baptism* and the *imposition of hands*, so he proceeds to specify two future events, the *resurrection* and the *judgment*: ἀναστάσεώς τε νεκρῶν, καὶ κρίματος αἰωνίου. We found occasion to view διδαχῆς as governing not only βαπτισμῶν, but also ἐπιθέσεως. And now the question presents itself, whether it should not also be considered as extending its influence to ἀναστάσεως and κρίματος. One thing is undeniable, that it cannot be the resurrection and the judgment viewed as actually taking place which are the foundation of Christian instruction, for those events are still far away in the future; but it must be instruction regarding them, the knowledge of them, the doctrine of them, which the apostle really means. Thus there are two points of actual inward change, repentance and faith; and four points of knowledge or instruction, viz. baptism, laying on of hands, resurrection, judgment. And this difference between two of the points and four of them has suggested to Schlichting another mode of exhibiting the dependence of the whole six upon θεμέλιον. He makes μετανοίας not the genitive of apposition, but of object, and thus views repentance not as the matter of the foundation, but as the superstructure on the foundation. This superstructure is supposed to be the doctrine of baptism, of laying on of hands, of the resurrection, and of the last judgment. But there are many objections to this view. In the first place, διδαχῆς would

necessarily require to have been in the accusative, in apposition with *θεμέλιον*; for a genitive of apposition could not have accompanied a genitive of object in connection with the same noun. Now, although *διδαχὴν* is to be found as a various reading, and is, in fact, adopted by Lachmann, yet the amount of authority in its favour is too small. And independently of the reading, the sense brought out is by no means so suitable, viz. that the doctrine of baptism is the foundation upon which repentance rests; the reverse being nearer truth. Undoubtedly, therefore, the six principles mentioned—two of inward life, and four of doctrine—are all to be viewed as constituting the foundation spoken of.

With regard to the last two, the idea has very widely prevailed, that one of them has reference to the righteous, and the other to the wicked; as if the apostle had meant to say, the resurrection of believers to glory, and the condemnation of the wicked to hell. And the ground on which this exegesis has been defended is, that very frequently in the New Testament the resurrection of the righteous is mentioned by itself, and designated simply *ἀνάστασις*, as in 1 Cor. xv. 42, "So also is the resurrection of the dead; it is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption;" and with even greater frequency *κρίμα* is employed to denote the adverse result of judgment, viz. condemnation, as in Matt. xxiii. 14, "Therefore ye shall receive the greater condemnation," *περισσότερον κρίμα*. But the general reference of both clauses is decidedly to be preferred. Such a restriction as the one proposed could only be justified, either by something in the passage necessarily requiring it, or by the exclusive application of the terms in other passages to the ideas supposed. But so far is there from being anything in this passage requiring this restriction, that in reading it we at once think of the resurrection of all to be followed by the trial of all. And though the terms *ἀνάστασις* and *κρίμα* are frequently employed in the restricted sense mentioned above, they are also to be found in the wider application. In John v. 29 we are told that all come forth from the graves, they that have done good to the resurrection of life, *εἰς ἀνάστασιν ζωῆς*, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation, *εἰς ἀνάστασιν κρίσεως*. And *κρίμα* in like manner is employed in the generic

sense of judgment or trial, which is indeed its primary signification, as when Paul reasoned (Acts xxiv. 25) of righteousness, and temperance, and judgment to come, τοῦ μέλλοντος κρίματος, and exclaimed (Rom. xi. 33), ὡς ἀνεξερεύνητα τὰ κρίματα αὐτοῦ! Undoubtedly, therefore, the resurrection mentioned is the resurrection of both righteous and wicked, and the judgment also is the judgment of both. The doctrine is the same as the apostle teaches in other passages: "It is appointed unto men once to die" (Heb. ix. 27); "We must all appear before the judgment-seat" (2 Cor. v. 10). And these are principles of Christian doctrine which are among the very first that are taught: the idea of accountability lies at the foundation of all religion.

The epithet αἰώνιον is applied to κρίμα by a metonymy of the effect for the cause. It is not the κρίμα itself, strictly speaking, that is eternal, but the effect of it. The κρίμα is styled eternal, because its results are to endure for ever: it is never to be reversed. So the λύτρωσις of Christ is styled, in chap. ix. 12, eternal, because it conducts believers to unfading glory.

Having thus admonished the Hebrews to press on to perfection, and not to continue busying themselves with mere elements, the apostle adds: καὶ τοῦτο ποιήσομεν, ἐάνπερ ἐπιτρέπῃ ὁ Θεός. Great diversity of opinion has prevailed respecting this verse. The first point that claims consideration is the reference of τοῦτο. Does it point to the immediately preceding clause, μὴ πάλιν θεμέλιον καταβαλλόμενοι, or does it look further back still, viz. to ἐπὶ τὴν τελειότητα φερώμεθα? Schlichting, Grotius, Limborch, Wetstein, Michaelis, Storr, Abreschius, and the bulk of those who view this whole passage as a statement of the apostle's intended course of argument, allege that the natural reference of τοῦτο is to what immediately precedes; and therefore they conceive the apostle's meaning to be, that though at present he cannot discuss the simple principles enumerated, yet he will do so at some other time, if opportunity be afforded. Now, the objections to this interpretation are manifold. To express the idea indicated, the proper form would have been, not καὶ τοῦτο ποιήσομεν, but ποιήσομεν δὲ καὶ τοῦτο. Again, it is obvious that the statement of a purpose to handle elementary principles at some other time would furnish no suitable starting-point for the solemn warnings which immedi-

ately follow. In fact, the connection would be destroyed: for can we suppose the apostle to say, "I will discuss the first principles at some future time; for if you apostatize after being enlightened, etc., it is impossible that you can be restored?" Besides, when the peculiar expression is considered which the apostle has used in reference to the first principles, "not laying again the foundation," there appears something like a contradiction in supposing him immediately to add, that he will again lay the foundation. The substance of the participial clause is a negation, *μὴ καταβαλλόμενοι*; and it is altogether unwarrantable to omit the negative particle, and thus to make the very opposite of the idea expressed in the preceding clause the thing to which *τοῦτο* refers. But if the negative statement be what *τοῦτο* points to, then the sense brought out is really nothing different from what emerges when *φερώμεθα* itself is made the object of reference. Tholuck feels the force of this objection, and therefore decides against the reference to *καταβαλλόμενοι*; but still he supposes that there is something awkward in the language of the apostle when *τοῦτο* is made to point back to *φερώμεθα*. This, however, is a mere fancy. In fact, this reference of *τοῦτο*, independently of all other difficulties, is by far the most natural. For observe that the two clauses, to one or other of which *τοῦτο* must refer, are not independent statements, of which it would be unreasonable to pass over the latter for the sake of reaching the former; but they are members of one compound sentence, of which *φερώμεθα* is the affirming word, and *καταβαλλόμενοι* is a subordinate and explanatory clause. *Τοῦτο*, therefore, is most reasonably made to refer to what is affirmed in the preceding sentence, taken as a whole. Let us go on to perfection, not pausing by the way; and this we will do—what? Most unquestionably go on to perfection. To suppose aught else, either makes the apostle contradict himself, or brings out the same idea as the other reference, but in a forced and unnatural manner: Not laying the foundation; and this we will do, viz. not lay the foundation, or we will abstain from laying the foundation.

Most of those who view this whole sentence as a statement of the apostle's design, contend for the reference of *τοῦτο* to *καταβαλλόμενοι*, though many of them acknowledge that it is

better to connect it with φερώμεθα. But, on the other hand, all who look upon the passage as admonitory, concur in holding by this last reference: This we will do, viz. go on to perfection. The words would express a confident hope on the part of the apostle, that his readers would be stimulated to join with him in running the Christian race with augmented celerity. It may be said, indeed, that if anything in the shape of admonition or incitement had been designed, we should rather have expected the subjunctive ποιήσωμεν, like φερώμεθα in the preceding sentence. And the fact is, that there are weighty and numerous authorities for this reading, such as the Uncial codices A. C. D. E., also many cursive MSS., and some of the best versions. It is the reading followed by Theodoret and Œcumenius, and it is preferred by Böhme, Klee, Bleek, Lunemann, Delitzsch, and others. It is a strong argument in defence of the subjunctive that it is coupled with φερώμεθα; and it is a stronger argument still, that an admonition such as is then exhibited furnishes a far better starting-point for the solemn warning which follows in the 4th verse, "For it is impossible," etc. The subjunctive would throw the idea into the form of a formal advice, Let us; the indicative future exhibits it in the shape of a confident hope or expressed purpose, We will. The words, ἐάνπερ ἐπιτρέπῃ ὁ Θεός, have always been viewed as peculiarly favourable to the idea that it is the apostle's own purpose which he has been expressing, and no doubt they would be very consistent with this view; but still they are not at all unsuitable to the other interpretation, expressing as they do, in connection with it, the truth that human purposes and hopes should always be formed in subordination to the arrangements of Heaven. If opportunity be given, if life be spared, if grace be granted, we shall go on, or let us go on, brethren, to the perfection of Christian knowledge and experience. Let us not waste our time, but, trusting to God, let us strive to make improvement. The remark of Calvin brings out the idea well: "Neque enim hoc in hominis manu positum, ut quoties libuerit, a carceribus ad metam transiliat: sed singulare esse Dei donum, cursus nostri confectionem."

Out of these verses, as thus expounded, the solemn warning which immediately follows most naturally springs. The duty

of moving onwards is of paramount importance. By continuing in your past negligence, you expose yourselves to the greatest dangers. Your indifference to the truth, your imperfect acquaintance with its principles, expose you to the arts of the designing; and by continuing careless and indifferent, you may plunge yourselves at last into the dreadful guilt and ruin of apostasy. Keep back from such a doom. Move on with alacrity in your Christian course: *ἀδύνατον γὰρ τοὺς ἅπαξ φωτισθέντας, γευσαμένους τε τῆς δωρεᾶς τῆς ἐπουρανίου, καὶ μετόχους γενηθέντας Πνεύματος ἁγίου, καὶ καλὸν γευσαμένους Θεοῦ ῥῆμα, δυνάμεις τε μέλλοντος αἰῶνος, καὶ παραπεσόντας, πάλιν ἀνακαινίζειν εἰς μετάνοιαν, ἀνασταυροῦντας ἑαυτοῖς τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ παραδειγματίζοντας.*

The precise reference of *γὰρ* has been disputed. It seems most natural to make it point to the leading statement of the preceding sentence, that is, either to *τοῦτο ποιήσομεν*, or, which is the same thing, to *ἐπὶ τὴν τελειότητα φερώμεθα*: "Let us, for," etc. Delitzsch, however, argues that it must be viewed as looking to *ἐάνπερ ἐπιτρέπῃ ὁ Θεός*, which first suggests the idea of a barrier or limit to be more fully exhibited, which it is the object of the following verses to illustrate. This reference is very liable to be misunderstood. According to this connection, the meaning is not, as might be supposed: For if God do not permit, then it is impossible to renew men. Such a view would rob the passage of all that is peculiar to it; for it is equally true in every case, that without God's help nothing can be done. The mediating thought is: God may not permit. There are cases where the Spirit is withheld, and in these renewal is impossible. This view of the reference of *γὰρ* does not differ materially from that which makes it point directly to *φερώμεθα*.

Delitzsch also argues, that the active voice *ἀνακαινίζειν*, which must be viewed as describing what a Christian teacher makes it his object to accomplish, supplies an argument in favour of the idea that the preceding verses are designed as an exhibition of the apostle's purpose. There is some force in this consideration. But in so far as it has force, it is obvious that it obliges us to think of a design very different from that of merely indicating the course of an argument. The design suggested must be that of stimulating the Hebrews, and helping

them forward; and certainly there is nothing unnatural in the idea that this may be included in the words as well as admonition: Let us press on, you striving to grow in all that is good, whilst I put forth every effort to help you. But still admonition must be viewed as the main staple of the first three verses.

In the early church this passage led some to doubt the authority of the epistle altogether; and it was viewed by others as warranting extreme strictness of ecclesiastical discipline. The Montanists and Novatians made it one of the foundations of their principle, that no lapsed persons, whatever might be the depth of their subsequent penitence, should ever be restored to the communion of the brethren. The general body of the church, with the view of depriving their opponents of the support of this passage, fell, after the fourth century, upon another method of expounding it, and understood it not as denying the possibility of repentance in any case, but as simply prohibiting the repetition of baptism. Ὁ θεῖος ἀπόστολος, says Theodoret, οὐ τὰ τῆς μετανοίας ἀπηγόρευσε φάρμακα, ἀλλὰ τοῦ θείου βαπτίσματος τὸν ὅρον ἐδίδαξεν. Οὐχ ῥίον τε οὖν ἡμᾶς πάλιν ἀπολαῦσαι τῆς τοῦ βαπτίσματος δωρεᾶς. This interpretation seems to us exceedingly far-fetched and unnatural; and yet the way was so gradually prepared for it by a change in the use and meaning of words, that it is not surprising it obtained currency. Even in Justin Martyr's time, φωτισμὸς had become a common name for baptism. Long ago, however, this interpretation has been abandoned. And it is now almost universally admitted, that the passage does speak of persons who are placed, even in the present life, beyond the possibility of repentance. There are great differences of opinion, however, as to the precise character of the persons referred to: whether they ever were truly regenerated—whether the nature of their fall can be accurately defined—and whether the sin here spoken of coincide with the sin against the Holy Ghost. The whole passage appeared so full of difficulty and perplexity to Luther, that he was led to question the full canonicity of the epistle, declaring that it seemed to him to contradict all the gospels, and also the epistles of Paul (Tholuck, 246, note).

Undoubtedly, the statement made in the passage before us is of a very solemn and awful character; and it ought to awaken

the most serious apprehensions in the breasts of those who are conscious that, though they have long known the Scriptures, they have yet lived in the practice of heinous sin. How near such persons may be to the dreadful gulf of confirmed impenitence, God only knows; and they ought to cry mightily to Heaven for deliverance from so terrible a doom. It seems to be the doctrine of this passage, that we may place ourselves beyond the pale of pardon, even in the present life.

The verses now under consideration seem to be at variance with two classes of passages; viz. those which teach the doctrine of the saints' perseverance; and also those which extol the exceeding riches of the grace of God, and magnify His patience and long-suffering forbearance. Yet we know that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; and every passage, therefore, must be entirely consistent with every other. Any discrepancies that may appear to exist between them must result from our misconceptions; and therefore we must modify our views of one passage by the clearer representations of another. What is less frequently or less palpably exhibited in Scripture, we must expound in accordance with what is more frequently and more plainly taught.

Now the doctrine of the final perseverance of genuine saints is undoubtedly supported by a great variety of passages. The same assistance of the Spirit which enabled them at first to accept the offers of the gospel, will be granted to enable them to persevere in cherishing love to the Saviour. You might as well suppose that a man in his senses, standing by the brink of a flooded river, and with no wish to be drowned, would wilfully leap into the most rapid part of its current, as that a person who has been made truly alive to the danger of sin, who has fled for deliverance to Christ, and whose mind is enlightened by the Spirit of God, would deliberately renounce his Christian character, and rush into the jaws of certain destruction. Accordingly we find in Scripture the most unequivocal testimonies borne to the doctrine of the saints' perseverance. Paul, writing to the Christians of Philippi, declares himself confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in their hearts, will perform it unto the day of Christ Jesus. In like manner,

Peter assures us that there is reserved in heaven an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, for those who are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time. From our Saviour's lips, too, were heard these decisive words: "This is the Father's will who hath sent me, that of all which He hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day." "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand" (John vi. 39, x. 27–29). Of similar import is that noble passage in the Epistle to the Romans: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." The former part of this passage, it is true, consisting of questions which contain their own answers, might be understood as simply expressing the resolution of an ardent mind, and what ought to be the resolution of every Christian, in the view of the astonishing love of God in Christ; but the last two verses seem to express Paul's firm and serious conviction, that the true followers of Christ shall never be induced, by the most beguiling temptations, completely to apostatize from His service. And if any persons allege that many professing Christians do in fact apostatize and fall into gross sin, and die apparently in a state of impenitence, the case of such apostates is completely met by John, and explained in a manner which rather gives the strongest support to the doctrine of the saints' perseverance. "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us" (1 John ii. 19). This verse is really sufficient of itself to establish the doctrine of the final perseverance

of those who are truly united to Christ; and it furnishes an inspired answer to the chief objection that is made against the doctrine. Various attempts have indeed been made to silence this passage. Schmid and Spener argue, that ἐξ ἡμῶν must be viewed as referring to the apostolic college.

What room, then, is left for the statement of the apostle in the passage under review? Within what limits does it find a legitimate application? Let it be remembered that Christ Himself, in the parable of the sower (Mark iv. 14), makes mention of persons who receive the word, who receive it with joy and gladness, in whom it springs up and seems for a time to grow luxuriantly; and no human eye can distinguish them from the genuine followers of the Lord. But after a little time they fall away: they have no root in themselves, and they endure but for a time. They know the truth, and at the first they love the truth; they have a deep sense of the importance of heavenly things; their minds are much affected with the marvellous facts of the gospel; they are acquainted with the evidence upon which the authority of revelation rests; but still our Lord's language implies that they have not the root of the matter in them—that they have not unfeignedly and truly embraced the gospel—that they have not with a completely changed heart submitted to the yoke of Christ. They have enjoyed many great and precious privileges; they have experienced no small sense of the value of the Bible; they have been near to the kingdom of heaven; but their hearts have never become the good ground where the seed of heavenly truth finds an appropriate soil for the production of all the fruits of holiness. They have never been true to themselves, nor to the privileges they possessed; and when they do fall away, they are only revealing their real character. The difference, indeed, between them and genuine believers was all along apparent to God, who knoweth them that are His; but it is the event only which makes the discovery to us.

Now here, I doubt not, we find the principle according to which the passage before us must be expounded. Within these limits we are restricted by those passages which affirm the doctrine of the saints' perseverance, and within these limits we have ample room for all the apostle here affirms.

Let us consider, then, more narrowly the description given of the persons whose case is considered. The language is very elevated, and there is a gradation of particulars rising one above another, and reaching to such a height as should make us tremble lest, after all we may have felt and known, we should still fall short of the character and rewards of believers.

The first part of the description is *τοὺς ἅπαξ φωτισθέντας*, persons once enlightened. *Φωτίζω*, which belongs to later Greek, literally denotes to emit light, to shine, and also to cast light upon something so as to bring it to the knowledge of men. In the common Greek it is only applied to objects in the sense of illustrating them, but in Hellenistic Greek it is applied to persons in the sense of instructing them. Both the Septuagint and Aquila frequently employ it as the equivalent of הוֹרָה, which signifies to direct, to guide, to instruct; and thus it acquired the acceptation mentioned. See Ps. xxiv. 8, xxxi. 8; xxv., xxxii. This meaning occurs repeatedly in the New Testament, as in John i. 9, Eph. i. 18, iii. 9, Heb. x. 32; and without a doubt it is the true acceptation in the passage before us. For a long period prior to the Reformation it was the almost universal opinion, that both here and in Heb. x. 32 *φωτισθέντας* signified persons baptized. But this is a patristic and not an apostolic use of the word. In the Fathers the verb signifies (1) to instruct with a view to baptism, and (2) to administer the rite of baptism itself. (See Suiceri, *Thes.* ii. 1491.) Even the Syriac version exhibits this sense. But though it is very likely that the change of meaning might originate in the practice of imparting instruction preparatory to baptism, yet in the New Testament the word only means enlightened with the light of knowledge. So in Eph. iii. 8 Paul says, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see, *καὶ φωτίσαι πάντας*, and to instruct all, or to teach all, what is the fellowship of the mystery," etc. *Φωτισθέντας*, therefore, undoubtedly denotes persons instructed in the doctrines of the gospel, persons illuminated with the light of truth. The word occurs another time in this epistle (x. 32), where the relation in which it stands to what goes before it shows that it is used as synonymous

with the expression in ver. 26: *τὸ λαβεῖν τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν τῆς ἀληθείας.*

Ἅπαξ is a favourite word in this epistle, where it occurs more frequently than in all the rest of the New Testament. It does not mean "once" as preparatory to a second time, but rather expresses the idea of "once for all." So in chap. x. 2, "Because that the worshippers, once purged, should have had no more conscience of sin." *Ἅπαξ φωτισθέντας*, "once enlightened," therefore, seems to imply such a knowledge of the gospel, such a view of its beauty, and suitableness, and authority, as, if once extinguished or voluntarily abandoned, does not admit of restoration or resumption. However, it must be observed that *ἅπαξ* does not qualify *φωτισθέντας* only, but all the participles that follow; and therefore we are not warranted to conclude that any amount of mere knowledge, dissociated from the other features, ever entails the awful doom of perpetual exclusion from the possibility of repentance. The several things that are described must concur, and then, if there be apostasy, the case admits of no remedy. Having once been, the experiences mentioned can never be again. *Ἅπαξ* stands in contrast with *πάλιν* in ver. 6.

Connected with *φωτισθέντας* is the clause *γευσαμένους τε τῆς δωρεᾶς ἐπουρανίου*, and have tasted the heavenly gift. What is this heavenly gift? Faith is the gift of God, and so is Christ, and so is the Holy Ghost; and to each of these may the epithet heavenly be applied with the utmost propriety. Accordingly, there have been interpreters who have sought the reference of the apostle's language in each of these directions. The Lord's Supper, too, has been conceived to be the gift in question, on the ground apparently of the primary physical acceptation of *γεύσασθαι*. But the question is not, what things may be justly designated heavenly gifts? but, what does it best comport with the apostle's argument to suppose him here to mean? His language is very general. It is not precise enough to mark out faith, or Christ, or the Holy Ghost, or the Eucharist, or pardon, or peace of conscience, or salvation, not to mention other objections to each of these expositions. Let it be observed that the several parts of the description are differently connected together, some by *καὶ* and some by *τέ*. Now

the former of these conjunctions marks a wider step than the latter; καὶ associates the greater divisions or parts, and τὲ the subordinate members. The clause before us, therefore, must take its hue from the one that precedes it. The two form one great member of the whole sentence; and therefore it seems the most probable supposition, that the heavenly gift is just the truth that enlightens, the light of Christian knowledge. As no description of the gift follows, the article τῆς must be supposed to look back to something that has already been indicated, which can only be the knowledge of the gospel comprehended in φωτισθέντας. And we know that Christ Himself described the knowledge of the truth as the gift of God; for He said to the Samaritan woman, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee *living water*" (John iv. 10). Delitzsch argues, that what is coupled by the conjunction τὲ must not only be something subordinate to the main preceding member, but something that results from it; therefore not the truth which is the cause of illumination, but rather pardon, God's favour, justification, salvation in Christ; and he fixes upon this last idea—salvation in Christ. But the objection already urged against the other interpretations is decisive against this one also, viz. that the language is too indefinite to express any one of these ideas. Besides, Delitzsch's own argument is misapplied; for although it is quite true that φῶς is not a consequence of φωτισθέντας, but a cause, yet the idea expressed by the whole phrase, γευσαμένους, enjoying the light, is a resulting effect, and is most properly appended by means of τέ. Nor let it be said that this interpretation loads the passage with tautology; for the one clause expands the thought of the other, and not only describes an augmented degree of Christian knowledge, but pleasure in the possession of it. The idea to be attached to γευσαμένους is of great importance to the right understanding of this passage. This word has been supposed to mean here, taste, lightly or partially, as with the mere tips of the lips; and many expositors of the Reformed Church, concerned about the doctrine of the saints' perseverance, have pertinaciously adhered to this idea. But it rather means tasting in the sense of partaking, receiving fully and copiously. This

is obvious, from the use of the word in chap. ii. 9, where it is applied to our Lord's tasting of death, which certainly does not mean that He had only the slightest touch of suffering, but rather that He felt the full bitterness of dying. We cannot suppose the apostle to mean, that persons who have had ever so slight a taste of the heavenly gift, whatever you suppose it to indicate, cut themselves off, when they fall away, from all hope of restoration. The idea of amplification manifestly enters into the whole passage. It is not the smallness, but the greatness, of the attainments and privileges which apostates have enjoyed, which constitutes the ground of their tremendous doom, and which the apostle must be supposed here solicitous to exhibit. As the first clause, then, expresses generally the idea of acquaintance with the truths of religion, so the second, connected by *τέ*, superadds the idea of enlarged and earnest study of the truth, and great pleasure in contemplation of it.

The next particular descriptive of the persons spoken of is, *καὶ μετόχους γενηθέντας Πνεύματος ἁγίου.* The term Holy Ghost is frequently employed in Scripture, by a metonymy of the effect for the cause, to denote the gifts of the Spirit, those miraculous powers by which the truth of Christianity was demonstrated, as in Acts xix. 6: *ἦλθε τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἐπ' αὐτούς, ἐλάλουν τε γλώσσαις, καὶ προεφήτευον.* Of these gifts there was a considerable variety in the primitive church; and it was very common for them to be imparted by means of the laying on of the apostles' hands. They were a manifest token of the presence of God; and those who either possessed them or witnessed them in others, enjoyed the most palpable evidence of the truth of Christianity, and were thus laid under the strongest obligations to be faithful, obedient, and persevering. And if they afterwards abandoned the truth, or became remiss in the discharge of their duties, they as plainly incurred very aggravated guilt, and exposed themselves to the righteous displeasure of God. Under the term Holy Ghost may here be included whatever the Spirit did to display the truth to the minds of those of whom the apostle is speaking: whatever evidence He afforded them, either in their own experience or in the miracles performed by others, of the truth of the gospel; whatever striving He may have made in their hearts to induce them to forsake sin.

The next branch of the description is composed of two members: *καὶ καλὸν γευσαμένους Θεοῦ ῥῆμα, δυνάμεις τε μέλλοντος αἰῶνος*. It has been considered strange that the apostle should use the word *γευσαμένους* a second time within so short a compass: the reason doubtless is, that it more strongly expresses his idea than any other he could have found. It is also remarkable, that in the one case he couples the word with a genitive, and in the other with an accusative. The former construction is the one usually found in classic Greek, and also for the most part in Hellenistic Greek. The latter occasionally occurs in the Septuagint, as in 1 Sam. xiv. 29, *ἐγευσάμην βραχύ τι τοῦ μέλιτος τούτου*, and once in the New Testament, besides our text, viz. John ii. 9, *ἐγεύσατο τὸ ὕδωρ*. Bœhme and Bleek conceive, that the reason for preferring the accusative in the verse before us, was a desire to avoid the concurrence of six genitives in the same clause, and also to make it obvious that *καλὸν* referred to *ῥῆμα*, and not to *Θεοῦ*. Bengel, Blomfield, and Delitzsch, however, argue that the change of construction implies some real minute difference of meaning; and Delitzsch's view is, that the construction with the genitives suggests the idea of partaking of a thing of which a boundless store remains for others; while the accusative only exhibits the idea, that the substance is used as a daily means of support. In opposition to this it may be argued, that if the two constructions had been both equally established by usage, there might have been this difference of signification; but when one of them is quite rare, the idea must have a precarious foundation. Certainly the distinction cannot be made good by decisive examples.

With regard to what is meant by *καλὸν Θεοῦ ῥῆμα*, Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Œcumenius explain it of the whole word of God, or of the gospel generally. And so far as the terms themselves are concerned, they might be used to designate this idea; but it is an objection to this view, that the same thought has been already both expressed in *φωτισθέντας*, and amplified in the subordinate member therewith connected with it. Let it be remembered, therefore, that though *ῥῆμα* certainly is employed to denote the whole word of God, as in Eph. vi. 17, *καὶ τὴν μάχαιραν τοῦ πνεύματος, ὅ ἐστι ῥῆμα Θεοῦ*, yet it is also frequently employed to denote a promise; and the epithet *καλὸν*

is particularly favourable to this meaning here. There are passages in the Old Testament where the very words of our text are employed (Zech. i. 13; Josh. xxi. 45, xxiii. 14) to designate the promises made by Jehovah, which the Lord gave to the children of Israel, of the land of Canaan. With perfect propriety, therefore, may these words be viewed as describing the similar promises, as worthy surely of being styled good, which God has given us under the gospel dispensation. It is not the gospel as a system that is meant, nor the Scriptures of truth, but the gospel viewed as embodying encouraging promises (Lunem. 164). This idea is entirely suitable to the scope of the passage, and to the construction of the words, and it makes a new link in the chain of the apostle's description. This good promise of God is the promise of life, and peace, and pardon—happiness which the gospel gives; and to have tasted this promise, is to have received it—to have felt in some good measure the importance and value of it—to have had the mind excited by the contemplation of it.

Connected with *καλὸν Θεοῦ ῥῆμα*, is *δυνάμεις τε μέλλοντος αἰῶνος*. Of this clause two views may be taken, according to the signification attached to *μέλλοντος αἰῶνος*. That this phrase, like *οἰκουμένη μέλλουσα*, was sometimes employed, in imitation of the Hebrew phrase עוֹלָם הַבָּא, to denote the times of the Messiah, as distinguished from the times anterior to His appearance, is generally acknowledged; and that it might be so used, even after the new dispensation commenced, is obvious from a passage in Romans, where, after our Lord's advent, Adam is designated *τύπος τοῦ μέλλοντος*. Now, according to this view of *μέλλοντος αἰῶνος*, the *δυνάμεις* mentioned would naturally mean the miraculous manifestations by which the introduction of Christianity was signalized, and its heavenly origin demonstrated; and the significancy of the whole clause would be, that the persons described had both witnessed these wonderful displays, and in some cases even had possessed the power of exhibiting them. That *μέλλων αἰών*, however, is also employed to describe the state after death, the invisible world, as distinguished from the present life, is obvious from Matt. xii. 32, where the Saviour says, *οὔτε ἐν τούτῳ αἰῶνι, οὔτε ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι* (see also Eph. i. 21; Luke xx. 34, 35; Mark x. 30).

In fact, there are more examples of this signification than of the other in the New Testament. Now, according to this view, the δυνάμεις μέλλοντος αἰῶνος will naturally mean the powers or influences of the invisible state; and what can the tasting of these in the present life signify, but a vivid sense of their reality —some considerable experience of the power which they ought to exert upon present conduct? Many who have been instructed in the truths of religion, never realize their transcendent importance; but the persons here described are conceived to have experienced a not quite transitory, but a vivid and somewhat lasting, impression of the reality and value of eternal interests.

Or if it be alleged that δυνάμεις in plural generally means mighty deeds, miraculous works, as is obviously the case in chap. ii. 4, then perhaps the powers of the world to come may mean miracles, viewed as manifestations from the invisible state. The world to come is future, so far as regards each of us, but it is a really existing state, though invisible here; and the miracles of the gospel were just gleams of the heavenly glory breaking in upon this earth, to awaken men to their higher interests. The connection of γευσαμένους with δυνάμεις might appear harsh, if the miracles simply meant mighty deeds under the gospel, whether witnessed or performed by the persons spoken of; but if they signify wonders of the world to come, wonderful works from the invisible world, then the idea of tasting them, as samples of the glory yet to be expected, is quite natural. That μέλλοντος αἰῶνος must in any case mean the spiritual, invisible, and to us future world, may be argued also from the fact, that the chain of principles exhibited in vers. 1, 2, ends with the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment; and therefore it is most natural that here also a similar climax should be exhibited. The connection, too, of this clause with the preceding, by means of τέ, as showing that they are kindred to one another, as well as the application of the same participle to both, favours the view now given; for as we have seen reason to adopt the conclusion that καλὸν ῥῆμα Θεοῦ means the good promise of God, or God's promise of good, of happiness and joy, it is obvious that the idea of manifestations from the future life forms a most natural sequel, and is, in fact, the last step to which the progression of thought leads.

The only objection of any weight to this view is furnished by the clause *μετόχους γενηθέντας Πνεύματος ἁγίου*, which may be supposed already to embrace the idea of miracles. But this objection may be set aside, either by the supposition that these words refer only to the influence exerted by the Spirit in the heart through the instrumentality of the word, or by the consideration that, if miracles are there also meant, it is miracles viewed simply in themselves; whereas the leading idea of the last clause is exhibitions made from the future invisible world. Miracles as proofs of religion, and miracles as manifestations of a world of glory which is yet to be reached, are two sufficiently distinct ideas.

Chrysostom seems at a loss whether to view *μέλλοντος αἰῶνος* as referring to the present state or the future world. At one time he says: *τίνας λέγει δυνάμεις; ἢ τὸ θαύματα ἐπιτελεῖν, ἢ τὸν ἀῤῥαβῶνα τοῦ πνεύματος;* But again we find him writing quite otherwise.

With regard to the clauses which have now been considered, the great question which has always been asked is, Whether any more full, unambiguous, unequivocal description could have been given of the genuine and undoubted followers of the Lord. What is wanting here that is characteristic of a really regenerate man? This is one of the main grounds on which the Lutheran Church have always held the idea that the truly regenerate may fall away and be lost for ever. The opposite view, however, has always prevailed in the Reformed Church; and the passages which have already been cited seem to make it obvious, that none of those who really are once savingly united to Christ shall ever perish. Yet it must be confessed that the language of the passage under consideration is exceedingly strong, and it is undeniable that individuals exhibiting the features of character here described would be universally considered as disciples by men; but the decisive question is, whether they would all necessarily appear such to God, or whether in some cases the features described might exist, and yet the root of godliness be wanting. The deficiencies of professing Christians are often such as human eye cannot discover; but God sees every heart, and He may both on the one hand recognise disciples where men see them not, and on the other

regard as aliens individuals who are universally considered by us as Christians. We must therefore conclude that, while the features described would, in the great majority of cases, be really attended with inward sanctification, they yet are not infallible marks of grace, but might in some cases be found where the soul was really a stranger to godliness. Delitzsch puts the question, whether any more sacred and glorious spiritual experiences are ever connected with regeneration than are here described by the apostle. Now, I think it is a fair answer to this question, that the features described, while all uncommonly elevated, are yet either mainly of an intellectual kind, or wear the aspect of privileges enjoyed; and further, there is no positive mention made of inward regeneration and change of heart. Having been born again is not one of the points that enters into this description. But high attainments, every outward appearance of grace, miraculous powers, may consist with alienation of heart from God. And further, were we to suppose the persons here represented as falling, to have been really regenerated men, then Christ could not say at the day of judgment to all the wicked, "Depart from me, I *never* knew you;" for there would be some among them whom He had once known in as intimate a manner as He ever knew those who are dignified at last with a place at His right hand. Yes, those words "I never" prove the perseverance of the saints, for they intimate that no one finally condemned ever was in Christ.

As the five clauses now considered describe the position and privileges of the persons spoken of, so the next clause brings into view their abuse of these privileges: *καὶ παραπεσόντας*. The rendering of this clause in a number of modern versions, if they shall fall away, *si prolabantur*, *s'ils retombent*, has plainly been suggested by dogmatic, not by philological considerations: it is, however, inadmissible, and it is quite unnecessary for the purpose that suggested it. *Καὶ παραπεσόντας* describes an actual fall, just as really as *φωτισθέντας* describes an actual possession of knowledge: the meaning is, persons that have fallen away.

What amount of declension is indicated by *παραπεσόντας*? This word occurs in no other part of the New Testament. In classic Greek it denotes, both literally and tropically, to leave the right way; and it also occurs in Lysias in the sense of

changing sides, of going over from one party to another. In the Septuagint the verb is used to describe not individual acts of sin, but such a total degeneracy as is followed by the sweeping vengeance of Heaven. "Son of man, when the land sinneth against me by trespassing grievously, *τοῦ παραπεσεῖν παράπτωμα*, then will I send famine upon it, and will cut off man and beast from it: though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness" (Ezek. xiv. 13): see also Ezek. xv. 8, "And I will make the land desolate, because they have committed a trespass, saith the Lord God;" xviii. 24, "But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die;" xx. 27, "Therefore, son of man, speak unto the house of Israel, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, Yet in this your fathers have blasphemed me, in that they have committed a trespass against me." Obviously, therefore, the falling away denoted by *παραπεσόντας* is not any isolated act of sin, but a grievous and entire apostasy from God. The thing meant is the same as is described in chap. iii. 12 by the words *ἐν τῷ ἀποστῆναι ἀπὸ Θεοῦ ζῶντος*, and in chap. x. 26 by emphatic words, implying a total abandonment of the gospel, a wilful apostasy from the faith, a going over from the Saviour's cause and service to Judaism, or some other rival system. No doubt every particular sin is dangerous, and every species of declension must excite alarm for the safety of the individual; for if not speedily repented of and forsaken, it may lead to the confirmed apostasy that ends in destruction. But it is the completed apostasy itself of which the apostle is here speaking,—the state of persons who have avowedly abandoned the gospel, and now blaspheme the Saviour's name, and that, too, after they have known the evidence of the truth of Christianity, and studied the scheme of doctrine which it unfolds, and experienced some considerable sense of its importance and value. They take part with the enemies of Christ and His cause; and their malice would lead them to re-enact the scenes of Calvary. The

whole description must be taken together: past privileges and attainments associated with present opposition and hatred. The latter without the former, though ever so bitter and malignant, would not be the case contemplated by the apostle.

Now, of the persons thus described, the apostle affirms that it is *ἀδύνατον πάλιν ἀνακαινίζειν εἰς μετάνοιαν.* It has been supposed by many that *ἀδύνατον* does not here bear the strict sense of "impossible," but only indicates a very great degree of difficulty; and certainly there are examples to be found in Greek authors where this signification must be allowed. But it cannot be denied, that in the New Testament the ordinary signification of the word is by far the most prevalent (it is impossible for God to lie; it is impossible for the blood of bulls to take away sins); and in all the other passages of Hebrews where it occurs, it denotes strict impossibility: *ἀδύνατον ψεύσασθαι Θεόν* (chap. vi. 18); *ἀδύνατον αἷμα ταύρων ἀφαιρεῖν ἁμαρτίας* (chap. x. 4); *χωρὶς δὲ πίστεως ἀδύνατον εὐαρεστῆσαι* (xi. 6). And even with respect to those few parallel passages in the Gospels (Matt. xix. 26; Luke xviii. 27) which have been supposed to justify the signification of "very difficult," they are not decisive; for it seems the obvious intention of the Saviour to affirm that with men the thing spoken of is impossible: *παρὰ ἀνθρώποις τοῦτο ἀδύνατον.* No good reason, then, can be shown why the ordinary signification of *ἀδύνατον* should not be adopted in the passage before us: the usage of the epistle itself should settle the question, unless something existed in the particular passage which utterly repudiated the idea.

Ἀνακαινίζειν is a *ἅπαξ λεγόμενον.* It is used by Josephus in the sense of repairing or renewing a decayed building; and it is occasionally found in the later Greek writers, tropically used to denote reforming the mind, changing the mode of life. In the passage before us it undoubtedly bears this sense. To renew to repentance must mean to bring back to the love and service of the Saviour, to bring under the power of religion, to convert from sin to holiness. It is said by some that the active *ἀνακαινίζειν* is here used for the passive *ἀνακαινίζεσθαι*—it is impossible for them to be renewed; but though such a use of the infinitive active is undoubtedly to be found, yet here it would make no difference upon the sense. It is alleged, indeed,

that in this way you avoid the necessity of mentioning any agent to whom the accomplishment of work is impossible; but the advantage is merely apparent: for whenever you begin to inquire into the grounds of the impossibility, you must grapple with that difficulty. They cannot be renewed—it is impossible to renew them: there is no more difficulty connected with the one statement than with the other.

Πάλιν is connected with *παραπεσόντας* in the Peschito, and also by Erasmus and others; but the position of the word leaves no doubt that it must be viewed as qualifying *ἀνακαινίζειν*. Nor is there any tautology occasioned in this way; for *ἀνακαινίζειν* refers to the first change of renewal which took place upon them when they first professed the gospel, and *πάλιν* brings into view the idea of a second such change, which is affirmed to be impossible. Now here, I confess, there is a very great difficulty; for you will naturally ask, Must not the two changes spoken of be of precisely the same kind? But the second renewal, whose possibility is denied, is beyond all question a renewal implying real repentance and regeneration. Must there not then have been a real renewal the first time? Now, but for the passages which have already been adduced, and the numerous others, in proof of the doctrine of the saints' perseverance, I think we should naturally be led to return an affirmative answer to this question. But having respect to these passages, we must look upon the first renewal as one which, although it went to a great extent, and having all the external features of genuine repentance, was such as human eye could not challenge, yet stopped short of an entire surrender of the heart to God. Only it went so far, and was accompanied with such clear views and strong convictions, that, being wilfully thrown aside, the process could not again be renewed so as to issue in a real saving change of heart. *Πάλιν* forms a verbal contrast to *ἅπαξ*, ver. 4.

Εἰς μετάνοιαν some have rendered as if *εἰς* were used for *διά*, "by repentance," but there can be no question that "unto" is the right translation; and this brings before us the idea of repentance in its most radical and incipient stage. Renewal *by* repentance would refer to the outward change of life resulting from repentance as the instrumental cause; but renewal *to*

repentance carries the mind back to the inward change itself, to the origination of a right state of heart towards God. And the thing denied by the apostle is not merely that the work can go on, but that it can even begin at all. It is impossible to bring them to repentance at all.

This declaration has always been considered harsh and repulsive. Schoetgenius, in his *Horæ Hebraicæ*, imagines that the entire difficulty will vanish, if we suppose the apostle to mean that it is impossible for him, or any human teacher, to effect the saving transformation described. But this idea deprives the passage of all point; for in no case is a teacher able, without the grace of God, to renew any to repentance, whether apostates or merely unconverted men. Something manifestly is here affirmed of apostates, which does not hold in the case of others. Yet we can hardly conceive the apostle to mean, that it is beyond the power even of God Himself to soften the heart of apostates, though He were ever so desirous of reforming them. Where, then, does the impossibility lie? Is there any scriptural principle which will guide us through the difficulty? Yes, we find a complete solution afforded by the principle that God, in righteous judgment, sometimes withholds the influences of His grace, which are always indispensable to conversion, and consequently in every such case a saving change becomes impossible. Nor is this an idea suggested only by the exigencies of the present passage. Do we not read in 2 Thess. ii. 10–12, "They received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved; and for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness?" Now, without a doubt it is this judicial blindness, this final departure of the Spirit, that is the cause of the impossibility spoken of by the apostle in our text. The parties described have done despite to the grace of God; they have quenched the Spirit, and the Spirit no longer strives with them. Their impenitence is their punishment as well as their sin. How dreadful the situation of such persons! It is impossible to conceive a scene surrounded with deeper shades of gloom. Think of a human being, still living under the sounds of mercy, and yet inevitably doomed to everlasting destruction! His day of

grace has for ever fled. For him there remains nothing but a fearful looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour him as an adversary. He may be unconcerned and cheerful, but it is a deceitful calm; it is a slumber on the brink of destruction; it is repose over a mine whose train is already set on fire. A dreadful storm is mustering its fury to descend upon his head; a fearful awakening shall be his when the other world bursts upon his view; the moment is already fixed when the pile of his eternal ruin shall be kindled by the breath of God's indignation.

The remaining clauses of this sentence are obviously designed to display in vivid colours the aggravated guilt of the parties described, that a sufficient reason may be furnished for the dreadful announcement made respecting them. *Ἀναστανροῦντας ἑαυτοῖς τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ παραδειγματίζοντας.*

It has been disputed whether *ἀναστανρόω* denotes simply to crucify, or to crucify anew or afresh. If we look to the use of the word in the common Greek, we shall find that it bears the same signification as the simple verb *σταυρόω*; the preposition *ἀνὰ* referring to the elevation of the person crucified, and not to any repetition of the act. This undoubted fact has led Ernesti, Schleusner, Bretschneider, Wahl, Bœhme, and others, to take the ground that the verb here cannot mean *crucify afresh*, of which no example can be found, but simply crucify. Yet it is very remarkable that the Greek fathers, and also the other ancient interpreters,—all, without exception,—understand *ἀνὰ* to mean here, anew, again, as it does so frequently in composition; which seems to indicate that *ἀναστανρόω* was felt to be quite adapted for expressing the idea of a renewed crucifixion. And that it really does so here, will be obvious, if we consider that it is not an actual, literal crucifixion which is spoken of at all, but that the word is used tropically to describe a certain state of mind. Now, as a figurative expression, it must unavoidably be viewed as looking back to the literal crucifixion of Christ, from which all its propriety and force are derived; and it exhibits to our view another crucifixion of a totally different kind, though marked by a very obvious analogy to the first. The Jews who nailed the Saviour to the accursed tree, treated Him with cruelty, and contempt, and scorn. To this scene the apostle looks; and his

language intimates that those who act the part he has described are actuated by similar feelings, and chargeable with similar guilt. They approve the deeds of the murderers of Christ, and they lack only the opportunity of perpetrating the same horrid crime. Their conduct, so far as the guilt is concerned, is exactly parallel to what transpired on Calvary. Whatever, therefore, might be the force of the preposition *ἀνά*, where the verb was applied to real crucifixion, there can be no doubt that the idea of repetition is necessarily associated with it in this passage; and if no parallel use of the word can be produced, it is just because no other case of a tropical application of it can be found. The idea had never before claimed expression.

The force of *ἑαυτοῖς* has been differently estimated—crucifying to themselves. Morus supposes the meaning to be, to their own hurt; which, though undoubtedly quite true, yet does not seem so suitable to the scope of the clause, as the specific object of it is not to describe the danger, but the guilt, of the parties. Theophylact understands the word as designed to express the voluntary and determined nature of the apostasy; which idea, though perfectly suited to the scope of the clause, yet does not seem very naturally to arise out of the expression. Tholuck views the word as a contrast to *coram omnibus*, and supposes it to denote the inward character of the deed; but such apostasy as the apostle is describing is open and notorious to the world, as indeed the next clause implies. Heinrich and Schulz conceive that the true explanation is to be found in the peculiar nature of the crucifixion described. When the Jews were effecting the actual crucifixion of Christ on Calvary, it could only be done once for all, as a common act participated in by thousands; but this peculiar crucifixion is of such a nature, that every enemy of Christ may do it for himself. Of this crucifixion there are as many separate acts as there are apostates. Every one does it for himself.

The idea suggested by Bleek (195), and adopted by Delitzsch (230), is perhaps entitled to the preference, that the construction of *ἑαυτοῖς* here is the same as that of *ἐμοὶ* in Gal. vi. 14: *δι' οὗ ἐμοὶ κόσμος ἐσταύρωται, κἀγὼ κόσμῳ.* Now here the mutual crucifixion spoken of by Paul obviously means a complete and perpetual severance; and so the crucifying of Christ to one's self

may mean dissevering all bonds of connection, and throwing away the Saviour as a possession no longer prized. And this view not only associates with the clause the idea of exceeding sinfulness, but also supplies the strongest reason that could be imagined for the affirmed impossibility of renewal to repentance. The parties spoken of, after a minute acquaintance with the gospel, and experience of its excellence, have deliberately adjured Christ with something of the formality attending the crucifixion of one judged no longer worthy to live.

Παραδειγματίζοντας is the natural supplement to *ἀνασταυροῦντας*. It expresses the idea of exposing to open contempt and scorn. Crucifixion was considered the most disgraceful of all deaths, and every crucified person might be said in a peculiar manner to be *παραδειγματιζόμενος*. The only other part of the New Testament where this word occurs is in Matt. i. 19, where Joseph is said not to have been willing to expose his wife to open disgrace, *αὐτὴν παραδειγματίσαι*, for what he deemed her sin.

It is worthy of notice, that while *παραπεσόντας* is a participle of the aorist, *ἀνασταυροῦντας* and *παραδειγματίζοντας* are of the present, indicating that the apostasy takes place at a definite time, and becomes a past event, whereas the unworthy treatment of Christ is viewed as continuing. From the tense of these participles Harless and Hoffman have drawn the conclusion, that the impossibility of renewal affirmed by the apostle is not perpetual, but hinges upon the continuance of the contemptuous conduct. Not because they have crucified Christ, but because they are doing it; and while they continue so acting, they cannot be renewed. But this inference annihilates everything that is peculiar to the passage before us, and to the sin of apostasy; for there is no sin whatever that will not, so long as it is persisted in, prove an insurmountable barrier to conversion. The peculiarity of the sin spoken of by the apostle is, that once committed, it continues to pollute the soul of the individual, and shuts him out for ever from the hope of mercy. It is conceivable, that at times the remembrance of what he once experienced and felt may awaken anguish in his bosom; but it will not be a godly sorrow leading to repentance, but sorrow of the world working death.

The question has been much agitated, whether the sin here spoken of be the same as the sin against the Holy Ghost. In the Gospels of Matthew (xii. 31) and Mark (iii. 29) it is the case of the Pharisees which our Lord is considering when He utters the terrific declaration about a sin for which there is no forgiveness, either in this world or in the world to come; and His words seem to imply that some of them, though they had never professed Christianity at all, had yet incurred this inexpiable and unpardonable guilt. In Hebrews, however, the persons spoken of have been illuminated with the light of Christianity, and have enjoyed and prized the highest privileges of the gospel; and thus there seems to be a decided difference between the cases. Yet this difference is merely circumstantial; for when we turn to Luke xii. 8–10, we find that our Lord, when treating of the same sin against the Holy Ghost, makes special reference to the case of His own professed followers. From a comparison of the three Gospels, therefore, it is obvious that the unpardonable sin might be committed both by men who had never professed attachment to Christ at all, and also by men who had enrolled themselves among His people. Consequently the passage in Hebrews may refer to this same sin, in the latter aspect, as one which the parties addressed by the apostle were in some danger of falling into. And this will be more obvious still, when the specific character of the sin is brought into view, as described in the Gospels. It is speaking against the Holy Ghost. It is acting despitefully towards the Spirit of God. The Pharisees had witnessed the wonderful works performed by Christ; and although they could neither deny nor explain them away, yet, rather than acknowledge Him as a messenger from God, they preferred, in the obduracy of their hearts, to ascribe His miracles to the co-operation of the devil. Thus they maligned the Spirit of God as an impure and wicked spirit. Now the very same feature characterizes the sin described by the apostle; for among the privileges mentioned by him is participation of the Holy Ghost, and acquaintance with the miracles performed through His power. Yet at last the parties are represented as crucifying Christ, so far as it was possible for them to do so, just as the Pharisees had really crucified Him when He was upon earth. The essence of the sin is obviously the same, only

in the one case it is professing Christians who fall into it, and in the other it is men who have never acknowledged Christ at all.

Now, if the sin here spoken of be the same as the sin against the Holy Ghost mentioned in the Gospels, this furnishes a conclusive argument against the view of the Lutheran Church, that regeneration is necessarily implied in the apostle's language, and that it is the fact of having been regenerated which constitutes the peculiarity of the sin described. This cannot be maintained, unless it be at the same time affirmed that the Pharisees, also spoken of by Christ, were regenerated men. But in their case it was not the fact of having been regenerated that made it possible for them to commit the sin against the Holy Ghost: it was their knowledge, their privileges, their beholding the miracles of Christ; and so also it was the enlightenment of the Hebrews, and the possession of the privileges of the gospel.

In short, what seems essential to the commission of sin that shall be irremissible is light; such abundant evidence as conclusively manifests the operation of the Spirit of God, followed by determined and malignant rejection of the gospel altogether. The situation of those who thus shamefully and contemptuously treat Christ and His cause, is more dreadful than even that of His actual murderers; for, while actuated by the same malignity and hatred, they are sinning against much greater light: they blaspheme the name of Christ after having seen the evidence, and admired the beauty, and felt the power of His doctrine. For the infuriated multitude who surrounded His cross, and drove the nails into His hands and feet, and mocked at His sufferings, Christ prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." And there is reason to believe that many of them were afterwards brought to repentance, and received pardon, and are now shining in glory. But the very terms of this prayer suggest the idea that, if they had known what they were doing, they would have placed themselves beyond the pale of pardon. Now, this union of clear knowledge with malignant opposition constitutes the very situation of the parties contemplated by the apostle; and therefore Christ's prayer for His actual murderers entirely harmonizes with the apostle's tremendous denunciation against apostates. Both concur in demonstrating that sins committed against the clear light of conscience

are the most dangerous of all sins, and sometimes rise to an amount of aggravation which it is frightful to contemplate. Wilful obstinacy, perseverance in sin after the understanding has been fully enlightened, and all the evidence of the truth has been seen, places men in a situation of awful danger. Presumptuous transgressors rush against the thick bosses of the Almighty's buckler, and with open eyes plunge into hell. They resemble the devils in character here, and they shall resemble them in character and state hereafter. When the Rubicon of hope may be passed, no human tongue can tell; but that there is such a stage in the downward progress of degeneracy, the apostle's language too surely indicates. And this should lead us to remember that there are peculiar dangers to which those are exposed who are much conversant professionally with the word of God. Abundance of light, unaccompanied with corresponding growth in grace and holiness, may so familiarize the mind with disregard of known duty, as to destroy its religious susceptibilities altogether.

In the 7th and 8th verses, the apostle gives a figurative illustration of the important and alarming truths which he has been propounding: *γῆ γὰρ ἡ πιοῦσα τὸν ἐπ' αὐτῆς πολλάκις ἐρχόμενον ὑετόν, καὶ τίκτουσα βοτάνην εὔθετον ἐκείνοις, δι' οὓς καὶ γεωργεῖται, μεταλαμβάνει εὐλογίας ἀπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ· ἐκφέρουσα δὲ ἀκάνθας καὶ τριβόλους, ἀδόκιμος καὶ κατάρας ἐγγύς, ἧς τὸ τέλος εἰς καῦσιν.* The general import of these verses, as descriptive of men, is sufficiently obvious. Professing Christians, who, enjoying the privileges of the gospel, lead holy and consistent lives, obtain blessings from on high; but those who, although possessing the very same advantages, live in negligence and sin, expose themselves to a more terrible doom than if they had never heard the truth at all. The whole idea is exhibited in a tropical dress, and a beautiful consistency is preserved throughout. *Γῆ* would be better translated "ground" than "earth;" for it refers not to the earth as a whole, but to a species of soil, or to a particular field under cultivation. The use of *πίνω*, as applied to ground, is quite common in the best Greek writers; and it very expressively describes the manner in which the most abundant rains are speedily absorbed. *Πιοῦσα* as an aorist expresses past time, while *τίκτουσα* and *ἐκφέρουσα* in the

two dependent clauses are both presents, because they describe consequences that follow from the reception of the rain, and are of course posterior to it. What corresponds in men to the absorption of the rain by the field, is not simply instruction, but all those advantages and influences that are exhibited so fully in the 4th and 5th verses. *Ἐπ' αὐτῆς* is conceived by Bengel to express more than *ἐπ' αὐτὴν* would do; and Winer (450) represents the difference as being, that with the genitive a degree of continuance is indicated. And not only is the rain thus represented as lingering upon the field, but also as falling frequently upon it. *Τίκτουσα*, though originally descriptive of the birth of animals, is also frequently applied to the production of the ground, the earth being conceived as a mother fructified from above. *Βοτάνη* has here a more extensive signification than in the native writers of Greece, denoting any useful production of the ground, whereas in them it is restricted to what we call herbs. This extension of the signification has resulted from the employment of *βοτάνη* in the Septuagint to represent דֶּשֶׁא and עֵשֶׂב, which include every species of vegetable food, or rather indeed every species of vegetable production, דֶּשֶׁא denoting the tender shoot, and עֵשֶׂב the plant in seed. *Εὔθετον* denotes primarily well placed, and secondarily convenient in any respect, useful, profitable, which is its signification here. *Ἐκείνοις* is viewed by some as dependent upon *τίκτουσα*, by others as governed by *εὔθετον*; but the arrangement of the words, as well as the insertion of *καὶ* before *γεωργεῖται*, seems rather to favour the latter idea. It is argued, however, by Bleek, that *εὔθετος* is generally followed, not by a dative, but by *εἰς* or *πρός*; and certainly in the only other passages of the New Testament where it occurs, this is the construction: *εὔθετός ἐστιν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ* (Luke ix. 62); *οὔτε εἰς γῆν, οὔτε εἰς κοπρίαν εὔθετόν ἐστιν* (Luke xiv. 35). *Εἰς* denotes the purpose for which useful; the dative, the parties to whom useful. There is hardly a perceptible difference, however, occasioned by whichever construction you follow. It has been doubted whether *δι' οὓς* means, by whom it is dressed, or for whom it is dressed, referring in the former case to the actual cultivators of the soil, and in the latter to the proprietors of it. With the genitive it is allowed that *διὰ* commonly denotes *by*, and with the accusative

on account of, for, though there may be exceptions; but here there is nothing to militate against the supposition of the ordinary usage, and therefore we ought to adhere to it, the more especially as the distinction is carefully observed in this epistle. The rendering of the Vulgate, therefore, *a quibus*, is undoubtedly wrong. *Δι' οὓς* refers to the proprietors of the field for whose benefit it is cultivated, and who have a right to claim the fruits in their season. Now, when we look from the figure to the thing signified, who are the proprietors? Not Christians themselves, nor Christian teachers, as some argue, but God and Christ, to whom we belong, and who have a right to expect that we produce the fruits of holiness which are well-pleasing to Heaven. God is the husbandman, who sets out the vineyard in the parable, and returns after a time for the fruits. Of the good ground it is said that it *μεταλαμβάνει εὐλογίας ἀπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ*. This is supposed by Michaelis, Ernesti, and others, to mean that the land is demonstrated by its fruitfulness to have been blessed of God. But, without a doubt, the whole construction requires that these words be viewed as describing a reward or blessing consequent upon the fruitfulness. Grotius, Wittich, and Stuart conceive the meaning to be, that the field receives the praise of fruitfulness, and is regarded with complacency by God. I am rather disposed to think that the language must be viewed as including much more than this. The reception of blessing from God must designate some positive influence by which progressive development is effected; and indeed the language of Paul seems almost borrowed from the passage in the Septuagint, or is at least exceedingly like it, where Isaac says, "The smell of my son's raiment is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed"—*ὃν εὐλόγησε Κύριος*. To restrict the blessing to a mere complacent regard, is quite irreconcilable with the ordinary meaning of the words: the blessing must be viewed as referring to those genial influences by which the fertility of the ground is enhanced, and the faithful labours of the husbandmen are made subservient to the production of ever augmenting crops. And here it may be noticed, that these concluding words of the verse have a preponderating reference to the main subject, and are less applicable to the figure than the rest of the verse. What is meant, therefore, is, that the faith-

ful use of religious advantages will be followed by augmenting blessings from on high, agreeably to the word of our Lord, "To him that hath shall be given, and more abundantly;" *μεταλαμβάνει* with genitive expresses participation.

The introductory clause, *ἡ πιοῦσα τὸν ἐπ' αὐτῆς πολλάκις ἐρχόμενον ὑετόν*, applies to the unfruitful field as well as to the fruitful one. They both receive the descending showers, and drink them in; but while the one bears valuable fruits, the other is covered with briers and thistles. Chrysostom conceives that *ἐκφέρουσα* is an inferior kind of word, and expresses the idea of an abortion, whereas *τίκτουσα* describes a prosperous birth, so that they are strictly proper in their respective places; but it has been contended by Elsner and Raphelius that usage does not justify this distinction. In Gen. iii. 18, LXX., *ἀκάνθας καὶ τριβόλους ἀνατελεῖ σοι* are the words employed to describe the effects of the original curse upon the ground; and probably the recollection of that passage might suggest the phrase to the apostle here. On account of the noxious weeds with which the ground is thus covered, it is declared to be *ἀδόκιμος*, worthless, such as cannot stand trial—such as, when inspection is made of it, is seen to be of no value. And a yet stronger expression is added—*κατάρας ἐγγύς*, near to cursing; which refers to the measures that are likely soon to be taken against it: bearing only worthless productions, it is fit for nothing but to be overrun with the flames. It has been much contested whether *ἧς* refers to *κατάρας* or to *γῆ*. According to the former view, which is adopted by Bleek, De Wette, Ebrard, Calvin, Schmid, Abreschius, the concluding clause is subordinate to the preceding member, and describes the consummation of the curse. According to the latter view, which is held by Chrysostom, Bengel, Bœhme, Tholuck, and Delitzsch, the concluding clause stands parallel to the one before it, and is epexegetic not of one word in it, but of the whole. The two constructions, however, bring out essentially the same thought. Perhaps, upon the whole, the reference to *γῆ* is preferable. *Τέλος* then bears precisely the same signification which it has in 2 Cor. xi. 15, Phil. iii. 19, where the same construction appears. It means the end of a thing, or what happens to it—whose end is destruction. But if *κατάρας* be the antecedent, then

τέλος cannot mean end, but rather the contents of the curse, or issue of it. What is the fire or burning here mentioned? Allusion is supposed by some to be made to the practice of applying fire to a field overrun with thorns and briers and thistles, where the tangled thickets, the receptacle of noxious vermin, are speedily reduced to ashes, and the whole field presents an aspect of black and dreary desolation. It is a decisive objection to this view, that when a husbandman takes the trouble of burning any field, his design is not to punish it, but to remove injurious excrescences, and if possible to render it fruitful. But the object of the burning spoken of in our text is not remedial at all, but exclusively punitive. We must therefore suppose, that as in ver. 7 the concluding clause rather describes the thing figured than adheres strictly to the drapery of the figure, so in ver. 8 there is in the conclusion a similar departure, an employment of words rather suited to the real subject than to the figure; or if it be conceived that the apostle has some ground in view that has really been burned in the way of judgment, then we must turn our thoughts to Sodom and Gomorrah, to Admah and Zeboim, on whose plains the curse of Heaven came down in a fiery deluge. As we read in Deut. xxix. 23: "The whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning: it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, which the Lord overthrew in His anger, and in His wrath."

These two verses now considered form a short allegory. The one species of ground is manifestly designed to represent those professing Christians who faithfully use the means of grace they enjoy, who bring forth fruits meet for repentance, who adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour by a conversation worthy of the gospel. They receive augmented blessings from on high, and are enabled by divine grace to advance from one degree of improvement to another. They experience the truth of Christ's promise, "To him that hath, shall be given." The seed of the word, watered with the rains and dews of heaven, produces in them precious and abundant fruit to the praise of God's grace. Those, on the other hand, represented by the barren field, are persons who, though possessing the means of spiritual improvement, yet never bear the genuine fruits of

holiness, and in whom the seed of the word, after perhaps having seemed for a time to germinate, is choked by the cares and pleasures of the world. These men draw down a tremendous curse upon their heads. Their abuse of religious privileges, their obstinate continuance in sin, their vile affections, gathering power from the very means of grace, mark them out as doomed to destruction. They are nigh to cursing. They are on the eve of being totally abandoned by Heaven; and the inevitable result of such desertion, if it do take place, will be the fire of hell. It has been the view of many expositors, that the destruction of Jerusalem is referred to in ver. 8. Obviously this is not the main idea of the apostle; and yet it is not unlikely that there might be prophetically floating before his mind that tremendous scene of judgment, as one instance of the vengeance prepared for hardened unbelievers and wicked apostates. Long ago foretold by Christ, it was now close at hand; and it is a remarkable fact, that none of the Jews who were faithful to the Saviour perished in that ruin.

The apostle has now uttered some tremendous truths, which, like thunderbolts, were fitted to alarm, to terrify, to appal. His object, however, is not to drive the Hebrews to despair, but through salutary fear to rouse them to effort. Even in the alarming description of the barren field, the expression ἐγγὺς seems thrown in to suggest to them, that he by no means yet considered their case as hopeless. Accordingly, in the next verse he proceeds to assure them, that in describing the character and doom of apostates, it was not his intention to insinuate that they were such wicked and miserable persons. The dreadful consequences of continuance in sin he had set before them, lest any of them, through abuse of their privileges, should bring themselves into that dreadful position; but he cherished a good hope of them, that being warned of the danger, and supplicating the help of God's grace, they would renew their efforts, and strive to persevere in holiness. It is noticed by Bengel, that this is the only place in the epistle where the endearing epithet ἀγαπητοὶ occurs; and Delitzsch remarks, that if it was to be used only once, there was no other place where its introduction could be more necessary or effective. It was fitted to soothe the minds of the Hebrews, and to make them sensible that, if the apostle had

uttered some severe things, he had done so out of true affection for them. The plural *πεπείσμεθα* refers to the writer alone, as in several other parts of the epistle. Bœhme remarks, that *πεπείσμεθα* expresses more than *πεποίθαμεν* would have done; the difference being, that the latter word would simply have indicated a friendly trust, while the former expresses a conviction, produced by external grounds and considerations. Remarkably analogous to this passage is Rom. xv. 14: *πέπεισμαι δέ, ἀδελφοί μου, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐγὼ περὶ ὑμῶν, ὅτι καὶ αὐτοὶ μεστοί ἐστε ἀγαθωσύνης.*

Ver. 9. *Πεπείσμεθα δὲ περὶ ὑμῶν, ἀγαπητοί, τὰ κρείττονα καὶ ἐχόμενα σωτηρίας, εἰ καὶ οὕτω λαλοῦμεν.* We speak terrible truths, but it is not to fill you with despair; it is to warn you of danger, and to incite you to diligence: and we have good ground, in the love which you have shown to God's name, and in your ministering to saints, for confidently hoping that, though you have been remiss in some things, ye are really devoted to the Saviour, and will obtain the salvation which awaits the redeemed in heaven.

It has been doubted whether the *κρείττονα πράγματα* here mentioned are to be viewed as a contrast to the curse itself, or to the wickedness that entails the curse. In the former case, the expression would mean the illustrious rewards which believers are to receive in heaven: in the latter, it would refer to the present faith and Christian conduct of the Hebrews. In defence of the former idea it has been argued, that in the very next verse, connected with the present one by *γάρ*, the apostle declares, as his reason for the confidence expressed, that God is not unjust to forget your work and love: He will not forget them, but will assuredly bestow the appropriate reward: the *κρείττονα πράγματα*, therefore, it is said, must be that reward. But in defence of the idea, that the phrase refers to the faith, and hope, and Christian graces of the Hebrews, it may be argued, that the very same things which are designated *κρείττονα* are also described as *ἐχόμενα σωτηρίας*. Now this expression, which is perfectly conformed to the usage of the verb *ἔχεσθαι*, denotes things connected with salvation, things standing in close relation to it; it cannot mean the final salvation itself, but rather what is inseparably associated with it. Now what can these things be, but the present faith, and trust, and perse-

verance of believers? For let it be observed, that as *ἐχόμενα σωτηρίας* is obviously a contrast to *κατάρας ἐγγύς*,—bordering upon salvation, bordering upon cursing,—it must denote things preceding salvation, connected with it as antecedents, and not as consequents. Were it necessary, then, to decide for one of the two references mentioned, to the exclusion of the other, there could be no doubt that present Christian graces, the opposite of thorns and thistles, would be entitled to the preference. Confidence as to the future wellbeing of any individual, not grounded upon anything good in his present condition, would be altogether vain, and what we may be sure the apostle would not express. But there seems no good reason why the word *κρείττονα*, more especially as being plural, may not refer both to the present character and also to the future condition of the Hebrews, and thus form a contrast both to the thorns and thistles of the useless field, and also to the curse ultimately alighting upon it. The persuasion expressed by the apostle is, that the Hebrews, with all their faults and backslidings, neither deserved to be compared to a field that bore nothing but noxious productions, nor would be subjected to such a curse of burning as barrenness entailed. This was his confidence, although he had spoken of such things with the view of arousing them to new zeal and energy. *Εἰ καὶ οὕτω λαλοῦμεν*—although we thus speak. The present tense, instead of the aorist *ἐλαλήσαμεν*, which might have been used, keeps the danger still before the eyes of the Hebrews, and reminds them that the apostle, though now speaking favourably, is not disposed to retract anything he has said.

Ver. 10. *Οὐ γὰρ ἄδικος ὁ Θεὸς ἐπιλαθέσθαι τοῦ ἔργου ὑμῶν, καὶ τῆς ἀγάπης, ἧς ἐνεδείξασθε εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, διακονήσαντες τοῖς ἁγίοις, καὶ διακονοῦντες.* It is alleged by Stuart and others, that *ἄδικος* must here mean unkind, unmerciful; and the chief argument in defence of this signification is founded upon the supposed exigency of the passage: it is also argued, that *δίκαιος* sometimes means merciful, benevolent; and that *ἄδικος* may therefore mean unmerciful, cruel. But no example can be pointed out of such a meaning of *ἄδικος*; and even with respect to *δίκαιος*, it is not clear that it ever specifically means merciful. Doubtless חָסִיד is rendered in the Septuagint both by *ἐλεημο-*

σύνη and δικαιοσύνη; but there is no proof that the same usage in respect of δικαιοσύνη passed into the New Testament. The only case where something like the signification of merciful seems to attach to δίκαιος in the New Testament, is Matt. i. 19, where we are told that Joseph ὢν δίκαιος, and not wishing to make a public example of Mary, thought of putting her away privately. But Principal Campbell has rightly explained the word in this passage, when he argues that it must be viewed, not as expressing the specific idea of merciful, but the more generic idea of worthy, upright—what includes every essential quality of a good man. But even though it were quite clear that δίκαιος did sometimes mean merciful, it would not therefore follow that ἄδικος should mean unmerciful; for it often happens that certain members of a family of words acquire a particular signification, which does not run etymologically throughout the whole. A presumption may accrue in reasoning from one such word to another; and where the doubtful term is of rare occurrence, the presumption may be entitled to some weight; but where the word itself is of frequent occurrence, an argument from etymology is of small value. Unjust, therefore, I doubt not, is the sense we must attach here to ἄδικος.

Does the apostle, then, it may be asked, mean to insinuate that there is such a merit in the works of believers as entitles them to a reward from God, which it would be unjust to withhold? Such a deduction would be a gross abuse of the passage. There is nothing more explicitly taught in Scripture than this, that the persons and services of men are accepted only through Jesus Christ, and that all their own righteousnesses, so far from possessing any merit, are in the sight of God but as filthy rags. What have we that we have not received? and must not the idea then be absurd, that we can in strictness of speech make God our debtor? Let the most eminent Christians be tried according to the exact letter of the law, and they could not for a moment stand the test. Now the apostle's language must be understood without prejudice to those great principles which make the salvation of man and the title to eternal life result from the free grace of God. But let it be noted that the Almighty, while in the exercise of unmerited mercy He has freely bestowed the blessings of salvation, has at the same time

given to His people promises of happiness and glory hereafter, to be proportioned to their present attainments. Now, in reference to these promises or covenant engagements, it may be said of God, that He is not unrighteous to forget the work and love of His people. "Se autem nobis," well observes Augustine, "debitorem fecit, non aliquid a nobis accipiendo, sed omnia liberaliter promittendo." Calvin, too, illustrates this clause by a reference to Phil. i. 6, where the commencement of a good work by God in any soul is represented by Paul as a kind of pledge that He will not abandon it, but will watch its progress, and do what is needful for its final accomplishment. The aspirations and principles which God graciously implants in any heart, it concerns Him as a wise and righteous ruler not to disappoint; and therefore He fans the smoking flax, and prevents the bruised reed from being altogether broken. Perhaps the passage of all others most analogous to the one before us is 1 John i. 9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" —πιστός ἐστι καὶ δίκαιος. Does this mean that confession possesses such a virtue in its very nature as constitutes of itself a title to pardon, which it would be unjust in God to overlook? The very idea would be subversive of the whole scheme of the gospel: if this were the case, there would be no occasion for Christ's sacrifice at all. Obviously the kind of obligation referred to by John as resting upon God, is such an obligation as springs, not from any meritorious claim on our part, but from His own free and gracious engagements. He cannot deny Himself: He cannot be unfaithful to His promises (John's language supplies the key to the whole): He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. It is the same principle which leads the God of the gospel to bestow pardon at first where confession is made, to grant additional grace for the advancement of His believing people in holiness, and to confer glory at last proportioned to the attainments made here in the divine life. We have no claim of merit to any of these blessings, yet we may expect them all from a God of righteousness, because He has promised to bestow them. The final reward is a reward of grace. It is grace that strengthens us for the duties and trials of our pilgrimage; and it is grace that admits us at first within the

sacred enclosure of the Christian fold. Yet God's very grace is our best assurance that He will not forget any work performed in His cause, or love manifested to His name.

The reading of the verse before us is contested. Many MSS. omit the words *τοῦ κόπου*, and many contain them. Griesbach gives a detail of the evidence on both sides, and decides against the clause; Schulz, on the other hand, admits it. But Knapp and Lachmann reject it, as also Beza, Mill, Bengel, Bleek, Delitzsch. And, indeed, it is now generally allowed that the preponderance of evidence, whether you look to Greek MSS., or ancient versions, or the comments of the fathers, is against the admission of *κόπου*; and the probability seems to be, that the reading has crept in as an interpolation from 1 Thess. i. 3, where the same phrase occurs.

The work spoken of here is not faith, as some conceive, but Christian conduct in general, which of course springs from faith. While the plural *ἔργα* denotes individual works or actions, and the singular *ἔργον* sometimes a particular deed, as in Mark xiv. 6, in such passages as the one before us, and 1 Thess. i. 3, Gal. vi. 4, it expresses very much the verbal idea of doing, working. And if inquiry be made as to the favourable features by which the conduct of the Hebrews was characterized, we must with Grotius go to chap. x. 32, where they are commended for having endured a great fight of afflictions, bearing reproaches and troubles themselves, and sympathizing with others in the like position. Coupled with *ἔργου ὑμῶν* is *καὶ τῆς ἀγάπης*, which is not merely exegetic, but rather occupies the position of a particular feature brought out into prominence from the general *ἔργον* or course of conduct.

It has been made a question whether *εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ* describes the object of the love—love shown to God's name; or whether the love spoken of mean love to the brethren manifested in God's name. So the Vulgate: *in nomine ejus.* At first sight, it would seem as if the concluding clause, *διακονήσαντες τοῖς ἁγίοις καὶ διακονοῦντες*, were decisive in favour of the latter view; but it is not. No doubt *εἰς* is sometimes used pretty much in the sense of *ἐν*, and that, too, in connection with *ὄνομα*, as in Matt. x. 41, 42, *ὁ δεχόμενος προφήτην εἰς ὄνομα προφήτου*; but in the passage under consideration, the

article before *ἀγάπης* naturally awakens the expectation that its object will be defined; and the preposition *εἰς*, generally implying motion towards, is quite fitted to indicate that object. So in Rom. v. 8, God commendeth *ἑαυτοῦ ἀγάπην εἰς ἡμᾶς*. See also 2 Cor. ii. 4, 8, that ye may know the love *ἣν ἔχω περισσοτέρως εἰς ὑμᾶς*; so also Eph. i. 15, Col. i. 4, 1 Pet. iv. 8. This is the view taken by Chrysostom and Theophylact in former days, and also by most recent interpreters.

The concluding clause defines more narrowly the nature of the *ἔργον* and the operation of the *ἀγάπη* spoken of: *διακονήσαντες τοῖς ἁγίοις καὶ διακονοῦντες*. The Hebrews' love to the name of God was not a mere profession; it was displayed in acts of kindness to the children of God, agreeably to the apostolic maxim: "He that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him." *Διακονεῖν* and *διακονία* are words of frequent occurrence in the common Greek, in the sense of furnishing and preparing means of subsistence; and they are applied in the New Testament to the help afforded by Christians to one another in times of sickness and distress, as in Rom. xv. 25, 2 Cor. viii. 4. The words, as here used, must be viewed as including every kind of service, whether in the shape of money, or sympathy, or advice, or exertion. The participle of the present coupled with the participle of the aorist embodies the acknowledgment of the apostle that the benevolent exertions and sacrifices of the Hebrews did not all belong to the past, but were still to a greater or less extent characteristic of them. Thus the duty of perseverance in every good work is tacitly enjoined. It is not the fact of having once yielded obedience to the maxims of the gospel that will entitle us to be received with the welcome, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord:" past performances can never cancel present obligations. Because there are cases where *οἱ ἅγιοι*, without any term qualifying, is applied to the Christians of Palestine, and particularly to the mother church at Jerusalem, as in Rom. xv. 25, 2 Cor. viii. 4, ix. 1, etc., it is argued by De Wette, that the Hebrews to whom this epistle was addressed must have been Jewish converts residing somewhere abroad, from whom help was sent to their suffering countrymen at Rome. But the argument fails at two points. In the first place, whatever

might be the usage as to ἅγιοι, it gradually changed, as it could not but do with the spread of the gospel; and there are passages where it is applied by itself to Gentile Christians, as in 1 Cor. vi. 1; and there are also passages where, to discriminate the saints of Palestine, τῶν ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ is added, as in Rom. xv. 26. But again, even if the usage contended for had been uniform, the conclusion would not follow: for there were many Christians in Jerusalem who were possessed of means to aid their poorer brethren; and, in fact, one of the brightest examples of Christian beneficence recorded in Scripture was exhibited at Jerusalem, when those who had lands and houses sold them, and brought the proceeds to the apostles, that distribution might be made to all, as every man had need.

Ver. 11. Having now expressed a good hope respecting the spiritual state of the Hebrews, and mingled commendation with the sharpness of his reproof, the apostle next intimates that his object in using the alarming words, which might be offensive to some, was not to cause them pain, but to guard them against danger, and to rouse them to strenuous perseverance in the discharge of Christian duty. Ἐπιθυμοῦμεν δὲ ἕκαστον ὑμῶν τὴν αὐτὴν ἐνδείκνυσθαι σπουδὴν πρὸς τὴν πληροφορίαν τῆς ἐλπίδος ἄχρι τέλους. Ἐπιθυμοῦμεν expresses a very earnest and longing desire. Chrysostom says that it indicates the deep feeling of a father: καὶ οὐκ εἶπε, θέλω, ὅπερ ἦν διδασκαλικῆς αὐθεντίας, ἀλλ' ὃ πατρικῆς ἦν φιλοστοργίας, καὶ πλέον τοῦ θέλειν, ἐπιθυμοῦμεν. Theophylact, too, paraphrases the word thus: ἡ ψυχή μου καίεται ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν. Now, the glowing zeal which the apostle thus felt leads him to individualize his readers. He does not say ὑμᾶς, but ἕκαστον ὑμῶν, which shows that he was not merely concerned for the general welfare of the church, but profoundly for the spiritual prosperity of each individual soul among them. A minister, in order to discharge properly the functions of his office, must look after the individual members of his congregation. It is probable, too, that the words of the apostle embody the acknowledgment that there were not a few among the Hebrews whose conduct was all he could wish; but this was not enough. It was his desire, not simply that some, not simply that many, but that each individual, manifested the full power of the gospel in his whole deportment.

Two leading views, with subordinate modifications, have prevailed with regard to the meaning of this verse. Chrysostom, Theodoret, Grotius, Schlichting, Limborch, and others, conceive the apostle's desire to be, that the Hebrews would continue to the end to manifest the same zeal in ministering to the saints as they had hitherto done. But it is a strong objection to this interpretation, that the new idea embodied in the phrase *πρὸς τὴν πληροφορίαν τῆς ἐλπίδος* is made to occupy quite a subordinate place. Besides, if the apostle's chief desire with regard to the Hebrews was that they should continue to act just as he acknowledges they had been doing, it is difficult to see what ground there could be for the strong censures which he has pronounced against them, and which he afterwards repeats. Less vehemence, too, might have better suited an admonition just to go on acting as in time past. Sykes indeed conceives, looking to the phrase *ἕκαστον ὑμῶν*, that the special object of the apostle's strong desire is, that the same zeal which some of them had shown in ministering, each individual would now manifest; but so far as the ministering to the saints is concerned, it is not spoken of in ver. 10 as characteristic of some members only, but of the church as a whole, and therefore the verse is not susceptible of this peculiar turn. The other view of the verse—adopted in substance by Bengel, Cramer, Bœhme, Bleek, Lunemann, Ebrard, and Delitzsch—makes the apostle's desire to be, that the same zeal which the Hebrews had manifested in giving help and sympathy to the afflicted, they would now manifest also in another direction, viz. *πρὸς τὴν πληροφορίαν τῆς ἐλπίδος*. They had been exemplary in one respect, which is cheerfully acknowledged as an encouraging circumstance, but their confidence in the great hopes and promises of the gospel had suffered decline; and however stedfast some of them might still be in their attachment to Jesus, and in their expectations of His return, there were not a few of them who were wavering, and disposed to question whether it might not be better for them to fall back to the old religion. The precise point where their Christian character threatened to fail was in respect of the confidence to be placed in the promises of Christ, however long hope might be deferred; and accordingly we find, in various parts of the epistle, admonitions to hold fast their hope and trust.

See chap. x. 23, iii. 6, 14—the beginning of their confidence firm to the end. Now, this is the very thing of which the desire is here so strongly expressed by the apostle. Show the same desire *πρὸς τὴν πληροφορίαν τῆς ἐλπίδος*. The verb *πληροφορεῖν*, which belongs to later Greek, signifies to bring full, to give sufficiency; and the passive means to be fully convinced, as in Rom. iv. 21, xiv. 5. The noun also bears the analogous signification of full conviction, perfect assurance, as in 1 Thess. i. 5, Col. ii. 2, Heb. x. 22; and coupled with *ἐλπίδος*, it means perfect confidence of hope, unwavering expectation. What the apostle wanted of the Hebrews was, that they should not vacillate in their Christian hope, that they should not be tempted by the deferred fulfilment of Scripture promises to doubt of the truth of Christianity, or to give any quarter to the idea of returning to Judaism. It admits of question whether *ἄχρι τέλους* stood connected in the writer's mind with the verb *ἐνδείκνυσθαι*, that ye show the same diligence to the end, or with *τὴν πληροφορίαν τῆς ἐλπίδος*, in regard to the confident hoping to the end. The one idea does not materially differ from the other. In either case the duty of unwearied perseverance is inculcated. No confidence of hope possessed at one time is of any value if we afterwards decline from the paths of godliness. The *πληροφορία τῆς ἐλπίδος* here spoken of necessarily implies faith, and is therefore analogous to the *πληροφορία τῆς πίστεως* in chap. x. 22. Hope is grounded upon belief, and confident hope must have confident belief for its basis. The two phrases run into one another, and designate substantially the same thing. There is no ground for the idea entertained by some, that the one designates mere conviction of the truth of the gospel, and the other the higher point of conviction of one's own personal interest in the gospel. They both look to the same thing, viz. promised blessings, which the one describes as believed, and the other as therefore anticipated.

This verse has no reference to what has been designated the doctrine of personal assurance, or the acquisition of a thorough conviction of one's own individual interest in Christ. That such a persuasion—and that, too, well grounded—is attainable, is obvious from the admonition of Peter, to give all diligence to make our calling and election sure. But here the feeling which

the apostle admonishes the Hebrews to cherish, is an unfaltering persuasion of the great truths and promises of the gospel, which they had begun to hold with a loose grasp. The opposite of personal assurance is not doubt about the truth of the gospel, but doubt about one's own individual interest in its blessings. The opposite, however, of the confidence of hope recommended by the apostle, is such a doubt about the promises of Christ as leads one to question the likelihood of their fulfilment, and tempts him to apostatize to some other form of religion, as in the case of Hebrews to Judaism. But though the apostle is not here speaking of what is currently designated in our theological literature the assurance of faith, yet without question the course which he recommends would naturally issue in that blessed result. The more the Hebrews abounded in love, in deeds of Christian beneficence, in firm conviction of the truths of Christ's promises, they would always be the more likely to feel an unhesitating persuasion of their own saving union to Christ, and title to the glories of His kingdom.

It is a Christian's holy life that is the evidence, both to himself and to others, of the reality of his faith, according to our Lord's principle: The tree is known by its fruits. There are some, however, whose pretensions to evangelical sentiment are extremely high, who affirm that we should never look to ourselves for any ground of hope; that it is an intrusion upon the office of Christ to represent assurance as resting upon anything else than the promise of God, or the free pardon proffered in the gospel. But there is here an obvious confusion of thought. When the question is, What is the ground of a sinner's acceptance? the answer is, Christ's righteousness received by faith alone. When the question is, What is the ground of a true saving faith? the answer is, The testimony of God applied to the conscience by the Holy Ghost. But when the question is, Has some particular man, A or B, really believed the gospel and obtained pardon? it must obviously be something connected with the man himself to which you look for an answer. Has the gospel produced its legitimate influence upon his dispositions and life? Is he bringing forth fruits meet for repentance? Is he yielding a diligent and cheerful obedience to the commandments of Christ?

Ver. 12. The admonition to be as zealous in cultivating confidence of hope with respect to the promises of God as in performing deeds of kindness, is enforced as the best means of guarding the Hebrews against slothfulness, and rousing them to the imitation of those who have been faithful and persevering in times past. Illustrations grounded upon contrast are very impressive; and the value of example as an enforcement of precept is proverbial. As exhibited in the English version, the 12th verse seems to describe a second object of desire, standing on quite the same platform as the first, in the 11th verse: we desire *that* ye do show zeal, that ye be not slothful. But the direct object of the apostle's desire, as stated in the 11th verse, is, that the Hebrews cultivate some good confidence of hope, and then the 12th verse exhibits the influence which this state of mind will exert upon their conduct. We desire, etc., so that ye may not be: *ἵνα μὴ νωθροὶ γένησθε, μιμηταὶ δὲ τῶν διὰ πίστεως καὶ μακροθυμίας κληρονομούντων τὰς ἐπαγγελίας.* As in chap. v. 11 the apostle declares the Hebrews to be *νωθροί*, dull of hearing, it has been imagined by some that we have here something like a contradiction; but the verse before us points to the future as moulded anew by strengthened Christian hope. Besides, in the former passage the word refers to slowness of apprehension, but in this it describes slothfulness, the indisposition for effort that results from feeble convictions.

Μιμητὴς is a word repeatedly used by Paul, but by none of the other apostles, excepting once by Peter (1 Pet. iii. 13), where its genuineness is questionable.

Πίστεως and *μακροθυμίας* express analogous ideas: faith, and the endurance to which faith prompts. Without faith there can be no confidence of hope, and without some good degree of hope there can be no continued effort. *Πίστεως* and *μακροθυμίας*, therefore, are indeed just of the same general import as *πληροφορία τῆς ἐλπίδος*. Most frequently *μακροθυμία* is employed to indicate the divine forbearance and long-suffering in respect of sinners; but it is also sometimes applied to the fortitude with which men endure trials, and the constancy with which they cherish hope (Jas. v. 7, 8, 10).

The *ἐπαγγελίαι* here mentioned are the promises given by Jehovah to His people under the old dispensation, which have

all since obtained their fulfilment in Christ. To lay hold of these promises, and trust to them confidently, prior to their fulfilment, was a much greater exercise of faith than to accept them now. Yet there were many saints of old who walked with God, in the comparative darkness of ancient times, trusting to His word, and cherishing the confident hope of its accomplishment. Their faith failed them not in times of perplexity, and their example is worthy of being copied in every age. We should imitate their faith and patience, that we may obtain the same reward with which they have been blessed. It has been made a question, whether the persons here held up to the imitation of the Hebrews be the patriarchs alone, or departed Christians alone, or departed saints in general. That the patriarchs were in the apostle's mind, is shown by the reference to Abraham which immediately follows. Indeed, that reference is the reason alleged for the supposition, that they only are meant in ver. 12. But the reason does not hold good to this extent; for the leading purpose of the verses that follow is not to exhibit an example of a believing and persevering saint, but rather to point out in the oath of God the grounds for confident, unshaken hope. Besides, if the patriarchs alone had been meant, we should have expected *κληρονομησάντων* instead of *κληρονομούντων*. The tense of the participle obliges us to conclude, that departed saints in general, whether belonging to the old economy or to the new, are equally meant by the apostle. And in what sense are we to understand the affirmation made regarding them, that they are inheriting the promises? Bleek, looking to chap. xi. 13, 39, where it is said of the saints of old, that they all died in faith without receiving the promises—that they obtained not the blessings promised, conceives that it would fasten a contradiction upon the apostle, were he made here to say, that they did inherit the actual blessings promised by God; and therefore he understands the words as simply meaning, that they inherited or obtained promises in the strict literal sense, as distinguished from their fulfilment. But it is overlooked that the passages quoted from chap. xi. refer to the earthly life of the patriarchs: so long as they lived here it was promises merely which they enjoyed, but the fulfilment happened not in their day. In the passage before us, however, the

connection obliges us to think of something happening after death. We are to maintain our confidence of hope ἄχρι τέλους, and we are to encourage ourselves in doing this by thinking of those who have gone before us, and who have in this way reached already the inheritance of the promises. Obviously, therefore, κληρονομούντων does not refer to the receiving of promises upon the earth, but to the obtaining of the promised blessings after death. The faith and patience of the departed ancestors of the Hebrews had met with a glorious reward. They were now enjoying, in the invisible world, the blessings purchased by Christ for His people. That this is the correct view of the passage, is obvious further from the fact, that the inheriting of the promises is described as the result of faith and patience; whereas if meant simply, as Bleek supposes, having promises given to one upon the earth, it would rather be the antecedent of faith than the reward of it. Bleek, indeed, says, that what is meant is, that the promises, in consequence of being received and held fast, became a kind of hereditary possession; and the view of Grotius seems to have been the same: jus certissimum ad posteritatem transmiserunt. But the persons described as κληρονομούντων are not the children of those who manifested faith and patience, but the very individuals themselves. Besides, κληρονομεῖν does not necessarily mean "obtain as an heir," but simply acquire or possess, as is evident from the fact that it is interchanged with ἐπιτυγχάνειν in ver. 15. Without a doubt, actual blessings enjoyed after death are here described. The reception or belief of the promise is faith; the long-continued adherence to faith is patience; and the final result of both is τὸ κληρονομεῖν τὰς ἐπαγγελίας, obtaining the precious enjoyments which the promise exhibited. Ἐπαγγελία in other passages, as well as here, denotes the thing promised (Luke xxiv. 49; Acts i. 4; Heb. x. 36).

Vers. 13–15. The blessed results of persevering faith, which the apostle employs to urge the Hebrews to unwearied diligence, he illustrates not only by a reference to their pious ancestors generally, but also by a particular description of the case of Abraham, whose faith, though most severely tried, yet most signally triumphed, and was most gloriously rewarded: τῷ γὰρ Ἀβραὰμ ἐπαγγειλάμενος ὁ Θεός, ἐπεὶ κατ' οὐδενὸς εἶχε μείζονος

ὀμόσαι, ὤμοσε καθ' ἑαυτοῦ, λέγων, Ἢ μὴν εὐλογῶν εὐλογήσω σε, καὶ πληθύνων πληθυνῶ σε· καὶ οὕτω μακροθυμήσας ἐπέτυχε τῆς ἐπαγγελίας.

Bœhme refers γὰρ to ἐνδείκνυσθαι σπουδήν, in ver. 11, as a reason for the zeal there enjoined; but ἐπαγγειλάμενος reduplicating upon τὰς ἐπαγγελίας, which immediately precedes, shows that what the conjunction introduces is designed primarily to illustrate the concluding clause, 12th verse. There are persons inheriting the promises, and Abraham is one of these. And with peculiar propriety is his case selected, both because he was the person to whom the great evangelical promise was most explicitly unfolded, and also because his own faith in it was so strong and unwavering, that he has been designated the father of the faithful. The selection of his case, too, is attended with the advantage, that it affords the opportunity of referring to the oath with which God confirmed His promise, which justifies the confidence of hope recommended by the apostle. Another reason, too, for bringing Abraham upon the field, is his connection with Melchizedek, whose priesthood has already been adverted to, and is immediately to become the subject of detailed consideration.

It has been made a question, whether ἐπαγγειλάμενος, as the participle of an aorist, should not be viewed as referring to a time prior to that indicated by the finite verb ὤμοσε, and as therefore embracing all the promises that had been given to Abraham from his youth. De Wette and Lunemann take this view. But the time of the aorist participle frequently coincides with the time of the finite verb; and it must do so here, because the words of the promise are quoted, and are described as being uttered along with the oath: "He sware by Himself, saying, Blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee." Not therefore the earlier promises given to Abraham in Chaldea, or during his early residence in Canaan, are here meant; but the glorious promises which followed the offering of Isaac, described in Gen. xxii. 16–18, promises of an eminently Messianic character, the first and only promises that were confirmed with the sanction of an oath.

The promise referred to is cited by the apostle. In its full amplitude it is recorded in Gen. xxii. 17: "In blessing I will

bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies: and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." The apostle's citation is taken from the Septuagint, with this difference, that for πληθυνῶ τὸ σπέρμα σου, he simply says πληθυνῶ σε, which, however, means substantially the same thing. Bleek, De Wette, and Lunemann conceive that the apostle's reason for the change was that he had only here to do with Abraham as an individual; but Delitzsch sets aside this argument by the consideration that πληθυνῶ necessarily implies the idea of posterity, and therefore maintains that the sole reason for the abbreviation was the desire to present the promise in the most concentrated possible form. The full import of this great evangelical promise is unfolded by Paul in various parts of his writings: it relates to Abraham personally, it relates to his posterity; it relates to this world, it relates to the world to come. Abraham, as an individual, was greatly blessed in temporal matters, and became a man of vast possessions and distinguished renown: but the apostle tells us that his faith in this promise was counted for righteousness (Gen. xv. 6, xvii. 4); on the ground of it he also looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Again, Abraham became the father, through Isaac, of a very numerous posterity, who to this day live as a separate race: but Paul, in Rom. iv. 16, expounds the same promise of the spiritual seed of Abraham, whether consisting of believing Jews or converted Gentiles. "The promise," says he, "is sure to all the seed: not to that only which is of the law, but that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, (as it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations.)" And it is this view only of the promise which furnishes an adequate reason for the solemnity of an oath, with which it was accompanied when given to Abraham: it was much more than a promise of temporal greatness. And it is the same view of it which explains the marvellous power ascribed to it by the apostle, of imparting consolation to believers. And it is worthy of notice, too, that as the apostle, in what follows, brings into prominence the significancy of the oath that confirmed the

great evangelic promise to Abraham, so does he afterwards make of similar avail the oath with which God appointed the Mediator of the new covenant to the office of the priesthood. The promise itself, and the priesthood through which it was to be accomplished, were both inaugurated by oaths of God, and no other promise or priesthood ever enjoyed the same distinction. Thus we see that the apostle, even during his suspension of the treatment of Melchizedek's priesthood from chap. v. 11 to chap. viii. 1, still, amid the hortative digression of chap. vi., is throwing out hints, and continues sowing seeds of argument which will spring up into a crop of convincing demonstration when he comes to compare Abraham with Melchizedek, and Melchizedek with Christ.

God sware by Himself, because there was no greater by whom He could swear. *Καθ' ἑαυτοῦ. Κατὰ* is so used after *ὄμνυμι* only here in the New Testament, but it frequently occurs in the Septuagint, and also in the later Greek writers. The prevailing mode of indicating the object by which you swear in the New Testament is by means of *ἐν*, as in Matt. v. 34, etc.: *μήτε ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ· μήτε ἐν τῇ γῇ. Εἶχε ὀμόσαι*, which means "had to swear" in the sense of having the opportunity or power of doing so, is a genuine Greek construction, although in the New Testament it occurs only here and in four passages of Luke's writings, which is considered by some as favouring the idea that Luke had something to do with writing the Epistle to the Hebrews. An oath is an appeal to the highest known power, and therefore God in swearing could only swear by Himself. If He had sworn by the heavens and by the earth, then, as a writer in the Talmud remarks, the obligation of the oath would have ceased with the dissolution of the world; but as He Himself lives *in secula seculorum*, the oath sworn to Abraham will continue in force through eternity.

Εὐλογῶν εὐλογήσω σε is a well-known Hebraism, grounded upon the practice of strengthening the finite verb by means of the infinitive absolute. *Ἦ μὴν* is a form of asseveration or swearing of frequent occurrence in the best Greek authors: it is a double affirmation—*ἦ* indeed, *μὴν* certainly,—and intimates the perfect assurance with which the statement which it introduces is made.

Ver. 15. *Καὶ οὕτω μακροθυμήσας ἐπέτυχε τῆς ἐπαγγελίας.* Here we have the concluding member for which the two preceding verses have prepared the way. *Οὕτω* refers to the divine promise confirmed by an oath, which sustained Abraham under all trials; and *μακροθυμήσας* describes the perseverance which he was in consequence enabled to manifest. This word embodies here essentially the same ideas as *διὰ πίστεως καὶ μακροθυμίας* in the 12th verse—believing amid all perplexities, persevering amid all dangers, holding fast, as the apostle elsewhere expresses it, the beginning of one's confidence stedfast unto the end.

And what is the import of *ἐπέτυχε τῆς ἐπαγγελίας*? Those who view *κληρονομούντων τὰς ἐπαγγελίας* in ver. 12 as describing the possession simply of promises, not enjoyment of promised blessings, are necessarily obliged to assign the same meaning to this phrase; for here we have just a particular instance of the general statement there made. And accordingly Bleek insists that *ἐπέτυχε τῆς ἐπαγγελίας* is just a statement of the fact that Abraham received from God the assurance, Blessing I will bless thee, and that *μακροθυμήσας* describes his conduct previously to this period. But this view violates all logical order. It reduces ver. 15 to a mere restatement of what has been affirmed in vers. 13, 14. And as the promise quoted here from Genesis was given to Abraham mainly on account of his prompt surrender of Isaac, *μακροθυμήσας* must be viewed, contrary to all the proprieties of language, as describing his feeling in preparing for the sacrifice of his son. Without a question, therefore, *ἐπέτυχε τῆς ἐπαγγελίας* must here mean, obtained the promised blessing, which is the sense of the phrase in chap. xi. 33. And so Abraham, having received from God a promise confirmed by an oath, persevered with faith and patience for a course of years, and at last obtained possession of the blessing itself.

Some, however, of those who take this view of *ἐπέτυχε τῆς ἐπαγγελίας* say it was the birth of Isaac that was the blessing Abraham obtained as the reward of his faith, for Isaac was promised many years before he was born. But the circumstances connected with the history of Abraham quite forbid this explanation. The patriarch received the promise of a

numerous posterity and of great spiritual privileges when he first left Ur of the Chaldees (Gen. xii. 2). The same promise was afterwards repeated to him on different occasions (xv. 4, xvii. 1–8); but it was never accompanied with an oath until the time when he displayed his willingness to sacrifice Isaac in obedience to the command of God. Then we are told God said (xxii. 17), "By myself have I sworn," or do I swear, בִּי נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי, "for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that in blessing," etc. As the only promise, then, which was given to Abraham with an oath was given when Isaac was a young man, it is abundantly clear that the fulfilment of it could have no respect to the birth of Isaac. Others, feeling the force of these historical considerations, say the blessing which Abraham is here said to have obtained, was the restoration of Isaac from what seemed certain death. But, in the first place, the sparing of Isaac was not promised to Abraham: it took place unexpectedly,—to his joy certainly, but also to his surprise. Then, again, this event did not follow but preceded the oath—confirmed the promise. Neither, therefore, in the birth of Isaac, nor in the restoration of him from the altar of sacrifice, nor in any subsequent event of Abraham's earthly life, are we to search for the blessing here described. Abraham, in fact, was now near the close of his career: all the most important events of his earthly being were past; and there can be no room for doubting that *ἐπέτυχε τῆς ἐπαγγελίας* describes the blessed result of his perseverance to the end of life. It means, in fact, the same thing as *κληρονομούντων τὰς ἐπαγγελίας* in ver. 12: receiving the blessings of the life to come. And in this view of the language, the case of Abraham bears far more intimately upon the particular scope of the passage; for the special object of the apostle here is to show how confidently believers may anticipate finally reaching the place whither Christ the forerunner hath gone. Any fulfilment of a promise doubtless confirms other promises given by the same party; but a fulfilment consisting of the bestowment of the identical thing we are expecting is a case more perfectly in point, and affords the strongest confirmation. Abraham hath obtained the promise in the invisible world: let us copy his faith, and we shall share his reward.

Ver. 16. Having thus adduced the case of Abraham as a particular illustration of the general statement made in the close of ver. 12, the apostle now lays hold of the oath, which the description of that case had led him to mention, and employs it to demonstrate the stability of the ground upon which believers stand, and the unwavering trust and confidence of hope which they ought to cherish. He proceeds upon the principle set forth in detail in the Epistles to the Romans (iv. 17) and the Galatians (iii. 8–16), that the promise given to Abraham had respect to the great salvation to be accomplished by the Messiah, and finally to be enjoyed in the region to which Christ the forerunner (ver. 20) has now gone. First of all he refers to the nature and purpose of an oath among men: *ἄνθρωποι μὲν γὰρ κατὰ τοῦ μείζονος ὀμνύουσιν, καὶ πάσης αὐτοῖς ἀντιλογίας πέρας εἰς βεβαίωσιν ὁ ὅρκος.* *Γὰρ* connects with the case of Abraham, not merely the 16th verse, but the whole exposition that follows of the rich consolation and precious encouragement embodied in the oath of God. *Μὲν* is wanting in some of the oldest MSS., and is rejected by Tischendorf, Lachmann, Bleek, and others. It is not followed here by the usual co-related δέ, which supplies something like an argument against its genuineness. And yet there are not a few cases, as Winer shows, p. 624, where the contrast to *μὲν* is not expressed when it can be readily supplied from the context, and he instances the verse before us as one. Men indeed swear by the greater, but God only by Himself. The commencement with *ἄνθρωποι*, when it is God's oath that is to be the main subject, seems to require the presence of *μέν*; and the contrast substantially is what formally appears in ver. 17. Men swear by the greater, by one greater than themselves: this is a circumstance essential to an oath among men, who are changeable beings, and who have too much cause to mistrust one another. Appeal is therefore made to a superior being, even to God, who is the Witness of all human actions, who is the Guardian of justice and righteousness, and the Avenger of injustice and deception. A false oath, therefore, is a most daring insult to the sacred majesty of Heaven: perjury is justly considered one of the greatest of sins. The reason, doubtless, why the *τοῦ μείζονος* is here used to designate God, is the occurrence of the phrase in ver. 13, to which specially this

verse looks back. The use of the oath among men is next brought into view by the apostle. Its solemnity fits it for being employed in cases of difference as the means of terminating strife. When there is *ἀντιλογία*, dissension, and when there is no way of discovering where the truth lies, the matter is referred to the oath of one of the parties, and the question is closed. It is allowed that *ἀντιλογία* has two significations; viz. first, the more general one of contradiction, and secondly, the more specific one of a contest at law, a law-plea. Now, the latter meaning has been adopted here by the greater number of interpreters, but the former is rapidly coming into favour, and deservedly. For though the sense of strife at law is to be found in the Septuagint, yet wherever the word occurs in the New Testament, it simply means contradiction, as in chap. vii. 7: without all contradiction, the less is blessed of the better. And in fact this sense is more suitable to the case which the apostle is illustrating; for the main question which he is handling respects not any contest between God and man, but simply a statement made by God, for the sake of removing all opposition to which, He is graciously pleased to interpose with an oath. And that such oaths were customary among men is evident from the case of Abraham and Eliezer, of Joseph and his brethren, of Israel and the Gibeonites, where statements, which, when nakedly made, might have excited doubt, were confirmed by oaths, and then accepted as decisive. The oaths commonly administered in a court of law are not parallel; for the witnesses on both sides are sworn, and the decision rests not upon the oaths themselves, but upon the apparent preponderance of evidence in one direction. The only parallel case in a court of law is where, in the absence of all evidence whatever, the matter in dispute is referred to the oath of one of the parties. The more general sense of contradiction or opposition is undoubtedly the one to be followed here.

What is the subject of this clause? Beza, Capellus, and others, as also the English version, say *εἰς βεβαίωσιν ὁ ὅρκος*, an oath for confirmation; but it is obvious that in this case *εἰς βεβαίωσιν* should have been placed between the article and *ὅρκος*. Therefore *ὁ ὅρκος* alone is the subject, and all the rest belongs to the predicate. What is affirmed is, that an oath is the

termination of all contradiction or opposition, and εἰς βεβαίωσιν seems added to the predicate to describe the settled confidence which issues from the cessation of strife.

It does not seem a forced conclusion from the apostle's words, that the oath is not in itself an unlawful thing under the gospel, as many have supposed. From its very nature, however, it ought to be sparingly employed; not at all in the common intercourse of life, but only in judgment, when some point of great importance to the parties is under consideration. The words of our Lord, "But I say unto you, Swear not at all, neither by heaven, for it is God's throne, nor by the earth, for it is His footstool," seem to refer to the frequent use of oaths in the common conversation of the Jews; for the oath that is administered by public authority is one common form, whereas the oaths referred to by our Lord were exceedingly various, according to the whim of the parties.

Ver. 17. From the purpose of the oath as employed among men, the apostle proceeds to illustrate the design of God in swearing to Abraham: ἐν ᾧ περισσότερον βουλόμενος ὁ Θεὸς ἐπιδεῖξαι τοῖς κληρονόμοις τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τὸ ἀμετάθετον τῆς βουλῆς αὐτοῦ ἐμεσίτευσεν ὅρκῳ.

Ἐν ᾧ does not refer to the immediately preceding ὅρκος, as is manifest from the conclusion of the sentence, ἐμεσίτευσεν ὅρκῳ. It rather points to the entire fact exhibited in ver. 16: in which state of things, that is, since an oath has such power with men; and it may be very well translated, on which account, wherefore. Schmidt, Rambach, and others, view the participial clause, βουλόμενος, κ.τ.λ., as what is mainly connected with ἐν ᾧ: but this is obviously a mistake; for the will in God to afford abundant evidence to men did not take its rise from the customs of this world, but existing independently, it manifested itself conformably to these customs through the medium of an oath. Ἐν ᾧ exhibits the reason for ἐμεσίτευσεν. Also περισσότερον does not qualify βουλόμενος, but ἐπιδεῖξαι. What God was willing to do, was to exhibit abundant evidence. It is not the idea of superfluity, but copiousness, which this adverb here expresses. It is remarked by Lobeck, in his edition of *Phrynichus*, p. 747, that verbs of wishing take an infinitive of the aorist after them when the thing wished is conceived as imme-

diately attainable; and conformably with this canon ἐπιδεῖξαι is here used. With regard to κληρονόμοις τῆς ἐπαγγελίας, the same difference of view exists as in the case of κληρονομούντων τὰς ἐπαγγελίας in ver. 12. Tholuck maintains that it refers exclusively to Old Testament saints; but the description in the verses that follow of the persons for whom the comfort of the oath is designed, makes it undeniable that believers under the gospel must at least be included. Lunemann, again, argues from the 18th verse, that concludes this description, that New Testament saints are the only persons meant; but it is a historical fact that the oath sworn to Abraham was designed for his own comfort, as well as of distant posterity. Consequently the phrase must extend to the spiritual seed of Abraham in general, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether under the law or under the gospel. It is obvious, too, from the meaning we have assigned to κληρονομούντων τὰς ἐπαγγελίας in ver. 12, and to ἐπέτυχε τῆς ἐπαγγελίας in ver. 15, that here κληρονόμοις τῆς ἐπαγγελίας does not mean simply persons possessing the words of promise, but the spiritual seed who are destined to obtain the promised blessings, heirs of the promised blessing. What is certified to the heirs is τὸ ἀμετάθετον τῆς βουλῆς αὐτοῦ. The neuter of an adjective, used substantively, is common with Paul, and quite classical, and it sets forth the abstract idea with peculiar emphasis. The counsel or design, whose unchangeableness is set forth, is the promise of blessing to Abraham and his spiritual seed, and the proof of unchangeableness furnished is the oath of God. Ἐμεσίτευσεν is translated in our version "confirmed with an oath," which, although exhibiting substantially the design and purpose of the transaction, yet does not exactly express the meaning of the word, which signifies to act the part of a mediator. The one party here are men, and the other party is God, who, in giving a promise to men, interposes with an oath for its confirmation, and as there is none greater in the universe, He swears by Himself. "Interposed with an oath" seems the best translation.

Abreschius and Storr, as also recently Hoffman and Delitzsch, conceive that it is not so much the oath and promise given to Abraham that are here referred to by the apostle, as the oath mentioned in the 110th Psalm, by which the Son of God

was constituted a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. And the reasons assigned for this view are, that the promise to Abraham was not the one in regard to which the Hebrews mainly need admonition. It is added, moreover, that already, at chap. v. 10, the apostle had had the oath of the 110th Psalm upon his very lips, though, for the sake of admonishing the Hebrews, he had postponed the consideration of it; and as he is now steering full sail to the subject of Christ's relation to Melchizedek, it is supposed that the oath connected with his priesthood may be the one here meant. But this view dislocates the order of thought by which the apostle has reached the present stage of his argument. No doubt he is making for the harbour of Christ's priesthood, but his point of departure has been the promise and oath to Abraham, and of these the connection requires us to suppose he is speaking in ver. 17. And any apparent unsuitableness in them to impart comfort to believers, and to inspire them with confidence, can only be occasioned by narrow views of their extent. In reality, the promise to Abraham embraces all other promises. It is spiritual as well as temporal. It reaches to heaven as well as earth. And it includes the one Seed in whom all the families of the earth are to be blessed.

The 18th verse brings into view the special design of God with reference to the heirs of promise, in superadding to the promise an oath for confirmation: *ἵνα διὰ δύο πραγμάτων ἀμεταθέτων, ἐν οἷς ἀδύνατον ψεύσασθαι Θεόν, ἰσχυρὰν παράκλησιν ἔχωμεν οἱ καταφυγόντες κρατῆσαι τῆς προκειμένης ἐλπίδος.* What were the two immutable things to which the apostle here refers? Storr, Stuart, and others regard them as the oath which God sware to Abraham, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," and the oath which He sware to Christ, "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek;" both of which, doubtless, are intimately connected with the hopes of believers, and are the means of imparting to them strong encouragement. But the two things here mentioned are introduced in such close connection with what precedes, that it seems necessary to understand them as referring to something already described within the limits of the passage. Now the oath regarding Christ's priesthood has not yet been mentioned

at all, and the only other oath spoken of is away back in chap. iii. 11, and it refers to the exclusion of the unbelieving Jews from the land of Canaan: it cannot, excepting by a very circuitous process, be brought to wear any appearance of suitableness to the exigencies of the verse before us. What, then, can the two immutable things be, but the promise and the oath of God? The promise was first given; and being the promise of a God of truth, it was impossible that it could fail. But in condescension to man's weakness, God subsequently superadded to it the sanction of an oath. We have, therefore, a double assurance. There are two immutable things on which our faith and hope may rest. A promise, and an oath to confirm the promise, are two sufficiently distinct things. Nor is there any force in Stuart's objection, that what God has *once* solemnly *declared* can never be annulled; for if that would show that the oath was not another immutable thing, it would equally show that there was no propriety in its being sworn at all. No doubt a simple declaration of God is more stable than the everlasting mountains; but then God Himself has been pleased, in condescension to our weakness, not only to promise, but also to interpose with an oath, so as to give more abundant exhibition of the immutability of His counsel. Alike in His promise and in His oath, it is impossible for God to lie, or to have deceived.

Παράκλησις means an address, whether for consolation or for encouragement and incitement. The former idea is embraced by perhaps the majority of expositors, but the latter seems most suitable to the whole design of the chapter. The apostle has not been consoling the Hebrews under distress, but exciting them to cherish confidence of hope in God, and to be faithful in resisting every allurement to apostasy. Now what stronger inducement could be imagined to zealous efforts in God's service than the immutability of God's gracious designs of mercy? Doubtless the same idea is equally fitted to comfort; but the simple question is, whether the design of this paragraph is to comfort, or to arouse and stimulate.

With regard to the concluding words of the verse, *οἱ καταφυγόντες κρατῆσαι τῆς προκειμένης ἐλπίδος*, two different modes of construing them have been proposed. Bleek, Stuart, Lunemann, and others take *οἱ καταφυγόντες* as expressing a complete

idea, and then connect *κρατῆσαι*, etc., with *παράκλησιν* as descriptive of its object and design. According to this arrangement, *καταφυγόντες* means escaped persons, persons who have sought and found refuge, like *οἱ σωζόμενοι* in Acts ii. 47, saved persons; and the meaning of the whole sentence is, that we who have escaped might have strong encouragement to hold fast by the hope exhibited to us. Now *κρατεῖν* does signify to hold fast as well as to lay hold of; and holding fast the hope is just what might naturally be expected to follow *παράκλησιν* as its object. The only objection to the arrangement under review is that *οἱ καταφυγόντες* appears too naked. After *καταφεύγειν*, you look for a place, or person, or purpose to be mentioned; and as *κρατῆσαι* expresses such an idea, and immediately follows, it seems best to connect it with *καταφυγόντες*. The simple question, indeed, as between the two constructions is, whether *παράκλησιν* or *καταφυγόντες* can most easily dispense with the express specification of its object; and there can be no doubt that what the *παράκλησις* is an admonition to do, readily appears from the whole structure of the verse. Still the nature of the connection between *κρατῆσαι* and *καταφυγόντες* is made a question. Storr, Schulz, and Bœhme exhibit the meaning thus: "who have found refuge in laying hold of;" but some preposition before *κρατῆσαι* would have been requisite to bring out this idea. The infinitive beyond all question is the infinitive of design, as in Luke i. 17, Heb. ix. 24; and the sense comes out to be, "who have fled to lay hold of."

And what is meant by *τῆς προκειμένης ἐλπίδος*? Because *πρόκεισθαι* is currently applied by Greek authors to the rewards exhibited at the end of the course in view of the runners, to animate them to strenuous effort, therefore many conclude that *ἐλπὶς προκειμένη* must point to the object of hope, and mean the rewards to be enjoyed in heaven. And very similarly, it must be allowed, is the word used in Col. i. 5, *τὴν ἐλπίδα τὴν ἀποκειμένην ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς*. But in the verse before us, the hope spoken of is described as a thing not to be claimed in time future, but already laid hold of, because it has been placed within our reach, and therefore Cameron, De Wette, Delitzsch, and others take *ἐλπίδα* here subjectively; and this seems to be the proper view. Besides, it should be remembered that hope, subjectively con-

sidered, is the topic which the apostle has been handling from ver. 15 onwards, hope to be cherished in the bosom, confidence of hope; and it is hope in this aspect also that is spoken of in the following verse, as we shall see immediately. The two immutable things spoken of are calculated to impart strong consolation or encouragement. What anxiety or doubt should they experience who have the security of their ground of trust attested to them by a divine promise and oath? We are exposed to perils and perplexities on every side; we are surrounded with difficulties and trials; the devil goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour: but when we seek refuge in Christ, and believe the precious promises of God, then we receive a hope into our bosoms that fills us with joy and gladness. There is a hope brought to us by the word of God, laid down before us; and we are admonished to lay hold of it, to receive it into our hearts, and to cherish it.

Ver. 19. In ver. 19 the apostle gives a striking description of the precious benefits which accrue from the reception of Christian hope into the heart, and the diligent cultivation of it. Ἣν ὡς, etc. Some refer ἣν to παράκλησιν, but it admits of no question at all that ἐλπίδος is the antecedent. Ἣν ὡς ἄγκυραν ἔχομεν τῆς ψυχῆς ἀσφαλῆ τε καὶ βεβαίαν, καὶ εἰσερχομένην εἰς τὸ ἐσώτερον τοῦ καταπετάσματος. Tholuck and Klee suppose that the hope indicated by the relative must be taken subjectively: in the other case the object of hope viewed as laid up in heaven is meant; but in this case, it is hope cherished in the heart that is represented as an anchor to the soul. The idea, however, of a change of signification in the relative as compared with the antecedent is not readily to be admitted. And, in fact, the necessity felt for such a supposition furnishes an argument of no small weight, as has already been indicated, in favour of the subjective view of ἐλπίδος in ver. 18. It will be observed, that while in ver. 18 hope is represented as a shelter, where fugitives find refuge, in ver. 19 the different but analogous figure of an anchor is employed. Both in classical writers and upon coins this figurative exhibition of hope is of frequent occurrence. In the image by which the apostle thus sets forth the excellences of Christian hope, the soul is viewed as a ship tossed upon the stormy ocean of life, and in imminent

hazard of being dashed to pieces upon the rocks that everywhere abound, or swallowed up in quicksands. Now what an anchor is to a ship hurried along by tempestuous winds towards a dangerous shore, that is the hope of the gospel to a mind driven about upon the waves of uncertainty and conflicting opinions. And as it is of the utmost importance that the anchor of a ship should be both strong in itself and fit to take fast hold of the ground upon which it is thrown; so the apostle tells us, with reference to these qualities, that the anchor supplied by the gospel is both sure and stedfast, *ἀσφαλῆ τε καὶ βεβαίαν*. These two adjectives are very frequently found together. They express very similar ideas, the one negatively, and the other positively: *ἀσφαλῆ*, not liable to fail, in regard to an anchor not losing its hold; *βεβαίαν*, firm, strong, not readily broken.

It has been supposed by Bœhme, Bleek, Bloomfield, and others that the clause *καὶ εἰσερχομένην*, etc., is not connected, like *ἀσφαλῆ τε καὶ βεβαίαν*, with *ἀγκυρὰν*, but with *ἣν*, and that it therefore describes hope not figuratively, but literally. This idea, however, does violence to the grammatical construction. As both of the adjectives refer to the anchor, describing its properties, so also does *καὶ εἰσερχομένην*, with the view of indicating the ground upon which the anchor is cast. A ship's anchor sinks down into the depths of the sea; but the anchor of Christian hope, while it also goes out of sight, is thrown upwards into heaven, and the soul, holding fast by this anchor, remains secure amid all the storms and tempests of life. It is only a hope fixed upon something beyond this world that can give comfort and energy to the mind under every variety of trouble. The blessed promises of the gospel are not limited to this earth, but reach away above the skies; and the believer who receives them is enabled to fix his desires and aspirations upon the glories of heaven. The anchor of his hope enters *εἰς τὸ ἐσώτερον τοῦ καταπετάσματος*. It is heaven that is indicated by this expression. The language is grounded upon the construction and services of the ancient tabernacle, in which there was a holy and a most holy place, of which the one was separated from the other by a veil, *καταπέτασμα*. In Lev. xvi. 2, 12, 15, accordingly, the most holy place is designated *τὸ ἐσώτερον τοῦ*

καταπετάσματος. Now this most holy place, into which the Jewish high priest entered once every year, was a type, as is most clearly brought out in chap. ix., of the sanctuary above, of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man; and therefore heaven is here to be understood as indicated in language borrowed from the old economy. The anchor of our hopes enters into heaven, following our great High Priest, who hath gone thither before us.

In describing the place where the anchor of the believer's hope is thrown, the apostle might have used literal terms, and said heaven; but at the risk of somewhat mingling the figure of an anchor with that of the high priest's entrance into the most holy place, he borrows phrases from the sanctuary and ritual of the Jewish priesthood, because he is about to return from his long digression to the priesthood of Christ. The figurative description of heaven that closes the 19th verse most naturally suggests the idea of a priest ministering within the veil in the regions on high; and accordingly he adds (ver. 20), ὅπου πρόδρομος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν εἰσῆλθεν Ἰησοῦς, κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισεδὲκ ἀρχιερεὺς γενόμενος εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

Ὅπου, where, is frequently used for ὅποι, whither, which never occurs in the New Testament. This substitution is to be met with in the best Greek, and it seems to associate with the idea of motion towards a place, that of subsequent continuance in it: whither He hath gone, and where He continues, fused together. And the connection of the 20th with the 19th verse does not simply mean, that where we cast the anchor of our hopes, there also Christ is; but it intimates that heaven is opened to our aspirations because the Son of God has ascended up on high. Our hope enters, because our elder brother is already there.

Πρόδρομος occurs only here in the New Testament, but it is common in the best Greek writers. It is applied to pioneers sent forward to prepare the way for an army, and to scouts who go forth to gather intelligence. Here it describes Christ as having gone into heaven before His people, in order to prepare the way for them. The idea of a forerunner or pioneer necessarily involves the accessory idea of relations to others that are to come after, and not mere relations of time, but of subserviency.

Christ first enters within the veil; but He does so leading the way, and acting as our guide. The idea involved in *πρόδρομος* seems to be nearly the same as the one expressed in Heb. ii. 10, where Christ is styled *ἀρχηγὸς τῆς σωτηρίας*, the Captain of salvation, who guides His people to glory; or more nearly still in John xiv. 2: "I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, that I may receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also."

Bœhme, Tholuck, and Ebrard conceive *ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν* to be connected with *πρόδρομος*, in the sense of forerunner for us, our forerunner; but Bleek, Lunemann, and Delitzsch couple them with *εἰσῆλθεν*, which is undoubtedly the idea of the apostle, for the entrance spoken of is that of a high priest into the sanctuary. As the Jewish high priest, after having slain the victims in the court of the tabernacle, entered into the most holy place for the benefit of the congregation, so Christ, after having shed His precious blood as an offering for sin, entered into the sanctuary above, that He might complete in heaven the work begun on earth, and intercede continually for His believing people. He entered for us. The nature of the services implied in this expression is sufficiently indicated by the description given of the place, "within the veil," where priestly work alone could be performed. As acting *ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν*, He pleads the merits of His all-perfect sacrifice, points to the blood of His offering (Heb. ix. 12, 24, x. 19), and makes intercession for us, or as expressed elsewhere (ix. 24), He appears in the presence of God for us.

It will be observed, that while the last clause of the preceding verse is couched in language strictly applicable to the Jewish high priest, and the first of this one is for the most part modelled after the same pattern, yet the word *πρόδρομος* stands without any parallel in the Jewish priest. He entered the most holy place for the people, but not as *πρόδρομος*. He entered alone, and the people were perpetually excluded. Not so with our High Priest. He enters first, and He enters alone; but He enters as *πρόδρομος*, to be afterwards followed by His people. Here, therefore, is the first indication of a glorious distinction of the Christian priesthood, which is afterwards more fully unfolded.

Having thus again brought the priesthood of Christ fully before the view of his readers, the apostle subjoins the peculiar description already exhibited at chap. v. 10: *κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισεδὲκ ἀρχιερεὺς γενόμενος εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.* (These words have been already sufficiently considered.) They are appended here, because they are the central theme of the apostle, and because the apostle has now brought himself from a long digression to the topic on which he had been about to enter at an earlier part of the epistle; and thus, after most naturally digressing from his subject, he again with ease and grace returns to it. Both the commencement and the close of the digression we have been considering, furnish fine examples of the *callida junctura* described by Horace.

CHAPTER VII.

FROM the admonitions and warnings which are exhibited in chap. vi. and part of chap. v., the apostle now returns to his great subject, viz. the priestly functions of Christ; and he prosecutes it without any further interruption down to chap. x. 18. In this the main body of the epistle he shows that our Lord, who was a priest after the order of Melchizedek, was greatly elevated above the priests of the law, and thence he infers the abolition of the ancient priesthood; he points out a variety of respects in which the superiority of the Christian Priest to the Aaronical consisted, such as that His offering needed no repetition, that He gave place to no successor, that the forgiveness which He bestowed was irreversible; and then the efficacy of the blood of Christ in purging the conscience is compared with the efficacy of the legal sacrifices, which was merely external and ceremonial. An entrance is made upon these magnificent and most precious truths in chap. vii.; of which the first ten verses treat of Melchizedek and his priesthood according to the information exhibited in Genesis, and then the remaining verses handle the priesthood of Christ as illustrated by the relation in which, according to the 110th Psalm, it stands to the priesthood of Melchizedek.

The first section of the chapter, which treats of Melchizedek and his relation to Levi, divides itself into two portions; the one consisting of three verses, which exhibit the history of Melchizedek both in its positive and negative aspects; and the other consisting of seven verses, which argue Melchizedek's superiority to Levi on the ground of the tithes which were paid to him by Abraham. The 110th Psalm is the mine from which, with the aid of the historical statements of Genesis, the whole riches of the chapter before us are gathered by the apostle.

Melchizedek stands before us as a most mysterious indi-

vidual. The gloom of distant ages envelopes his person, and the brief notices which are given of him are of a highly enigmatical kind. Who was he? Whence did he come? Whither did he go? And when did he leave this earthly scene? No satisfactory answer can be given to these questions. His origin, his mode of life, his continuance on earth, his disappearance, are all involved in the profoundest darkness. Contradictions and impossibilities almost seem to meet in his person. It need not, therefore, surprise us that his character and condition should always have been a fruitful subject of speculation in the Church. The strange announcements made regarding him by the apostle, as well as the dignified position assigned to him in the Old Testament, coupled with the absence of all historical details, have given rise to a multitude of different views, some of which are an outrage upon everything like sobriety of judgment.

It was an idea entertained by the Hieracites of early times that Melchizedek was the Holy Ghost; and the Melchizedecians supposed that he was an impersonation of some divine influence, more powerful than Christ Himself, and the model after which Christ was made. But these notions are altogether without foundation, and utterly subversive of the grand principles of the gospel. They do not at all comport with the narrative in the book of Genesis, nor with the statements made by the apostle; and the most wonderful thing about them is, that they should ever have found acceptance with any who acknowledged the Scriptures as the word of God.

A more prevalent idea in early times, and a more plausible one, was that Melchizedek was Christ Himself; and there are still some who entertain this opinion. They suppose there was an incarnation of the Son of God previously to the one which took place when He was born in Bethlehem; that in the days of Abraham He lived in the flesh, and reigned upon the earth, and went in and out among the children of men; and that it was He who met the father of the faithful returning from the slaughter of the kings, and refreshed him with bread and wine, and blessed him. But there are two considerations which completely overturn this view. In the first place, the apostle declares of Melchizedek that he was made like to the Son of God, which undoubtedly implies that, while in some respects they

resembled one another, they were yet different individuals. The very idea of resemblance or comparison indicates that the objects spoken of are numerically different from one another. But further, Melchizedek is described by the apostle as a prefiguration of Christ, and we are told that Christ was made a priest after the order of Melchizedek. Now nothing is ever employed to stand as the type of itself, but one thing is made the type of another. It is obvious, too, that the whole strain of Scripture, both in the Old Testament and in the New, leads to the conclusion that the incarnation of the Son of God first took place when He was born at the commencement of the Christian era. The Old Testament invariably describes the appearance of the Messiah as an event that was yet to take place; while the New Testament exhibits it as one which had never occurred before. Christ became incarnate only once.

Various other opinions have been entertained regarding the person of Melchizedek. Some have imagined that he was an angel, whom God sent to reside in this world, and to discharge important duties for the benefit of men; but though angels are described in this epistle as ministering spirits to the saints, yet the whole analogy of revelation is opposed to the idea of their being invested with the offices of kings and priests on the earth. Of those who allow Melchizedek to have been a man, some have supposed that he was the translated Enoch, sent back from the abodes of bliss to reside again in this world in a body that never had died, that he might furnish an example of faith and holy living, and superintend the civil and religious concerns of men; and others have maintained that he was Shem, the son of Noah, who survived the flood, and according to the Hebrew text survived till the days of Abraham. But both these suppositions are inconsistent with the account given regarding Melchizedek, whose parents are unknown and whose origin cannot be traced, whereas the descent both of Enoch and Shem is distinctly recorded in Scripture. In fact, if it could be shown that Melchizedek was either the one or the other of these patriarchs, or any other whose parentage is mentioned, the statements of the apostle regarding him would be falsified. It would not be true that he was *ἀπάτωρ, ἀμήτωρ, ἀγενεαλόγητος*. You can only show who Melchizedek was by giving the lie to Paul.

It seems then utterly vain to attempt identifying Melchizedek with any other individual mentioned in Scripture. We only know the few facts of his history which are recorded in the fourteenth chapter of Genesis, and in the passage before us, which is founded upon Genesis; and within these narrow limits we must be contented to confine ourselves. Everything else regarding him is enveloped in mysterious darkness, which it is impossible for the sharpest or most powerful human intellect to dispel. Nay, the very mystery connected with his person is an indispensable element of his typical character; and having been appointed for this purpose, it must for ever elude the power of man to fathom its depths. Who shall discover what God has been pleased to conceal?

The first three verses embody the leading facts regarding Melchizedek, and describe his priesthood in words grounded upon the 110th Psalm. The general structure of this period is abundantly obvious, and it presents more of the roundness of Greek composition than is usual with Paul. The view of Beza, Schulz, and others, who supply *ἐστὶ* before *βασιλεὺς Σαλήμ*, as if these words were the commencement of the predicate, is to be rejected; and equally that of Storr, who would translate the first two verses thus: "For this Melchizedek, etc., is by interpretation king of righteousness," and then begin a new sentence at *ἀπάτωρ* in ver. 3. Undoubtedly Melchizedek stands as the nominative to *μένει*, and all that intervenes between them is connected with it by apposition. In this way only do you preserve the harmony and orderly flow of the sentence: in this way only do you assign its proper force to *γάρ*. The affirmation which is the burden of the three verses, that Melchizedek *μένει ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸ διηνεκές*, plainly stands connected, as a reason marshalled by *γάρ*, with the concluding words of the last chapter, *Ἰησοῦς κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισεδὲκ ἀρχιερεὺς γενόμενος εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα*. Ebrard indeed affirms that *γὰρ* is not argumentative, but explicative, because it cannot be supposed that the apostle would ever think of setting himself to prove a position quoted from the word of God. True, he accepts the position, "Thou art a priest for ever," as a divine dictum that needs no proof; but then the object of the *γὰρ* is not to establish this point, but only to show that, as perpetuity is ascribed to the priesthood of

Christ, so also there was a certain kind of permanency in the priesthood of Melchizedek himself, and thus a correspondence between the type and the antitype. "For this Melchizedek . . . abideth a priest for ever." With regard to the long train of clauses interposed between the nominative and the affirming verb, it will be observed that they divide themselves into two classes; viz. first, statements gathered from the book of Genesis, and secondly, comments made by the apostle himself. The former class of circumstances, reaching down to *Ἀβραάμ*, are rightly considered by Ebrard, and also by Delitzsch, as belonging to the subject; and the latter, commencing at *πρῶτον μέν*, as connected with the predicate in the way of assigning reasons for the affirmation made: For this Melchizedek abideth a priest for ever, as being king of righteousness, king of peace, without father, without mother, without beginning of days, or end of life.

Of the points belonging to the subject, and gathered from Genesis, the first is *βασιλεὺς Σαλήμ*. Some have supposed the place here mentioned to be Salim near to Enon, where John baptized; and in support of this view the authority of Jerome is adduced, who not only affirms, *Epis. ad Evagrium*, that Salim near Scythopolis was the place, but adds that there were ruins still remaining in his day which were supposed to be those of the palace of Melchizedek. The most prevalent opinion, however, has always been, that Jerusalem was the seat of Melchizedek's government; and in defence of this view it has been argued that there were ancient kings in Jerusalem, as appears from Josh. x. 1, who bore the exactly equivalent title of Adonizedek. Certain it is, too, that in the book of Psalms (lxxvi. 2) the metropolis of Judea is designated Salem, for where else was the tabernacle of God? And if it be said that in that psalm the name is just an abbreviation of Jerusalem, it may with more probability be argued that it rather is the more ancient name, seeing that poetry delights in words that have fallen out of common use. Indeed, Jerusalem just means habitation of Salem, or habitation or inheritance of peace, which renders it highly probable that the original name of the place was Salem. And this, in fact, is the account given by Josephus, a more ancient authority than Jerome, who not only mentions that Melchizedek was king of the city of Solyma, but adds that

Solyma subsequently received the name of Hierosolyma. The very seat, therefore, probably of Melchizedek's power was the place where the temple of God afterwards stood, which Christ styled His Father's house, and which He claimed the privilege of regulating according to His pleasure. There is one consideration urged by Bleek against this view, that if Jerusalem had been the place meant, we can hardly conceive the apostle, on the watch as he is for analogies, would have failed to exhibit the seat of Melchizedek's government and priestly service, as a type of the New Jerusalem above where Christ ministers, whereas he contents himself with adverting to the etymology of Salem. But it seems a sufficient reply to this argument, that he has not reached that part of his subject where he has occasion to treat of the sanctuary connected with the Christian priesthood; and when he does come to handle this topic, it is after he has left Melchizedek, and has been discoursing of Aaron and the Levitical priesthood, so that the tabernacle then presents itself to him as the most fitting type of the sanctuary above.

But Melchizedek was not only a king: he was also priest of the Most High God—*ἱερεὺς τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου.* It is strange that Bleek should imagine that because the people governed by Melchizedek were Canaanites, therefore these words must be understood polytheistically, as meaning the highest God among a number of gods. The original Hebrew expression is אֵל עֶלְיוֹן, which always signifies, not the highest of gods, but God most high over all that exists, possessor of heaven and earth. From a glance at Gen. xiv. 18, 22, it is patent to the eye that the God whose priest Melchizedek was, and the God whom Abraham worshipped, were the one and the same God. The priest-king and the patriarch speak of Him in precisely the same terms. The union of the kingly and priestly offices was quite uncommon among the Jews; but they were conjoined in Melchizedek, that he might be the more remarkable a prefiguration of our Lord, who sits a priest upon His throne. Doubtless, Melchizedek discharged the duties of his priestly office for those over whom he ruled with kingly authority. Here, therefore, we find a community, not of the race of Abraham, which worshipped the living and true God in the

land of Canaan, and enjoyed the ministrations of a divinely appointed priest. May we not see in this an illustration of what was overlooked by Elijah, that God may often have a seed to serve Him in the most unlikely situations, and that it is not for us to say, Only here or only there the genuine followers of Christ are to be found? The day of judgment will reveal saints who were altogether unknown in this world; and the words of Cornelius will be fully vindicated, that God is no respecter of persons.

The historical facts recorded in Genesis regarding Melchizedek are next mentioned by the apostle in language grounded upon the Septuagint: *ὁ συναντήσας Ἀβραὰμ ὑποστρέφοντι ἀπὸ τῆς κοπῆς τῶν βασιλέων.* This is the one and only occasion on which Melchizedek appears upon the field of history as an acting personage; and it is remarkable that it should be just at the moment when Abraham, as the conqueror of four kings and the deliverer of five, stands forth as a mighty potentate, the foe of tyrants, but the disinterested friend of the oppressed. Just when the patriarch's greatness was most conspicuous, then the king-priest of Salem emerges from impenetrable darkness, acts the part of a superior to Abraham, and then immediately evanishes from view, never more to appear upon the stage. Bleek adopts the idea of Schlichting, that the meeting of Melchizedek with Abraham is mentioned by the apostle, not as having anything mysteriously significant about itself, but simply as serving to set forth vividly the scene of the blessing that follows. But the peculiar time of the meeting is one of the circumstances that evince the greatness of Melchizedek; and the fact of its being the only historical statement that is made regarding him, forms the ground of the negative description that speedily follows, "without father, without mother."

Καὶ εὐλογήσας αὐτόν, "and blessed him." This blessing is fully exhibited in Gen. xiv. 19, 20, and it obviously appears as a priestly act. It does not simply mean that the priest congratulated the patriarch on the success of his expedition, but that he also pronounced a real blessing upon him, which the God whom he served would not allow to fall to the ground. When the patriarchs blessed their children, it was as prophets they spoke, whose tongues were guided by the Spirit of God;

and the same doubtless was the case in the present instance. And now the last historical statement is added, in words nearly the same as those of the Septuagint, though more rhythmical and better adapted to their place in this long flowing period: *ᾧ καὶ δεκάτην ἀπὸ πάντων ἐμέρισεν Ἀβραάμ.* The office of Melchizedek as priest, and the definite portion of the spoils presented to him, make it obvious that Abraham's design was not merely to show gratitude to him for kindness, but mainly to express reverence for him as a divinely appointed and holy priest. The patriarch recognised Melchizedek as a priest of the Most High God by paying tithes to him. It is not stated that this was a yearly tribute paid by Abraham. On the contrary, it seems probable that it was an isolated and incidental acknowledgment springing out of circumstances; for the offering was presented upon a journey, and it is expressly stated in the 4th verse that it was the tenth part of the spoils. Whether Abraham ever again met Melchizedek, we are utterly ignorant.

And now commences the apostle's own comment, grounded not only upon the statements of Genesis, but also upon the silence of the record; and he obviously represents the various features which he adverts to in the state and character of Melchizedek as points in respect of which he was made, in a certain sense, like to the Son of God. His language is very remarkable. Melchizedek flourished long before the incarnation of Christ. It might have been supposed, therefore, it would be said that Christ was made like to Melchizedek; but he says the very reverse, that Melchizedek was made like to Him; from which it is obvious that the character and position and offices of Melchizedek were all arranged in providence so as to fit him for being a distinguished type of our Lord. Paul did not simply find Melchizedek suitable to his purpose, and therefore press him into the service, but he recognised him as one whom the all-observing, all-controlling providence of God had raised up for a specific end: *ἀφωμοιωμένος δὲ τῷ υἱῷ τοῦ Θεοῦ.*

The first circumstance the apostle mentions is grounded upon the interpretation of Melchizedek's name: *πρῶτον μὲν ἑρμηνευόμενος βασιλεὺς δικαιοσύνης*, that is, *κατὰ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ.* Both Philo and Josephus draw attention to the righteous character of Melchizedek, and they interpret his name as signi-

fying τῇ πατρίῳ γλώσσῃ, βασιλεὺς δίκαιος. The apostle's rendering is more precise and literal; and while it equally exhibits the righteous character of the king-priest, it is better adapted to Him of whom Melchizedek was a type, who was not only righteous in Himself, but was also the source and fountain of righteousness to others (1 Cor. i. 30). It was common in ancient times for individuals, though having names already, to obtain others, grounded upon some feature of their character, or some achievement performed by them: God Himself gave new names to Abraham and Sarah, expressive of the honour He designed for them. We must view the name of Melchizedek, therefore, seeing the apostle gives so formal an interpretation of it, as really descriptive of the character he bore. He was king of righteousness—a man of integrity, an upright and faithful ruler. His throne was established with justice and judgment, and he swayed a sceptre of righteousness over the subjects who enjoyed the privilege of being ruled by him. How well fitted, then, was this illustrious king to prefigure Him who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners! What says David regarding the Messiah? "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of Thy kingdom is a right sceptre: Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness; therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows." How happy compared with most other nations would the subjects of Melchizedek be; and what a scene of blessedness will this world present when the righteous rule of Christ extends from sea to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth!

As the apostle interprets the name of Melchizedek, so he does the same with the place where the seat of his government was: ἔπειτα δὲ καὶ βασιλεὺς Σαλήμ, ὅ ἐστιν, βασιλεὺς εἰρήνης. Here ὅ ἐστιν serves the same purpose as ἑρμηνευόμενος in the preceding clause. שָׁלֵם is an adjective, and strictly means peaceful, bringing peace; but like the neuter of adjectives in Greek, it may also express the abstract idea. And it is worthy of notice, that Philo gives the very same interpretation of the whole phrase as the apostle: καὶ Μελχισεδὲκ βασιλέα τε εἰρήνης (Σαλὴμ τοῦτο γὰρ ἑρμηνεύεται) ἱερέα ἑαυτοῦ πεποίηκεν ὁ Θεός. Melchizedek was a righteous ruler, and therefore happiness

and peace doubtless flourished among his subjects. His very capital was called שָׁלֵם, peace, either in consequence of his peaceful rule, or because the providence of God had previously so ordered things. How admirably, then, was he fitted, on this ground too, to be a type of our blessed Lord! Is not "Prince of Peace" one of the most illustrious titles of the Messiah? When He was born, was not the burden of the angels' song, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good-will towards men?" The great object of His mission is to reconcile sinners unto God, and by spreading the principles of piety, to spread happiness and peace throughout the world. Righteousness and peace were united together in Melchizedek, the type; and so the prophets foretold that the reign of the Messiah should be characterized by the same blessed qualities. "In His days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth. The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills by righteousness" (Ps. lxxii.). And the same conjunction of qualities is exhibited in the New Testament as characterizing the reign of Christ: "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. xiv. 17).

The order in which the two points already mentioned are placed by the apostle, and in all the other passages where reference is made to them, is worthy of observation: "first being by interpretation king of righteousness; after that, also king of Salem, which is king of peace." There is the same principle involved here as in James's description of the wisdom that is from above, which is "first pure, then peaceable." Righteousness and purity are always the first qualities to be attended to: they should be at the foundation of every character and action: it is on them only that a solid superstructure of happiness and peace can be reared. Every peace you may try to build on false and wicked principles, must be fleeting and unsatisfactory: it will resemble a building raised upon sand, which the first tempest will overthrow. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked; they are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt." When the Saviour came to reconcile mankind to God, He first of all made provision for the interests of holiness and justice; and having laid such a foundation, He

established the happiness of His people upon a basis which can never be shaken.

Having thus interpreted the names of Melchizedek and his city, the apostle subjoins some other points, which are also to be viewed as belonging not to the subject, but to the predicate, in the way of assigning reasons for the proposition affirmed. The particulars now to be considered differ from the former ones in this, that they are not grounded upon positive statements of Genesis, but upon the silence of the record. The first of them are *ἀπάτωρ, ἀμήτωρ, ἀγενεαλόγητος*. With regard to the words *ἀπάτωρ, ἀμήτωρ*, they are not uncommon in Greek writers. Sometimes they are applied to orphan children, like our own words fatherless and motherless; sometimes they are employed to express the idea of never having had father or mother, as when Vulcan is designated *ἀπάτωρ* and Minerva *ἀμήτωρ*. So both words are applied to God to describe His underived existence. But there is another usage of them, according to which they mean, either descended from obscure parents, or from parents altogether unknown. So Philo designates Sarah *ἀμήτωρ*, because there is no mention made of her mother in the Scriptures. Now which of these meanings is to be adopted in the case before us? Some say the middle one, and maintain that Melchizedek was not descended from earthly parents at all, but had derived his existence directly from God, like Adam. But there is not the slightest ground for this idea; and besides, it would not constitute any proper resemblance between Melchizedek and Christ. The last of the three expressions, *ἀγενεαλόγητος*, supplies the principle for deciding the meaning of the whole; for this word is expounded in the 6th verse, where it is said of Melchizedek, *ὁ δὲ μὴ γενεαλογούμενος ἐξ αὐτῶν*. It is obvious, therefore, that *ἀγενεαλόγητος* does not mean literally without descent. The apostle does not say *ἀγένητος*. He only designs, therefore, to intimate, that of Melchizedek there was no recorded genealogy; his parentage was not exhibited in any genealogical table; his name was not to be found in the registers of the Levitical priests. Among those who served at the Jewish altars, descent was a matter of prime importance; every priest required to be registered as belonging to the stock of Aaron; and it is plain from Ezra ii. 62 and Neh. vii. 64, that when any

one was unable to prove his priestly extraction, this was fatal to all his pretensions. Beyond all question, therefore, *ἀπάτωρ, ἀμήτωρ,* mean simply, of no recorded parentage, or of no priestly parentage—descended from parents who were utterly unknown, or who did not belong to the stock of Aaron. In applying these epithets to Melchizedek, the apostle is just giving voice to the silence of the Old Testament record. There is not a syllable in Genesis regarding his origin. It is not, however, obscure or lowly descent that is here indicated, as in the words of Horace, *nullis majoribus ortos,* but simply descent of which absolutely nothing is known. So Theophylact: *οὕτως εἶπον τὸν Μελχισεδὲκ ἀπάτορα καὶ ἀμήτορα, ὡς ἀγενεαλόγητον καὶ ὡς μὴ μνημονευθείσης τῆς γενεᾶς αὐτοῦ παρὰ τῇ γραφῇ.* And he says also, that *τὸ ἀγενεαλόγητος ὥσπερ ἑφερμηνευτικόν* (explanatory) *ἐστι τοῦ ἀπάτωρ καὶ ἀμήτωρ.*

And now the question presents itself, Wherein lies the resemblance between Melchizedek as *ἀπάτωρ, ἀμήτωρ, ἀγενεαλόγητος,* and Christ? Bleek seems to imagine that these epithets are applied to Melchizedek, not with the view of indicating analogies between him and Christ, but only to suggest how much superior he was to the priests under the law. But in this paragraph the sole comparison is between Melchizedek and Christ; and the words that are added toward the close of this verse, "but made like," undoubtedly imply, that in being without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, Melchizedek stood in some relation of resemblance to the Son of God. Chrysostom's explanation of the likeness is this: *ὅτι, ὥσπερ οὗτος ἀπάτωρ τῷ μὴ γενεαλογεῖσθαι οὕτως ὁ Χριστὸς αὐτῇ τῇ φύσει τοῦ πράγματος* (xii. 173, A.); but this explanation fails of giving satisfaction, for it does not apply to *ἀμήτωρ*: though Christ had no earthly father, He had an earthly mother. Wherefore Theodoret supplements the defect by saying that our Lord was without father in respect of His human nature, and without mother in respect of His divine nature. Now this explanation might suffice, if *ἀπάτωρ* and *ἀμήτωρ* stood alone; but there is a third term, *ἀγενεαλόγητος,* which refuses allegiance to this principle of explanation. Perhaps, therefore, the resemblance between Christ and Melchizedek in respect of the points under consideration,

must be viewed as lying in the similar relation in which they stood to the Aaronical priests. The grand argument of the Jews against the priestly office of Christ was that He was not a Levite. Now their own psalmist himself had answered this argument by anticipation, for he had described the Messiah as a priest after the order of Melchizedek. But Melchizedek's name occurred in no genealogical register of priests; he did not even belong to the race of Abraham; and therefore he was a type of Christ in respect of disconnection with the hereditary priests of the Jews. As there is no genealogy of Melchizedek at all, so there is no priestly genealogy of Christ. His priesthood does not come to Him by descent, but centres all in Himself.

Melchizedek is further described by the apostle as *μήτε ἀρχὴν ἡμερῶν μήτε ζωῆς τέλος ἔχων*. Bleek seems inclined to the idea that these words should perhaps be understood literally, and be held as implying that Melchizedek was not a mortal man. But they cannot disprove him to have been a man, without at the same time elevating him to a level with God. If he really had no beginning of days, then he existed from all eternity, and he must either be the Father, the Son, or the Holy Ghost. The principle which the apostle's explanation of *ἀγενεαλόγητος* by *μὴ γενεαλογούμενος ἐξ αὐτῶν* has led us to apply to *ἀπάτωρ, ἀμήτωρ*, suggests also the true meaning of the clause before us. It is recorded birth and recorded death that are meant. No register has been handed down to us of the origin or decease of Melchizedek. An impenetrable cloud rests upon the commencement, duration, and end of his being. You see him acting as a priest in Salem; but when he came upon the stage of time, or when he left it, is buried in profound obscurity. Just for a moment the curtain is lifted up, and Melchizedek appears, like a vision, in the full vigour of life, and in the exercise of regal and priestly functions; but he is never seen or heard of again. Some understand the words before us as referring, not to the natural life of Melchizedek as a whole, but to his priestly life, as if the meaning were, either that the commencement and the close of it are not recorded, or that they were not fixed by definite limits as in the case of the Levitical priesthood, which prescribed a certain age. But there is nothing in the clause to indicate that the words *ἡμερῶν* and *ζωῆς* are so restricted. This

view, too, would make the passage quite tautological: having neither commencement nor end of his priesthood, he abideth a priest for ever. Doubtless, therefore, it is the natural life of Melchizedek that is here meant; and that life is said to have neither beginning nor end, because there is no record of his birth and death. Nor is there anything forced or unnatural in this. It is exactly of a piece with the other modes of expression employed in the paragraph. We have only to remember that Melchizedek is not treated of merely as a historical personage, but rather as a type or figure. Ἔχων is certainly causal, but not in respect of the other members; all being on a level, and all causal of μένει. And now the question presents itself, What is it in Christ which this part of the figurative description of Melchizedek was designed to typify or suggest? Wherein lies the resemblance? We have already seen that the names of Melchizedek and his city were designed to foreshadow the righteousness and peace which should characterize Messiah's reign. We have also seen that the description of Melchizedek, as without father, without mother, without descent, was designed to point to the circumstance that Christ's priesthood should not come to Him by pedigree, but be exclusively His own. And in harmony with these typical meanings it may now be affirmed, that Melchizedek, being described as without commencement of days or end of life, must be viewed as a figure of the eternity of the life of God alike *a parte ante* and *a parte post*. Why have the birth and death of the king of Salem been shrouded in impenetrable mystery? Just that they might exhibit a type of the eternal existence of Christ. You cannot see the beginning and end of Melchizedek, because they are not recorded; so also you cannot see the beginning and end of Christ, because they are not. If you attempt to go back to the origin of the Son of God, you are lost in the darkness of eternity; if you attempt to go back to the origin of Melchizedek, you are lost in the obscurity of unrecorded events. And you are as incapable of looking forward to the end of Christ, as of finding out when Melchizedek died.

Here, then, we have good reasons for the apparently arbitrary and paradoxical language which the apostle employs. If an image was to be constructed to represent the eternity of Christ and His priesthood, it is difficult to conceive what other

kind of figure could have been thought of than the one before us. An object literally eternal, even if it could have been found in this world, would not have sufficed; for the type and the thing typified would have been homogeneous; and, moreover, the one would have transcended the powers of our imagination as much as the other. Something historical was needed,—a historical personage, and one already off the stage. What other circumstances can you imagine that would have furnished so fine a typical representation of the eternity of Christ and His priesthood as those connected with Melchizedek?

With regard to the next clause, *ἀφωμοιωμένος δὲ τῷ υἱῷ τοῦ Θεοῦ*, it is conceived by many to stand solely connected with the concluding member, as if the meaning were, "and like the Son of God, Melchizedek abideth a priest for ever." But *ἀφωμοιωμένος δὲ* looks back to the several descriptions of Melchizedek which have already been presented, and gathering them all up into one, it exhibits them as the ground of the concluding statement: "and having thus been made like to the Son of God in the several respects mentioned, he abideth a priest for ever." *Ἀφωμοιωμένος* does not refer at all to the 110th Psalm; for there, as De Wette well observes, it is Christ that is compared to Melchizedek, and not Melchizedek that is compared to Christ. This participle carries us back to the days of Melchizedek himself; and it is not a comparison which it describes, whether by apostle or psalmist, but the production of a likeness effected by God Himself. Melchizedek was raised up for this very purpose. All the events and circumstances of his life were so regulated by a controlling providence, as to be made suitable for exhibiting a prefiguration or typical likeness of Christ; and thus the groundwork was laid for the comparison made by the psalmist in long subsequent ages. It does not apply to the last particular merely, but to all that have been mentioned. In respect of them all, Melchizedek shadowed forth the blessed Saviour.

Why does the apostle here use the phrase *τῷ υἱῷ τοῦ Θεοῦ* and not *τῷ Χριστῷ*? On the supposition that there had only been mentioned the two points of Melchizedek's righteous and peaceful rule, and his exercising a priesthood that came not to him by descent; then with perfect propriety he might have been said in these respects to be *ἀφωμοιωμένος τῷ Χριστῷ*, for

Christ and Messiah are designations of office, kingly and priestly. But there is a third point specified, viz. "having neither beginning of days nor end of life," which, as we have seen, finds its counterpart in the unbeginning and the unending dignity of Christ's divine person. Not Christ, but the Son of God, is most appropriate as commensurate to all the points specified, for the first chapter places beyond doubt that "Son of God" is a designation of nature and not of office.

And now comes the end of this long sentence. The affirmation with which it closes is, that Melchizedek, being made like to the Son of God in the several points mentioned, *μένει*, abideth, *ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸ διηνεκές*. In what respect do these words hold true of Melchizedek? They cannot mean that he is still a priest, for this would be inconsistent with the undivided authority of Christ; neither can they mean that he was a priest till the days of Paul, for this would have been inconsistent with the priesthood of Aaron and his sons. Some think they mean that he continued a priest all his days: he never retired to a private station. But this would constitute no special distinction, for even the Jewish high priest continued in office till the end of his life. It has been supposed by others that, in accordance with the ideas already indicated, the reference is to the fact that there is no record of the end of his priesthood. As the fact that the end of his life is not mentioned is employed as a type of the unending duration of Christ, so the fact that the end of his priesthood is not mentioned is equally fitted to exhibit typically the unending priesthood of the Son of God. Melchizedek's priesthood came not to him by descent, nor did he surrender it to any successor, but the sole exhibition of it which is made is as existing in his own hands. Melchizedek, so far as the record mentions to the contrary, abideth a priest for ever; but our Lord continueth literally and actually a priest for ever. What an encouragement, then, have we to commit the keeping of our souls to Christ? He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them. He is a priest in all respects suited to our case, and no danger can be imagined at any time to threaten us which He will not be ready to ward off. He is ever at His post. All our prayers He will hear. In all our straits

and difficulties He will sympathize with us. When we confess our sins and cry to Him for pardon, He will cleanse us from all our unrighteousness, and through sprinkling of His precious blood, bless us with complete forgiveness. Oh the privilege of having such a High Priest to plead for us in the sanctuary above! Let us not want the blessings which He is exalted to bestow for want of continuous and earnest application to Him.

Vers. 4–10. The representation of Melchizedek in the first three verses as a type of the Messiah, is grounded both upon the statements and upon the silence of the book of Genesis; and now in the seven verses that follow, the priestly transactions already described as having taken place between him and Abraham, are employed to demonstrate his superiority to the Levitical priesthood. Tithes were paid to him by the patriarch, and a blessing was pronounced by him upon the head of the patriarch. The significancy of these acts is the point now to be considered. *Θεωρεῖτε δέ, πηλίκος οὗτος ᾧ καὶ δεκάτην Ἀβραὰμ ἔδωκεν ἐκ τῶν ἀκροθινίων, ὁ πατριάρχης.* De Wette is inclined to view *θεωρεῖτε* as the indicative; but the impetuous sweep of the verse, as well as the idea of attentive consideration that frequently belongs to *θεωρέω*, show that it is the imperative. *Πηλίκος* is employed to describe greatness of any kind; and here, of course, it is greatness of official dignity that is meant. Our version views *καὶ* as qualifying Abraham; but the position of it shows that it must not be so taken. It would have been a small matter that some gift had been presented to Melchizedek; but when even tithes were paid to him, this was a palpable recognition of his official dignity. Tithes were an offering presented to the Most High as a token of homage and submission, and they were paid into the hands of those who discharged the priestly functions, and laboured for men in things pertaining to God. The priests were thus put, as it were, into the room of God, to receive the tribute for Him; and so far they were placed in a position of superiority to the worshippers. And then, who was it that paid tithes to Melchizedek? It was the most distinguished individual mentioned in the Old Testament: it was Abraham, the founder of the Jewish nation, the friend of God, the father of the faithful. He is here styled *ὁ πατριάρχης*, the head of his race, with the view of giving prominence to the dignified posi-

tion which he occupied. And the impressiveness of the whole sentence is greatly increased by the fine rhythm of this word, and by its being separated from Abraham and brought in so musically at the close. Yet Abraham, so far elevated above the rest of the chosen people of God, paid tithes to Melchizedek, and thus acknowledged the superiority of this distinguished priest of the Most High God. How great, then, must Melchizedek have been! *Θεωρεῖτε*, consider the matter, says the apostle: ponder it well. Think of the dignity of Abraham. By how much your notions of him are high, by so much must your views of Melchizedek rise to a still loftier point. The object of the comparison is not to sink Abraham, but to exalt Melchizedek; to raise Abraham very high, that Melchizedek may be exalted to an almost superhuman position.

The tithes presented by Abraham to Melchizedek were tithes of the spoils taken in war. It was customary in ancient times, even among Gentile nations, to offer up to the gods the first-fruits, not only of the productions of the ground, but also of what was caught in hunting, and of spoils captured in battle. Abraham, therefore, having succeeded in his attempt to recover Lot, felt constrained, out of gratitude to that God whose providence had prospered his undertaking, to present to Him a tenth of the spoils taken from the discomfited enemy, and he put this consecrated portion into the hands of Melchizedek, His priest. *Ἀκροθίνιον, -ια, primitiæ, ex ἄκρος, et θίν, θινός, acervus, quasi τὰ ἄκρα θινός, summitates acervi*, meaning first-fruits, first-fruits of corn, the choice parts of plunder, the select portions of anything offered to the gods. Nowhere else does the word occur in Scripture, and we must follow its meaning as exhibited in the common Greek writers. It would seem, therefore, at first sight as if it were not the tenth of all the spoils that was given, but only the tenth of the best portions, the tenth of the part allocated to God. But this view is contradicted by Genesis, where it is expressly said that Abraham gave to Melchizedek the tenth of *all*. It has therefore been supposed by the majority of interpreters that *ἀκροθινίων* here must mean, not choice portions, but spoils in general, *σκύλων καὶ λαφύρων*, as Œcumenius renders it. But no undoubted example of such a meaning has yet been found, and therefore we must suppose the apostle uses

the word in its current signification. Does he then contradict Genesis? No: the two statements are perfectly reconcilable. Tithes were paid of all; but in making up the portion for Melchizedek, Abraham did not take indifferently what came to hand, but he selected the best. The words literally mean, that he gave the tenth out of the best. It was the tenth of the whole, but more valuable than a tenth selected at random would have been. I need not point out to you what fine moral lessons the patriarch's example suggests to us. What we do for God should be done to the very best of our ability. What we offer to God should be the best at our disposal. Our days of health and vigour should be consecrated to Heaven, and not the mere feebleness of exhausted nature. Every offering to God should be without spot and blemish.

Ver. 5. The apostle now brings the Levitical priests into the field of argument, that he may apply to them the measure obtained from the comparison of Melchizedek with Abraham. The substance of what immediately follows is this: if Melchizedek was greater than Abraham, much more must he have been greater than the sons of Levi, whose head Abraham was. This point is handled down to the close of ver. 10, and payments of tithes, together with the parties from whom and to whom they were due, constitute the chief medium of proof. First of all, in ver. 5 it is mentioned that the Levitical priests had a right to tithes from their brethren: *καὶ οἱ μὲν ἐκ τῶν υἱῶν Λευὶ τὴν ἱερατείαν λαμβάνοντες, ἐντολὴν ἔχουσιν ἀποδεκατοῦν τὸν λαὸν κατὰ τὸν νόμον, τοῦτ' ἔστιν, τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς αὐτῶν, καίπερ ἐξεληλυθότας ἐκ τῆς ὀσφύος Ἀβραάμ.* *Καὶ μὲν* does not mark transition to a new topic, but introduces the fuller consideration of what was proposed in ver. 4. The import of *πηλίκος* is now to be unfolded. The phrase *οἱ ἐκ τῶν υἱῶν . . . λαμβάνοντες* has been differently interpreted. De Wette and Bleek understand it to mean those of the sons of Levi who receive the priesthood, that is, Aaron's descendants as distinguished from the Levites in general. But Ebrard and Delitzsch maintain that the clause is not designed to distinguish the priests from the Levites, but only to indicate that the priests were of the posterity of Levi. The meaning, say they, is not *those of the Levites who were priests*, but those *who as Levites were priests.*

And in defence of this view it is argued, that what mainly concerned the apostle's argument was to indicate that the priests obtained their office by descent. It is also said, that by adopting this view you remove or diminish the difficulty connected with the apostle's statement that the priests received tithes, while the fact is that the Levites received them as well. Still the preposition ἐκ following οἱ, and preceding a genitive plural of more comprehensive import than οἱ, can hardly be understood otherwise than partitively. We cannot doubt that the phrase was designed to mark out a particular class of the sons of Levi, viz. those of them who were priests. All the Levites were occupied with the service of the tabernacle, but it was only the sons of Aaron who officiated as priests. And it is manifestly this portion alone whom it concerns the apostle's argument to bring into view. But then he affirms of the parties spoken of, that they have a right to take tithes of the people. Now the right of claiming tithes belonged to the whole tribe of Levi; and the priests, the sons of Aaron, were to receive for their support whatever was offered to the Lord, whatever was devoted or redeemed (Num. xviii. 8, 19, 21). Why, then, does the apostle say that those of the sons of Levi who were priests were entitled to tithes, while the fact is that all the sons of Levi enjoyed the very same privilege? This is a subject involved in considerable perplexity. For the truth is, that the Levites had much more to do with tithing than the priests, and the Levites alone and not the priests came into immediate contact with the people. The Levites received a tenth from the hands of the cultivators of the soil; and then the priests received from the Levites a tenth of what had been gathered by them. The former was designated מַעֲשֵׂר רִאשׁוֹן, the first tithe, and the latter מַעֲשֵׂר הַמַּעֲשֵׂר, the tithe of a tithe (see Lev. xxvii. 30, Num. xviii. 11). A most ingenious method of solving this difficulty has been proposed by Biesenthal, who would substitute λευὶν for λαὸν in the verse before us, thus making the apostle say the priests have authority to tithe not the people, but the Levites; but there is no MSS. authority at all for the change of reading. Delitzsch says there are only three possible solutions: either that the apostle refers to the priests as the only parties who *received* tithes without needing to *pay*, or that he includes the Levites

under λαόν, or that ἀποδεκατοῦν designates not direct but mediate tithing. Yet none of these solutions seems very satisfactory. May not the principle that the priests were the higher order, that the Levites were subservient to them, and acted under their control, meet the difficulties of the case? *Qui facit per alterum, facit per se.* And, in fact, it is stated in Neh. x. 38 that when the Levites tithed, there behoved to be a priest along with them: "And the priest the son of Aaron shall be with the Levites, when the Levites take tithes: and the Levites shall bring up the tithe of the tithes unto the house of our God, to the chambers, into the treasure-house." So that, according to this representation of Nehemiah, the priests might really be said to take tithes of the people as superintending the process. And if the apostle does not enter minutely into the differences between priestly tithes and Levitical tithes, the reason is that these differences had no bearing upon his subject. It was with the priests only that his argument had to do, and with the tithes which they were entitled to receive from their brethren.

Ἀποδεκατόω and δεκατόω are not to be found in classic Greek. They belong to the Hellenistic form of the language, and are employed in the Septuagint to represent the Hebrew word עָשַׂר. They mean, to pay tithes, and also to receive tithes, following the double use of the Hebrew word. The latter obviously is the meaning in the passage before us.

And who are the parties from whom the priests have the authority to take tithes? They are their own brethren, who have descended like themselves from Abraham. There is a degree of surprise expressed in the clause, καίπερ ἐξεληλυθότας ἐκ τῆς ὀσφύος Ἀβραάμ. Why so? The manifest design of it is to illustrate the dignity of the sons of Levi. Even the descendants of Abraham, the father of the faithful, are laid under obligation to pay tithes to the priests, and thus to acknowledge their superiority. How elevated a position, then, was that of the priests! Yet the leading design of the verse is to show that it was only a modified dignity. The 5th and 6th verses are contrasted with one another: οἱ μέν, ὁ δέ; and the design of both of them is to illustrate the fundamental theme propounded in ver. 4: πηλίκος, how great is Melchizedek! The details of ver. 5, therefore, must rather, upon the whole, be viewed as not

designed to exaggerate, but rather to circumscribe and restrain. If, for example, the circumstance that it was brethren whom the Levitical priests were allowed to claim tithes from be supposed to set forth the exceeding greatness of their dignity, then of course the circumstance that it was not brethren from whom Melchizedek received the tithes mentioned in his case, would *pro tanto* detract from his exaltation. What then are the points of contrast between vers. 5 and 6? The Levitical priests obtained their dignity only by descent; but Melchizedek's priesthood centred in his own person. The Levitical priests needed a positive statute to secure the acknowledgment of their claims; whereas those of Melchizedek were so conspicuous in the light of their own evidence, that Abraham voluntarily recognised them at once. The Levitical priests claimed tithes from the people, that is, their own brethren, with whom naturally they stood upon the same level, and over whom they could have asserted no superiority unless it had been granted to them by positive statute; but the tithes mentioned in the case of Melchizedek were paid to him by a stranger, who presented them as a spontaneous acknowledgment of his intrinsic and self-evident elevation. And finally, those from whom the Levitical priests received tithes were the descendants of Abraham, children of him who is the father of the faithful; but it was Abraham himself who paid tithes to Melchizedek. How exalted, then, is the position of Melchizedek! Not only is he higher than Abraham, who is higher than the Levitical priests, who are higher than the people; but his exaltation above Abraham is far more conspicuous and striking than is the elevation of the Levitical priest above the people. You have thus mountain ranges rising above mountain ranges in fourfold succession, but the highest overtop those beneath them in a far greater degree than they do those nearer the plain. Such is part of the apostle's exhibition of the idea he embodies in πηλίκος.

Having thus considered the nature of the connection between the 5th and 6th verses, let us now for a moment, before leaving the 5th, glance at the grammatical structure of the concluding clauses of it. Bœhme and Bleek virtually reverse the arrangement in their exhibition of the sense: *Abrahimidæ quidem, sed fratres tamen;* but this is unwarrantable. What are the words?

τὸν λαόν, τοῦτ' ἔστι, τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς αὐτῶν. Here it is indicated, that as the parties were upon a level, the Levitical priests needed positive statute, ἐντολήν, to warrant any claim of superiority. Καίπερ usually has an adversative signification; but Erasmus and others make it here causal or explanatory: "their brethren as being descended." But ἐξεληλυθότας is not dependent upon ἀδελφούς, but rather upon λαόν: the people their brethren, although these people are descended, etc. Descent from Abraham might have been supposed to constitute ground for exemption from claims of superiority on the part of any brother; and so it would, but for the ἐντολὴ of God, who was pleased for the good of all to institute a priestly order. Therefore they have a right to claim tithes from people their brethren, although descended like themselves from Abraham.

Ver. 6. The 6th verse, we have seen, forms a contrast in all points to the 5th. The privilege possessed by the priests, of receiving tithes from the posterity of Abraham, asserts for them a more dignified position than the other Israelites. What are we to think of Melchizedek, who received tithes not from the sons of Abraham, but from Abraham himself? ὁ δὲ μὴ γενεαλογούμενος ἐξ αὐτῶν, δεδεκάτωκε τὸν Ἀβραάμ.

Γενεαλογέω signifies to deduce and exhibit one's descent. Ἐξ αὐτῶν refers to the Levitical priests. Melchizedek did not stand connected with them by relationship. This being an undoubted fact, why does the apostle use the hypothetical μὴ instead of the direct negative οὐ? Because there is more embodied in the participle than comes expressly out. There could not be any genealogy of Melchizedek exhibited. Ὁ οὐ would merely have denied his descent from Levi, but would have implied that he was known to be descended from another; but the apostle uses μή, because while denying descent from Levi, there is at same time in his mind the idea that his descent cannot at all be exhibited, as is clear from ἀγενεαλόγητος in ver. 3.

Melchizedek did not belong to the race of Jewish priests; he was not descended even from Abraham; his priesthood was of a totally different stamp from that of Aaron; his name was not to be found in any of the genealogical tables of the priests. Yet he received tithes from Abraham; and it was thus shown, that if his priesthood was different from the Levitical, the differ-

ence was all in his favour. He occupied a higher position than any other priest of old. The superiority of Melchizedek thus appears in a manifold manner, from the tithes that were presented to him by Abraham. He was shown to be superior to Abraham himself, because Abraham paid him tithes; and he was shown to be superior to the Levitical priests, because they received tithes from the posterity of Abraham, but Melchizedek received them from the patriarch's own hands. And not only so, but he received them as the expression of Abraham's spontaneous and heartfelt homage, and not as the consequence of an ἐντολὴ obligatory upon the father of the faithful.

The law of tithes, which was established by divine authority, does not now exist. Yet we are not to suppose that the very spirit of it has disappeared from the institutions of the church. On the contrary, the obligation to present offerings to God, out of the means with which His providence has blessed us, remains in full force; and this is one of the ways in which we are to express our homage to Him. The chief difference between the offerings of the old dispensation and those of the new is, that formerly a definite proportion of one's annual increase was fixed by divine appointment, as what should go to pious uses; whereas now it is left to every man to decide for himself how much he will contribute to the cause of God. It is not meant, that under the gospel a man is at liberty to give as little as he pleases to religious objects without incurring any blame. On the contrary, he is bound, not as responsible to man, but as responsible to God, to give according to the measure of his ability. It is a question of some moment, what could be the reason why a definite proportion was fixed in the infancy of the church, and why now, when she has reached her maturity, there is no proportion fixed at all? Could the change be meant as an indulgence to the men of later times, that they might have the opportunity of doing less than was exacted from their predecessors? Surely, if there was to be indulgence of one age as compared with another, it might rather have been expected that the milder treatment would be given to the church in her nonage. We must suppose, therefore, the reason of the difference to be, that in the early ages of the world the people of God needed very minute directions, and could not, in their

inexperience, be left to judge for themselves what was a sufficient contribution to the cause of religion; but that now, under the higher dispensation of the gospel, when clearer light is shining around us, and stronger motives are supplied to influence our feelings, it has been left to the impulse of our own minds to say what we shall do for the kingdom of Christ. And surely, if there is to be a difference in the amount of what we do now, in the days of the church's maturity, it ought not to be on the side of doing less than was formerly done, but on the side of doing more. God specifies no amount, but He leaves it as it were in the position of a debt of honour, to be decided by our own sense of duty. This, which is the essence of the voluntary principle, seems directly and logically deducible from the comparison between the Levitical priests and Melchizedek. There was positive statute fixing the precise amount due to the Levitical priests; but there was no such statute with regard to what was payable to Melchizedek. Now the simple question seems to be, whether Christ was a priest after the order of the Levites or after the order of Melchizedek; and the conclusion undeniably follows, that under the gospel what is to be paid for the support of the Christian cause, ought not to be considered fixed by positive statute, but should be the free-will offering of believers. Yet Abraham gave to Melchizedek with no stinted hand. He rated himself. And being a man of means, he went beyond what a positive statute of tithes would have exacted; for, as we have seen, he gave not a simple tenth, gathering it out indifferently; but the tenth which he presented consisted of the most valuable objects. Therefore under the gospel, giving from love, we are to offer generously, not each the smallest amount he conceives will suffice, but all according to their ability, and actuated by gratitude for the marvellous love of Christ shown to us.

Another argument in proof of the superiority of Melchizedek, is derived from the blessing which he pronounced upon Abraham: *καὶ τὸν ἔχοντα τὰς ἐπαγγελίας εὐλόγηκεν.* It will be noticed, that for the purpose of exalting Melchizedek the more, the apostle expatiates on the dignity of him whom he places beneath him. He does not, after the fashion so common among men, depress the one that he may elevate the other, but he

exalts both, that the dignity of the superior may appear the more transcendent. As he had formerly for the same purpose brought the patriarchal position of Abraham into view, so now does he exhibit the great and precious promises which he had received from God. Jehovah had honoured him very highly, and shown him very peculiar marks of favour. Others had received divine promises as well as Abraham; but those given to him were so numerous, so explicit, so far-reaching, that he might be singled out from all others, and described by way of eminence as the man who had the promises. He was in a particular manner the friend of God, and the promises were very specially directed to him. Among the promises referred to, may be mentioned the promise of the land of Canaan for a perpetual possession—the promise of heaven, as is clear from chap. xi. 16 of this epistle—the promise of Isaac, after all Sarah's hopes of seed had vanished—and the promise of the Messiah to be born, as one of his distant posterity. These are promises of which Abraham enjoyed the spiritual benefit—these are promises which are blessing us to the present hour. They were imparted to Abraham, not for his own sake only, but also for the advantage of all who, like him, should trust in God. "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." He was the father of the faithful—the model of dependence upon God—the depositary of the promises. Now this most illustrious individual not only paid tithes to Melchizedek, but also stood humbly before him to receive his blessing.

In some MSS. *εὐλόγησεν* is the reading here; but *εὐλόγηκεν* is supported by the vast preponderance of evidence. The aorist would simply state the act of blessing as a historical fact; but the perfect expresses the idea that it has taken place and endures. It will be observed, too, that in Genesis the blessing is mentioned before the payment of tithes, because probably it might be Melchizedek's mode of pronouncing the blessing which was the means of demonstrating to Abraham the exalted dignity of his character. The apostle, however, inverts the order of the events, because his main argument in proof of Melchizedek's greatness is grounded upon the tithes paid to him. The blessing, in fact, is just a subordinate branch of this argument, and therefore it is both preceded and followed by dis-

cussions about tithes. By how much, therefore, Abraham stands exalted in our view, by so much, and far more, must Melchizedek appear to us a great and glorious personage.

The 7th verse forms a part of the argument grounded upon the blessing of Abraham, and is designed to point out where its force lies. *Χωρὶς δὲ πάσης ἀντιλογίας, τὸ ἔλαττον ὑπὸ τοῦ κρείττονος εὐλογεῖται.* The principle here laid down is one about which the apostle affirms there can be no dispute. It is represented as a universally acknowledged maxim: "The less is blessed of the better, or of the greater." To bless is the act of a superior: to receive blessing bespeaks the position of an inferior. Now it is obvious that, in order to make this principle really an incontestible one, the word *εὐλογεῖται* must be viewed as bearing a special acceptation. For in the ordinary sense, in which it is frequently used, it may be applied indifferently to what is done by superiors or inferiors. It often means to wish well to another, to pray for the good of another, to desire his happiness; as in Matt. v. 44, *εὐλογεῖτε τοὺς καταρωμένους ὑμᾶς*; and in Rom. xii. 14, *εὐλογεῖτε τοὺς διώκοντας ὑμᾶς εὐλογεῖτε καὶ μὴ καταρᾶσθε.* Now an inferior may wish well to a superior; an inferior may pray for the good of a superior; an inferior may forgive the wrongs of a superior, and refrain from cursing him. Something more, therefore, than this must be involved, it is obvious, in the meaning of *εὐλογεῖται* here; something which only a superior can do to an inferior. And this additional amount of meaning seems to lie in the efficiency of the blessing pronounced. It is not a mere wish or prayer for the good of the party contemplated that is meant; but it is the uttering of a real blessing with the authority and foresight of a prophet, God Himself interfering to give it effect. Of such blessings there are not a few examples to be found in Scripture. In this manner Isaac blessed Jacob; and even after he became sensible of the deception which had been practised upon him, he was unable to reverse what he had spoken, because he felt it had been ratified in heaven, and all he could do was to pronounce another blessing of a different kind, but of equal certainty, upon Esau. In all this he plainly spoke as a prophet (Gen. xxvii.). Jacob, too, in his turn, when he was near death, blessed the sons of Joseph in a similar manner, and

also his own sons, and declared the great things which God in His providence was to do for them collectively and individually, which all received a most signal fulfilment (Gen. xlviii. xlix.). The case of Balaam, too, throws great light upon this subject; for though he had been sent for by Balak to curse the children of Israel, and was manifestly not unwilling to gratify the king of the Moabites, yet he found it altogether impossible to suppress the words of blessing that came to his lips; and falling into a trance, he described the vision of Israel's glory that passed before him. And when our Lord was leaving His disciples to ascend to His Father in heaven, He lifted up His hands and blessed them; and while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven: and they returned to Jerusalem with joy and gladness, to wait for the descent of the Holy Ghost, agreeably to the promise which their Master had given them. Now, these are examples of efficient blessings; and doubtless the one mentioned in our text, on which so much stress is laid by the apostle, was a blessing of this kind; and there can be no question, that the power of uttering such a blessing necessarily implied some superiority over the party on whom it was pronounced. Melchizedek's superiority to Abraham therefore was obvious, on the clear principle that the less is blessed of the greater. The conclusion, however, is not formally stated by the apostle, but is left to be drawn by the reader.

Ver. 8. The superiority of Melchizedek to the Levitical priests, the apostle goes on to illustrate by some additional considerations. Ὧδε and ἐκεῖ are for the most part adverbs of place; but in the verse before us they plainly refer to the different objects the apostle is comparing, viz. the Levitical priests and Melchizedek. As in vers. 5 and 6 οἱ μὲν designated the Levitical priests, and ὁ δὲ Melchizedek, so here it might have been expected that ἐκεῖ would have been applied to the former, and ὧδε to the latter; but the reverse is the case. The reason doubtless is, that the Levitical priests were viewed by the writer as existing down to his own time, whereas Melchizedek belonged to an age long since past.

The Levitical priests are described as ἀποθνήσκοντες ἄνθρωποι, dying men, men taken away one after another by death, whose title to tithes was grounded not upon their own individual

qualities, but upon their connection with a particular race that was continually perishing, yet continually renewed. So in ver. 23. But the meaning of the contrasted member is by no means so obvious. There one received them, *μαρτυρούμενος ὅτι ζῇ*. *Μαρτυρεῖσθαι* signifies to be borne witness to, to have witness borne in one's favour; and therefore the clause means, testified of that he liveth, of whom it is testified that he liveth. It is Melchizedek, without a question, that is here meant, and not Christ, as Capell., Heinsius, and Pyle conceive. What, then, do these words mean? Do they intimate that we have evidence from Scripture that Melchizedek never died, but continues to live on as a priest? By no means. There is no testimony to this effect in the word of God; and besides, such a priesthood still subsisting would be inconsistent with the priestly functions of Christ, who has no partner in His office.

Christopher Cuntz supposed that the words *ἀποθνήσκοντες* and *ζῇ* should not be understood literally, but metaphorically, as meaning, the one anxious, alarmed by the fear of death, and the other living in a joyous and happy frame of mind. But though it is plain, from 1 Cor. xv. 31 and 1 Thess. iii. 8, that the words are sometimes employed in the significations stated, yet this view of them is not suitable to the passage before us. For it does not appear that there is any testimony, whether positive or negative, to the joyousness of Melchizedek's life. It seems necessary, therefore, to understand *ἀποθνήσκοντες* and *ζῇ* in their literal acceptation. The Levitical priests were men that died. One succeeded another in office, and the succession is frequently noticed in Scripture,—as, for example, the succession of Eleazar to his father Aaron. That this is the meaning of *ἀποθνήσκοντες*, is confirmed by the fact that in ver. 23, where Christ and the Levites are directly compared, the same idea is plainly expressed: they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue, by reason of death. But how are we to understand the contrasted member of the sentence relating to Melchizedek—*ἐκεῖ δέ, μαρτυρούμενος ὅτι ζῇ*? It must be recollected that Melchizedek was a type, that he was made like to the Son of God, that the events of his life were so arranged as to exhibit a similitude of the Messiah. What is said of Melchizedek is not to be understood in precisely the

same manner as what is said of Christ, even when the words are the same; but allowance must be made for the difference between type and antitype, between shadow and substance. The unrecorded commencement and close, for example, of Melchizedek's life and priesthood, are prefigurative of the eternity and eternal priesthood of Christ. Now the words before us must be understood in a similar manner. The key which *ὁ μὴ γενεαλογούμενος ἐξ αὐτῶν* (in ver. 6) furnishes to *ἀπάτωρ, ἀμήτωρ, ἀγενεαλόγητος* (in ver. 3), fits also the intricate words of the verse under consideration. It is the absence of any record of his death that is referred to. What is positively stated here, "of whom it is witnessed that he liveth," means nothing more than what is negatively stated in ver. 3. Bleek supposes that the testimony referred to in *μαρτυρούμενος* must be sought in the 110th Psalm as well as in Gen. xiv.; but it is the Messianic priest who is described by the Psalmist: and there is nothing affirmed regarding Melchizedek but what is conceived to be known from earlier Scripture. Tholuck's idea, that the continued living of Melchizedek must be understood of his priestly life taken up into the life of Christ, and thus perpetuated, has no foundation whatever in the text; and besides, it would equally apply to the Levitical priests, for they also were types of Christ. The clause before us must be interpreted on the same principle as the 3d verse; and they are both grounded upon the fact that it is only as a living person that Melchizedek is exhibited upon the canvas of inspiration. Not a syllable is breathed of his death, or of the cessation of his priesthood; and God's purpose in this studied silence of the record was, that, appearing and known only as a living priest, he might be a type of Him who literally is a priest for ever, and ever liveth to make intercession. The eternity of Christ's priesthood could not, in the nature of things, be typified by another priesthood literally eternal too; and therefore it was necessary, if it was to be typified at all, that some kind of similitude of it should be contrived. Such a similitude we find in the priesthood of Melchizedek. He was made like to the Son of God. His life, his office, purposely exhibited without recorded commencement or recorded close, furnish a suitable prefiguration of the eternal duration of the Messiah. Aaron is known to us as a man throwing off his

pontifical robes, resigning them to his successor, and preparing to die; but Melchizedek is never presented in such an attitude. He appears only as a living man and a living priest; and the purpose is, that he might prefigure the enduring priesthood of Christ.

Vers. 9, 10. That what is said in this whole passage regarding Melchizedek and other typical persons must not be interpreted too strictly, but expounded with discretion, is obvious from the clause ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν in the next verse. The use of such forms is to soften and modify what might otherwise appear too bold and unguarded a statement. *Καὶ ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν, διὰ Ἀβραὰμ καὶ Λευὶ ὁ δεκάτας λαμβάνων δεδεκάτωται, ἔτι γὰρ ἐν τῇ ὀσφύϊ τοῦ πατρὸς ἦν, ὅτε συνήντησεν αὐτῷ ὁ Μελχισεδέκ.* The purpose of these two verses is to present another illustration of the inferiority of the Levitical priests to Melchizedek. It is possible, as Theodoret suggests, that the Jews might be ready to object to the apostle's foregoing argument that Abraham was not a priest, and that consequently it was not at all remarkable he should have paid tithes to Melchizedek. It would have been something more to the purpose to show that Aaron, or some one of the priestly order, had done this. Now the apostle's reply is, that they all virtually did it. Levi, the appointed head of the priestly order, who were to receive tithes among the Jews, paid tithes to Melchizedek in Abraham, being in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him. This statement, however, is not grounded upon the naked principle, that a son can always be held to have done whatever his father did, but upon the special relation in which Abraham stood to his posterity. He was the divinely appointed root of the Israelitish nation. He was set apart to be the founder of a people among whom peculiar institutions should be established. And the dealings of God with him were regulated, not merely with a view to his personal circumstances, but to influence and mould the whole race. Abraham sustained something of a representative character. He received many glorious promises, not for himself only, but for those who were to follow. What he did, therefore, in the way of paying homage to Melchizedek, may be regarded in a certain sense as done by his posterity. When a man's offspring succeed to the position which he occu-

pied, and hold the same property or honours, they are generally regarded as bound by the conditions which accompanied the first grant of them; and if they repudiate these conditions, they must relinquish the advantages. If Abraham, then, as the holder of the promises, and the head of the chosen race, paid tithes to Melchizedek, and thus recognised the validity of his priesthood, his posterity, and Levi among the rest, who in virtue of these promises obtained possession of all the privileges which distinguished them, must be regarded as having homologated that recognition, and as being bound by its spirit. Levi, therefore, although the great receiver of tithes, virtually paid tithes to Melchizedek; and his inferiority thus stands confessed.

With regard to the phrase, ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν, it is quite classic, and of frequent occurrence. There are two usages of it. It is employed to bring a statement to a close that might have been prolonged by the enumeration of some other particulars, in this sense: "to say in a word," "to speak briefly." It is also used to soften something that might be considered harsh, and to suggest that it must not be too strictly understood, in this sense: "so to speak," "if I may so express myself." Some have argued for the former meaning in the verse before us, but it admits of no reasonable doubt that the latter view ought to be followed. The statement of a son's having done what a father did before born is a bold one; and though in the circumstances quite just, yet is the very kind of statement naturally accompanied with such a phrase as ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν. Long ago, the objection was made to the reasoning of the apostle, that if it proved Levi inferior to Melchizedek, it would equally apply to Christ Himself, who was also a descendant of Abraham. This difficulty is handled at length by Augustine, who solves it on the principle, that although Christ was descended from Abraham, yet He sprang not from him in the ordinary course of nature. And certainly, if the mode of Christ's conception sufficed to preserve the human nature which He assumed pure from every taint of that corruption which adheres to the posterity of Adam, it may be equally acknowledged sufficient to raise Him above the obligations and the influences consequent upon descent from Abraham. But independently of this, every one sees that, as our Lord's assumption of human nature was His own voluntary act, and was de-

signed as the means of blessing the whole race, even as a man He occupies a position infinitely raised above all other men. He was David's son, and yet at the same time He was David's Lord. And just so, though He was Abraham's descendant, yet He was the Lord in whom Abraham trusted, and consequently so raised above Abraham as not at all to come under the sweep of an argument grounded upon the inferiority of the Levites to Abraham. And when we think of the exalted description given of Christ in chap. i. of this epistle, it need not surprise us that the apostle should never once have thought of noticing the objection to his argument mentioned above. Melchizedek himself, who occupies so exalted a position, is introduced merely for the purpose of serving as a foil to the glory and dignity belonging to Christ.

What unexampled greatness, then, does it not appear from this passage must belong to Christ! Levi was below Abraham, just as all the links of a chain are below the highest, on which they depend. Abraham, again, stood below Melchizedek, as is clear from the tithes he paid and the blessing he received. And Melchizedek, in his turn, stands below Christ, as being merely the type and shadow of what Christ is the substance. You thus mount higher and higher, until you come to Christ, than whom there is none higher.

We may also conclude that an unexampled power of blessing must belong to Christ. Melchizedek blessed Abraham, and blessed him with effect: his words were ratified by Heaven, and the blessing of God came down in copious measure upon the patriarch. As much higher, then, as Christ is than Melchizedek, so much greater power must belong to Him. He breathed upon His disciples, and they received the Holy Ghost. He distributed a few loaves among famishing thousands, and they were all satisfied. And He has the same power still. He is alive for evermore to bless His people. He can bestow upon them whatever He sees will be conducive to their good, for He has all power both in heaven and in earth. How happy they who have confided their souls to His care, and are trusting to His sacrifice and intercession!

Vers. 11–19. The apostle has now evinced by sundry considerations the superiority of Melchizedek to the Levitical

order of priests. And he next proceeds to infer, from the fact of the Messiah's having been appointed after the order of Melchizedek, that the Levitical priesthood must have been a radically defective institution, and designed merely for a time. The substance of the next four verses is this: if the Levitical priesthood had fully answered all the ends contemplated by such an institution, there would have been no occasion for the appointment of another in its room. The words of the Psalmist, therefore, "Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek," furnish proof of the insufficient character of the services of Aaron. *Εἰ μὲν οὖν τελείωσις διὰ τῆς Λευϊτικῆς ἱερωσύνης ἦν· (ὁ λαὸς γὰρ ἐπ' αὐτῇ νενομοθέτητο·) τίς ἔτι χρεία, κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισεδὲκ ἕτερον ἀνίστασθαι ἱερέα, καὶ οὐ κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Ἀαρὼν λέγεσθαι;*

What is the *τελείωσις*, of which it is here concluded that it was not effected by the priesthood of Aaron? Some understand it to mean perfect satisfaction for sin, others the thorough sanctification of the heart, and others the exalted blessedness and glory of heaven. But one thing seems obvious, that it must here have a special reference to the specific end which a priesthood is designed to serve, and that it must designate the thorough attainment of that end. Now what is the leading purpose of a priesthood? It is to make expiation for sin; it is to present offerings to God for the averting of His displeasure. Accordingly this same word is used in chap. x. 1, where we are informed that the sacrifices of the law can never make the comers thereunto perfect, *τελειῶσαι*; and the reason assigned in the 4th verse is, that it is impossible for the blood of bulls and of goats to take away sins. Complete removal of guilt, therefore, perfect satisfaction to justice, thorough expiation, seems to be the leading idea involved in the word *τελείωσις* in the verse before us. At the same time, it must be noticed that in chap. ix. 9 we are told the sacrifices of the law cannot make perfect, *κατὰ συνείδησιν τελειῶσαι*, which appears to point to some internal change; and therefore we seem warranted in regarding *τελείωσις* as including both the forgiveness of sin and the inward transformation of the soul. In short, it seems to describe a state of peace with God, grounded upon the remission of sin, and issuing in an increasingly holy life, the enjoyment

of communion with Heaven here, and the cheering hope of a blessed and glorious immortality hereafter—the holy and happy state to which it is the purpose of all religion to restore man. Now the apostle's conclusion is, that these objects were not reached by the priesthood of Aaron. Perfect expiation was only foreshadowed by it, but not accomplished; and in so far as individuals were blessed under it, it was through the grace and power of the Messiah, exerted for the benefit of those who, like Abraham, saw His day by the eye of faith, and were glad.

And how is the failure of the Levitical priesthood intimated by the apostle? *Εἰ μὲν οὖν τελείωσις ἦν . . . τίς ἔτι χρεία;* Here the conditional member is expressed by means of an imperfect, and the corresponding clause is thrown into the form of a question. This question is proposed without a verb, but obviously the same imperfect *ἦν* must be supplied. Bleek says the supplement may either be simply *ἦν*, or *ἦν* with the particle *ἄν*; but according to this latter view, the argument would be too hypothetically stated. If perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, what further need would there be of another priest—*ἂν ἦν*? Now, no doubt all the elements of the apostle's reasoning are here substantially exhibited, but the existence of another priest is hypothetically contemplated; whereas the true state of the case seems to be, that the apostle has taken his stand upon the fact affirmed in the 110th Psalm, and is speaking from that position. If perfection was . . . , what need was there for another priest? Clearly there was none. But another priest was long ago promised. Consequently perfection was never attained by means of the Levitical priesthood.

In the very enunciation of the hypothetical clause, the apostle's view of it is indicated by the particle *μέν*. This particle is correlative, and suggests a thought not expressed: if indeed perfection was, *οὐ δὲ ἦν*.

The apostle, before concluding the sentence, throws in a parenthetical clause, with the view of showing that the whole Mosaic law, under the operation of his argument, was inseparably connected with the priesthood, and that consequently his argument applied in the following verse, as we shall see, to the one as well as to the other; and he does so apply it in the conclusion thus extensively: *ὁ λαὸς γὰρ ἐπ' αὐτῇ νενομοθέτητο. Νομο-*

θετέω means to enact a law, and also to govern or instruct; and *νομοθετεῖσθαι* means to be enacted as a law, and also to be governed, to be placed under law. The latter obviously is the meaning here. The people had been or were placed under the law. The Mosaic institutions were enacted for the people *ἐπ' αὐτῇ ἱερωσύνῃ*, in connection with the priesthood, on condition of being under the priesthood. A very similar expression occurs in chap. viii. 6, *ἥτις (διαθήκη) ἐπὶ κρείττοσιν ἐπαγγελίαις νενομοθέτηται*, which has been established, instituted, enacted upon better promises, *i.e.* resting upon them as its conditions. The new covenant does *not* involve the condition of being subject to the Levitical priesthood, but the old one did. The force of the clause therefore is, that the law was an appendage of the priesthood, that it was instituted in connection with the priesthood, that it necessarily involved the existence of the priesthood, and that it could not be conceived to exist by itself if the priesthood were abolished. It must share the fate of the priesthood.

Now, if the Levitical priests, in the administration of the Mosaic law, and the performance of its multiplied rites, had been able to accomplish all the ends which a priesthood contemplates, there would have been no occasion for another priest to be appointed, of a different order. The same priesthood would have been perpetuated to the end of the world. The simple declaration therefore of the Psalmist, that the Messiah was to be of Melchizedek's order, shows that the Levitical priesthood was imperfect, and God designed it from the very first to give place to another. It is of importance to observe that the apostle is building his conclusion entirely upon the Old Testament. He is not reasoning from facts under the new order of things, which would have had but little weight with Jewish minds, but he grounds his conclusion exclusively upon the book of Psalms. He infers the weakness and unprofitableness of the Levitical priesthood from the words of David. With regard to the construction of the concluding member of this verse, Luther, Baumgarten, Schmid, and others, conceive that *λέγεσθαι* is immediately connected with *χρεία*, and that then *ἀνίστασθαι* is governed by *λέγεσθαι*: thus, What need for it to be said that another priest arises after the order of Melchizedek, and not after the order of Aaron? But without a doubt the two infini-

tives are co-ordinate, and are both similarly dependent upon the question proposed. The apostle does not say ἄλλον, but ἕτερον, because he means not simply another numerically, but another and a different, another kind of priest. Ἀνίστασθαι expresses the idea of appearing upon the stage of time, being manifested or raised up; but there is no ground for the supposition of Tholuck, that it carries with it the notion of sudden exhibition. Bleek finds a difficulty in deciding what is the subject of λέγεσθαι, affirming that it cannot be ἕτερον ἱερέα, and he also considers that the negative μὴ might have been employed instead of οὐ. But ἕτερον naturally enough connects itself with λέγεσθαι: Why should another arise, and be described not after the order of Aaron? The negative does not go directly to the verb, but rather to κατὰ τὴν τάξιν; and οὐ is chosen, in order that οὐ κατὰ τὴν τάξιν may form a direct negative to κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισεδέκ.

In the 12th verse the apostle applies to the law likewise the conclusion which he has, if not formally stated, yet really made good, regarding the priesthood; and it was, we have seen, as a foundation for this inference that the parenthetical clause was inserted in the 11th verse: Μετατιθεμένης γὰρ τῆς ἱερωσύνης, ἐξ ἀνάγκης καὶ νόμου μετάθεσις γίνεται. Estius, Gerhard, and Lunemann, suppose that γὰρ introduces this verse as a proof or confirmation of the parenthetical clause of the 11th verse; but that clause is the statement of a fact which could hardly be doubted, and which needed no such formal proof. Obviously the statement here made is rather grounded upon that parenthesis as an inference; and in so far as it is exhibited as a reason for anything, it is designed rather to show a reason why a change of priesthood could not rightly be made. Such a change would only be made in a case of necessity, when the ends of priesthood were not served. Why? Because changing the priesthood involves a fundamental change of law, which should never be done on light grounds. The attachment of the Jews to their peculiar institutions was so strong, that many even of those who acknowledged the Messiahship and priesthood of Jesus, still clung to the idea that circumcision and other ritual observances were to be perpetual in the church. It is manifest, however, from this verse, that everything which peculiarly be-

longed to the Mosaic law, everything ritual and ceremonial, is abolished. The old law was so inseparably connected with the Levitical priesthood, that the one could not survive the other; and therefore the new priest who was to arise was to be invested with the authority of establishing a new order of things. The ancient priest had had the law established for him by Moses; but when the new Priest should arise, there was to be no Moses to act as legislator for Him. He was to be legislator Himself. Aaron had been instead of a mouth to Moses, and Moses had been instead of God to Aaron; but the Messiah was to unite the functions of both in His own person, and to be at once the Moses and the Aaron of the new dispensation. Yes, Christ is the Prophet who was to be raised up like unto Moses, and He is the Priest who was to come in the room of Aaron. Like Melchizedek, He is at once lawgiver and priest. Agreeably to the prediction of Zechariah, He was to rule upon His throne, and be a Priest upon His throne (vi. 13). When the priesthood was changed, the old law was changed, and new institutions were set up by Christ.

It is not here stated by the apostle that the τελείωσις which the ancient priesthood failed to secure, was to be attained under the new; but this is obviously implied, and it is clearly brought out afterwards. The inefficiency of the Levitical institutions appears from the fact that, in God's providence, another order of things was after a time set up. It would be a libel, therefore, upon the divine wisdom, to suppose that anything like deficiency should be found to characterize the services of a priesthood introduced in such circumstances. But it may be said the ancient priesthood itself was God's institution; and if services appointed by Him proved inefficient formerly, what security have we that the new rites may not be found equally unsuccessful? But this objection is grounded upon the supposition that God established the Levitical priesthood, in the idea that perhaps it might suffice; but that finding it inadequate, He substituted another in its room,—in which view certainly the failure of the first might have warranted the surmise that the second would also disappoint expectation. But the Aaronical priesthood was not set up in the idea that it might suffice for ever. On the contrary, it was designed from the very first as a mere prefigu-

ration of the priesthood of the promised Messiah; and the appearance of Melchizedek, made like to the Son of God, before Aaron was born, as well as the declaration of the Psalmist so long before the incarnation of Christ, made it obvious that all previous institutions had been designed simply to prepare the way for the great High Priest of the church. When the apostle says, "If perfection had been by the Levitical priesthood, what need would there have been of the priesthood of Christ?" he is not at all to be viewed as stating the grounds of God's procedure in setting up a new priesthood; but only as arguing against the notion which had become so common among the Jews, that the services of their law really had the power in themselves of reconciling sinners unto God.

It will be noticed also, that the apostle says expressly it was a change of the law which was to accompany the change of the priesthood. This obviously implies, that while the old law was to be set aside, another law has come in its room, and therefore we are still under law to Christ. There are positive ordinances and moral precepts which it is incumbent upon us to observe under the gospel; and those persons who argue for an Antinomian exemption from all law, contradict the apostle, and turn the grace of God into licentiousness.

Ver. 13. The conclusion already drawn in regard to a change both of priesthood and law, the apostle now confirms by a reference to the fact that the Messiah was not to belong, and did not belong, to the tribe of Levi; and therefore he introduces the proof by means of *γάρ*. *Ἐφ' ὃν γὰρ λέγεται ταῦτα, φυλῆς ἑτέρας μετέσχηκεν ἀφ' ἧς οὐδεὶς προσέσχηκε τῷ θυσιαστηρίῳ.* 14. *Πρόδηλον γὰρ ὅτι ἐξ Ἰούδα ἀνατέταλκεν ὁ Κύριος ἡμῶν· εἰς ἣν φυλὴν οὐδὲν περὶ ἱερωσύνης Μωσῆς ἐλάλησεν.*

Ἐφ' ὅν, in reference to whom, concerning whom. The preposition *ἐπὶ* with accusative bears the very same signification in Mark ix. 12, Rom. iv. 9. The usage, however, is not very frequent. Theophylact says *ἐφ' ὃν* is used instead of *περὶ οὗ*. It is not the things spoken by the apostle in the preceding verses to which *ταῦτα* refers, but the things declared in the 110th Psalm. Now the person in regard to whom the Psalmist said ages before, Thou art a priest for ever, was not a Levite: *μετέσχηκεν φυλῆς ἑτέρας*—He belonged to another tribe. *Μετέχειν* with the genitive

expresses the idea of being participant in, being a member of; and *ἑτέρας* intimates that the tribe was quite a different one from that which usually furnished priests, and one from which it was wrong, according to law, that priests should be taken. *Ἀφ' ἧς*, of which, from which; *οὐδείς*, no one, no one sprung from which; *προσέσχηκεν τῷ θυσιαστηρίῳ*, approached to the altar, attached himself to the altar, that is, performed the duties of a priest. Instead of *προσέσχηκεν*, another reading is *προσέσχεν*; but the paronomasia with *μετέσχηκεν*, so conformable to the style of this epistle, speaks in favour of the received reading. And, besides, the perfect is the most suitable tense; for it is not so much the statement of a historical fact that is designed, as the exhibition of a principle. On different occasions there might be persons not of the tribe of Levi who approached the altar; but in this they transgressed. What the apostle means is, that no one of a different tribe from Levi ever has legally given attendance at the altar. *Προσέσχεν* would make the statement with regard to some specified past time; but *προσέσχηκεν* makes it with regard to all time, from Moses down to the apostle's day.

The 13th and 14th verses are both introduced by *γάρ*. They both exhibit substantially the same thought, but the one in a more general form, and the other in a more specific; and the colouring of the diction is different. In ver. 13 it is the Messiah that is spoken of, as exhibited in Ps. cx.; and the ground on which mention is there made of a different tribe from Levi, is the acknowledged principle, that the Messiah was the Son of David, who belonged to the tribe of Judah. But in ver. 14 the person of the Messiah is defined as the individual whom the writer of this epistle and his Christian brethren acknowledged for their Lord, viz. Jesus of Nazareth; and the ground on which here He is described as having sprung from Judah, is the acknowledged fact that Joseph and Mary belonged to that tribe. Thus the two verses, while exhibiting the same truth, and therefore, in the view of some, chargeable with tautology, are related to one another as more general and more special; and to a Jewish mind, not yet thoroughly established in the faith, they would suggest an argument in favour of the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth. Whether Jesus were the Messiah or not, the apostle's argument from Ps. cx., in regard

to an intended change of priesthood and law, would stand firm; but the perfect coincidence of the circumstances of Jesus with the position assigned to the Messiah, both gives weight to the general argument, and in turn derives from it support for the claim of Jesus the Nazarene. Thus we see how watchful the apostle is, in reasoning with the Hebrews, to connect the faith of the gospel at all points with the Old Testament.

Pierce supposes *πρόδηλον* to mean *evident beforehand;* but this signification would have required *ἀνατέταλκεν* to be in a different tense. Without a doubt, *πρὸ* just strengthens *δῆλον*; and the meaning is, "obviously apparent,"—*ἀναντίῤῥητον*, as Theodoret explains it. Now on what was this evidence grounded? Not upon prophecy, as in the preceding verse, but upon the well-known fact that Joseph and Mary belonged to Judah, as accordingly they went up to the city of David to be enrolled at the time of the taxing. For *ὁ Κύριος ἡμῶν* does not here mean indefinitely, as Michaelis supposes, the Lord spoken of in the Psalms, but Jesus, whom the apostle acknowledged as his Lord. *Ἀνατέλλω* is frequently employed to describe the rising of the sun or stars, and also the growth of the branches of a tree, or the sprouting of seeds. Now our Lord is exhibited both under the image of a sun or star, and also under that of a branch or shoot, as in Num. xxiv. 17, *ἀνατελεῖ ἄστρον ἐξ Ἰακώβ*; and in Isaiah, "a branch grow out of the stem of Jesse." Wherefore the question arises, Which of these images is the one which the apostle here designed to employ? Bleek is inclined to the idea that both might be floating together in the writer's mind, and that they are to be conceived as here coalescing. But a star and a plant are so exceedingly different from one another, that they cannot be combined into one picture without the utmost confusion. The simple question therefore is, Which of the two images is most suitable to the special design of the passage, which is to express the idea of descent from a particular family? And it seems obvious that the sense, springing up as a branch, is entitled to the preference. Were the object of the clause to exhibit the glory of Christ considered in Himself, then the idea of His rising as a bright luminary in the heavens would be striking and impressive. But when the leading object of the clause is not to display His

glory, but to indicate the tribe He has sprung from, the figure of a branch growing from a root is undoubtedly the most expressive. In short, the words of the apostle correspond to those of the prophet, describing the Messiah: "A rod shall grow out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch from his roots."

Εἰς ἥν, in reference to which tribe Moses spake nothing of priesthood.

Yet it was no new notion of the apostle's that the Messiah was not to be a Levite. It was the common belief of the Jews; and this belief was grounded upon the plain prediction that He was to be the Son of David, who belonged to the tribe of Judah. If He was to be a priest, therefore, at all, it is obvious that He could not be so under Mosaic constitution. There had been changes of priests under the old dispensation, but they had all taken place within the limits of the tribe of Levi: the idea of going to another tribe was quite alien to the whole system; and the leprosy of Uzziah sufficiently attested the displeasure of Heaven against all interference with the laws of the priesthood. It was manifest, therefore, from Ps. cx., that the whole system was to be changed. It was a well-known fact that Jesus of Nazareth, whom so many signs conspired to prove to be the Messiah, was not a Levite, but a descendant of David, and consequently belonged to the tribe of Judah, which was wholly unconnected with the ancient priesthood.

In the three following verses (15–17) the eternity attributed by David to the Messiah's priesthood is exhibited as another decisive proof that a radical change of system was intended from the first. *Καὶ περισσότερον ἔτι κατάδηλόν ἐστιν εἰ κατὰ τὴν ὁμοιότητα Μελχισεδὲκ ἀνίσταται ἱερεὺς ἕτερος.* Here *κατάδηλον* has nearly the same signification as *πρόδηλον* in ver. 14, only *πρόδηλον* signifies evident as a matter of fact, and *κατάδηλον* evident as a matter of argument. And what is the thing of which it is here affirmed that it is far more evident? Erasmus thinks it is that the two priesthoods spoken of are quite different. Bleek and Tholuck say it is that a change of law necessarily accompanies a change of priesthood,—that, in short, an entirely new economy was to be set up. Capellus, Bengel, and Delitzsch suppose it to be, that perfection was not attainable by the Levitical priesthood. Now, in defence of this

last idea, it may be argued that it was the leading principle maintained in the preceding paragraph; whereas the necessary dependence of the law upon the priesthood was a subordinate argument, adduced to support that conclusion. Now in what respect is it affirmed of the unattainableness of perfection, that is yet far more evident? The meaning is not, that this proposition is more evident than some other proposition; but the meaning is, that this same proposition is evident, first from one consideration, and then far more evident from another consideration. The imperfection of the Levitical priesthood, says the apostle in vers. 13, 14, is evident, in the first place, from the fact that a new priesthood was to be instituted out of a different tribe; and this imperfection is evident also, he says now, from the fact that the new Priest was to exercise His functions *εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα*. Now it is obvious that the one of these arguments is a far more powerful one than the other. We can imagine that a priest might have been taken from the tribe of Judah instead of the tribe of Levi, and that still the general character of the priesthood might have remained without very material change; but certainly the appointment of one individual priest to act in perpetuity, argues the introduction of a system wholly different from the ancient one, in which death occasioned a regular succession of priests. With perfect propriety, therefore, might the apostle say that his proposition regarding the insufficiency of the Levitical priesthood was made far more evident by means of the new argument to be adduced.

And now follows this more convincing argument, in this and the two next verses: *εἰ κατὰ τὴν ὁμοιότητα Μελχισεδὲκ ἀνίσταται ἱερεὺς ἕτερος*. *Εἰ—for that, because, since.* *Εἰ* is not used merely in suppositions that are doubtful, but where the thing is understood to be quite certain, as in Acts iv. 9, Rom. viii. 31. *Εἰ . . . ἀνίσταται*, if indeed, as David himself assures us. The apostle might have written *ὅτι* in the sense of "because;" but, as Bœhme remarks, it would then have been doubtful whether this conjunction introduced the more evident proposition itself, or assigned the reason why it was more clear. Besides, the conditional statement looks forward to ver. 17, where it is affirmed as a fact. *Κατὰ τὴν ὁμοιότητα* is the apostle's own explanation of *κατὰ τὴν τάξιν*, and shows that likeness is the

idea expressed by the latter phrase rather than order. *Ἕτερος* expresses more than *ἄλλος*. It means a different kind of priest. Aaron's son was *ἱερεὺς ἄλλος*, as compared with his father, but not *ἱερεὺς ἕτερος*. Schulz conceives *ἕτερος* to be the subject, and *ἱερεὺς* the predicate: another individual is raised up as priest. But without a question, *ἱερεὺς ἕτερος* is the nominative to the verb; and the meaning is, Since another priest is raised up after the likeness of Melchizedek.

Vers. 16, 17. The new and different priest is thus described on the authority of the Psalmist: *Ὃς οὐ κατὰ νόμον ἐντολῆς σαρκικῆς γέγονεν, ἀλλὰ κατὰ δύναμιν ζωῆς ἀκαταλύτου. Μαρτυρεῖ γάρ· Ὅτι σὺ ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισεδέκ.*

Some have supposed *Μελχισεδὲκ* to be the antecedent to *ὅς*, but without a doubt the relative looks to *ἱερεὺς ἕτερος*. The arrangement makes this obvious, as also the tense of *γέγονεν* —who has been made and continues to be a priest. *Οὐ κατὰ νόμον ἐντολῆς σαρκικῆς*. Chrysostom, Œcumenius, Theophylact, as also Bœhme and Kuinœl, conceive that *νόμον* here designates the Mosaic law in general, and that *ἐντολῆς σαρκικῆς* (singular being put for plural) brings into view the contents of that law as consisting of carnal ordinances, such as circumcision, distinction of meats, etc. But the singular is rather to be viewed as pointing to that particular law which regulated the appointment of the Levitical priests. And why should the law of the ancient priesthood be designated the law of a carnal commandment? Tholuck says that it is so called because it restricted the priesthood to a particular family, requiring fleshly descent in a certain line; but this can scarcely be the whole reason, because the descent of the Messiah was as much fixed to Judah as that of the old priests was to Levi, and it was promulgated even before the appointment of Aaron at all. *Σαρκικός*, besides the signification of sinful, means also fleshly, having reference to what is external, and worldly, and visible; and *σάρκινος* also, which is the form adopted here by Griesb., Lachm., Tischend., after A, B, C, D, J, though differing in some respects from *σαρκικός*, yet bears also this sense. A carnal commandment, therefore, may be viewed as meaning one that mainly has respect to what is outward and apparent. And the law of the priesthood was very decidedly of this character. Not only did it insist

upon Levitical descent, but it also required freedom from a variety of bodily defects, and the services which it prescribed were almost entirely external and ritual. And as men who held the office were frail and dying, there was a continual succession. This view of the import of σαρκικῆς ἐντολῆς both harmonizes with all the facts of the case, and brings out strikingly the contrast which is obviously intended with what follows. There is indeed another idea suggested by this contrast, and adopted by Carpzov, Bœhme, and Kuinœl, that the carnal commandment means a transitory, temporary commandment, not a commandment that had to deal merely with externalities. Although, doubtless, the idea of perishableness is involved in σαρκικός, yet it is hardly the word that would be selected to set forth that idea singly and specially; and besides, there is another consideration which quite turns the scale in favour of the view already given, viz. that it takes nothing for granted but what any Jew would allow—that the law of the priesthood had a predominating respect to external circumstances, and, on account of man's frailty, provided for succession by transmission of office from father to son. In this view, the words of the apostle would tell with far greater effect on Jewish minds, than if, in the very premises of his argument, he were to take for granted that their priesthood was a transitory and temporary institution.

The law of a carnal commandment, which describes the foundation of the Levitical priesthood, has set over against it the power of an endless life, which belongs to Christ. Νόμος designates a law that comes to a man from without to control him, but δύναμις expresses the idea of a power existing and working from within. And not only so, but the νόμος that regulated the Jewish priesthood had respect in a very preponderating measure to externalities; and having to do with frail, dying men, provided for a regular succession, while the δύναμις of Christ was the power of an imperishable life. Here, then, is pointed out to us the foundation of the enduring priesthood with which our Lord is invested. Unlike the priests of old, He has in Himself an inherent and indestructible principle of life, which altogether precludes the idea of succession in reference to His priesthood. He died, it is true, but the reason was that He was victim as well as priest; but death had no dominion over Him,

because it was not possible that He should be holden of it. Hoffmann and Delitzsch take up the idea, that the imperishable life ascribed by the apostle to Christ means exclusively the life which He rose to when He emerged from the tomb, and not the life which began with His miraculous conception, and which was manifested during His abode upon earth; and the reason which they assign is, that the subject here handled is not Christ's priesthood as begun to be exercised amid suffering and dying, but Christ's priesthood as existing after the order of Melchizedek in the presence of God above. But this reason is altogether inadequate to sustain the conclusion. It is not denied that Christ was a priest before He ascended to heaven. It would therefore follow, on the principle supposed, that He was appointed to the office before He was possessed of all the needful qualifications. But does not the verse before us say that He was made a priest according to the power of an imperishable life? He must have possessed that qualification previously, and without it He could not have performed any part of His priestly functions. And accordingly He Himself declared while on earth, "I have power to lay down my life," etc. This was the very power here described, without which He could not have died to make expiation, and so as to be sure of rising again from the dead. But having life in Himself, He was able to vanquish death; and He came forth from the grave in the power of His own inherent might; and now He liveth evermore to discharge the functions of His priestly office. This submission to death for a brief space was indispensable as the means of expiating man's guilt, which the blood of bulls and goats could not have done; but His resurrection was equally necessary, that He might ascend to the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens to make intercession for us. If death had triumphed over Him, as it did over Aaron and the long line of Jewish priests, then He could not, any more than they, have accomplished the great ends of a priesthood; but His indestructible life, ζωὴ ἀκατάλυτος, placed Him in a totally different position, enabled Him to meet death in his own dark domain, and to achieve a victory which should turn out to the eternal salvation of all that trusted in Him.

The 17th verse adduces the scriptural ground of the descrip-

tion given of the Christian priest, as distinguished from the Levitical, viz. the oft-repeated words of the 110th Psalm, *Μαρτυρεῖ γάρ*, that is, God or the Scripture testifieth, "Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek." The emphasis manifestly, in this citation of these words, lies upon the expression "for *ever*." *Ὅτι* is not a part of the testimony, but it is the mark of citation, and it is frequently used to introduce indirect as well as direct quotations. It will be observed that the order of the words taken from the 110th Psalm is changed here, as compared with former exhibitions of them. *Εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα* is placed near the beginning, and has the emphasis resting upon it, because it is the substance of this phrase that is made specially prominent in the immediately preceding verses. The reason introduced by *γὰρ* here lies in the words *εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα*, and it goes back to *δύναμιν ζωῆς ἀκαταλύτου.*

The 18th and 19th verses exhibit, as inferences from the eternal priesthood of Christ, the abolition of the old priesthood, and the law, and also the introduction of a better hope. The fact of this abolition, as also the grounds of it, were hinted at as far back as the 11th verse. *Ἀθέτησις μὲν γὰρ γίνεται προαγούσης ἐντολῆς, διὰ τὸ αὐτῆς ἀσθενὲς καὶ ἀνωφελές· οὐδὲν γὰρ ἐτελείωσεν ὁ νόμος, ἐπεισαγωγὴ δὲ κρείττονος ἐλπίδος, δι' ἧς ἐγγίζομεν τῷ Θεῷ.* For there is, indeed, in the very fact of the appointment of another and nobler priesthood, on the one hand, an abolishing of the ancient sacerdotal institution; and on the other there is the exhibition of a more exalted hope. The construction of the several clauses of this compound sentence, particularly of the last clause of ver. 19, has been very differently estimated. A large number of interpreters view *ἐπεισαγωγὴ δέ*, as standing in immediate connection with the preceding words. Yet those are by no means agreed as to the nature of this connection. Erasmus, Calvin, Capellus, Ebrard, and others, suppose the whole clause *ἐπεισαγωγὴ δὲ* to be descriptive positively of what the law does. On the one hand, it makes nothing perfect; but then, on the other, it is the bringing in of a better hope: it is a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. But this is by no means a natural construction. The sentiment is of course good and scriptural, but it does not spring naturally out of the words. Another verb was indispensable to connect *ἐπεισαγωγὴ* as the

predicate with *νόμος*, seeing that the former verb *ἐτελείωσεν* could not. Besides, as Beza remarks, the *ἐπὶ* in *ἐπεισαγωγὴ* would be altogether inexplicable; for this word signifies the superinducing of one thing over another, and necessarily points to something brought into the place of the law, and not brought in by the law. Others, again, as Schlichting, Michaelis, Ernesti, Heinrichs, who also join the two clauses together, supply *ἐτελείωσεν* to the latter: the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope does make perfect. This also is a good sense, and quite scriptural (what the law could not do, the gospel has done); but the two members of the verse are not so balanced as to admit of being rendered naturally, to produce it. As Bleek remarks, *ὁ νόμος* in the one clause would necessarily have demanded *ἡ ἐπεισαγωγὴ δὲ* in the other. What, then, is the proper distribution? The *μὲν* after *ἀθέτησις* in ver. 18 undoubtedly has in contrast with it the *δὲ* after *ἐπεισαγωγὴ* in ver. 19; and in this view the connection of the whole sentence must be the following: For there is, on the one hand, an abrogation of the commandment going before, and on the other hand there is the bringing in of a better hope. The same verb *γίνεται* thus serves for both members, and they are both stated indefinitely; and *ἐπεισαγωγὴ* describes the entrance of a new hope into the room of the abrogated law.

The commandment here described as abolished, means, doubtless, the same commandment which is spoken of in ver. 16, viz. the commandment relating to the Jewish priesthood, and designed to regulate its duties and succession. *Ἐντολὴ* has been supposed by some to mean the law in general, because *νόμος* is mentioned immediately afterwards; but there is no occasion to depart from the specific and common meaning of *ἐντολή*, for the clause that follows is just a general principle applied to the particular case in hand. This commandment or law of the priesthood is called the commandment going before; not, as Pareus supposes, in the sense of commandment foresaid or mentioned above, but to indicate that it preceded the new dispensation, having been promulgated by Moses. The abrogation of this commandment took place, we are told, on the ground of its weakness and unprofitableness. The neuters *τὸ ἀσθενὲς* and *τὸ ἀνωφελές*, according to a very common usage, are employed

to express abstract ideas. (So in Rom. viii. 3, *τὸ ἀδύνατον τοῦ νόμου ἐν ᾧ ἠσθένει διὰ τῆς σαρκός.*) Very similar to what is here affirmed regarding the institution of the priesthood, is the description given of the whole law in Galatians, where its provisions are characterized as weak and beggarly elements. In order to perceive the import and bearing of these terms, we must remember the exalted blessings, commencing with expiation and terminating in heavenly glory, which the apostle comprehends under the frequently occurring expression *τελείωσις*. Only the shadow of these blessings, not their substance, the ancient priesthood was able to impart. The abrogation was altogether incompetent to expiate human guilt. It could not procure for man the pardon of sin, or impart true peace to the troubled conscience. The sacrifices which it enjoined were possessed of no inherent value; its rites and ceremonies had no power of cleansing from the defilement of sin. It was in vain that the worshippers came up to Jerusalem, to tread the courts of the tabernacle, and to present the offerings required of them, if they did not in all the services look forward to a nobler priest than any son of Aaron, and put their trust in the deliverance to be achieved by the great Messiah. In itself, the old priesthood was weak and unprofitable;—weak, as unable to guide those under it to perfection; unprofitable, as inadequate to impart the blessings which the soul of man needs;—and it was therefore abolished after serving certain temporary ends.

For the law, it is added, made nothing perfect. The law here mentioned denotes the whole institutions of Moses, of which the commandment described in the preceding verse was a part. Not only was the particular institution of the priesthood weak and unprofitable, but the whole law, we are now assured, was characterized by similar features. In every part it was powerless to accomplish the great purposes for which man needed a priesthood and a religion. In no respect was it fitted to be a permanent institution. In no respect was it capable of leading to perfection. It was a mere shadow of good things to come; valuable as a prognostication of blessings, but altogether destitute of the power to bestow them. Why is the neuter *οὐδὲν* employed? Some say it is put for the masculine, and doubtless persons are mainly contemplated; for it is persons on whose

account either a priesthood or a law is instituted. But the apostle designedly uses the neuter, that his statement may apply to things as well as persons; for there were services at the consecration of the sanctuary, and the dedication of special objects to God. So Schmidt: "Nihil absolvit seu perfecit, ne ipsum quidem sanctuarium perfecte consecravit, quippe quotannis consecrandum: multo minus homines."

Contrasted with the weak and unprofitable commandment going into disuse, is exhibited a better hope brought in by the new dispensation: ἐπεισαγωγὴ δὲ κρείττονος ἐλπίδος; supply γίνεται from ver. 18. Now here it must always be remembered, that it is not a historical fact which the apostle is stating, but an inference grounded upon Ps. cx. Taking his stand upon that ancient oracle, he affirms that there is to be found in it proof at once of the setting aside of the old law, and of the introduction of a new and better dispensation. The terms in which he characterizes the old law, and the new economy as better, are doubtless grounded upon his own experience of the blessings of the gospel; but the germ of all he says regarding them here is to be found in the psalm. Only it was needful to the unfolding of that germ, that the warm beams of the Sun of righteousness should shine, and the rains of gospel truth fall. Such an exposition as we here find of the psalm could not have been given before the introduction of Christianity. Ἐπεισαγωγὴ expresses the idea not only of bringing in, but of bringing in upon something else, and so as, in the case before us, to occupy the room of that disappearing object. What is thus brought in is designated a better hope, that is, better than anything furnished by the old law. The external and the present predominated of old; the spiritual and the future are of far more extensive influence now. A vastly greater certainty and clearness, too, characterize our hopes under the gospel. Our great High Priest hath been upon the earth, and He hath ascended up on high, to prepare a place for us. With the firmest confidence we are warranted to rest upon His finished work. The new covenant is established upon better promises, which are calculated to inspire a better hope. The Mediator of this covenant hath opened up for us a new and living way into the presence of God. The services of His priesthood have effected

a real atonement for sin; His intercession secures the sanctifying grace of the Holy Ghost; and by the bestowment of mercy to pardon, and grace to help in the time of need, He lays the foundation for peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost. It is not a fearful and doubting hope, but a joyful and assured confidence, which trust in Christ is fitted to impart; for being Priest after the order of Melchizedek—and in this lies one main evidence of its superiority—He at the same time is King, and possessor of all power both in heaven and earth.

This better hope opens up for us a way to intimate communion with God: "by the which we draw nigh unto God"—δι' ἧς ἐγγίζομεν τῷ Θεῷ. These words are obviously designed to express some distinctive characteristic of the privileges enjoyed under the gospel. During the continuance of the old economy, the people were excluded from the most holy place, and the high priest only was permitted to enter; by which it was figuratively intimated, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet thrown open, so long as the first tabernacle continued standing. But when Christ ascended into the immediate presence of God, He went thither not merely as our priest, but also as our forerunner; and therefore we are permitted to throw the anchor of hope εἰς τὸ ἐσώτερον τοῦ καταπετάσματος. We have access into the holiest of all by the blood of Christ. Heaven is now exhibited to us as our destined inheritance; and the blessed hope of it is intended to be the means of sustaining and guiding us through the difficulties of life. Nor is it only when we actually enter heaven that we are said to approach to God. The present tense, ἐγγίζομεν, intimates that we have access already into the presence of God, and may enjoy intimate communion with Him. Of old it was the priests only who were privileged to draw near to God; but now all believers are upon a level. We are all priests to God, a chosen priesthood, a royal nation, a peculiar holy people; and we have received the most affecting and convincing tokens of our Father's love. Where there is no confidence in the good intentions of another, it is impossible to serve him, or to enter into his presence with pleasure. A slave can never be actuated by the same spirit as a son. But we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

We know that God is in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself; and if we have laid hold of the precious promises of the gospel in faith, we can draw nigh to God as children to a father able and ready to help us; and we may be cheered and impelled by the most transporting hopes. All religious exercises, all trust in God, all enjoyment of Him, are comprehended under the idea of drawing nigh to Him. We draw nigh to Him in prayer, with the full confidence that He will hear us for the sake of His Son. We draw nigh to Him in the sanctuary, in the belief that He is there present to bless us. We draw nigh to Him in seasons of sorrow and distress, because He has assured us that all things shall work together for our good. We draw nigh to Him at the dark hour of death, because we believe that our Lord has despoiled the grave of its terrors, and is preparing mansions for us in heaven. It is the precious hope of the gospel which thus brings us with confidence into the presence of God in all circumstances.

Vers. 20–28. In the first three verses of this chapter, the apostle makes a statement regarding Melchizedek, grounded upon the Old Testament, and embodying all that is said of him both in Genesis and in the 110th Psalm. In the next seven verses (4–10), he shows, by a variety of considerations, founded upon the historical statements already made, the superiority of Melchizedek to the Levitical order of priests. In the next nine verses (11–19), he proves, by arguments drawn mainly from the 110th Psalm, the abrogation of the old priesthood and law, and at the same time points out the reason of this great change; ending with the declaration, that there is the bringing in of a better hope, by which we may draw nigh unto God. In what follows to the end of the chapter, he goes on to show the superiority of the new Priest foretold by David to all the priests of the Mosaic dispensation. It is not now Melchizedek that is compared with the Levitical priesthood, but it is Christ Himself. His superiority to them was made to appear formerly from the superiority of Melchizedek, but it is now brought out by other considerations in the way of direct comparison.

Καὶ καθ' ὅσον οὐ χωρὶς ὁρκωμοσίας. This clause has been supposed to stand in grammatical connection with the foregoing verse; as if the apostle had meant to say, "And it is a better

hope, inasmuch as it was not given without an oath." But *καθ' ὅσον* here, and *κατὰ τοσοῦτον* in ver. 22, must beyond all question be considered as grammatically balanced against one another, the one being the complement of the other, in the sense of "as so," "by how much, by so much." Now, in this view, the latter half of the 20th verse and the 21st verse must be regarded as a parenthesis, thrown in for the purpose of exhibiting the proof of the oath's existence, and bringing forward the other term of the comparison. Even according to this arrangement, however, there may still be a reference to the better hope mentioned in the 19th verse; and what follows may be viewed as suggested by the mention of that hope, and as designed to point out the foundation of it. The hope inspired by the gospel is a better hope, because the Messianic priest, who brings it, is the Mediator of a better covenant, and is greatly exalted above the sons of Aaron. And now it becomes a question, how the ellipse in the first of the two correlated clauses is to be supplied. There is no verb in it. Bœhme, Kuinœl, and Ebrard borrow the concluding words of the 22d verse: As not without an oath *He was made surety*, by so much is He surety of a better covenant. But the great distance of these words constitutes a strong objection to this supplement. Bengel, Bœhme, and Lunemann propose to borrow *ἱερεὺς γέγονεν* from *ἱερεῖς γεγονότες* at the close of ver. 20, and this is the supplement also of the English version; but it introduces an idea too similar to the concluding member of the apodosis. Bleek, Tholuck, Hoffman, and Delitzsch prefer to look backwards, and borrow from ver. 19 either *γίνεται*, or *ἐπεισαγωγὴ κρείττονος ἐλπίδος γίνεται*: And inasmuch as not without an oath this introduction of a better hope takes place, insomuch is Jesus the surety of a better covenant. Here everything is natural and easy.

The long parenthesis presents hardly any difficulty. It comes in very naturally, suggested by *ὁρκωμοσίας*. *Οἱ μὲν γὰρ* refers to the Levitical priests, who were appointed without an oath. They were set apart to their office, it is true, by God, and a certain sanctity was affixed to their ministrations; so that when they performed them in a spirit of piety and faith, they drew down blessings both for themselves and for the people. But still there was not the solemnity of an oath interposed either at the

original institution of the ancient priesthood, or at the installation of any individual priest. *Ὁρκωμοσία, ἡ ὅρκου ὄμοσις*, the swearing of an oath, is a very rare word, more commonly *ὁρκωμόσιον*, plural *ὁρκωμόσια*. It is used in the same sense as *ὅρκος*.

Εἰσὶ γεγονότες, a lengthened form of the perfect, instead of *γέγονασι*. Michaelis supposed it to express a different idea from the usual perfect, "are, having been," *i.e.* "who were, but have ceased to be;" but this meaning is not at all suitable to the passage. Bœhme proposes, "sunt sacerdotes, sed sine juramento facti," for they are priests, but appointed without an oath; but this rendering would require *χωρὶς ὁρκωμοσίας* to stand in immediate juxtaposition with *γεγονότες*; and besides, it makes the leading statement in the present tense.

But widely different was it with the Messianic priest. *Ὁ δὲ μετὰ ὁρκωμοσίας*. He was set apart to His office with an oath on the part of God Himself, in proof of which the apostle quotes from the 110th Psalm: "The Lord sware, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek." This was a very special distinction of the new priesthood. We are not to suppose that the oath of God was more to be relied on than His promise; for it is the mark even of a thoroughly honest man, that his word is as good as his oath. But God, in His dealings with mankind, has respect to the views and feelings which are prevalent in the world; and as the oath in all ages has been viewed as carrying a peculiar sanctity with it, He has condescended to interpose His oath in certain cases, that He might inspire us with the most perfect confidence. It is only, however, in cases of distinguished importance that God gives His oath, and where the thing sworn to is designed to be irreversible. When He gave that glorious promise to Abraham, already considered, which was designed to be the hope of the faithful till the end of time, He sware by Himself, saying, "Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee;" and the apostle, commenting upon that oath to Abraham, says that it was given because God was willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel. The oath of God therefore argues both the unusual importance of the arrangement to which it is applied, and the irreversible character which He stamps upon it.

Ver. 22. From the oath therefore interposed in the case of the Messianic Priest, the apostle, in ver. 22, draws a conclusion in reference to the superior excellence of the new covenant: *κατὰ τοσοῦτον κρείττονος διαθήκης γέγονεν ἔγγυος Ἰησοῦς*. The old dispensation, it is implied in these words, was also styled *διαθήκη*. It was an arrangement between God and the children of Israel, proposed by Him with the promise of certain blessings, and assented to by them when they said in public convention, "All that the Lord our God hath said we will do." And we are informed regarding this ancient constitution, which is also called the law, "that it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator," who no doubt was Moses (Gal. iii. 19). In the Old Testament the name בְּרִית is applied with great frequency to the arrangement thus made with Abraham and with the children of Israel. Now this word ברית (Delitzsch, 302), derived from the root בָּרָה, to cut, signifies, strictly speaking, a covenant, on the ground of the peculiar practices that were common in ancient times at the making of covenants. In the fifteenth chapter of Genesis, we find that, on the occasion of God's making a covenant with Abraham, the patriarch was required to take an heifer, a she-goat, a ram, a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon, and to divide them through the middle, laying portion over against portion. And then it is added, that in that same day the Lord made a covenant with Abraham. Thus it is evident that בְּרִית does not signify, as some have contended, simply an arrangement, a disposition, a promise, but expresses definitely the idea of a covenant. No doubt, on account of the infinite superiority of one of the parties in the Scripture covenant, there are cases where man's part in the transaction goes very much out of sight, and the word almost seems to designate just a transaction of God; but still, wherever ברית is used, the idea of man as a party never wholly vanishes.

The case, however, is very different with *διαθήκη*, which signifies in classic Greek simply an arrangement or disposition, and particularly a testament or latter will. There is indeed one passage in Aristophanes which indicates a tendency to pass over into the other meaning of covenant; *διαθέσθαι τινὶ διαθήκην* being used to express mutual stipulations. Now the Seventy have uniformly employed the word *διαθήκη* to represent בְּרִית;

and although in classic Greek it signifies testament, and *συνθήκη* is the proper word for covenant, yet, in consequence of the practice of the LXX., *διαθήκη* has come, in the language of the Scriptures, to mean covenant, like בְּרִית. In some cases, indeed, as in Gal. iii. 15, it bears the older meaning of testament; but far more generally, and always when it is employed as the name of the old dispensation, it means covenant, because בְּרִית is the word for which it stands; and wherever it is applied to the new dispensation as a system, at all events wherever it is applied to the new as compared with the old covenant, is the only meaning which it can bear. In the passage before us this is its meaning, although our translators have rendered it by the word testament, which does not at all suit the scope of the passage.

The new covenant, as compared with the old, is described by the apostle as *κρείττων*. It is proved to be so by the oath which the Lord swore in reference to its establishment. But wherein does its superiority lie? It lies in the better promises with which it is accompanied, in the more dignified mediator who is entrusted with the execution of it, and in the permanency which is stamped upon all its provisions. The blessings promised under the old covenant were, to a preponderating extent, temporal; but those set before us by the new are spiritual and eternal. The sacrifices of the old covenant had no intrinsic fitness for expiating the guilt of man; but the sacrifice of the gospel has a real power of cleansing the soul from sin. The services of the old law were very burdensome, and they had no power of imparting true peace to the conscience; but the services of the gospel are few and simple, and fitted to give solid satisfaction to the soul. Hence Peter styles the law a burden which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear. In the old covenant it was men, sinful and erring like themselves, that mediated between God and the people; but in the new it is one who, though bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, is yet the Son of God, and free from all imperfection. Neither Moses nor Aaron really had the power, by all the prayers they offered, and all the services they performed, of blotting out the sins of the people; but Christ undoubtedly can reconcile us to God, and present us faultless before His throne. Faith in the Messiah has always been the only condition of

acceptance with God; but there can be no doubt that the nature and operation of it are pointed out with immensely greater clearness under the gospel than ever they were under the law. Well therefore may the new covenant be designated a better one than the old, and proved to be so by oath.

Of this better covenant, Jesus is here declared to be the ἔγγυος. This word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, nor is it to be found in the Septuagint at all; but it is not infrequent in the common Greek, and it appears also in the Apocrypha (Ecclus. xxix. 15; 2 Macc. x. 28). It denotes a surety, one who becomes bound to perform certain things for another; as in the case of a debt, to make payment of it, should the party be unable to discharge his own obligations. In other passages Jesus is called μεσίτης, and particularly in Heb. viii. 6, κρείττονος διαθήκης μεσίτης, and hence it has been supposed that ἔγγυος and μεσίτης are employed in exactly the same sense; but there seems to be no good reason for restricting ἔγγυος to the meaning of μεσίτης. What is a mediator? He is an individual who interferes between two parties for the purpose of reconciling them, and he may properly enough be called a mediator whether he succeed or fail. But in order to be an efficient mediator, he must be able to do all that is requisite to bring the parties to agreement: he must be able to give security for the due performance of all that either could claim from the other. One who could do this, would be a perfect mediator. But it is obvious that Moses could do nothing of the kind in reference to the old covenant. He could only communicate God's message to the people, and then present the people's acknowledgments and requests to God, but he could not become surety for the people in any respect whatever; and therefore, although he is designated the μεσίτης of the old covenant, he could not with any propriety be called the ἔγγυος of it. It was altogether different, however, with Christ: He was a perfect mediator, He was able to give complete security for the payment of all the demands of the law, and He actually paid those demands in His own person; and therefore He might be styled ἔγγυος in the strictest sense of the word. Why, then, should we scruple to let ἔγγυος have its special and appropriate meaning here, when it is so perfectly applicable? As applied to Christ, μεσίτης

and ἔγγυος do not express wholly different ideas, but the latter is rather to be viewed as indicating the great extent to which the former goes. In itself considered, μεσίτης might be applied to any one who made an attempt at mediating; but ἔγγυος could only be used when he became bound at his own cost to remove all obstacles. The application of both words to Christ, therefore, indicates that He is a mediator, able and willing to do everything required for completing the work He has undertaken. Macknight argues that ἔγγυος cannot here mean surety, but must be used in the same sense as μεσίτης, on the ground that it was not applicable in its strict signification to the priests of the old covenant, and also on the ground that the obedience of faith, even under the gospel, cannot be rendered for us by another, but must be rendered in our own persons. The former ground is correctly stated, but it has no bearing upon the question; the latter ground embodies a palpable mistake. It supposes that the obedience of faith is the condition of the covenant, but it is no such thing. The condition of the covenant is perfect satisfaction to divine justice, which satisfaction was rendered by Jesus in His active and passive obedience. This covenant is called the covenant of grace, not because it relaxes the law, but because it accepts the perfect satisfaction of another in our stead.

It will be noticed that Jesus is here denominated the ἔγγυος of the covenant itself, and not of those who are parties to the covenant. To whom, then, and for whom, is He surety; and what does He engage for? He is security to His Father for payment of our debt, and He actually paid it when He died upon the cross. De Wette denies this, on the ground that a surety simply engages to make payment on condition of the failure of the party himself, but does not immediately begin to make payment, as Christ is supposed to have done. But this is a frivolous objection. Christ did not become our surety in the idea that perhaps He might not need to answer for us. On the contrary, He knew that we were utterly incompetent to discharge our own obligation, and that what He engaged for would certainly be required. A distinction of sureties has been recognised among jurists. *Fide jussor* is one who becomes bound to pay, should the debtor himself not be able. *Expromissor* is

one who takes the responsibility immediately upon himself, and exonerates the debtor at once. Now, when one becomes responsible for another, at the very time he is satisfied that it is quite beyond the power of that other to help himself, he may make immediate payment, and the generosity of the deed will only be the more conspicuous. This was what our Saviour did. By His active and passive obedience, He satisfied the law for us, and thus furnished security that no damage should accrue to the moral government of the universe from our pardon and admission to favour.

As Christ is styled the ἔγγυος of the covenant, some have considered that He is not only surety to God for man, as above explained, but also to man for God, viz. that all divine promises shall be duly and fully performed. This sounds rather harshly, and seems an unnecessary supposition, because suretyship takes place only where there is some doubt of the ability or right disposition of the principal party. Now, surely God's promise needs no security to make it more worthy of our confidence. Yet still it is a fact that God, in His boundless mercy and grace, does condescend to reason and deal with us as a man does with his friend; and because our suspicious and doubting hearts are slow to believe, He has not only given us a promise, which might have sufficed, but He has also confirmed it with an oath, that we might be fully satisfied. He has furnished us with very ample proofs of His friendly disposition. And certainly nothing could be imagined better fitted to give us the full assurance of God's love, than the sending of His only-begotten Son to die for us. Hence the exclamation of the apostle, "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. viii. 32.) Do not these words warrant us to view the work of Christ as designed not only to supply the claims of justice, but also to inspire us with confidence in the stability of the divine promises?

Hoffman and Delitzsch maintain that the designation of ἔγγυος belongs to Christ only, viewed as exalted at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, and that consequently the sufferings which He endured and the death which He died in this world, were no part of what He did as the surety of the

covenant. They were rather the basis upon which the covenant was constituted, and then the ascension to glory became the assurance or pledge that the promised blessings would certainly be conferred. It is argued by Delitzsch, that if our Lord's dying were considered part of what He did as surety of a covenant at all, this could only be understood of the covenant of the law, whose curse was death, while yet it is certain that the idea of a surety in connection with the covenant of works is wholly destitute of scriptural foundation. Now, in this argument it is overlooked that the very design of the covenant of grace is to dispose of the curse resulting from breach of the covenant of works, honourably to God, and safely for man; and that, consequently, when Christ took that curse upon Himself, while doubtless it was to magnify the law, it was at the same time, in pursuance of the covenant of grace, to avert the curse from man's head. The covenant of works needed no surety. It could execute itself in man's life if he obeyed, in man's death if he transgressed. But any scheme of pardon, such as the covenant of grace is, needed some one to answer for the individuals who were to be the objects of special favour. And this is the most onerous and critical part of the whole transaction. This being once accomplished, all else follows as a matter of course. In fact, the whole question about the reference of ἔγγυος just resolves into this, whether Christ first became a priest when He ascended into heaven, or whether He was acting as a priest when He offered Himself upon the cross. If He only became a priest after leaving this world, then the oath of God refers to Him as already exalted, and what He does as ἔγγυος all takes place in heaven. His death was no part of His suretyship. But if, on the other hand, He performed any priestly work while here, then the oath of God had reference to His entrance upon office in this world, as well as to His prosecution of it in heaven; and His suretyship must be viewed as embracing His sufferings and death. Now, of these alternatives, the latter is demonstrated to be the true one by the analogous case of the Jewish priests. Who will say that the Jewish high priest only first became a high priest by the fact of entering the most holy place? He needed to be installed into his office before he was warranted

even to touch the mysterious veil of the sanctuary. Nay, it behoved him to put on his priestly robes, and to approach the altar, and to slay the appointed victim; and only after all this was done could he appear in the presence of God. Besides, if ἔγγυος be restricted to Christ viewed as in heaven, then He could only be considered as surety for God to us that His promises would be fulfilled, but He never was surety for us to God. The suretyship all exists where it was altogether unnecessary, and there is none on the side where alone failure could take place.

The next three verses (23–25) bring into view another argument in favour of the superiority of Christ to the Aaronical priests: *καὶ οἱ μὲν πλείονές εἰσι γεγονότες ἱερεῖς, διὰ τὸ θανάτῳ κωλύεσθαι παραμένειν· ὁ δέ, διὰ τὸ μένειν αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, ἀπαράβατον ἔχει τὴν ἱερωσύνην· ὅθεν καὶ σώζειν εἰς τὸ παντελὲς δύναται τοὺς προσερχομένους δι' αὐτοῦ τῷ Θεῷ, πάντοτε ζῶν εἰς τὸ ἐντυγχάνειν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν.* The facts here stated—the numbers of the priests, their mortality, the permanent existence of Christ, and the enduring character of His priesthood—have all been mentioned already by the apostle, but it has been in a different connection. Here they are first exhibited as proofs of the superiority of the Messianic Priest to Aaron and his sons, and of His exhaustless power of blessing all who come to God by Him. The Levitical priests died, and their bodies mouldered to dust, and others needed to take their place; and hence, as time advanced, the number was continually increasing of those who had held the supreme priestly dignity: there were many who had been priests. How different was the case with Christ! Though He died, He rose again, and His body saw no corruption: He rose the conqueror of death and the grave, never more to come under their power; and He abideth for ever, God and man, a complete human being, with an immortal spirit and a glorified undying body. He needed no successor, therefore, like Aaron. He is in possession of all His powers and qualifications to continue the discharge of His priestly functions, and therefore He retains His office. *Ἀπαράβατον ἔχει τὴν ἱερωσύνην.* Whether does this mean, transitively, that His priesthood does not go to any other; or, intransitively, that His priesthood is unalterable and perpetual? The latter is the common meaning of the word in Greek writers, as in the phrases *νόμος*

ἀπαράβατος, ὅρκος ἀπαράβατος, and it suits here perfectly well. Of course it is implied that the priesthood does not pass to a successor; but the prominent idea is, that it does not pass away at all, or suffer any change. Christ remains a priest for ever, and the only true priest; and He shall continue to discharge the functions of His office till all the purposes of God have been fully accomplished by it, and all His people are gathered home to heaven.

The unchangeable priesthood of Christ fits Him for being a perfect Saviour to the children of men: ὅθεν καὶ σώζειν εἰς—He is able to save, that is, to rescue from all those consequences to which a broken law exposed the sinner, to deliver from the wrath and curse of God, to save from going down to the pit, to bless with a title to eternal life. An efficient surety puts the individual for whom his services have been pledged, in the same position as if he had never incurred the ruinous responsibility. And this is what Christ does for us. He restores us to the favour and friendship of God; He grants us remission of all our sins; and by the grace of His Spirit, He prepares us for resuming our position among the holy and obedient children of God. He is able to save εἰς τὸ παντελές—completely, perfectly, to the uttermost. This phrase has been supposed, on account of the subjoined reason, πάντοτε ζῶν, to mean for ever, both here and hereafter, as Chrysostom and Theophylact understand it. Doubtless durability is *one* of the elements of a complete deliverance; but the words cannot be restricted to this: they mean entirely, absolutely, to the uttermost. Christ is able to save from all the consequences of sin; He is able to save the most abandoned of the human race; He is able to raise us to the most perfect happiness; and He is able to place us in a position of eternal security. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow: though they be red like crimson, they shall be as the wool." You may have long violated the laws of God, and by your perverse conduct have accumulated a fearful amount of guilt; but if you cry to Christ out of the anguish of a penitent and abased soul, He will listen to your entreaty, and bless you with a complete and eternal deliverance. Oh what an encouragement do these words "to the uttermost" present to the greatest sinners to flee at once to the Saviour!

Christ saves, we are next informed, *τοὺς προσερχομένους*, *κ.τ.λ.* The coming unto God which is here mentioned denotes applying to Him for help, seeking His favour and friendship, and devoting ourselves to His services. It is not an incidental application which is meant, but a steady turning of the soul to God. The "comers thereunto," *τοὺς προσερχομένους*, spoken of in chap. x. 1, mean individuals who statedly occupy themselves in the services there described. The way of access to God is plainly pointed out. We are not to approach to Him in our own right or name. Our sins have hid His face from us, and we must make our application through the Mediator He has appointed. We must commit our cause into the hands of the Surety of the covenant; for if we go directly to God, our unexpiated guilt will render it impossible for us to be heard. Both our first application to God as sinners for mercy, and our stated applications to Him afterwards as His people, must be made through His Son as the great High Priest.

The concluding clause of ver. 25, *πάντοτε ζῶν εἰς τὸ ἐντυγχάνειν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν*, repeats the ground of the conclusion as to Christ's ability to save, already exhibited in the word *ὅθεν*, which refers to the enduring life and the unchanging priesthood described in the preceding verse. Are these last words then a mere repetition? No: they embody two additional ideas. They do not simply mean that Christ, being always alive, is ready to help us when we may chance to need assistance; but they intimate that His divine life and uncircumscribed energy have their chosen sphere of occupation in guarding our spiritual interests. And then, further, they give us an account of what it is the ever-living Saviour does, in order to secure for His people a salvation complete in all its parts. He continually intercedes for them. The word *ἐντυγχάνειν* means to meet with a person, to meet regarding some matter. It also means to apply to another with entreaty, and when followed by *ὑπέρ*, to entreat with that other in behalf of a third, to intercede for. In this sense it is used in Rom. viii. 27.

Now, this constant engagement of Christ with the concerns of those who are trusting in Him, throws back much light upon the phrase *σώζειν εἰς τὸ παντελές*, in the preceding clause; showing that it does not simply embrace the bestowment of a

complete and irreversible pardon, but that it also includes protection against the temptations of life, deliverance from the snares of the wicked one, the imparting of grace to secure victory over every evil desire, and the final elevation of the soul to a state of sinless perfection. It is not merely the sinner who needs Christ's help to save him; but the saint also needs it all his days, that his salvation may be carried εἰς τὸ παντελές, to completion.

It has been much disputed how the intercession of Christ is carried on in the sanctuary above: whether He utters a certain form of words, or whether the language of the apostle is to be understood as simply intimating that He takes a continual interest in the welfare of His people. We should obviously be chargeable with presumptuously attempting to be wise above what is written, if we ventured to settle such a point as this with anything like dogmatism. It has been alleged by some, that as Christ is invested with royal dignity, and is seated on the right hand of His Father, in conjunction with Him governing the universe, therefore the intercession which He is represented as conducting, ought to be understood as indicating the unwearied interest which He takes in the good of His people. He never forgets them; He is the friend through whose interest they have access to God; He manages all things for their good; and it is on His account that His Father is propitious to any repenting sinner. At the same time, it must be remembered that our Lord, as High Priest of the church, presented a real and actual sacrifice of expiation to God; and therefore it would seem to follow, that the other part of His priestly functions, viz. intercession, must not only be something equally real, but also something similarly analogous to the intercession of the Jewish high priest in the earthly sanctuary. Is not Christ's humanity in heaven? Has not His glorified body the organs of human speech? Is not His possession of man's nature one of His qualifications for the office of the priesthood? But whether it be by His simple presence in heaven as the Lamb that was slain, or whether that voice which spake on earth as never man spake, be heard also to utter words in the sanctuary above, certain it is that Christ efficaciously interferes for the benefit of His people. Nor is it simply the church as a whole He intercedes for: it is

those who come to God by Him. Every individual engages His attention. All the temptations, and sorrows, and trials, and difficulties of every individual, are known to Him. And His intercession has reference to everything that concerns every believer. The high priest of old had the names of the several tribes upon his breastplate; but Christ has the names of all His people in His heart. Oh what unbounded confidence are we not warranted to place in Christ! How happy we should be in the thought, that we have so true and powerful a friend in the immediate presence of God; and how earnest we should be in striving to showing our gratitude, by striving to do His will!

The next three verses bring into view three other points, in which the priesthood of Christ stands honourably distinguished from the priesthood of Aaron; and they are blended together in one picture, because they are intimately connected together as cause and effect. The apostle commences the statement of them in an elevated and exulting tone, warm from the contemplation of that power to save to the uttermost, which he has been ascribing to the ever-living Saviour. *Τοιοῦτος γὰρ ἡμῖν ἔπρεπεν, κ.τ.λ.* (26–28). The substance of these verses is, that the Christian priest is perfectly holy, while the Levitical priests were compassed with infirmity: the Christian priest presented no sacrifice for himself, but the ancient priests always needed to do this: the Christian priest presented only one sacrifice for the sins of the world, because it was a perfect sacrifice; but the Jewish priests offered many sacrifices, because none of their offerings expiated sin. *Τοιοῦτος* has its reference backwards to the ever-living and all-powerful Saviour described in the preceding verses, and therefore it is followed by *γάρ*, the object now being to set forth the suitableness of this glorified Redeemer to us. *Ἔπρεπεν* expresses the idea of what was befitting us, or required by our wants and liabilities and dangers; as in chap. ii. 10 it was employed to indicate what was conformable to the character of God. *Καὶ* is admitted into the text before *ἔπρεπεν* by Griesbach, Lachmann, and Tischendorf, on the authority of A, B, D, E; and it carries with it internal evidence of its genuineness, the force of it being, that not only has a Saviour been provided, but that *also* this Saviour was also indispensable to us; and thus, too, the use of *γὰρ* is more clearly brought out.

God in mercy provided a Saviour, for (γάρ) we could not want Him. It will be observed that, throughout the comparison made between Christ and Melchizedek in the earlier part of this chapter, it is the simple word ἱερεὺς that is invariably employed, Melchizedek having been the only priest of his order; and there is some ground for the idea that Melchizedek, of whose sacrifices nothing is said, was specially a type of Christ viewed as an exalted priest—a priest already upon His throne. Here, however, the apostle reverts to the use of ἀρχιερεύς, which was always the one employed in chap. v., where sacrifices were spoken of. We are warranted, therefore, to regard τοιοῦτος as referring to Christ, not simply as a priest corresponding to Melchizedek, but also as a priest corresponding to Aaron; and, in fact, the apostle has already, at vers. 20, 23, brought the Levitical priests into direct comparison with Christ: οἱ μὲν γάρ, οἱ μὲν πλείονες. Accordingly, in what follows, to the end of this chapter, not only is our Lord's exaltation described, but also that sacrifice of Himself upon which His exaltation was grounded. Τοιοῦτος, we have seen, refers back to the Saviour, described in the preceding verse. In what relation, then, does it stand to the epithets that follow—ὅσιος, ἄκακος, ἀμίαντος, κ.τ.λ.? They are to be viewed as the development of what is embodied in τοιοῦτος. Such a Saviour became us, viz. one who is holy, etc. Bleek, De Wette, and Lunemann, however, say that the apostle, while unfolding what is wrapped up in τοιοῦτος, goes away beyond it to an indefinite extent; and Delitzsch also holds that he goes beyond the contents of τοιοῦτος, but only to a definite extent, viz. to this extent, that he combines with features characterizing Christ as the antitype of Melchizedek, those which characterize him as antitype of Aaron. But even this is a mistake. The fact is, that the apostle has already been gathering up the separate threads of his argument from ver. 20, and combining them into one; and τοιοῦτος itself refers to Christ both as the antitype of Melchizedek and of Aaron, as is obvious from the resumption of the word ἀρχιερεύς. What follows, therefore, is the simple development of τοιοῦτος, and exhibits Christ both as an exalted Saviour, and also as one who has offered Himself in sacrifice for the sins of the people.

The character of the Christian priest is first of all exhibited.

He was ὅσιος, ἄκακος, ἀμίαντος. These words are all descriptive of moral character, and they refer to the three great branches of ethics—what is due to God, to others, to ourselves. Ὅσιος is a word of similar import to ἅγιος, yet by no means synonymous. Ἅγιος is invariably employed in the Septuagint as the equivalent of קָדוֹשׁ, and ὅσιος is the rendering of חָסִיד. Ἅγιος appears in a far greater variety of connections, and frequently carries with it the idea simply of dedication; but ὅσιος always implies moral purity and holiness. In addressing the churches as a body, the apostles frequently describe the members in a body as ἅγιοι, but they never characterize them as ὅσιοι collectively. The Jewish high priest was said to be קָדוֹשׁ, or ἅγιος, in virtue of his office; but he could only be described as חָסִיד, or ὅσιος, on the ground of his actual character. From all these facts, the conclusion seems to follow, that ἅγιος means holy, as opposed to *profane;* while ὅσιος means holy, as opposed to living without God. It designates the most inward element of a pure moral state (Delitzsch, 311; Ebrard, 256). So, when Christ is designated, in Acts ii. 27 and in Psalms, τὸν ὅσιόν σου and חֲסִידְךָ, the highest possible idea of His purity is conveyed. Ἄκακος has reference to the second great branch of ethics. Our Lord was free from all deceit and falsehood. He did harm to no one. Perfect justice ruled His life, and He manifested an unfailing desire to do all possible good. Ἀμίαντος refers to the third great branch of ethics, and describes Christ's life as perfectly free from every stain of moral impurity. The freedom from bodily defects which was to characterize the Jewish high priest, and the bodily cleanness which he was required to secure by bathing and washing, were typical of the perfect moral purity that belonged to the incarnate Son of God.

Κεχωρισμένος. Many regard this phrase as still descriptive of Christ's moral character, in the way of summing up the foregoing particulars, and intimating that, though He freely mingled with sinners, eating with them at their entertainments, He yet all the while was distinct from them, and contracted no stain from His intercourse with them. Nothing like sympathy with their sins ever rose up in His mind. All these ideas, however, have already been sufficiently indicated by ἀμίαντος, and therefore another must be proposed. It was indispensable that Christ, as

High Priest, should for a time live in this world, freely mingling with its inhabitants, sympathizing with them in their sorrows, counselling them in their perplexities, and censuring them for their faults; but it was equally indispensable that at length He should be taken away from among them. And in beautiful conformity with this view stands the next particular. He was taken away—whither?—to heaven. Yea, He was made *ὑψηλότερος τῶν οὐρανῶν γενόμενος*. This phrase obviously expresses much more than the idea of ascending to heaven. It indicates elevation to the highest dignity. It is strikingly analogous to what is said in chap. iv. 14, where we are told that Christ passed through the heavens, so as to rise above them. There may be an allusion to the Jewish high priest, who passed through the holy place, advancing till he came to the innermost recesses of the temple. There is this difference, however, that Christ abides on high. He is raised above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion. He occupies the highest seat in the universe, and all the heavenly hosts are made subject to Him. As our High Priest, He unites the authority and nature of God with His glorified humanity.

Ver. 27. What follows comes in as suggested by Christ's abiding elevation in heaven: *ὃς οὐκ ἔχει καθ' ἡμέραν ἀνάγκην, κ.τ.λ.* The comparison here obviously lies not with Melchizedek, but with the Levitical priests; and various points of contrast are exhibited. There is great difficulty connected with the phrase *καθ' ἡμέραν*. The description that follows, of sacrifices offered first for the priest's sins, and then for those of the people, seems obviously to have special reference to the services of the great day of annual atonement, when, not the ordinary priests, but the high priest, performed all the appointed rites; and hence, instead of daily, we should have expected the apostle to use the words *κατ' ἐνιαυτόν*, as he does in chap. ix. 25 and chap. x. 1, 3. Schlichting, Piscator, and Michaelis get over this difficulty by supposing *καθ' ἡμέραν* to mean, on a stated day, that is, on one particular day in the year; but this is quite irreconcilable with the usage of the language. Others have supposed that it is the daily morning and evening sacrifices which are here referred to by the apostle; but these were not necessarily performed by the high priest; and besides, of them there was not a double offer-

ing, first for the priest, and then for the people. Not a few conceive that the perpetual meat-offering described in Lev. vi. 20, as offered by the high priest from the day of his being anointed, may be the sacrifice here alluded to; but it is not likely the apostle would select an unbloody offering as the medium of comparison; and besides, it does not appear that this meat-offering took precedence of the daily burnt-offering, but followed, so that the *πρότερον* and *ἔπειτα* of the apostle would require to be reversed. Hoffman's idea is, that *καθ' ἡμέραν* does not at all apply to *οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς*, but only by way of negation to Christ; that what the high priests did yearly is compared with what Christ would have needed to do daily if His offering had needed repetition at all. Coming in the room of so many high priests, if He had been like them, He must have gone every day to the altar. This appears very far-fetched; and besides, the particle of comparison, *ὥσπερ*, does seem to carry the *καθ' ἡμέραν*, which is denied of Christ, forward to the *οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς*. This is a very great difficulty; and I see no way of escape from it but in the supposition that, while the main reference is to the services of the great day of annual expiation, the apostle yet uses the phrase *καθ' ἡμέραν* with the view of intimating that Christ was the antitype not only of those most important and solemn sacrifices, but also of all Jewish sacrifices whatsoever.

To what does *τοῦτο* in the last clause of the verse refer? It has been supposed by some to look to all that is connected with *ἀναφέρειν*: offering first for himself, and then for the people. And with the view of softening the harshness of the idea thus suggested, it is conceived that what in Christ corresponded to the Jewish high priest's sin-offering for himself, was the fervent prayer He presented that the cup might pass from Him. But this prayer had nothing in it of the nature of a sin-offering at all. Besides, the description given of Christ in the preceding verse stamps the brand of absurdity and contradiction upon the idea that the apostle would immediately say that He had presented a sacrifice for Himself. Without a question, therefore, *τοῦτο* refers not to the whole of what is connected with *ἀναφέρειν*, but only to the immediately preceding words, *ἔπειτα τῶν τοῦ λαοῦ*. This—viz. offering for the sins of the people—this

Christ did. And perhaps this indispensable and imperative restriction of the reference of τοῦτο may suggest another explanation of the difficulty connected with the use of καθ' ἡμέραν; for it shows that the leading thought in the apostle's mind was, that one sacrifice for the people was all the Saviour needed to make. Now the contrast to this was, that not merely every year, but every day, there were sacrifices offered upon the Jewish altar.

It was a consequence of Christ's stainless character, that He needed to offer no sacrifice for Himself, while it was widely different with the Jewish high priests. They were men ἔχοντες ἀσθένειαν: they were sinful beings (chap. v. 2, iv. 15), and therefore they needed sacrifice as much as the people. Accordingly it was enacted, that on the great day of annual atonement they should offer first for themselves and their families, and then for the congregation; and if they had neglected these preliminary offerings, the whole service would have been vitiated. It was altogether different with Christ! There is not the remotest allusion to any offering ever presented by Him for Himself.

And even for the people Christ needed to offer sacrifice only once, while the Jewish high priests offered year by year, yea, day by day, continually. Why this difference? Because no sacrifice presented by the Jewish priest ever really made atonement for sin. The work of expiation was as far from being completed as ever. And hence he retired from the holy of holies, returned to the people, and came back with a new offering when the appointed time came round again. His repeated offerings merely brought sin to remembrance, but did not blot it out. But Christ, says the apostle, ἐποίησεν τοῦτο, did this, viz. offer for sin, ἐφάπαξ, once for all. Why so? Because His sacrifice was a complete and perfect one. And wherein lay its excellence? In the fact that He offered ἑαυτόν. The Jewish priests offered bulls and goats; but the Christian Priest offered His own life, the life of one perfectly holy, of God's Son. Hence, too, our High Priest, having entered into the holy of holies, did not return. He abideth in the presence of God, because His work of expiation is completed.

The 28th verse, introducing γάρ, explicitly states the ground of the difference between the offerings of the Jewish priest and that of Christ. Ὁ γὰρ νόμος—for the law, the Mosaic law—maketh men high priests, who have infirmity, moral infirmity or sinfulness; ὁ δὲ λόγος, but the word of the oath, the declaration of God, recorded by David so long after the days of Moses, maketh the Son a priest. The date of the word of the oath, placed (μετά) after the law, suggests the idea of the intended abrogation of the law, and thus coincides exactly with ver. 18. It has been alleged that the argument of the apostle here is contradictory to the similar chronological argument in Galatians, where the posteriority of the law to the promise is said to have no power to disannul. Why, then, is the posteriority of the oath here spoken of as having power to set aside the law? But there is no real parallel. The promise to Abraham was a promise of endless blessings confirmed with an oath. To imagine this set aside by any subsequent constitution, is to suppose that God might violate His oath. But the law of Moses was not an institution whose permanence was guaranteed by an oath; and therefore it might be set aside by any subsequent institution God pleased to substitute in its room. Υἱὸν stands in contrast with ἀνθρώπους, and thus furnishes an argumentative defence of the view that Christ's Sonship is not grounded upon official claims. The apostle contrasts τετελειωμένον with ἔχοντας ἀσθένειαν; and therefore moral perfection must at least be included by τετελειωμένον. Yet the participial form expresses the idea of being made perfect. Was Christ, then, ever otherwise than morally perfect? No; He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners: He did no sin, neither was any guile found in His mouth. Some, therefore, understand τετελειωμένον as having simply the force of an adjective. But it describes not only the growth of our Lord's human faculties, agreeably to the earlier statement of this epistle, "Though He were a Son, yet learned He," etc.; but also His elevation, as the reward of His humiliation, and sufferings, and death, to the right hand of God.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE apostle has shown that the priesthood of Christ was not of the Levitical order, but of the higher order of Melchizedek. He has also made a direct comparison between the Priest of the gospel, and the priests who existed under the Mosaic law; and he has exhibited the oath mentioned in the 110th Psalm, the blameless character of Christ, His elevation above the heaven, and the fact of His offering sacrifice but once, as convincing proofs of His unapproachable excellence and dignity as a priest. He continues to prosecute the same subject; and with the view of making good the superiority which he has claimed for the new Priest, he compares the heavenly sanctuary in which He ministers, and the services which He performs, with the earthly tabernacle, and the ministrations of the sons of Aaron. This is the general substance of what is handled in the next three chapters.

In the eighth chapter the heavenly tabernacle is first brought into view, and compared with the tabernacle of Moses, the one being represented as the shadow of the other; and from this comparison a new argument, in addition to the one mentioned in chap. vii., is evolved in proof of the superiority of the new covenant to the old, and of the consequent abrogation of the old.

Κεφάλαιον δὲ ἐπὶ τοῖς λεγομένοις, τοιοῦτον ἔχομεν ἀρχιερέα, ὃς ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς. Our translators have understood the apostle as here declaring that he was about to give a summary of the topics already considered. And certainly *κεφάλαιον* does mean a recapitulation, a revision, a summation; but it also means the principal object

among a number, as in Plato (*Leg.* i. 643, C), *κεφάλαιον δὴ παιδείας λέγομεν τὴν ὀρθὴν τροφήν.* Now this latter meaning is the only one that is here suitable; for it is not a fact that the apostle proceeds to give a condensed view of the points already handled: on the contrary, he passes on to a new topic in connection with the priesthood of Christ. What is the force of *ἐπὶ* here? Schleusner says "besides," as in Luke xvi. 26, Col. iii. 14,—a chief point in addition to the things already spoken of; but this sense would have required the participle to be in a past tense. As the words stand, the only meaning which can be assigned to the preposition is, in reference to, in regard to, the things spoken, that is, the subject under consideration. And *κεφάλαιον* must be viewed as standing in apposition with what follows, or as being predicated of it. A main point is this, viz. that we have such an High Priest, who hath sat down: we have an High Priest thus distinguished, that He hath sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. Of frequent occurrence in the Old Testament is the phrase כִּסֵּא הַכָּבוֹד, throne of glory, as a designation of Jehovah's seat. Of similar import are the words before us, and *ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς* is added to define the locality. Lunemann says these words—as not having the article before them, *τῆς ἐν*—must be viewed as connected with *ἐκάθισεν*, and not with *μεγαλωσύνης*; but according to either connection, it is precisely the same sense which emerges. The whole phrase is obviously designed to describe the elevation of our Lord to the seat of supreme dominion and authority. The same idea is exhibited in chap. i. 3 and chap. xii. 2, with a variation of language, which serves the purpose of defining the sense more exactly. Thus, for *ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς* in chap. i. 2, you have *δεξιᾷ τῆς μεγαλωσύνης ἐν ὑψηλοῖς*; and in chap. xii. 2, *τοῦ θρόνου τοῦ Θεοῦ.* It is the throne of God, therefore, that is meant—the throne from which laws go forth to the whole universe; and session on the right hand of this throne denotes participation in the government which is there conducted, the possession of the highest dignity which the universe can furnish. The posture here ascribed to Christ, that of sitting, is the one suitable to a sovereign; and it could not fail to remind the Jews of the very different posture in which

their priests presented themselves in the holy place. In all the services connected with the temple they were required to stand. This contrast is plainly brought out by the apostle himself in chap. x. 11: "Every priest standeth daily ministering, and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God." What a glorious Priest, then, do we possess under the new covenant; a Priest who, while He expiates our guilt, has power to shield us from every danger; who, while He prepares us for heaven, is Himself the Sovereign of heaven, to admit us within its gates! And how unspeakably aggravated will our sin be, if, while we have such a Saviour provided for us, we disregard the mercy He proffers, and live in rebellion against His government! By how much His mercy is great, by so much in this case will our ruin be dreadful. Kiss the Son, then, lest ye perish from the way, when His anger is kindled but a little.

In some prophecies of the Old Testament, the Messiah is described as a priest upon His throne; and in exact conformity with this view, Christ, while seated on the right hand of the throne above, is designated *τῶν ἁγίων λειτουργός, καὶ τῆς σκηνῆς τῆς ἀληθινῆς, ἣν ἔπηξεν ὁ Κύριος, καὶ οὐκ ἄνθρωπος.* These words stand in apposition with *ὃς ἐκάθισεν*, and introduce the new and important topic which the apostle is about to handle. The first and second verses have been regarded as somewhat inconsistent with one another, because the one exhibits Christ as a sovereign ruler, and the other as a minister or servant at the same time, and that, too, after the days of His humiliation are ended. But let it be observed that the word employed is *λειτουργός*, and not *ὑπηρέτης*. Now *λειτουργός*, in accordance with its etymology, denotes a great public officer, one appointed to discharge some important public duty, to which very few were adequate; and in particular, it was applied to those who among the Greeks took charge of the public sacrifices. It is a word, too, that is frequently employed in the Septuagint to describe the Jewish high priest, as also the verb *λειτουργεῖν* and the noun *λειτουργία* are applied to his priestly functions. *Λειτουργὸς* forms therefore a very appropriate designation of Christ, and is quite in keeping with His exalted position. He

is minister *τῶν ἁγίων*, not of holy persons or holy places in general, but of the sanctuary. This meaning of *τὰ ἅγια* is well cleared, both from the Septuagint, where it is employed to represent קֹדֶשׁ, and from Heb. ix. 8, 12, where it manifestly denotes the interior of the heavenly temple. And as Christ is a high priest, it is obvious that the specific meaning of the word must be, not the holy, but the most holy place. The Hebrew designation of the innermost shrine of the temple was קֹדֶשׁ קָדָשִׁים, which is rendered by the Seventy *ἅγια ἁγίων*. This designation is also applied by the apostle to the most holy place, as in chap. ix. 3; but sometimes he uses the simple phrase *τὰ ἅγια*, as in chap. ix. 25, xiii. 11; and there can be no doubt that here *τῶν ἁγίων* means the most holy place, or the sanctuary. And what is the *σκηνὴ* that is coupled with the sanctuary? It is the tabernacle in general, or perhaps more specifically the holy place, named in Hebrew קדֹשׁ. This tabernacle the apostle designates *ἀληθινῆς*, obviously with the view of distinguishing it from the earthly tabernacle, which forms the groundwork of his description, and supplies the nomenclature he employs. And what is the precise force of *ἀληθινῆς*? It does not mean true in point of fact, as opposed to what is false and groundless; but it means real, essential, absolute, what corresponds in the fullest and deepest sense to what it pretends to be. The earthly sanctuary never really served the purposes for which a sanctuary is designed. It only represented them. It was a mere copy, formed after a pattern shown to Moses. But the tabernacle here spoken of was the original itself: it embodied the reality of which the other was a mere prefiguration; and its services were fitted to attain every end which such a structure could be conceived to contemplate. This tabernacle and sanctuary are in heaven: they were not reared by the hands of man (Heb. ix. 11), like the tabernacle set up by Moses in the wilderness, but by the hands of God Himself; and they stand in the same relation to the new covenant, that the tabernacle and most holy place of Moses bore to the covenant of old.

The whole description presented in this verse is grounded upon the sacred things connected with the old dispensation, which were designed to be symbolical of the blessings of the gospel. The high priest of the Jews was a type of the great

Messiah; and the sacrifice he offered, and the intercession he made, prefigured the priestly functions of Christ. The most holy place, into which the high priest entered alone once in the year, and where the presence of God was manifested in a peculiar manner, was a prefiguration of the glorious sanctuary above, where the invisible Jehovah dwells, and where Christ now is, in the immediate presence of His Father. The bulls and goats of the old dispensation were killed outside the sacred structure, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; and therefore this world, where our Lord died as a victim for sin, may be viewed as constituting the outer court of the great temple of the gospel. After entering the tabernacle, and passing within the veil, you came to the holy place, and last of all to the holy of holies. Now the holy place was accessible to the subordinate priests, though the most holy could be entered only by the high priest; and may we not, therefore, as Christ's people are all kings and priests, regard the holy place as symbolizing that part of heaven into which the redeemed are to enter when their eternal blessedness commences? It is true, the sanctuary into which Christ entered, which of course corresponded to the most holy place, is styled in chap. ix. 24, heaven, *τὸν οὐρανόν*; but this does not necessarily imply that the whole of heaven is the most holy place, and that there is no distinction between its different parts. On the contrary, the statements already made, that Christ passed through the heavens, and was made higher than the heavens, seem plainly to show, that as the Jewish high priest passed through the outer court, and then through the holy place, and came last of all alone into the inmost recesses of the sanctuary, so our High Priest ascended from this outer court, passed through the heavens where His people as priests are to enter, and came last of all alone into the most holy place, where none can follow Him. The earthly building was called *σκηνή*, because God was pleased to dwell in it, and to manifest His gracious presence to His people; and the heavenly receives the same name, but with the addition of the epithet *ἀληθινή*, because there, too, His presence is displayed to the hosts above, and His glory shines with an effulgence of which we can form no conception. The bearing of all this upon the superior dignity of the Christian High Priest is exceed-

ingly obvious. It was a favourite idea among expositors in the sixteenth century, that the tabernacle here spoken of was the human body of our Lord Jesus Christ. In defence of this view, it was argued that the Saviour described His own body as a temple, and that in John the incarnate Son of God is represented as tabernacling among men. The rending of the veil of the temple, too, at the crucifixion of Christ, and the allusion made to this miraculous occurrence in chap. x. 20, were conceived to justify this view. But there are insurmountable objections to it. As applied to the statement made in chap. ix. 11, it would suggest the incongruous and unnatural idea, that Christ passed through His own body on His way into the most holy place. It is also quite inconsistent with the statement made in ver. 5 of this chapter, that Moses constructed the earthly sanctuary after a model shown to him in the mount. Now we cannot for a moment imagine the glorified body of Christ, ages before the incarnation, was exhibited to the view of Moses. The sanctuary, therefore, and the tabernacle here spoken of, are, *first*, the immediate presence of God, the seat and centre of rule; and then, *secondly*, the outer regions, where angels and glorified spirits dwell. What may be the nature of the localities in heaven, and how they may be separated from one another, we know not; but that some distinction is to be conceived between the most elevated region, where the divine glory is manifested, and where the human body of Christ resides, and the regions which are thronged by myriads of blessed spirits, seems agreeable to many representations of Scripture. Were it not for the human nature of Christ, which necessarily implies relations of place and time, one would readily fall into the view held by some, that the most holy place or sanctuary means a sphere of existence not conditioned at all by relations of space, while the tabernacle denoted regions existing in space, and forming the dwelling-place of the unnumbered hosts above. But the glorified humanity seems to necessitate the supposition, that both the sanctuary and tabernacle exist under relations of space, and are in some way inconceivably represented.

Having thus introduced Christ into the glorious sanctuary above, the apostle proceeds to consider the ministry in which He is engaged; and in the next four verses he adverts to the

difference between that ministry and the ministry of the Levitical priests. As an high priest, He must have an offering; but He cannot offer as the priests upon earth do: for He is not one of them, nor is He here. Their service is but an adumbration of His; and His ministry as much transcends theirs, as the substance is more valuable than the shadow—as heavenly things are more precious than earthly. *Πᾶς γὰρ ἀρχιερεὺς εἰς τὸ προσφέρειν δῶρά τε καὶ θυσίας καθίσταται· ὅθεν ἀναγκαῖον ἔχειν τὶ καὶ τοῦτον, ὃ προσενέγκῃ.* The first half of this verse is a general principle applicable to all priesthoods. The offering of sacrifice is the distinctive duty of a priest, without which the office would virtually cease to exist. A priest without a sacrifice is like a king without a kingdom, or a general without an army, or a prophet without any knowledge of the will of God. Hence the clergy of the Church of Rome, who have arrogated to themselves the title of priests, have at the same time made the monstrous assumption, that the bread in the Lord's Supper is the real body of Christ, and consequently a sacrifice. From the inseparable connection thus existing between sacrifice and priesthood, the apostle concludes it was indispensable that Christ too, as a priest, should have somewhat to offer. And now one would naturally have expected it to be mentioned what His offering was; but the argumentation that follows rather turns upon the manner and circumstances of the offering, than upon the substance of it. What it was, however, is plainly stated in other parts of the epistle. It was Himself (vii. 27). It was His own blood (ix. 12). It was His own body (x. 10). *Δῶρά τε καὶ θυσίας* is a combination of terms of frequent occurrence. As applied to the Jewish priests, it designates the various kinds of offerings and sacrifices which it was their province to present. These terms, however, are not here applied to Christ: it is only said of Him, that He must have somewhat to offer.

An important question takes its rise from this verse: whether the offering of Christ was presented upon the earth or in heaven; whether His priestly functions were exercised at all upon the earth, or only began when He entered into the sanctuary above. Some have maintained that the offering of His sacrifice was completed in this world, and that He entered heaven merely to intercede for His people. Others have

affirmed that His sacrifice was not offered at all upon earth—that His death was merely a preparatory step—and that His offering was presented only in heaven. But both views may be driven too far. In the case of the ancient sacrifices, the victim was always killed outside the sanctuary, and its blood was then carried within the veil, and sprinkled towards the mercy-seat; and both these offices were performed by priestly hands. Both of them, too, were indispensable. The mere killing of the victim would not have been a sacrifice, unless the blood was afterwards carried within the veil; and equally entrance within the veil, even with blood, would not have been an offering, unless the victim had been duly killed at the altar. From these facts we may conclude, that the sacrificial work of Christ began when He was nailed to the accursed tree, and was finally concluded when He entered into heaven, to present before the mercy-seat His body that had suffered. At the same time, it deserves to be noticed, that the aspect of our Lord's sacrifice which is most frequently brought under view in Scripture, is that which connects it with this world, as in Heb. i. 3, vii. 27, x. 12, 14. In the verse before us, however, it seems to be connected with heaven, the analogous fact in the old economy being the entrance of the high priest into the holiest of all, with the blood of the victims killed without.

Instead of proceeding to state what Christ offers, the apostle next brings into view the place where His services are conducted, and the difference which this makes between Him and other priests: *εἰ μὲν γὰρ ἦν ἐπὶ γῆς, οὐδ' ἂν ἦν ἱερεύς, ὄντων τῶν ἱερέων τῶν προσφερόντων κατὰ τὸν νόμον τὰ δῶρα.* As a high priest, Christ, according to the general principle stated in ver. 3, must offer something. But He could not offer in the same manner as the Levitical priests, nor along with them, for He did not belong to their order. Had He continued upon earth, therefore, He could not have carried through His priestly functions at all. There would have been no suitable sanctuary for Him to minister in; for the only place where it was allowable to offer sacrifices was occupied by others, who offered according to the law. He went to heaven, therefore. It is not meant that this was the only reason for His ascension to glory; but it was a reason, and we may see from it how admirably the

different parts of the system were adjusted to one another. He appeared in the immediate presence of God for us, and presented His offering, in a manner of which no example had ever before been seen.

It seems to be implied in this verse, that the temple at Jerusalem was standing, and its services going on, at the time the Epistle to the Hebrews was written. At all events, it is certain that these services continued for some years after the death of Christ. And there was a propriety that they should not be abolished, at least till His offering was completed. That offering, therefore, behoved to be presented in a different sanctuary.

Having mentioned the earthly priests in connection with the heavenly, the apostle proceeds to point out the relation in which their services stand to His. And he brings in a scriptural testimony to the fact that the earthly sanctuary was merely a copy of the heavenly, and consquently of inferior value and dignity. *Οἵτινες*, *quippe qui*, as being persons who are appointed. *Λατρεύειν* has nearly the same signification here as *λειτουργεῖν*. It is the more general term, denoting worship, commonly followed with the dative of the person, as *τῷ Θεῷ*. Here it is followed by the dative of place. *Ὑπόδειγμα* denotes an image that exhibits or represents something else to the eye: *σκιὰ* means, as opposed to body, the shadow which it throws; and as opposed to *εἰκών*, in Heb. x. 1, a draught or sketch of the object: *τῶν ἐπουρανίων* means, not of heavenly things in general, but specifically the heavenly things spoken of, viz. the sanctuary and tabernacle. What, then, is the meaning of the whole? The English version does not give the sense well; for it seems to exhibit this shade of meaning, "who serve as an example, serve the purpose of." Much light is thrown upon the clause by chap. xiii. 10, *οἱ τῇ σκηνῇ λατρεύοντες*, of which the meaning manifestly is, "who serve the tabernacle," that is, who perform the religious services connected with the tabernacle. On the same principle, the words before us must mean, "who serve, that is, perform religious services in connection with what is designated the example and shadow of the heavenly things." Now it is obvious from ix. 23, that the earthly tabernacle is just what is styled the example and shadow of heavenly things;

and therefore the meaning is, that the priests serve the earthly sanctuary. They perform the religious services connected with the house of God on earth.

The earthly tabernacle, then, is a mere shadow of the heavenly one. It is a faint representation of it. It is not even a perfect likeness, as is plain from x. 1. It has nothing substantial about it. It is to the heavenly things you must look for true and solid excellence. The earthly was a shadow, the heavenly is a reality. This does not mean that there is more of materiality about the heavenly than the earthly, but simply that it possesses higher glory, and imparts real and durable blessings. No services of the earthly sanctuary could reconcile to God, but those of the heavenly have an undoubted efficacy in blessing us with His favour.

That the earthly tabernacle adumbrates the heavenly, the apostle proves from the directions given about the rearing of the tabernacle: *καθὼς κεχρημάτισται Μωϋσῆς*, as Moses was divinely instructed, *μέλλων ἐπιτελεῖν τὴν σκηνήν*, when he was about to make the tabernacle: *ὅρα γάρ, φησιν, ποιήσῃς πάντα κατὰ τὸν τύπον τὸν δειχθέντα σοι ἐν τῷ ὄρει.* While upon the mountain of Sinai with God, Moses received instructions regarding the tabernacle he was to build. It is said that a pattern (תַּבְנִית, Ex. xxv. 40, LXX. *τύπος*) was exhibited to him. What are we to understand by this pattern? Was it a visible model? Was it a drawing? Was it something presented to his mind in a vision? We cannot tell. Some say it was just an architectural plan. But if this had been the case, then the earthly sanctuary would have been merely the copy of a copy of the heavenly; whereas both here and in chap. ix. 24, the earthly and the heavenly are exhibited as standing to one another directly in the relation of type and antitype. Besides, if it were merely the copy of a copy, one can hardly imagine the apostle would have failed to give prominence to this circumstance, so well fitted to demonstrate the vast inferiority of the earthly. How far it is possible for heavenly scenes to be made visible to a mortal eye, there is but little in Scripture to enable us to judge. Only we know that Paul was caught up to heaven, and there saw and heard things which it was not lawful or possible to utter. In some similar way there might stream into

the entranced soul of Moses some tempered rays from the bright effulgence above, which would serve as the means of giving him an idea of what he was to form a shadowy representation of. But without determining anything as to the manner in which the communication was made, it is enough for us to suppose that such revelations were imparted to Moses as enabled him to construct a tabernacle such as God designed. The earthly tabernacle was modelled according to the supernatural view presented to the spiritual vision of Moses, and was adapted to represent the heavenly sanctuary; and therefore the earthly shadowed forth the heavenly. It is an unfounded conclusion which has been drawn from this passage, that there is a material structure in heaven serving as a sanctuary, quite similar in shape to the tabernacle. This is a gross view of the subject. It is heaven itself (ix. 24) that is the Christian sanctuary; and all that can be concluded from the passage before us is, that the earthly tabernacle was made after God's direction, and everything connected with it so arranged, that it was fitted to prefigure, when its services were going on, the services Christ performs for His people. The mercy-seat of the earthly tabernacle exhibited the great truth, that God shows Himself merciful to those who trust in the Messiah. The visible symbol of the divine presence was designed to shadow forth the spiritual and gracious presence of God among the blessed company of the redeemed in heaven. And the entrance of the earthly high priest into the most holy place, and his occupation there, were designed to represent the ascension of Christ to heaven, and the interest which He there takes in the spiritual wellbeing of His people. True, in describing what is done by Christ above, the apostle employs the words temple, tabernacle, sanctuary, veil; but we are no more to conceive of these as being constructed like their types upon earth, than we are to confound physical and spiritual things. Type and thing typified, while they resemble one another in some respects, are yet essentially different in nature. Nearness to God, and perfect enjoyment of Him, are symbolized by access into His tabernacle.

The 6th verse stands in immediate connection with the 4th: *εἰ μὲν γὰρ ἦν ἐπὶ γῆς, οὐδ' ἂν ἦν ἱερεύς . . . νυνὶ δὲ διαφορωτέρας τέτευχε λειτουργίας, ὅσῳ καὶ κρείττονός ἐστι διαθήκης μεσίτης,*

ἥτις ἐπὶ κρείττοσιν ἐπαγγελίαις νενομοθέτηται. Νυνὶ δέ. But now; νυνὶ does not refer to time, but indicates a logical conclusion. The more excellent ministry here mentioned denotes the ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. This ministry is as superior to Aaron's as the substance is to the shadow, as heaven is to earth. The superiority of Christ's ministry is estimated from the superiority of the covenant with which it stands connected. The new covenant is a better one than the old; and in proportion to its superior excellence, the administration of it is of more importance. And the ground upon which the new covenant is declared to be better than the old, is that it has been established upon better promises. The promises of the old covenant were for the most part temporal. They related to the possession of the land of Canaan, and the enjoyment of national blessings. They prescribed the means of cleansing the soul from ceremonial defilement, and secured protection to all who complied with the rites of the law. But the promises of the new covenant are spiritual and eternal. They relate to the possession of the heavenly Canaan, and the enjoyment of God's favour through eternity. The fact of the oath constituting the priesthood was the ground of the conclusion drawn in the former case in reference to the superior excellence of the covenant. Here the new covenant supplies the means, not of cleansing the body from ceremonial defilement, but of cleansing the soul from the guilt of sin, and of saving from its power. The promises of the new covenant provide, not that a symbol of God's presence shall appear among His people, but that His spiritual and gracious presence shall be felt in the heart of every genuine believer. He puts His law in the inward parts of those who seek Him. He blesses them with the enjoyment of His favour. He protects them while on earth, and gives them the prospect of entering into His eternal kingdom. Most precious are the promises He has given, and they are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus, through whose ministry it is, as the Mediator of the new covenant, that they are carried into effect. It is for the purpose of illustrating the nature of these better promises that the passage is quoted from Jeremiah towards the close of the chapter, descriptive of the new covenant God was to make with His people. That quotation is the apostle's proof. In the

preceding chapter, where mention is made of *κρείττονος διαθήκης*, Jesus was described as *ἔγγυος*: here the term *μεσίτης* is employed. *Ἔγγυος* is the more specific word, *μεσίτης* is more general. And both of them go beyond what could be predicated of the Jewish high priest. Thus the excellence of Christ's ministry appears from the fact, that not only is it performed in a heavenly sanctuary, but that also there are additional functions discharged by Him, to which there is nothing corresponding in the priesthood of Aaron.

Νομοθετέω is here used in a sense somewhat different from what it bears in chap. vii. 11, where it means, in the passive, to be governed, to be under law. Here it denotes to be sanctioned as a law, to be ordained, confirmed, established. The word is of frequent occurrence in Plato, and in the passive voice it has both the shades of meaning which are found in this epistle. *Ἐπὶ* with the dative is employed to denote the condition upon which a thing is done or established. The new covenant was founded upon better promises. It embodies better promises as its essential elements. Objections have been made to the reasoning here, on the ground that the promises and conclusion are exhibited just in the reverse order from what they occupy in the preceding chapter, ver. 22. There the superiority of the covenant was deduced from the excellence of the priesthood; here the excellence of the priesthood is deduced from the superiority of the covenant. Is not this reasoning in a circle? Not at all. For the two arguments, though moving in opposite directions, yet proceed upon independent principles. Here the superiority of the covenant is based upon the passage quoted from Jeremiah, and then upon the foundation thus laid a conclusion is drawn in reference to the dignity of the ministry. The two conclusions thus rest on separate foundations; and hence, instead of being vitiated as a circle, they mutually confirm one another.

Oh what reason, then, have we to rejoice in Christ, on account of the establishment of an order of things so vastly superior to what existed before! And how great will our guilt be, if we remain unaffected by the glorious prospects set before us in the gospel! The more clearly our duty is revealed, and the more powerful the motives are which are employed to draw

us to it, by so much is our culpability augmented when we turn a deaf ear to the voice of God, and live on in sin. Oh, deal not unfaithfully with the new covenant which Christ has established. Neglect not the duties which it imposes upon you. Avail yourselves of the services of Him who is its mediator, and lay fast hold of the precious promises which it holds out. Your eternal welfare is at stake. The new covenant is not one of many expedients, all fitted to bring about the same result; but it is the one and only method which Heaven has prescribed for man's salvation. Its surety is God's own Son Himself. Its services are carried on by Him who is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person. The Mediator of it dwells amid the light and glory of the heavenly world. What other covenant can boast of such an administrator? And if any other expedient could have sufficed, would God's own Son have shed His precious blood to ratify the covenant of the gospel? Here, then, lies our only hope. Let us firmly grasp the promises Christ gives. Let us trust to the sacrifice of expiation which He has offered. Let us cry to Him daily for the benefit of that intercession which He is conducting in the sanctuary above. And let us copy His example, that we may be prepared for entering into the place which He is preparing for His people.

Vers. 7–13. The apostle has inferred the superior excellence of Christ's ministry from the consideration that He is the mediator of a better covenant, established upon better promises. Such language would naturally excite the jealousy of the Jews; for they were exceedingly touchy, and could bear nothing which, even by implication, brought discredit upon their institutions. Therefore he now proceeds, as required by sound logic, to confirm this position, by a reference to their own scriptures, which centuries before had spoken of the introduction of *a new covenant*, different from the one made with the children of Israel at Sinai. This announcement of the Old Testament was sufficient to show that there was nothing inconsistent with the authority of Moses in what was now claimed for Christ. The old institutions were never designed to be other than temporary: their object was to prepare the way for institutions more perfect than themselves. They were like a

foundation, which, to serve its purpose, required that a superstructure should be reared upon it. They were like a flower, which would have bloomed in vain if no fruit were brought to perfection. The pioneer of an army performs important functions; but if the main body never come up, it is to no purpose that he has removed obstructions from their path.

The 7th verse connects the mention of a second covenant with the idea of imperfection in the first: *εἰ γὰρ ἡ πρώτη ἐκείνη ἦν ἄμεμπτος, οὐκ ἂν δευτέρας ἐζητεῖτο τόπος.* The first covenant here mentioned does not denote what is styled in theological language the covenant of works, which was made with Adam in the state of innocence. It means, as is obvious from ver. 9, the covenant which was made with the children of Israel when the Lord took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt; in short, the institutions and laws which were given to them at Mount Sinai. The same covenant is expressly mentioned by Paul in the Epistle to the Galatians, and the place and time of its promulgation are very distinctly specified (Gal. iv. 24). This covenant, it is here implied, was not *ἄμεμπτος*. It was not without blemish. It was a defective institution. But was it not established by God Himself? And how can anything appointed by Him be viewed as faulty? We are not, however, to understand the apostle as insinuating that there was anything positively wrong in the institutions of Moses, or even anything not fitted to serve the purpose God designed by them, but only that the Mosaic economy was not fitted to serve all the purposes which a religion for fallen beings should contemplate. There are exact parallels to the statement here made in chap. vii. 11, "If perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, what need was there of another priest?" and in Gal. iii. 21, "If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law." The old covenant had no power of leading to perfection, it had no power of giving life: it is styled by Paul, a covenant that gendereth to bondage (Gal. iv. 24); and by Peter, a yoke which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear (Acts xv. 10).

The inadequacy of the first covenant gave room for expecting that a second would be instituted. Had the first been sufficient, there would have been no second: *τόπος οὐκ ἂν*

ἐζητεῖτο. Τόπος here denotes room, opportunity, occasion, as in the phrases δίδοναι τόπον, εὑρίσκειν τόπον, λαμβάνειν τόπον. In the concluding clause of a conditional sentence, ἄν with the imperfect indicative denotes "would do," whereas with the aorist it denotes "would have done" (Winer, 351). Here, therefore, the meaning is, "no place would be sought for a second." The apostle, writing to the Jews, some of whom, though converted, were yet disposed to the law of Moses, and were still observing its rites, speaks of the old dispensation as at the time going into disuse, and of the new as taking its place. It has been supposed that the place sought for the new covenant is the hearts of men, as contradistinguished from the tables of stone whereon the old covenant was written. That the new covenant seeks specially to lay hold of the heart, is clear from the passage quoted from Jeremiah; but perhaps it may be a mere refinement to suppose that τόπος means anything else than that God was bringing about a great change.

That preparation had long ago been made for the change now to be accomplished, the apostle immediately proceeds to show, by a quotation from Jeremiah (xxxi. 31–34): μεμφόμενος γὰρ αὐτοῖς λέγει. It has been much disputed whether the apostle means to say, fault was found with the covenant, or with the people; whether αὐτοῖς is to be viewed as governed by μεμφόμενος or by λέγει. So far as the words are concerned, either construction might be followed. But the scope of the passage seems to require that the fault should be viewed as found with the covenant. In the preceding verse it is plainly implied that the covenant was not faultless, and that for this reason another was needed; and now a passage from Jeremiah is to be adduced as proof. Surely, then, if the apostle would give any pertinency to the quotation, he must mean that it confirms the idea that fault had been found with the old covenant; and the selection of the word μεμφόμενος, with a manifest reference to ἄμεμπτος, supports the same conclusion. Besides, as has been well observed by Stuart, the passage from Jeremiah is not made up of reproof, but is full of consolation and promise. True, there is reference made in it to the breach of the covenant by the people, but that is not the leading thought; nor can it be pretended that it was the sins of the

Jews under the first covenant which rendered another necessary. Who will say, that if the Mosaic institutions had been better observed, there would have been no need of the gospel? In translating, however, it is best, as the apostle has not used the word *αὐτῇ*, to leave the object of the blame unfixed, and simply to say, "For, finding fault, he saith to them."

The passage adduced from Jeremiah corresponds to the Septuagint version, with slight variations. It was written by the prophet in connection with predictions of the recovery of Israel from the Babylonish captivity, and is to be viewed as directing their attention to a remoter and a greater deliverance than the temporal one with which they were so soon to be blessed. The same object is kept in view in other verses of the same chapter, as when the prophet says, "The Lord hath created a new thing in the earth: a woman shall compass a man." In fact, it is quite the manner of the prophets to commingle predictions relating to the Messiah with predictions of deliverance or punishment comparatively near to their own times (see Isa. viii. ix. x. xi. xii.). It admits of no question, therefore, that the passage quoted from Jeremiah was originally designed as a prediction of the new order of things to be introduced by the Messiah.

Ἰδού, הִנֵּה, behold. This word challenges attention. It intimates that the matter to be adduced by the prophet was of peculiar importance. And certainly this passage of Jeremiah is one of the most striking in the Old Testament. In no other is the distinction between the old covenant and the new so formally stated. Ezekiel adverts in very similar language to the characteristics of Messianic times (xi. 19, xxxvi. 26); but he does not speak of a new covenant, as distinguished from the old. Both Ezekiel and Jeremiah, however, make it plain that they had been led to view the Mosaic institutions as of a temporary nature, and by no means as sufficient to meet the wants of God's people in all succeeding times.

Ἡμέραι ἔρχονται, יָמִים בָּאִים, days come. The times of the Messiah are referred to. They are often spoken of indefinitely in the Old Testament, as days that were to come. They were days that were looked forward to with intense interest by the saints of early times. The glory of the latter days was the grand object of their faith and hope.

Καὶ συντελέσω ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον Ἰσραὴλ καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον Ἰούδα διαθήκην καινήν. The Septuagint renders the original, וְכָרַתִּי, by *καὶ διαθήσομαι.* Paul here employs a different word, *συντελέσω*, probably with the view of expressing the idea that the new covenant was a complete and perfect one. It was made by Jehovah, and made as a final settlement. The construction follows the Hebrew model, *καὶ* being used for ו instead of *ἐν αἷς*, or the conjunction *when*, *ὅτε*. It is probably a consequence of the use of *συντελέσω* instead of *διαθήσομαι*, that the construction of *οἴκῳ* is changed by Paul; for while *διαθήσομαι* governs the dative of a person along with the accusative of a thing, this could not well be the case with *συντελέσω*. *Ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον*, however, denotes the same thing as *τῷ οἴκῳ*, though this use of *ἐπὶ* is somewhat unusual. The houses of Israel and Judah, though forming two kingdoms, are both mentioned by the prophet, to show that the new covenant contemplated the whole Hebrew nation. The first covenant had been made with them while they were an undivided people, the entire posterity of Jacob; and the second likewise was to be made with the same parties, not with Judah to the exclusion of Israel, nor with Israel to the exclusion of Judah, but with the seed of Abraham. Even under the first covenant, however, Gentiles were admitted to the privileges of God's people when they became proselytes. And under the second covenant, it was predicted the same thing should take place much more extensively and systematically. When Isaiah declares (xlii. 6) that the Messiah was to be given for a covenant of the people, he adds also, "for a light of the Gentiles, to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house." Hence, as proselytes under the first covenant were reckoned as belonging to Israel and Judah, these terms, particularly Israel, came to be employed as meaning the people of God in general, whether of Jewish or Gentile extraction. This extent of meaning is of frequent occurrence in the prophets: "Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit," which cannot refer to the dispersion of the Jews, for that is never spoken of as a blessing (Isa. xxvii. 6). Accordingly, Paul expressly declares, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham (Gal. iii. 7); and he adds,

that the blessing of Abraham was to come upon the Gentiles through Jesus Christ. It may be laid down as a principle, therefore, that where Israel and Judah, and the seed of Abraham, are spoken of by the prophets in connection with the blessings of Messiah's reign, these terms, unless something very specifically restrict their meaning, are to be presumed as denoting the people of God in general.

In the next verse, the new covenant is declared to be different from the old one: *οὐ κατὰ τὴν διαθήκην ἣν ἐποίησα τοῖς πατράσιν αὐτῶν, ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐπιλαβομένου μου τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῶν, ἐξαγαγεῖν αὐτοὺς ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου.* The construction of *ἐπιλαβομένου* is rather uncommon. Winer says (619) it was suggested to the Seventy by the Hebrew בְּיוֹם הֶחֱזִיקִי בְיָדָם; and then the participle was taken instead of the infinitive, to avoid ambiguity. This is probably correct; but it does not therefore follow that the construction is thoroughly sound. It rather seems to be a mixture of the genitive absolute and of the genitive governed by a noun. The infinitive or the imperfect would have been more conformable to the classic model; and it does not appear that either of them would be less plain than the participle: *τοῦ ἐπιλαβέσθαι με τῆς*, or *ἐν ᾗ ἐπελαβόμην* (Winer, 376; Tholuck, 291).

This clause marks out the Mosaic institutions as the old covenant that is referred to, because it defines the time when that covenant was made. The kindness and condescension of God to ancient Israel are very strikingly and touchingly described. He took them by the hand and led them out of Egypt. They were like children, unable to protect themselves from danger, or to guide themselves in the path of duty. But with mighty power, and an outstretched arm, Jehovah delivered them from their oppressors, and brought them out of the house of bondage. They marched out of Egypt as no nation has ever done from the scene of their oppression. And God gave them institutions adapted to the stage of development which they had reached,—laws and ordinances, which are designated the covenant made with them at the time of their deliverance. That covenant, however, was only designed to be temporary. It was to be abolished, and one of a very different kind was to be substituted for it.

A reason is stated for the difference of the new covenant from the old: ὅτι αὐτοὶ οὐκ ἐνέμειναν ἐν τῇ διαθήκῃ μου, κἀγὼ ἠμέλησα αὐτῶν, λέγει Κύριος. The Hebrew expression הַפֵּרוּ אֶת־בְּרִיתִי is stronger than the version of the LXX., which is here followed by Paul, though the sense is substantially the same. There is greater difficulty connected with the next clause. The Hebrew is וַאֲנֹכִי בָּעַלְתִּי בָם, which is rendered in our version, "although I was an husband to them," and by others, "although I was their Lord." Either of these makes good sense, and is consistent with the meaning of the words; but the LXX. give a totally different view, and their rendering is followed in our epistle. Abulwalid supposed that בָּעַל took here the sense of "despising, disregarding," from the cognate word בָּחַל; and Capellus supposed that בָּעַלְתִּי should be written נָעַלְתִּי. But Gesenius rightly argues, that words denoting domination are very naturally transferred to bear the sense of looking down upon, despising; and therefore supposes that בָּעַל, besides the primary meaning of governed, possessed, might have come to bear the secondary signification assigned to it by the LXX. There can be no reasonable doubt, therefore, of the correctness of the version of the LXX. (see also Jer. iii. 14).

The prophet's declaration is, that the Jews transgressed God's covenant. They did not continue in it, and therefore they did not derive from it all the benefits they might have done. It was not indeed a covenant that could have supplied all the wants of their condition as fallen creatures; but it was fitted to bestow upon them many more blessings than they actually derived from it. Their frequent violations of it brought frequent punishment upon them. They were as familiar with its curses as with its blessings. Ἠμέλησα αὐτῶν. These words describe the consequences of the violation of God's covenant on the part of the Jews. They were left to themselves. They ceased to enjoy God's protection. He took not the same care of them as before. Therefore they fell under the power of their enemies. They were carried away to strange lands. Hence we may see that it is God's providential care only which prevents us from falling into calamity. Let us be under His protection, and all shall be well with us: let us incur His displeasure, and there is nothing which may not prove to us the source of misery.

From a comparison of vers. 7 and 9, it appears that the nature of the old covenant, and the conduct of the Jews under it, are both assigned as reasons for the introduction of a new one. The old covenant in itself was not fitted to do for mankind all that needed to be done for them as sinners; and whatever had been the conduct of the Jews under it, it would still have been requisite that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent. Why, then, is the misconduct of the people mentioned at all as a reason for the new covenant? Some, in fact, suppose that it is not exhibited as such, but that ὅτι looks only forward to ἠμέλησα: Because they continued not in my covenant, therefore I abandoned them. In this view, however, the clause introduced by ὅτι ceases to have any bearing upon the prophet's object: it is only when you view it as assigning a reason for what goes before, that it falls into the stream of his discourse. How then does it serve as a reason? It does so, because it tends to bring out the inadequacy of the old covenant, whose failure appears in the whole history of the Jews. Then why are they blamed, if the covenant itself was at fault? Now this is a question which betrays an utter forgetfulness of the true position of man. Our responsibility does not rest upon the fact of our having a revelation. Though God had done nothing for us at all after our apostasy, our responsibility to Him would have remained in full force. Everything done for us by Him is over and above what we could claim. If He was pleased, therefore, for centuries, to leave large portions of the human family without any revelation at all, that it might be made to appear experimentally what man's own reason could do for him (1 Cor. i. 21), who shall dare to question His procedure? And if He gave to another portion of mankind a modified revelation of His will, that it might be made obvious that nothing less than the revelation of His Son Jesus Christ would meet the exigencies of our case, is it not plain that that more favoured people have still less reason to utter a complaint? The old covenant was never designed as a complete and final revelation. Accordingly, it is described by Paul as the ministration of death and the ministration of condemnation (2 Cor. iii. 9); and he describes it as gendering to bondage (Gal. iv. 24). Doubtless it conferred many benefits upon the Jewish nation, and it would

have been the source of many more if they had been faithful; but in no circumstances could it have done all that was needed. The very history of the Jews, therefore, makes it plain that something else than the law of Moses was requisite, just as the history of the Gentile nations makes it plain that the law of nature was inadequate. The law of Moses was in itself the ministration of death; but it served as a finger-post to point to Him who was able to give life. It was a schoolmaster to conduct to Christ.

The nature of the covenant foretold by Jeremiah is described in the next three verses (10–12): *ὅτι αὕτη ἡ διαθήκη ἣν διαθήσομαι τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰσραὴλ μετὰ τὰς ἡμέρας ἐκείνας, λέγει Κύριος, διδοὺς νόμους μου εἰς τὴν διάνοιαν αὐτῶν, καὶ ἐπὶ καρδίας αὐτῶν ἐπιγράψω αὐτούς· καὶ ἔσομαι αὐτοῖς εἰς Θεόν, καὶ αὐτοὶ ἔσονταί μοι εἰς λαόν.* The peculiar construction of *διδοὺς* cannot be explained from the Hebrew, because the original is נָתַתִּי, and not נֹתֵן. Winer views (622) such constructions as springing from the effort after an easy flow of words, and the more prominent exhibition of the second thought. There is much force in this remark as applied to original composition; but it does not fully explain why a quotation or a translation should be so moulded. The reading of the Septuagint, as presented in the *Vaticanus Codex*, is *διδούς*; but according to the *Codex Alexandrinus*, *διδοὺς δώσω*, as if the original had been נָתַתִּי נָתַתִּי. There can be no doubt, however, that the authoritative reading in the epistle is *διδούς*; and, however you may explain the use of the participle instead of the finite verb, the meaning is sufficiently clear without expunging *καὶ* before *ἐπιγράψω*, or giving it the sense of *also;* nor is the proposal to be listened to that would connect *διδοὺς* with *διαθήσομαι*, because it tears asunder the clauses descriptive of the covenant.

The house of Israel has here the same extent of meaning as Israel and Judah in the 8th verse. Yet the expression, though properly denoting the whole Jewish nation, must not be viewed as limited to those who are Israelites according to the flesh, but as extending to all who are the children of Abraham by faith. All are not Israel who are of Israel, but the faithful are counted as the seed. It had been predicted by the prophets, that the church, styled the Israel of God, was to receive a great enlarge-

ment at the coming of the Messiah; and therefore the covenant here described must be viewed as made with the faithful in all nations. Were you to understand the word Israel as meaning only the literal descendants of Abraham, then you would be shut up to the conclusion that the prophecy of Jeremiah had fallen to the ground; for so far were the Jews from embracing the new covenant when it was introduced, and receiving its laws into their hearts and minds, that as a nation they rejected the Messiah, and the curse of Heaven came down upon them.

The laws of the new covenant were to be of a higher order than those of the old, better known and more heartily obeyed. The ordinances in force of old had related largely to outward and ceremonial acts, but those to be established by the Messiah were to be more spiritual and moral. The laws of Moses were written upon tables of stone, but those of Christ were to be written upon the fleshly tables of the heart. "I will write my laws upon their hearts, בְּקִרְבָּם, in their inward parts." This language is emphatical. It intimates not simply that God's laws should be known and remembered, but loved, and cherished, and obeyed. Not fear, but a heartfelt principle of love, would be the spring of obedience. Receiving the Spirit of God, the children of the new covenant would have a deeper appreciation of the beauties of holiness, be less occupied with mere forms, and feel that their hearts must be given to God. The expressions εἰς Θεόν, εἰς λαόν, are formed after the model of the Hebrew לֵאלֹהִים, לְעָם. They are fully more significant than the ordinary Greek phrases, αὐτῶν Θεός, ἐμοῦ λαός, would be. They express the idea that God would be to His people all that is looked for from a God, and that they would be to Him all that a people should be to their prince. We cannot doubt that the prediction of Jeremiah has been fulfilled. Whatever deficiencies may be chargeable upon Christians—and they are neither few nor small—those who have really felt the power of the gospel, and not been Christians merely in name, have risen to a much higher position in spiritual excellence than was reached under the old economy. Genuine Christians in the present day are in many respects better than faithful Jews in ancient times; and when men talk as if it were otherwise, let them beware lest they be doing despite to the work of God's Spirit. But a higher degree of

spiritual worth is yet to be reached by the church: for while the words before us are applied in Lev. xxvi. 12 to the dwelling of God by the symbol of His presence in the Jewish camp, they are applied in 2 Cor. vi. 16 to the dwelling of God in the spiritual temple of the believer's heart; and they are again applied in Rev. xxi. 3 to the state of matters that shall exist, when the New Jerusalem comes down from heaven, and the proclamation is made, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men!

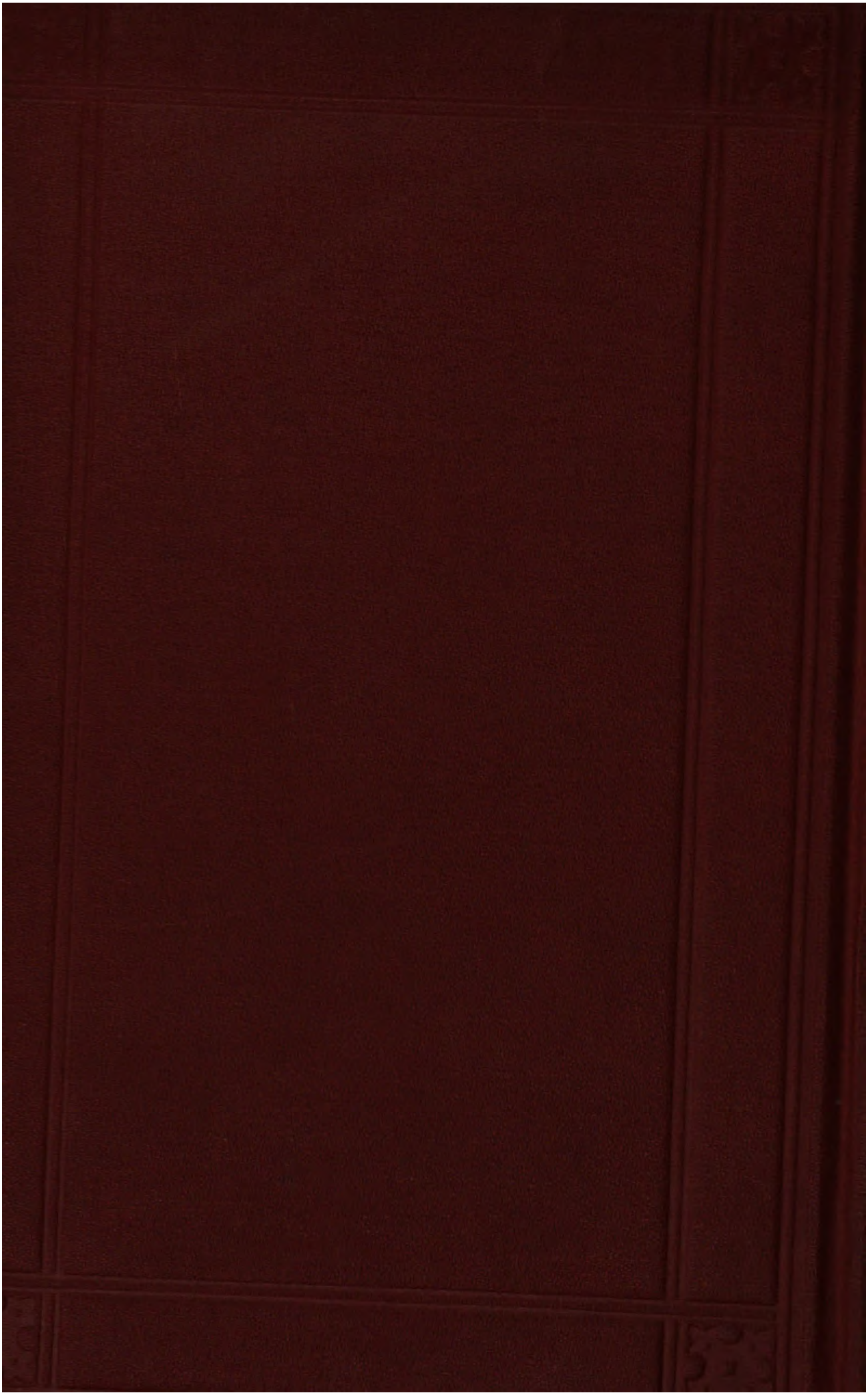
The description of the blessed state of believers under the new covenant is continued in the 11th verse: *καὶ οὐ μὴ διδάξωσιν ἕκαστος τὸν πλησίον αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἕκαστος τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ, λέγων· Γνῶθι τὸν Κύριον· ὅτι πάντες εἰδήσουσί με, ἀπὸ μικροῦ αὐτῶν ἕως μεγάλου αὐτῶν.* This verse exhibits the greater amount of religious knowledge that should exist under the new covenant than under the old. The words of the prophet, however, must not be interpreted too narrowly, as meaning that there should be no religious instruction; but only that knowledge should be widely spread in the church, and that comparatively few would grow up ignorant of the first principles of the gospel. Among those connected with the church, knowledge would be clearer, more widely spread, and more influential, than it had ever previously been. Our Lord Himself quotes this declaration of the prophets, "And they shall be all taught of God," as applicable to His own times; and He adds, by way of inference, "Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." And it cannot be questioned that the prediction quoted by the apostle from Jeremiah has been to a great extent fulfilled. There does prevail in the Christian church a far greater amount of religious knowledge than existed among the Jews of old. The law was read to them at wide intervals, but every family connected with the church has now a Bible of their own. Nay, the very children of Christian parents know more of God and His ways than was known to experienced saints under the old covenant. "The least in the kingdom of God is greater than John the Baptist, than whom previously a greater had not appeared in the world" (Matt. xi. 11; Luke vii. 28). A more conclusive proof than this of the fulfilment of Jeremiah's prophecy could not be

imagined. And still we have reason to expect that a more ample fulfilment of it shall yet be witnessed: the members of the church shall both be wiser and better than they now are, and the church itself shall be spread over a vastly wider field. "The knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea." The phrase *ἀπὸ μικροῦ αὐτῶν ἕως μεγάλου αὐτῶν* is a Hebraism, formed after the model of the words of Jeremiah: לְמִקְטַנָּם וְעַד־גְּדוֹלָם, from the little of them to the great of them.

The 12th verse exhibits the last clause of Jeremiah's prediction: *ὅτι ἵλεως ἔσομαι ταῖς ἀδικίαις αὐτῶν, καὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν καὶ τῶν ἀνομιῶν αὐτῶν οὐ μὴ μνησθῶ ἔτι.* These words describe the pardon of sin; and the completeness of the pardon is indicated by the declaration that the sin is no more to be remembered. Once remitted, it is as if it had never been. The ground on which pardon is granted is not here stated, but it is fully brought out in connection with the same passage quoted again in chap. x. 15–17. It is the sacrifice of Christ which secures the forgiveness of guilty sinners, and the existence of this sacrifice constitutes the distinguishing glory of the new covenant. The words of the prophet describe the pardon flowing from it, as the ground of the great improvement that should take place under the gospel: "Knowledge and righteousness shall prevail, because I will forgive sin;" *ὅτι, κ.τ.λ.* This is the true order of events: there must first be a sense of pardoning mercy, and then the sinner will be stirred up to diligence. Set him to work for pardon, and he will do nothing effectual. And it is obvious that under the gospel the preciousness of pardon, Christ having died, must be far more clearly perceived than it could be in ancient times, when the blood of bulls and goats was the symbol illustrative of its necessity. Pardon seen to flow from the death of God's own Son, must exert the most powerful influence upon the heart and life. It is this principle, coupled with the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, that has elevated the church under the new covenant.

This chapter concludes with a remark of the apostle upon the quotation from Jeremiah. Ver. 13. *Ἐν τῷ λέγειν καινήν, πεπαλαίωκε τὴν πρώτην· τὸ δὲ παλαιούμενον καὶ γηράσκον, ἐγγὺς ἀφανισμοῦ.* Jeremiah speaks of a new covenant, which neces-

sarily implies the idea of another, into whose room it comes. That other, therefore, must be destined to disappear. It was now old and hoary, and near dissolution. *Παλαιόω* is usually applied to things, *γηράσκω* to persons; but the two are here employed to point out that the very last days of the old covenant had come. Its energy was already gone, and the feeble remnants of it were soon to be altogether removed.

END OF VOL. I.

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