



A

# COMMENTARY

UPON THE

# EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

BY

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## PREFACE.

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THE following Commentary was at once the last literary labor of its author, and a life-work. His last work, in that he recast his notes upon the Epistle into the shape in which they are now given to the public, during the two years which preceded his death.\*

During these years he was engaged in arduous labors, connected with the Sabbath controversy, the temperance reformation, and other public duties: and it might justly awaken surprise, that in this short time he could find leisure to begin and complete a work of such exhaustive research, and close and profound study. It is therefore right to state, that the Epistle to the Hebrews had specially engaged the attention of Dr. Junkin from the time of his preparation for the ministry: that during his pastorate of eleven years, and in the colleges over which he presided, he had lectured upon this Epistle. His great teacher, the peerless Mason, taught him to love this portion of holy Scripture with a peculiar affection, and beginning his studies of it

\* A note in his own writing on the first page of the manuscript, reads, "begun Nov. 1, 1865," another on the last page reads, "finished Aug. 30, 1867."

under the Prince of American expositors, he continued them at intervals until very near the close of his life.

This Commentary therefore is no hasty production, but the result of long, careful, and enthusiastic study on the part of its author. Alike in his youth, in the fulness of his manhood, and in his later years, the *Priesthood of Christ*, as announced in the Garden, symbolized by the Patriarchal and Mosaic altars and ritual, described by the inspired bards and prophets, accomplished in the person and work of the Son of God, and explained and developed in the exhaustive argument of the Epistle to the Hebrews, was more than any other, *the theme* on which Dr. Junkin delighted to expatiate.

The writer of this Preface is not the person to characterize the work of a near and venerated relative. He may, however, say a few words to explain some peculiarities which the reader will discover in its pages.

1. It was prepared from notes originally used in expounding the Epistle from the pulpit. This will account for the fervor of style which here and there has not been eliminated, and which to critics may seem better adapted to a popular address than to the pages of a commentary. But,

2. Most readers will not except to this, and it is hoped that even the coldest hermeneutical scholar will be reconciled to it, by the fact that these occasional outbursts are always the result of the evolution and demonstration of some great truth, by the most severe exegesis. Like those of Paul himself in this Epistle, the hortations of the expositor, are based



upon truths fitted to stir the soul, which have been established by fair and cogent logic, and exhaustive criticism.

3. The *hermeneutical* characteristics of this book are peculiar. The laws of criticism have been most scrupulously obeyed, and their principles applied with the greatest care. "The demonstration of the Spirit," that is, the process of making the Bible its own interpreter—using the utterances of the Spirit in one place to make plain his utterances in other places, is employed by the author with wonderful ability, patience and comprehensiveness. He spares no pains in exhibiting the *usus loquendi* of the words and phrases of his text, so as to enable his readers not only to understand the result, but also the process by which it is reached. In this direction there may be an excess of effort.

4. It is the judgment of those who have examined the work in manuscript, that whilst it will command the respect of scholars, it will be eminently useful to those who are not learned in the original languages of the Scriptures, who will find in it a most lucid and satisfactory guide to the understanding of the Epistle it expounds.

5. In this volume there is little hesitating interpretation. The author always gives what he holds to be the true meaning of the text, and his reasons; while he treats differing opinions with deference and respect.

6. This exposition, it is believed, will be found to be "multum in parvo." The Epistle to the Hebrews, as no other part of Scripture, presents the whole scheme of salvation in its relations to both the old and new dispensations.

In his exposition of it, Dr. Junkin finds full scope for the exercise of his great powers of analysis and synthesis, in unfolding the mediatorial work of the Incarnate God, as brought to view in the entire Bible. This makes the book rich, not only as an explanation of the particular Epistle, but of many other Scriptures which bear upon its grand themes.

It is proper to say, that the manuscript was completed by the author and ready for the press, and it was his expectation himself to revise the proof.

This expectation was defeated by his death. The work, therefore, goes before the public without the corrections which he doubtless would have made, but which another editor must shrink from attempting. With these remarks, the volume is submitted to the study of all who care to know what is the mind of the Spirit in the Epistle to the Hebrews, with the prayer, that though dead, the Author shall yet speak through this work to the instruction of many in righteousness.

D. X. J.

NEWCASTLE, February 22, 1873.

## INTRODUCTION.

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“MANNA!” exclaimed an Israelite as he stooped down and gathered a handful of small round things—as small as the hoarfrost on the ground; for when the dew that fell in the night upon the face of the wilderness had gone up, there remained something “like coriander seed, and the color thereof as the color of bdellium,” “and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey.”

“Manna!” cried another as he approached and stirred with his finger the little globules in his neighbor’s palm. “What is it? Where did you get it? Whence came it?” “Look out over the plain,” replied he; “see how it glitters in the slanting rays of the rising sun, far as the eye can reach. It seems to have distilled with the dew-drops of the evening, but it has not risen and departed along with them. Some useful end it doubtless is designed to subserve.”

“Manna!” interposes a third sojourner of the desert as, rubbing his eyes, he steps out of his tent-door toward his friends and participates of their excited curiosity, and finds himself almost equally involved in their ignorance and inability to meet the inquiry, “What is it?” So they called it manna; and recalling a rumor to this amount, circulated to some extent in the camp the preceding day, he remarked, “This is the bread of which Moses spake to the elders: ‘and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread.’” It came down from heaven, and this bread nourished more than three millions of people in the wilderness for forty years. “Man did eat angels’ food.” But how

prepared? "And the people went about, and gathered it, and ground it in mills, or beat it in a mortar, and baked it in pans, and made cakes of it." Its design, by God who sent it, is, then, to feed his heritage, and its collection and preparation are by their own industry and care.

Similar questions meet us when we take up this ancient writing with the view to its analysis and exposition, and to them, in due order, must we respond, by way of preliminaries to entrance upon the exposition itself.

1. What is it? A writing about Messiah.
2. Whence came it? The canonical authority.
3. To whom is it sent? To the Hebrew Christians.
4. In what form? An epistle.
5. By whom written? By Paul the apostle.
6. In what language? Greek.
7. For what grand end? To dissuade from apostasy and to feed the life of the Church.
8. How to be used as food? By diligent study.

1. This is a writing concerning the Son of God, considered and viewed as the Messiah. Thus is it announced in the very first sentence: "God hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things." The humiliation, obedience, suffering, death, exaltation and reign of the Lord's Messiah, his prophetic, kingly and priestly offices, are largely discussed. Jesus Christ, God's anointed, the Messiah, is constantly held up to view, "the same yesterday, to-day and for ever;" and it is through Jesus, Messiah, that the redeemed are made perfect in every good work, to do the will of God.

2. This writing is canonical—that is, it "is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," and has been received by the Church as part of the divine record. Because it was ad-

dressed, as we shall see, to Hebrew Christians, and in the Greek language, it was long recognized and in use in the Eastern Churches before it became known and received by the Roman and more Western Churches as among the sacred books. But in Palestine, Egypt and the East it was universally accepted. Eusebius, the father of Church history, in his catalogue of the inspired books, reckons among them the fourteen Epistles of Paul, to make which number this must have been counted. Peter, in his Second Epistle, iii. 15, refers to it as Paul's, thus recognizing its authority: "And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you." Paul was its author, and that by wisdom given unto him by divine inspiration. Its late reception, not *rejection*, by the Western Churches, is easily accounted for. The extreme difficulty of multiplying copies, when it must be done by the pen and on parchment, made it very expensive, and the Christians then were persecuted and poor. The Latin language was used in the West; the Jews were not numerous in the West, and yet more numerous than popular. There was very little commerce with Palestine affording facilities of intercommunication, and there was nothing in the literature of the Jews at this time to create a demand at Rome for books relating to Hebrew theology. This tardiness of knowledge and recognition is not surprising, but was to have been expected. Peter, moreover, refers to the depth and difficulty of its theology as resulting from wisdom supernatural; and this, in fact, constitutes the evidence by which the Epistle forced itself upon the convictions and judgment of the learned and the unlearned, and doth so unto this day. Holy Scripture receives not its evidence and force of truth from human testimony. "The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or Church, but wholly upon God (who is truth

itself), the author thereof, and therefore it is to be obeyed because it is the word of God." Confession of Faith, i. 4.

3. The manna was sent to the Israelites—the people of God, the Church in the nation, the nation in the Church. They could not impart it to other nations. It could not be kept, treasured up, packed and labeled for transportation. There is no express prohibition of it to strangers; but its fall being limited to the neighborhood of the camp, and its perishing nature, would seem to restrict its use to Israelites, and strangers might not eat of it unless they were circumcised and became of Israel—members of the Church and citizens of the commonwealth. In like manner, the Holy Scriptures, and this Epistle especially, are given to the professing Hebrew people. This is assumed and presupposed in it, not asserted or proved. The very first verse implies it. God spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets. And the whole discussion is about affairs intelligible only by those familiar with the Old Testament writings. Peter, moreover, settles this point; for in Second Epistle iii. 15, he states that "Paul hath written unto you." To the same whom Peter addressed did Paul write. But in verse 1 he says, "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you;" to the same to whom he wrote the first he writes this second. But the first he addressed expressly "to the strangers (sojourners) scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia," etc. The word here rendered "strangers" is the same as translated in Heb. xi. 13 "pilgrims;" and the term "scattered" is the same that occurs in James i. 1, "scattered abroad"—literally, "to the twelve tribes in the dispersion." Hence it is plain that this Epistle was sent to Hebrew Christians.

But most naturally would it be sent to the centre of the Church's operations. At Jerusalem was still located the missionary board which superintended the missions of the Church, and the desolations and ruin, to enable them to meet which is

one object of this letter, must occur in Palestine and in the city of Jerusalem. We might therefore reasonably expect the prophylactic remedy to be applied where the virulence of the disease was to display itself. As the Hebrew Christians of Jerusalem and Judea were doomed to behold the terrible desolations of Zion, the sack of the city, the destruction of the temple, the total ruin and desecration of all that had been grand and imposing in the gorgeous ritual established by Moses, so ought they to be doubly and first fortified against desponding fears and the peril of abandoning all hope in God. These reasonable expectations were duly realized. History confirms them, and in so doing gives a rational response to the question, why this writing was so long neglected or unknown in Rome and the other Western Churches.

Whether the title, "The Epistle to the Hebrews," usually found as a caption, was part of the letter itself, or was prefixed by human authority, is matter of doubtful disputation, and of little consequence.

4. The form of the manna is noted—a small, round, white thing, like coriander seed. So the form of this instrument of writing may be noted. Inadvertently or by necessity, it has been already mentioned as an epistle. Like the manna, its form appears at first inspection, whilst its substance remains to be scrutinized before it can be well understood. That it is addressed to persons absent is obvious, and yet the ordinary caption or heading required by the fashion of the times in epistolary communications is omitted. All the Epistles, except this and John's first, have the caption—viz., the name and generally the official designation of the author. Our modern practice is to subscribe, and not to superscribe or prefix, them. But the epistolary character is made plain at the close, where the compliments, in usual form, are delivered, and where it is expressly



declared, "I have written a letter to you in few words." This introduces our—

5th preliminary: By whom was it written? The Church has long since decided this by prefixing thereto the name of Paul. The omission of the superscription, and a supposed difference of style from his other Epistles, are the chief objections to recognizing Paul as the author.

As to the former, we may remark that, of the twenty-one Epistles, this and John's first are the only ones which omit the name. Now, if the omission be proof against Paul's authorship, why not against John's? or why not against Barnabas', or Luke's, or any person's whatever? But as Paul superscribes his name in thirteen Epistles, and good reasons can be shown for his withholding it in the fourteenth, the omission is proof in his favor. Of these, the chief is because prejudices had arisen against him amongst the Jews, so strong as on one occasion to cause his arrest at Jerusalem, and his subsequent transportation to Rome in chains as a malefactor. However unjust the accusation and unreasonable the prejudice, it is not easy not to see how it might present an obstacle to the candid reception of a discussion bearing his name; whereas this discussion, being argumentative and founded wholly on Old Testament Scripture, would be much more likely to reach the judgment and control the conscience, all preconceived prejudice out of the way, just as an honest jury altogether unacquainted and disconnected with the facts of the case, except as revealed in the evidence, are most likely to render a verdict according to truth. A letter written from Italy, as this was, and especially from Rome, whither Paul had been carried in chains because of alleged misconduct at Jerusalem—from Rome, the foe of the Jews, and soon to be the scourge and terror and destruction of the Jewish people—would, of necessity, be received by this people with jealous caution. But prefix the name of Paul, so hated by many in the devoted city, and hos-



tility and bitterness are aroused which go far to shut the eye of reason and bewilder the conscience, and so lead to a foregone conclusion contrary to truth and right.

Besides, Paul was, by special eminence, the missionary to the Gentiles. He had been so designated at his conversion, on the way to Damascus, Acts ix. 15; and he had been ordained an evangelist and missionary to the Gentiles by fasting and prayer and the laying on of hands, Acts xiii. 1-4. "Why, then, should this man," might the Hebrews in Judea exclaim, "who had been ordained and sent to the ignorant heathen, assume to himself the office of teaching us out of our own Scriptures? Let him follow his own calling and execute his own commission, and not presume to enlighten the children of Abraham and the disciples of Moses."

The argument against Paul's authorship, deduced from supposed difference of style in this from his other Epistles, is fanciful; matter of taste; the creature of imagination. On the contrary, whilst we admit occasional diversity in rhetorical figure, such as the peculiarity of his matter demanded, we insist that the logical methods in this Epistle are most decidedly Paulian. You have the same "sword of the Spirit" as in the others, especially those to the Romans, Galatians and Ephesians. You see the same flash of the Heaven-tempered weapon; the same unerring direction of every sweep of his claymore; the same melting away before him of the hostile ranks of foes to God and his truth; the same unity of sentiment and purpose—the glory of Messiah in the salvation of lost men. This sameness—we do not say *similarity*, but this *sameness*—of logical method and substance, in our humble judgment, constitutes the irresistible internal evidence of authorship. No man since the days of Isaiah could be the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews but Paul, the Missionary to the Gentiles.

6. Confirmatory of this is our sixth preliminary remark, in

answer to the inquiry, In what language? The commonly received opinion is the true one. It was originally written, as we have it now, in Greek. This truth acquires a strong presumption from the fact that, as far back as historical notices of it can be traced, it is recognized as a Greek document. Paul was born a Roman citizen at Tarsus, a city of some celebrity for its commerce and its schools, in which, doubtless, the Greek language, then vernacular in Western Asia, and spoken by educated men all over the East, was critically studied. No controversy has ever existed as to the thirteen Epistles. All admit that this missionary to the heathen wrote in Greek; and as we have the fourteenth in that tongue, it has the right of prescription, and the burden of proof lies on the opponent of this view. It has been argued that, being addressed to Jewish Christians, it ought to be in Hebrew. But Paul, writing to the Romans, used the Greek language. Besides, pure Hebrew was not spoken in Judea at this time. Their vernacular was a compound of Hebrew, Chaldee and Syriac, and no one of the elements, any more than the composite result of their commixture, could at that time have been used as the vehicle of this grand discussion, with equal hope of success, as Paul's vernacular.

The idea of its being written in Hebrew and translated into Greek meets with two serious objections, utterly insurmountable—viz., first, no historian has ever professed to have seen a Hebrew manuscript of it; and secondly, it bears on its face the ease and smoothness of an original, and nothing at all of the cramp, stiffness, and awkward constructions of a translation.

Moreover, had it been written in Hebrew, it were impossible to explain those passages where citations from the Old Testament are translated into Greek—"first being by interpretation king of righteousness, and after that also king of Salem, which is king of peace," vii. 2. He translates the Hebrew name of the ancient priest, which is composed of two words, Melek, *king*,

and Tzedek, *righteousness*; so also Salem, a Hebrew word that means *peace*. Now, such interpretation would be useless and senseless, if he were writing in Hebrew. So John i. 41: "We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ;" and 42: "Thou shalt be called Cephas, which is, by interpretation, Petros," or in English, "a stone." And in ver. 38: "They said unto him, Rabbi (which is to say, being interpreted, Master)."

7. Our next inquiry, drawn forth by the exclamation, "Manna!" regards the grand design of the Epistle. This is to dissuade the Hebrews from apostasy—*i. e.*, to guard them against renouncing the faith of Jesus the Son of God; or, to state it in a positive form, to persuade them to hold fast the profession of their faith firm unto the end. This grand end must be our guiding star—our Star of Bethlehem—from which we may not turn away our eye. In so stating, we lay down a universal law of hermeneutics. He who will give the true interpretation of any instrument of writing, must first read and study it, until he catches its spirit, its master-thought, its leading idea, the essential principle of its unity. As *perspicuity* is the first and highest quality of style, so *unity* is the prime excellence toward perspicuity. Every honest man that speaks or writes, does so, because he has something to utter—some idea or thought, whose communication he believes will be profitable to the hearer or reader. Some speakers, indeed, we have known, who were not listened to, who speak, not because they have anything to say, but simply because they wish to make a speech. These we exclude, when we affirm that every *honest* speaker or writer designs to utter some useful thought. Let the expositor of any writing, first of all, make himself acquainted with this, and then regulate his detail in reference and subordination to it. This laborious and important service has been accomplished by many learned and successful expositors; and by none that have come under our eye more efficiently than

by the two to whom we are most indebted—Dr. John Owen and Dr. John M. Mason. These, and others too, have, after most patient and painstaking effort, elaborated the principle of unity above stated. *This Epistle is a dehortation from apostasy*; or, positively stated, its grand design is to gather up, prepare and minister the spiritual food—the heaven-descended manna—for the sustentation of the life of the Church. Accordingly, we shall find here the entire gospel of God's salvation—all the great elements of evangelical truth. And lastly, as to preliminaries,

8. This manna is to be prepared, by grinding it in the mill of a searching and sound criticism, or beating it in the mortar of an infallible and eternal logic. "And Paul, as his manner was, . . . reasoned with them out of the Scriptures; opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead: and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Messiah." This characteristic of our apostle alone, ought to satisfy any man capable of appreciating an argument, that none but he could have written this letter. Here is our pattern. We must search the Scriptures, not confining ourselves within the bounds of the letter itself; but referring to the contexts whence it makes citations; comparing Scripture with Scripture; and so following the analogies of the faith, that, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we may reach satisfactory conclusions as to what is His mind and will in those portions of the inspired records that come under our investigation. And this will we do, if God permit.

# COMMENTARY

ON THE

## EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

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### CHAPTER I.

VERSES 1-4. "God, who at sundry times, and in diverse manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed Heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds ; Who, being the brightness of *his* glory and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high ; being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."

THE LOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE EPISTLE is presented to us in this one complex sentence. A comparison is instituted between the Mosaic and the Evangelical or Messianic dispensations. This, as most comparisons, reveals points of agreement and points of difference. The former, coinciding with the views of the Hebrews (professors of Christianity or not), need no argumentation, and are simply named and passed by as matter of mutual agreement. Even the ques-

tion of the Messiah, long promised and expected, was not a subject of controversy; nor even the question, whether Jesus of Nazareth is he that should come. This was admitted by those to whom the letter is primarily addressed. They held the doctrines of the Bible concerning Messiah; and moreover that this Jesus is he.

1. The first point of agreement between these two dispensations, or administrations of the covenant guaranteeing mercy to lost men, lies in the sameness of their origin—God is the author of both. God spake by Moses; God speaks by his Son. Obviously, then, it is the Father—the divine essence, in the person of the Father, it is, that presides over the whole economy of redemption, and rules and regulates all the movements of mercy. The mission of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and all their operations, are directed by the Jehovah in the first person.

2. They agree in this, that the communication in both is mediate. Direct intercourse between God and his people does not occur, but he speaks through mediators. In this they agree; whilst, of course, the mediators are diverse, as we shall see.

3. It hence follows, that the oral communications—the messages as spoken, and the matter of them as committed to writing—are of divine authority. The apostle thus compliments by coinciding with his Hebrew brethren, in his supreme regard for the lively oracles, and so recognizes along with them the sacred Scriptures as the basis of future discussion. “Thus saith the Lord”—thus and thus it is written, closes up controversy and excludes gainsaying.

Points of difference, revealed by comparison, are more numerous and lead us into our exposition of terms. And—

(1.) As to the mode. Our translation has it, “at sundry times;” more literally, as all scholars agree, “*in many parts.*” This refers to the different portions of the Old Testament

revelations, which were communicated by about thirty different writers and thirty-nine distinct books. Besides, many of these books—such as the Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc.—contain many portions separate from other parts and delivered at different times. Assuming that Moses wrote first at Sinai, which was fourteen hundred and ninety-one years before Christ; and that Malachi closed the canon, four hundred and twenty years before Christ, these holy writings are spread over a period of at least one thousand and seventy-one years. This, doubtless, is the reason why our translators render the word *πολυμερῶς* “at sundry times,” expressing the historical truth, but not all of it, nor even the leading idea: the *many parts* being most prominent, but necessarily involving *sundry times*.

(2.) “In diverse manners” is more literal—still more so, if we render *πολυτρόπως*, *in many ways*. And here reference is had—(a), To the audible voice, as to Moses at Horeb, on Sinai, and elsewhere; as to Joshua at Jordan, as to Isaiah, Jeremiah, as to Elijah, and others. (b), The writing on the stone tables. (c), In dreams, as to Joseph, Isaiah, Daniel, etc. (d), In visions, where the bodily senses as external are locked up and the imagery of thought is presented to the mind independently of the senses, as to Abram, Gen. xv. 31; Job iv. 13; Dan. ii. 28, iv. 5, vii. 1, Isaiah, Ezekiel, etc. (e), In plain language, in parables, in allegories, etc. Some of these *many ways* contrast and differ from those under the New Testament, not so much in their principle as to the extent in which they are practiced, being seldom resorted to. But we have examples in John’s apocalyptic visions, in Peter’s great sheet, and his dream therewith connected. Nor do *the many parts* differ, but in degree and in time; there being twenty-seven parts, or separate books, and ten different writers; and the writing was all accomplished within the brief period of forty-four years.



(3.) The third point of comparison and contrast, regards the parties addressed—to *the fathers, to us*. I see no reason why we may not comprehend among the fathers, Abraham and Noah and Methuselah and Enoch, and all the worthies who preceded the Saviour's advent. That he *spake* unto them is undoubted, although the matter spoken was not written prior to Moses. This does not, however, conflict with the idea, that the Hebrew nation is peculiarly and emphatically comprehended under the term *fathers*. To that people above all were the lively oracles addressed; and for the use and improvement of their teachings, in a very especial manner, were the seed of Abraham responsible; and these leading men were the medium of instruction to the masses of the people—the children learned of the fathers.

The other side of the contrast—to *us*—though primarily including the Jewish believers, covers all within the limitation of time called *the last days*. To us is the gospel preached as well as unto them.

(4.) And this presents another point of comparison—in *time past*; or more literally *anciently*: it leaves the portion of duration or time very indefinite, covering, it may be, all antiquity. Correspondently indefinite is the expression, *these last days*. The terms seem to suggest rather the relations of the times, as to antecedence and subsequence, than *proportion* of duration. If we apply the former to all past ages wherein God spake to the fathers, then, *the last of these days*, or *these last days*, must embrace all the ages in which God spake by his Son; and the question forces itself upon us, whether this phrase marks the period in and at which the Son spoke directly and personally, or designates the whole times in which he speaks by the words as recorded by his inspired penmen—that is, the whole period of the gospel dispensation. Owen objects to this last, and makes it refer to “the last days of the Judaical Church and



State," and, of course, applies it to the personal ministry of Messiah mainly, "though not solely intended." If the reading, "the last of these days," could be established, it would decide with Owen. This, however, has not been done, and probably cannot; and if not, the application to the more extended period of the gospel dispensation, and the authoritative speaking of the Son, in the writings inspired by him (He wrote nothing himself), would seem to be the better interpretation. For the phrase, thus taken, covers the other sense—that is, takes in the close of the Jewish times; which use corresponds with Isa. ii. 2: "And it shall come to pass in *the last days*, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills: and all nations shall flow unto it." Gen. xlix. 1, referred to by Owen as proof, does not sustain him in limiting the phrase to the personal ministration of Christ in the days of his flesh—"that I may tell you what shall befall you in the *last days*." But among Jacob's predictions are some matters which, like those just quoted from Isaiah, do not come within the period of this personal ministration. V. 10, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." This gathering occurred after his personal ministry was ended. The prophecy of Daniel concerning "what shall be in the latter days" (ii. 28) refers to some things not yet accomplished. And in 2 Tim. iii. 1, "that in the last days perilous times shall come," certainly refers to the Papal apostasy, which occurred not until six centuries after the personal ministration of the Son had closed. This exposition is preferred by Prof. Sampson in his excellent critical work, p. 44: "In the New Testament, the phrase is frequent under different forms of equivalent meaning, in all of them designating Messianic times, but referring more particularly

to different periods of it. Thus, in Acts ii. 17, Heb. i. 1, and 1 Pet. i. 20, it refers to apostolic times, and in 2 Tim. iii. 1, James v. 3, 2 Pet. iii. 3, to later times near Christ's second coming."

(5.) Another point of contrast is the media of communication—*by the prophets* and *by his Son*. The literal meaning of the Greek word *prophet*—a word which we have adopted into our language—is simply *one who speaks beforehand*—who describes events before they come to pass. It implies foreknowledge; and when the event lies in the distant future and is not capable of being known, like an eclipse, by calculation, it proves the prophet to be inspired of God, for prescience of the far-off future belongs only to Him "who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." Foreknowledge, in the order of nature and of human intelligence, depends on foreordination. I know that when the minute and hour hands meet over a certain figure, the clock-hammer will strike the bell twelve times; I know this, because I know that a system of instrumentalities has been arranged, foreordained, to bring about this result. Prediction of distant events, such as moek at and lie beyond all human calculation, proves the man who makes it to be a prophet in the generic meaning of the word. But this meaning is modified in scriptural usage; and he is a prophet, who stands between God and men, and makes known to them God's teachings, whether they relate to future events or not—as Moses communicated much to Israel that was not prediction of future events; so did Paul, and Peter, and David and others. Accordingly, in the New Testament, evangelists who read and expounded the Scriptures to the people are accounted prophets. Paul, in 1 Cor. xiv., makes this plain; he shows that "he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort; he that prophesieth edifieth the church;" and he proves at

length the superiority of one who performs this function to those who exercise miraculous gifts, and urges, "Covet to prophesy."

God anciently spoke *IN the prophets*; in these last days, *IN his Son*. This close rendering gives at once an insight into the nature of inspiration. The Spirit of God took possession of the body, mind and heart of the men, and used them as God's instruments for the utterance of his words, and in the writing controlled the hand and the pen. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Pet. i. 21. And in 1 Pet. i. 11 he lets us know, that the prophets were so completely instrumental in God's hand, that sometimes they did not understand the meaning of the Spirit's language which they had spoken or written: "Searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was *in* them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory which should follow." Daniel also confesses (xii. 6), "And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end." Doubtless, much of the language which he uttered, was as unintelligible to Balaam as were her own utterances to the ass on which he rode. In the former case, the words were no more those of the speaker than in the latter. Much against his own desires, the Eastern soothsayer proclaimed to the affrighted and enraged king the sure word of true prophecy. What conceptions had the wicked prophet of the spiritual beauty, glory and felicity of God's redeemed Church, or of the grandeur and majesty of the Star that should arise out of Jacob? With the light of thirty-three centuries, and that Star, now the Sun of righteousness, shining into our understandings,

how little—oh how little!—do we yet know of the felicity, beauty and glory of our divine Lord and of the Church which he hath redeemed with his own blood! How very imperfect, then, must have been the views of this ancient seer whose soul was absorbed with the love of gold! No; the words are God's: "All Scripture"—all the sacred writings—"are given by inspiration of God;" and the men who "spake as they were moved"—*borne along*, as the original means—"by the Holy Ghost," had afterward to study their own language, and, like the angels who desire to look into its meaning, they had fewer facilities than we have now, and therefore less probabilities of success than the modern scholar. Plenary inspiration then—an inspiration of the very words and an overruling superintendence of the writing—is the only true doctrine on this subject. It is all Scripture, all the holy writings, which from a child Timothy had known, that Paul assures him are given by inspiration of God, 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16. Those who deny the plenary inspiration of the language, make a bold, reckless and dangerous advance toward utter infidelity. If these words are not God's, and if we admit the theory of inspiration of *general* ideas, which leaves the prophet to exercise his skill in the selection of words independent of any moving and governing influence from the spirit within him, then we have no inspired writings. And if, in speaking, there is no controlling power of the Spirit, the message is man's and not God's; we cannot rest in the belief of anything higher, holier, safer than the wisdom, honesty and discretion of a fallible man. A divine faith, based on a merely human testimony, is the foundation of the Church, and not the word of God, the rock of eternal truth. How much this differs from a denial of supernatural revelation, let the reader judge. From such views of Scripture, the

Lord deliver his Church, and let the dumb ass, speaking with man's mouth, forbid the madness of such prophets!

The other side claims our attention—IN *the Son*—IN *the fathers*. This contrast instantly suggests natural relationship; although there is something of figure in applying the term fathers to persons far back in the line of descent. Still, father and son are relative terms; and the relations expressed by them are natural. We are therefore now to inquire into the Sonship of the Messiah: and our first remark is this very assertion, that he is of the same nature with his Father. If nothing in the context of any writing calls upon us to interpret words in a figurative sense, we have no right to do it; for this would be not to interpret, but to pervert. A letter writer speaks of the son of the President being sick or dead, have you a right, on the faith of this epistle, to give out, that the Secretary of State is dead? This officer is appointed by the President and is subordinate to him in several respects similar to that of a son to his natural parent: but can this justify such an interpretation of the letter and the fraudulent speculations and intrigues to which it may give rise? An Indian chief calls the President his Father; does this authorize you to charge the highest officer in the nation with having broken the seventh commandment? Would the analogies which lead to this figurative use of the word father, justify you before a legal tribunal in a suit for slander? The rule stands therefore, that words are to be interpreted in their plain, natural meaning, unless the connection shows that they are used figuratively. The word Son must here be understood in its usual natural force, unless it be shown from the context that the writer designed it as a figure; and this throws the burden of proof on the advocate of the figure. The son partakes of the nature of his father: a man's child inherits the properties of humanity: and the

Son of God possesses the attributes of Godhead. This the apostle will prove in due time. We need add only an observation or two on the figurative interpretation of the Unitarian school. They affirm that *Son of God* is only an official title of Messiah, and does not at all imply his possession of the divine nature. Were this so, then the names Messiah and Son of God mean the same thing and may be interchanged: and the assertion, Christ is the Son of God is resolved into Christ is Christ: Messiah is Messiah; the Son of God is the Son of God! *Messiah*, translated into Greek from the Hebrew, becomes *Christ*: into English, *Anointed*. These are equivalent—rather *identical*, and are expressive of official relation. Kings and priests were of old introduced into office by the application of oil upon their person; this signifying the conferring of official powers and official qualifications. The Lord's anointed, in civil things, is the person on whom he has laid the duty of ruling; in sacred things, of conducting religious worship: so Aaron and his sons; so Saul and David, etc. So in Psalm ii.: "I have *anointed* my king—thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee"—and Ps. xlv.: "God, thy God hath *anointed* thee with the oil of gladness—;" and Ps. cxxxii., "I have ordained a lamp for mine *anointed*." So in Dan. ix. 25 "from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto MESSIAH the Prince shall be," etc. "And after threescore and two weeks shall MESSIAH be cut off, but not for himself." MESSIAH then is an official title of the Saviour; but Son of God is not: it signifies his natural procession from the First person, and indicates sameness of nature.

This expression, therefore, *in the Son*, presents the doctrine of the mystical union of the first and the second persons in the Godhead. The Father and the Son are distinct in personality, but one in essence—"thou Father art in me, and



I in thee—" "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father—" "Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in me?" Cheerfully do we admit that this is a great mystery; for so it is reasonable to expect. If there were nothing in the mode of the divine existence incomprehensible by our finite minds, we should in this fact have ground of doubt as to the very being of God. If there are inscrutable mysteries in our own nature, how much more in the infinite One in Three and Three in One. Could I comprehend in my imperfect understanding everything in the God of the Bible, I should say he is not the God that made the universe. My inability to form a clear and definite conception of this mutual in-being of the divine personalities included in the Trinity, creates a presumption of its truth. The fact affirmed in the doctrine I can believe, whilst the mode of the fact I cannot comprehend. The fact that I see the moon and the stars afar off in the firmament, I believe; but *how?* in what manner?—the mode of the fact no man can explain. In this sense the world is full of mysteries. Even material nature, and how much more spiritual nature, baffles all human philosophy. If the grass of the field or the pebble beneath our foot contains facts too wonderful for our skill to unfold and fully to explain, how can it be expected that our powers should unravel the mysteries of the Godhead, and bring the holy Trinity down to the comprehension of our finite minds?

Thus has the apostle, within this very brief space, recognized, as common to both dispensations compared and contrasted, the divine inspiration of the scriptures; the Trinity of persons in the Unity of the Godhead—the Father and the Son expressly by name; and the Spirit by necessary implication as dwelling in the ancient prophets and bearing them along; and the prophetic character of Messiah. Thus also

has he touched several points of difference in degree or in kind, wherein the New Testament dispensation has the advantage; in all of which, however, there is no contradiction. Thus, without raising up disputed points, he has prepared the way for exhibiting the pre-eminence of the Son, according to the Holy Scriptures recognized by the Hebrews themselves, officially and personally above all the agencies heretofore employed as internuncios or mediators between God and men. The personal pre-eminence and grandeur of Messiah give infinite weight and force to the arguments bearing upon official relations. These last are classified into three departments, viz.: those of KING, PROPHET, and PRIEST. As the doctrine of the Trinity herein premised, lies at the basis of the whole dispensation of mercy under both the Old and the New, so the three offices of Christ embrace the entire matter of the Epistle, and to one or the other, every item of the detail is referable, and must be referred in its proper time and place. Nor let the student of this heaven consecrated logic suppose, that these classes of illustrations and proofs must be taken up one after another, and finished up before any branch of another is introduced. This slight intermingling, however, does not create any confusion, for it is easy to refer each to its appropriate class. And six items are here mentioned. 1. He is appointed by the Father heir of all things. 2. He created all things. 3. He is in himself a glorious manifestation of the divine perfections. 4. He is by consequence the governor of universal being. 5. He has offered up the only sacrifice that can take away sin and secure salvation to the lost. 6. Having finished the work assigned to him as Mediator, he of course takes possession of his glorious throne in the heavens. And these six items make it evident, that the Son is far superior to the angels, through whose ministrations the Old Testament dispensation was instituted at Sinai, and intimates the measure



of excess ; viz., as much better or superior as he hath inherited a more excellent name than they.

Let us open up these in order ; and

1. The heirship of the Son. An heir is one who receives an estate—any property from another after his death. The owner, either in writing or orally, expresses his will, that after his decease, his property shall pass over to the possession of another or others. If no such will be expressed, it is implied that the decedent acquiesces in the disposition which is made by the laws of the country. Whether by oral or written will, or by omitting both and leaving the disposal to the law, the dying man *appoints* his heir : and this universal custom is based on the assumption of a right in property ; and, moreover, a right during life to decide who shall possess it after the testator has departed this life. Such seems to be one of the moralities of worldly goods, as proved by the universality of the custom. Some years ago an effort was made to prove the custom unreasonable and improper, and to show that the property of deceased persons ought to revert to the Commonwealth and be distributed equally all over society. But this doctrine of community of goods—this philosophy of infidelity—did not find much favor, and even its advocates took care to make their wills and submit to the laws of God in this matter. In accordance therewith, the Father of eternity made his Son heir of all things. On this two remarks are requisite. (1.) A finite being could not inherit all things. Incompetency to receive and use his father's estate, prevents the infant or imbecile child of an earthly parent from inheriting in the full and proper sense ; and human laws provide a trustee or guardianship in such cases. If the Son of God were a man merely, frail and liable to imbecility, disqualifying him from the management of all things, he could not be made the inheritor of all God's universe. This shuts us up to the belief of the

true divinity of the Son. (2.) On the other hand, if the Son were only divine—if he had not a finite nature—if he were not man, he could not be appointed, made, constituted heir of all things; for viewed as a divine person only, he possessed all things from the time of their creation: a right to them could not be *given*, because it existed from eternity. Hence we are constrained to believe the doctrine of “the Word made flesh.” It is the God-Man, the Mediator, the Messiah that is appointed Heir of all things, and this inevitable logical conclusion is our

2. Item under the kingly office—“by whom also he made the worlds.” So John testifies. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made.” i. 1-3. We may not then be told, that Messiah—the Son, was only an agent in the organization of the new dispensation, and that this is all that is meant by his making the worlds. For Paul in 1 Cor. viii. 6 says, “There is one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things.” And Col. i. 16, “For by him—the First-born—were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible.” The fathers, and the prophets, and the angels—the heavens and the earth—all are the product of his creating power, how gloriously then does he rise above all the agencies of the Old Economy! In chap. xi. 3, the word here translated *worlds*, undoubtedly means not the ages, but the universe—“Through 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.” The Word of God—the Messiah is the author of the universe. God our Redeemer is God our Creator. And this is meet so to be, for it is only in con-

templating this glorious creation that we gain a knowledge of the Creator.

3. For he is the brightness of the Father's glory. Like the dazzling splendor of the natural sun to the sun himself. The brightness is such that you cannot behold it directly—the eye would be destroyed by it: but the light radiated abroad gives us a correct idea of the body whence it comes. "The brightness of his glory" is, then, the effulgence of everything excellent in him, and this is seen in the face of his Son. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." The *express image*. The *character*. This is the original Greek, which we have adopted into our language. It is taken from the delineator or engraver's art, where the accuracy of the likeness is the excellence of the work. Of his *person*, of his *substance*. "The apostle then lays down the proposition, that the Son is the effulgence of God's glory and the exact delineation of his substance." And this runs us into the sphere of his prophetic office, in the exercise of whose functions the Father is revealed to us. In the ancient prophets, revelation was a twilight; at best a morning star; but in the Son, it is the splendor of the risen day: as Malachi foretold—"Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings." Other luminary to the soul in darkness there is none. An extemporized star could guide the Eastern Sages, when aided by the shouts of the angelic host, to the place where lay the babe of Bethlehem; but the brilliancy of the Sun of righteousness only, aided by the groans of Gethsemane, and no *ignis fatuus* of human philosophy, can ever lead a soul, wandering amid the darkness of mere nature's light, to the mansions in our Father's house, where sits the risen Redeemer, in all the effulgence of his own glorious throne. "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost"—not only who are hopelessly and forever gone, but also to all

those who still wander in the mazes of an erring philosophy and refuse to come to the light of eternal life.

4. To the Son moreover belongs the supreme dominion—the actual government—the upholding of all things by the word of his power. Upholding, *φέρων*, it is the same root word, as above referred to describing the operation of the Spirit of inspiration. 2 Pet. i. 21—“holy men of God spake as they were *moved*—*φερόμενοι*—*sustained* and *carried along*, by the Holy Ghost: and it includes both these ideas;—(1.) The sustaining or keeping in existence all things. This implies the doctrine, that God alone is self-existent; all creatures are dependent on him for their being and its attributes. (2.) All existences are governed, limited, controlled by his power who sustains them. The conception of an *independent creature*, cannot be received into the understanding. We can utter the words as a proposition, as we can say ten and six make forty, but we cannot conceive them as expressing a truth. The philosophical theory, that puts man, as a creature endowed with the faculty of will, above the Creator, in such sense as involves his independence in all acts of his will, denies this attribute to our Lord. “An independent being is a God,” and absolutely independent volition in men involves atheism. Now why should men advocate such a theory? We can see no reason for it; but we can see its motive power in the pride of the human heart. Assuming omniscience as a quality of the human reason,—determined to believe nothing, as to fact and mode, which they cannot explain; and being unable to explain how God can sustain and govern man as a voluntary agent, they come boldly up and deny that the human will is one of the all things, which Messiah sustains, governs and controls. Man, says this philosophy of such direct atheistical tendency, is a free, moral agent, and therefore God himself cannot even by the word of his power, change, modify, con-

trol, by motives or in any possible way, the sovereign will of the sinner, without destroying his moral agency. It is a small matter to this philosophy, that it dethrones Jehovah by setting the human will far above divine control: and this in the face of the scripture which presents the sweet promise, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." Ps. cx. 3. And in Ps. xxii. 27, "All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him." How could God present such a promise to Messiah and his people, if God had not the power to turn the hearts of men, to change their wills, to new-create their souls? What if the nations should be unwilling to worship before him? Where then is the Father's promise; and what becomes of his veracity? Would any *honest man* promise to accomplish what he knew never could be within his power? No more does God. In the next verse he refers to this very sustaining and governing power of his Son, "For the kingdom is the Lord's; and he is the Governor among the nations." God *can* govern voluntary agents. But *how* "he worketh all things after the counsel of his own will"—*how* "he worketh in us both to *will* and to *do* of his good pleasure," without destroying our voluntary action and moral accountability, we cannot understand. The fact is taught in scripture; and it reveals itself in our consciousness: we have the witness in our own souls, that we act freely, voluntarily, willingly in embracing the salvation of God; and he assures us, "it is God that worketh in us the willing and the doing of his good pleasure." Of the existence and consistency of these two I have the highest conceivable evidence; and yet *how* it is—the *mode* of that consistency lies away beyond the range of my intellect. In this ignorance I am content. God knows more than I do, and may explain it in the light of his divine throne hereafter. Mean-

while it is safer to admit an unveiled mystery and therein to confess my ignorance, than to arraign the divine omniscience and abrogate the divine government of Messiah.

5. From this function—our Lord’s kingly office, the apostle carries us forward to the grand truth on which are dependent both the prophetic and the kingly, as to real, practical efficiency;—the great burden of the priesthood: he hath by himself purged our sins—*having made purgation of our sins*. Here note (1.) We are sinners; have transgressed the law of God. This is pre-supposed in the very conception of salvation, whose announcement is the Gospel. (2.) We are polluted; moral turpitude, depravity, indisposition and inability to holy spiritual action, are involved in sin: and these must be taken away. (3.) We are guilty, that is liable to punishment—the wages of sin is death. Wages must be paid; justice demands it. “The soul that sinneth, it shall die.” (4.) All these, being included in the idea of purgation, our Lord has effected *by himself*. This is in contradistinction, (1st,) from ourselves. We cannot remove our guilt or turpitude. If the Ethiopian cannot change his skin, how shall we change our whole nature and wash out the deep stains on the soul; how shall we pay unto God a sufficient ransom? (2d,) In opposition to the sacrifices of the old law. Can the blood of bulls and of goats take away sin? More plausible is the plea of the Syrian nobleman for the waters of Abana and Pharpar, 2 Kings v. 12, or the Hindoo for those of Ganges. (3d,) In opposition to even the authorized sacrifices of the Aaronic Priesthood, whose inefficiency he afterwards proves, from their frequent offering. (4th,) To anything and everything under the old law, that did not look to Messiah the Prince, Prophet and Priest. By himself alone can be and hath our sin been purged, as will appear more fully hereafter.

6. This work, for the accomplishment of which he as-



sumed humanity, being completed, he, of course, receives his reward: he returns and takes his seat on the right hand of the majesty in the heavens. If Jesus had not settled the whole terms upon which death could have any claims upon us, he had never risen from the grave. But he has taken away everything upon which the grasp of death could seize, and therefore it was not possible he could be bound thereby. He hath risen, as in the nature of eternal justice he must rise, and in rising has given glorious evidence of his Godhead. We may not trouble ourselves about localities in the boundlessness of space. Whether the great English astronomical divine, who assured us, that his knowledge of that sublime science enabled him to say, there was no room in space for such a locality as Trinitarians conceived heaven to be, has yet found out, that he had not swept, with his tube scientific, all the corners of God's universe, we are not aware; no message having been received from heaven since his exit from this mundane sphere. But one thing is very certain—in our Father's house are many mansions; and our Saviour, who has gone to furnish and prepare them for us, will meet no insurmountable obstacles in bringing his many sons unto glory: and as they pass up in countless millions, they will welcome us to the skies, exclaiming, "And yet there is room." Oh yes! the Son of God is in heaven—he hath seated himself on the right hand of the majesty on high. A King he sits upon his throne—on the right hand—the place of highest honor—the place of supreme rule. "I have set my King upon my Holy hill of Zion." All in heaven; all on earth; all in God's wide domain are subjected to the dominion of him at Bethlehem born: for, be it remembered, it is the Babe of the manger, who is Lord of the universe: it is the Man of Calvary that burst the mortal bondage of the grave and ascended in triumph at

the head of his angel bands: it is he that groaned in Gethsemane, who sits in yonder throne and who shall come with power and great glory; with the voice of the archangel—his own almighty word shall wake the sleeping dust of all the millions of his redeemed.

Such, oh children of Abraham! would the Apostle say,—these, these are the consolations the gospel tenders to you for the distresses you must soon be called to suffer, by the destruction of your whole civil and ecclesiastical system. When all shall have been swept away, bear in mind, that your Messiah has ascended in triumph; your elder brother hath taken possession of his own throne; the Son of David is Lord of the universe!

V. 4. All these things bespeak a superiority indisputable above the angels; and the apostle notes the fact and the degree of the excess.

1. He is made and declared to be superior. Seated in the most honored part of the throne, he extends his dominion over all; and the angels stand around the same throne, awaiting his commands and exulting in their execution; and feeling it to be their highest honor to serve the highest Lord.

2. The measure of this excess is not absolutely, but only relatively defined. So much better is he, as he hath inherited a more excellent name than they possess. The name of anything is that by which it is designated and distinguished from all others. Name is not the vocal sounds, or the written marks which we use conventionally to call up a given person or thing to view or notice: but the distinctive characteristics are the name. The name of the Lord Jesus comprehends every excellence and glory that distinguishes him from all creatures. As he was made better than the angels—higher, superior—which implies not an increase in dignity *as God*, but *as Mediator*; and as he



was *appointed* heir; so he *acquires* this superior name by inheritance. Perhaps we may admit the suggestion, that allusion is here made to the human custom of transmitting *titles* of official dignity along with the estate. The inheritor succeeds to the title of nobility attached to the heritage: the successor to a throne inherits the name or title proper to the kingdom to which he is the heir; and he derives advantage from the fair reputation, the respectability, the fame and eclat of his predecessor.

Thus, this verse affirms the grand proposition, that *the Son of God, as MESSIAH, is transcendently superior to the angels.*

This is the first step in his argument for dissuading the Hebrews from apostasy. He has instituted a comparison between the two dispensations, and this proposition is the result. If it be true that the Head of the New Dispensation is greatly more excellent than the angels, who were the most exalted agency employed in the ministrations of the Old, then it must follow, that our obligations are correspondently greater to adhere steadfastly to the New: and this is the conclusion he reaches in the first verse of chapter second; "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip." The ten verses, from the fifth to the fourteenth inclusive, are devoted to this proof; and we have in them a fine exhibition of Paul's familiarity with, and supreme reverence for the sacred Scriptures; and, moreover, of his logical method of wielding the sword of the Spirit.

V. 5. "For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." This is a quotation from Ps. ii. 7. The word *For* ( $\gamma\alpha\rho$ ) is a causal particle; it intimates a reason in support of some statement preceding. It is of very frequent use, and very generally for this purpose. We have examples in ii. 2, 5,

10, 11, 16, 18. The matter preceding, to which *for* has reference, is the main proposition before us—Christ—Messiah, the God-man is superior to the angels; *for—because* the Father never calls an angel his Son; and if any man affirm to the contrary, let him adduce the proof. “Unto which of the angels.” This seems adapted to the idea of different ranks and degrees of dignity among these heavenly messengers. But take the most exalted, and when did God ever call one of them his Son? This glorious name is His inheritance: it belongs to him in consequence of his natural relationship to Jehovah. And when this Saviour was about to assume humanity, Gabriel said, Luke i. 35, “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, that the Psalm so designates him is plainly set forth: and that the whole of it relates to Messiah even the best Jewish expositors, (as Owen has shown) until recently, so understood it. Later Jews affirm its application to David, the Son of Jesse: of which, however, they cannot find proof. But the whole drift and spirit of it establishes the correctness of our apostle’s application: and that of Peter and John and their whole company, see Acts iv. 25, 26, 27. Besides the eighth and ninth verses of the Psalm cannot be understood at all of David.

“To-day have I begotten thee” can never be explained of David; for if he wrote the Psalm, the words literally applied to him would not be true as to time; and there is no meaning in the word *begotten*, peculiar to David. As a creature of God he was begotten and might be called his son; as of Solomon he says, 1 Chron. xxviii. 26, “I have chosen him to be my son,” or as “of Adam, which was the son of God.” But neither man nor angel was ever addressed thus, “Thou art the Son of God.” Moreover, “to-day have

I begotten thee" is applicable only to the eternal generation. "The transaction, (says Dr. Sampson, p. 57) was one *ab eterno*; and therefore the relation is as eternal. It was not first constituted by his incarnation; nor by his subsequent exaltation. Not by the former, for his mediatorial power, conferred in virtue of his sonship, began to be exercised long before his incarnation." The voice of God from heaven at his baptism on his entry upon his public ministry proclaimed, "this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased:" and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is my beloved Son; hear him." And John i. 14, 18 calls him "the only begotten of the Father"—"the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father." Such language has never been addressed to or spoken of any angel.

"And again, I will be to him a Father and he shall be to me a Son." This is quoted from 2 Sam. vii. 14. But we find that Solomon is more especially regarded in that context, and the propriety of this application seems at first glance questionable: but this appearance will be corrected, if we consider a few things. (1.) Solomon was in some degree a type of Christ; and like all personal types, cannot be full and perfect in all his character and relations, but must be typical only in certain points. One of them is stated in v. 13. "He shall build an house to my name"—This resembles Christ: so, as King of Israel, as Son of David, as especially favored of God, as distinguished for wisdom. Consequently in these he is typical; but as a sinful man, as a temporary sojourner on earth, as liable to fall into idolatry he could not typify the Saviour. (2.) Some things in the place are not explainable of Solomon,—as, "I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever:" and the establishment of his family on the throne forever, whereas his kingdom, literally taken, was soon broken up

and his family divided and scattered. (3.) The precise point for which the quotation is made, it subserves: viz., to prove that the promised Messiah inherited a glorious name, which is above every name—that there was addressed to him and spoken of him a title never addressed to any angel,—that he was declared to be the Son of God with power. Now this Sonship is one of the points; like his eternity and the eternity of his throne and kingdom, in which the language is necessarily restricted to the Son of David, and “spoken of for a long time to come”—forever. I will be to Messiah a Father, exercising a fatherly watch and care over him and his kingdom; and he shall be to me—not now constituted, but continued as from eternity, a Son. No angel stands or ever stood in such relation to God and inherited such a name.

V. 6. “And again, when he bringeth in the First-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.”—Ps. xcii. 7.

The question of connection of the word *again*, has occasioned more discussion than is profitable. Some will have it joined to *bringeth*—when he again bringeth in, implying that God had on some former occasion brought in his Son, as at creation—at his resurrection. Others are for connecting it with *he saith*—and when he again saith—implying that the words had been spoken on some former occasion. Our translators give the plain, common sense: *again* is used in v. 5 as introducing an additional topic; just as speakers, and writers do at present. One branch of discussion is disposed of, and a second is introduced, and again a third. So Matt. iv. 8. “Again the devil,” etc., xix. 24, “And again I say unto you,” etc.

*First-begotten* and *only begotten* are not equivalent terms. The former seems to imply a second or more children of the same parent; but such is not the idea, no more than the

common designation of a church by the phrase *the first church*, when there is no other in the place. The implication, however, is an expectation of a second, etc. The word *first-born*, primarily and naturally means one born before any other to the same parents; though often it happens, that there is never a second. But neither does this natural force of the word fill up the measure of scriptural usage. The first born, naturally indeed, becomes the head of the house and tribe when the parent is called away. The ruling power and the property largely fall to him; and this very ancient custom gives dignity, honor, weight. This resulting supremacy is the leading sense of the expression. The cases of Esau and Jacob, of Reuben and Judah; and, probably, of Cain and Abel, may illustrate the claims of primogeniture. So, when it is said "Israel is my first-born," and "Christ the first-born among many brethren," and the promise to Him, Ps. lxxxix. 27, "I will make him my *first-born*, higher than the kings of the earth," and Col. i. 15—his dear Son "is the image of the invisible God, the *first-born* of every creature," the meaning is the same; Jesus has the absolute superiority over every created thing. It comprehends all the glories of his life, death, resurrection and triumphant entrance into heaven, in the presence of the whole universe of intelligence. "Let all the angels of God worship him." Whosoever refuses to worship the Son breaks the first statute of God's empire. "He whom angels worship must be far superior to them. Jehovah says idolatry consists in worshiping them that are not God; but it is no idolatry to worship Jesus the Son of God." (Mason.)

But "*only-begotten*" looks not for a second son; it excludes the idea altogether. One there is and cannot be a second, and he must necessarily be the first-begotten in the chief meaning just given.

This passage is quoted from Ps. xevii. 7. "Worship Him all ye gods." This psalm is without title, and is by sound critics considered as a continuation of the ninety-sixth, which manifestly is prophetic of Messiah's reign. "Declare his glory among the heathen—say among the heathen, that the Lord reigneth—Let the heavens rejoice and let the earth be glad—Before the Lord." The ninety-seventh begins in the same Messianic strain; "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice: let the multitude of the isles be glad. The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory. Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship him all ye gods." The word *Elohim*, usually translated God, signifies *strong* or *mighty* ones; and is properly applied as a name of the Creator; and never, perhaps unqualifiedly, as the name of idols. When applied to heathen deities, there is generally some qualification, very much as we use the word God. Absolutely it means the Creator; and when we wish to signify idols or false divinities, we append some qualification—*false gods, heathen gods, gods of the Greeks, the Romans*, etc. With this remark you can easily understand why the word *Elohim* in this text, is translated by Paul, *angels*, after the old Greek or LXX. Dr. Sampson, p. 67, remarks—"And whatever the critics may say, the translation of *Elohim* by *αγγελοι*—angels, here made by the Septuagint and Paul, can be abundantly sustained by the examples of Ps. viii. 5 and cxxxviii. 1." In the former, *Elohim* is in our translation rendered *angels* and it is so quoted in Heb. ii. 7. And in the latter it is rendered "gods;" and evidently means magistrates, or angels. So Ps. lxxxii. 6, 7, "I have said, ye are gods, *Elohim*; and all of ye are children of the Most High. But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes."

The time when this order is issued to the angels to wor-



ship the Son, and the nature of this worship, remain to be discussed. The former is marked by a great event—when he bringeth in the First-begotten into the world. The world is unequivocally, the inhabited earth—the mass of mankind dwelling on the earth: not surely the ground, but the people. At what period did God introduce his Son to the people of the world? Not surely when the Sinai covenant of restrictions was imposed. That system left out and practically excluded the great mass of mankind from the privileges of God's house and worship. But when the middle wall of partition was broken down and the gentile world came under the voice of the glad tidings, and the nations heard the clarion clang of salvation for the lost. "And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people—all the nations. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest: on earth peace, good-will toward men." Yes, dear reader! this is, assuredly this is the in-bringing of the Son—the introduction of Messiah—the God-man. And here is the kind of worship which angels can render. They cannot be sprinkled with the blood of Calvary, for they have no sins to be wiped out. They cannot adore the Babe as the shepherds do. They cannot cry aloud for pardoning mercy through atoning blood. They stand in their own spotless robes, and cannot array themselves in the brighter robes of the Messiah's righteousness. They cannot seize the golden harps and strike the high notes of praise to Him who



sitteth in the right hand of the throne. They cannot sing the new song, saying, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." Rev. v. 9. But they can stand in mute astonishment at his condescending love to men. "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures and the elders: and the number of them—of the angels—was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." And thus do all the angels of God worship the Son at his introduction to the world: and thus is demonstrated the glorious pre-eminence of Messiah above the angels, who were the most exalted agents in bringing in the Old dispensation.

V. 7. "And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire." Ps. civ. 4. This language stands in contrast with that of vs. 8 and 9; as is intimated by an idiomatic construction, which we cannot render literally into English—"and, *on the one hand*, of the angels he saith; *but—on the other hand*, of or unto, it is the same as rendered *of* in v. 7, of the Son." This contrast we must keep in mind as we proceed; for the very purpose of comparison is illustration. Moreover, we must not let slip, either the immediate object of the quotations, or their bearing upon the remote and grand design of the entire discussion. The immediate object is, to prove the superiority of the Messiah to the angels. We have here the fourth proof-text. If the reader will consult the preceding psalm, and note the identity of expression in its close, with the opening of this one hundred and fourth: and moreover, the drift and spirit of the one hundred and

third, he will probably be of opinion, that the LORD in both is the same; and that God in Christ is the JEHOVAH, who hath prepared his throne in the heavens: that "hath removed our transgressions from us—that like a Father, pitieth his child, so the Lord pitieth them that hear him." Isa. ix. 6. Messiah is "the everlasting Father"—that He it is, that is "clothed with honor and majesty—he sitteth in the right hand of the majestic throne—who covereth himself with light as with a garment—who stretcheth out the heavens like a curtain—by whom the worlds were made—who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot; who walketh, (or as Alexander prefers to translate) who moveth upon the wings of the wind (spirit)—who maketh his own angels spirits—winds; and his public official servants a flaming fire." Now this interpretation is as necessary to Paul's logic, as it is to David's poetry and philology. We may not convict the latter of bad taste and disjointed imagination; nor the former of far-fetched analogies and inconclusive reasoning, because of a foregone conclusion that Christ cannot be God over all and blessed forever, and at the same time, the glorified Man exalted above the angels. The whole context whence the apostle quotes, agrees precisely with the positions he has taken in his first sentence, in reference to the Son of God. If he is the Prophet, the King, the Priest, the Creator and the Sustainer and Governor and Heir of all things: if he has by himself purged our sins and taken his seat on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens and inherited a name which is above every name: if all these; then it is right and proper and necessary that the Scriptures should say, He maketh his angels spirits—full of life and activity, and his ministers—his liturgists—his public servants of all descriptions, a flaming fire—quick and bright as the lightning, and resistless as the thunderbolt.

The interpretation which makes this passage mean, that God rules the stormy winds and makes them his messengers to bend the flexible reed or prostrate the mighty oak; to waft the ship to its desired haven, or plunge it beneath the briny deep: that he controls the forked, fiery, lightning and directs its force upon the princely tower for its destruction, or directs its harmless shaft to the earth and leaves a purified atmosphere behind—thus making the flaming fire his servant—this interpretation affirms truth, but not *the* truth that suits Paul's argument. "One decisive reason against this is, that the Apostle is comparing the dignity of the angels with that of the Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore this interpretation, which makes him introduce fire and wind, can have no manner of connection or sense." How does God's government of winds and lightning prove the pre-eminence of Messiah over angelic spirits? His position is, that these mighty Spirits are under the direction of the Son of God. One of them we are told, 2 Kings xix. 35, went out and smote on that night one hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the camp of the Assyrians. Ingenious skepticism informs us, this was nothing but a pestilential wind from the desert. What then? Is this wind under control of the angel of the Lord; and is the angel that guides this poisonous wind one of our Lord's servants? The more you magnify the power of the wind and the angel, the more you enhance the might of Him who sitteth on the throne, around which hang myriads of millions of these messengers awaiting his commands and rejoicing in their execution.

But we must advert to the contrast.—The adversative "but," points this out. The scripture, or the Spirit of inspiration, speaks of the angels as subordinate ministering spirits—servants in waiting before the throne of majesty. But, on the contrary, of the Son, "Thy throne, O God, is

forever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom," etc. This is a quotation from Psalm xlv. 6, 7. That this psalm concerns Messiah has always been held by his believing people. A simple reading of this must convince all that have the elements of divine knowledge and any respect for the Holy Scriptures. Such was the application of it, we are assured by men deeply conversant with the subject, by the ancient Jews. All translations and all sects agree, that the King, who is fairer than the children of men; who rides forth in his majesty because of truth, meekness and righteousness, is the Son of God. It were a work of supererogation to enter on proof of this general opinion. Rather let us glance first at the points here contrasted. (1.) The angels are ministering servants; but the Son is Lord of these angels. (2.) The angels are, as the very word signifies, at best ambassadors; but the Son issues their commissions and calls them to account for their execution. (3.) The angels are the *property* of the Son—*his own*; but the Son holds them by right of creation. (4.) The angels owe all their efficiency and energy to the power of God working in them; but the Son's efficiency is underived and independent. (5.) The angels' authority of administration and rule is derived and temporary; but the Son's throne is eternal. (6.) The angels' joys in their reward are measured; but the Son's are boundless.

Apart from these points, five things must be here noted.

1. The Son is expressly called God. We have already remarked, the word Elohim used here by the Psalmist, is never applied absolutely in scripture, to any but the true God. Hence obviously, here is a direct and unequivocal assertion of the true and proper divinity of Christ; as John affirms, "This is the true God and eternal life." 1 Jno. v. 20. Of course, therefore, those who ever labor to reduce the Saviour to a mere fallible man, must find some way to

pervert this language from its obvious and manifest meaning. Some deny the word God to be in the vocative case, as in our translation—O God, as spoken to; but affirm it to be in the nominative, thus, “God is thy throne”—meaning, that God upholds Messiah in his government. But now, *throne* is the symbol of ruling power—of sovereignty; and the Hebrew word rendered into Greek, by *thronos*, is never used for an ordinary seat; but is the proper term for the seat of supreme power—the symbol of royalty. Thus God is converted into a symbol; and this in the face of the most obvious and natural construction. Besides, if *Theos* is the subject or nominative of the verb—God is thy throne—then it must be the subject throughout, and the attributes of the kingdom should be God’s—the sceptre should be God’s—the kingdom is God’s. But such is not the fact: the sceptre and kingdom etc. are still the Son’s, still implying that the throne is his.

2. The sovereignty, symbolized by *throne*, is everlasting—forever and ever. The same we have in Isa. ix. 7: “Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth and forever.” So in Dan. vii. 14: “His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom, that which shall not be destroyed.” No language of man can more strongly express the permanence and perpetuity of Messiah’s reign. Let now those who deny his divinity and affirm him to be only and merely a man, tell us how a mere man can have and hold an everlasting dominion—a kingdom that shall know no end.

3. The attributes of this eternal kingdom—“the sceptre of thy kingdom is a sceptre of righteousness.” Here is a little difference from the psalm, in the words—“is a right sceptre:” the sense however is the same. As throne is the

symbol of supreme ruling power; so sceptre represents actual government—the application of law to regulate the conduct of men. The rod in Moses' hand at Horeb was probably the type of royal sceptres. By it he first learned the sovereign power of God. When he cast it down, it became a serpent and he fled from it; showing that mere power is an object of terror. When he in faith extended his hand and took it up, it became a harmless rod; showing that faith in God who establishes government among men and nations, makes supreme power no longer terrible but desirable. Messiah's kingdom is characterized by righteousness. Jeremiah (xxiii. 5) speaks of this king under the name of a righteous Branch from David's root—"And a king shall reign and prosper and shall execute justice and judgment in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is the name, whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." Accordingly, this divine administration never relaxes justice, even when it dispenses mercy. "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face." Ps. lxxxix. 14. And again, "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other—Righteousness shall go before him; and shall set us in the way of his steps." Ps. lxxxv. 10, 13. "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law." Rom. iii. 31. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." Matt. v. 17. When Jesus saves his people, he does it by fulfilling all the righteousness of the law, perceptive and penal; its requirements are all complied with; so that God can be just, whilst he is the justifier of them which believeth in Jesus. Rom. iii. 26.

4. The Spirit testifies as to the root of this rectitude in Messiah's kingdom. This is found in the heart of the King



himself; "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity." The purity and rectitude of the administration have no extraneous and sinister purposes to subserve; as is too often the case with governments in merely human hands. This King is subject to his own law, for out of himself the law issues and all the attributes of his being are in accordance thereto. The will of the sovereign, made known to the subjects for that purpose, is law; and Jesus came "not to do mine own will—but my meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." Love to men, love to God, love to holiness, righteousness and truth; and, consequently, hatred toward all that would counteract this love, shines forth in his whole life, at his death and resurrection: and continues characteristic of his government; and will so continue for ever and ever.

5. That holy obedience shall be followed by happiness as its reward, is the fundamental idea of moral government. Sweep this away, and the universe becomes at once, a chaos worse than materialistic—a chaos of matter and spirit, of motion and mind, of intelligence and brute force: we cannot say, of virtue and vice, for this implies a distinction which the besom of moral destruction has for ever swept away. But if this basis of morality abides unshaken; then, from the perfection of Messiah's kingdom and its origin in his love of righteousness and truth, it must necessarily follow, that with his work before him, his reward must be with him. "Therefore God, *even* thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." This inference is beautifully logical: and is substantially the same as the apostle presents in Phil. ii. 5-11—"he humbled himself and became obedient until death—Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name—" But let us attend to particu'ars.

(1.) God here, is the Father, as presiding over the



economy of redemption. The covenant in eternity—the covenant of grace between the Father and the Son, referred to Eph. i. 4, 5 is the ground, as it were, of the Father's action here. “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.”

(2.) In pursuance of this covenant, the Son must assume humanity and the Father bestow it on him; as stated in Ps. xl. 6—“Mine ears hast thou opened” which in Heb. x. 5, is translated, “a body hast thou prepared me.” So the Word was made flesh: he took on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham.

(3.) His other qualifications are expressed by the anointing of the Holy Spirit at his induction to office, as we have already briefly noted, and must still farther hereafter.

(4.) This anointing with the oil of gladness, is different; we might say, is in contrast. The former, “like that literal anointing by the hand of Mary, was unto his painful labors and trials and sufferings even unto death and burial. But this unto joy and felicity—the consequence of his having finished his work.” This was, as it were, the solemn inauguration of the Son of God into the possession of his eternal throne—the day of heaven's jubilee, when he returned to re-occupy his vacated throne, adorned anew with the fresh glory of redeeming love. A jubilee, when understood, to the church below; to the spirits of the just made perfect; to the angelic hosts who had witnessed the humiliation of the manger, the cross, the tomb: who now escort the victorious conqueror to the gates of glory and the throne of light. A day this, when the joys of heaven were doubled, and the Spirit came down and anointed the church below for its blessed work.

(5.) Note the relative measure—"above thy fellows:" not *equals*; but partakers in common of this joy, though in inferior degree, as their capacity enabled them. "Did not our hearts burn within us?" "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." All the joy of his people consists in their partaking of this oil of gladness. Above and beyond his fellow-participants is the Son anointed: in kind they agree; in degree they differ. Let the reader be again reminded of the mediatorial character of the Son. As God, he could not be exalted either in power or glory or felicity; but as God and man—as Mediator he can be promoted in all these respects.

V.v. 10, 11, 12. These are taken from Ps. cii. 25-27 and are exactly copied from the old Greek translation—the LXX. The Psalm refers to the last days, or times of Messiah. This is evident from v. 13-16, and 18 and 22, which are prophetic, "Thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Zion.—So the heathen shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth thy glory:—the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord. When the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the Lord." But if this internal evidence were wanting, the fact of Paul's quoting it in arguments addressed to Hebrews, shows that it was admitted by them to refer to the promised Son of David; or then, our Apostle committed a great blunder, in offering evidence which he knew they would reject. And this is true of all the other passages. No lawyer would offer a witness or a document, which he knew the Court would refuse to admit because of irrelevancy or of incompetency. That modern Jews have denied many of the scriptures referring to Messiah, which their ancestors received as Messianic, is easily proved; but their denial cannot shut off the internal evidences, or annihilate historical facts.

V. 10. The *and*, as in vs. 5 and 6, intimates an additional proof text: it is the sixth. "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands." Note (1.) The person addressed *Thou, Lord*: this is borrowed from the preceding verses, it is not in this verse of the psalm. (2.) The time of the action in the psalm, "*of old*"—*at the faces—before—formerly*. By the apostle, *in the beginning*; with evident reference to Gen. i. 1, and to John i. 1. This proof of Christ's superiority to the angels is under the affirmation of v. 2 "by whom also he made the worlds;" hence the suitableness of this translation. (3.) "*Thou hast founded the earth*," is a little briefer and more literal. (4.) "*And the heavens are the works of thy hands*:" manifestly alluding to Gen. i. 1. Thus, creation is affirmed to have been accomplished by the person spoken of and spoken to in this psalm; and consequently in proof direct of his supreme Godhead, and therefore, of his infinite pre-eminence above the angels.

V.v. 11 and 12. "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."

Having exalted the Son of God as the Creator and upholder of all things, he here compares this Creator with the works of his hands, in regard to their durability, or permanent existence. Let us note particulars.

1. "They shall perish." *They* includes the whole previously mentioned—the earth and the heavens shall *perish*. This word signifies, not the annihilation of the matters referred to; but their dissolution; the separation of their parts into their elements—the entire change of form and structure. The same doctrine is taught in 2 Pet. iii. 10–12—"the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and

the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up—all these things shall be dissolved—the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved.” In v. 7 he tells us, “the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same Word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men.” He refers this dissolution to the same WORD, who, John assures us, was in the beginning with God, and was God, and all things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.

2. “But thou remainest.” Messiah abideth, the same, yesterday, and to-day, and forever: and He it is that winds up the affairs of the worn-out and dilapidated world which has grown old like a garment that has become useless and is about to be folded up and thrown aside.

3. In contrast with these heavens and this earth, now become worthless as a worn-out vesture, is the fact, that it is Messiah who makes this final disposal of a worn-out universe, and lights the pathway of his redeemed Church to heaven, with the flames of a burning world. But whilst all things are changed under the operation of his almighty hand, He himself remains unchanged and his years shall not fail. How language could be framed, to express more forcibly the transcendent glory and grandeur of the Son, not only above all on earth, but above the angels and all in heaven, it may well be accounted impossible to conceive. His eternal duration and his absolute control, government, and final judgment of the universe—surely these place him infinitely above the angels. Thus the argument accumulates mountains high: and thus the way is prepared for the final and Scripture challenge on this point.

V. 13. “But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?”

1. Note the adversative, "But." This intimates opposition of meaning; yet the proposition to which this is opposed is not expressed; it is implied. As if he would say, "God, or the Scriptures, never, on any occasion, at any time, under any circumstances, addressed such language to any angel whatever, however exalted and glorious he may have been—Sit on my right hand: But thus does he address the Son." Thus, the language contains a negative, of the most imperative and absolute character in regard to the angels: and an affirmative, of a character equally strong, imperative and absolute in regard to the Son.

2. On v. 4, we have stated the force of the phrase *right hand*—the position of highest honor and supremest power: "He sat down—took his seat on the right hand of the Majesty on high:" universal dominion belongs to the Man of Calvary, because he is heir and Lord of the universe.

3. This is quoted from Ps. cx. 2; from which more frequent and important quotations are made, than from any equal portion of the Old Testament. A divine interpreter assures us that it is Messianic. Matt. xxii. 42-45: "What think ye of Christ—Messiah? 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? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?" See also the parallel cases, Mark xii. 35, etc., Luke xx. 41, etc., Acts ii. 34, 35. And Paul in 1 Cor. xv. 25-28 argues that Christ must reign until all his enemies—all things be put under his feet—then shall the Son also himself be subject, etc.

So our LORD'S argument with the Pharisees, and also Peter's, assumes,—does not *assert*, but is stronger than a mere assertion; for in *assuming* that the Psalm applies to the Messiah, he obtains their admission to it. Both our

LORD'S and Peter's argument were in public, in the face of the scribes and Pharisees—the learned doctors, and therefore, their not contradicting him concedes the point. “No man was able to answer him a word.” But now, if they could have denied that the psalm was spoken of Messiah and sustained their denial, they would have swept away the foundation of his argument and gained a complete triumph. The ancient Jews never denied this: its denial is a rejection of Christ and the whole New Testament dispensation—an invention which proves the hardihood and unblushing effrontery of modern infidelity. We shall meet other quotations anon: meanwhile let us pass to the exposition of this; and,

4. The command, *Sit*, in the English and Greek taken from the LXX., does not fully express all that may be suggested by the Hebrew. A slight yet beautiful and not unimportant shade of meaning, is not thrown upon the canvas. The Hebrew word used by the Psalmist, suggests not only the taking and occupying of the honored seat; but is retrospective; it implies a previous right and occupancy, as if He should say, *Re-seat* thyself: *return* and *re-occupy* the throne, which, for a little while and for a glorious purpose, thou hast vacated. Having laid aside thy sceptre and thy robes of eternal royalty, and veiled thy divinity in human flesh; and having accomplished the mission on which I sent thee, until thou didst say, “It is finished;” and having burst the mortal bondage of the grave, Return, Thou only-begotten and well-beloved, arrayed in all the glory thou didst lay aside, and all the superadded glory of revealing mercy to the universe of intelligent beings; Return and re-occupy thy throne, and vindicate the rights of thy glorious crown; and there abide until all thine enemies shall bow down as a footstool of thy feet.

“The form of the Hebrew word here used is identical



in its letters with the word *to return*, as the following passages show: Ps. cxvi. 7, "*Return* unto thy rest, O my soul." Isa lv. 7—"Let him *return* unto the LORD"—Hosea vi. 1, "Let us *return* unto the Lord," etc., and vii. 10, and xiv. 1, 2. Moreover the drift of the psalm shows its reference to times subsequent to Christ's exaltation. "The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion—he shall judge among the heathen." And its coincidence with the second psalm shows its reference to post-resurrection times. "This, says Alexander, is the counterpart of the Second Psalm, completing the prophetic picture of the conquering Messiah." How beautiful the logic by which he proves his position, that Christ—the Messiah of the Hebrew scriptures, is so much better than the angels! And how pertinent and forceful the general appeal by which he closes it up.

V. 14. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"

1. Here observe first, the form of expression is the same as in the preceding verse: the strong affirmation: the bold appeal to gainsayers for facts and doctrines which they could not for a moment deny. As if he would say, 'You know, brethren, this is the old and universally received doctrine in Israel. From the day when the angel's voice from heaven stayed the uplifted hand and deadly knife, saying—"Lay not thine hand upon the lad"—until the angel that talked with and instructed Zechariah, their ministry has been recognized among the true Israelites.'

2. The characteristic feature of their ministrations here pointed out, is merciful—*for*, on account, to promote the advantage of God's children. And as to the children, so more especially to the elder Brother, the angels have a special charge. This verse is not a quotation, but a general reference to established doctrines. In Ps. xci. 11, it is distinctly stated in reference to our Lord; "He shall give his



angels charge over—concerning thee, to keep thee in all thy ways,” etc. But what is there special as to Christ, is, in principle applicable to all his people. “Bless the LORD, ye his angels that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word. Bless ye the LORD, all ye his hosts, (armies) ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure.” Ps. ciii. 20, 21.

3. But whilst it is true, that their ministrations are mainly for the protection and comfort of God’s redeemed, they necessarily have a different relation to others. For very often the salvation of Zion is a result of the destruction of her enemies. The same angel of the LORD—the uncreated angel Redeemer, that encamps round about them that fear him, wields his omnipotence in crushing his and their enemies. So the created angels that do his commandments have terrible orders to fulfil, as for example, in the night of Egypt’s wailings, when there was not a house in which the first-born did not lie dead. And in the night of vengeance upon the Assyrian camp, when the angel of the Lord went out and smote down to death “an hundred, four score and five thousand:” 2 Kings xix. 35.

4. Yet mighty as are these liturgical spirits, they are all sent forth under orders; and are in perfect subjection to the authority above them; and that is none other but the Son of God in human nature—the Messiah.

And thus closes the argument for the superiority of our Lord over the angels, who were the highest agency employed in the establishment and conduct of the Old Testament dispensation. “The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the LORD is among them as in Sinai, in the holy place.” Ps. lxxviii. And Stephen, Acts vii. 53, assures us they received the law through the disposition—along the ranks of angels. We may note further the fact, without professing ability to account for it,

that all the seven quotations in proof are from the Psalms, except the second. Why? Is it because they are more clearly doctrinal than the other scriptures? Is it because they embody the essence of all practical religion? Or is it because, being more constantly used in worship, they were more familiar, better known and appreciated by the people? Whether any or all these are sufficient to account for the fact or not, this lesson most assuredly ought to be received from the fact; viz., The church should very highly appreciate the book of Psalms and by no means exclude these heaven-inspired hymns from the matter of her praise. She should never so cultivate and improve music, as to silence David's harp and to suspend singing in the family and drive it from the church into the organ loft.

Before proceeding further with the text, it may be profitable to note a few things, by way of general remark or inference from our discussion of the argument for the pre-eminence of Christ above the angels.

1. It is the rule of all holy obedience everywhere, throughout God's whole world, that all His rational creatures shall glorify the Son. The spirits of light and redeemed men are bound to this service; each, however, in their own proper sphere. Angelic hosts do glorify him, as bound, because he is Lord Creator and Governor over them and the object of their supreme adoration. All men, holy and unholy, are equally bound to serve and obey him; but actually all sanctified men do worship the Son. They who withhold this worship blaspheme his holy name; and there is an eternal line of distinction between blasphemy and worship. The denial of his Godhead and the worship due to Him, is the highest possible crime. Because "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 : and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Phil. ii. 9-11. "For the Father judgeth no man ; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son : that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father which hath sent him." John v. 22, 23. "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is Messiah ! he is Antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father." 1 John ii. 22, 23. This follows by necessity : for father and son are relative terms : if there is no father there is no son : the one implies the other.

2. For aught we know, all intelligent creatures in God's universe are anxious spectators of his system of grace and scheme of providence, carrying on in this world of ours. Little comparatively as is our earth, it may be—though we do not affirm it, yet no man can presume to say it cannot be so—it may be, that the dispensation of God's mercy and grace in this world of ours, may be the means of confirming millions of worlds in eternal happiness : not of *redeeming* their inhabitants, but of *confirming* them, by giving evidence of the inflexible righteousness and eternal justice of God. To this idea the Apostle seems to refer in Eph. i. 10. "That in the dispensation of the fullness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him." And in iii. 10—"that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God"—*By the church* here is meant, the instrumental agency—the medium through which intelligence is communicated to the angels of light. The attributes of Jehovah displayed in the work of man's redemption, are made known through the church's

agency, to the principalities and powers in heavenly places. These glorious spirits, always in waiting before the throne of Messiah, learn of Him, through the church below, the hitherto inscrutable mysteries of redemption and the combinations of His love and mercy, justice and righteousness; and then dart off with their messages, away to the distant worlds scattered over the boundless expanse of his dominions. These messengers of Messiah study man to learn the glory of their God.

3. There is a progression in the development of these mysteries of mercy and justice. Several eras may be noted. (1.) When the first-fruits of Messiah's purchase from sin and rescue from pollution arrived at the gates of glory, the inhabitants of the heavenly world were all stirred up and eagerly inquired, 'Will he be admitted? Can a spirit, once polluted and now expelled from a polluted body by the hand of a fratricidal assassin—can such an one be received into this holy habitation? Can we associate with such on terms of equality?' Abel's reception marks the first era: a spirit once polluted, now pure; but how? This question exercises angelic bosoms, and is unsolved; when (2.) A second advent and under different circumstances gives a new turn of thought and surmise. Enoch, arrayed in a spiritual body enters the realms of eternal day. Thus were the heavenly host furnished with a faint glimpse at the glorified body, which they were hereafter to behold on his throne and to accompany down to this earth whence his body is derived, that they may witness the grand scene of his final judgment.

(3.) Moses was probably the third mark of an era. If, as is probable from the facts on the mount of transfiguration, he arose from the dead, he was the first called away from the house of temporary imprisonment, to mingle with angels and spirits innumerable of just men made perfect.

Christ indeed is called the *first-fruits* of them that slept; but not as being the first human body that arose from the state of the dead. Lazarus and the widow's son preceded him. But He was the first-fruits, in the sense of the superior—the more excellent. Thus there is a progression in the character, as well as the number of heavenly inhabitants; until the Lord of glory himself graced his divine throne with the majesty of his own effulgent glory.

(4.) This marks the fourth illustrious era; exhibits humanity in its highest possible form, short of the beatific vision, wherein eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered the heart of man to conceive the glory that shall be revealed in us and to us. What we shall be we know not; but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

4. This progress must continue, both as it regards numbers and excellent properties. Heaven is not stationary. How different must it have been when Elijah entered it in his ear of fire, from what it was when Abel first trod the golden streets? From this how different, when the everlasting doors were lifted up and the King of glory entered? And then, the progress in holiness and happiness of the myriads of millions, redeemed and unredeemed, how it outstrips imagination; and how the powers of the soul flag, when the finite labors to grasp the infinite? Who shall attempt to set bounds and limits to glories and felicities of the heavenly world?

5. There is no display of God's mercy any where, at the expense of his righteousness. "A God all mercy is a God unjust." They who hope to purchase heaven by a mere act of indemnity, cherish a hope that shall make them ashamed. Is there any need of stronger proof than we have seen, that salvation by free grace is favorable to the interests of righteousness, than that the author of it loveth righteousness

and hateth iniquity? Those very men, who, rejecting the vicarious atonement, will have mercy at the sacrifice of justice, are most pertinacious in denying the necessity of mercy at all.

6. One more remark and we shall then proceed to the inference of the next chapter and the proofs in support of it. It is, that the enhancement of Messiah's glory, in the foregoing discussion, regards his Kingly office. These six testimonies of Scripture exalt the Son of God and anoint him King on the holy hill of Zion, and call upon all kings to serve and obey Him.

## CHAPTER II.

VERSES 1-4. "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip."

We have here an inference, based on the preceding, and containing, for the first time, a distinct avowal of his grand design. He forewarns them of the danger of apostasy from the faith of the gospel; and thereby forearms them against it. He is more directly practical in this than in any of his Epistles. As a wise master builder, he lays his foundation of doctrine on the rock of eternal truth, and follows it up closely, with an application: and in such a manner as to call for supporting it with further reasons equally cogent. Having demonstrated most abundantly the superiority of King Messiah above the angelic hosts, he gives this as the reason why these testimonies ought to be most diligently treasured up and studied: and then, in subsequent verses enforces this inference by pointing out the danger of disregarding it. Let us note the danger; the way to obviate it; and the obligation to do so.

1. The danger. To disregard his instructions is to despise and offend the teacher. God spake by his prophets, whom he sent with his message: if we refuse to hear them we insult, not the messenger only, but the Master himself. To contemn the ambassador is to insult his Sovereign. God speaks to us by his angels; contemptuous treatment of these more exalted servants, is a still higher offence. God speaks to us by his Son; surely the words from his mouth cannot be contemned or even neglected, without greatly aggravated



turpitude. This sin may spring from lassitude, from worldly-mindedness, from hostile feeling. But the language before us scarcely implies these. "Lest at any time we should let them slip." The allusion is to a leaky vessel, into which water is introduced, but whence it glides away as it were unperceived. Such, to a sad degree, is the case with many hearers of the gospel in our day. They attend the sanctuary, and lo, the preacher is "unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument, for they hear his words, but they do them not." Or, perchance they do not even hear his words; attention, which is necessary to memory, is given to something else—the stained glass windows—the beautiful lamps or gas burners which glimmer at noonday to help the sun to overcome the philosophy of windows that shut out the light—the beautiful head dresses and rich flounces. In such cases, the chinks are not to blame; for the water was never put in and of course could not flow out. The result however is the same—an empty vessel.

2. The method of escaping or obviating this danger—"give the more earnest heed." This calls for (1.) *Attention*, a prerequisite to memory. All men know that sounds may strike the ear and not be heard. The clock strikes and I hear it not. That is, my attention was not arrested. The percipient mind was giving heed to something else; consequently nothing actually was thrown into the storehouse of memory, by its doorkeeper, attention: and therefore nothing can be drawn out. (2.) Attention has its own proper antecedent—*desire*, running out into will. If there is no desire to receive the instructions of wisdom, there can be no attention, and there will be no hearing, no memory of the words heard; and therefore no ability to call up and ruminate upon the discourse: and so the thunders of Sinai are no more received and retained in the mind, than the

still small voice: an empty vessel is the result. (3.) *Desire* implies a feeling of want; a conception of something supposed to be capable of relieving the want; and the outgoing of the mind after that thing. Until therefore a man feels that something is needed to secure his happiness, he will not bestir himself. But let the light of the law shine in upon his soul; and conviction follows; he perceives his danger and inquires what he must do to be saved. But we are here concerned rather with professed believers, than with sinners in general. Professors' poverty in religious knowledge and consequent danger, are owing, not to lack of means of instruction but to want of diligence in their use. Believing that much study is a weariness to the flesh, they excuse themselves and abide content with the bare and vague hope that they have an interest in the great salvation. The onward movement toward perfection does not secure their attention; scarcely attracts their notice. Earnest heed, intense study they leave to others. Indeed, not a little of this censure is perhaps due to the ministry. There is more anxiety apparent to increase the number of jewels, than to polish and make them fit to be set in the Master's crown. To the conversion of sinners, rather than to the edification of saints, is given the more earnest heed. Far from us be the wish to check the former. Let converts be multiplied as the morning dew; and to this end let preaching of the law be penetrating as the barbed arrow: but let it not be forgotten, that the growth of church members into holy conformity with her Master's likeness, is an indispensable and most efficient means of grace: and that this growth depends on and results from the constant and faithful study of the divine oracles.

3. This remedy prophylactic it is our duty to apply—"we ought,"—it is becoming, fit, obligatory on us, the more earnestly to give attention to the things heard. The word

rendered *ought* is formed from one that signifies to *bind*—to *make fast*: and so it expresses moral obligation: as Rom. viii. 26 and xii. 3, 1 Cor. viii. 2, and 2 Cor. ii. 3. In this last it expresses the obligation on the Corinthian believers so to act as to afford him occasion to rejoice.

If this obligation to hearken to the words spoken, to mix them with faith and practice them in the life, be disregarded and the majesty of the Son of God thus insulted—if men refuse to study the things which make for their eternal peace; and thus let the glorious message, heralded by men and angels and the Lord of glory himself, pass away from their minds and leave no abiding impressions on their hearts and lives—then must they in due time meet their responsibilities and endure such vengeance as their most aggravating transgressions deserve. To arouse their souls to a due appreciation of their peril, the Apostle proceeds to construct an argument from the less to the greater. The principle of this argument is universally admitted; viz., that moral responsibility is in proportion to privileges. This maxim is beautifully illustrated by the parable of the talents. Our Apostle applies it in Rom. ii. 12: “For as many as have sinned without law—without the revealed law—the written revelation—shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law—under the light of revelation—shall be judged by the law.” In other words, as privileges are multiplied responsibility increases. Your privileges and mine, my Hebrew brethren, are exceedingly enhanced—they are much beyond those of your fathers, hold fast therefore and improve more abundantly your superior light.

V. 2. “For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation; which at first began to be spoken by the

Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with diverse miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will.”

The causal particle *For*, intimates a reason in support of the foregoing dehortation and is too plain to need further explanation.

The conditional word, *if*, is not designed to express a doubt, as to whether the word spoken by angels was steadfast: but rather intimates a very high degree of confidence and a universal concession on the part of the persons addressed. As if he would say, “You know, my Brethren, that under the Old Testament dispensation, the connection between sin and punishment was indissoluble. Full proof of wrong-doing was always required, but when this was made out and the crime proved indubitably, then justice was administered without sale, denial or delay. Now if these things are so, how much more rigidly should the just demands of the law be exacted from those who sin under the clearer light and encouraging revelations of the New Testament?”

“The word spoken by angels.” *Word* here means the doctrines, though *Logos* be used; and not the *personal* word; nor yet the executive word (*hrema*); but the doctrines communicated by angels. But how spoken *by angels*? It marks the *medium agency*—*through* the angels. The reference is to the ministration of angels, chiefly at Sinai: *chiefly*, but not excluding other angelic instrumentalities, as to Manoah and his wife, as to Balaam, as to Abraham, as to Gideon, etc. But, as the Jews have always held, the grand instance of Angelic liturgy or service, was at Sinai. Stephen Acts vii. 52, when he charges home upon his persecutors, their crowning sin against “the just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers, Who received

the law by the disposition of angels and have not kept it," hands us the key of the passage—"by the disposition,"—in or along the *ranks* of angels. The Greek word means rows of persons drawn up as it were rank and file. From Stephen we recur to Ps. lxxviii. 17, previously cited. David describes the prosperity of Zion and the glory of her King. "The hill of God is as the hill of Bashan—the Lord will dwell in it forever. The chariots of God are twenty thousand, *even* thousands of angels: the LORD is among them as in Sinai, in the holy place." Thus there were angels innumerable in Sinai; for David is a prophet and God in him speaks, although in no other prophet did he speak or write down this fact of the angels' presence in Sinai. Moreover, the LORD that was in Sinai among these myriads of angels is the JEHOVAH; and this JEHOVAH in the Second Person; the same who is spoken of in Ps. ii., of whom JEHOVAH in the First Person declares the decree, "Yet have I set—anoined my King upon my holy hill of Zion." Still farther proof of this identity is found in v. 18. "Thou hast ascended on high: thou hast led captivity captive, etc." Now compare this with its quotation and use in Eph. iv. 8–13. "Wherefore he—the scripture saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men, etc." Thus undeniably is it established, that the law (and the system built upon it at Sinai) is here meant, and of it the stability is affirmed. It had already stood more than fifteen and an half centuries and witnessed the evanishment of all other systems of law and order; and the governments which consisted in their execution had all passed away. But Messiah's throne is forever and ever, for it was ordained by angels in the hand of a Mediator. But now the steadfastness of this doctrine—the stability and strength of this law—is manifested in the energy of its operation, by which every transgression—every act by

which the law is crossed ; and disobedience—not hearing, meets its just punishment, its rewarding compensation, according to eternal right. The former of these terms—*transgression* may be designed to refer to law proper, as distinguished from evangelical matter. For be it remembered the Levitical laws, or positive, ceremonial institutions, are almost entirely evangelical: that is, they are types of Christ and of christian doctrines and gospel ordinances. The latter term—*disobedience*—simply and literally *not hearing*, most likely has special reference to evangelical truth, of which no trace can be found in the human mind by nature ; but it is all by divine inspiration and addressed to the sinner and claims the obedient ear. Not that there was no mercy ; for it was a dispensation of grace, a merciful covenant. The continual sacrifices were a visible display of the doctrine of remission of sins through the blood of atonement typified by the flaming altar. But a just recompense was visited for all sins that struck directly at the existence of the dispensation itself and the vitals of its theology. So there were sins for which there were no sacrificial offerings and no pardon. Against civil society, for example, murder was not pardonable. “Thou shalt take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death ; but he shall surely be put to death.” Num. xxxv. 31. So also the sins of blasphemy and idolatry were capital. Lev. xxiv. 15, 16. “Whosoever curseth his God shall bear his sin. And he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to death.” “Cursed be the man that maketh any graven image”—and for the idolatry of the golden calf, “there fell of the people that day about three thousand men.” See Exod. xxxii. If for such transgressions they died without mercy under two or three witnesses “how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation ?”

1. Note the form of expression : it is after Paul’s Socratic



method—an interrogation, involving a strong negation—there is no possibility—no method by which we can *fly from* our perilous condition. There is allusion here to the perpetrator of manslaughter, fleeing before the avenger of blood. Various roads lead to the city of refuge, and by vigilant activity he may peradventure evade His pursuer and reach the gate and escape the blow of his pursuer. But God is the avenger of those who despise his law and reject his gospel, and from his allsearching eye there is no concealment; and from the blow of his avenging sword there is no evasion.

2. “Salvation” here includes the entire system of gracious doctrines—*Redemption* by the payment of a price—a ransom—the satisfaction rendered to divine justice by Christ’s bearing our sins in his own body on the tree; suffering the just for the unjust, which sufferings he, as our vicarious substitute endured for us. This results to us from the pre-existent covenant of grace, whereby, in eternity, he as our Surety pledged to the Father that in the fullness of time—when the stipulated hour should come, he would pay the bond—the *Lutron* or redemption price to the last drop. Now we must keep it in mind, that these vicarious sufferings of Christ, and these only, can secure the souls of his people—all whom the Father hath given to him he hath kept—for them he prays and not for the world, John xvii. “Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.” Acts iv. 12.

3. *Righteousness*, the second grand idea of Salvation, is conformity with law. “Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.” Matt. iii. 15. And in this sense “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” Rom. x. 4. *End of law* here is the completer, the fulfiller of all law, ceremonial and moral. “He of God



is made unto us Wisdom, and *Righteousness* and Sanctification and Redemption." 1 Cor. i. 30. "And this is the name whereby he shall be called THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." Jer. xxiii. 6. To holy obedience, which is righteousness, and to nothing else are life and happiness and heaven promised. But man failed and the curse came. Man did not obey and the blessing is not and cannot, by mere man, be secured. But man in the Mediator and Surety, has completed this fulfilment, and secured the positive blessedness due and promised to holy obedience. Christ's death snatches us from death—his sufferings in our stead, as our Surety, deliver us from the curse of the law, but do not merit heaven for us. This is done by his life of holy obedience. But neither do these complete the idea of salvation, therefore,—He is made *Sanctification*; we must be holy personally or we cannot be truly happy. The work of our sanctification begins in regeneration by his Holy Spirit; who is sent to create us anew in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath foreordained that we should walk in them. Now this mission of the Spirit is a consequence of Christ's obedience until death and inclusive of death. "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away—(if I do not endure the curse due to your sin)—the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send him unto you." John xvi. 7. Hence the folly and madness of the supposition, that free grace salvation leads to licentiousness: "do we then make void the law through faith? Yea we establish the law." Rom. iii. 31.

4. Note the magnitude of this Salvation. It is pointed to by an indefinite expression—*so great* salvation. How great—"what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height—of the love of God, passeth knowledge." Eph. iii. 18, 19. Infinitely great, and transcendently glorious is this salvation. It comprehends the felicities of the heav-

enly world—the blessedness of God’s redeemed, as it rises and swells forth and rolls on in endless progression through boundless range of eternal ages. It involves the sublimest manifestations of the divine perfections; the brightness of the Father’s glory, as it radiates in heaven’s own light “from the thorn woven crown of our crucified King.” Oh! how shall we escape, *neglecting* all this?

5. The primary idea of *neglect* is a negation of any feeling of interest. The mind is indifferent in reference to it: the affections are unexcited—unmoved. The objective matter does not present itself in such a form and aspect as to become an object of desire. It is seen merely as are the bricks in the wall by the passer by, but not looked at: no concern is excited; no disposition to look into the subject. And this, because (2) of the mental state, whereby no adaptation of the matter to the condition of the neglecter is perceived. No feeling of want exists in him. Or, if a general impression does prevail that all is not well—that something is yet wanting to secure happiness, there is no apprehension that this desideratum may here be found. Like the sick man, he feels there is something wrong, but he has no definite conception of the proper remedy or knowledge where it may be found. Hence apathy and sluggish indifference. But (3) all this has its root in the carnal mind, which is enmity against God. Having eyes, they see not; and having ears they hear not. The god of this world hath blinded their minds—because darkness hath blinded their eyes. This enmity often lies hid, deep down in the deceitful heart, and apparently unknown to the man himself. He denies, because he really does not know the depth of his own iniquity, and often rises in conscious indignation at the suggestion. Nothing having occurred to rouse up the serpent from his hidden lair, his deathful fangs have smitten no one and he does really not

believe himself to be the corrupt wretch the Bible makes him to appear. All these however result, (4.) In his letting the remedy *alone*, not using it. All men are dead in trespasses and sins. All that is needed to give the impress of eternity to this death and to secure the loss of the soul for ever, is simply this state of inactivity. Let the silent poison work on: apply no neutralizing remedy and death is sure. And such is the case of most men who perish. Indeed sins of omission are vastly more numerous than sins of commission. It is easier for the rebel to neglect ten duties, than to commit one act of treason. If Satan can people hell, by engineering such neglect of heaven, he is content: but this must be attended by many aggravating circumstances.

These are recited in order. (1.) This salvation took its beginning, as to its New Testament utterance, through our Lord. The dignity of the person gives importance and force to his announcements. (2.) Witnesses very numerous and respectable confirmed his teachings. He ever taught in the synagogue and the temple, embracing always the most public opportunities to let his voice be heard: so that hundreds, yea, thousands of all classes and conditions, could testify to the gracious words of warning and invitation which proceeded from his blessed lips. The historical evidences of the life, the teachings, the ordinances, the sufferings, the death, the resurrection and ascension of Christ—made out and established just as the facts and history of any mortal man are sustained, are as full and complete as that of any history in the annals of the world. Besides these proofs, v. 4 tells us of supernatural evidences, the proof of which, as facts, are presented as other facts of history are wont to be established by human testimony: which facts however, when so established, constitute a divine Testimony, God also bearing witness conjunctly—(1.) By “signs,” that is by miraculous works, which, besides the evidence of

divine power, signify something: as 1 Cor. xiv. 22—tongues are for a *sign*—a miracle and proof of divine power, but also, their bestowment signified the progress of the gospel into all nations. So the cloven tongues of fire. So the resurrection of Lazarus signified the resurrection of souls from spiritual death. (2.) *Wonders*—such exertions of the divine power as excite amazement, terror, consternation. The disciples prayed that signs and wonders may be done and the place was shaken. So the death of Ananias and Sapphira was a wonder, filling the mind with terror. (3.) *Divers miracles*—powers of the world to come, Heb. vi. 5, and in Matt. vii. 22 we have it translated “wonderful works:” and in Acts viii. 10, “this man is the great *power* of God.” Thus it is quite general and applicable to many exercises of divine influence: hence the epithet here—*diverse* powers. And (4.) “gifts of the Holy Ghost”—*Dividings* of the Holy Spirit, “according to his own will.” This describes the qualities or properties imparted by the Spirit to members of the Church, fitting them for special duties. Though a different word is used, the passage in 1 Cor. xii. 11 seems to express the same sentiment—“But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.” Thus, the very same Spirit, who spake to the Church of old in the prophets, adds his confirming testimony to the things spoken by the Son: and so all the proofs of divine mission by the prophets are here exhibited for the mission of the New Testament dispensation. This is in accordance with the use of miraculous works as well understood among the Hebrews. “We know,” said Nicodemus, “that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.”

“Now,” urges Paul, “with all this flood of light around us, above and beyond what the Church of old possessed,

and with your knowledge of the fact, that they did not and could not escape who neglected this great salvation, how do you expect to meet your increased responsibilities? How will it go with you when the slighted and insulted Lord shall come? When the hand that made the heavens is raised to crush his foes, it must be a fearful destruction." Remember, dear reader, those who hear the gospel, cannot plead that they have not been warned. If they persevere in unbelief, how shall they escape? Unbelief—unbelief is the damning sin. Upon the children of disobedience abideth and remaineth continually and forever the wrath, not of men, not of angels, not of all creation, but the wrath of God.

Chap. ii. 5-8.—Having closed his practical inference and enforced his dehortation against the disobedience of unbelief in neglecting the prophet's teachings and the king's commands, he proceeds here toward an argument from the priestly office of the Son, which presupposes his humiliation.

"For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place, testifieth, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet." Ps. viii. 4, 5, 6.

*For*, here gives a supporting reason in reference to v. 2 and 3. The word spoken by angels was steadfast, much more those of this new dispensation, because this is not placed in the hands of angels, but of the Son himself.

"The world to come"—the inhabited earth—the people, church, body of God's children, just about to be—the New Testament dispensation. A proof of Messiah's superiority above the angels is found in the fact, that the glorious state

of things painted by the old prophets, is not presided over by angels but by the Son. This is made evident by the quotation from the eighth psalm. David had been accustomed to contemplate God's glory in his works of creation and providence. For this purpose, he tells us, Ps. cxix. 62, "At midnight I will arise to give thanks unto thee, because of thy righteous judgments." In those hours of quiet, when the world is hushed to silence, he lifts his eyes to the starry heavens and communes with God who by his Spirit hath garnished them ; but ere I was aware my soul made me as the chariots of Aminidab—he rapidly passed up and lost himself in the higher glories that encircle the divine throne, on which in the visions of God, he saw seated David's nobler Son. Then running back from that era of glory in the vista of ages, he finds himself with the shepherds of Bethlehem paying his devotions at the manger cradle of him who in the counsels of eternity was anointed king over his holy hill of Zion. And all this for man ! How can it be ? "What is man ? etc." There are three words rendered into English by *man*. The first, *Adam*, signifies human nature in its original state of perfection. The second *Enosh*, human nature in its fallen, imperfect state. The third *Ish*, a man of rank and consideration. So the Psalmist says, "Surely men of low degree are vanity ; and men of a high degree are a lie"—the former—sons of *Adam fallen*—the latter sons of *Ish*. He that was formerly Adam has become of low degree, he has fallen ; he is vanity, nothing more—there is no Adam—no pure and holy human being. The fallen man of high degree is a lie—he is by nature an enemy of truth. It would not be at all wonderful, that God should visit a holy being such as he formed man : but that he should look upon fallen, guilty, degraded, condemned, human nature, is a wonder worthy of himself. "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels," etc. But who ? Who was



made a little lower than the angels?—reduced? Not man in his original condition, for he never was higher than they, and therefore could not be lowered. Not fallen man, for he was and is vastly below them: there is no need for God to arrest and reduce him—he is sunk—sunk far below them already. The Jews' boast was, that their dispensation was received by the ministration of angels, and they reproached the christians, because, as they affirmed, theirs came from a mere man, a despised, condemned, executed malefactor. Paul meets them with proof from their own scriptures, showing that their Redeemer must be thus reduced for a time. But this shall not be long. (The word for *little*, both in Greek and Hebrew is applicable equally to time and space. In Acts v. 34, it certainly refers to *time* and not to "space," as we translate it—"put the apostles outside—*exo*—for a little while.") So the Heb. Ps. xxxvii. 10 and Haggai ii. 6—"for yet a little while," and then thou crownest him with glory and honor. All things are put under his feet, the Father only excepted." (Mason on Ps. viii. see notes Vol. I. p. 325—unpublished.) But now, if there be anything not put under fallen man, then this passage is not true of him: no nor even when he is redeemed. "Then 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 last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." 1 Cor. xv. 24–26.

If then, this universal dominion, has not been given to man, fallen or redeemed; if man could not be lessened in comparison of the angels, because he was always below them; and if this promise of absolute dominion over the universe must inevitably be redeemed; whither shall we turn for that glorious humanity that must thus be exalted



to the lordship of the world to come? Thus the Apostle shuts us up to the blessed and grand conclusion, that the only possible fulfilment is by Messiah. "But we see Jesus, who was made for a little while lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor." The argument is cumulative, rising far above the logical necessity of the case. Paul was pledged, in order to show the superiority of Christ over the angels, to evince His presidency over "the world to come," that is, the kingdom of Messiah, "whose name shall endure forever; his name shall be continued as long as the sun—and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and amen." Ps. lxxii. 17-19. But he has done much more than this; he has presented to his Hebrew brethren a testimony of their own great prophet, king and priest, that exalts Messiah to the throne of the Universe, and puts the entire creation of God beneath his sceptre, which is to be wielded until all the enemies of truth, righteousness and God shall be placed under his feet as a footstool.

But it is not this transcendent exaltation of their own Messiah that offends the Jews. Their stumblingblock is not thus removed: it consists in the humiliation of the manger, the agonies of Gethsemane, and the anguish unutterable of Calvary. Here lies the offence; how does the Apostle remove it?

By showing the purpose for which he must thus, for a short time, be *lessened in comparison* with the angels; viz., for the suffering of death—*on account of the passion of the death*. This is a most literal translation, and the article, *the*, designates a death of a peculiar and important character, and previously contemplated; viz., that precise, vicarious death to which, in eternity, by his covenant with the Father, he had bound himself to submit, when *the* hour should come; and of which, when it did come, he reminded the other party

to the covenant;—"Father, *the* hour is come," and here I stand; my people, whom thou gavest me by covenant, have failed; the dread responsibility of my suretyship has fallen upon me and I am ready to meet it, to discharge the bond, to pay the *Lutron*—the redemption price.

The closing member of this sentence—"that he by the grace of God should taste death for every *man*," stands in close connection with that member which we translated, "on account of the passion of the death"—"that"—ὅπως—to the end that, pointing out the design or purpose of what goes before. The main proposition, introduced by the ad- versation, "But," is this, "We see Jesus crowned with glory and honor." All the other three members are accessories; viz., "who was lessened in comparison with angels," which is not a formal sentence in the Greek: then is pointed out the objective design of his being *lessened*, (I use this term, because it is precisely analogous to the original, which is a verb formed from the comparative degree of the adjective), which is not a sentence—"on account of the suffering of the death:" then the closing member, pointing out the object of the suffering or passion—to the end that, by the grace, which substitutes him in the room of his people, he might taste, that is, endure death for every one—ὅτι ἐρ παντός, in the room or legal position of every, not all, in the plural, but every one of his sons, whom he is pledged to bring unto glory.

Indefinite and universal terms, when given under restrictions, which they generally are, are always to be interpreted under the restrictions. This is a universal law of her- meneutics. For example, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." 1 Cor. xv. 23. *All* in the former part is restricted by *all* in the latter. All *what* die in Adam? All animals? All men? All angels? All beings that have life!! Or is it not, all men whom Adam

represented and acted for in the covenant of works? “By one man’s—Adam’s disobedience, many were made sinners.” There is no other conceivable way of all men dying in Adam. *As* in Adam all die. *How?* Because he being the head of the covenant of works, all men sinned in him and fell with him in the first transgression: “even so”—in the very same way, all Christ’s people whom he represented and acted for in his covenant of grace, are made alive in him. If Christ was the representative and head of all angels, all men, all devils, they will assuredly all be saved; for his obedience and death are of infinite value: but if Christ represented his people, whom the Father gave him, John xvii. 9, “I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me,” then the *All*, who are made alive in him, are all his people, and they shall all appear with him in glory; for he says, John xvii. 24, “Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am;” and him the Father heareth always.

Here then, beloved brethren, by the clear showing of your own General, Poet, Prophet and King—the most illustrious of your sovereigns, and most unrivaled of your poets; your Messiah—at once David’s root and David’s Lord, was to be humbled as David had been before he could ascend his throne and vindicate its rights. The coronation of the Son of God is the glorious sequence of that very humiliation, suffering and death, which your weak faith converts into a stumbling stone and a rock of offence.

Such in substance is also the testimony of your Prophet Zechariah: vi. 12, 13. “Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, behold the man whose name is *The BRANCH*; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a Priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall

be between them both." It is the Priestly office that is magnified in this proof from the eighth psalm, and upon which he proceeds in v. 10: "For it became him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."

The causal particle, *For*, points to the preceding inference from the eighth Psalm, and intimates reasons in support of the purposes for which Messiah's humiliation, sufferings and death must occur. And so far from admitting the validity of the Jews' objections to Jesus' claim to the Messiahship, from the facts of his humiliation, this verse affirms their consistency therewith.

1. There is a great work to be accomplished—bringing many sons unto glory.

2. The method of its accomplishment—by the obedience and death of Christ—making the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

3. The consistency of accomplishing this work in this way, with the character of God, (1) as the final cause of the universe—for whom are all things, (2) as the efficient cause of all things—by whom are all things.

1. The great work is that which the Son, in the eternal covenant of grace, pledged himself to perform; viz., to exhibit to God's moral and intelligent universe, one of the divine attributes heretofore unknown. The divine wisdom and power, his goodness, love, justice had been revealed in his works of creation and providence: but *mercy*, that is, love flowing forth upon sinful and rebellious creatures, was hitherto unknown. To reveal this charming attribute is the grand purpose of God, in the economy of redemption—the entire gospel scheme—for this was the Messiahship established: and that in eternity. Wisdom—Messiah, in Prov. viii. 22, 23, saith, "The LORD possessed me in the

beginning of his way, before his works of old: I was *set up—anoined*, as the Hebrew word here and in Ps. ii. 6, and elsewhere signifies—from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.” So in his prayer John xvii. 24, he refers to those whom the Father gave him—“for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.” So in Eph. i. 4, “According as he hath chosen us in Christ, before the foundation of the world.”

Now, in order to the exhibition of mercy, there must be moral creatures in a sinful state. Why God permitted—or, if you will—decreed to let angels or men fall into sin, let silly philosophers inquire; and in their inquiries let them deny God’s ability to prevent men from sinning, if their philosophy enforces this blasphemy upon them. In our judgment, it is wiser and more pious to lay our hand on our mouth and both in the dust before the omniscient, almighty and holy one. “Secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those which are revealed belong unto us and to our children”—Deut. xxix. 29. Let us submit to the humiliation of confessing, that God knows more than we do. “The foolishness of God is wiser than men.” Mercy is the exercise of love to sinful beings. Can this be done? Can there be sinners in God’s universe and he not to blame for it? Nay, let us not rush on to forbidden ground. The fact is so; men are sinners: Can they or any of them be delivered from sin? They are all by nature children of wrath and heirs of death and hell; can they be made children of mercy and heirs of eternal glory? If this change is possible, as it is benevolent, it must be right and praiseworthy to accomplish it. The phraseology—bringing many sons unto glory—implies their being first made sons, and secondly removed to a new abode. So that we have the three points, the change of character and relations; the provision of a new place of abode; and the removal to

it. The characteristic change is wrapped up in the word sanctification; meaning all and everything that removes moral defilement and produces holiness. Regeneration by the Spirit implants a new life in the soul—restores the holy spiritual life that was lost to the race by the first transgression. Cotemporaneous with this and co-existent, is the change of relations; for the Spirit who regenerates takes up his residence in those born again, as the Spirit of adoption, and they are now sons of God, both by birth and adoption.

The new abode is a state of glory—"unto glory"—a brief, but forceful description of heaven. Glory is the manifestation of excellent properties; and in the permanent state of felicity, are to be found the highest manifestations of intellectual, moral and spiritual qualities. Accordingly he is the God of glory—and the great mystery of godliness winds up by assuring us that God manifested in the flesh, "was received up into glory:" which is paralleled with Mark xvi. 19. "So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God:" and "I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you unto myself." This is the third item. He brings many sons. The Good Shepherd leadeth his own sheep, going before them, and they follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. The expression may cover all the teachings of his word, and ordinances, and examples: but rather the mysteries of his divine power and goodness, in carrying the spirits, released from trammels of clay, and finally their reconstructed bodies, to their everlasting home. The work then is consistent with the divine attributes, if its accomplishment involve nothing wrong.

2. This leads on to the method of its accomplishment—by the obedience and death of Christ. It has been shown, that life eternal to a moral creature, results from holy, vir-



tuous action : that righteousness entitles to life. When the Saviour said to the young man, " If thou wilt have life, keep the commandments "—he merely repeated a doctrine engraven upon the heart of man at his creation. The inference hence drawn by some, that therefore the youth had the ability to do it, is a specimen of worldly reasoning, not of sound and scriptural logic. Our Lord described the measure of duty, not of ability. Yet the commandments must be perfectly fulfilled, before a sinner can be admitted to heavenly glory. Hence the indispensable necessity of the Captain of our Salvation being man : so also to meet the penal sanction of the law, in the nature that had sinned, required humanity : yet free from all imperfection. The epithet *Captain*, in the Greek includes the idea of *bringing*. It simply means the *Leader of the way* : he who precedes and directs others to follow.

He is *made perfect* through sufferings. It is the same word as that uttered on the cross, *It is finished*. It is brought to an end—to a close. The work is done, completed, terminated.

This consummation of the Saviour's work by or through the instrumentality of his sufferings, is represented as the work of God, the Father. He appointed him to it. He put the cup into his hands : He refused to remove it from the blessed lips of his own Son, although he cried in tears, and agony and blood, that it might pass. To these sufferings and unspeakable anguish was the Son assigned—" he was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." " All we like sheep have gone astray, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Isaiah liii. 6. Nor is there any other way of accounting for the Father's action, inflicting these sufferings upon his Son. Nor is any needed ; for as he his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, it was meet and proper that the sufferings be com-



pleted, that the release of his people from condemnation might follow. "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."

3. The consistency of accomplishing this work in this way, with the character of God as the final and as the instrumental cause of all things, is our third general topic. It is divided into these two parts, and

(1.) As to the final cause or ultimate design of the universe—"for whom are all things"—on whose account the universe was brought into and continues in existence. "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever." The workmanship is the glory of the workman, an exhibition of his skill and character. "The Lord hath made all things for himself"—"This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise." "All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord; and thy saints shall bless thee." Ps. xlv. 10. Now among the attributes of God displayed in his works, are his holiness, truth and justice. "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne." "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil; and canst not look on iniquity"—Heb. i. 13—"he will by no means clear the guilty." Ex. xxxiv. 7. "Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with thee"—Ps. v. 4. "To me belongeth vengeance and recompense."—Deut. xxxii. 35. "O Lord God to whom vengeance belongeth; O God to whom vengeance belongeth, show thyself." Ps. xciv. 1. Abundantly do the scriptures testify that vindicatory justice is an essential attribute of God. His nature leads to the punishment of sin. He would not be God, if he did not hate sin. The exercise of this hatred in taking vengeance on crime, is a display of his own holiness and love to his creatures. It is not a matter of contingency—or of whim or caprice with

him, whether to take vengeance or to pass by transgression. In that case there would be no stability in his government : but his throne and government derive character from the unchangeableness of his own nature. If, therefore, he should bring many souls unto the heavenly glory, without vindicating his own justice in the punishment of their sin, either in their own persons or in the person of their representative Surety, it would be utterly inconsistent with the grand purpose of exhibiting his own righteousness. On the contrary, to lay their sin upon a Surety, both able and willing to bear its punishment and heave the mountain load off from the children of his love, is to glorify his justice. In this case mercy and truth meet together ; righteousness and peace embrace each other. God is just whilst he justifies and sanctifies his children and brings them to glory.

(2.) But we are running into the second phase of the idea ; the consistency of saving men through the sufferings of Christ, with God's character as the Creator, by whom are all things. He has made a world on which he pronounced the sentence, " And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good." And he made man upright—after his own image. But the glory to which the Psalmist refers, and of which he says, " Thou hast set thy glory above the heavens," transcends all that which shines forth from the moon and the stars and the entire universe of material things. It is the ineffable consolation of God's people to know, that they and all they have are in those hands that were nailed to the cross, and that now hold the reins of universal empire. But woe to the philosopher that can see God's glory in the visible heavens, but the eyes of whose faith behold not at all the star of Bethlehem, the Sun of righteousness. But true believers " see the King in his beauty and behold the land that is very far off," and rest in the delightful assurance, that he will permit nothing

to take place that will not terminate for their good. They may be called to pass through the burning fiery furnace, but they shall walk loose in the midst of the fire, and shall have no hurt, for beside them is one whose form is like the Son of God. Dan. iii. 25.

But further, this stern justice of God the Father, which would not spare his own Son, because he had assumed, as their Surety, the dreadful work of taking away their sins, settles the principle on which the divine government rests, and that expressly as the Creator and Governor of the universe; and how can we avoid the inference from this, that all worlds are interested in the dread transactions of Gethsemane and of Calvary? Can there be conceived a higher evidence of the rectitude and stability of God's government, than these transactions exhibit, if Jesus bare our sins, imputed legally and of right to him? But if He did not so bear them, can there be a more fearful instance of the utter and cruel prostration of all law, justice and right? Let all worlds know that God's justice has received this crowning testimony, and how must all holy beings, in all these worlds, exult at the confirmation sure? "May I say, that it is not improbable that God, in the salvation wrought by his Son, in this little world of ours, of which we enjoy the most glorious dispensation, is making a grand display of the immutability of his holiness and justice, which is to be the Herald of his glory and excellency, to the utmost bounds of his universe—to all places where there are rational existences? This idea which assumes the majesty of truth, truly makes it becoming—makes it worthy of GOD, to make the Captain of our salvation perfect through sufferings."

V.v. 11, 12, 13. "For both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren; saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I

sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, behold I and the children which God hath given me.”

Here we have the usual connecting link, when reasons and explanations are to follow, in support of something previously affirmed. The sufferings of Messiah—his humiliation, obedience and death, as taught in Ps. viii., being predicted by David, must be becoming God the Father to inflict and consistent with the glory of the divine government, *For*, Messiah, according to Scripture, is partaker of man’s nature—“both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one.” This unity of nature between the Son of God as Messiah, and his brethren, those sons to be brought unto glory, was a necessity involved in his Suretyship. It was to human nature God had promised eternal life as the reward of perfectly holy obedience. It was humanity that failed of obedience, in the person of their moral head, the first Adam; and that consequently do still fail. It must be humanity, in the person of the second Adam, that shall fulfil all righteousness, by establishing, as every remedial law must, the principle of the original institute or law, which failed of securing life by obedience. Manifestly, the obedience of an angel would not fulfil the conditions of life for human beings: nor could the suffering of death by an angel meet the commination of the covenant, “thou shalt surely die.” But however you, my brethren, may be ashamed of Jesus, he is not ashamed of his relations to you as your Surety and of any and of all the consequences, debasing or glorious, which necessarily result to him. Why should he blush at his own covenant engagement? Why should he shrink from the crown of thorns, when he knows it is soon to be exchanged for a crown of glory inconceivably brilliant with jewels purchased with his own blood? Why should he blush to own his poor re-

lations in this his day and their day of humiliation and sorrow, when he knows, that, yet a little while, and he shall say to them, in the presence of the assembled universe, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world"? Oh no! my Hebrew friends, Messiah is not ashamed to call you brethren.

It is the Sanctifier and the sanctified whose unity is affirmed: and here he enters more directly upon the Priestly office. But by the use of this term, we are not to suppose the process of actual purification from pollution and the implantation of pure and holy affections is intended. For this is the special work of the Holy Spirit, of whom it is nowhere said, that he and the sons of God are all of one. Sanctifier is used in the Jewish sense of atonement by suffering. Dr. Sampson's criticism here is sound. He shows, that "he that sanctifieth" refers to Christ and his sufferings, and therefore satisfaction to justice is meant and consecration to God, and not purification in the spiritual sense. This he sustains by the use of the same word in Heb. x. 10, 14, "we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once"—"he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." This, as we have seen, secures the mission that purifies. "The Holy Spirit sanctifies; the sufferings of Christ atone; and thus redeem:" and therefore he prefers to translate "redeemer and redeemed," he who delivers from the curse of the penal law, and they who are delivered.

V. 12. "I will declare thy name unto my brethren." This is from Ps. xxii. 22—a psalm appropriated by the old Jews, and by Jesus on the cross, to himself. We need not stay to sum up the internal evidences of its Messianic character: a simple reading is conclusive. The Bible presents no character but the one, to whom the language of this

psalm can be applied fully and properly. The preceding verses describe his anguish and prayers for deliverance. "Save me from the lion's mouth; for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns." Then when the agony is over and he has said, "It is finished," he proceeds to depict the consequences—the spread of the gospel. "I will declare thy name—God the Father's name—all his glorious perfections as illustrated in the gospel—unto my brethren." This is directly to the point: it proves that Christ is partaker of their nature. But he finishes the sentence, "in the midst of the church—the congregation, worshipers—will I sing praise unto thee"—literally, "will I hymn thee." The praises of God are celebrated when and wherever his gospel is proclaimed, whether with music and poetry or not. But especially in the public solemn assemblies of the saints, and in the voice of song are the Father's praises uttered. And we may note again, that all the preceding texts in proof and the subsequent one, are from the book of psalms and hymns.

V. 13. And again, "I will put my trust in him." It is not universally agreed whence this is quoted. Some take it from Isa. viii. 17 as translated by the LXX. in these very words. To this it may be objected, (1) that our translators have not so rendered the words of Isaiah, and this (2) because as Owen argues, the LXX.'s translation is incorrect. But (3) this very translation is found in Ps. xviii. 2—"in whom I will trust." (4) Because the matter in Isa. viii. 17 and 18 is intimately connected, and they might be expected to be quoted together, as those from Ps. viii. above, and not quoted as two distinct texts, with the usual, "And again," placed between them. Owen is most probably right, and "I will put my trust in him," is from Ps. xviii. 2, and Paul translates the Hebrew for himself. It requires only the reading to convince any one that the psalm respects the Lord our Redeemer.



The remaining quotation, which is the first outside of the book of Psalms, is from Isa. xiii. 18. In the 14 v. we have proof of Messiah being the subject. "And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling, and for a Rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem." This is applied to Christ by Paul, in Rom. ix. 32, 33. "For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. As it is written, Behold I lay in Zion a stumbling-stone, and a Rock of offence: and whosoever believeth in him shall not be ashamed." So 1 Pet. ii. 7, 8, "Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the Stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the Head of the corner, And a Stone of stumbling, and a Rock of offence, *even to them* which stumble at the word; whereunto also they were appointed." It is the Redeemer, that is spoken of; and in v. 18, he says "Behold I, and the children which God hath given me." Keep in mind the point to be proved—that Christ and his people have one common nature—"are all of one"—a point material to his argument; for as we have seen, the fulfilment of preceptive and penal law must be in and by the nature that had failed. Unless the Second Adam meet completely these two requisitions of law, he can never restore his people from the ruin induced by the First Adam, and bestow upon them the crown of righteousness and of glory. But now these scriptures sustain his position; and he proceeds to apply them to the particular point of oneness of nature and the general argument for the superiority of the priesthood of Christ over that of Aaron as set up by Moses. But I will suspend for a little the argument, and give to the reader, from my notes on Dr. Mason's lecture delivered in Murray street church, Dec. 18, 1814, the following practical inferences.

1. "There is no consecration of a sinner to God, but



through the sacrifice of one that is more than human. Let no man deceive himself by imagining, that it is the example which Christ Jesus set us in his life and death, that brings us near unto God, and finds for us acceptance with him.

2. Every son whom the Lord Jesus Christ brings unto glory, he sanctifies unto God by his own blood. He has united the obligation to the curse. The souls and bodies of his people are his own, he has bought them. His, not as creatures *merely*—in this way the devils are his. It is not necessarily a source of consolation to belong to God as creatures, much less for sinful creatures. It is the new claim which the Lord Jesus has upon them, that is the fountain of their consolation. He not only redeemed them from death to life; but from sin to holiness; from vain conversation to a life of faith and love. From all iniquity to all holiness, even as he is holy. Under this is comprehended personal cleansing from sin. We shall be like him for we shall see him as he is: but remember, he that shall thus see “purifieth himself even as he is pure.”

3. The highest and holiest of all relations in which human beings can stand, is that of Christians. Christ Jesus is not ashamed to call them brethren. Vain and worse than vain are all the distinctions of this world, without this one. To be borne on the breath of admiring—for the most part, *ignorantly* admiring millions, is nothing. No greater curse can be visited upon man than that which leads him from the Lord Jesus Christ; and this is often the effect of worldly popularity. That is the true glory which shall burst out in the light of eternity from the tomb of Jesus. Such as share in it are his children and his brethren; all others are his enemies, and shall feel the consequences of their enmity, if his grace prevent not. The most horrible thought that can rack the soul not altogether dead in sin, is, that the Lord Jesus Christ is its enemy.

4. It is a most consoling truth, that no external thing—nay, nothing at all can or shall ever hinder the Lord Jesus from acknowledging us as his brethren. Those who trust in him he never forsakes. The world may be ashamed of them—[ashamed of them the world is]—on account of those very things for which the Saviour takes complacency in them. But no reproach, no calumny, no persecution, no diseases of body, no feebleness of mind, nor even the remnants of sin within them, makes the Lord Christ blush to own them. He makes the angels to own them as his, by ministering to their safety and defence. He is not ashamed of their mournings: nay, their very tears he bottles up, and writes them among his jewels. Yes, and Christian, every one of those tears shall be a radiant point of glory in thy crown hereafter.

5. Every salutary and consoling lesson which the believer learns, is learned from the lips of the Lord Jesus. If his heart melts, it is because the finger of the holy One hath touched it. If our hearts are elevated, to behold something of the glory of God, displayed in the perfection of his law and the excellence of his salvation, it is because the Lord Jesus magnified the one, and wrought out the other.

6. The life of a child of God is to be a life of trust. We are too prone to imagine that our life is to be a life of feeling. It is not so, it must be a life of faith. It is not the delights of our hearts, which can carry us through difficulties; it is the faith of the Lord Jesus. Young Christians generally know their Lord, as their righteousness, at their first acquaintance with him, as ever afterward. But, to know him as their Strength requires time, trials and experience. We feel strong as a mountain, we shall never fail. But beware; sin dwelling in us rouses up; temptation assails; resolution, like a thread of tow touched by a flame, is gone in a moment; we fall, and to enable us to rise again

faith must throw us into the arms of our divine Master—Lord, save me or I perish. Live by faith.

7. Christ, having sanctified his brethren by his blood, views them with unutterable complacency, whilst under the influence of this sanctification here, and, having conducted them by his counsels through their pilgrimage on earth, receives them to abide with himself in heavenly glory. None of them is lost. In that day when he shall have assembled them all in that beautiful world, from the first believer, down to the last—of all grades and conditions, but bearing the one image of himself, there shall He, in the presence of rejoicing angels and shuddering devils, who have mocked at these very ones,—then shall he say, “Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you.” Come, sit down with me in my throne, even as I have sat down in my Father’s throne. Then shall the harps of the angelic throng strike the hymn of glory: then shall the redeemed, their hearts burning with a flame such as angel never felt, join with their song of triumph and glory, To him who hath loved us and bought us to God by his blood. The trembling devils and the shuddering rejectors of Christ and his salvation shall hear the harmonious sounds; but shall hear for the last time. For soon shall they hear and obey the sentence, “Depart from me ye cursed;” down they sink and are locked up under the chains and darkness of eternal death. The horrors of their condition, all words and imagery—and the Bible exhausts language and wearies imagination to express the dreadful thought—fail accurately to depict. Here we must ask our soul one question—a question which ought to shake the inmost fibres of the heart and make the soul to tremble. Where shall I be? To which of these companies shall I be joined? Are there none within these walls, who, if called this moment would be found despisers of the Lord

Jesus? Are there none, who, if placed before the judgment seat, would be commanded—Depart from me? Unto you, O sinful man, unto you, O sinful woman! I call this day, and in the name and by the authority of my Master, do hereby proffer salvation. Come to the Lord Jesus;—however vile, however sinful, however great your iniquities. Oh, come, accept the invitation. Do you? or do your hearts say, *Nay?* Consider well what you do. On this pivot of time eternal issues may turn. If you now refuse, it may be you will never have another offer. He may utter the dreadful command—“Let him alone.” “His Spirit may cease to strive with you.”

From these practical deductions we return to the argument. The necessity for the humiliation of the Son has been proved from Ps. eighth. His temporary degradation to “the form of a servant,” if he finished the work for which He was sent, must be followed by his exaltation to the enjoyment of his glorious reward. This too the Psalmist affirms. The Apostle then presses the consistency with the character of God, thus humbling his own Son and completing his whole work by sufferings, through which he perfects forever all them who are sanctified. But this process of perfecting through sufferings the Captain of salvation, is inconceivable, except as a sequence of his susception of our nature—the nature of the Sons whom he had pledged himself to bring unto glory. This unity of nature of the sanctifier, or redeemer, and the sanctified redeemed, is then affirmed and proved from Old Testament Scriptures, v.v. 11, 12, 13.

V.v. 14, 15, Hence incontrovertibly it follows as here described, “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil: And deliver them who

through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”

The reasoning we have anticipated: having shown that the obedience and death of even an angel could not meet the requisitions of law upon man, and redeem him. We may however note, 1, The children here, are obviously the same sons, (v. 10) whom the Father gave Him, and whom he, as their Surety, undertook to bring unto glory. Their names and number are not given and we cannot now—perhaps never can know them all. Their names, however, are written in the book of life of the slain Lamb. Rev. xvii. 8. Those are said to wonder after the beast, “whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world”—so xiii. 8—“book of life of the Lamb slain, from the foundation of the world:” the comma after slain is assuredly correct. “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world”—Eph. i. 4. So “In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.” Tit. i. 2, and so Isa. xlix. 16, “Behold, I have graven thee on the palms of my hands:” doubtless Jesus knows all his sheep, and will keep his eye on them; and even the devil shall not be able to pluck one of them out of his hands, or erase one name written there beside the print of the nails.

2. *Flesh and blood*, is a metonymy for human nature in its distinct personality. They belonged to the race and shared the fate of Adam.

3. The Leader of the way to salvation took part of the same—the Word was made flesh. He took to himself a true or real human body and a reasonable soul—entire humanity—and “was found in fashion as a man.” Phil. ii. 8.

4. Yet his humanity was not personal—it never existed, distinct and separate, as a human person; but united to

and with the divine nature; and so, as in all cases, the personal denomination is taken from the higher nature—He was a Divine Person.

5. The manner of his assumption of our nature was different from the ordinary course. Had he been born of human parents both, and consequently inherited all the liabilities thereof, as a human person, he could not have been “that holy thing, which shall be called the Son of God.” Or had he been formed of the dust of the ground, he would have been *like* Adam or his, but not of kin or relation to us. Outside of the covenant, whose breach brought death into the world and all our woe, he must be; and yet included in the race of man, he must be; and thus infinite wisdom presents the wonder—“Therefore the LORD himself shall give you a sign, Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” Isa. vii. 14.

In the remaining part of these verses we may examine three points, which will cover the whole ground: viz., 1. The condition of the children. 2. The grand purpose to be secured—their deliverance. 3. The means and method thereof.

1. The condition of the children or sons.

(1.) They are in a state of condemnation—“condemned already.” This involves guilt: they are amenable to the law which pronounces death upon them: and this is what in Scripture is meant by guilt—liability to punishment.

(2.) They are polluted and need purification: hence a way must be opened up for the sanctifying Spirit.

(3.) They are dead in sin and must be restored to life, or glory they cannot reach.

(4.) They are all their lifetime subject to bondage under the fear of death. And this presents the fearful but unanswered question, What is death? In the most obvious



use of the word, there is much that is unsearchable. We call it the separation of soul and body. But what is that mysterious link that binds them together, and how is it sundered? In this lowest conception the question mocks human wisdom. But whilst this is involved in the general notion of death, it is only subordinate. In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die. Adam did not die a natural death that day, and therefore that is not the chief phase of the idea. He did die a spiritual death—he lost that life which consists of the holy activities of the soul in its communion with God. But as we have very imperfect knowledge of these activities in the primitive state, we can have no definite conception of what death is: and if we wait for the teachings of experience, we may, with lost men and angels buffet the billows of the burning lake for thousands of ages, and even yet know but little of the awful character of death. Even in the lowest form, there is no reconciliation of nature to its own dissolution. It involves a contradiction in God's government, to suppose that that which he has proposed as the greatest evil, could become the choice of any of his creatures. Nothing but the hope of a higher life can overbalance the yearnings of nature for its continued existence. But this hope is cut off in regard to the death of the soul. All human nature shrinks from death natural. So it was with our Saviour, yet because of what lies beyond for the sons, we consent. But from death as a penal evil to the soul immortal, there can be no hope except in the way of God's appointments; of which presently. Meanwhile let us note the consequence of the penal nature of death. This it is that generates the fearful bondage, which weighs down the spirit of unbelieving man all his days. Beyond the confines of time is a just retribution—a righteous judge, a dread eternity, an everlasting fire. Hence this bondage. But bondage is involuntary servi-



tude. If he consent to his servitude, it is not bondage. Now, that unrenewed men endure this state is evident from their unwillingness to talk on the subject of death. Even to their sick and dying friends they are dumb. They labor to shut out such thoughts, and shove off their spirits without notice, and so surprise them into the sad world beyond. And as to themselves in health, their schemes to shut out the thoughts of the unwelcome intruder, are multifarious and often ingenious. Business, pleasure, sports, theatres, revels, tournaments, games, etc., all to blind the conscious soul to the thought of penal evil beyond time. But why is death so terrible and unwelcome? Because it is somehow under the power of a living being. Man insulted God when he believed the devil and disbelieved his Creator; and that Creator put him into Satan's hands, and thus is he kept under the terror of death, in a fearful bondage. The law hands him over to the tormentor. All this fear, and trembling, and apprehension and horror, is but the voice of the Prince of the pit crying to the soul, Thou art mine; I shall have thee. And have the soul he will, unless the blood of Calvary prevent. This is the power, greater than that of the adversary.

2. The deliverance from this galling bondage to Satan, whose yoke is the fear of death. Of course, this is not the entire removal of that shrinking apprehension which nature has at the thought of bodily death. Pains and sorrows often abide until the close, even where the spirit is life because of righteousness. Good people frequently have these, and the bad are sometimes free from them. This depends very much on mere physical condition, the nature of the disease and the state of the nervous system. David Hume died in fun, "as a fool dieth." The deliverance is not from this; but from the dread conviction that the soul, so soon as released from the body, is in the hands of Satan,

being delivered over under the curse of the law, to endure God's wrath at the hand of the deceiver, who is now the executioner. Rescue from this curse and from the society of demons and lost souls of men, is the work which can be perfected only in human nature, united with the divine.

3. The *means* and *method*. In general, "through death." By himself dying; not surely, the mere dissolution of his material body, even inclusive of the nervous anguish, inseparable from death by crucifixion. Great as this was, it is impossible to see how it could destroy him that had the power of death. Rather, viewed by itself, must it not tend to magnify and extend his power? If so holy and upright a person, who, as the Judge confessed, had done no evil—"I find no fault in him—" comes to death over which Satan has power, how much more shall his dominion extend over others? It must, therefore, refer to the legal relations in which our Lord stands to his people and to the Father. He was Surety for them, as in Heb. vii. 22. "By so much was Jesus made a Surety of a better testament—covenant." A surety is one who stands for another—becomes legally responsible for him, making sure the subject matter in view. As Judah became Surety to his father, for the safe return of Benjamin. Gen. xliii. 10. And Prov. xi. 15, "he that is Surety for a stranger shall smart for it." Accordingly, in Isa. lv. 34, the gospel call commands, "Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David—the Beloved. Behold, I have given him for a Witness to the people, a Leader (Captain or Leader of the Way) and Commander to the people." Now, it is in this official character he comes "to destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil."

Here let us remark, the Bible knows no plurality of devils. Diabolus, from which is derived our English word

*devil*, is a Greek word which means an *accuser*—a hostile accuser. It is equivalent to the Hebrew *Satan*, in meaning; and is so represented in Rev. xii. 9—“that old Serpent, called the Devil and Satan.” Diabolus is never used in the plural in application to evil spirits. Wherever the English word *devils* occurs, it is for *demons*, a Greek word now adopted into English. Our translation distinguishes between the two words, by prefixing the definite article to the name of the Arch-fiend or Leader of the fallen angels—the *devil* means diabolus. Now it is this gigantic spirit, probably the mightiest of all the creatures of God, that our Redeemer engaged to destroy. By his destruction cannot be meant his annihilation—his being reduced to nothing. We suppose it cannot be shown, that any creature, even inert matter, was ever annihilated. Such was not the Saviour’s undertaking: but him as having the power of death. The destruction of Satan’s power to put out the life of the body, and to make the soul a bond slave here and wretched in eternity, is all that was necessary for the deliverance of Christ’s people from the fear of death. And this is the strict meaning of the word: it is to make of *no effect*: to *abrogate* or *neutralize* power. Luke xiii. 7—“Why *cumbereth* it the ground”—Rom. iii. 3.—“Shall their unbelief *make* the faith of God *without effect*?” 1 Cor. vi. 13.—“but God *shall destroy* both it and them.”—Rom. vi. 6. “Our old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin *might be destroyed*, that henceforth we should not serve sin.” 1 Cor. xv. 24—“when *he shall have put down* all rule, and all authority and power”—put down, abrogate, render inefficient all rule, power, authority, rendering it null and void. Satan’s entire power of death, as it resulted to him from the guilt of man’s sin, is made a nullity and utterly void.

Now this is effected by Christ’s unloosing those bonds of

guilt—that *liability* to punishment, which bound sinners to the stake for everlasting burnings, and wrapping those bonds around himself—and thus offering “himself without spot to God”—Heb. ix. 14. The Messiah offered himself a spotless offering—a burnt sacrifice—he suffered without the gate. By his own voluntary act he placed himself under the curse; and being legally responsible as the Surety of his sons, die he or justice must: and thus our guilt is removed and the law, whose sting is death, is completely fulfilled and its dread penalty satisfied. Diabolus has no rightful authority over death, and no force or physical power that is permitted to exercise to the injury of manhood, but only as it is derived from the law’s sentence. “The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law: But thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Cor. xv. 56, 57. The blood of Calvary has neutralized the poison of death’s sting, to all that believe in its efficacy.

Here lies one of the greatest mysteries of love divine, that, whereas death is the consummation of all woes, the infliction thereof on our Lord, is the very means of deliverance from that consummation. Rejoice then, ye that fear the Lord! Your deliverance follows the vacating of Satan’s power, by the inevitable necessity of God’s eternal justice. So certainly as your Redeemer has taken away your sin, is your name written in the book of life of the slain Lamb; and who is he that shall erase it? As certainly as He has bound around himself the bonds of your guilt, so certainly are you released from them: and who is he that shall pluck you out of his hands, or his Father’s hands, and hurl you back into the hands of Satan?

Perhaps it may be profitable here to note an objection. It may be asked, “If Christ has met death in both relations of body and soul, why do Christians die at all? Should

they not be exempt from bodily as well as from spiritual death? To this we may respond, without assuming the presumption of a perfect and satisfactory answer. 1. The commination, "thou shalt surely die," was inflicted, as to the spirit of man, that very day. He lost communion with God, and he begat a son in his own likeness, and so all men, by nature, are spiritually dead. But the body of Adam did not die then, but after nine hundred and thirty years he died. It seems necessary to support the veracity of God in the threat, that natural, like spiritual death should be universal. Perhaps this is what our apostle means in Rom. viii. 10, "And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life, because of righteousness." 2. No part of the curse is involved in the bodily death of the saints. They always do triumph in death, although in many cases they have not the ability to manifest it: and this is a mercy to the survivors; for it leaves the question whether the spirit just departed has gone to heaven or hell undecided. Of this anon. 3. No man can affirm, that the death of true believers may not be necessary on account of the wonderful connection and commixture, if I may so speak, of soul and body; it may be the shortest method, consistent with the progressive nature of sanctification, for arresting the evil influences of carnal affections, and preparing the bodies for re-edification. 4. Can any man be sure, that the whole nature of the process has not been changed by the death of Christ? May not the appearances of distress be only apparent; and may not the soul be ineffably happy, like the martyrs praising God in the midst of the burning flame? And may not the spirit, when apparently dull and incapable of being roused to consciousness and converse with us, be wholly absorbed in sweet communion with the ministering angels and spirits of just men—of friends who had gone before, and are now returned

to point them to heaven and lead the way? 5. But perhaps the best of all explanations is that alluded to in our second remark and deferred—viz., the effect on survivors. If no believers were to die, then they must either abide on the earth indefinitely, or be removed by miracle like Enoch and Elijah. The former could not be, for the earth would soon be filled, so as to render life impracticable. The latter might be both distressing and gratifying to those left behind. But if none were to die but unbelievers, then every death would reveal the dread fact, that another lost spirit had just reached the quenchless flame and uttered the shriek of eternal despair. And who can conceive the anguish of survivors? What wailings would float upon the midnight air, like one endless Egyptian lamentation? Is not the avoidance of these awful scenes reason enough, why God has thrown the pall of obscurity over the grave's triumphs? But 6 and lastly, God shall raise the dead, no more to slumber in the ground, but to be made like unto him who shall come with power and great glory, and to spring forth to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Oh ye faithful, tell me, is not compensation abundant for the degradation of a thousand years' slumbers in the dust? Benevolence then, mercy to saints and sinners, shines forth from the chambers of death and snatches the world from the anguish of despair.

Verse 16th gives a supporting reason to the preceding. By his suffering as the substitute and Surety of the sons whom he engaged to bring unto glory, our Lord hath forever abolished and made of no effect Diabolus in all his power over death; and by inevitable, legal necessity, delivered his children from death and the bondage fear of death. This he did *for* and on behalf of his sons,—“I lay down my life for the sheep.” Their nature he must therefore possess; and this the Apostle affirms, using the present



as the historical tense: "For verily, he took—or taketh not on *him the nature of* angels; but he taketh on *him* the seed of Abraham." You observe the words in italics: they intimate that they are not in the original, but are supplied by the translators to complete the sense: and here they give it correctly. Owen translates more literally, but substantially with the same meaning. "For verily not anywhere doth he take angels; but he takes the seed of Abraham." Sampson applies (erroneously, we think), the matter to his laying hold of the spiritual seed of Abraham; that is, all who follow his faith. But none of these observe the force of the middle voice of the original—he taketh or layeth hold of *for himself*, not angels but humanity. Our translation gives the meaning better than either. Our Lord is nowhere in Scripture represented, as laying hold of, or assuming to *himself*, angelic, but human nature. Thus reaffirming the position of v. 14, that he partook of the same flesh and blood with his children, but with the limitation to Abraham's seed, and with a bold contrast excluding the angels. Both these points are adapted to conciliate the Hebrews. Your glorious Messiah passed by the heavenly host: he slighted also all other humanity, and selected a child of Abraham—a Jewish body, in which to perform the work and to endure the suffering which alone can secure forever the salvation of his people.

Observe, moreover, the action itself—he *taketh to himself* the seed. Can an agent act before he exists? He was so of the seed of Abraham, that it was his own act. Apply this mode of expression to mere men. Pray, did you and I *take hold on* human nature—take our own nature, when we were born into the world? The very expression implies pre-existence: and pre-existence in great power, exercising Lordship over humanity. Therefore Christ pre-existed in the power of his eternal Godhead. For, to assume another



nature is not the prerogative of a creature. It is not for an angel to take upon himself human nature: a new person would thus be produced, and creatures do not create. The uniting of the human and divine nature, by which a new person was produced, is the most stupendous act of God's creation. Our whole race was hurrying down to darkness and death, when He laid hold of it and turned the current to the gates of light and life.

V.v. 17 and 18. "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest, in things *pertaining* to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted."

The Apostle has been proving the necessity of the Son's humiliation in our nature, in reference to the claims of law upon his children. Now he presents another aspect of the case; viz., the adaptation of our High Priest, because of possessing human nature, to win the affections of his people to God, to Christ and to one another. The inferential particle, *Wherefore*, looks back to the former adaptation, viz.; His participation of the same nature with his children. He must be man, for the obedience—the righteousness to which life is promised, and the sufferings of the penalty are due from man. This regards the question of justification; but the question of sanctification requires the exhibition of different attributes. For the former, the capacity to obey and to endure penal evil in man's nature, was adequate; but for the latter, it is necessary—"It behoved Him to be in all things to be made like unto his brethren." Let us note.

1. "All things"—this comes under the rule already laid down for the interpretation of universal terms. They must always be limited by the connection and the common sense of the case. Is it necessary that our High Priest be like

unto his brethren in all things absolutely? What! like us in foolish talking and jesting! in violent passions! in avarice, in corrupt affections? in sin of all kinds? in ignorance and folly! Nay; but in all those qualities that fit him for his official duties.

2. In regard to these, it *behoved* him, etc. This word is not in very frequent use. The original refers to debts that must be paid—things due, which cannot be withholden without violation of right. We express it by—*I ought*—I owe it. A moral necessity lies upon me.

3. And it implies, that a moral necessity exists for Messiah to be like the brethren before referred to in all the original elements of their nature, which was created in the image or likeness of God—in knowledge, righteousness and holiness. He is to be like them, subject to the sinless infirmities—hunger, thirst, fatigue, and the pains and sufferings incident to the flesh and a life with men on earth.

4. The general end for which these are requisite, is, that he might be a *merciful* and *faithful* High Priest. This whole strain of argument regards Priesthood: but these two properties are important in their influence upon the success of his services in drawing the hearts of men to him and in promoting their enjoyments.

(1.) MERCY, when spoken of God, is the exercise of love to sinful creatures, the result of which in the highest sense is their eternal welfare. *Merciful*, as a characteristic of Messiah, includes his tenderness, compassion, sympathy, fellow-feeling, entering into their joys and sorrows, all the promptings of benevolence toward his people, in their various afflictions and temptations. All which have their foundation in a common nature. *Pity* the afflictions of men an angel might; but *sympathy* implies community of feeling.

(2.) FAITHFULNESS in a friend is steadfastness, reliabil-

ity. "It must answer that mercifulness just spoken of. It consists, therefore, in his exact, constant, careful consideration of all the concerns of the brethren under their temptations and sufferings,—the constant care and condescension unto the wants and sorrows of his tempted and suffering brethren."

5. "In things pertaining to God." The Priestly office is sacred, and is conversant about sacred things. The offering up of sacrifices and the interceding between God and man, comprehend the substance of its duties. The Priest's lips should also keep knowledge, that so the people may learn the law at his mouth: but these things in detail hereafter.

6. "To make reconciliation for the sins of the people." Four things are included and necessarily suggested by the word translated "to make reconciliation." (1.) An offence, a sin, a crime perpetrated. (2.) Some person displeased, dissatisfied at real or supposed injury. (3.) An injurious or offending person who needs to be forgiven. (4.) A sacrifice—a satisfaction making restitution, a reparation of the injury. The *first* is the sins of the people. God's law has been violated; his authority set at naught; a blow is aimed at the divine government. Consequently, the *second* item is realized: God is displeased—is angry with the wicked; his jealousy for his own glory and the honor of his government, burns like a fire. *Thirdly*, therefore his offending people need restoration to divine favor; they need pardon and the restored light of the divine countenance. But *fourthly*, the cause of hostility—the ground of the divine displeasure being sin, a sacrifice must be offered: the redemption price must be paid. The sufferings of Jesus constitute this price. The wages of sin is death; and this our Redeemer paid. We have already seen that God is just and holy, and cannot pardon, as men too often do, without any regard to claims of right. He cannot deny his own essential attri-

bute and abandon the helm of universal government, and let wild misrule run riot over his world.

7. Thus we see, reconciliation is the bringing together into friendship parties that had been hostile. This idea is constantly expressed by the word *atonement*, of which the generic, natural meaning—*at-one-ment*, is precisely equivalent to the Latin word *reconciliation*. But now, this *at-one-ment*, this restoration to unity of counsel and feeling, is an effect; and finds its own cause in the fact, that the offence is removed—satisfaction is rendered to offended justice: God's holy law is more honored by the death of his own Son, than it could be by man's sufferings forever. Hence pardon to all who believe: hence renewal of communion; peace with God: and often joy in the Holy Ghost. But caution. Let us not confound cause and effect. Much mischief has occurred in the Church from this error. *Atonement* is very often used for *satisfaction*, its cause. Cause and effect are so intimately and inseparably connected together, that we often confound them. And in this case, the effect is so charming and consolatory, that our attention is hurried past the one and fixes itself upon the other. The *at-one-ment* is put for *satisfaction* to justice: the controversy about the extent of the atonement, assumes atonement as cause. It is controverted, whether the satisfaction to justice is for all men alike—the saved and the lost. If men would use the word atonement in its true and natural meaning, they would at once see, that to assert its universality, is to teach universal reconciliation to God, that is, universal salvation; and to contradict the plain teachings of the Bible.

In v. 18, *For*, intimates a reason of the preceding characteristics being required—he must be merciful and faithful, in order that his sympathies toward his people in their temptations may flow forth and lead to their relief. The use of the particle translated *in that* as a causal—*because*, is

not here allowable, for the obvious reason, that *For*, itself expresses the idea of that relation; and it makes a tautology, *for because*; of which impropriety we ought not to accuse the Apostle. In Rom. iii. 1 we have the same words translated "for wherein"—in the very matter or thing "in which" thou judgest another, etc. 1 Pet. ii. 12: "Having your conversation honest among the gentiles, that, whereas they speak against you," etc.—better "in order that—to the end that" (*ὅνα*), *in what* they speak against you, etc. So here, for, *in what* he himself hath suffered, etc. Thus a reason is given for the ability of the Saviour to succor his people; viz., that he is possessed of their nature and is both merciful, and faithful: but also there is a limitation of its exercise to the matter *in which* he, being tempted hath suffered. In chap. iv. 14, this subject again recurs, when we shall look into this temptation more particularly: the two points now before us are (1.) The ability of Christ, and (2.) the succor flowing from it. His ability—capability hangs, pendent on his experience of trials and suffering, not in general and inclusive of all his sorrows, but only those which resulted to him from his various temptations. Having been assaulted, as we shall see anon, and experienced the painfulness resulting from the wiles of the devil, he hath a *fellow-feeling* for our infirmities, and his human sympathies go forth from his divine throne and lead to their relief. He will not suffer them to be tempted beyond what they shall be enabled to bear. (2.) The succor is manifestly such relief as rescues from the power of temptation. The original implies help given in answer to clamorous shouting for relief: and is used chiefly in reference to distress from satanic powers. See Matt. xv. 22: "Have mercy on me, O Lord thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a demon:" and v. 25, "Lord, help me." Mark ix. 22: and Rev. xii. 16.

Thus, then, we have abundant ground of consolation. Access is afforded to us into the presence of a gracious, merciful, trustworthy Friend—a Friend, who knows by experience, in many a contest with the great tempter, how cunning his devices, how subtle are his schemes, how great his power and multiplied his demoniacal agencies for assaults upon the children of God :—a Friend, more happily adapted to our relief, than legions of angels. These by mere power can and do protect us : but this Friend we approach through human sympathies, and through these He comes at all times to our relief : he will bruise Satan under our feet shortly.



### CHAPTER III.

VERSES 1, 2.—“ Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High-priest of our profession, Christ Jesus: Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses *was faithful* in all his house.”

The inferential particle here is the same as in v. 17th preceding, and, like it, intimates a deduction from the words going before. It behoved the Son of God as High-priest, to offer up sacrifice for the sins of his redeemed; for the possibility of which he must possess their nature. This he took upon him and made reconciliation. And because of his exposure to temptation, He rendered himself capable of sympathizing with them in their temptations. These constitute reasons why you should carefully study his official character and relations. Wherefore, consider.

In these verses 1-6, he resumes the comparison and contrast with which he began the Epistle, in order to show more fully the vast superiority of the New above the Old Testament dispensation, and thus lay additional ground for his dehortation. Remark then,

1. The address—“ holy *brethren*.”

*Brother*, properly means, a son of the same parents, at least one parent. But this prime relation we modify variously, and so do the scriptures. One removed from parentage to the second or third degree is called brother; as Lot is the brother of Abraham; and perhaps “the brethren of our Lord:” so men of the same tribe or original stock are brethren; of the same nation; or of kindred nations. Here,

it is obvious, that union in ecclesiastical, as well as national bonds, is intended.

2. *Holy* brethren. The primary idea of this word is consecration or setting apart to any special, but particularly any sacred use. In this sense inanimate things, as the materials for the tabernacle, and the building with all its furniture were holy. So all men, set apart by circumcision or baptism, were holy: and this irrespective of their personal purity. They are dedicated to God. But the secondary meaning rises and includes preparation for the service proposed. In regard to persons, it implies the removal of impurity—their moral cleansing. Nevertheless, when masses of men are included, it is not intended to affirm that each and every one of them is holy in this higher sense: but only, that we recognize them as such, on their professed devotion to God, and in the absence of evidence, in their conduct, to the contrary. We are bound to recognize all who make a credible profession of their faith, and love to God, as children of his household. This credible profession of their faith consists of four things. (1.) An intelligent comprehension of the grand, fundamental doctrines of Salvation. (2.) A professed belief in them as divine. (3.) A rational—a scriptural account of their practical working upon his heart and conscience. And (4.) A life and conduct consistent with all these. When these four exist—where there is such evidence of piety—of inward, heart-consecration to God, no body of christians, no church has a right to refuse recognition of such persons, as holy brethren. It is of doubtful propriety to use in such cases the phrase, “in the judgment of charity, we receive him:” meaning, it is scarcely allowable, but we stretch the rule a little. If these four items exist, it is not a stretch of charity to admit such an one: for it would be a violation of justice to refuse him. Let us not so sin against the generation of God’s just

and holy ones. The franchise belongs to all born in our Lord's kingdom.

3. "Partakers of the heavenly calling." The original for *partakers*, is with slight modification, the same as used in ii. 14. He *took part* of the same nature. Thus, he intimates that Messiah took part of their nature to work out their salvation; and they are made partakers of the blessed results.

4. "Of the heavenly calling." To call a person is to invite him to come—"go call thy husband"—tell him to come hither. "Unto you, O men, I call." "Come unto me, all ye that labor, etc." But calls are not always effectual. "And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding; and they would not come." There is therefore a twofold call. (1.) An outward call—a vocation, which address the outward ear; in the form of a command and an invitation. (2.) There is an inward, spiritual, effectual call, in which the soul hears the voice of God the Holy Ghost; and obeys it; and secures eternal life. Now both these are covered by this phrase "the *heavenly calling*." The outward gospel call is from heaven—"This is my beloved Son, hear ye him." Christ himself and all his ministers, are commissioned from heaven to invite, to call upon lost men "Unto you, O men, I call:" to command men everywhere to repent and come to God and salvation. But it is a *heavenly calling* for the higher sense. The Spirit is sent from heaven to make the call upon the outward, dull ear to enter the heart and sound aloud in the conscience. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth;" without His influence, the outward call is of none effect. But moreover, the mission and work of the Spirit was secured by the sacrifice of Calvary. "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart—and this departure is by the

cross—I will send him unto you.” John xvi. 7. Oh! how then can a Christian man say, the atonement of itself secures the salvation of no one? Does it not secure the mission of the Spirit? Does it not secure the regeneration of the soul? Does it not, in lines of living light, write on the sanctified heart a passport to glory in the skies? Does it not secure to every one sprinkled with atoning blood, a crown of glory, eternal in the heavens?

5. Mark how delicately the Apostle introduces again the comparison between the two dispensations, which must issue in the disparagement of the Old. He accounts them as brethren, not nationally simply; not in a mere sectarian spirit, but in the highest and holiest sense; and shares with himself in the common salvation: and a little after, in the common profession of an interest in the Messiah. How admirably all this is adapted to win a patient ear. Ministers, and private Christians too, may hence learn, by kindly condescension, to win the way for their words to the heart of others.

6. *Consider*—The original regards intellectual effort. It calls for the exertion of the rational faculties. In form, it is mandatory. It is the command of a teacher, whose office duty obliges and authorizes him to claim the attention of the mind and the active energies of the entire intellect. This implies three things. (1.) That the matters and things to which attention is demanded, are important. As if he would say, I am not here to amuse and entertain you for an hour, with a beautiful picture addressed to your fancy. This is not a letter on æsthetics, a production of the muse; a loose talk about matters and things in general. I am here to reason with you, as my manner has been everywhere, out of the Scriptures. Acts xvii. 2. (2.) That this great subject is surrounded with no small difficulties. Many of the deep things of God are involved in it. “Great

is the mystery of Godliness; God was manifest in the flesh"—"the mystery of faith in a pure conscience." "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery"—1 Cor. ii 7. "Thy judgments are a great deep"—Ps. xxxvi. 6. "That which is far off, and exceeding deep, who can find it out?" Eccles. vii. 24. "Into these things the angels desire to look." These difficulties are thus intrinsic: the very nature of the matter renders it hard to be understood. Then the extrinsic difficulties are numerous and great. The mystery of godliness is of pure revelation; and great research in the holy Scriptures is necessary, before it can be brought to light. Copies of the Scriptures were very scarce: few therefore had access to them. (3.) Nevertheless all these can be surmounted. All the truths necessary to salvation may be acquired. "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost"—not to such as are gone to perdition—but to unbelievers on earth—"in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. But the hand of the diligent maketh rich; then, give all diligence—search the Scriptures; study the word and you shall become wise unto God. *Consider*

7. The *Apostle* and High Priest. APOSTLE is a Greek word and signifies simply a person sent: and includes three ideas—a person who sends, a person who is sent, and a person or persons to whom he is sent. He is the *internunciatus*—a messenger between two extremes. The first notice of this great Mission is in paradise—"He shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel." The utter crushing of the head of that old serpent, the devil and Satan, can be effected only by the mission of the Son of God in human nature. "There is one Mediator between God and man." The Apostleship or Mission of the Son of God is involved in

and springs from the covenant of grace. Rather, it is an essential and an all-important part of that glorious transaction. This covenant of grace, ordered in all things and sure, specified the time when the Son should be sent. Gal. iv. 4: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law." 1 John iv. 9: "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." Therefore he says, John vii. 28, 29—"and I am not come of myself, but He that sent me is true, whom ye know not. But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me." John xvii. 18: "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." And the Messenger of the covenant, Mal. iii. 1, is affirmed to be the LORD whom ye seek—and before whom a messenger is sent. The word *Apostle* is undoubtedly an *official* title, first of our Lord, and then of his messengers, whom he hath sent, *even so*, that is, *officially*, as the Father sent him. Luke vi. 13—"and of his disciples he chose twelve, whom also he named APOSTLES"—"These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not in the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Matt. x. 5, 6. As Apostles their mission was limited, yet their authority and power were great within these limits. A new commission was given three years later, not indeed to the Apostles as such, but to the *disciples*, including the eleven no doubt, but many others also. Under this evangelical commission the gospel went all abroad. It was under it Paul and Barnabas were ordained as Missionaries at Antioch, Acts xiii. 3, "And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands upon them, they sent them away." And it is in this sense they are spoken of in Acts

xiv. 14. When the people at Lystra were about to perpetrate idolatry, the missionaries remonstrated, just as ours do now in such cases. So is the word used in 2 Cor. viii. 23—"the apostles—the messengers of the churches."

In the study here enjoined, you are carefully to regard the person *who sends*—the Father in his relation to the Son, as established in the covenant. 2 Sam. xxiii. 1, 5—in the last words of David he says, "he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure; for this is all my salvation and all my desire"—So Isaiah referred to before—lv. 3. The person *Sent*: his personal character and official relations fill the Bible from end to end, as they fill the heart and occupy the intellects of men and of holy angels. The persons *to whom* Messiah is sent. First to the lost sheep of the house of Israel—not to the finally lost—there is no mission in the world of woe. But the lost sheep are Israelites: to them He is sent first of all, that the Sinai restrictions might be complied with. But after a fair offer has been made in his own person, and the Jews had in general rejected Him, he commissioned his evangelists to go into all the world. His right to do so he affirms in the commission itself—"all power in heaven and earth is given unto me—it belongs to my rightful dominion; Go ye therefore, and teach all nations." But now, as Messiah's right of universal dominion is founded on the fact of his humiliation, according to Ps. viii., and his being made perfect through sufferings, his Priestly office becomes a subject for you to study with the most intense earnestness.

*The High Priest.* His mission is mainly in order that he may offer the sacrifice which only can take away sin. All priests heretofore appointed, are really official types of this High Priest, and all sacrifices at all altars approved of God, are but symbols of his one offering. The detail of these matters will come up as we proceed with the comparison.



“*Of our profession.*” To profess religion is, as we have seen, to acknowledge its doctrines and to live accordingly. The Greek word means *similarity of doctrines*. In 1 Tim. vi. 13 it is said of Christ Jesus, that “before Pontius Pilate he witnessed a good *confession*,” using the same word in the original as here. The suggestion of Dr. Sampson pleases me, that, “if we suppose a very natural metonymy, substituting for the profession the thing professed, we have the meaning, The Apostle and High Priest of Christianity, or the new dispensation.” p. 116. And this, whilst it does not vary the sense, gives point and force to the comparison between the two priesthods, about to be instituted.

*Christ Jesus.* The position of this divine name, after the official designations, seems very naturally to indicate the writer’s purpose to be, the fixing of attention upon the mission and priesthood, rather than upon the person of Christ Jesus. This name, put into English, means “the anointed Saviour:” and what has been already said of his personal character, as well as the official matter which follows, shuts us up to the belief, that his official superiority is to fix our attention.

*Faithful* to him that appointed, etc.

The first point of comparison here is their faithfulness. This we have discussed, on v. 17, and need not now repeat what is there stated.

The comparison between the two dispensations, here revived, regards first this high attribute of faithfulness in respect to their heads respectively. And we may remark, 1. The faithfulness of our Apostle; he ascribes to Moses this most excellent moral quality. No disposition is shown to pull down and disparage Moses, in order to enhance the character of our Lord relatively. Let the head of the old dispensation have all due honor and glory, and it is surely very great; this can have no effect toward debasing

Messiah. But 2. This candor, whilst it distributes honor to whom honor is due, makes a wide difference in the measure of it: because a corresponding difference exists between the persons standing at the head of the two dispensations respectively; both as to personal attributes and official relations, though the latter only concerns us at present. (1.) Each has been appointed to office [made an officer] and invested with a very weighty and important trust. (2.) Each was faithful to the appointer, giving all diligence and discharging all the duties required of them. Neither was chargeable with omitting any required service, or performing it in a sluggish or careless manner. It is required of stewards that a man be found faithful; and neither of these stewards was accused of wasting his master's substance. Moses, indeed, on two or three occasions offended in temper and spake unadvisedly with his lips; but was not accounted untrustworthy. (3.) The scene for exhibiting this moral excellence was in one sense the same; yet in another different. Moses was faithful in all his house. House here is the church or household of faith; as is evident from v. 6—"whose house are we"—we believers are the house of God. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God." So 1 Tim. iii. 15—"how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God." Over this house Moses was appointed and thus it was *his* in trust; for its welfare he was responsible. But it was not his in native and essential right, nor in perpetuity. It was not *his own* house, but Christ's house; and Moses' only as to the dispensation introduced by him. This testimony is found in Num. xii. 7. "My servant Moses is not so; who is faithful in all mine house." Miriam and Aaron quarrelled with Moses because he had married an Ethiopian woman, and God gives this testimony in his favor, and smites Miriam with leprosy. The house over which Christ was appointed and faithful, was the same

church of the living God, but *his own* house: his own by creation, by redemption; his own by inheritance—the new Dispensation, his own kingdom. This fidelity to the appointer is the pledge and guarantee of fidelity to the whole house: And so Moses, in the construction of the tabernacle and arrangements of all the details of the worship, accomplished all things according to the pattern showed to him in the Mount. These points of agreement and difference intimate a decided preference in favor of Messiah above Moses.

V.v. 3–6. “For this *man* was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house, hath more honor than the house. For every house is builded by some *man*; but he that built all things is God. And Moses verily was faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after. But Christ is a Son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope, firm unto the end.”

1. Let us utter a caveat against the Unitarian heresy at the outset. The reader will notice the word *man* is in italics in v.v. 3 and 4: and should be so in ii. 9, intimating that there is nothing for it in the original. In the last named case, we have seen, that the word supplied should be—“he tasted death for every son, whom he brings unto glory.”

This case, in v. 3, has been seized upon to prove that Christ is only a man and not the “true God and eternal life,” as John calls him. 1 Epis. v. 20. But a drowning man will catch at a straw. Such a feeble argument shows a feeble cause. All we have need to do for the destruction of the argument, is to state the fact, that the word *man* is not in the original, either here or in verse 4. In all such cases, the well settled rule is, to fill up the ellipsis, by such word as the context and the obvious meaning of the writer

require. We prefer to say "This *person* was counted worthy, etc.:" and "every house is builded by some *person*, etc." Besides Jesus is a man—he possesses in his person perfect humanity: moreover he is God—God was manifest in the flesh—the word was made flesh. He is man; but does this prove that he is not God? He is God; but does this prove that he is not man? Reader, you are an animal—have an animal body and life; but does this prove that you are not a spirit? have not spiritual life? You have a body, does this prove that you have no soul? You have a soul, does this prove that you have no body? Christ has perfect manhood, does this prove that he has not perfect Godhead? He has perfect divinity, does this prove that he has not perfect humanity?

A similarly feeble argument is built upon the expression—"appointed him;" in the Greek—*made* him; hence these men—who have apparently reversed John Baptist's maxim, "he must increase, but I must decrease"—John iii. 30—which they seem determined to read, he must decrease, but I must increase—infer that Christ is a creature and not God who made all things. We admit that the human nature of Messiah is a creature. But this is not our answer to the Unitarian argument. The answer may be seen in a passage before quoted.—Mark iii. 14, "And he *ordained* twelve," using the same word as here translated *appointed*; he made them apostles, just as we now make men governors, ministers, doctors of divinity, generals, etc.

Having in v. 2 affirmed the fidelity of both Christ and Moses, he proceeds to argue the pre-eminence of the former. The causal particle, *For*, has reference not to the immediately preceding assertion of faithfulness, but rather to the chief idea of v. 1.—the injunction to study diligently the Apostle and High-Priest. Consider him, *for* he was counted

worthy of more glory than Moses. This superiority is here affirmed by Apostolic and prophetic authority: it has also been proved from the Old Testament Scriptures. The present proofs go rather to exhibit the measure of excess, than the simple pre-eminence. As the builder, furnisher and finisher of the house, excels the workmanship of his hand, so doth Messiah transcend Moses; so doth the new dispensation, the spiritual house or kingdom of Christ, excel the Aaronic priesthood and the administration under the judges and kings of old. There is no controversy between Paul and his brethren about the faithfulness and success of Moses. That the economy instituted by him was honorable and glorious; that in moral excellence and grandeur it outstripped all other nations and religious systems, is agreed. That it must be limited, and when its time should be fulfilled, that it must be superseded by a far more glorious state of things, is everywhere admitted and taught by the old prophets, and the law of Moses, and the psalms. If then "the man whose name is the BRANCH,—shall grow up out of his place and he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne:" Zech. vi. 12, 13—great must be his glory: and it is not estimated beyond the reality. He is counted worthy because He is worthy. In all this there is no detraction from Moses and his dispensation; but the reverse. For the New Testament economy confirms the truth and exhibits the value of the Old. Yet with all his honor and all his glory, Moses is only a part of the workmanship of the more glorious Builder, Ruler, Priest, whom he promised to Abraham's seed. This more glorious Builder did not come to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil, establish and confirm all that they taught and promised.

“For every house is builded by some *person*.” This verse is substantially a parenthesis: the matter of verses third and fifth is very intimately connected, and the fourth affirms a plain and obvious truth; every house must have an author. No house ever built itself and furnished itself. For the word translated *builded* includes the entire idea of the foundation, the superstructure, the furniture inside, and the ornamental grounds outside: in short, everything requisite for accommodating the household or family. The word refers more specifically to the furnishing than to the *building* proper; this, because the fitting up and furnishing of a house, presupposes its existence. “I go to *prepare* a place for you.” But he that built all things is God—is divine. He is God who hath erected and furnished this spiritual temple of lively stones. Here is reference to the ecclesiastical covenant—the church organization, which came into full form in the Abrahamic covenant. This expanded into the entire Israelitish people; but was modified and restricted by the Sinai covenant, which constituted it the peculiar house in which Moses was the minister or steward. Now the God who built all things is none other than the Son as Messiah; and hence again the inference is upon us, that he is infinitely superior to his own creature and servant Moses.

V.v. 5, 6, press this superiority as deducible from the relations of the parties compared, to the house and to each other. Both are faithful: Moses as a servant in a house belonging to another; Christ as a son in a house which he made, and over which his Father hath anointed him Prophet, Priest and King. The word translated servant does not mean a slave, but chiefly if not uniformly, a person serving about religious matters. This service was not limited to one single department or portion of his house, as is common in great houses, but extended to the



whole. Since Jacob's death, or at least since Joseph's, no one person had so extensive a charge. Even the Judges, Prophets, Priests, Kings had a limited sphere. But Moses' duties extended over the whole. True, he subsequently distributed the services amongst the judges, captains, priests and Levites; yet he held them all responsible to himself: he was a minister in reference to God who appointed him; whilst he was Master and Lord, in reference to the house—the whole house.

A question has been raised as to the word *his*, whether it means God's or Moses' house. The former is true; the house is God's; but if we restrict it to Him, we neglect the contrast which the Apostle is prosecuting between Moses and Messiah: and thus miss the point of his argument. On the contrary, if *his* refers to Moses, then *all his house* means the visible church as administered under Moses and his system: and so *all Moses' house* is contrasted with Christ's *own house*, or the entire visible church under Christ and his new system.

Nor should we lose the distinction between *his house* and *his own house*: the former phrase is applied to Moses; the latter to Messiah, intimating an ownership far different from and superior to that of Moses.

The latter part of v. 5 points out an ultimate purpose of the fidelity of Moses—"for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after:" that is, for a witness to the generations yet to come, lest they might despise the teachings of Christ in his own person and by his missionaries, and peril their souls. The new and more full and clear revelations of the New Testament dispensation, must lay them who hear under more weighty responsibility, let Moses' faithfulness be their example, "that they without us should not be made perfect." As Owen says, "This is the importance of the words, and this was the true and proper end of



the whole ministry of Moses, wherein his faithfulness was tried and manifested. He ordered all things by God's direction in the typical worship of the house, so as that it might be a pledge and testimony of what God would afterward reveal and exhibit in the gospel." "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth." Rom. x. 4. That is, to Christ as their end or object, all the ceremonial or Mosaic institutions pointed—they are evangelical. So Gal. iii. 24.—"the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ." Schoolmaster—rather pedagogue—a person employed, not to teach, as some mistake—but to lead the boy to the teacher. The law—not, as some mistake it—the moral law, for this could only condemn and fill the soul with terror, but the ceremonial law and ordinances—the sacrifices, the washings, the show-bread, the candlestick, the incense altar, the Ark of the testimony, the cities of refuge; all, all led to Christ.

"Whose house are we:" believers, the world over, are Christ's own spiritual house. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" And 1 Pet. ii. 5, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood." But this has a conditional particle, "Whose house are we, *if* we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope, firm unto the end." This brings us face to face with the grand object of the Epistle, a dehortation from apostasy; for it leads directly to the question of our actual acceptance and retention of Christ and his salvation. The *if* does not express or lay down the condition of our becoming lively stones in this spiritual house. For *if* perseverance to the *end* of the dispensation, or of our life, were a condition of our becoming living stones of the house, there never could be a building—a house visible and tangible, for there could be no stones until after the end, when they are gone beyond the

possibility of a location in the building. Such an absurdity is not chargeable upon the Apostle. This holding fast is simply the evidence of our being Christians in the sense of visible profession. We believers, professing Christ, are living stones of this house, *if indeed* we are believers. How is it known that any man is a Christian? Just as it is known whether this female is to be recognized as a widow, "if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet," etc. 1 Tim. v. 10. The *if* does not make her a widow or the reverse, but is simply significant that a question of fact is to be inquired after. If there is a hell, bad men will be sent thither: if there is a heaven, good men will enter it; these *ifs* do not express doubt on either hand. If true believers hold fast they will go to heaven, expresses no doubt as to their holding fast and reaching heaven. If there is a God, sin shall be punished; this expresses no doubt of God's existence, but the contrary.

*The confidence.* The original signifies freedom of speech—boldness of access to God, as that of children to a father of tried fidelity and abounding love—the *rejoicing*—exultation—boasting—"my soul shall make her boast in God." The hope of the Christian springs from his faith. Faith looks back to what Christ has done and up to his pledged veracity. Hope looks forward to the blessings expected. The free confidence of hope, and the bold glorying of hope, are steadfastly and firmly held even to the end. Now this, which evinces our union with God's visible Church, is both our duty and privilege. Our *duty*, because he requires it at our hand. "Come out from among them and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing." "Them that honor me I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed:" and there is great peril in being ashamed of Jesus. Our *privilege*; ye shall be sons and daughters of

the Lord Almighty. Rejoice in the LORD O ye righteous; and thou shalt rejoice in the LORD; and shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel. What an honor this! to be counted among the sons of God!—to be accounted among the lively stones in the temple where the Most High delights to dwell!

We further remark, (1.) The duty is imperative on all to whom the gospel comes, to embrace it and make a public profession of their faith. (2.) Rejoicing in God and glorying in his salvation, are no evidence of proud self-confidence. (3.) Official station in the Church confers dignity and respectability, but becomes permanent only when characterized and accompanied by faithfulness. (4.) But the Son confers dignity upon the office which he himself creates. (5.) The steadfastness of believers—their permanent occupancy of their place in the house as living stones, results not from human resolve, but from divine grace. The Master Builder selects and places the stones in his building, and there He assures us they shall abide. Him that overcometh—and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith—“Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God and he shall go no more out.” (6.) The world may hence learn, why it is, that all the terrors of persecution—slander, violence, blood, the axe, the gibbet and the stake, utterly fail to shake the soul of the Christian martyr; and why, therefore, he conquers even in death. (7.) Our thoughts—our views and respect for the Christian Church, will rise in proportion as we realize our personal interest therein. And yet is not this selfishness; for in loving the Church, he loveth himself; and in loving himself as a part and the Church as the whole, pure spouse of Christ, he loves her divine Husband. (8.) Let us therefore be firm, calm, outspoken and everywhere ready to confess Christ, and to bear his reproach; so shall we share his glory.

V.v. 7-19. "Wherefore, (as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts," etc., to v. 11.) Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God, etc. Verses 7 and 12 are intimately connected—"Wherefore, take heed;" and the intermediate words are quoted from Ps. xciv. 7-11; and we shall explain them, after pointing out the connecting link between the preceding discussion and this, before we proceed with the inference in verse twelfth and following.

Having compared Christ as God's Missionary and High Priest, with Moses in his official, public character, and evinced the infinite superiority of the former over the latter: and thus constructed a new argument against apostasy, the Apostle deduces the highly practical inference, by way of exhortation, "Wherefore,—Take heed, brethren." But he throws in a powerful auxiliary to its force, by showing historically, the fearful consequences to their ancestors of unbelief and neglecting the commandments of God.

This ninety-fifth psalm beautifully corresponds to the duty enjoined in the sixth verse just expounded. It calls for "the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope." "O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation." It calls for his worship and adoration "as our Maker, For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand." It thus expresses, by a different metaphor, the same idea—"whose house are we"—whose sheep of his hand are we. The Spirit speaks in Paul, and the Holy Ghost speaks in David: and their voices both are full of joy; yet both abound in solemn warning. The introduction of this quotation differs from other citations—"as the Holy Ghost saith." This may be for two reasons: (1.) to express distinctly the Godhead of the Spirit. He had said, i. 1, that God spake

in the prophets, and here that the Holy Ghost spake in David: proving that the Holy Ghost is God. But (2.) to give point to his dehortation, by showing that apostasy, as Stephen charged, was a resisting of the Holy Ghost. He that rejects the Scriptures, contemns his authority by whom they are written and does despite unto the Spirit of grace.

We proceed with the quotation—"To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation, in the day of temptation, in the wilderness; When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years."

1. Our first point regards time, *to-day* or *this day*. The application of this in the next chapter shows, that not any one particular point of time is meant; but a season, occasion, opportunity. There is a season in which God speaks out of his word, as well as out of his providence; beyond which his patience will not extend. Such, as long as it lasts to any one, is his "to-day;" and it has no to-morrow. The Jews, in the case referred to, had their day. So, after Christ's personal ministry, they had their then present to-day. They trifled it away; their summer passed; their harvest ended, and swift destruction overtook them. So it has been with many christians, and christian churches. All the eastern churches sinned away their day. The seven churches addressed in the Apocalypse,—where are they? But, dear reader, remember the day of gospel light may last to a community as an aggregate mass; and yet be lost and gone forever to many of the individuals included in it. The duty, then, of harkening to the voice of the Lord your God, is limited to the present moment: it is *now*: He may, in his miraculous forbearance allow you many days, but the duty is *now*; this very moment; and if you refuse he may say in his wrath, Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone.

2. "If ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." It might be read,—“to-day you may hear his voice,” and this would seem to suit the remark in iv. 7—he limiteth a certain day. It accords too with the scriptural usage of the word rendered *if*, as Owen shows from Matt. viii. 19 and xii. 36, where the word has not a conditional meaning. To-day you may hear his voice—now is the accepted time; to-morrow may be too late—harden not your hearts.

3. The voice in question is that of “the LORD our Maker;” who speaks to us, as to the Jews, in his holy word. The address of the divine legate, who faithfully delivers God’s Message, is the Lord’s voice. “He that despiseth you despiseth me.” Hearing the voice is receiving and obeying the doctrines taught in his holy word: and wherever they are proclaimed, men are laid under the inevitable necessity of receiving, or of rejecting. They must either hear or forbear. The talent must be either improved or neglected.

4. Hardening the heart is a process, and consists of neglecting to hear, of indifference to the truth heard, of positive revulsion, of bitter hatred against it, and often against those who proclaim it, of a gradually increasing insensibility to all those considerations which ought reasonably to interest a rational mind. The result is a seared conscience, running on in folly and crime, working all uncleanness with greediness: past feeling; given up to a reprobate mind.

5. Note the historical reference—“as in the provocation.” Or as Alexander translates the psalm—“Harden not your heart like Meribah, like the day of Massah in the wilderness.” The history you have in Ex. xvii. “Wherefore, the people did chide with Moses and said, Give us water, that we may drink. And Moses said, Why chide you with me? Wherefore do ye tempt the Lord?” And after he had smitten the rock and the water came forth, “he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah”—*temptation*



and *strife*,—"they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us or not?" The very existence of God, at least his existence among them, and, of course his omnipresence, they called in question. This is indeed a great provocation, or *bitterness*, as both the Hebrew and the Greek words mean. A bitter day truly, when God's own people thus acted, who had, a very few days before, beheld the wonderful displays of his presence and power. "Marvellous things did he in the sight of their fathers, in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan. He divided the sea, and caused them to pass through, and he made the waters to stand as an heap. In the day time also he led them with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire. He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink as out of the great depths." "And they sinned yet more against him, by provoking the Most High in the wilderness." Ps. lxxviii. 13-17. In view of all these wonders they cherished the bitterness of unbelief, and by resistance hardened their hearts.

Doubting whether God was among them, they made experiment—put him to the test—tried—tempted him. This is the true sense of the noun, *temptation*—the putting of anything to an experimental test, to ascertain whether it be the very thing it purports and is supposed to be. 1 Pet. iv. 12, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you"—pray that ye enter not into temptation—In 1 Cor. x. 13 we have an example of both noun and verb,—“God will not suffer you to *be tempted* above that ye are able; but will with the *temptation* make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” There is no sin in the mere fact of being tempted, i. e. being put to a trial; yet the endurance is often distressing—"ye are in heaviness through manifold *temptations*"—trials. 1 Pet. i. 6. Yet sin is often perpetrated by men courting—rushing needlessly into trying circumstances. This conduct springs

from pride and self-confidence. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation"—that standeth up firm in his integrity under the assaults of the adversary. But "let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man." James i. 12, 13. God is *untemptible* of evils, if you will allow the word: and he tempteth no person. It is evident that James uses the word in an ill sense; as if the purpose or design of exposing the person to trial, was, to crush him down. In this sense God tries no person; on the contrary, he exposes his people in the furnace of affliction, that their graces may be brought out; and themselves come forth as gold purified seven times. This result is expressed by the term *proved* me: it means the result of a trial which establishes the truth, and genuineness, and excellence of the thing tried. Peter, admitting the temporary painfulness of the " manifold temptations"—experimental trials, through which believers pass, assures us "That the trial of your faith is much more precious than of gold"—i. 6, 7. But here he uses the nominal form of the word, the practical proof of its excellence. The word for *proved*, is used to describe the process of the gold through the refiner's crucible: only the pure metal *passes through*. So James, "Blessed is the man who endureth—beareth up under and passeth through the experimental test; for when he is tried, proved to be genuine and true gold of the sanctuary, he shall receive the crown of life." In the same sense is the word used in 1 Cor. xi. 28—"But let a man *examine* himself"—put himself *to* and *through* the crucible of a rigid, self-inspection, as in the sight of God, "and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup." Thus did their fathers *prove* God. Their unreasonable chiding with Moses and with God, brought out the indubitable evidence of His existence among them, of his goodness in supplying them

with food and drink; and alas too, of his justice in punishing them for those very sins which occasioned this proof.

“Your fathers *saw my works forty years.*” There is a difficulty here in reference to the *forty years*. Some connect these words with the preceding, as our translation: others, as Alexander and the Hebrew text and its translation in Ps. xcvi., connect them with the verse following—“Forty years long was I grieved with this generation.” This diversity produces little difference of meaning in the result. If we follow our text, then we make their vision of God’s work extend over the whole period of sojourn in the wilderness. To this it is a slight objection, that their fathers all died in the wilderness, except Caleb and Joshua, and very few lived until near the close of the forty years, to behold God’s works and wonders. In defence of this connection, some insist that the works are those lying in past time, viz., the wonders in Egypt and at the Red Sea: and they give an adversative sense to *and*—*although* they saw my works. This is scarcely allowable. Besides, the word translated *When* in this verse, as Owen and the critics generally affirm, is used in scripture only in reference to place and not to time. If this be true—if this word defines or specifies the place *where* and not the time *when* the fathers tempted and proved God, and saw his works, then the works prior to their entrance into the desert, cannot be those referred too: and this is farther supported by the fact, that the Psalmist has it *work*, in the singular, as though it was limited to the one miracle of bringing water out of the rock. But, as stated before, the difference in the end is of little consequence. If the *forty years* is connected with verse ninth, then it measures the duration of their tempting and proving God, and their beholding his works. If these years are taken after the Psalmist, in connection with verse tenth,

then they measure the duration of God's grieving over that generation: and as their perverse conduct ran down through the forty years, so must God's displeasure with them cover the whole period; and such is the connection in v. 17 "With whom was he grieved forty years?"

V. 10. "Wherefore, I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart, and they have not known my ways."

"I was *grieved* with that generation." The conduct of Israel under the circumstances, was exceedingly provoking; and the Apostle uses a term very expressive of its effect in wearying God's patience. It implies a sickening disgust; a revolting abhorrence, that turns away with a perfect loathing of the persons and their behavior, as if they were sunk beyond hope of recovery into the depths of folly, pollution and crime. And yet the Lord is loth to give them up as hopeless, and grieves over their sorrowful condition. And there are two things that specially grieve him—their wilful errors, and their ignorance.

"They do alway err in their heart." "They tempted God in their heart by asking meat for their lust." Here is the exciting cause of their rebellion, their heart was not right with God: there was, in the least guilty among them, a lurking enmity, that constantly tended to practical errors, and led the head astray.

"And they have not known my ways." A way is a road or path along which men and animals travel. For such use are they constructed and kept up: and when no longer so used, they are neglected and go to ruin. Roads connect important places together, and are thus a medium of communication. Broad is the road that leads to death: strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life. So our Saviour says, "I am the way." There is no acceptable approach unto God and heaven but by this new and

living way. Hence a secondary meaning is, *method*, course of action. "When a man's ways please the Lord he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him:" that is a man's conduct or habitual course of action. So Isa. lv.: "Let the wicked forsake his way"—"neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord." Now God's ways of providence and of grace, are his methods of preserving and saving sinners. These were taught in the Church of old; therefore, "they have not *known* my ways" must mean knowledge with approbation: and indeed this is the proper force of the Greek word here used—they have not recognized and acknowledged my ways of saving and governing men.

We are here taught (1.) That, when God hath done great things for any people, nation or Church, it is a direct insult to the divine majesty to give back and show want of confidence in him. (2.) In proportion as the divine monitions have been great, frequent and tender, so is the rejection of them aggravatingly sinful. (3.) The nearer the day of God's merciful visitation draws to a close, the swifter is the approach to destruction. (4.) There is no situation on this side of heaven, where man can be free from the access of sin and temptation. It is all in vain to resort to dens and caves in the earth, or the desert and wilderness. The ground of Israel's sin, lay in their not setting their hearts to consider God's works. (5.) It is a glorious thing to be descended from a pious ancestry—a race of believers. This is heaven's nobility; and woe to the wretch that expatriates the family blood from the kingdom of God. A deep damnation awaits him who breaks up the line of descent from a pious stock. (6.) But think not to say, "We have Abraham to our father," and therefore we are sure of heaven. Your mother's and father's faith will do much for you, but only as a means of grace; for the grace itself, you must for yourself believe and live.

(7.) Of all sins for which God visits in wrath any people, the most atrocious is casting contempt upon his only-begotten Son. Whilst it is true that the Hebrew fathers, many of them, drank of that spiritual rock that followed them and that Rock was Christ, it is also true, that many rejected Him and perished in the wilderness.

V. 11. "So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest." *So*, here, is not a word of comparison as to manner; but rather marks a general conclusion. The positions taken in the preceding context are strong and make natural and consistent the ground next to be taken, *So that* I swear in my wrath. It is translated in Ps. xcv. 11 *unto whom*, but more correctly as above, *So that*. The oath is most distinctly expressed in Deut. i. 34, 35: "And the Lord heard the voice of your words, and was wroth and swore, saying, Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land which I swear to give unto your fathers:" And Num. xxxii. 10, 11—"and he swear, saying, Surely none of the men," etc. Of the nature and form of the oath, we shall have occasion more fully to speak hereafter. At present, 1. Note, the wrath of God is not, as wrath in man too often is, a bitter and malicious feeling, inconsistent with the love of benevolence or of beneficence. It is simply his holy indignation, going forth for the punishment of crime. In fact, God's wrath is nothing but his love to holiness and holy beings, bursting forth against corruption, sin and rebellion, for their suppression, and for the protection and defence of all pure, and holy and just subjects of God's moral government. Vindicative justice is that essential property in God's nature which leads to the punishment of sinners. "Though hand join in hand the wicked shall not be unpunished; but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered." Prov. xi. 21. He who denies vindicatory justice to God, identifies himself



with the interests of sin and rebellion throughout the universe.

2. The irrevocable nature of this just sentence upon their sin, is herein set forth. In vi. 17, "the immutability of his counsel is confirmed by an oath." Thus, stability is given to the moral universe and the love of God guaranteed to all holy and righteous beings therein.

3. The matter of this oath-confirmed sentence, "They shall not enter into my rest." Here,

(1.) The parties affected by it: All the Israelites, from twenty years old and upward at the time of the exodus. The number of men at that time, besides the Levites, was six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty. Num. ii. 32. Double this for the females and we have one million two hundred and seven thousand and one hundred. Add to this the adult Levites and we have an aggregate of one million two hundred and ninety-seven thousand and one hundred. Still further, if the ordinary laws of mortality continued to govern amid the population under twenty years, this would double the number and give us the fearful aggregate of two millions five hundred and ninety-four thousand and two hundred sentenced to death in the wilderness without seeing the promised land; and all within the round of forty years. At the end of this period, the adult males amounted to six hundred and one thousand seven hundred and thirty, being a falling off of one thousand eight hundred. Num. xxvi. 51.

(2.) The falling short of Canaan as a place of permanent abode, is the specific punishment for the crime of which they were guilty. The originals in Greek and Hebrew favor physical rest; cessation from motion as the rest intended: or rather the place of quiescence: but of this again.

(3.) It is called *my rest*, because prepared and provided

by the Lord for the habitation of his chosen people, and was the subject of promise and the object of desire for more than four hundred years.

V. 12. "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." The inferential particle, "Wherefore," of the seventh verse, stands in immediate logical connection with this. From the demonstrated superiority of the Son of God over Moses, and the felicitous consequences of holding fast the confidence and the rejoicing of their hope, Paul infers the duty and propriety of earnest attention; "Wherefore, Take heed, brethren." The suspension of the sense, in order to take in an additional basis of strength for it, does not do away the logical connection. Had the writer made the connection close locally, and subjoined the quotation from the psalm as an appendix, the argument would not have been changed: a little additional verbiage would have been required, which the parenthesis method of the quotation saves. On this note,

1. The admirable tact of the Apostle, in bringing all the branches of his argument into subordination to his main purpose, and showing their bearing upon the danger of apostasy and the prevention of that direful calamity.

2. His winsome manner of address; he recognizes the Hebrews as brethren. This may be understood in the two-fold relations of nature and of grace: and understood in either or both, hath a specific tendency. Delicacy and tenderness become those who stand between the living and the dead; between the erring and the imperiled, and those whose office is to instruct and lead in the way of safety.

3. The arrest and direction of earnest attention. The word for *take heed*, primarily means to *see* to them, to *look at*—to *inspect* carefully—these in a natural sense. Then it rises to a higher region and involves mental activity—

the arrest of the understanding and the exercise of the reasoning faculties: and these with a view to interest the moral affections and to bring motive to bear on action.

4. The object upon which the mind's powers are called to operate. It is a great evil apprehended, that it may be guarded against. The detection of it, if it exist, is treated in this, and the prophylactic or the sanitary remedy in v. 13.

(1.) This fearful evil is unbelief—"an evil heart of unbelief." "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness"—And, we may add, with the heart man disbelieveth unto condemnation. The heart does not mean *feeling* only; used as a figure here, it includes the mental powers, for faith as an act of ours, involves the intellect. Belief is *reliance* on testimony: not simply the *perception* of its truth. In this sense the demons believe and tremble. But *reliance*, leaning upon, confiding in the veracity of the testifier; this sets to its seal that God is true, and appropriates the matter testified unto, to itself. Thus faith—true saving faith, is to be understood *objectively*, not *subjectively*. It is not his *act* of believing that justifies the sinner in the sight of God; but the *object* presented to his mind, in the divine testimony; viz., the Saviour himself as the fulfiller of all law on the behalf of sinners. The heart is evil because of its unbelief. The carnal mind is enmity against God—it is wicked or evil by nature, and unbelief bars the door against a change. Faith is a duty, or unbelief could not be a sin.

5. The possibility of a man being a believer—having true faith, and in general exercised aright, and yet at times falling under unbelief, is here intimated; although not so distinctly as in the original. Our translators have not given the proper force here, as they did to the very same word in ii. 1.—*lest at any time*. "Take heed lest at any time there shall be in any one of you," etc. The danger of occasional

attacks of unbelief is thus guarded against, as well as the enormity of its settled principle.

6. The aggregate mass of the church—"the brethren" are made responsible wards or guardians to watch over each and every individual member: lest there shall be in any one of you an evil heart—*any one* of members of the church. When the first born of men became the first murderer, then, having violated the law, he had the effrontery to deny its existence, "Am I my brother's keeper?" And thus generally, a denial of its existence, or a lowering of the law's standard, is subsequent to its transgression. Hence the device of a new law of grace, in which, not perfect obedience is required in order to life, but sincere. Let the sinner make the law, then he can fulfil it.

7. The manner in which the sin of unbelief discovers itself—"in departing from the living God." This implies activity; although the prefix *un*, before *belief*, seems naturally to suggest the idea of a mere negation—the simple absence of belief. If we say that man is unhappy, we do not mean it a mere negation—that he is simply devoid of happiness; but that his bosom is the abode of positive pain, sorrow, anguish. So unbelief involves positive resistance to the testimony of God—"he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar"—hath declared him to be a liar. 1 John x. 10. No man, under the dispensation of gospel truth, can work his way down to hell, but by the painful and laborious activities of an evil heart of unbelief.

8. Note the point of departure—"from the living God:" a phrase never to be pronounced but with the most profound reverence. It embraces all that belongs to the happiness, the life, the enjoyment of the creature. Many there are that live; but he only is Life—the fountain of life. Intercourse with him is the life of the soul, whose activities are happiness. Exclusion from his communion is death; and when

perpetuated is hell. Now this evil heart is ever prone to exclude from Him. It departs from his authority, though it cannot from his power; it quits and ignores his ways—forsakes his paths. This evil heart becomes liberal; it refuses to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. It soon casts off the flimsy robe of profession, because it now ceases to cover its own moral deformities: and presently lands in complete apostasy.

9. Now remember, professing christians have apostatized from their profession (so to speak), and yet not from the truth they professed; and, thanks to God's long-suffering, thousands of these have returned and been restored. But where is there one who has returned after denying the truth? Who ever heard of such? The reason why unbelief has this damning effect, is, because it sets at naught the only way of reconciliation with God. "You who have begun this race of apostasy, therefore, be entreated to stop short, lest God should permit you to run on to the goal; then crowned indeed you will be; but with a crown of iron heated to whiteness in the fires of his eternal wrath."

V. 13. "But exhort one another daily, whilst it is called to-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."

We have here the active remedy, prophylactic, and sanitary—preventive and curative, for the fearful sin of departing from the living God. And

1. The prominent idea is mutual exhortation. The Greek word signifies, to invite or call up alongside; as when a friend places a chair beside himself—and asks you to take a seat; which at once intimates a desire for friendly intercourse. From the principal part of this word is derived the name *church*, meaning persons called, but called out from a larger mass. Hence the word in this text is sometimes translated *exhort*; sometimes *comfort*, showing that

invitations and kindly converse go into the essence of exhortation; and being persevered in lead to comfort and consolation. Hence the noun *paraclete*, translated Comforter and applied to the Holy Spirit, in all places where it occurs in the New Testament, except one; where it is applied to Christ and is translated *Advocate*—"we have an Advocate with the Father." Exhortation, then, means friendly invitation, counsel, advice; which often includes admonition, reproof, rebuke, etc.

2. This duty is mutual,—“one another,” and is common to all the brethren. Doubtless, ministers and other officers of the church are more especially bound to its performance, but it is not restricted to them. “Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him.” Lev. xix. 17. And yet obviously this is a very delicate duty; and success in it will depend upon the preparatory state of your own mind: that is, first convince him that love to him is the basis of your action: and this you will fail to do, unless from heart-love you seek his good.

3. The frequency is to be noted—*daily*—according to every day: up to the present—this day: to-day: as long as the occasion calls for it: while any opportunity is spoken of. The Holy Ghost anticipates great neglect in this duty, and hence presses its frequency. Oh, how many to-days pass unimproved! How cowardly we are! How timid and diffident are even ministers in not speaking a good word in season? How much good is foregone and evil not prevented? The beginning of apostasy must be noticeable; and some brother might surely see it, and by gentle approaches arrest ere it gain strength.

4. This duty is well adapted to prevent a hardening process, or to recover a brother from its progress after the downward course has been begun. It consists largely in pointing out the deceitfulness of sin. Sin entered our



world at first by deceit—the woman, being *deceived* was in the transgression. Every deception involves a falsehood; consequently an exhibition of the opposite truth may break the fowler's snare and release the captive.

V. 14. "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end."

*For* introduces an argument and reason in further support of the duty enjoined in the two preceding verses. Take heed and exhort one another, *For*—because in so doing you will both give and receive evidence of your union with Christ. "As the branch cannot bear fruit, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me." "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch: and men gather them; and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." John xv. 4, 6. We have therefore two points before us.

I. What is it to be made partakers of Christ?

II. How is this participation proved?

In regard to the I., note

1. The language is figurative and means participation in all the benefits and blessings of the great salvation. Deliverance from the condemning power of the law on account of sin; reconciliation by the blood of atonement; justification by His righteousness imputed to us; regeneration by his Spirit, who ever after abideth in us; and all the consequent graces—faith, repentance, love, joy and peace on earth and glory eternal in heaven.

2. Of all these we are *made* partakers. Regeneration is the work of God's Spirit. Our spirit is the passive subject, in which the change from death unto life is made. It is the Spirit that quickeneth—giveth life, the flesh profiteth nothing. Thus the gospel stains the pride of all human glory, and places the crown on the only head fit to wear it—the same head which wore the crown of thorns. As the

Son, when he came to our world not to condemn but to save it, took part of our nature; so, in being prepared to go and be with him, are we made partakers of his divine nature. "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." 2 Pet. i. 3, 4. Now, these necessary consequences—necessary because God has ordained them—lead directly to our

II. Topic, How the evidences of this participation are attained; and this

1. In general terms, is by the effects of the union. Christianity is a system, and the most grand and glorious of all systems, of experimental philosophy. It reasons both ways; at times, from effects back to their causes; and at other times, from causes forward to their effects. The former most frequently. Thus, the Master himself, "By their fruits shall ye know them." If the tree bears good fruit, we know it is a good tree. If the professed believer bears the fruits of righteousness, he is a good tree—his profession is genuine and true. You will observe, the fruit does not make the tree good: this were to put effect for cause, and to subvert the very foundation of all inductive reasoning and science. If we hold our first confidence steadfast unto the last, this does not prove that the holding steadfast produced or created this firm faith; but the contrary; the beginning of the confidence—the strong faith is the cause; and the holding fast is the effect. From the effect we infer the previous existence of the cause: but strange is that philosophy which makes the holy obedience which follows true conversion and faith, the conditional *cause* of that faith

and conversion; the fruit the cause of the tree that bears it! No, not at all does the expression, *if we hold*, militate against the doctrine of the saint's perseverance in grace. If Christ is the true vine, every branch in him will bear good fruit. Does the *If* here affirm that he is not the true vine?

2. The true Christian has his heart and soul not only imbued, but has his whole faculties inured to the blessed doctrines of peace through the blood of the cross. He must not be a babe always; but must take food and grow up to the stature of a man. To be stationary in the divine life, is impossible. Trees do grow—souls do grow, graces do grow. Let us not deceive ourselves: it is a plain matter of fact, that, if we are habitually cold, dull, heavy, indifferent, we have not been made partakers of Christ.

3. In the Christian heart there must be and there always is, though not always in the same degree, a tender, a sacred and a permanent regard to the truth as it is in Jesus. You are to contend for it manfully against all opposition from within and without; and the opponents are vastly numerous and fearfully powerful—the evil heart of unbelief is a citadel of enemies within; then, there is the cold formality of nominal professors. Direct and blasphemous rebellion against the great God our Saviour exists; and blasphemies of the corrupt heart in the shape of rational religion. Then, there are sworn enemies of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the character of ministers of his gospel. They would take away your Lord—take away his sacrifice, the only blood of sprinkling that can purify the conscience and speak peace to the soul. They would tear out your life. They would break the arm of the Almighty that holds in his everlasting grasp the renewed man and all that is dear to him on earth and in heaven.

4. As necessary to the full proof of our being partakers

of Christ, "we must cultivate every grace of the Holy Spirit—*grace* I say, for every holy emotion, is his action in the soul. At the head of these stands *faith*, with his long and strong arm, which reaches unto the mercy-seat and draws down upon our souls the rich treasures of heavenly blessings. He that lives by faith, lives a life above the angels. He walks above the stars, which are as a pavement beneath his feet. His head is lost in the glories of heaven, while his feet are entangled in the snares of earth."

5. Love follows in order. Charity is the bond of perfectness, for it binds together all on earth and all in heaven. God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him. And this grace is eternal as its author—"Faith, hope, charity, these three, but the greatest of these is charity." Faith will be swallowed up in vision, hope lost in fruition, but Charity endureth forever.

6. There is a limit to the display of these proofs of our partaking of Christ—unto the end. It most probably means the end of our life on earth: for after that evidences are not needed. Heaven is all radiant with the glory of God's redeemed. In their Saviour's glory resplendent, there can be no room to ask them for proof of their steadfastness. As they pass the gates of death, they receive from the hand that was nailed to the cross the crown of righteousness and of glory, and the question whence came it, cannot arise. Let us then hold fast and repent. Precious in God's sight is the death of his saints.

V. 15 is a repetition of the matter quoted in v. v. 7 and 8 and partly in v. 13. It varies only in the introductory expression. V. 7 "as the Holy Ghost saith" and v. 15, "While it is said;" this marks time—as long as, and at the time these things are uttered, and "to-day"—this day, you may hear his voice, "harden not your hearts." This is recalled for a purpose somewhat different from its former use. Then

he pressed the danger and ruin of the hardening process ; but now he goes behind that process, and drags forth the demon which lurks there and produces this hardness of heart. Unbelief is this demon—destroyer of all tenderness of conscience and delicacy of christian sensibility. This demon he traces to his den and forces him out again to the light in the four following verses. V. 16. “For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.” A criticism on the word translated “some,” creates a difficulty, which springs from the punctuation. Owen and Sampson remark, the one that Chrysostom, and both that the Syric translation reads the passage with an interrogation—For who, upon hearing, did provoke? Our translation, most probably correctly, proceeds without the interrogation. For some, having heard, did provoke, but not all. And yet, the argument of Sampson is exceedingly plausible.

All the males from twenty years and upward (and as I have before stated, probably the females) making an aggregate of 1,297,100 perished as threatened, except Caleb and Joshua. See Num. xxxii. 11, 12. This aggregate Sampson thinks scarcely consists with the expression *some*. But even the actual number of 603,550 males over twenty years, requires an average of 413 per day, through the whole forty years. V.v. 17, 18, “But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?”

1. Here we note, the sin for which they were doomed to perish in the desert. Its first outbreak was at Rephidim in the wilderness of Sin, before they came to Sinai. Ex. xvii. 2-7. Its ultimate development occurred about a year afterward, at Kadesh in the wilderness of Paran, just after

the return of the Messengers sent to spy out the land. Num. xiv. 2, 4, and xx. 1. It was on this occasion that the Lord's patience was exhausted and, although he pardoned their sin, so as not to execute the declaration made to Moses, xiv. 12, "I will smite them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they," yet he declared his purpose to cut the adult males off and confirmed it by his oath—v. v. 28, 29, "As surely as I live, saith the LORD, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: your carcasses shall fall in the wilderness." They rebelled against their Lord and were about to "make a captain and return into Egypt." v. 4. Unbelief, working itself out into open rebellion, was the great sin of Israel.

2. Here we meet a difficult and delicate question: Did this sin regard the earthly Canaan only? or did it cut them off also from that Canaan which lies beyond the Jordan of death? Not without diffidence do I venture to dissent from what is perhaps the more general opinion. The latter form of the question I answer in the negative, which of course is an affirmation of the former. I think we have not sufficient ground to believe, that these 603,550 who died in the wilderness all passed into the world of woe. Because (1.) There is no expression in the whole history, distinctly affirming their loss of heavenly rest: nor anything from which it necessarily follows. (2.) The entire economy of Moses was characterized by carnal ordinances, but typical of spiritual things. The testimony of God, which they sinned in disbelieving, regarded the earthly Canaan only. Had the promise of the Messiah been expressly included, the sin would have been very different. (3.) The infliction of bodily death, though an expression of God's displeasure is not necessarily an evidence of eternal wrath. The body is dead because of sin, even where



the spirit is life because of righteousness. It cannot be doubted, but that men have died under God's anger, of whom, notwithstanding, we cannot safely affirm their utter perdition. The thief on the cross is an example. The Corinthian church members who polluted the sacred supper, are in this category. "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you and many sleep." Their eating and drinking were not of faith, but of unbelief, and yet it is said, they *fell asleep*; a phraseology applied only to such as die in the Lord. (4.) Moses and Aaron are fair examples. They died without entering the promised land; and the formal reason given by the Lord is, "Because ye believed me not." Num. xx. 12. Did Moses and Aaron miss of the heavenly Canaan? So the Lord similarly limits the unbelief of the guilty Israelites—"Yet in this thing ye believed me not." Deut. i. 32.—"in this thing," about the conquest of Canaan and the divine support in that most perilous enterprise, ye believed me not. (5.) If their perishing in the wilderness, under the wrath of God, is evidence of their loss of the heavenly Canaan, will it not follow, that all the rest of the nation who were not guilty of this same unbelief, assuredly entered that glorious Canaan which lies beyond the Jordan of death? But who will affirm this?

V. 19. "So we see, that they could not enter in because of unbelief." This conclusion closes up the argument so completely, logically, beautifully, as to leave no room for explanatory remark. We may, however, add a few practical deductions.

1. It is not the outward attention to the preached gospel, nor the ordinances of the church, nor even the voice, unmistakable from the burning mountain, that can create and perpetuate the soul's union with Christ. This is the result of the Holy Spirit's inhabitation in the heart and soul: for He dwelleth with you and shall be in you. Is your external

conduct decent, becoming your profession, even praiseworthy in the sight of men—do you shudder at the voice of the blasphemer, and shrink away from the society of the profane? It is all well so far. But there must be a deeper foundation; these must come up from below, with the waters of life gushing from the smitten rock. Take heed. Are you sure that a change of circumstances might not produce a change of conduct? “But what! is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing? And Elisha answered; The Lord hath showed me that thou shalt be king over Syria.” 2 Kings viii. 13. And Hazael perpetrated the very horrible cruelties, from which, before the change of circumstances, his soul shrunk away with disgust and horror.

2. The glory and strength of God’s visible church are not measured by the number of its members. A whole generation is swept off in the desert, but still the church is safe. The loss of unsound members is a gain of strength. Gideon’s three hundred men, with their broken pitchers and burning lamps, was a stronger army than the ten thousand whom he mustered out the day before the battle. See Judges vii.

3. Fidelity to God and Zion, whatever may be the power and weight of unbelief, is always marked with signal honor. Boast not of your Spartan bands—your legions of heroic barbarians. Caleb and Joshua dared to resist more than half a million of rebels, and over them they triumphed. In the balances of the sanctuary they outweighed the six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty.

4. The wrath of God may lie upon masses of men, and yet not be executed at once. God could have instantly cut off this rebellious band, all of them, as he did some—(see Num. xiv. 12, xvi. 46, xxv. 9), but he chose to execute his sentence through a succession of forty years.

5. Popular transgression will be followed by public punishment. Let not the individual suppose, that because a wicked work is popular and a whole nation shoulders the responsibility, therefore he, as an individual, shall escape in the mass; or that the magnitude of the mass will secure its exemption. "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil." The Midianites were as grasshoppers for multitude, but the cake of barley bread smote their tents and "the multitude melted away." Few mistakes, in a country of popular government, are more common and more fatal, than this idea, that divided responsibility screens from punishment.

6. Inability to enter the earthly Canaan lay in unbelief; so, then and now, inability to enter into the spiritual rest of the soul's communion with God, on earth and in heaven, is found in unbelief. There is no other obstacle or hindrance between the soul and heavenly felicity begun on earth and consummated in heaven.

## CHAPTER IV.

VERSES 1-11.—“Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left *us* of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard *it*. For we which have believed do enter into rest; as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, If they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he spake in a certain place of the seventh *day* on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this *place* again, If they shall enter into my rest. Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter in, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To-day, after so long a time; as it is said, To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth, therefore, a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.”

I quote this section entire, because it contains an argument, the logical framework, as it were, of the building, which we must understand, in order to an intelligent and safe comprehension of its outer covering and its inward finish and embellishments.

Having traced their falling short of Canaan as a punishment for their rebellion against God, to the unbelief of the six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty whose carcasses fell in the desert, the Apostle institutes—perhaps, rather, *prosecutes* a comparison already begun or hinted at, between the condition in reference to Canaan and our condition—the condition of Hebrew and all other professing Christians, in reference to another rest. The key to the argument is found in v. 11, where we see that the failure in the desert is used as an *example*, an illustration explanatory of the danger in this higher case of rest. The points of resemblance must be noticed. (1.) A rest was *proposed*, set forth before Israel, viz., their settlement in Canaan in a state of peace and quietness; an unrestricted enjoyment of all the benefits and blessings of civil and religious privileges. Similar to this and typified by it, is another rest set before the Church, of which David spake four hundred and thirty years after Israel had entered into the rest of Canaan. (2.) The rest of Canaan was *promised* to Israel in their paternal head, four hundred and seventy years before they acquired actual possession of it. This was guaranteed to Abraham, in the most solemn manner, under an exhibition of the typical sacrifices and the awful solemnity of the smoking furnace and the burning lamp (Gen. xvii.), typifying at once the furnace of affliction through which they must pass, and their deliverance by the divine Mediator through his own power and the efficacy of his own sacrifice. Corresponding to this, there must be, and there is a *promise* left to Israel after what refers to the promised land and its privileges; viz., that of the Messiah and all the blessings of his kingdom, which are included in the covenant with Abraham. (3.) As the promise of Canaan was confirmed by an oath, so this subsequent promise of a rest yet remaining, was confirmed by an oath, as we shall see in its proper place.

(4.) As the Israelites were tempted and also warned of their danger, so now we are tempted and warned that we may avoid the corresponding calamity, and secure to ourselves that peace, comfort and joy which characterizes the New Testament dispensation. (5.) As the delightful anticipations and glad prospect of Abraham's seed, who for four hundred years had been sojourners in strange lands, presented powerful motives to steadfast confidence in Moses and in God, so the anticipated blessedness of Messiah's reign, so gloriously described by the prophets and the poets, hold forth inducements and arguments of unmeasured force, toward securing unwavering steadfastness in the profession of their faith. And thus the Apostle turns his battery upon the citadel of unbelief.

We proceed now with the exposition in its detail. And remark,

1. Verse first is an inference and practical conclusion from the preceding discussion. If so fearful and widespread a calamity fell upon our forefathers, as a punishment for their unbelief in God's promise and their consequent rebellion against his government, let us take warning and indulge a salutary fear.

The radical cause of all fear, is the perception of great power. Perhaps I had better say, the *conception*; for undoubtedly a mighty power, which exists only in the imagination, operates as long as it is believed in as a reality, the very same as if it were real. Before this mighty power, we are thrown into an agitation of mind, whose character depends upon the relations we conceive ourselves to stand in to the power. This calls into action the law of self-love. If the power is in friendly hands, or so believed to be, the perturbation of mind will be pleasing: if in hostile hands, painful: and this explains the wonderful change which passes in the mind of the sinner under deep conviction,



when his views of God as angry with a just indignation, are suddenly changed and he beholds Him as a Father reconciled and at peace with him. Now, under both these aspects is the word *fear* used in Scripture. Ever since man sinned, he has been at enmity with God; and therefore, to him the primary fear is that which hath torment, and which at conversion is cast out by love; and if the love is perfect, the fear is annihilated. Self-love, which is very different from selfishness, in view of great power prompts to vigilance; and this is a modification of fear such as is here commended. Let us indulge that apprehension of danger which prompts to vigilance. Herein is nothing cowardly, but the reverse: true moral heroism perceives danger in the distance, and provides for it in due time.

2. There are two methods of explaining the phrase—"a promise being left *us*"—(1) It may mean, (by not supplying *us*, which word is not in the original), that the promise being relinquished, left, forsaken, describes the manner and cause of our falling short of the rest. (2) It may mean as our translators intimate by supplying *us*, that the promise is left to us: and thus it defines the precise point of our danger under the gospel. This appears to me the true explanation. We have a promise of entering into the joys and blessedness of Messiah's kingdom, as had our fathers of entering Canaan; they failed through self-will and unbelief, and we can stand only by faith, let us not be high minded but fear; they were cut off by unbelief, and thou standest by faith.

3. The precise thing feared—the object of the mind's perturbation, is, the possibility of falling short—not of losing, for that implies possession; but of failing to reach the rest, precisely as did their fathers come short.

4. This jealous, vigilant fear spreads its eye over the whole field. It watches all, and all watch each—lest any

of you should seem—should appear ;—this is the opposite of Cain's doctrine. Every man is his brother's keeper and is bound to look upon the things of others. The very beginnings of apostasy—the first signs of indifference or vacillation in regard to faith and practice must be nipped in the bud, lest they blossom and bear fruit unto death.

5. The nature of this rest must not be lost sight of ; and for its due appreciation, we must bear in mind the comparison and contrast. In whatever the New Testament dispensation differs from and excels the Old, this constitutes the *rest*. It may all be summed up under two heads ; (1) The removal of the yoke of ceremonial bondage. This yoke was laid on Israel at Sinai, and was a grievous and a heavy "yoke, which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear." Nevertheless, the Sinai institutions were a blessing in their operation upon that people : and for fifteen centuries they lifted them up, in every moral and spiritual attribute, above all the nations. Still it remains true, they were in comparison of the New Testament dispensation, a heavy yoke, from which Christ proposes to deliver them, and promises them a yoke which is easy and a burden which is light. (2) The other head rules the positive felicities of gospel grace—all the joys of holy communion ; the childlike freedom of approach to our Father God, which opens the mouth with boldness in prayer ; the full and joyous elevation of soul, which always follows the inhabitation of the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father.

V. 2. *For* here has special reference to *the promise left us*, and introduces a reason or proof of it. This is done by the assertion of a general truth, running back to the first promise in Paradise ; but having more immediate regard to the Abrahamic period, and including all between that era and the reign of Messiah. The gospel was preached in the days

of the Patriarch. Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it and was glad. "Unto us the gospel is preached"—we are evangelized; the message of salvation has been and is proclaimed in our ears, even as it was to them who fell in the wilderness, and to the multitudes who did not die there. There is but one gospel; but one Christ, one sacrifice, one righteousness: there is but one Spirit, but one Father, one church redeemed, sanctified, brought home to glory. The same gospel that cheered the heart of Adam in Paradise, of Enoch and Noah, of Shem, Melchisedek and Abraham, of Samuel, David and Isaiah, cheers now the heart of the convicted and renewed man. But the results of this evangelizing operation were very different among them of old; they are very different among us now. The word preached—the doctrine of hearing—the truths that fell upon the ears of the unbelievers in the desert, and everywhere, did not *profit them*. This refers to spiritual, saving profit. They were no doubt benefited in many respects, by the moral influences of the sanctuary teachings; just as wicked men now live unmolested and prosperous in many ways, because of the purifying influences of gospel teachings which they decry and traduce. But as to permanent, spiritual benefits, they were not.

Then follows the reason—not being by them that heard mixed with faith. There is allusion to the process of mastication and digestion of natural food. Truth is to the understanding, as food to the body. Gospel truth is as food to our spiritual nature. "My flesh is meat indeed and my blood is drink indeed"—the sacrifice of Christ, his atonement is the price of our redemption. But faith must appropriate the doctrines of the gospel, as the digestive powers in nature secrete and appropriate the food, so that it becomes part of the body itself. So the word, or doctrine of the gospel, is spoken of as taking up its residence in

the soul. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom"—And the difference between this hearing without profit and that which is mixed with faith, is beautifully set forth in the parable of the sower: where the seed by the wayside, on stony places, among thorns, represents the word not mixed with faith; whilst that on good ground, is that mixed with faith—received into an honest and good heart; made the subject of earnest and constant study; food digested and appropriated to the growth of the new man. Food that does not digest is injurious to health, and knowledge, without faith, puffeth up.

V. 3. *For* as usual, indicates an additional reason in support of the preceding assertion; which here is, that unbelief prevented a profitable entrance upon the rest of Canaan. If unbelief excluded some; by necessary consequence, faith admitted other some. "For we who believe do enter into rest." It is the present time; not shall, at some future period, enter; but are now entering and are now in possession of that rest, which faith secures. And this he proceeds to establish by the fact, that God had sworn, that the unbeliever should not enter into his rest. Now, this expression of divine indignation against the sin of unbelief, occurred twenty-four centuries and more after the establishment of the original sabbatic law. The works of creation were finished and completed with the sixth day, and God's example was made the moral law for Adam's race. The *rest*, now denied to unbelief, cannot therefore mean the regular, weekly rest; for all men, believers and unbelievers, are equally bound by this law, and have equal right and opportunity to obey it and to enjoy its benefits.

V. 4. *For he spake*—God or scripture—spake in a certain place. He gives neither the name of the speaker, nor the place whence he quotes, thus complimenting his Brethren by the assumption, that their familiarity with the sacred

book, would at once tell the person and the place. He spoke of the seventh *day* thus, "And God did rest the seventh day from all his works." In Gen. ii. 1, we are told "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished and all the host of them." "And on the seventh day God ended (*finished*, it is the same word as so rendered in the preceding verse) his work which he had made: and he *rested* on the seventh day"—The word *finished* means completed—the work of creating was all done and closed with the sixth day; and, of course, no work was done on the seventh; but on it God took a *Sabbath*, *rest* as this Hebrew word means; not that God was fatigued and wearied with his labor. For "The Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary"—Isa. xl. 28.

Rest is the opposite of motion, and, in regard to living beings capable of weariness, the secondary idea is relief from weariness—resuscitation of the exhausted energies. Neither of these senses of the word is applicable to God; he cannot cease from action; nor can he be refreshed and restored from the fatigue of working. But he has given us in Gen. i. 31, to understand in what His *rest* consists; viz., the contemplation of his works and his complacency in them: "And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold it was very good. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested—*sabbatized*, from all his work." The reason for blessing and sanctifying the day, was not, because it was the *seventh*, but "*because in it he had RESTED.*" Therefore, when he promulgated this Sabbatic law in thunder from Sinai and wrote it with his own finger on the stone table, he did not say, "Remember the *seventh* day"—but "Remember the SABBATH day to keep it holy." He did not bless the *seventh*, and hallow it; but "he blessed the SABBATH day, and hallowed it." It is worthy of very especial notice, that

there is not a single instance in all the Bible in which the day of sacred rest, is designated by the phrase *seventh day*. It is never so named. I have just examined all of the cases, as given in Cruden, and find that in all instances wherein the words *seventh day* occur, there is reference only to the order of succession as a means of designation; other days are always referred to, or a point from which the count begins, first, second, etc. This scriptural fact is precisely what the very meaning of the word *seventh* would demand. It is an ordinal number; that is, a word used to designate the order of things to which it is applied. It must have a unit or point from which to start. And God did rest the seventh day, *i. e.*, the seventh from the beginning of creation work. But this rest cannot be what remains as peculiarly distinctive of Messiah's reign, for the Church and the world had this rest always.

V. 5. Nor can the second rest, that of Canaan concerning which the oath was uttered, "If they shall enter into my rest," be the ultimate rest, as this was typified and set forth in the Sabbatic law: although the Israelites came up from the land of bondage, with the promise of rest before them in Canaan: and some failed to enter by unbelief; whilst the great body of the nation and Church did enter into that rest and settled there in quiet and peace.

V. 6 is partly an inference from the citations preceding, and partly an argument bearing on the position of v. 7. "Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein" is a deduction from the fact of the partial failure of entrance: and they to whom it was first preached—who were formerly evangelized, did not enter in because of unbelief; there occurred a third reference to a time of rest—"Again, the Scripture limiteth a certain day." The glorious spiritual rest; the Sabbath of the soul to the social body of the Church, hath not yet been reached: neither under the Sab-



bath of creation, type of a blessed state on earth and a much more blessed state in heaven; nor under that rest promised in Canaan; another rest therefore must be looked for. Of this David spoke in Ps. xcv., where he boundeth and limiteth the promise of rest to some day yet future; some special season still held up before the Church as an object of intense desire. Thus, four hundred and thirty years after Israel settled in Canaan, the Spirit speaking in David after so long a time constrains our attention. "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." This is to direct us again to the whole psalm, as proof of a third rest before the Church.

V. 8. Here he proceeds to argue from the data laid down, as *For* intimates a supporting reason. *Jesus* is a Greek word and signifies the same as the Hebrew word Joshua—"And thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." This is the name of Joshua, as we find it translated in the Greek Bible. The argument is simple and plain. If Joshua, who was appointed of God to lead the hosts of Israel across the Jordan and to locate them in the promised land, had given them rest—the rest promised, then would not the Scriptures afterward have spoken of another day.

V. 9. "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." Here the change of term must be carefully noted. The word for *rest* in iii. 11, 18, iv. 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, signified cessation from physical action, and chiefly by constraint. An example or two will give the idea. Acts xiv. 18, "And with these sayings scarce *restrained* they the people that they had not done sacrifice unto them." Acts viii. 49—"or what is the place of *my rest*?" Neh.—(in the LXX.) iv. 11—"till we come in the midst among them, and slay them, and *cause* the work to *cease*." Ps. lxxxv. 3. "Thou *hast taken away* all thy wrath." Such is the word in these

eight instances in this and the preceding chapter. It has no peculiar affinity for a moral or religious but only for a physical rest, or resting place. Not so the rest which Paul proves from the Scripture, remaineth for the people of God. There remaineth a *SABBATISMOS*—a sacred, spiritual rest. This word Sabbath is never used, but as expressive of a sacred, religious resting; whether of the regular recurring hallowed day, or of the special, set feasts of the Hebrew worship. In Lev. xxiii. a number of these “feasts of the Lord” are prescribed, on which there is to be “an holy convocation”—a meeting of the people for public worship: and a suspension of business—“Ye shall do no servile work therein.” Now these extra feasts are called *sabbaths*; and are contra-distinguished from the regular hebdomadal, or weekly recurring sacred rest day, mentioned in v. 3. “On the fifteenth day of the first month is the feast of unleavened bread seven days:” on the first of which seven and on the seventh—five days intervening—shall be an holy convocation and an entire suspension of labor. V.v. 6, 7, 8. Here are two extra Sabbaths. Then v.v. 10–14, we have the offering of first fruits; which is not a sabbath, there being no general suspension of labor and no holy convocation for public worship. Then v.v. 15 to 22, we have the feast of pentecost, that is the fiftieth day after the offering of first fruits. This is a sabbath, no servile work is allowed and there is an holy convocation. see v. 21. This is the third extra sabbath. Next is the feast of trumpets: v. 24. “In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath”—no servile work and a holy convocation. This is the fourth. Then v.v. 27 to 32, there is “a day of atonement, on the tenth day of the seventh month”—including total abstinence from work, under forfeiture of church standing, if not of life itself; and an holy convocation, “It shall be unto you a sabbath

of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls in the ninth *day* of the month at even: from even unto even shall ye celebrate your sabbath." Then v.v. 34-36 we have the feast of tabernacles. "The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the Lord." The first of the seven and the last, are days of sacred rest and public worship, and these are expressly called sabbaths in v. 39. Thus we have a sixth and a seventh, "These are the feasts of the Lord. Besides the Sabbaths of the Lord." Here, the sabbaths of the Lord, the sacred day on which he rested, and of which he says in v. 3 "it is the sabbath of the Lord," are contrasted with "your sabbath" in v. 32. Thus it is manifest, that these sacred rests are distinct from and additional to the Lord's Rest day. These are the sabbaths of which Paul speaks, when he cautions the Colossians, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of any holy-day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*"—rather the *sabbaths*, "which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. Col. ii. 16, 17. The meats, drinks, new moons, etc., connected with sabbaths, show plainly, that, not the Lord's sabbaths are in the Apostle's eye, but only the Levitical sabbaths of the ceremonial law: and demonstrate the error of those, who use this caution of Paul's, as an argument against the law of the sabbath, of which he does not here speak at all.

We have then three notable Rests, each preceded by a corresponding state of action, labor and work. First, God's cessation from creation works—from that form of action, and his thereupon contemplating them as all very good, and establishing his own example as the law of his finished work, in its highest product. He therefore made it the duty of man to work, in regard to worldly, earthly, secular matters, six days; and to devote and spend the

seventh part of his time, not in physical or even merely intellectual pursuits; but ceasing from labor, to cultivate his understanding, his intellect, his conscience, his moral faculties, his whole spiritual nature, in contemplating the glorious Creator in his works of creation, providence and grace. This is the life and spirit of the primitive sabbatic law, given to man as man. He who made man, knows best what laws are most suited to the nature He gave him. "The sabbath," says our Saviour, Mark ii. 27, 28—"was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: Therefore the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath." Obviously, the spiritual welfare of the soul is the grand end of this sacred institution. It brings the soul of man into communication with his Maker, and aims at his transformation into his likeness. Moreover, it tends constantly to fit him for the enjoyment of that most glorious Rest which lies beyond the Jordan of death; and of which it is of itself a beautiful type. But the measure of this fitness, resulting from the sabbatic rest, is infinitely diversified, both as to individuals and communities. Few individuals, and no community, ever made any considerable approach to that spiritual rest which the original institution held forth to the faith of mankind. The first great experiment of the principle, may be called the Patriarchal dispensation, extending from the Creation to the Exodus, a period of more than twenty-five centuries.

2. The second Rest has its commencement under the Abrahamic covenant, but its issue under the Sinai restrictions thereof. The special test here was the promise of Canaan; but within its embrace was included the spiritual substance of the original typified promise of an eternal Rest in heaven.

The works preceding this Rest, were God's wonders in the protection of his people and their deliverances in Egypt and

the desert of Sinai. God's mighty works and his people's sore trials and afflictions, were a meet preparation for the Rest promised in Canaan; and ought to have led them to such improvement in their social, religious character and condition, as to give them deep experience in divine things; and so to have made them a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle. But such was not the result: many fell short, by their unbelief, even of the earthly Canaan and the external or visible church state and privileges therein; and many more, after entering these, continued stiff necked and rebellious: and never attained to the high glories and the unspeakably blessed Rest which were set before them in the promise of Messiah, that seed of Abraham, in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed. Hence David spake, a thousand years before the incarnation, of another Rest. And Paul has demonstrated that this Sabbatism is the characteristic and the glory of the kingdom of God or reign of Messiah under the gospel Dispensation.

3. And this is our third notable REST. Of course it is preceded by its proper series of labors. This is introduced in the form of a reason in support of the conclusion which shuts us up to the belief of its existence. V. 10 "For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his." Jesus, the Son of Nun, did not lead Israel in reality into the grand, promised Rest of God's people: but Jesus, the Son of Mary, David's root and David's offspring, did the wondrous works which were indispensable to his own entrance upon his own eternal Rest as Messiah, and to his church's Sabbatism—under his New covenant dispensation. This work is the whole obedience of the Redeemer, from the manger to the cross. His humiliation in human nature; the sorrows of childhood; the flight into Egypt; the perfect fulfillment of all filial duties, for he was obedient to his parents until the day of his mani-

festation unto Israel; his full compliance with all the requirements of all law, civil, ceremonial, moral; the privations and labors incident to an humble employment, in which the *merit* of his obedience was and is scarcely less than the *value* of his example; the unmeasured and immeasurable anguish of his soul under the buffetings of the legions of hell in the wilderness and in Gethsemane; the unspeakable agonies of the crucifixion; the withdrawal of the light of his Father's countenance—that awful forsaking; and, as the crowning calamity of all, the wrath of God due to us for sin. Through all these works he passed, and thus laid the foundation of his own mediatorial glory and his people's salvation, deep and broad, and cemented it with his own blood, then bowed he his head and said—O! glorious truth!—IT IS FINISHED. Yes! the agony it over; the work is done; the righteousness of the law for the justification of his people is fulfilled; the sacrifice is completed which takes away their sin. Yes! “IT IS FINISHED.” The gates of death are thrown open, wide; the Victor of sin, death, hell and the grave, arises, ascends, enters the gates of light, and life, and glory; the Spirit of all grace pours down upon the church; releases it from the bondage of light; the ceremonial law, the pollution and death in sin, and thus the *sabbatismos* of our Lord and of his new kingdom and reign upon earth is inaugurated.

How happily now comes in the exhortation v. 11, “Let us labor therefore to enter into that Rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.” There is a beautiful adaptation in the word rendered—“Let us labor.” It expresses a deep feeling of the importance of the matter; and a consequent earnest haste lest the opportunity may pass and the thing not be made sure. A case or two will illustrate. Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 9, 21, urges him, “*Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me*”—“*Do thy diligence to come before win-*



ter." 2 Pet. i. 10—"give diligence to make your calling and election sure" and iii. 14.—"be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace." Take heed. Procrastination is the thief of time. Let no opportunity pass unimproved. Delay not. Spring into the life boat, that ye go not down with the burning wreck.

This dissuasion from apostasy—this persuasion to steadfastness in the faith, based upon so solid and enduring a foundation, our Apostle again supports by the most grand and solemn appeal to the Word of God who liveth and abideth forever. Three more remarks, however, before we proceed—

1. Let professors of religion keep in mind, that the Church, as an aggregate mass, may enter upon a new state of rest and prosperity, and yet individuals embraced in it, may be in an unsafe and ruined condition. Enlarged privileges in Zion do not guarantee salvation to all who have access to them, but only to those who faithfully improve them. Be it the more solemnly impressed, therefore, upon our minds, that enlarged privileges enhance responsibility and call for increased vigilance.

2. The New Testament Sabbath is not a yoke of bondage. No death penalty is attached to it, as in the wilderness. "Whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death." Ex. xxxv. 2. Here, as in many other things, the law is retained whilst the penalty is modified. But this ceremonial appendix to the original Sabbath ceases with the Levitical institution. So it was with sexual impurity—Lev. xx. 10—"the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death." This severe appendage is ceremonial, but neither this, nor the same penalty as to the Sabbath, belongs to the essence of the law: it is not on the tables; and neither the fourth nor the seventh commandment, is abrogated or enfeebled under the gospel. Neither of these laws; no, nor

any in the decalogue, was enacted—brought first into existence at Sinai. They were con-created with man and in man: and human legislation has no power to abrogate any one of them. The penalties are variable, and man may modify them; but the laws themselves are the CONSTITUTION for the human race; and unalterable as God the Legislator. None of them is a yoke of bondage; and the Christian Sabbath ought to be no gloomy day, but a day of pleasant memories and happy enjoyments—"If thou call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD honorable—thou shalt ride upon the high places of the earth." Isa. lviii. 13, 14. And it is a *fact* this day, that the Sabbath-keeping nations control the earth; and that in proportion to their delight in the Sabbatismos of our Lord.

3. For the day, as to order of succession, has been changed in honor of Christ's entering into his Rest on the first day of the week. "On the first day the disciples came together to break bread, and Paul preached." Acts xx. 7. The Marys came to the sepulchre, and Jesus came to the disciples assembled, John xx. 1, 19, 26. The dispute (for such it really is) about the seventh day rest, is simply trifling on a serious subject. The spirit of the law manifestly is, that a seventh part of the time must be devoted to moral and religious culture. Now that the self-same absolute portion of time should be observed is physically impossible. There is no possible method of measuring it off and marking it, so that it can be kept in all latitudes and longitudes of the globe. An exceedingly simple and decisive argument on this point arises from the fact, that a voyage round the globe changes the day. Let a Jew and a Christian turn back to back and travel one east and the other west on a great circle, each keeping his own Sabbath all the way, until they meet in the antipodes; and lo! then they

find themselves both keeping the same day. God's physical and his moral laws never contradict each other.

V.v. 12, 13. "For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked, and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

Two interpretations divide commentators here: which division turns upon the question, whether the phrase "the word of God" means the doctrinal or the personal word. The major part of critics, prior to the days of Owen, contended for the doctrinal word, *i. e.*, held, that the Scriptures, or the truths of the Bible, the doctrines of salvation, were the subject-matter here—that they are quick, powerful, etc. The other view is, that *the Word* of God, here means the same as in John i. 1-4, and in Rev. xix. 13. "In the beginning was *the Word*, and *the Word* was with God, and *the Word* was God." "And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called, The Word of God"—and v. 16, "on his vesture and on his thighs a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." This is the true interpretation.

1. Because it falls in precisely with the Apostle's logic, which must always control. He has proved the existence of a Rest for the New Testament Church; and supported his historical argument with this, that Jesus finished his own work for which he came into the world, and of course entered into his rest as God did at the institution of the primitive Sabbath Rest. He then urges his brethren to press forward with eager and earnest diligence, and haste into that Rest which remains; and stimulates this hasty diligence, by an appeal to their fears—"lest any man fall after

the same example of unbelief." Now what is the very next thought that arises naturally in the mind? Is it not the cause of this danger? Must he not show a reason why, to neglect the Lord's Rest, and his example of finishing his work and entering into his Rest, and to refuse to enter in themselves, is to run extreme peril by provoking the Lord to anger? But now, this is the very thing he does next, if *The Word of God*, means, the Lord, the living God who shall judge the world.

2. It is the person of Christ that is treated of and his doings, in the preceding verses, and our personal danger of despising him: and there is no intimation of a change from his person to his doctrine. What danger is there of the doctrines punishing us for neglecting his person?

3. On all hands it is admitted, as we shall see when we come to it, that the latter part of v. 13, refers to Christ's Judging the world.—"all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do"—literally, to whom our account is: and this is the very expression used in Rom. xiv. 10-13,—"we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ"—"So then every one of us shall give *account* of himself to God." This being clear and indeed admitted, why change from the person of our Lord in v. 10-11, to the doctrine in v. 12, and then back to the person in v. 13? And especially, if all that intervenes exactly corresponds with the character of the Judge? Now that this last is so, we shall proceed to show in the detail; forestalling, however, an answer to one single argument in opposition. It is this, that no scripture writer but John ever uses *the Word* (Logos) as meaning the person of Christ. Yes! indeed! if that assertion were true and including this case, the assertion closes the contest; but it does so by assuming the point in controversy. If no writer but John ever used Logos for the personal Word, then Paul never did. That Paul uses Logos for the doc-

trinal word very often, does not amount to proof that he never used it for the personal word: he uses it for doctrinal in v. 13. Let us see—Luke i. 2 speaks of some who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word—the Logos. Now that this cannot mean the doctrinal word is evident, for Luke is writing a life of our Lord's person, and it is not easy to see how a man could be an eyewitness of his *doctrine*. Nor is it easy to understand how any one could be a minister, an attendant, which describes personal service. 1 John i. 1 says, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life." Luke (and John too) depends for the facts of his history, according to the laws of evidence, upon the best proof, not documentary, the testimony of eye and ear witness. So Luke in Acts xx. 32, "I commend you, brethren, to God, and to the Word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance." "To be able," says Owen, "to build us up, and give us an inheritance, is the property of a person. Nor can they be ascribed to the word preached." This commendation is to the personal Word—who is called the Word of his grace, because by him grace comes; just as God is called "the God of love and peace." 2 Cor. xiii. 11. And in Heb. xi. 3 Paul says "by faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God." This is a different term, but substantially the same in force, as we shall see.

V. 12 gives a reason in support of the preceding, "Let us labor,"—Let us be in earnest haste, there is danger ahead, "For the Word of God is (1.) *quick*." This term popularly now means *speedy—nimble action*, but it is never so used in the Bible. The adverb quickly we find often and in its present natural force.—"arise up Peter quickly." "And

Mary arose quickly and came to Jesus." "Surely I come quickly." But the word *quick* is the translation for *living*, both in the Old and New Testament. Ps. lv. 15, "Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into hell"—*Quick* here does not mean *rapidly, quickly, speedily*, but *alive—living*. So throughout. The proposition is, "For the Logos of God is living"—not a dead letter but a living existence. This attribute he formally appropriates to himself, Rev. i. 18 "I am *he that liveth*, and was dead; and behold I am *alive* forevermore." Here is the word before us (*Zon*) *the living one*. By eminence he claims life of himself and in himself. "Because I live ye shall live also." How forcibly this attribute accords with Paul's argument? Take heed how you offend the Word of God, for he is not a dumb idol, but the living God and the God of life: In comparison with this, how forced and how vapid the figure, when you call the spoken or the written word, living? And how inconsistent with the declaration, that "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." But how does life manifest itself? Is it not by action? Can there be any life where there is no motion?—no activity? Accordingly this self-living Logos, is (2.) *powerful—energetic*. This word we have adopted into our language, and in the very meaning of the Greek. We speak of an energetic man—a man strong and active—not one who has life and strength, but is slovenly and dull, but active in the use of his powers—*a man of energy*. He who is to be the final Judge of quick,—that is—living and dead, was indeed once himself dead, but is now and forever alive and energetic. This quality too presents a reason why we ought to labor to enter into the Rest of this living Word. On the other hand, I know it is said the power and force of the doctrinal word is called for in conviction of sin. The soul is agitated by the energy of truth and made to tremble in view of the sins it has perpetrated.



But then let it be remembered, that the letter is dead—the whole Bible never energized the soul of a sinner, unless the living Spirit used it. And this leads to the (3.) quality—“sharper than any two edged sword.” This marks the penetrating power of the living Logos. So is He spoken of, Isa. xlix. 2. “And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword.” And Rev. i. 16—“out of his mouth went a sharp two edged sword.” The all pervading, living energy of the divine Logos is thus described.

(4.) The fourth is to the third as the second is to the first. Life without energy is nothing; and a sharp sword without a power to give it motion is a harmless nullity. All these qualities are found in the one divine, almighty person. *Piercing*,—not simply having a capacity to pierce, but actually pervading the whole of our being. This omnipresence of the divine essence is very imperfectly comprehended by the human mind. The Psalmist dwelt upon it and studied it with intense interest. “Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine uprising; thou understandest my thought afar off.” cxxxix. “Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect: and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.” Read the whole psalm. Yet with all his efforts, he found himself very ignorant. “Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.” This all-pervading essence divides asunder—passes into the middle space between the soul and spirit. The word rendered *soul*, properly means the animal life—the seat of feelings. From it we have the term which our Apostle uses in 1 Cor. ii. 14 to define a person unregenerate—“But the *natural man* receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God”—Correspondingly with this, the word *spirit*, gives us the term by which he describes the regenerated—“But he that is *spiritual* judgeth (discerneth—

criticiseth) all things." This movement divides also both joints and marrow. There is allusion here, as in the next verse, to the operations of the priests and Levites in cutting up and thus preparing the sacrifices for the altar. So the all-pervading essence of the divine Logos, exposes the lusts of the carnal mind, and distinguishes them from the holy affections, and fits the heart for being offered up an acceptable sacrifice to God. But (5) a necessary consequence of this omnipresence, is an ability to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. But this word discerner means a *critic*: in fact it is the very word itself, which we have adopted from the Greek and in the Grecian sense. This Logos sits as a judge: more than this, for judge expresses the officer who may be not active in duty; but critic includes the right and capacity to judge, and the active exercise of them. This divine Word criticises the *thoughts* and *intents* of the heart. These terms are not synonymous; but have reference, the former—*thoughts*, to the *emotional* activities—the feelings, affections, passions, the latter *intents*, to the intellectual powers, the settled judgments resulting from the activities of the reason, which constitute the principles for regulating conduct. These lie in the vicinity of the spiritual faculties. Dr. Sampson, who holds to the doctrinal word and repudiates the personal Logos, here sums up, thus: "What structure can be more fair and easy than this? *God's word* is enduring and effective, and trenchant, . . . and piercing, . . . and discriminating of the passions and thoughts; and in his (God's) sight there is no creature that is not manifest." I commit to the reader his choice between the two structures, after stating the other in similar terms. The Logos—word of God is living and energetic, and all-pervading, . . . and piercing . . . and sitting as a critic of the emotions and fixed principles of the heart: and (which is yet to be shown) is om-

niscient—all things being before his sight:—"his," meaning the sight of the person spoken of throughout; no change of person.

V. 13, follows up the consequence of the Logos possessing these fine attributes. Omniscience, in human conceptions, depends on omnipresence; and this, combined with the others, draws with it necessarily this knowledge of all the creatures. "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight." Here are two negatives: read very literally the sense will be very clear. "And a creature is not invisible before him."—And no creature is unmanifest in his presence. The word implies a purposed invisibility—hidden so as not to appear; the opposite of being shown, exhibited, held up to view. The expression involves the idea of attempt at concealment, such as they put forth who cry, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb." But all this is vain. And so he expresses the sentiment, free from both negatives. No effort at concealment from the Lamb—the Omnipresent and Omniscient Word of God as Judge can succeed, for "all things are naked, and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." The adversative "But" stands opposed to the assertion that there is not a creature invisible before him: On the contrary all are naked, uncovered as the *gymnastic* players—it is the same word. The other term *opened* has divided the critics. Both terms are taken, as I suppose after much study and research, from the services of the Priests and Levites at the altar of burnt-offerings. The bullock is brought up and felled; immediately he is turned up so that his neck is exposed: and it is this turning up of the neck, which gives origin to the verb here translated *opened*. We have hence the noun *trachea*, as a technical term in anatomy—the windpipe. The exposing of the neck of the animal gives full sweep to

the sharp knife. The blood flows down at the bottom of the altar. The body is then flayed and is now *Gymna*—naked. It is divided up, the entrails removed and the flesh prepared for sacrifice according to the rules. And thus, whilst Paul illustrates and enforces the omniscience of the Logos, he also directs our attention to the great sacrifice of atonement, the offering up of which when he cried “It is finished” *gives* to him, and *secures* for Him as Messiah, the office of eternal Judge and the right to execute its awful functions. How wonderfully appropriate all this, to the Apostle’s exhortation! Let us labor after that Rest; let us fear and shrink from the dreadful thought of falling short; for this Word of God, who hath on his vesture and his thigh that fearful title, KING of Kings, and LORD of Lords, is and shall be Judge of the living and the dead:—“with whom we have to do:” to whom we must render our account. I have stated to the reader, that the word Logos is chiefly used for doctrine, sentiment, account, as here. And 1 Pet. iv. 5, “Who shall give *account* to him that is ready to judge the living and the dead.” And Rom. xiv. 10, 11, 12—“for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.” John v. 22, 23—“For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son. That all *men* should honor the Son even as they honor the Father.”

This is one of the most awful and yet most glorious truths, dear reader! to which your attention can be called. The sacrificed Lamb of God—the babe at Bethlehem born—the God-Man,—he that groaned and bled in Gethsemane and expired on Calvary’s cross, is KING of Kings, Lord of the Universe, and shall judge you and me and all men in the

day of his glory: and oh, let earth rejoice, the same price which he paid for his right of dominion over the universe, delivers our souls from death and hell, and prepares us to stand undismayed before his great white throne—*If we believe.*

From this discussion, it is, we trust, made evident, that there is no power or energy, inherent in the doctrines of the Bible, to convert the souls of men from sin unto God. "Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" Jer. xxiii. 29. True, but the hammer must have the strong, brawny arm of a living man to wield it, or the rocks will not fall to pieces under it. Is not the word of God the sword of the Spirit? True, but no sword becomes an actual slaughter weapon, only as "it is drawn and brandished and given into the hand of the slayer." Ezek. xxi. 9, 10. "Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth:" Hos. vi. 5. Very true; but who did it? Not the *prophets*; not the *words*, but the Lord himself. We admit and contend earnestly for the doctrines of faith, as of infinite value in the work of salvation; but only as means and instruments in the hands of the Lord. All the iron of all the mountains, worked into swords and bayonets and guns, could not fight her battles and defend the nation, without strong, living men. Let us not under the plea of honoring the Scriptures and the doctrinal word, dishonor the Personal Word and the Spirit of all grace. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." "It is the Spirit that quickeneth—that giveth life, the flesh profiteth nothing."

V.v. 14, 15, 16. "Seeing then that we have a great High-priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession," etc. Or, "Having therefore a Great High-priest passed through the heavens," etc.

It is an inference from the preceding discussion, running as far back as iii. 7, where the subject of the church's Rest is introduced, and which results in the grand inference of iv. 14, based upon the glorious fact of the Saviour's entering into his rest and his consequent securing Rest to his church. All which are effects of his finishing the works of his mission, and especially of his priesthood. For the foundation of his kingly office depends on his completing or making himself perfect through sufferings. ii. 10.

Remark the additional epithet to that which is given in iii. 1. It is a natural result of his kingly office as Judge and the pre-requisites mentioned in v. 12, 13. He who possesses these, may surely be called a GREAT High-priest. Hence, to disregard him, to neglect his Rest, to reject his sacrifice and renounce our profession, were to bring upon ourselves a terribly aggravated condemnation.

2. The High-priest's office in detail will come up hereafter. We may now merely say, there could be, under the Levitical law, only one at a time. The corruptions which made the office venal and created a plurality of High-priests did not change the law, and our Apostle all along reasons and illustrates his subject from the law regulating the public services. On the great day of atonement, the High-priest passed within—passed *through* the blue veil which divided the tabernacle into two compartments. He was the only person ever permitted to pass through into the Most Holy place, and only on this one day. Beyond a doubt, this symbolized our Great High Priest passing through the visible heavens into the Most Holy place not made by hands.

3. The Scriptures speak of three heavens, for Paul was caught up to the third heaven—into paradise. 2 Cor. xii. 2, 3; and here Jesus passed through the heavens—and was received into glory—and was made higher than the heav-



ens, that is than the visible expanse, where the sun, moon and stars appear; the first is the firmament or atmosphere.

4. The name, "Jesus, the Son of God" is here retained, to keep up in our minds his Mediatorial character, as Saviour, and as God. On i. 2 and ii. 9, we have explained these terms. Their connection with, "Great High Priest," teaches that it is as the God-man, offering up the sacrifice required of the Priest, that he saves his people from their sins and secures the Rest of his church.

5. "Our profession"—this has been expounded already—See on iii. 1.

6. "Let us hold fast"—This is again the grand end of the whole Epistle. The word is different from, and stronger than that in iii. 6; and primarily is significant of physical force, strength or power: and when transferred to states of mind, implies earnest, unconquerable attachment and determined adherence, so that no power of argument, no seductive influence of motive can overcome the tenacity of purpose to retain its sentiments and belief. Such is exemplified in the Apostles, when forbidden to preach Jesus and him crucified, they responded, "We ought to obey God rather than men"—and after they had "been beaten, they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name." Acts v. 40, 41. This same holding fast has been exemplified by thousands of martyrs under Rome Pagan and Rome Papal.

7. This strong language implies, that believers may always expect to endure violent attacks, designed to drive them from their steadfastness. Their adversary continually walketh about seeking whom he may devour. And yet, it is not his most open violence that is the most dangerous. His secret, covert assaults, when he assumes the garb of an angel of light and injects into the mind the suggestions of

unbelief, under some plausible form of virtue, as to our mother Eve, "Yea! hath God said!" Can it be possible that He would thus curtail your liberty? These are the attacks which require the most vigorous grasp of your faith. Or, such as the ascendancy of irreligious society, where the name of God and his Son is treated with irreverence, and piety is jeered at and mocked, and you are cowed and do not stand up for Jesus. Take heed; keep a firmer hold of your profession. "Him that denieth me before men, will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven." Peter trembled and denied his Lord with an oath, before a servant maid; and having passed through this fiery ordeal, he afterward, by abounding grace, held fast his profession with a firm grasp. Now these multiform temptations call for strong support and require tender sympathy. Be not dismayed, for both power and sympathy to direct it are at hand.

V. 15. "For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are, yet* without sin." Here note,

1. Man's nature is essentially social. He is not simply gregarious—connected with his species by merely animal propensities: but his intellectual and moral qualities make association with his kind a necessity to him, permanent and not, as with the mere animal tribes, occasional and temporary. Sympathy does not, indeed, ignore animal feelings, but comprehends them as, however, an inferior part of our nature. Sympathy is simply *suffering along with*. Our Apostle, 1 Cor. xii. 26, refers to this, "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it."—And this in support of v. 25—"That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one

of another." Here is almost a literal translation of the Greek word *sympathy*, which we have adopted; and obviously it is a modification of love—brotherly love—the cement of the social edifice.

2. Observe the connecting link—let us never lose sight of Paul's logic or we shall never understand his language: *For* gives a reason, why we should hold fast our profession—*our*, that which is common to us all; which implies unity in the doctrines professed, of which Christ crucified is the centre. Adhere firmly to the common faith, *For*, because, amid all your trials and sorrows, you have a sympathizing High Priest: or to render most literally—*For* we have not a Highpriest, not able to sympathize with our weaknesses. The two negatives balance one another and amount to an affirmative; which he immediately introduces by the adversative, *but* has been tempted, etc.

3. The ability of Christ to sympathize with us in our trials, is based in his humanity: a common nature is indispensable to a common feeling. An angel may pity us and be a ministering spirit, guarding us from evil and supplying some of our wants, but has not ability to sympathize with us.

4. But more than a common nature is requisite. There must be and have been exposure to common trials,—common sorrows and common joys. Thus we find it in the experience of the present life. "The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy." Prov. xii. 10. And in these cases the sorrow is doubled and the joy is half lost; and this for want of similarity of experiences. Therefore, must our High Priest be exposed in all points to temptations similar to those to which his people are exposed. So it is with ourselves. The mother, from whom a darling babe has never been removed to heaven, cannot, or only very partially, enter into the

feelings of one that has been thus afflicted. "Miserable comforters are ye all," said Job to his friends. They had never been in such a furnace as he was in, and they could not discern the smell of his fire, and had no eyes to see the form of the Son of God.

5. But there are two points of difference between us and our Great High Priest. He possessed, indeed, our nature and all its sinless infirmities—hunger, thirst, weariness, liability to all bodily pains, to the scorn of wicked men and more wicked demons, etc. But in him was no sin, nor liability to fall into sin. The infidel philosophy which teaches, that Christ must have been fallible in order to be virtuous, makes the heart of piety to shudder: but, of course it is a necessary part of their system of unbelief, who do not believe that "This is the true God"—or "that all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father," or that "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." The other point is, that He passed through one trial to which none of his people have been subjected or ever can be: viz., the trial of Gethsemane and Calvary. Here He was alone—none were allowed to go with Him and pray yonder. No!—dear reader! you and I shall never understand—shall we?—what it is to be made sin and a curse—to drink such a cup; and held to our lips by such a hand.

V. 16. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

From the greatness and consequent efficiency of our High Priest, the fulness of his offering on our behalf, and the holy, calm, spiritual Rest which he has secured in his gospel Church, and from the sweet sympathies that shed tears at the tomb of Lazarus, let us be encouraged; yea, constrained to approach him with childlike confidence and freedom of speech. Such is the force of the inferential particle "there-

fore," and of the expression *boldly*. The phrase rendered "boldly," is the same as that rendered "the confidence" in iii. 6, so that we need not now delay on it.

In this exhortation, there is doubtless reference to the ancient forms of the Hebrew worship, the whole of which is expressed by the phrase "coming unto God." And we may note,

1. The point of approach—"the throne of grace." This is symbolized by the Ark of the Testimony. "And there will I meet with thee, and I will commune with thee, from above the mercy-seat." Ex. xxv. 22. This was the most sacred of all parts and portions of the tabernacle. It is the same in substance, and almost in form, with Rev. iv. 1-4—"behold a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne." The throne of mercy is surely a mercy-seat; the seat of him who dispenses mercy. Approach to the throne of mercy was restricted. The High Priest alone, and that only on one day in the year, was allowed to come. To all others access was prohibited even under peril of life. But now that the veil is rent in twain, and the holiest of all laid open, every man for himself hath freedom of approach into the holiest of all.

2. For what purpose? Certainly not for justice, although justice and judgment are the habitation of the Lord's throne. But to obtain mercy, and find grace, two matters very nearly related.

(1.) Mercy is the outflow of love to sinful beings. The revelation of this divine quality to the moral universe, is the grand end of Christ's mission. Rational creatures knew from observation and experience what justice was; and what love was. God had exercised this toward all holy intelligences; and that toward unholy angels. But the outgo of love toward sinners, was unknown even to the glorious inhabitants of heaven. This is "the mystery, which from the beginning of

the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers, in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God." Eph. iii. 9, 10. From the Church below, the glorious inhabitants of heaven received the knowledge of God's manifold wisdom. And that this wisdom of God is the display of his mercy, is plainly taught, "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the foundation of the world unto our glory." 1 Cor. ii. 7. "Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God"—i. 24. The way in which justice is maintained and yet love be exercised toward sinners—this is the problem of the universe, and its solution is the exhibition of mercy. The root and spring of it is love flowing forth in tender compassion. The word *obtain*, should be understood in the sense of receive, not of procuring by meritorious exertion; for it is a gratuity and we can only receive it as such.

(2.) "And find grace." Grace is free favor: any benefit received to which there is no claim of legal right. As mercy is the outgo of love; Grace is the income. Mercy regards the origin or procession of favor; Grace is its termination or reception. The word *find* is generally, in Bible usage, consequential on seeking. The shepherd found his sheep which was lost. We have found the Messiah. Combining the two we shall the better find the meaning of both. So Stephen says, "David *found favor* with God, and desired to *find* a tabernacle for him." Acts vii. 46. "Fear not, Mary: for thou hast *found favor* with God." Luke i. 30. "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in *favor* with God and man." In these cases *favor* stands for grace.

We must further remark here, that, though the duty and privilege of a first approach to obtain renewing grace, may be covered by this exhortation; yet the coming, here,



properly speaking, is that of Christians in a renewed devotion of themselves to God; as the object of the approach defines, mercy and grace for seasonable help—help in time of need. The duty urged is for believers, in their daily progress through the journey of life.

Here then is abundance to supply all your need: and you have an open door of access into the most holy place. The Captain of your salvation hath gone before. Oh what a glorious day was that, when from the tomb of Joseph he burst the bars of death; when he passed through yonder blue heavens, far beyond the stars of God. Oh, with what thrilling ecstasy did his unnumbered retinue exclaim, "Lift up your heads, oh ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors: and the King of glory shall come in." And oh what commotion there was all along the high battlements, when the angelic throng responded, "Who is the King of glory?" And what glad emotions swelled the bosoms, and ran along the ranks of redeemed millions, as the high response came back, "The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle." And oh what a vision was that, when the gates of light flew open wide, and the Lord of hosts passed into the third heaven and took his seat in the right hand of his own eternal throne!

And now reader! will you and I see him there?

If we have such desire, let us remember, Jesus is the same sympathizing High Priest that he was when he brushed away the trickling tear, as he stood at the tomb of Lazarus and sighed responsive to the sobs of Mary and her sister Martha. Let us go to him in the faith of his sympathetic humanity, his all-sufficient sacrifice and his eternal Godhead.

## CHAPTER V.

VERSES 1-3.—“ For every Highpriest, taken from among men, is ordained for men in things *pertaining* to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.”

We have here a brief description of the priestly office, as generally understood among men, but especially among the Hebrew nation. It is introduced as an argument, enforcing the preceding doctrine of the Great High Priest's sympathetic character and the blessings it results in, to the church. For so it has always been in Israel; the High Priest must, in order to make him a sympathizing friend, be a man—taken from—out from among men. An angel could not be a High-priest; because he lacks the elements necessary to sympathy.

2. He is ordained, set up, made to stand in an official position. All human society testifies to the necessity of such an office. Everywhere and in all times, there have been men set apart for the conduct of religious services, a part of which has been the offering up of sacrifices to God. The Hebrew people were not peculiar. The universality of the office proves its necessity in the judgment of the race.

3. The priest is set up *for men*: in the room and place of men; to act for their benefit and in their stead. This is the very thing meant by office; and is true in the same

sense in civil affairs. The civil officer, in every department, is a public servant, appointed, set up, established, ordained—it matters little what the word may be; the idea is one and the same—he is a person whose duty is to act and do certain things for the people, in their name and behalf. The style or title of office, will, in all cases, civil and religious, depend upon the matters entrusted to him. Common sense dictates, that the official title should be descriptive of its duties.

4. The priest's field of labor lies within the sphere of religion—things *pertaining* to God. This is a very general description, and is equally applicable to those that minister in religious affairs among heathen nations, and among those possessing a knowledge of the truth. The priests of the true religion stand between the living and the dead, and point out the way of acceptable approach to the Holy One.

5. The Apostle divides the duties into two classes. He is ordained, in order that he may bring forward, both *gifts*, and *sacrifices for sin*. By gifts are meant all offerings of acknowledgment, and thanksgiving. Such as vegetable products, whose presentation is a natural expression of fealty and gratitude. So Cain offered, but he neglected the other class; and therefore was rejected; because he did not confess his faith in the suffering Saviour. His was an *offering* and, in itself, not objectionable: but he brought forward no *sacrifice*—no living animal to be slain, as a confession of his own life being forfeited by sin, and of his hope notwithstanding, that he should himself be saved from death, by the death of the promised seed. There is an exceedingly small defect in our translation here: viz., the omission of a comma after the word gifts. For sacrifices are bloody offerings for sins; and ought not to be intimately connected with gifts. It should read “both gifts, and sacrifices for sins.”

6. This human High priest is able to *bear with moderated passion*—in the margin,—“reasonably bear with”—“have compassion” does not express all the word signifies. The two classes to whom this compassion is extended, will enable us to understand the idea: viz., the ignorant and the erring. A teacher’s patience is constantly put to severe trial, by the inattention, heedlessness and stupidity of his pupils. Paul himself gives us an example, where he complains, v. 11–14, of their slowness to learn. The other class, the erring—“them that are out of the way—them who have been led astray.” Both these weary the patience and exhaust the forbearance of such as are officially burdened with the watch and care for them. The position laid down is, that the human High priest is able to check his rising impatience and restrain, within due moderation, his passion toward both classes, forasmuch as he himself also is *wrapped round with infirmity*.

We have had these infirmities, which are here spoken of as a garment in which our bodies are wrapped, when discussing v. 15, above, and need not now delay on the word. We learn hence the duty of gentle dealing with the ignorant, and even with the froward. Let us bear one another’s burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ. And especially let ministers of the gospel, and, indeed, all teachers of that which is good, remember the days of their own folly and perversity, and so exercise patience and long suffering.

7. But neither is folly nor erring from the way harmless. In exercising and restraining our own feelings and repressing our own infirmity, we do not the less condemn them and theirs. This wrapper of infirmity is still a sin: and on its account, the priest compassed with it, lies under obligation to offer sacrifices for sins. *And by reason hereof*.—*And on account of this*—i. e., *this infirmity*; he ought—he is under obligation to offer sacrifice for sin; first for himself; then for

the people. Lev. ix. 7.—“offer thy sin-offering and thy burnt offering, and make an atonement for thyself, and for the people, and offer the offering of the people, and make an atonement for them.”

8. Thus are we taught, that sin in God's people, yea, even in the human High priest may and doth often occur. The idea of sinless perfection is a figment gendered by some philosophical crotchet of peculiar definition of law. It is never entertained by any true christian when on his knees before his Maker. Such an one, in such a position, always feels the need of confessing his sin, and for himself offering anew his sacrifice to God.

We also learn that the sins and infirmities of christians, long after conversion, be it supposed, are not less hateful before God, than sins before conversion; and nothing but constant reversion to the blood of sprinkling can keep a pure conscience before the Lord.

Such are the qualities and requirements in the human High priest; and all of them typical—mere shadows—dim representations of the substance who is our great High-Priest. The multitudinous sacrifices of the Levitical law, all, probably, except the Priest's offering for himself, point to Christ. And thus we approach the grand topic of the Epistle—the High-Priesthood of Messiah. Like any other Highpriesthood, it was not voluntarily assumed, without any due appointment.

V.v. 4-6. “And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as *was* Aaron. 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. As he saith also in another *place*, Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedek.”

Here 1. Note the tense; it is present—no man *taketh*. He speaks of the Aaronic Priesthood, not as it was cor-

ruptly interfered with in his own day; but as it is appointed and settled in the law. *And not any one receiveth this honor to himself.* It is an indefinite negative, and is universal, but with its own included exception.

2. *This honor.* The Priest's office in all ages, has been held in reverential regard. So deeply rooted in the human mind is this feeling and judgment, that even great corruption and disgraceful conduct in the personal officials, fail to destroy the inherent respect men retain for it. This stands out prominently in the cases of Eli's sons and the Popes of Rome. Difficult would it be, to find examples of more horrible depravity; and yet the Aaronic priesthood was not abandoned; and the Papacy—that great ulcer on the body politic, is not utterly cut out to this day. Priesthood, indeed, there is none properly speaking, nor can be now on earth. For no sacrifice remains to be offered up: the pretence of such offering now, is blasphemy and rebellion against our Great High Priest; for it formally repudiates the perfection of his sacrifice. Still, some of the services attached to the office remain and devolve upon those who now stand and minister between the living and the dead. And accordingly Paul, speaking of church officers, orders, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double *honor*"—1 Tim. v. 17. "I will give thee a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist." Doubtless the redemption of this promise it is, that wrests tokens of respect and honor to the ministers even from the most inveterate haters of religion.

3. Doubtless, also, we may apply the principle of modesty and self-distrust, here exemplified, to the servants of the Church in our own day. A sad time will or would it be, for the Church when and if men shall call themselves into the sacred office; selecting it as *a profession*, on the same



principles as are practiced in selecting the pursuits by which they are to make their living. A call to the sacred office now is as really from God as was that of Aaron, and woe to that man who runs unsest.

4. Aaron's call. Exod. xxviii. 1. "And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the Priest's office." The vocation of Aaron was not immediate and direct, but mediate through Moses, who as God's vicegerent instituted the entire system: but it was not for that reason, the less a divine vocation.

5. Here is a strong point of resemblance between the two dispensations: both Priesthoods are of divine authority. "So Christ glorified not himself to be made an High Priest." He received—he accepted the office willingly, as it was tendered to him. The tender was made by the same who said to him, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." On i. 5, we have seen what this implies. Its relevancy to this case, lies in the simple fact of its proving his Godhead and equality of nature with the Father. It is the same who testified to his eternal Sonship, who also testifies to his eternal Priesthood. Christ did not glorify himself, but the same who said, Thou art my Son, He glorified him to be made—by making him a High Priest—a Great High Priest. And the next quotation from Ps. cx. 4, "Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek." This is quoted here simply as proof of the appointment by God the Father. The Psalm, it is most abundantly evident, is wholly Messianic; and being so recognized by the Hebrews, would of course be conclusive of the fact of Messiah's Priesthood, and of its being by the same divine authority with that of Aaron, yet more direct and immediate. Of Melchisedek and the parallel between his Priesthood and Christ's we shall treat when we come to Chap. vii.

V.v. 7-9. "Who, in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto Him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." These two verses constitute one sentence: *who* is the only proper nominative case and is connected with *learned*, the only verb in the sentence. *Who learned obedience*, is the one formal proposition. But all this discussion regards him as our High Priest, and we must keep this constantly in our minds. The seventh, eighth and ninth verses are a compend of the whole services of Christ as our Priest, covering the entire field of his sufferings. Let us keep the proposition as our leading star—*He learned obedience*. Then we have adjuncts or subordinate points. 1. The time. 2. The accomplishment. 3. Subordinate accompaniments. 4. To whom offered. 5. Having been heard. 6. The reason. 7. The apparent inconsistency of all this with his relations to God. 8. His learning obedience, and 9. The means or instrumentalities of his learning.

1. The time—in the days of his flesh: not the period of his incarnation, or union of his own divine nature with humanity. It indeed is comprehended within this period, but covers a very small portion thereof. For this union still exists and will exist forever. The God-Man now lives and reigns. But these days are the days of his infirmity; when he was exposed to hunger, thirst, temptations and all sorrows and afflictions: these covered the portion of time from his birth until he cried, "It is finished." Now the agony is over—all infirmities are ended.

2. Who, having offered up prayers and supplications. These accompanied and formed a part of the means of his *learning obedience*. The same word is used here as is used to describe the offering of sacrifice; which some seize upon

as occasion to deny the reality of his offering himself as a sacrifice to God: as if the performance of one part of the Priest's office duty, could constitute a proof that the other could not be performed. Christ offered up prayers, therefore he did not offer up a sacrifice! This is weak: the same class affirm that his offering himself, takes place only in heaven where he offers himself as our advocate. But this offering is during the days of his flesh—his sorrowful humiliation.

“Prayers and supplications.” These terms refer to the two classes into which all prayers are divided, viz., supplicatory and deprecatory. Prayer is the offering up of desires to any person conceived to be able and willing to hear and answer. All desires are either for the removal of evil, or the procuring of good. The word here translated *prayers*, generally but not always, expresses the latter—desires for some good—supplication. The other word is deprecatory—cries out for the prevention or removal of evils. The former part of the Lord's prayer, properly so called, the seventeenth chapter of John, is supplicatory: the latter part from v. 15 to the end is deprecatory.

3. The subordinate accompaniments,—strong crying and tears. He does not refer to particular passages of the Old Testament, to show that such must be the experiences of the promised Messiah: no doubt his language would suggest this to the minds of his brethren. They would think of Ps. xxii. 1: “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?”—v. 19, “But be not far from me, O Lord; O my Strength, haste thee to help me.” Indeed the first half of the psalm is deprecatory. And so Ps. xxxviii. 8, “I roared by reason of the disquietness of my spirit”—and v. 21, 22, “Forsake me not, O Lord; O my God, be not far from me. Make haste to help me, O Lord

my salvation." Ps. xlii. 3, "My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?"—and vi. 6, "I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears." And his sorrows were greatly multiplied—"a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." And at the grave "Jesus wept."

4. To whom were these offered? "Unto Him that was able to save him from death." The Gethsemane scene may come in here, as illustrative of the last topic as well as this. The Apostle describes the person addressed in prayer, by a circumlocution, naming the attribute to which the eye of faith is directed; ability to save him from death. "Oh my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." Here is an appeal to a Father's love. This Son, who always did the will of his Father; who came on this very mission in obedience to his Father's appointment; who was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners; this meek, submissive and well-beloved Son, in tears and sweat and agony and blood, cries unto that Father; and for what? His prayer is deprecatory, "that this cup might pass." The condition thrown in here—*if it be possible*, reminds us of a distinction as to the matter of prayer; viz., what is absolutely promised—what comes clearly within a covenant promise, we may pray for absolutely; but what is conditioned we may pray for only under the condition. The reason is, because promise is the limit of prayer.

We have no right to anything from God, but what He has promised to bestow. Man forfeited all claim upon the divine beneficence, by his breach of the covenant God made with him at first: and unless there be a restoration of the forfeiture, by a new covenant, there is no ground for prayer. This does not mean, that every particular object of desire must have a particular promise, but only that everything

for which we pray, must come within the comprehension of some general promise.

This prayer was offered to "him who was able to save him from death." Now what death? It could not be merely the dissolution of the connection between soul and body—natural death. For Paul says he was heard—his prayer was granted. But he did die, and therefore escape from this death could not be the thing prayed for. Moreover, what was there in this death so horrible to him? Had he less fortitude or moral heroism than the thief beside him? And did he die only, as some say, to attest the sincerity of his belief in his doctrines and to give an illustrious example of meekness and patience under suffering? Could he not do all this without tears and groans and bloody sweat? Where is the fortitude here? Is this setting a heroic example? When Paul was about to be offered up, he manifested no such symptoms of shrinking—he stood firm—"I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand—henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." There also stood Peter; the prophets; the martyrs by thousands. Verily, if Christ died only to testify the truth of his own doctrine and give an example of patience and fortitude, I'll turn my back on the Son of God and enroll my name among the followers of Paul. But if in very deed the iniquities of us all were laid on Him: if all that is horrible in the curse of God:—all that is fearful in the wages of sin; if all these condensed to a single point were bearing down upon his holy soul—if indeed the Spirit of God was offering that soul an offering—a burnt-sacrifice for sin, then may we contemplate with deep reverence, awe and amazement the "Man of Sorrows." This then is the death that stood in all his horrid shapes before the humanity of Jesus. "Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. Then a

spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up: it stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof; an image was before mine eyes, and there was silence, and I heard a voice." Job iv. 14-16. A thousand times more terrific than this horrible vision of Eliphaz, faced the immaculate humanity of the Lord Jesus on that night of sorrows.

5. *Having been heard*: and 6. *The reason—in that he feared*. Great difficulty has gathered around these topics. The phrase, *in that he feared* may mean a holy, sacred reverence; or it may mean merely a natural fear of distress; which is but the activity of self-love; and is an infirmity, harmless in itself, and only blamable when in excess. This I think the better opinion. If this be adopted, then the desire contained in this deprecatory prayer is, not escape from, or the avoidance of death by crucifixion, which he knew he must suffer; but deliverance from the awful agonies of the curse. Perhaps it may not offend thee, thou bleeding Lamb, if a poor worm of the dust should say, thy humanity did shrink in terror from the curse: it obeyed that universal law of living existences, by which they cannot consent to their own destruction; for if they could, their punishment were an impossibility. Oh, is it not so? Did not thy human will shrink from and resist the terrors of divine wrath; and yet thou, Messiah, didst say, "Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done"? But, dear reader! do you not see still a great difficulty? If the conditioned, deprecatory prayer was only the outgo of the law of life—humanity shrinking from the unspeakable agony, how can it be said *he was heard*? Was he not to be made perfect through sufferings? (ii. 10), and did he not drink the cup until he could say in truth, "It is finished"? How then was he heard? First, an angel strengthened him; how? strengthened his Godhead! If not, it must have been his



humanity, and so Paul says, 2 Cor. xiii. 4—"he was crucified through weakness"—infirmity: and so strengthened it, that it did endure the whole weight of God's wrath due to us for sin—drink the whole contents of the cup. If the cup of divine wrath is exhausted; if all the anguish has been endured that God saw was required to vindicate his own eternal justice, what then? If he, whose human soul and body endured it, has still that soul and body in union with Himself, then inevitably, according to the nature of immutable justice, that body must arise from its rocky bed, and that soul must emerge from the dark gloom of the curse into the glory of an endless Rest. Has not the Father heard his prayer? Has not He saved him from death? Not, indeed, from a conflict with the powers of darkness and of death; nor from fearful—from inconceivable anguish in that conflict. But has He not saved him from death itself, and from all the agonies thereto belonging; and made him victor over all the agonies of death and all the terrors of the curse?

7. The apparent inconsistency of all this with his relations as the Son of God. *Though he were a Son*—This is the same Sonship as we had in chap. i. 2. How God the Son should thus suffer; and especially, which is the point here, how he should learn obedience through sufferings, is our present difficulty. Our discussion on ii. 10 meets most of this. The point remaining is our

8. Note. His learning obedience. One great occasion of misunderstanding with those who deny the divinity of Christ, is their refusing to allow, even for illustration, the hypothesis of two natures in the one person of Messiah. Some things are proper to his Godhead; some to his humanity. From John ii. 52, we learn, that "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." Hence the inference, he cannot be God, for it is absurd to suppose that

God grows and increases in knowledge. This is begging the question—If he is human, he is not divine. If he is divine he is not human. But every child will understand, that this growth in wisdom and stature refers to his human nature. No one supposes that the humanity is omnipotent, or omniscient, or omnipresent. If then the man Jesus was not omniscient, but acquired knowledge by experience in his youth, wherein lies the difficulty in more advanced years? Why should he not come by experience to acquire wisdom? Do not men now, gain experimentally knowledge of good and of evil far on in old age? Beyond a doubt, the Mediator—the God-man is omniscient; but equally undoubted and obvious is the truth, that he did not know the physical pains of crucifixion by experience until he was nailed on the cross. Just so our first parents became wise by their folly. They gained knowledge of good and evil by their melancholy experience. Theoretically they knew evil before, but now they knew it in a different sense. So our Lord having offered up prayers, and having been heard when he cried under the hidings of his Father's countenance, learned submission to his will by an experience unknown to him before. Humanity was never before so placed face to face with the curse of God: never had such a cup been put into such hands before. And this is our

9th remark. The instrumentality of this instruction in lessons of submission: he learned obedience by the things which he suffered. God schools his children in a great variety of methods. Prosperity and adversity; sickness and health; joy and sorrow—in short, he makes all things work together for good to them that trust in him; who are the called according to his purpose. And as it is with his adopted children; so, pre-eminently with his only begotten and well beloved Son. His humanity, like that of the first Adam, was compassed with infirmities; otherwise, he could

not have sympathized with us, obeyed for us, set us the example of progress in knowledge by diligence, of patience under trials and of sufferings unto death. And thus we enter upon the comprehensive statement in,

V. 9. "And being made perfect, he became the Author of eternal salvation, unto all them that obey him:"

This *being made perfect*, is the same which we had in ii. 10. It is equivalent to the exclamation—*It is finished*. It was affirmed to be consistent with God's character, as the Creator and Governor of the universe, to make the Leader of the way of salvation, perfect through sufferings. That Leader declared on the cross, that this was done; and here Paul using the same verb, but in the passive participle, says, "And *being made perfect*"—And he *finished* became—was and is the cause of eternal salvation. We have here, condensed, the whole substance of the Great High-Priest's work; the discussion of which, in detail and in comparison with the Priesthood of the Old Testament times, runs on through the tenth chapter. We are now required only to point out the connection between this priestly consummation or perfection, and the eternal salvation that follows, and to inquire unto whom it follows.

1. The *author*—the cause: in ii. 10—he is called the Captain of their Salvation—their *leader of the Way*. The practical guide, referring to events subsequent to the matter expressed by this word Author or *cause*, which carries us back to the ground work or foundation on which the other rests. *Cause* is uniform and necessary antecedent; its correlate, *effect*, is uniform and necessary consequent. This metaphysical definition is here applicable; the active obedience and passive endurance of our High-Priest is an antecedent indispensable to Salvation eternal. The inevitable consequent of it is this salvation: it is an effect from the preceding cause—it follows by a necessity absolute in the

very nature of God's eternal justice. Yet is it limited to believers—to all them that by practical obedience evince its preparation for them. We have then the three items here, 1. The cause of eternal salvation is the finished or perfected High-Priest. 2. The effect from this cause follows upon them for whom he is the Captain. 3. The relationship to Him, which ensures the effect of his work upon them. 4. But an antecedent idea to all these is presupposed all along; they are lost. Without this the whole is a mere absurdity. Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. They that are whole, hale, sound and healthy, need not a physician, but they that are sick do. This last, were we about to discuss in detail, would be first in order and would lead us to consider the first covenant—that with Adam, his fall and ours in him. But this is assumed, as conceded.

1. A cause may be meritorious and efficient, and essentially procuring its effect: or it may be incidental, opening up and affording opportunity for the effect to follow. In this last sense, it should be rather called *occasion*. As "David occasioned the death of the priests," 1 Sam. xxii. 12. But in this place, the highest and strongest sense must be adhered to. Christ has not merely occasioned this salvation: opened the door, so that man may save himself. He has not, by his being perfect, purchased a new trial and given men a new chance for their lives. He is the Surety of a better covenant than this. His authorship is efficient and makes the salvation absolute. On earth, in the days of his flesh, he laid the foundation; now, when his infirmities are all ceased, and he is seated in the throne of his power, he is carrying on his blessed work, by the instrumentalities of his preached word, and the efficient operations of his Almighty Spirit.

2. The effect unto all believers is eternal salvation!—Sal-

vation from the curse of God's law, because Jesus was made a curse for us: and the curse, that is, the agonies due and necessary to be endured because of sin, cannot be exacted from His people from whom He has lifted up this curse and taken away this sin by the sacrifice of himself. God could not be just were he to exact that penalty from Christ's people, which their surety had already paid. Hence the salvation is eternal. The price of our redemption is infinite and all paid up; nothing is left undone. "It is finished." He *is finished*. The redemption therefore cannot be temporary. His people are "a purchased possession"—"the Church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood." Acts xx. 28.

3. The relationship to Christ, which ensures the salvation and its eternity: it is that of subjects, obedient to their own Lord—"all them that *obey* him." This word *obey* is the same used in the preceding verse to describe the result of his teaching in the school of experience—he learned *obedience* by his sufferings. This obeying is itself a very important part of the *causative* or *authoritative* power of our Lord: for the salvation he is the author of is not a salvation *in* sin which is disobedience, but a salvation *from* sin. And this has two aspects. His people are delivered from the power of sin as condemning and fastening its penalty on the soul; but also as polluting and thereby disqualifying it for the enjoyment of holy society in heaven, and even upon earth. He has not authorized or caused eternal salvation in fact unto any, unless they are made *obedient subjects* of the eternal King. To affirm that Christ is the author of eternal salvation, to all them or any of them, who do not ever obey him, but who go down under the reprobation of his own dreadful curse—"depart from me ye cursed"—and who go away into eternal fire—this affirmation is to do worse than speak parables: it is to blas-

pheme God and mock the agonies of his own Son's death. No such absurdity is perpetrated in the Bible. In the absence of holy obedience—obedience of the ear, which means faith in the promises of the gospel, no man can give evidence that he is partaker of eternal salvation. A falsehood cannot be proved true. Faith works by love and purifies the heart—or as he says, ix. 14, purgeth your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

4. These things make evident the connection between his being made perfect through sufferings, and his becoming the author to them of eternal salvation. (1) He has removed all the obstacles to it and opened up a plain path. (2) He being a King-Priest, is invested with almighty power, and therefore ability to enforce the rights of the redemption he has purchased for them. (3) This leads us to examine into the question of fact, each for himself: am I an obedient subject of the great King? If I am, then is Christ for me the author of eternal salvation: if not, I am still in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity.

V. 10. "Called of God an High-Priest after the order of Melchisedec."

1. The word translated *called*, is quite different from that so rendered in v. 4. There it means *invited*, called forth from former relations and separated to office. The word here means *addressed, saluted* in the use of the epithet High-Priest: it therefore has not direct reference to his appointment to that office: but implies, that he had previously been so appointed. For God would not salute one as High-Priest who was not such in reality: he would not use a term of salutation that was merely an empty title and adapted to deceive. He addresses him, because he is what the address implies. This quotation is again made from Ps. ex., and is designed to lead the mind to a renewed consideration of the Priesthood of our Lord: in the former he is called Priest



only; but now, the addition *High* is affixed; that our thoughts may rise with it. All Aaron's sons were priests, but only one was or lawfully could be a High-Priest, in whom all the functions of the ordinary office are found: but others belong to the High-Priest alone.

2. The order or arrangement of succession, implies a number of individuals successively filling the same office and discharging its duties. But we shall see, when we enter properly into the discussion of the Priesthood in chap vii., etc., that this is not so: for Melchisedec had neither predecessor, nor successor: and this seems to have been so arranged for the purpose of typifying Christ as High-Priest. Nor does this expression imply, that there were a number of Priests in the same general charge, of whom Christ was Chief and Head. Aaron and his sons were introduced into the same Priesthood: Aaron alone was High-Priest. But Christ is to be insulated and single, as Melchisedec. He was not *of* the order of Melchisedec; but *after, according* to it: whereas Aaron's sons were of his order. Melchisedec was the first, perhaps the only personal as well as official type of Christ. He was so in many points which will come up in due time. His introduction here calls our attention to the magnitude of importance belonging to this great subject. But before its full discussion, our Apostle makes a digression for the purpose of rousing up and constraining us, by reproofs and censures, to give good heed. For the Priesthood is the basis of the whole salvation; and ignorance in regard to it is very likely to prove fatal.

V.v. 11-14. "Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be understood; seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth

milk, is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those, who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

1. The first point of difficulty here, is to determine the antecedent—to "whom." Is it the nearer or the more remote? Is it of Melchisedec or of Christ, we have many things to say? This question is not answerable by any mere grammar rule. It depends on the general drift or current of thought, and I think this will be in favor of the former. The things difficult to be understood, appear to me to be those first mentioned when he returns after the digression here commenced, vii. 1-4, especially v. 3. Without father, without mother, etc. Let the discussion decide.

2. "*We have many a word.*" This calls up the history of the raid of the four kings into the lower valley of the Jordan; of Abraham's campaign; its success; his return etc., etc. The meeting of the king of Salem—the King of righteousness—the tithing of the spoils, etc. Who was Melchisedec? Who was his father? Many questions and

3. *Difficult of interpretation.* They distract and divide critics to the present day: and even Owen seems ambiguous on the subject: he certainly speaks on both sides, at times: and after repeated examinations, I cannot say where he stands. Mason I follow, though my notes here are not very clear. These facts prove the exactness of the Apostle's expression, and we pass on to the cause of this difficulty.

4. *Seeing ye are dull of hearing.*—*Slothful* it is translated in ch. vi. 12. The slowness of men to acquire the knowledge of God's word, to gain a clear comprehension of gospel truth, is not because of intrinsic and essential intelligibility. If the same degree of earnest attention—of intense study, were bestowed upon the Bible and its doctrines, that is often upon other books and their contents; and especially upon

the book of nature; the amount of evangelical truth embodied in the knowledge and lives of Christians would be vastly beyond what it is: and the reason of this dullness is pretty obvious to all. We have not a mind to the work. If we felt the deep interest of the diggers after gold, or the delvers into the geological strata, oh! how soon would the knowledge of God cover the earth, and the Church arise and shine, reflecting the bright rays of the Sun of righteousness into all the dark corners of this sin-beclouded earth.

5. He proceeds to prove against his brethren this charge of dullness of hearing. For opportunities and advantages for gaining a knowledge of spiritual things, and time enough, have ye had, to have qualified yourselves for teachers of the word; but ye have not attained to this desirable eminence. On the contrary, ye are deficient in even the simpler and more elementary truths of religion—the first principles of the oracles of God. By the *oracles* of God, obviously are meant the sacred writings. Stephen reproves his persecutors for this same sin of neglect—“your fathers received the *oracles* to give unto us.” 1 Pet. iv. 11. “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.” All our teaching should come out of the Bible.

6. He then presses the same by a figure well adapted to produce a feeling of shame for this neglect. Ye have reduced yourselves to the condition of little children, who are incompetent to receive and digest strong food, but must be treated to milk. He means by a babe, one too young to speak, and, as such an one is fed with milk, so is it with you who have nothing but the simplest elements of knowledge; ye abide without experience—unskillful in the word of righteousness. By this is to be understood, the doctrines of salvation, which point out the way in which a sinner is accepted as righteous before God.

7. On the other hand, as strong meat—*food* not flesh as

we commonly use this word now, but as rich food is furnished to and received and digested by adult persons; so diligent students of the lively oracles, acquire deep experience of divine things, and, by habitually exercising themselves in the investigation of spiritual truth, carry their perceptive and reasoning faculties to a high degree of perfection in the knowledge of good and evil. The discriminating faculty, thus teaches to embrace and cultivate that which is good and to avoid the evil. Again he illustrates by reference to training the athlete for the vigorous efforts of the public games. In their system of drilling and training *solid food* is prescribed; not the food for infants: and their preparatory exercises all bear toward the perfection of their powers. Even so, adult Christians are under a perfect system of gymnastic exercises—this is the very word here used—for the perfecting of their powers of perception and retention; and all with a view to the habit of diligence, which is so important to insure progressive holiness.

To this brief exposition let us add a few practical reflections.

1. Difficulties in our way are trials of our faith, and are designed in mercy to perfect our graces. Instead of allowing them to paralyze our energies and to cause us to sit down in passive discouragement, they ought to arouse to redoubled effort. “Who art thou O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain.” Thus shall it be in regard to all obstructions in the path of our duty, if only, we have faith to cry out, “Oh that thou wouldst rend the heavens, that thou wouldst come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence.”

2. Ministers of the gospel should not shun difficult portions of the Scriptures. These are the very passages in regard to which the people need their help. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable;” and

surely those of difficult interpretation ought not to be utterly ignored in the pulpit. Thus have the prophetic writings too generally been let alone. Our Saviour reproves this spirit—"Ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?" And "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy." Still it is true, that due reverence and caution should govern all in our efforts to understand the words of prophecy and all other difficult words. It is well worthy of inquiry, whether this defect is not characteristic of the pulpit in our day; and whether this be not one of the reasons of its constantly diminishing power over the people. Men who always deal in milk, and that a little diluted, will always have babes to feed.

3. Paul had "*many* things to say," but one of the evidences of want of interest on the part of people in the pulpit is the fact, that it must not say many things, or it will be deserted.

4. None are so deaf as those that will not hear. "The full soul loatheth an honeycomb, but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet." The hungry man, like Peter, will even dream of food and long to partake of it. And "blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." The reason why men are not filled with grace and consolation, is because they do not earnestly desire it:—"they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear, which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely." Ps. lviii. 4, 5.

5. All God's people ought to be teachers of evangelical truth, either in a private way, both by precept and example; or publicly; or in both ways. God made every man his brother's keeper, and no one can without sin neglect an opportunity of advancing truth. "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." James

iv. 17. The organization of the church involves this idea; she is a depository of truth, not to hide it away; but to proclaim it on the housetop. How severely the Apostle reproves his brethren for falling behind this mark! Our Sabbath-school operations are a beautiful illustration of this truth. They set to work and keep at work, large numbers in their proper avocation; and woe to that congregation which neglects its youth; and especially when it cannot bring up its members to this blessed work. Poor must be the nurture of that people, who cannot even minister milk to the little ones. How long can such a church have men of full age, able to digest strong food? That church which puts all its members to work must grow.

6. Christianity is a system of practical and experimental philosophy. It trains up men in the school of experience. It provides for their advancement all forms of exercise and all kinds of nourishment; and suited to all stages of being and of progress, from the speechless babe to the hoary head. It therefore cultivates all the parts, faculties and powers of their physical, intellectual and spiritual nature. No one-sided education does it furnish, but develops the entire man and fits him for his high destiny.

7. Thus God's church is an aggressive association. It aims at conquering the world for its Divine Master. It is a city set on an hill. It is a light shining in a dark place. Teaching, as before said, is its grand function. Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature—Go, teach all nations. But now, among these teachings are found mysteries. Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, etc., 1 Tim. iii. 16. The incarnation and the trinity, for example, are inscrutable mysteries: that is, we cannot understand everything about the matters they teach. How the human and the divine natures co-exist in the one person of Christ, we do not know and cannot



explain : so of the Trinity. How three are One is a mystery. But here we must be careful to note, that the mystery lies not in the doctrine or thing taught. Every one knows what we mean, when we affirm that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—these three are One. Or that the eternal Logos, took into union with himself a true body and a reasonable soul. But then, there is a mystery in the facts taught. How the three persons, or the two natures co-exist, we cannot understand. But surely our ignorance as to the mode of existence, consistency and co-operation, cannot reasonably create any difficulty in the way of our believing the doctrines or things taught. For who understands the mode of existence, consistency, and co-operation of the rational soul and the animal body, which two natures, so very different, compose his own person? Who understands *how*, that is, the *mode*, by which his own mind influences and controls the body; or *how* the body influences the mind? As to *modes* of existence and action we are all in the dark. If then we are in fact ignorant of a thousand things in and around ourselves, is it any wonder, if we should be found unable to comprehend the infinite three in One? Does any man pretend to know how God can be in two places—in ten thousand—in every place at the same time and at all times? But will any, except the fool, who hath said in his heart there is no God, make the incomprehensibility of the divine omnipresence a reason why he should take refuge in atheism? Would atheism relieve his difficulty? Does the atheist understand himself, the parts and portions of his own body; and how they operate on each other; and his rational soul and how it and his body constitute one person and influence each other, any the better for his atheism? God is wiser than we.

## CHAPTER VI.

VERSES 1, 2.—Having arrested his onward course toward the discussion of the great doctrine of the Priesthood, in order to stir up and arouse the Hebrews to due attention, the Apostle here avows his purpose not to be forever feeding them with milk, lest they should always remain mere babes—“not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God; of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.” On the contrary, in the first part of v. 1 he states what he will do—“Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection.” Thus he turns their attention to the dangerous tendency toward apostasy, which lurks in the spirit of indolence that would keep them always in comparative ignorance. Therefore I shall not detain you, with repeating ever and anon the simpler elementary truths: but shall act as a wise architect in the construction of a house.

1. He must have a *foundation*. This term signifies sometimes the substratum or basis on which the building rests: sometimes that part of the building which rests on this basis and lies beneath and below the ground, but usually rises some distance above the surrounding surface. This we commonly construct of stone, and after its construction, the superstructure of brick or wood rises up to the summit and is perfected. “As a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon.”

2. He proceeds to state what these elementary doctrines are: and in this he explains the difficult expressions of the

first part of v. 1. They are the truths necessary to salvation: and he specifies (1.) "repentance from dead works." Repentance is a change of mind—a turning of the mind or intellect from one object to another. It includes illumination of the understanding—conviction of the judgment. And this is effected by the Holy Spirit shining in upon the mind, and giving the light of the knowledge of the glory of God. Conviction is a law-work in the conscience and of itself is not a blessing; but, like a sickening medicine, is followed by a blessing. For the Spirit proceeds to enlighten the mind in the knowledge of the gospel. Then the regenerating power of the Spirit is exerted, and the soul is made alive and turns from dead works, to serve the living God. It turns not from works, but only as *dead*—as utterly devoid of holiness and meriting nothing at the hand of God but indignation and wrath. They are *dead* works, because he who relies upon them for salvation abideth in death spiritual; and so abiding will pass down into death eternal. Works—the acts and doings of men, are all *dead*, which precede the regeneration of the soul. "First make the tree good and his fruit good also:" cleanse the fountain or pure waters cannot flow from it. The idea is preposterous, that a heart filled with all unrighteousness—a carnal mind which is enmity against God, can be the source of pure and holy activities. It is true, an unregenerate man performs actions—does works, which for their matter or substance are good. Such an one gives food to the hungry and clothes to the naked; and if we look only at the outward matter, all is well. But then, God looketh on the heart; he regards the inner man; he sees the secret workings of the soul: and it matters not that he tithes mint, anise and cummin, if he omits "the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith;" all is dead works. It is alas! too true, that people who boast most of good works, do least of works that

are really good ; whilst, conversely, it is pleasing to know, that those who humble themselves on account of their deficiencies, abound most in works approved of God. It is, then, an elementary truth of Christianity, that no man, who does not renounce and turn away from all works as a foundation of his salvation, is in a safe condition.

But this change of mind in saving repentance is not the whole of it. There is also a change in the moral affections and the will. The heart is renewed ; and, moreover, there must be and doth always follow, a change in the whole course of his life. Without this, there can be no proper evidence of the reality of repentance. But this turning is an act of

3. Faith. In its general nature, as a principle of the soul, faith is simply reliance upon testimony. It is not a mere knowledge of truth—an assent of the understanding to the truth of a proposition. The Samaritan woman told her friends many things that occurred at the well and that Jesus had said ; and they believed her : they relied upon her testimony. They recognized in her the attribute of veracity. They came out and saw and heard for themselves. Now they receive directly the knowledge ; and there is no room for reliance on her veracity ; for they know of themselves. So in heaven, faith is swallowed up in vision : faith and hope are no more, charity only remains.

But faith as a grace of the Spirit, *succeeds* regeneration. When the soul is born of God, that faith in God, which was lost in the first transgression, is restored ; although the specific testimony on which it rests and relies, is not that concerning the tree in Eden, but that relating to the tree of life in the midst of the heavenly Paradise, which bears twelve manner of fruits and its leaves are for the healing of the nations. It belongs to this faith to exercise

confidence in God's veracity, who testifies that there is salvation in Christ. Appropriation belongs to faith; it takes to itself and for itself the things promised of God. And this suggests another of its characteristics. It is faith objectively taken and not subjectively, that saves the soul. That is, not the mind's own action is imputed to it for righteousness and so for salvation. This is one of the dead works from which we must turn. But it is the *object* presented in the divine testimony, that is imputed for righteousness, and which, by consequence, secures salvation: that is, Christ Jesus and him crucified.

4. The doctrine of baptisms is another of these elementary principles. *Doctrine* is the thing taught—the intelligible substance communicated by a teacher. So the doctrine of baptisms must be the things set forth by the teacher about baptisms. And here we meet the difficulty, what baptisms are meant? This word *baptismos* is used only four times in the New Testament, viz., in Mark vii. 4, 8—“*the washings of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables.*” “For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men; *as the baptismous of pots and cups.*” The third instance is this before us; and the fourth is Heb. ix. 10—“which stood in meats and drinks, and divers washings—baptismous—and carnal ordinances, imposed on them, until the time of reformation.”

It is obvious that in three of these instances, the Christian rite of baptism is not meant at all. But Jewish lustrations, and even traditional additions, for which our Lord administers reproof. The nearly related word, *Baptisma*, occurs twenty-two times, and is never applied to signify Jewish washings. It is applied thirteen times to John's baptism; four times to the Christian ordinance; and five times to Christ's baptism of blood.

Now it seems most reasonable to suppose, this marked

diversity in the use of these two words, *Baptismos* and *Baptisma*, was designed to contradistinguish into two classes the Jewish washings and the Christian ordinance. Nevertheless, I cannot make any satisfactory approach to an exposition of the difficulty here, without including both under the term in our text. Preparatory to this and explanatory, let me remark, (1) that all the Jewish washings, sanctioned and required by the Levitical law, had one clear and unequivocal meaning. They all teach, not consecration merely, but *purification*. This is confirmed by the waterpots at the marriage of Cana; and indeed is self-evident. If, then, the Levitical ablutions were appointed symbols of purification, it could not have been for them as legitimately used, that our Lord reproved the Pharisees: but for their superstitious use; and especially their traditional appendages. (2) *Baptisma*, being always expressive of the Christian rite and never of a Jewish lustration, nevertheless has the same general significance of *purification*, whilst it also symbolizes regeneration, and is a seal of the covenant. Consequently, their agreement in the leading idea may account for *Baptismos* being here used as including *Baptisma*; because all the former meanings are included in the latter. Therefore (3) it is not the *Baptismous*, but the *doctrine* of Baptisms that is presented here—the thing taught in the Jewish washings is all of it taught in the Christian washing. This may justify us in the following exposition. This distinction in the terms is not noticed by the critics—even Owen, who rarely leaves any unnoticed, passes over this; and I feel timid always when dissenting from the Prince of Christian expositors.

Keeping in mind that our Apostle is stating the elementary truths of Christianity that lie in the foundation, and calling up the fact, that baptism and imposition of hands are ceremonies, which can properly be administered only



after certain pre-requisites, Owen thinks the words "the doctrine of baptisms and of laying on of hands," ought to be read as parenthetical. As if the Apostle had said, These principles of the doctrine of Christ, namely, repentance, faith, the resurrection, and judgment, are those doctrines wherein they are to be instructed, who are to be baptized, and to have hands laid on them. According to this sense, the words are to be read as in a parenthesis: "Not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, (namely the doctrine of baptisms, and of the imposition of hands) of the resurrection from the dead, and of eternal judgment." He thus makes four principles—lays down four great stones as the foundation. These four, but especially the first two are necessary for the admission of an adult to baptism: and the interposition of the portion in brackets, seems to indicate that necessity; whilst the last two are not so indispensable to admission to baptism. The doctrine of baptisms is those principles of belief and practice which open the way—if thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest be baptized.

Doctor Mason explains the plural *baptisms* as referring to the outward water baptism, and the inward, spiritual baptism; which seems justified by the remark of John, Matt. iii. 11. "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me—shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Nor do I see any difficulty in admitting this as included with the other; and thus we have three washings as it were taught in the doctrine; the Levitical ablutions, the Christian ordinance and the spiritual thing signified by both, the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.

"The laying on of hands," is a ceremony used chiefly with three significations, (1.) As a sign of conferring blessings, personal. Jacob blessed the two sons of Joseph: and

our Lord laid his hands on the babes and blessed them. (2.) Imposition of hands indicates the conferring of official gifts. (3.) The supernatural influence of the Holy Ghost. The first and the third are probably included here. Miraculous gifts were as necessary to the church then, as they were common. The Apostles were commanded to tarry at Jerusalem until they should be endued with these gifts; and accordingly the day of Pentecost brought them down in rich abundance. Afterward the imposition of hands became the visible act connected with the bestowment of them. At the revival in Samaria—Acts viii. 16, 17, when “as yet the Holy Ghost 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”—that is, in his supernatural influences, by which they spake with tongues, healed the sick, etc. His gracious influences they had before experienced. The importance of all this will be seen, if you remember, that Christ promised to send the Spirit, and put the proof of his own mission upon his mission of the Spirit; and so the truth of the whole gospel.

*And of resurrection of the dead.* This doctrine has always been a stumbling block to the wise men of this world. It was so to a large class of the Jewish philosophers. It is so still. The quibble of the Sadducees proved their shame. Their woman that had had seven husbands, was made the occasion of showing off their ignorance. Like many objectors in our day, they assumed a false position as the basis of their argument, viz., that the relations of this life were to be revived in the future world. A correction of their blunder, broke their system into fragments. He then proved the doctrine of the soul's separate existence in a state of conscious existence and felicity, by the voice in the burning bush. God is not the God of the dead, but of

the living. Some cannot find a future state and a resurrection in the Old Testament. Our Lord had no difficulty on that score. This doctrine of life and immortality was brought to light through the gospel. Not the knowledge of them discovered, but made more clear and more generally extended than before. Even the wretched Balaam had a knowledge of the future, "I shall see him but not now; I shall behold him but not nigh." And Job knew, that after his skin and flesh should become the food of worms, he should yet see his Redeemer.

*Eternal Judgment* is the fourth fundamental doctrine. This ought to be interesting to us all, for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and receive the sentence from which there is no appeal, and from whose execution there will be no escape. This belongs to the Son; the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son. In this there is a dread solemnity. The man of Calvary that wore his thorny crown—the babe of Bethlehem—the meek and low one who entreats us now to return, and warns us most tenderly—yes, he it is, that shall come, in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory, and every eye shall see him and they also that pierced him. Oh what grandeur terrible, "Our God in glory and our world on fire." Who now is the proud and brazen fronted sinner, that will stand up and say, I would not call him Lord if he were now on earth. Oh! Sinner, God hath sworn, that unto this Jesus every knee shall bow and every tongue confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Moreover, let it be remembered, that this judgment is eternal—duration without end only can measure its extent. Everlasting life—Everlasting punishment: these are its fearful and its glorious issues. Blessedness without end or measure. Misery without measure or bound. "When I have rolled ten thousand years in fire, then,

let me then expire." But no! Eternity is but just begun. Be entreated then, oh sinner! to make sure of an interest in his redeeming blood; while it is called to-day, harden not your heart as in the provocation.

Such are the first principles. Obviously then, such as are not well grounded in these cannot make progress. Such persons as go not farther than these, may, indeed, have a foundation absolutely, but not relatively: they have no superstructure, no building. They may be saved, yet so as by fire.

V. 1. Therefore, leaving these elementary truths, let us go on to perfection. "Leaving" here, cannot be understood as if the doctrines were relinquished, abandoned, renounced. The figure interprets it differently. The wise builder, when he has laid his foundation, does not forsake it and erect his superstructure on the sand. He leaves it, by building upon it and from it. As the walls arise he leaves the foundation, but perpendicularly above it he and the whole house rest upon it. He advances steadily toward its completion. The word for *perfection* here, is the same, only in the nominal form, with that in ii. 10, where the Captain of our salvation is to be *made perfect* through suffering: the same he uttered on the cross, "It is finished"—ended—completed. The head stone of the corner is raised to its proper position; the building is finished, and let the shoutings of grace—grace to it, resound over all the region.

V. 3. *And this will we do, if God permit.* There is scarcely room here for a question as to the antecedent to which *this* refers. It is something positive—something to be done—*will we do*; not something to be left undone. Now the thing which he proposed to do, is, to go on to perfection—to the completion of the house.

We may notice how naturally he identifies them with

himself, and draws them, as it were, into the same purpose of going forward, and so shutting the door against apostasy. If he can fix their eye upon an important object before them, and induce them to press forward toward its attainment, he completely counteracts any tendency that might have existed toward apostasy, a backward movement.

Mark also the modesty of his faith. Paul believed that God governs the world He made: and that he governs it upon a fixed plan, and not by guess. Moreover, he feels that himself and his friends, whom he so blandly attracts into association with himself, in the purpose of a constant progression in the divine life, are wholly in the hands of God. "Without me ye can do nothing:" and as he says himself in another place, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Thus are we taught a lesson of humble dependence for success, upon our Father's good pleasure.

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

*For*, intimates a reason in support of the matter just before stated. Ignorance and even imperfect knowledge are dangerous, and we shall do our best to forestall the danger, by building up believers unto the stature of perfect men in Christ: for to renew and restore to good standing and safe condition backsliders of a certain description, is a thing that cannot be done; because, having renounced and rejected the only Saviour, there is no door of hope for them.

Let us then point out the characteristics of the class of persons referred to: then their sin of falling away: then

the impossibility of their restoration: lastly the reasons of it.

I. The characteristics are five in number.

1. "Who were once enlightened." Naturally light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun. Whatsoever doth make manifest is light; and natural light is a beautiful emblem of truth. Truth, simply as truth, is pleasing; and were there no sinful perversion, all truth, and more especially the truths of morality and religion, would be food and gladness to the mind. As it is, the reception of gospel truth into the understanding, the adjustment of it into a system, the perception of its relations, part to part, and its adaptation to the truths of moral science, of civil and political relations, and even to our physical constitution, all afford intellectual employment and pleasure too, to the philosophic mind. Nothing is more certain than that thus, unregenerate and, of course, unholy men, do in this way receive the lights of Christian instruction and knowledge. More than sixty years ago, an infidel, who was a regular attendant on Dr. Mason's preaching, being asked why he attended upon the exhibition of doctrines which he did not believe, replied, that he liked to hear how beautifully and gracefully Dr. Mason could utter lies. But there is a much larger class, who not only perceive the doctrines of the gospel separately and as worked into a system, and apprehend and believe them to be true, who yet believe only with the understanding and not in heart. This is not the faith that works by love, but only a dead faith. Thus Satan believes. He knows perfectly well that Christianity is true, but then he turns from it with utter abhorrence and hatred.

2. "And have tasted of the heavenly gift." Gifts are not graces in a true, spiritual sense. The word is used in 2 Cor. ix. 15 to signify a spirit of liberality in giving money or goods for charitable uses. "Thanks be unto God for his



unspeakable gift." Here the disposition to distribute to the relief of the poor saints, is the *gift*, and it is from God, but not itself a grace, though often an accompaniment of grace. Paul said to Simon, thy money perish with thee, because thou thoughtest that the gift of God could be purchased with money. The ability to work miracles is the gift here spoken of. On ii. 9, we saw that to *taste* death, is to suffer, experience, endure death: so to taste of the heavenly gift, is to receive and exercise the power or disposition, which is produced in us by an heavenly influence. And thus we come very near to the

3d Characteristic of these persons—"made partakers of the Holy Ghost." See on iii. 1 and 14, partakers of the heavenly calling—partakers of Christ. So to partake of the Holy Ghost, is to experience his influences and power, and be instrumental in producing his works. Such was Simon's wish to purchase it.—Not the gracious, sanctifying influence, but the power of working miracles. That such power is clearly separable from His regenerating and sanctifying operations, is evident from the cases of Balaam and Judas.

4. "And have tasted of the good word of God." The seed, in the parable of the sower, is the word of God. Some fell by the wayside, some on a rock, and some among thorns. These received the word gladly—it appeared sweet to their taste for a while. It appeared to them beautiful, as the word properly means, and with satisfaction they accepted it. Ezekiel's hearers, that admired his pleasant voice, but kept not his sweet words to practice them, were such as here described.

5. "And the powers of the world to come." *Powers* here means the same as in chap. ii. 4, translated miracles. The world to come is the gospel dispensation—the age about to be. The world in ii. 5 means the inhabited earth—the

people inhabiting the earth in the gospel period: the word here used means the age, defining the same thing by time, which the other does by place. Thus the powers of the age about to be, are the same diverse miracles which we met with in ii. 4.

It may be objected, that the 2d, 3d and 5th items here are the same. Our answer is, they are nearly the same. All these worketh that one and the same Spirit; dividing unto every man severally as he will. These are but shades or phases of difference, and this is neither improper nor uncommon. Very often the thought is turned around as it were, in another sentence and so made plainer.

II. The sin of falling away and crucifying to themselves afresh, the Son of God, and putting him to an open shame.

1. *Falling away.* This word is not elsewhere used in the New Testament; but the simple word throwing off the preposition which means *beside—along side*, occurs in nearly an hundred instances; and is of various significations. For example. The shepherds *fell down* and worshiped him. Satan urges Jesus to *fall down* and worship himself—the house of the foolish man *fell*, and great was the *fall* of it. Paul in Romans uses it three times—xi. 11, 22; xiv. 4: and in 1 Cor. three times—x. 8, 12, and xiv. 25.—Have they stumbled that they *should fall?*—on them which *fell*, severity. Evidently, the context must determine in each case, the meaning, whether the *falling* is good or bad—for a good or for an evil purpose or result. And here it cannot be questioned. It is an evil—*falling away* from that which is good—renouncing the truth—apostatizing. It is the sin against which the whole Epistle is directed. It is worthy of remark, here, that the conditional word *If* is not in the original. The participle *falling away*, stands in the same precise grammatical relations with the other six participles in the context, in v.v. 4, 5, 6. I nevertheless treat the

whole as our translators give it, supplying *If* and *Seeing*, though not in the Greek, because they aid in giving the true sense.

2. *Crucifying afresh*—anew, again, the Son of God. Neither does the compound Greek word, thus translated, again occur; but the simple verb and the noun, *cross*, is used some fifty or sixty times: and there is no room for doubt as to its meaning—putting to death, by nailing to the cross. The prefix simply adds the idea of repetition—*crucifying again*. Now, literally and absolutely this is impossible; as we shall see him arguing in another place. So here, this repetition of the crucifixion is relative—they crucify to *themselves* the Son of God. But this, not literally; their rejection of his sacrifice on the cross, makes their salvation impossible, unless Christ should offer himself a sacrifice a second time.

3. *Put him to an open shame*. The original word thus translated occurs but once besides this; viz., in Matt. i. 19.—“to make her a public example;” to expose her to public inspection as a person debased and degraded. The simple word occurs often, and signifies to point out and hold up for inspection and examination. “Jesus *showed* them his hands”—“*show* us the Father.” Jesus was held up to public gaze, when crowned with thorns, arrayed in a purple robe, nailed to the cross—So now, those who, after such full knowledge and professed belief in his doctrines, turn away and scorn him, do make him a public example. Theirs is not simply the sin of unbelief. They go beyond this, and sin not in ignorance, like the mob around Pilate’s court; but with full knowledge and convicted judgment, that he is the Messiah, they turn away and treat him with contumely and contempt.

These we must revert to when we look for the reasons of impossibility as to their recovery from their apostasy.

III. To renew them to repentance is a thing impossible—it cannot, literally—it is unable to be done.

1. The matter that is impossible—to renew these persons unto repentance again. It must be carefully noted, that the question is not about renewing them to *life*, but to *repentance*. There is no evidence, that they had been alive spiritually; but only, that they had professed repentance. And we have evolved the true idea of that grace, inadvertently however, omitting the obvious distinction of initial and continued or repeated repentance. Initial repentance is the first turning of the soul and heart from sin to God; and is subsequent to regeneration, and concomitant with faith. When the soul is made alive unto God—quickened by the Spirit—it relies and rests instantly upon God's veracity, setting to its seal that God is true; and then turns away from all unholy works, to serve the living God. Permanent—repeated activities of this grace, occur every time we fail and sin by omission or commission. This habitual repentance is a daily exercise of the new man; and no one can grow in this grace, or any other, but by its exercise. Hence, all Christians confess their sins, and God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.

2. "*Again*" implies, that they were once renewed unto repentance. They professed conviction—declared their revulsion of heart against sin, their faith in the promises of life and salvation through Christ. They so conducted themselves as to secure confidence in the reality of their conversion and the genuineness and sincerity of their repentance toward God; and were accordingly received to Church membership. They now renounce all this—they call the light darkness; they taste not, but loathe the heavenly bread; they blaspheme the Holy Ghost, denying his divinity, and scoffing at his miracles; they reject the word of God; and despise the miraculous evidences of its truth. They "sin

wilfully after having received the knowledge of the truth," as in ch. x. 26, on which in due time we must comment; when we shall see this sin to be substantially the sin against the Holy Ghost, which hath never forgiveness, neither in this world, neither in that which is to come.

IV. The reasons why they cannot be renewed unto repentance.

1. Because no new light can be brought to bear on their understandings. The glorious truths of the gospel have already been presented, admitted and acknowledged; the ordinary operations of the Spirit have aroused their consciences; they have felt themselves shut up to the profession of repentance; they have been forced, as the evil angels, to an acknowledgment of the truth; they admit that there is no salvation but in Christ—that nothing can deliver a sinner from the curse of God, but the sacrifice offered on Calvary, and yet they reject that sacrifice and turn away. How then is it conceivable, that they can be saved? There is not another name under heaven given among men, whereby a sinner can be saved, and this name they despise and reject. If Christ were to come down and offer himself again a sacrifice for sin, they would surely be more likely to despise and mock the agonies of his second crucifixion, and even more contemptuously than they do the first. No medicine but one can possibly cure their disease; and that they trample under foot.

2. Then the contumely and contempt displayed toward the kind and condescending Saviour, stands in their own minds a mountain in their way. They feel an utter revulsion of soul against him, and this drives them farther and farther from him. Apostates are thus always more bitter and hostile than ordinary sinners. The more they scoff, the more they are rooted and grounded in their hatred and enmity against God and his Christ.

3. Then, on the score of law and justice, they are wholly delivered over to hardness of heart and blindness of mind. For it is a fixed and indispensable principle in the very nature of moral government, that there must be a limit to probation—a point in time when the trial ends, and the subject under trial must be called to account. My Spirit shall not always strive with man—let him alone, he is joined to his idols. We cannot conceive of moral government at all without this principle. If then these apostates have sinned away their day of grace, there remains to them nothing but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour them as adversaries of God, unreconciled and irreconcilable.

As intimated, this is the unpardonable sin and will come up hereafter, we only now anticipate the important practical remark; that if any tender conscience is distressed by the apprehension that it has committed this fearful sin, the very fact of this distress disproves it; for unbelief, landing a soul in apostasy, sears it as with a hot iron, and leaves it utterly callous and dead to tender emotions—hard as the nether millstone.

V.v. 8, 9. "For the earth, which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God. But that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned."

We have here, under a comparison, or brief allegory, the argument preceding; designed to alarm and arouse such as are peculiarly in danger of apostasy; but moreover to constrain all to whom the gospel comes, to diligence and faithfulness in the improvement of their privileges. The earth symbolizes man, as an individual or in the aggregate. The cultivator of the ground is the Lord. The results varying, represent the different effects from the preached gospel.



I. "The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant." If we consider the aggregate mass under this figure, then we must note the perilous condition of the Hebrew nation at this juncture. For about thirty-five years they have had the gospel pressed upon their consideration. "My doctrine shall drop as the rain and my speech shall distil as the dew; as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass." Deut. xxxii. 2. And such is the rain in this text—properly a shower, gentle and yet copious, adequate to saturate the soil. Heavenly influences are described thus, "He shall come down like the rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth." Ps. lxxii. 6. The common influences of the Spirit, enlightening the mind and stirring up the consciences of men, are also here set forth.

The earth—or rather land in general, includes forests, rocky mountains, swamps. But the expression, "which drinketh in the rain," limits it to arable land, soil naturally adapted to cultivation. Such land represents the mass of mankind, whose faculties are adapted to the reception of truth, whether of natural, mental or spiritual science. And if the natural man—the unregenerate, receiveth not the things of the Spirit, it is not, that his intellectual powers have no adaptation; but because of the alienation of his heart from God; his corrupt lusts becloud his mind.

This doctrine—this rain coming often upon it, intimates the abundant instructions given to Israel and to all who hear the gospel, for "precept is upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little and there a little;" so that for your opportunities, ye ought to be able to teach others. Thus facilities to knowledge generally abound all over the Church: we have the Bible-class, the Sabbath-school, the family instruction, the prayer-

meeting, but above all and more important than all, the public commissioned ambassador of God, with the holy Scriptures open before him and before all the people: so that men cannot remain ignorant of the glorious gospel of the blessed God; unless they wilfully shut their eyes and stop their ears.

II. The Lord is the husbandman. This vast and comprehensive agency is all of his provision. "The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy." The prophets, who of old spake unto the Fathers, were all under the direction of the Holy Spirit. And the whole system of agencies under the gospel comes under the evangelical commission, Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. Now in all this the Lord exerciseth his sovereignty. "Hath the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of dew?" Job xxxviii. 28. God alone can bring rain. "Are there any among the vanities of the gentiles that can cause rain?" "The Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field." So in Amos iv. 7, "I have withholden the rain from you—and I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city." Now as God is sovereign of the rain, so is he in the dropping of his doctrine and the distilling of his Spirit. He has left many portions of the earth without the knowledge of his gospel—"thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes." How deeply then ought we to feel our obligation of gratitude and responsibilities, in view of the Divine partialities in our favor; and how strenuously should we exert ourselves in the improvement of our opportunities?

III. The varied results of this cultivation represent the diversities of effect of a preached gospel. These are of two kinds, good *fruitbearing*: and barrenness and corrupt fruit.

The former is described in the words "and bringeth forth herbs, meet for them by whom it is dressed." In these are several points to be noted.

1. There is a slight defect in the translation. It should be "for whom"—on account of whom, for whose benefit it is dressed. That the almost invariable usage with Greek writers, in regard to this construction, is the correct one here also, is evident from the undoubted truth, that in the times of this writing, the owners of the soil were generally different persons from the stewards and laborers, by whom the work was performed. Witness the parable of the vineyard, let out to husbandmen. Moreover, this usual rendering includes the other, for the laborer is worthy of his meat,—the wages of labor must first be paid, whilst the land is tilled for the proprietor.

2. The product is not cereal grains, nor yet grasses; but herbs, garden vegetables. This is the most valuable product of the soil; on its production much more labor is bestowed than on the other kinds, and much more value in proportion to the acres is ordinarily received. Here we are taught, that the organized Church, which is within the wider field, which is the world at large, is the special object of the husbandman's care, and that to which he looks for the fruits of righteousness, to the praise of his own glory. "Those that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing." Ps. xcii. 13, 14.

3. This tillage is peculiarly liable to noxious products,—weeds, briars, thorns—that spring up and retard the growth of the plants: and this beautifully illustrates the careful exercise of discipline in the Church, which promotes the growth of its members in holiness and perfection, negatively as it were: that is, by removing hindrances out of the way, and thus preventing evil communications from corrupting

good manners. Positively, all growth in holiness is by the Spirit's influence in the soul: "and their soul shall be as a watered garden."

4. The further consequence is, blessing from God. But we must distinguish. Two words are rendered by the one English term *blessed*. "Blessed are the pure in heart." Here *blessed* means, *happy* are the pure in heart. But the word in our text, signifies to speak well of—to commend, to praise a person because of good qualities in him. We have adopted this word in English—*eulogy*; and in the proper Greek sense. Obviously, therefore, the blessing here is not the grace that precedes and causes the fruit-bearing. It is nevertheless a reward for it, and is accompanied with, or, we may say, followed by blessing in the sense of beatitude. For the *eulogy* "well done thou good and faithful servant," is followed by the joy of the Lord. And thus God always rewards that very fruit-bearing, holy diligence, which is itself the product of his own previously communicated grace.

Converse *results* follow the opposite course of conduct. Land that bears thorns and briars meets a different fate.

1. Barrenness is a negative idea—it is the mere absence of fruit and fruit-bearing capacity. It is, however, always in Scripture looked upon as a great evil. In his displeasure, "God turneth a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein." Ps. cvii. 34. But there is a striking analogy between land and man as a moral being. If land capable of drinking in the rain—arable land, bears no fruit, it will produce weeds, briars and thorns. If there is no good seed sown in the heart, Satan will supply the defect, and roots of bitterness will spring up. There is no neutrality in morals: men are either good or bad; with Christ or against him.

2. This land producing thorns and briars is *rejected*.

The word is used to describe metals which have been subjected to a fiery trial, and, having been found adulterated, are discarded, thrown away as useless. The verbal form of the same we have in 1 Cor. xi. 28, Let a man examine himself—throw himself into the crucible of a rigid self-examination, and having passed through and stood the test, so let him eat. But more than a negation is found here. Such land is cursed with increase of evils; and being incapable of producing any good fruit, it is subjected to a process of fire. We may not however press the analogy too close. For the agriculture of that day resorted to the process of fire to improve the soil. This point is not to be maintained as symbolical. Thus is it with men who do no good, but evil. They are thrown out: reprobate silver shall men call them. They are not simply let alone; but, being positively evil, are cast into outer darkness, where are weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Now, let all men know that this process is in progress, though you may not perceive it, by which your characters are brought to the test. The instrumental agencies are at work. God's ministry are applying the words of truth now, by which you shall be judged in the day of their divine Master's glory. Still the process here and now is a solemn reality. Jesus our Lord is probing the conscience; is applying the truth, and it is impossible but that either a hardening influence or the reverse is taking place even now. Are not many hastening apace toward the perilous point of final abandonment—nigh unto cursing? And what is this cursing, but simply the withdrawing of influences tending heavenward, and leaving you to the freedom of your own will? Then the end is burning. But now turn; oh, why will ye die?

V.v. 9, 10. "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though

we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints and do minister."

The communications, which are intended to alarm and arouse, are followed by very different effects upon different minds. Impending wrath ought to alarm those over whose heads it hangs; whilst others of a contrary character, are really in no danger, and have no just ground of dismay or even of uneasiness. Humble piety often trembles under general denunciations of divine displeasure against sin; whilst gospel hardened transgression braves the thunders of omnipotence. Such is the deceitfulness of sin; such the tempting wiles of the arch adversary. These often succeed for a time in exciting perturbation of mind and painful anxieties of heart, in view of what, at worst, is only the frown of a Father's love; whilst that generates the false belief that there is no real danger—God's wrath! it is only a figure of speech after all; the divine Being is benevolent, and not at all the subject of malevolent passions. Let not true believers mistake a parental reproof and warning for a coming of burning wrath. Let those who abide in the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity know then, that confident boldness will not prevent the fire from kindling among the briars and thorns, nor extinguish it when kindled.

But, Beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, though we thus speak. Let us not sin against the generation of the just. Here we note,

1. The compellation, *Beloved!* as it is contrasted by the adversative, *But*. There are two classes presented, viz., those described in v.v. 4 and 5, as persons that have enjoyed many privileges and received many gifts, but who turn away from the truth and deliberately renounce the proffered salvation: and these beloved ones—the aggregate of true



believers who are bound together by that charity which is the bond of perfectness and which endureth forever: and outliveth even faith, and hope.

2. The apostle's confidence in the reality of their conversion—"we are persuaded." Well does Dr. Sampson observe, "We persuade ourselves." This phrase, as with us, often expresses the surest conviction. Thus, in Rom. viii. 38, "For I am persuaded, that neither death nor life, etc., shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." He also quotes Rom. xiv. 14 and 2 Tim. i. 12. Whilst it is true, that we cannot know, with absolute certainty, that any given individual or mass of individuals are truly converted and infallibly safe; yet our evidences may be so thorough, as to leave no shade of doubt. Nor can we duly appreciate the benefits to christian society, from such persuasion; and consequently the importance of giving, in a life of holiness, the evidence from which this persuasion springs.

3. The matter of this persuasion—*better things* of—concerning—about you. What things? Assuredly the things, wherein the beloved were better than the apostles before mentioned. You, my beloved, have gone beyond these gifts and natural attainments, and embraced the salvation set before you in the arms of a true faith, and exhibited its truth in sincere repentance and the exercises of a true charity. In short, these *better things* are such as have salvation. Hence, as before remarked, the attainments of the other class in this contrast, do not necessarily *accompany*—or more literally, *have* salvation. The graces of the Holy Spirit, displayed in their life, convinced him of their regeneration and consequently, of that life in them which, by His inhabitation, shall endure forever.

4. It is no offence against charity to warn men of the perils of eternal wrath. He that believeth not the Son

shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. The law's curse and the gospel's promise are not antagonistic.

5. It is dangerous, nevertheless, and should never be done, to leave men under the denunciations of divine wrath, without pointing out the way of escape through the great atonement.

6. The beloved of the Lord are not to be left comfortless, though wicked and impenitent men may pervert gospel promises to their own ruin.

V. 10. The grounds of this favorable opinion are found in their personal and practical religion : and,

1. They were working christians. The better critical opinion, and which Dr. Mason decidedly held, is, that the *work* here is that of faith. Whether the weight of Greek manuscripts justifies or not, the insertion of *faith* after *work*, as in 1 Thess. i. 3—"Remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labor of love"—the Apostle's meaning here includes it. For without faith it is impossible to please God ; and faith worketh by love. Faith is the great, radical constituent of christian character, out of which all others grow. Men may sneer when they hear people talk of believers. Well, let them sneer. It is not my present business to show their inconsistency, when they act faith in all their lives, only not in God. I shall merely say, the judgment of God is different from theirs. We are justified by faith ; we live by faith ; and we shall die by faith in the death of him who is the resurrection and the life. The man who does not work in this way does nothing.

2. This working faith is active love—labor of love. The word for *labor* is not found in all original manuscripts, and is considered by many critics of doubtful authority. But its omission would make no material change of meaning. Griesbach omits it, and his text reads "the work of you and

of love"—your work even of love: and when we proceed to ascertain what the work is, we find it to consist in showing reverence to his name by exercises of love toward his people; all of which are the fruits of faith.

3. The objects of love—which love ye have showed toward his name. The name of a thing is that whereby it is known and distinguished from all other things. The name of God includes anything and everything that displays his attributes to the contemplation of rational minds. Of course, the highest manifestation of his perfections is found in our Lord Jesus Christ. To respect, reverence, and love Christ, is to love the Father. To treat with contempt the Son, and yet to profess respect and love to the Father, is the veriest effrontery. "He that saith I love God and yet hateth his brother is a liar."

4. Therefore, note the manner in which faith works and love labors. Ye have ministered to the saints. This ministering is a general idea—performed the duties of a deacon. It includes supplying their temporal wants, lodging, entertaining, forwarding them on their journeys and in their business, and giving money for their use. 2 Cor. viii. 4, 9. This is an expression of respect and love to Christ. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me." But the Apostle insists on continuity in this course of action. A spasm of charity may drive a man to do a very liberal thing; but he may fall off and neglect this Christian duty for long years: but these believers persevered—they do minister.

5. The faithfulness of God to his covenant engagements, is an important item in the foundation of the Apostle's confident persuasion. God is not unrighteous to forget your works of charity. Not to forget is to remember, as Paul did the charitable works of the Thessalonians: and to remember is to reward their doings; which is to be righteous.

Not to reward faithful service is to be unjust. God's justice is displayed partly in our present life, and fully in the future world. Jesus tells us, that the giving of a cup of cold water to a disciple in the name of a disciple shall in nowise lose its reward—Matt. x. 42. Nor is there the least discrepancy between this and the doctrine of salvation by free grace. No work merits reward, but the work of faith, and this faith is a divine grace. He gives the grace, and then, in the strictest sense, rewards all the holy activities of the heart in which it dwells.

6. "One of the most decisive tests of our interest in His salvation by faith, is our exercising faith in Him for the life that now is. If you are afraid to trust the Lord Jesus for the enjoyments of time, how can you trust him for those of eternity? This test of your faith is of more importance than you are generally aware of. Try and bring your minds up to it. See whether you are not more willing to trust yourself to his grace and mercy for eternal things, than to trust his providence for those things which perish in the using."

V.v. 11, 12. From the danger of apostasy and the confidence he felt in their devising liberal things, Paul proceeds to exhort them to take warning and encouragement to persevere in the ways of well doing. He feels it to be as truly his duty to recognize and commend their Christian zeal and charitable works, as to censure the backsliders and therein to warn the faithful. "And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence unto the end: That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." The central idea here is the contrary of the failing of the apostates; viz., full assurance of hope. At this high attainment he urges them to aim. Christians ought not to live in gloom, and doubts, and despondency all their days. It is their duty and their

privilege to rise and live above these heavy drawbacks upon their felicity. Where hope is ever and anon at the point of expiration, there can be but little spiritual enjoyment: and but little of that life, vigor and energy, so important as a preparation for success in any enterprise. Hope of success nerves the arm of effort and realizes its object.

To this end, the spirit displayed in their ministering to the saints, is commended and the same active charity encouraged. The hand of the diligent maketh rich: and this is pressed upon every one of them: no drones are to be encouraged or tolerated in the hive. Industry in any lawful pursuit, but especially in sacred things, is a sure method of warding off the assaults of the foe. "Occupy till I come." And this is equally the duty of those who have little, as those who have much of money, or of any kind of talents. Failures in this duty, are perhaps more common among those of small means than among those who have large resources. The man of one talent was the only one utterly deficient: and so it often is; a man says, I am too poor to do anything—I cannot teach or preach, or give money to aid others. Such men forget the two mites. If the small rain-drops were to stop coming down, the rivers would soon run dry.

This eager diligence the Apostle presses without limit—to the end. While there is life, there must be laborious diligence: and this end is the beginning only of a new and more glorious career of usefulness and felicity. If the soldiers are enlisted to the end of the war, it is likely to end sooner than if for short periods. Their interests will press them to a speedy conclusion.

V. 12. The aim of the preceding exhortation, is to prevent slothfulness and to excite to energetic action. Ye are not to slumber over the means of improvement—planning ex-

cuses—now running at this—now at that; and not pursuing any with steadfast and systematic energy. We see how this does in temporal things. No good comes of it. “The slothful man saith, there is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets.” Prov. xxii. 13. Such persons relieve the Devil from the trouble of tempting them; they tempt themselves. The contrary course is strongly urged. “Be ye followers of them who through faith,” etc. i. e., the Old Testament believers. The great inheritance is wrapped up in the promises: and God will have his people to know that it is worth waiting for. Paul had experience of this in regard to his temporal salvation—amid his vastly numerous perils by sea and land, his patience had her perfect work, and by long-suffering he triumphed. Now therefore he urges his brethren: “Gird up the loins of your minds and press on, giving all diligence to make your calling and election sure.”

V.v. 13–15. “For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself, saying, Surely, blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee; And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.”

Promises are to be inherited; that is, to pass down from father to son; and God will teach his children, that they must await his time for their possession and enjoyment: and this is necessary for the perfecting of their faith and patience. These graces in vigorous exercise generate the full assurance of hope. Hope is the daughter of faith and the mother of charity. No man can be a Christian without hope; but its life and power vary with the character of its parent. As faith increases in strength, hope acquires activity, buoyancy and cheerfulness; and love feels her benevolence expand and her life reaching into eternity. Thus grow these graces, until the daughter supplants the mother—the



full assurance of hope swallows up faith in vision, and is herself merged and lost in the full fruition of heavenly love. Now the foundation of all this, lies in the pledged veracity and unfailing faithfulness of a covenant keeping God. This is the matter discussed in these and the following verses.

He illustrates, in the case of the father of the faithful, the characteristics of all his children, of whom he will have us to be followers. We may notice, I. The promise; II. The oath; III. The fulfilment.

I. The promise was given to Abram at his call, in the seventieth year of his life; and renewed on several occasions. The last was after the offering of Isaac, Gen. xxii. 16-18, when the oath was superadded. This vocation, promise and oath organized the visible church, properly so called. It involves also the blessings of the covenant of grace and redemption, which was made in eternity between the Father and the Son, and guarantees these blessings to Abraham and to his spiritual seed for ever.

II. The oath. And we must note its general nature.

1. An oath is a solemn appeal to God, asking him to witness the juror's sincerity and purpose to tell the truth, or perform the promise he therein makes; and that as he shall answer to God at the Great Day. It is therefore when used by creatures, an act of religious worship of the very highest character. It recognizes the being of God; his omnipresence; his omniscience; his omnipotence; his holiness; his justice; his truth; his future judgment of the world. It imprecates God's wrath upon the soul and body, if the man violates any of these obligations. When the commandment orders, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain"—it orders us to take it when lawfully called upon to do so. Accordingly, Isa. lxxv. 16, speaking of the gospel day, says "he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the

God of truth"—And this is according to law, Deut. vi. 13, "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name." To take an oath to tell the truth or to discharge the duties of an office, when lawfully called upon, is as much a duty, as profanely and in vain swearing is a sin. "Thy children have forsaken me, and have sworn by them that are no gods." Jer. v. 7.

2. The object or purpose of an oath is noted in v. 16—"an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife." In controversies and lawsuits, truth is essential to justice; and the oath is a means of arriving at truth. If ever a man will tell or act the truth, it will be when he stands in the recognized presence of God his judge. The oath places him in this presence: and if the truth cannot be gotten from him thus, it must be deferred until he stands at the final tribunal.

3. This verse also cites the usual custom of swearing by the greater. Any other would be absurd and idolatrous, and a robbery of God: for "none else is judge but God," and he that swears by an idol puts it in God's stead. Who-so refuses, when properly called upon to swear, sins against justice and society; for he refuses to aid in reaching justice. Hence laws are enacted to compel witnesses to testify, by punishing refusal.

4. Mark the amazing condescension of our God: he bows to our weakness and swears by himself; that he may give us the highest possible evidence of his benevolent purposes toward us. This crowns the condescension of his love in making the covenant.

5. The matter of the oath, or the thing promised under cover of it. The phraseology of v. 14, is an Hebraism, "Surely, blessing I will bless thee"—It is a superlative under a verbal form—and is equivalent to—I will greatly bless thee; and will increase vastly thy seed: they shall be

for numbers, as the stars of heaven. This, as our Apostle has shown in Rom. iv., regards chiefly the spiritual seed—the whole body of God's redeemed throughout the world and the ages.

III. The fulfilment of the promise. V. 15. "And so after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise." This has two aspects: the former regards the immediate descendant—the Son of laughter. Isaac was both the natural and the spiritual seed, and combining both, he and Jacob only were granted to Abraham during his life. Thus discouraging was the prospect and sore the trial of Abraham's faith. During the hundred and five years which he lived after the promise was given, he was privileged to see only Isaac and Jacob within the compass of the promise; and the latter a lad of only fifteen. Yet Abraham staggered not, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God. His faith annihilated time and space. So our Lord says, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad." He set to his seal that God is true: and knew that countless millions, both natural and spiritual children, should be given to him according to the promise.

Nor is this operation of faith in giving knowledge, at all peculiar to religion. "By faith we understand—we *know*, that the worlds were framed by the word of God." And there is not another intelligent history of creation. By faith we know that Julius Cæsar conquered Gaul and was assassinated in the Senate house: that Napoleon won the battles of Wagram, Marengo and Austerlitz; that he lost Waterloo and died a prisoner at St. Helena. By faith we know that Columbus discovered America; the Protestant religion peopled it, and made it a free nation. By faith man attains almost all the knowledge he possesses. Strip the wisest man in the world of all the knowledge he has acquired by believing the testimony of others, and you make him a fool

comparatively. Strip this jury of the knowledge they have by believing the witnesses examined in court, and you render a verdict impossible; justice is unattainable; and business becomes impracticable. Make unbelief universal, and society, and law, and government are at an end; the pulse of life stands still, and nature pauses on the brink of utter desolation. Marvel not then at the divine declaration—"he that believeth not shall be damned." That a natural principle—an original—I might almost say, an *organic* law of the human mind, without which man, as a social being, could not exist—the law of reliance upon the solemn declarations of intelligent beings—that this principle, sanctified in the renovated man, and directed by divine grace upon the pledged veracity of God who cannot lie, should lead to such glorious and blessed results, is surely not a matter to be wondered at. Reliance upon testimony, so far from being an acquired habit, as Hume says, is a primary law of the mind as God made it; it is unbelief—it is the withholding of reliance or resting on testimony, that is the acquired habit. Our first parents naturally believed God; and only when the power of the arch liar had been felt, and the soul had sunk under his polluting touch, did a shade of doubt cross the disk of their pure intelligence. This pollution and the darkness it produced, are removed by the Spirit, in regeneration; and a pure and simple belief in the veracity of God the promiser, henceforth controls the whole mind and heart of the true Israel of God.

V. 17. "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise, the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath."

The phrase, *wherein*, refers to the matter of verse 16th. By the same principle and method which men practice, in order to secure confidence and the onward movement of

society, our Lord, in great condescension and love to us, exhibits the immutability of his purposes of mercy. Let us note,

1. The heirship which he has assigned to us. An heir is one to whom goods, property descend in consequence of relationship—nearness of kin. It implies, in the most direct and proper sense, that we are children of God; and if children, then heirs. And as we are by nature children of wrath, it implies adoption.

2. The property in which we have a right and interest is the promise—the great promise of eternal inheritance. It includes the whole salvation offered in the gospel, and all that follows in consequence—the privileges of the church state, here below; food and raiment; antepast of heavenly joys—all that justice and love award to the child in the period of non-age; and in due time the full possession of his heavenly inheritance—a mansion in his Father's house—an everlasting home in heaven—the society of holy spirits, redeemed and unredeemed; the smiles of divine approbation—the beatific vision. These all in prospect; “for it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know, that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”

3. All these and infinitely more than we can conceive, or ask, or think, are included in the divine counsel. This word, *counsel*, expresses the will of God developing itself in his divine determination—“him being delivered by the determinate *counsel* and foreknowledge of God,” etc. This counsel involving infinite wisdom, goodness and love, cannot change. God is immutable and Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever—“I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.” And Paul says, “For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the *counsel* of God.” Acts xx. 27.—the whole divine plan of salvation. This

counsel cannot in itself be made more fixed and certain than it is from eternity.

4. For this is not the matter God is willing to do ; but to show the *immutability* of his purpose : to give to the heirs of the promise, more, and most abundant, evidence of its unchangeableness. Thus, his oath, like that of a human witness, is not designed to make the truth in itself more certain ; but to manifest that certainty to all whom it may concern : for this end,

5. He *confirmed* it by an oath. Literally, he *mediated* by an oath. He came between the matter or substance of the promise, and the minds of the heirs of promise ; and pledged all the attributes of his own being, to bring them together and ensure to the heirs all the blessings guaranteed in the testament or covenant of which they are inheritors. Just so is it with the witnesses to a human testament : they *mediate*—they stand between the testator speaking in his will and giving promises to his heirs, and those heirs of these promises ; and, by their oath, link them together and show to these heirs the sure and certain connection between themselves and the goods promised in the testament. Without their mediation by oath, the inheritors cannot reach the promised inheritance ; and their present anticipated enjoyments of it, must be in proportion to their faith in the mediating witnesses. This leads us to consider the consequences of this oath.

V.v. 18-20. "That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us : which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil ; whither the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec."



Here he, I., states the grand design of this mediatorial interposition by oath—the strong consolation of the heirs of the promise.

II. The unfailing foundation whereon this consolation rests—the oath and the promise.

III. The parties in whom it is effected—described by their actions.

IV. The manner in which faith works out this consolation—as an anchor of the soul.

V. The object on which this anchor takes hold—Jesus within the veil.

I. The grand design to be accomplished is the high consolation of the heirs of promise.

1. The verbal noun, translated, *consolation*, is a very near relative of that translated in John xiv. 16, 26, and xv. 26, and xvi. 7, Comforter, meaning—the Holy Ghost—Paraclete. The only other instance of its use in the New Testament, is in 1 John ii. 1, where it is applied to Christ—“we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Righteous.” The word here in our text means, primarily, the process of ministering comfort. The verb from which both are derived, means *to call up alongside*—to exhort, to beseech, to pray—to *comfort*. Paracletis, is translated, *consolation, comfort, exhortation*. It seems always to include a delightful or pleasant state of mind resulting from counsel, advice, friendly communication of good news. Of course it is susceptible of various degrees of intensity. Here this is expressed as *a strong consolation*—a high degree of satisfaction, of complacency, of happiness.

II. Now, obviously, this must depend on the good news communicated, and the degree of evidence of its certainty; which in this case is the highest possible. For the thing testified unto, by the oath, is the infinite sufficiency of the great salvation—whatever of efficacy there is in the blood

of atonement—whatever of glory and happiness can be secured to the soul by the obedience of the Son of God. The promise and the oath of him who cannot lie, are the foundation on which the hope of the heirs of glory rests. And where in all the universe, can there be found such another basis of confidence? The immutable and eternal God himself has laid the foundation of our hope on the everlasting Rock: and the edifice thereon erected must stand forever.

III. The parties to whom this guarantee is vouchsafed—to whom this strong consolation is imparted, are described by their activities,—they have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before them. Here the allusion is obviously to the cities of refuge, Num. xxxv. 10–30. There were six appointed—three on the east and three on the west of the river Jordan; at places easily accessible from all parts of the land. In cases of manslaughter, whether intentional or accidental, the slayer, if he escapes and enters either of these, is not liable to be himself slain by the revenger of blood. But if he were overtaken by the revenger of blood, that is, by any relative of the person killed, he was liable to be put to death by him, and the law accounted it a just execution. But if he succeeds in entering the city, then the avenger of blood has no right to injure him; but he is to be subjected to a regular trial, and if the killing was intentional and malicious, “he shall be surely put to death.” On the other hand, if the killing were accidental, he shall not die, but shall abide in the city of his refuge until the death of the High Priest, and then shall he return to his home.

Christ is this city of refuge—“the name of the LORD is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and is safe.” We may not carry the parable to an extreme. A few points may be named. (1.) We have sinned and forfeited our lives

to the law. (2.) The law commissions the avenger of blood. The wages of sin is death: "the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law." (3.) The city of refuge, with its ever open door, is Christ with open arms ready to receive the sinner who flees to Him for refuge. (4.) Faith and hope impel and draw toward Christ. Conviction awakes the soul to a sense of its danger; illumination of gospel truth points out the door of hope. The avenger of blood takes the track; he follows the fugitive with vengeful tread. The wrath of God, like a whirlwind of fire pursues him; he flies with quickened step and throws himself at the officers' feet in the gate—the stronghold is now his protection: he is safe.

IV. The manner in which hope works out these blessed results—as an anchor of the soul. An anchor is a heavy appliance made of iron and wood, and connected with a ship by a strong rope or chain. It is thrown into the sea when it is desirable to keep the vessel stationary. This it does by sinking to the bottom and its flukes bedding themselves in the sand or catching on the rocks. Vessels are thus, often saved from drifting upon a lee-shore and being stranded, or dashed to pieces on the rocks. Having ridden out the storm in safety, the crew take up the anchor and proceed on their voyage to the desired port. So is hope to the voyager on the troubled ocean of this sinful world. Faith is the Christian's cable, and hope his anchor: his vessel never parts this cable, nor drags her anchor. For, though like the iron instrument, it is far out of sight, it keeps firm hold upon the rock invisible, within the veil. It reaches into the Holy of Holies. As the blue sea hides the iron anchor, and yet the sailor knows where it is, and feels himself safe in the use of it; so the eye of faith passes beyond these blue heavens, and keeps the spiritual voyagers firm and steadfast. It gives ballast to his soul, and he stands erect

and stiff against the sweeping tornado. The eye of hope never blenches, it shall see—it doth see the King in his beauty and beholds the land that is very far off.

V. The object on which this anchor fastens is thus anticipated. Jesus, in reference to the figure of the ship, is the Rock. But following the anchor downward into the invisible, the Apostle's thought is reflected by contrast into the upward invisible—within the veil: and thus he is again brought back to the point whence this digression was begun, in v. 10, the High Priest as typified by Melchisedek. Here there is a reference to the practices of Kings, Princes, Great ones of earth. Their movements are attractive to the public. A great retinue accompanies them; and they are preceded by heralds, whose business is to announce their approach, and make all due preparation for their reception and accommodation. Whither—into which place—i. e., within the veil, type of heaven, the Forerunner is for us entered. The allusion suggests a contrast; for, in the customs of men, the forerunner or herald, is a subordinate—a servant of the Prince; here the Forerunner is the Prince himself who goes before, to prepare a place for us in his Father's house. How amazing the condescension of his love! And how wonderfully this magnifies the glory of his work! The Lord of glory himself becomes a herald in advance of his redeemed; and this by the necessities of the work he engaged to accomplish. That He came to our world in the form of a servant, born of a woman, made under the law; that he lived, obeyed, suffered, died, arose from the grave, ascended and took possession of his glorious throne in the heavens, what Christian doubts? These are all objects of faith; yet, can any thing be more certain? Now, the reasons for all this are manifest from the nature of his priestly office; for it is as High Priest he enters into the holiest of all. Three things may be noted.

1. He appears there as the head and representative of his redeemed—as we must see more particularly hereafter. Having fought their battles here and foiled the powers of darkness—having been betrayed, condemned, crucified and buried—finished the work, he must necessarily arise, as the first fruits of them that slept; he must give evidence and proof of all this before the presence of the Father's glory. This he does in his own person and the persons of those who arose with him and went to glory. He was not the first human body that went to heaven. Enoch and Elijah had long been objects of wonder and admiration there. But they had not slept in the dust, and did not arise from the dead and ascend. Lazarus and the son of the widow of Nain arose, but they slept again in the ground. The babe at Bethlehem born; the man that groaned at Gethsemane and expired on the cross and under the curse of Calvary, was the first specimen of humanity that was announced in the realms of everlasting day, as having burst the bonds of death and passed the gates of life and glory. In all this he was the anti-type of the Levitical High Priest, who carried into the most holy place the memorial of the fact, that the sacrifice had been offered for the people according to law.

2. We know that some of the saints arose from the dead after this resurrection, and entered into the holy city. This was proof to the saints on earth, that he is able to raise the dead bodies of his people. Here they have a sample of it. His own resurrection might not remove all doubts. After this they might still fear, and doubt whether a dead body not joined to a divine person could rise. Now their doubts must vanish. But they accompanied him to heaven. Why this? The same doubts might prevail there. To cut off all doubt he takes some with him, whose souls had been long known among the saints in heaven.—And he takes

them back, united to their once dead bodies; where they are again recognized. The fact of risen bodies is displayed chiefly in heaven; but a few on earth could see it. It was to give the spirits of the just a proof, to make them perfect in the faith.—They did need something—they without us could not be made perfect.—We do not know, Brethren, how far these ransomed spirits were kept in suspense, while the work of redemption was carrying on here on earth—We are sure the angels did not know the whole, till they learned from the church below.

The body of our Lord Jesus was a Jewish body—a direct descendant from Abraham. So the bodies of those who went with him. “Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.”

I have quoted my notes from Dr. Mason nearly verbatim. The fact of the saint who arose, passing with him to heaven, is all along *assumed*: it is not asserted nor proved; but assumed as true. To my mind, it seems questionable. The most like it asserted by Matthew, is that they entered into *the holy city*; which may mean—heaven. The reasonable presumption is in favor of Dr. Mason’s view. I see nothing in it inconsistent with the analogies of the faith.

3. Our Lord’s entrance was to take possession, as our Fore-runner, of the holy heaven, not so much as his own, for as God, it was his from eternity: but for us. We have in him a claim of right therein; that in due time we, in spirit and in body, shall occupy the mansions he has purchased and prepared for us. We have no promise that we shall not die; but then the death of a christian is at most only a process of taking down to rebuild, and with increased beauty and convenience. There is nothing terrible in this king of terrors, but his cold hand. And the christian can well



afford to be handed, though the hand be cold, into the warm bosom of his gracious Lord. That Jesus has gone before us, should reconcile us to commit our bodies to the dust.

Now all that, as our Forerunner, Jesus has done and will do for us, inclusive of the mission of the Spirit, is based on the fact, that he is our High Priest. His carrying in the memorial of his own blood, within the veil, is the grand plea, by which he prevails in his intercession and secures the mission of the Spirit. On this hangs all our hopes of a glorious resurrection; our claim on eternal life; our felicity in spiritual enjoyments here, and all our expectations for eternity. "There is no faith, no hope, no forgiveness, no peace, no happiness, no heaven, but upon this broad ground—*Jesus loved me and gave himself for me.*"

If these things be so, and we know from the word of eternal truth, they are so; what are we to think of those nominal christians, who deny the atoning sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ? We own no man as a brother in Christ, who does not rest upon Him as a real—vicarious substitute for us, in suffering for our sins. We know no such christians. There are none such in heaven—nor ever will be.—Seek then, Christian Brethren, to be washed in the fountain of his blood, and ye shall be clean.

## CHAPTER VII.

VERSES 1-3. "For this Melchisedek, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually."

1. Here note first, the logical connection—this is expressed by the term, *for*—rendering a reason of what precedes. Christ Jesus is made an High Priest *forever*, after the order of Melchisedek, *for* this Melchisedek abideth a priest continually. After his order is our Forerunner made an High Priest: but his order had no predecessor or successor; therefore, our Forerunner is unchangeable and everlasting in his office. All between *Melchisedek* in v. 1 and *abideth* in v. 3, is parenthetical; and set forth the main points of resemblance between the two Priests, which constitute the one a type and the other an anti-type.

2. Melchisedek was a personal, and the *first* personal type of Christ: yet not of his person, but only of his office. There is no type of Christ's person; nor can be, because he is God, co-equal with the Father. But the person—the man Melchisedek, is a type of our Forerunner, in regard to his offices, especially his Priesthood. That is, he was brought into being, made, prepared and fitted, in the points required, to foreshadow and intimate certain official characteristics of

our High Priest: in order that they might, in due time, illustrate in various ways, his official relations. Resemblance is the basis of typical representation: yet not resemblance of the things directly; but of their uses, applications and relations. For example: the paschal lamb is a type of Christ, because its uses, in regard to Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage, resemble the uses of Christ, in regard to man's deliverance from the bondage of sin and Satan. So, many things in the condition, character, offices and official acts of Melchisedek, resemble the offices and acts of our High Priest.

3. Who was Melchisedek? To this question, no absolute and definite answer has ever been returned. Conjectures only are furnished: some say, an *angel*; which is refuted by the Apostle—every High Priest taken from among men, etc.—He could not be a Priest for men, if he were an angel. Christ himself could not become our Priest, but consequently on his becoming man. Some say, God the Father—some the Son—but the Son could not be “made like unto the Son of God:” nor could the Father, nor the Holy Ghost typify the Son. Dr. Owen gives a conjecture, that it was some descendant of Japheth, providentially thrown in among the sons of Ham and Canaan, as a kind of type of the future conversion of Japheth to the religion of Shem. If we may give an old Jewish conjecture, I think the most probable is, *Shem*. Shem lived five hundred years after the flood, Gen. xi. 11. Abraham was called in his seventieth year, four hundred and twenty-two years after the flood; he died one hundred and five years thereafter; (Gen. xi. and xii.), *post diluuium* 527. Shem died *post diluuium* 500; so Abraham outlived Shem only twenty-seven years; and was cotemporary with him a hundred and forty-eight years. Dr. Owen sets this conjecture aside by the statement before us, that Melchisedek is without father, without mother, etc., whereas

Shem's parentage is known. This, however, is no valid objection. Because these expressions are Paul's statement in his own times, and have reference only to the genealogical tables of the Levitical priesthood; and they are as true of Shem as they are of Nebuchadnezzar. Neither of these names occurs in the record to this day. The word *Shem* means, *name, fame, renown*, and this adds to the strength of the conjecture. For what man of earth could command such influence, and become so renowned as the inhabitant of two worlds—a man who lived ninety-seven years before the flood and four hundred and ninety-nine after it? Besides, Abraham and Abraham's Lord were descendants of Shem. These favoring circumstances appear to me, sufficient to convert the *conjecture* into a *probability*, that, the Melchisedek of Salem is the Shem—the Renowned progenitor of Abraham, and David, and Messiah himself. Besides, this supposition at once explains the assumption of authority on the part of Melchisedek, and the respectful and profound reverence of Abraham toward him. But we may not dwell upon a matter of doubtful disputation. Let us look

4thly, at the characteristics of this illustrious type. (1.) He is a king—Melek; and therefore suitable to typify him of whom David speaks in Ps. ii., "I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." The Messiah is to rule the world—he is King of all the earth. (2.) He is king of *righteousness*. And this is the King of whom Jeremiah says (xxiii. 5, 6)—a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth—and this is the name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. And Isaiah (ix. 6, 7) says of him, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder"—"upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom—" (3.) King of *peace*: and so he is "the Prince of peace:" "and of the increase of his government and peace

there shall be no end." This epithet—*Salem*, locates the habitation of Melchisedek at Jerusalem, or the vision of *peace*. Ps. lxxvi. 1, 2, "In Judah is God known: his name is great in Israel. In Salem is his tabernacle, and his dwelling-place in Zion." The name of this King-Priest translated, means King of *Righteousness*: and the name of the city and dominion translated, is, *Peace*.

5. The Priesthood in Israel was limited to the house of Aaron and tribe of Levi. Hence care must be taken to keep the genealogical register correctly; so that none but Levi's sons may officiate in sacred service; and none but Aaron's may assume to themselves the Priestly functions. A good illustration of this we have in the case of the descendants of Barzillai, Ezra ii. 61-63; Neh. vii. 63. "These sought their register among those that were reckoned by genealogy, but they were not found; therefore were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood." Had their names been found on the registry, they would have been admitted to priestly ministrations. But on the genealogical Register, they were "without father, without mother, without descent." So, Melchisedek is not found on the Register of the only line of legitimate priests: no record of his name is there: his father's name is not recorded, nor his mother's: no evidence points out his line of descent from Aaron. The time of his birth, or his father's birth or death, is not registered—without beginning of days, or end of life. It is not at all affirmed, that Melchisedek had no father, or mother, or genealogical descent; or that he was not born at any time, or died on any day: But only, that these matters, like those of the children of Barzillai, were nowhere found on the register of the Levitical Priesthood. Yet was he a Priest of the Most High God, and that by divine appointment, for his services were accepted.

6. The date of this war of the "four kings with five," we

cannot ascertain with precision. "After these things" were the vision and confirmation of the covenant over the slain beasts. Gen. xv. Then the birth of Ishmael, when Abraham was eighty-six years old. Gen. xvi. 16; when he had been eleven years in the country. Now he came to the promised land in the seventy-fifth year of his life. Gen. xii. 4. His vocation, when he was in Ur of the Chaldees, was after the flood, four hundred and twenty-two years, when he was seventy years old; add five, up to his entrance into Canaan, and we have four hundred and twenty-seven, as the time after the flood. Add sixteen hundred and fifty-six, from creation to the deluge, and we have A. M. 2083, as the date of this entrance: or A. C. 1921. From this we have eleven years to the birth of Ishmael, and within that time this war occurred. The chief importance of this matter of date, is to enable us to remark,

7. That this interview of Abraham and Melchisedek, must have been about four hundred and twenty years before the institution of the Aaronic Priesthood. From the call of Abraham, P. D. 422, to the Exodus is four hundred and thirty years to a day; Exod. xii. 40, 41, and the sojourning began when Abraham left his native Ur of the Chaldees in his seventieth year: and of this about ten had elapsed. If, therefore, this King-Priest were Shem, it must have been about the five hundred and twentieth year of his life; and eighty years before his death. Now it is obvious, that all these items conspire to magnify the importance and to enhance the dignity of the Priesthood, to which Abraham pays such profound reverence.

8. The slaughter of the kings we may note, merely to say, that a war of defence and of reprisal for violent dealing and robbery, is justifiable. God's King-Priest utters no reproof, but blesses Abraham. The history makes it plain, that his entire action was approved.



9. The bread and wine which Melchisedek brought forth, was it sacramental or complimentary? was it the King's or the Priest's action? Romanists say the latter, in order to make use of it for party ends. But, as Owen has shown, there is no ground for this. The decisive reason is found in the words used—Gen. xiv. 18. “And Melchisedek, King of Salem, brought forth bread and wine: and he was Priest of the Most High God.” The Romanist alters the reading—*because* he was Priest—contrary to the meaning, usual for this connective—*and*. But chiefly their perversion is rejected, because the word translated, *brought forth*, is never used to express the offering up of sacrifice, but only of acts of benevolent hospitality: another word entirely is used to describe a priestly offering.

10. The resemblance to the Son of God. True, Jesus was not born for nearly two thousand years after this interview, and therefore it might seem more proper to say, that he was made like to Melchisedek. But our Apostle does not say, made like unto Jesus the Son of man, but like unto the Son of God. The Son of God was revealed to the Church in Paradise, as the seed of the woman: and Nebuchadnezzar saw in the fiery furnace one like to the Son of God. The conception of Him was not unknown, and that under a particular appearance—“and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.” But it is not in any material or visible appearance this resemblance is to be found. It is a resemblance of relations—of analogies, which forms the basis of the typical character. All these points in the condition, character and official position of Melchisedek, were arranged by infinite wisdom in divine providence, in order that they might be adapted to typical meaning. Just so was it with the tabernacle and all its furniture. Heavenly things were really the prototypes, after which they were all made: yet

when made, they became to Israel, types of spiritual things : and these things became the anti-types.

11. Before we proceed to argue the pre-eminence and glory of Christ's Priesthood from these data, carrying with us from these verses, *blessing* and the *tithing*, we must note one more point, for the typical character—he abideth a Priest *continually*: the *unbroken continuity* of the Priesthood. The phrase translated here *continually*, occurs nowhere in the Greek of the Old Testament or the New, except in Heb. x. 1, 12, 14. We have therefore little aid from parallel cases. It is translated in 12, 14, *for ever*; in 1, as here. It is formed from a word that signifies to *stretch out*—to *extend* so as not to break off and leave a gap between the parts extended; but the thing stretched and extended continues one and uninterrupted. I can find no better expression for the thought than the above—*unbroken continuity*—or *uninterrupted continuance*. This is the undoubted meaning in all the four cases. This Priesthood of Melchisedek, though assuredly it had a beginning and an end; yet, on the only reliable priestly register, neither is found; nor is either known to us. Both beginning and end are to us lost in time, and are as though they belonged to eternity. He may have been a Priest for four hundred years, and, if he was Shem, doubtless, was so longer than that; without break, stop or interruption. Here is a contrast with Aaron's line, which was broken constantly by death or incompetency. Here also is a resemblance to Christ's priesthood. Its origin is hidden in eternity past, and its end in eternity future; and there is no interruption or break in the line. Melchisedek's is to us a kind of artificial infinite, and Christ's a real and natural infinite.

V.v. 4-10. “Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.” The object of these seven verses is to prove the

superiority of Melchisedek, in his official character, above Levi, or the Aaronic Priesthood. The first step in the argument is taken in v. 4. The payment of taxes is an implication of inferiority on the part of the payers, and of superiority on the part of the receiver. But Abraham tithed the spoils to Melchisedek, and thereby acknowledged him as a superior. Consider Abraham's position as a mighty Prince, a Patriarch, at the head of a victorious army, returning through the territory of another Prince, and submitting to be taxed, for the expression is, Melchisedek tithed Abraham. By this Prince was he taxed to the extent of ten per cent. on the spoils of victory which were the purchase of a hard fight, and, no doubt, of the blood of some of his men. You can now appreciate the degree of respect, and veneration, and acknowledged superiority in which Melchisedek was held. Be it that Abraham did it voluntarily and of his own motion: this enhances rather than diminishes the force and significance of the act: and that, whether you regard his kingly or his priestly office, or both. This man of Salem stands confessedly greatly superior to Abraham.

But secondly, consider, that the payment of tithes is a provision of law divine. V. 5, "And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham." The Patriarch, therefore, in paying tithes recognized in the receiver a divine right to receive them according to law. But here, a person not pretending to authority by descent from the Levitical priesthood to tithe the people of God, (for he lived and acted as Priest four hundred years before the Levitical priesthood was established) yet is recognized as justly entitled to the tithe. V. 6, "But he whose descent is not counted from

them, received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the 'promises." But here we have another admission of Melchisedek's pre-eminence above Abraham. V. 7. "And without all contradiction, the less is blessed of the better." This blessing by a "Priest of the Most High God" was pronounced in a most solemn manner and in the name of God—"Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth:" Gen. xiv. 18, 19. It is, therefore, authoritative—God's blessing officially pronounced. And this as the one who had received the promises. But among these was the promise that he should be the father of many nations; or, as Paul expounds it—the heir of the world. To this point is directed the descriptive epithet, "possessor of heaven and earth."

The principle is admitted, that the less is blessed of the greater or better; as Isaac blessed Jacob, and Jacob blessed the two sons of Joseph; and this granted, greatly elevates Melchisedek above Abraham. This act of pronouncing God's blessing is, however, rather the work of a prophet; and completes the typical character of Melchisedec. He was a Prophet, a Priest and a King; and officially, therefore, fitted to be held up as a type of our Great Prophet, Priest and King. But we have to view him, with the Apostle, chiefly as a High Priest: and that because the basis of his ruling and teaching offices, is laid in the full execution of the priestly functions. The Redeemer's dominion and his right to teach all nations depend on his fulfilling his office as a Priest. Unless he is made perfect through sufferings, he cannot rise, and live, and reign, and send his Spirit over all the world for its subjugation. The obedience of the faith, among all nations, hangs on these three nails.

A third circumstance evincive of the superiority of Melchisedek's priesthood, which, however, comes under the matter of verse third, is the mortality and consequent

change of Aaronic priesthood, and the *quasi* immortality of the former: *i. e.* his death not being recorded, which opens the way for his typifying the actual immortality of the priesthood of him who is symbolized by this King-Priest. V. 8. "And here men that die receive tithes: but there he, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth." *Here*, in Aaron's line men die; but *there*, in Melchisedek's, and so in Christ's, there is no interruption by death.

Yet a fourth item must be noticed; there is a sense, in which the inferiority of the Levitical priesthood is manifested; viz., by its representation and submission to taxation in its progenitor. V. 9. "And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, paid tithes in Abraham. V. 10. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedek met him." It is scarcely necessary to throw in here, a caveat against the seminal theory of representation; viz., that the germs of all his posterity were actually present in Adam when he sinned; and thus they, being present in a kind of infinitesimal seminal person, actually sinned in him and fell with him in his first transgression. And this fanciful theory applies equally to Abraham. Levi was seminally present and paid his tax to the king of Salem—the priest of the most High God, and received a blessing from him. Sufficient to put to rest this theory of representation, is the single remark, that it annihilates the very conception of representation. The American mind is very familiar with the idea. By *representative* is meant a person who acts in the room and place and on behalf of other persons. By representation is meant the whole relation of a representative to his constituents for whom he acts; and all his doings on their behalf. But now, if they are themselves personally present and act for, in and by themselves, where is the representation? Abrogated, gone, lost.

But now, the relation of representative and constituents,

principals or represented persons, is always based upon and brought into existence by a union between them; which union is created, formed and constituted by agreement, contract or covenant. The popular election of a man to represent us in the national legislature, constitutes a compact, agreement, covenant between the people as one party and the man elected as the other party. In consequence of this covenant they act in him and by him. The people are present in their representative head, not seminally—not in their germ of being; but morally, legally: the acts of the representative are the acts of the people.

So was it with Adam, in regard to all his posterity; God had made a covenant with him, as the head of his natural progeny. So with Abraham, God had entered into covenant with him as the head; not of all his natural progeny, but of his spiritual seed—but in Isaac shall thy seed be called. As Adam represented and acted for his seed under the covenant headship appointed of God; so Abraham represented and acted for his seed under the covenant headship appointed of God. Levi was one of this seed, whom Abraham represented, and for whom he acted in the payment of tithes. Levi had no actual existence for four hundred years after. He never handled the tithe money; no more than Abraham possessed the promised land: Yet it was his by covenant, promise and oath; though he possessed not a foot breadth in it, but his place of burial, which he purchased with his own money—the first land purchase in human records. Thus and only thus did Levi pay tithes. But not Levi personally as an individual; no more than Abraham personally and individually: but both officially, as public heads. Abraham as father of many nations; and Levi as head of the house of Aaron. Levi himself was never a priest. He was the seventh generation from Abraham—(see *Exod. vi.* 16–23) and died at the age of one hundred



and thirty-seven—about one hundred and eighty years before the exodus. Thus it is demonstrated, that the Levitical or Aaronic priesthood is decidedly and acknowledgedly inferior to that of Melchisedek.

V. 11. “If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law) what further need *was there* that another priest should arise after the order of Melchisedek, and not be called after the order of Aaron?” *Therefore* implies rather a continuity of the argument, than an *inference*, properly so called. “Moreover, if perfection,” etc. *Perfection*—This is the verbal noun—from the word used in ii. 10—to *make perfect*—and on the cross—*it is finished*. Its force is there explained. In vi. 1, it presents, as we should have noted, the person who completes, finishes up and rounds off—every part of a work. The *perfecter*—the *finisher*. Here vii. 11, it describes the *process of completing*. “If therefore the finishing process—the entire completion of the whole church were secured by the Aaronic Priesthood,” there could be no necessity—no room for another priesthood; and David would not have mentioned any other, as he has done in Ps. cx. The fact of such mention, proves the imperfection and want of completeness of the operations under the Levitical priesthood. The parenthesis (“for under it the people received the law”) is not designed to direct our attention to The Ten Words, as though they ordained and directed the Aaronic priesthood; which is not the fact; as Owen seems to suppose. He takes unnecessary trouble to explain the expression *under it*, which undoubtedly refers to the Levitical priesthood, and to show its consistency with the fact that the *law* means the commandments from Sinai, which were given *before* the priesthood. But now *the law* which the people or church received, was not the Ten Words, but the whole ceremonial institutions connected with the priest-

hood, as well as the priesthood itself. This is more evident from

V. 12. "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law." What law? Surely not the Ten Words: nay, but the entire system of ceremonial sacrifices, ordinances, institutions, which have their foundation on the priesthood. So in v. 19 "The law made nothing perfect," not the Ten, but the law establishing the priesthood and all its ministrations.

This perfection or finishing up and completing the work of salvation, is the grand end of all priesthoods. Reconciliation through sacrifice being the burden of priestly duties, all must fail that do not make full and perfect restitution to the divine law for the sins of men. The price of redemption must be fully paid, and then must follow the release of the redeemed from the curse of law and all its consequences. Any offerings of any priesthood that stop short of this result, and leave the people under the curse of the law, must leave room for another priesthood and another sacrifice. But the Spirit, in David, assures us that another priest must and will arise; therefore all preceding priesthoods fail of perfecting the saints. This perfection includes full and complete satisfaction to justice, as just stated; perfect righteousness to justify the sinner before God and secure the mission of the Holy Ghost for regenerating the dead soul, working true faith and sincere repentance in the heart; peace with God and with conscience and with all holy beings; love and joy and freedom and holy boldness of access to the throne of mercy, as children to a father; a life of holiness here and meetness for and entrance into the blessedness of the heavenly state. Now, very many of these having failed in the hands of Aaron's sons, the necessity for a priest after another order is clearly established; and the extinction of the defective priesthood

and the death, by limitation, of the law of commandments contained in ordinances must occur—"the weak and beggarly elements," as Paul calls them, must pass away—"there is made of necessity a change also of the law."

But now, ye children of Abraham, be not alarmed, as though you were to suffer a great evil in this change. Look at your Father, how reverently he bows to the Majesty of God, displayed in the official personage of his prophet-king-Priest. See the superiority of this Priest of the Most High God over Abraham, as prophet, king and Priest. Think of Levi's inferiority to Abraham: and then mark the clearness and boldness of David's own testimony—David, whose son your Messiah must be—David, himself the most glorious of your kings, and sweetest of your poets, and among the noblest of your prophets—this David, to whom the Lord had given the promise of that Seed "whose name shall endure forever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed:" of this Son, David declares, "The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedek." Ps. cx. 4. The Apostle proceeds,

V. 13, 14. "For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood."

Ever since the record in Gen. xlix. 8-10, it has been known that Messiah must come in the house of Judah—"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." Ruling authority must remain with the tribe of Judah, until the Peacemaker come, and the nations shall be called to the knowledge of

the great salvation. "In that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek; and his rest shall be glorious." Other testimonies abundantly show the same beforehand—as is the force of the expression—*it is evident*—it is evident *before*—prophecies make it plain. This prophetic demonstration makes undeniable the simple fact, that our Lord Messiah is a Branch from David's root.

Then he proceeds to another very important fact, and which, because of its infinite importance, is sustained by scriptural evidence even yet more abundant; viz.,

V. 15. "And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedek there ariseth another priest: (16) who is made, not after the law of carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life." Here remark,

1. There is not a comparison instituted between the certainty of the things affirmed; but only between the degrees of evidence. Two things may be equally certain and both very certain; but yet the amount of proof in support of them respectively, may vary greatly. That Lazarus rose from the grave, and that Jesus died and rose again, are equally certain; but yet the proofs of the latter are incomparably more abundant than of the former.

2. Dr. Sampson's observation is correct—he objects to our translation—"for that after the similitude," etc.—a translation for which no sufficient reason can be seen. No clear instance can be shown in which the particle *ei* has this meaning. There is no reason why we should not give it the conditional sense which it usually has with the indicative, implying that if the condition is true, that which results from it is to be regarded as real and certain.—"The sense is, 'And it is yet more abundantly manifest (that the priesthood hath been changed), if another priest ariseth after the likeness of Melchisedek: (But such a one has arisen).'"

We use *if*, often in the same way, without intending to express a doubt. In 1 Cor. xv. 12-20 we have examples—"Now *if* Christ be preached, etc.—But *if* there be no resurrection of the dead—*if* Christ be not risen," etc. So here, "*if* after the similitude," etc. Besides, we use it as an alternative between two, and that when the side we favor is not doubtful, though not expressed, because of its obviousness. "My statement is before you, judge *if* I tell the truth." The word, *whether*, indicates an alternative and often, for brevity, we use *if* in place of it, and that without expressing which of the alternates we hold as true. This matter is presumed self-evident. We cite two examples. Acts iv. 19—"Whether (*ei, if*) it be right in the sight of God—judge ye." In John iv. 1—"try the spirits *whether* (*ei, if*) they are of God." Give the same translation of *ei* here and we have a good and plain and the true sense—"it is yet more abundantly evident" whether after the similitude of Melchisedek, etc. That a priest should arise, similar, in all the points above named, to him who met, entertained with royal liberality, tithed and blessed Abraham, is so explicitly testified unto by David, that it transcends all possibility of doubt. But moreover, to make assurance doubly sure, God, as he swore by himself in confirmation of his covenant to and with Abraham, so, by the mouth of David, confirms this priesthood and its perpetuity by an oath.

3. The manner of appointment and induction into office of this great High Priest are to be noted. This is done (1.) by shutting off the Jews' objection based on the necessity of Aaronic succession. Not after the law of a carnal commandment; not by descent from Levi, according to the flesh: for such was not Melchisedek, who lived and ministered as God's Priest, hundreds of years before Aaron was born; and after his likeness is to be the royal priest descended from David. This "law of a carnal command-

ment," is nothing but "the law of commandments contained in ordinances—in dogmas"—mentioned by Paul, Eph. ii. 15—which "was abolished in his—Christ's flesh." (2.) In contrast with this is the induction of our Anointed one.—But, on the contrary, after the power of an endless life. All priests of Aaron's line were mortal—their souls and bodies were separated at death; and their bodies were dissolved. Not so, the Great Priest. The divine power and wisdom constituted his Mediatorial Person. He was from eternity God, and the humanity—soul and body were united with the divinity—the Word was made flesh: and this hypostatic union is not dissoluble, as the word signifies. Nor did his body, like those of Aaron's line, dissolve—it saw no corruption. His body is now on the throne eternal in the heavens: his soul is included in the Messianic Person: and this Divine Logos and entire human nature, is, by the power of an indissoluble and eternal life, the High Priest of our profession.

In support of the preceding he again quotes Ps. cx. in the form of a testimony;

V. 17. "For he testifieth"—David—the Spirit of God in him, beareth witness, and addresseth his testimony to the person of the Messiah, "Thou art a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedek." From this testimony, that another Priesthood is unalterably and forever established, it follows, that all former priests were unavailing, and never could secure the grand end of a priesthood—the perfecting of God's redeemed people.

V.v. 18, 19. "For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before, for—on account of the weakness and unprofitableness thereof; (for the law made nothing perfect); but the bringing in of a better hope *did*; by the which we draw nigh unto God." Remark

1. There is nothing in the original answering to the word



*verily*: the particle so rendered, simply marks the former of two things brought into comparison and contrast. "For there is, on the one hand, an abolition—a disannulling of the preceding commandment; but on the other hand, there is an introduction of a stronger hope.

We have the reason on the one hand also stated; viz., on account of its weakness and unprofitableness; and on the other, on account of the easy access it opens up to us unto God.

2. The commandment going before includes that establishing the Aaronic priesthood, and all things appurtenant thereunto: all which are doomed and repudiated, by the fact of another priesthood being established. And the wisdom of this abrogation is manifest, in the fact of their failure to secure the true end of the priesthood,—the perfecting of the saints. It never could be said of Aaron, we are complete in him: as Paul exhorts the Colossians iv. 12. Then, corresponding to this, the strong or better hope, springing from the immortal priesthood opens the door of a free and bold access to God, and the wisdom of its introduction is therefore manifest.

V.v. 20–22. "And inasmuch as not without an oath, he was made priest. (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath, by him that said unto him; The LORD sware and will not repent, thou art a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedek): by so much was Jesus made a Surety of a better testament."

We here take another ascent in the argument, whose design is to show the transcendent dignity and glory of Messiah's Priesthood above all that preceded. Two points are presented; the solemnity of his appointment—it is confirmed by an oath; and his Suretyship of the Covenant. The former is embraced within the brackets, and we shall examine it first. In vi. 13–18, we have discussed the nature and utility of the oath; and need scarcely remark again,

that God's oath is not designed to make the matter sure; for his purpose, whether expressed or not to his creature, makes it as immutable as his own nature. But in condescension to our weakness, he by an oath manifests his purpose to us. How we could have higher ground of confidence than God's oath lays down, we cannot conceive. The importance of the subject matter of an oath, is manifested in the seriousness and solemnity of its administration: and the dignity of the juror, enhances the weight of his testimony.

At the inauguration of Aaron, there was much of external display; splendid official robes and head dress, with jewelled mitre; the investiture was preceded by sacred ablutions at the laver; and the holy anointing oil crowned the imposing pageant, whilst the perfume from the incense altar ascended and filled the tabernacle. But this was all symbol and type of spiritual things—shadows of good things to come. No oath is interposed “For those priests were made without an oath; this our High Priest with an oath, by him that said unto him, The Lord sware, and will not repent.” The immutability of the divine purpose, and the stability and permanency of the office can receive no higher confirmation.

But this solemn transaction is unseen by mortal eyes; yet was it the establishment of a covenant on which the hopes of a lost world depend. Verse twentieth stands in close connection with verse twenty-second. *By as much as* the oath of God in the investiture of the Son with the priestly function, excels in dignity and glory the external display of material decorations, *by so much* does the Priesthood of Messiah excel that of Aaron and his descendants. This word Surety gives a new turn to the thought. Aaron is never so called, nor any other priest: and this, because none was ever at the head of a covenant, guaranteeing the safety of God's redeemed. We must here, therefore, inquire into

this better testament, as to its general nature and its bearing on the welfare of the church.

I. Its general nature is that of a covenant. The Greek word occurs thirty-three times in the New Testament, and is translated *Covenant* twenty times, *Testament* thirteen. It occurs seventeen times in this epistle, and is translated *Covenant* eleven times and *Testament* six times. We may fairly infer, that *Covenant* is the more comprehensive word and includes *Testament*. That is, that a *Testament* is a *Covenant* of a particular kind: which is the fact. A covenant so framed as to come into force after the death of the person making it, is called a *Testament*—a *Will* and *Testament*. The testator prescribes the terms of the covenant; the inheritor, after the death of the testator, expresses his agreeing to the covenant, by accepting the inheritance on the terms prescribed. Until this consent is given, it is not a completed covenant. No man is bound by his father's last will and testament, until this consent is given. There may be such conditions in a will, as to make it a burden to claim under it; and it is therefore refused. Such, to the unbeliever practically, is the Lord's testament. The carnal man sees no advantage to himself, and refuses to claim under it; and feels no obligation to do so, until his heart is changed and his will renewed by divine grace; in consequence of which renewal, and not before, is the covenant sealed. The difference between this and a human testament, lies in the blessed assurance that He makes His people willing in the day of his power.

A *Surety* is one who becomes responsible for another person, and who therein pledges to make good that person's engagement. Few terms are more familiar in the business world, and more universally understood. To give bail, to give security, to endorse, is to become a *Surety*. The Greek word is formed from an adverb signifying, *near, close by*.

The Surety is morally and legally near to the principal: he identifies himself with him; places his moral person into such intimate relation, as to make them one, in regard to the matter secured. They become, like man and wife, one. In the plain, ordinary sense is the word used in Scripture; a few instances will illustrate. Gen. xliii. 9 and xliv. 32. Judah became Surety for Benjamin that he should be returned in safety to his father. Solomon cautions against rashness in this matter. Prov. vi. 1, 2—"if thou be surety for thy friend, if thou hast stricken thy hand with a stranger, thou art snared with the words of thy mouth"—And in xxii. 26—he advises against it,—“Be not thou one of them that strike hands or of them that are sureties for debts. If thou hast nothing to pay, why should he take away thy bed from under thee?” xi. 15—“He that is Surety for a stranger shall smart for it, and he that hateth suretyship is sure.” In covenants, where the parties are fallible, it is sometimes required that both give security. Where one is technically infallible, the other is required to provide a surety, as in ordinary sureties of the peace. Where one is infallible really, only the fallible party must give security: as in the covenant of God with the first Adam: and as in the extension of the covenant of grace over the subjects of it; as in Isa. lv. 3, “and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.” The son of Jesse had gone to his rest hundreds of years before this was written. The David, or *beloved* one here, is none other than the head of the covenant of grace, acting as Surety of his people; who are commanded to come within the pale of the covenant in *fact*, as they have always been within it in law and covenant right. The sureness of the mercies, springs from the infallibility of the Surety who guarantees them. This naturally leads us to the consideration of the next topic connected with this Suretyship.

II. The bearings of this suretyship upon the welfare of the redeemed church; and we remark;

1. This covenant is *better* in comparison with that confirmed at Sinai, wherein Israel becomes God's peculiar people, to whom the means of grace are to be chiefly confined for long centuries. This restrictive covenant comprehended the gospel promises and all the ritual observances, which were evangelical institutions. These elevated Israel above all the nations, and were powerful through the blessings of God's Spirit, for the salvation of millions. Yet still, with all its advantages, that covenant was vastly inferior to the dispensation now instituted under the Suretyship of Jesus, our Immanuel. For,

2. The perfection of our High Priest's sacrifice, ensures the mission of the Holy Ghost, in measure and degree above and beyond any thing which the church had ever before experienced. Such were the promises—"I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring." "For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen"—"all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delight-some land saith the Lord of hosts." "But unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise, with healings in his wings." "All flesh shall come and worship before me."

3. The salvation of God's redeemed is not a contingency—is not a thing that depends upon the will, the whim, the freaks and fancies of sinful man; but upon "the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." In eternity the covenant was established, "According as he

hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." Eph. i. 4, 5. If therefore Christ is our Surety, and if we have failed, the work of bringing us to glory devolves upon Him. These things are undeniable: and, therefore, we know that "the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his." 2 Tim. ii. 19.

V.v. 23, 24. "And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: But this *man*, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable Priesthood."

This is a continuity of argument; or it may be viewed as a distinct proof, to the point, that a change is indispensable. We have a contrast kept up between the Aaronic priesthood and Christ, and a similar construction of the sentence. "And on the one hand these priests were made more numerous." Owen, with our translation, uses only as an asseveration, the contrasting term, "truly," and thus loses the force of the contrast: and also omits the comparative degree of the original—*more*. It gives a fuller and more forcible meaning, to preserve both, and to say in contrast with the above—"but on the other hand, this *man* hath an unchangeable priesthood." I object also to the word *man*, supplied here. The contrast is between *these more numerous priests*, and *this one*: and we ought not to enfeeble the argument, and, at the same time, give slight advantage to the deniers of our Lord's divinity. Christ, whilst he possessed entire humanity, yet was not a human, but a divine person—"this is the true God, and eternal life." 1 John v. 20.

Another point of this contrast, is the mortality of the Aaronic and the immortality of the Messianic priesthood,



which contrast brings to view the more numerous priests of the former and the unity of the latter: and all eventuating in the temporary and changeable tenure of those; and the eternal and immutable duration of this. From this multiplicity of priests and offerings, Paul afterward argues, as we shall see, their imperfection.

Now, if the Priest is immortal, and the Priesthood never passeth away, but continueth forever, it exactly suits the character and condition of mortal and immortal men:—of mortal men, for his sacrifice snatches them from death and the grave; and of immortal men, for their purchased immortality in bliss, requires a Priest durable as their own being. This is the precise inference which the Apostle deduces from the facts.

V. 25. “Wherefore, he is able also to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

There may be some latitude of opinion, as to the antecedents embraced by the inferential particle, *Wherefore*. 1. The thing inferred is our High Priest’s ability to save his people: and I cannot doubt our logical safety, if we base the inference (a.) On the *better covenant* or *testament* of which Jesus is the Head and Surety. (b.) On the oath of his consecration. (c.) On the unchangeableness of his Father’s purpose—he will not repent. (d.) On his own immortality, and the consequent eternity of his Priesthood.

2. The measure or degree to which his saving power extends—to the uttermost—to the whole end—to every termination, or perfect completion. In this, there is a half-expressed contrast with the Levitical priesthood. It saved from ceremonial defilement, and foreshadowed the true priesthood and true sacrifice; but could not cleanse the conscience and give peace to the heart, but only as it directed to Christ. But Jesus completes the work in eternal glory.

3. The limitation of this ability—"them that come unto God by him." Here we must detail. (a.) Coming unto God, is equivalent to believing his testimony concerning his Son. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth—even to him shall men come." Isa. xlv. 22-24. "Come unto me, all ye that labor," etc. "Come, for all things are now ready." (b.) The medium, "by him"—*through* Christ as the door of the sheep. (c.) The ability to come is a grace from God—"No man can—(is able)—to come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." John vi. 44. (d.) If sinners do not believe they cannot be saved. Christ is not able to save them continuing in unbelief, impenitence and sin. (e.) The reasons of his ability—"seeing he ever liveth"—he liveth always. This epithet is appropriated by him, in Rev. i. 18—"I am *alive* for evermore." His people stand in need perpetually of his interference on their behalf, and hence the necessity to them of an intercessor, in perpetuity.

4. Christ's intercession. This word primarily means to come into close contact—to come together in the transaction of business. In the New Testament it occurs seven times, and always in the sense of asking for something to be done;—interceding against a person, as in Acts xxv. 24—"ye see this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews *have dealt* with me"—here, *have dealt*—have *interceded*, is we know against Paul. They were clamorous for his condemnation. So, Rom. xi. 2, "Elias *made intercession* to God against Israel." In Rom. viii. 26, 27, 34, the word is used in the sense of asking benefits for the persons.—"The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us"—"because he *maketh intercession* for the saints"—"Christ—who also maketh intercession for us." In this sense must it be taken here. "We have an advocate—the Paraclete—the Comforter—with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:" He

always lives and pleads the cause of his people; presenting the evidences of his own completed work, before the Father's throne, as the strong plea and reason, why the Spirit should be sent and all the graces needful be shed abroad in the hearts of his redeemed.

V. 26. From this point of departure, our Apostle proceeds to designate the qualities of a priest suited for us. "For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens: 27, Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's; for this he did once, when he offered up himself." Here are positive qualities, and negative. Let us remark,

1. The word expressive of *suitableness* to our case, came under notice, on Chap. II. 10, to which the reader can refer. The point here in question, is not the method of approach unto God, in sacred worship, whether mediate; *i. e.*, through the intervention of a third party, or immediate and directly, each one for himself. It is assumed all along, that a High Priest is indispensable. So it had been from the days of Aaron and Sinai. But the question is as to his attributes. What qualities must he possess, in order to ensure an acceptable approach through him unto God?

2. This meetness for the priesthood must always be viewed in reference to *us*. Official services are always relative. The condition of the persons for whom the office is instituted, is to be kept in view. Their wants, necessities, trials, troubles, feebleness or strength, all are matters of high import. Our sinfulness, guilt before God, pollution in sin, alienation from all holiness, etc. These were, in a measure, provided for in the Aaronic priesthood. No descendant of even the Levitical priesthood, having any physical deformity by nature, or by accidental injuries, could succeed to the office.—"He that hath any blemish, let him

not approach to offer the bread of his God"—the blind, the lame, deformed, diseased, etc., Lev. xxi. 17-23. Also, the sacrifices—the material of the things offered, must be free from blemish. The paschal lamb must be without *blemish* and so all others; Ex. xii. 5, Lev. ix. 3, xiv. 10, etc. Beyond doubt, these personal and natural qualities have a typical force: they point to the perfections of a higher order in the great High Priest. Moreover, the official adornments of Aaron—the ephod, the breastplate with the Urim and Thummim, the Mitre, etc., all symbolize the qualifications proper to the office: but, of course, are only dim and shadowy types of the glorious originals. Let us then enquire, not for an High Priest, but for *Such* an one.

3. These properties regard (a.) His moral perfection—he is *holy*. The word thus translated is used seven times in the New Testament. Of these four are in application to Christ: viz., Heb. vii. 26: Acts ii. 27, and xiii. 35.—“Thou wilt not suffer thine *holy one* to see corruption:” Rev. xv. 4. “For thou only art *holy*”—We have another word translated *holy*, which means, *consecrated*—set apart to sacred use. The term here, evidently has a higher sense. “Thou only art *holy*.” It signifies the essential moral excellence of this person. (b.) The second—*harmless*—regards his relations to other beings. The first regards his nature; this second, his character—his life of action. “He did no evil, nor was guile found in his mouth.” Both these—the positive excellence of his nature, and the negative humbleness of his life, are essential to his mediation on our account. Such a sacrifice he must have to offer for us: no natural blemish must it have; no acquired defect or offensiveness. (c.) *Undefiled*. This respects his personal freedom from moral taint and pollution. It is applied, in chap. xiii. 4, to express freedom from sexual impurity: and in 1 Pet. i. 4 “to an inheritance

incorruptible and *undefiled*”—In James i. 27, he describes a characteristic of true religion, by this epithet—*undefiled*. Incidental defilement disqualified the priest of Aaron's line from officiating; but such never can affect this Priest. (d.) *Separate from sinners.* “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.” And such is the separation of our High Priest from sinners. It is not that he shuns them in contempt, and avoids all intercourse with them. On the contrary, the Pharisees charged him with receiving sinners. Matt. ix. 11. While it is the duty of people in general, to separate themselves from an infectious hospital, it is the duty of doctors and nurses to visit it. They that are sick need a physician; I came, not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. Not physically—not as to mere place was he separate, as Socinians teach. For “he was made of a woman,” made under the law—“the Word was made flesh”—“he was made in the likeness of men.” “God sent his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh”—And constantly did he mix and mingle with men of all classes and conditions. No ascetic, monkish temper did he ever display. Stand by thyself for I am holier than thou, was never the language of his mouth or his conduct.

But whilst he possessed our nature, in all its essential attributes, yet is there a most essentially important sense in which he was and is separated from sinners. And this in two aspects. *First*, as to the generation of his human body. This separates and distinguishes him from all the rest of humanity. Gabriel said unto her, “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.” Luke i. 35. Thus is Jesus separated from sinners. He was

not a Son of Adam *as* all other human beings are: he was not of that number whom Adam represented in the covenant with him; and, consequently, did not die in Adam—"as in Adam all die"—that is, all whom he represented—all his natural posterity—all human *persons*. Jesus never was a human, but a divine person.

Hence the *Second* aspect of his separation; it is not from them as men—as *human beings*, but as *sinners*. He loves his people with an everlasting love, and with loving kindnesses doth he draw them to himself. But now they were all sinners, and yet the objects of his love: did he then love them, even whilst they were dead in sin—as sinners? Were their sins, or their sinful character the object of his love? Or was it as the rational creatures of his hands? A benevolent physician so loves his patients, that he perils his life, by visiting them in a pestilential hospital; is it the cholera or the yellow fever he loves; or is it the men—the persons of the sick? (*e.*)—"and made higher than the heavens." In chap. i. 3, we had the positive degree, of which we have here the comparative. There it is translated *on high*—in *high* places; here it is connected, not with places, but with the person who is elevated—he is made *higher* than the heavens. It may refer to *place*, or to the *state* or condition of a person or thing. If it regards locality or place, then *heavens* must be understood of the visible expanse, beyond which we constantly refer the abode of happy spirits. The human body of our Lord must have a local habitation. He received it into personal union on earth—he was, as to his divine nature—lessened, lowered for a little while in comparison with the angels; but in consequence of having finished that part of his priestly function which must be here performed, until he said "it is finished," "therefore God hath highly exalted him"—and he passed through the blue veil of these heavens, and thus is made higher.



But if we take a purely moral view of his elevation, then, not locality, but relative condition as to degree of power and glory, is the thing meant; and *heavens* must be understood as the inhabitants—the angels and spirits of just men made perfect: and Christ's exaltation to regal power, dignity and glory, is his being made higher than the heavens—higher than all angels, and all spirits. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." And this is doubtless the fullest and best sense. Such an High Priest it was proper—it was becoming and necessary for us to have. Had he lacked these properties, he could not have been qualified to offer a suitable sacrifice to the justice of God for us: and he would have had no adequate offering to present. But being himself both sacrifice and priest, and possessed of all these, the negation and deficiency of v. 27, lie not in the way of his perfection.

In regard to this deficiency, we note (1.) The result of the foregoing qualities, he has no necessity to offer for himself individually. Under the Levitical priesthood, such necessity did exist; because the High Priest himself, sinning daily, had daily need of a sin offering for himself. This sinfulness vitiated his entire sacrifice and made it inefficient; for how could an impure priest present a pure offering? Yet (2.) the term *daily* is perhaps better limited to the day of atonement. Lev. ix. 7, 8, 15. Here this order is pointed out distinctly. He is to offer the lamb for himself; then for the people. xvi. 6, 11, 15. These offerings were not *daily*. It does not appear that the High Priest himself ministered every day, but on the day of atonement he did offer for himself, and then for the people. The evidence of the inefficiency from this will come up hereafter. Now, we remark, (3.) The liability of misconstruction must be guarded against—"for this he did once, when he offered up himself." *This* refers to the nearer or last mentioned,

and not to the farther off. The Aaronic priest offered first for his own sins and then for the people's: and it is to the latter, the word *this* refers. (4.) It is important to bear in mind, that it was as High Priest the son of Aaron offered, and afterward went into the most holy place within the veil. So, it was as High Priest that Christ offered himself, and was afterward exalted. He was Priest before he offered. The exposition of the Socinians that makes his being made higher than the heavens, the beginning of his Priestly function, and his offering himself to be nothing more than his presentation of himself as our Advocate, is, therefore, a violation of the typical meaning of Aaronic sacrifices; and is an exceedingly unfair method of rejecting, as is their design, the whole doctrine of Atonement. Jesus was not exalted to heaven that he might become our High Priest and minister there for us: but he was our High Priest and offered himself a sacrifice for our sins, the just dying for the unjust; and therefore, as our High Priest he was made higher than the heavens.

V. 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 ever more."

Note here, (1.) The logical link, *For*—it introduces a reason in support of the preceding,—drawn from the obvious and admitted fact of human infirmity. Those high priests being feeble and imperfect, must themselves be purified by blood, but our High Priest, free from all imperfection, labors under no such necessity. (2.) *The law* is, of course, the Levitical institutions, which provide for the succession in Aaron's line. (3.) It *maketh*—appointeth men, to succeed, whenever a gap occurs by reason of death. Then we have the contrast; *but*—it compares the appointment of Christ the Son, not of Aaron, but of God, by the Word of

the Oath, with the Levitical succession. This manifests its superiority in six respects—(a.) In the method and solemnity and security of appointment. (b.) In the personal qualifications, as before described. (c.) In his relationship as the Son, he is infinitely above Aaron's sons. (d.) In the order of this appointment, as to development in time; it is *since*, that is, *after*. The subject of appointment in the divine purpose from eternity; but revealed more than four centuries after the Levitical priesthood was instituted, this Priesthood supplants the other, as the Apostle argues more fully elsewhere. The coming in so long after, intimates the removal of the former: and (e.) In perpetuity it vastly transcends it—*forever more*, as guaranteed in the oath. (f.) In the *finishing*, the perfection of its sacrifice—*consecrated* we have translated it. It is the same word as in Chap. II. 10, and used in the same sense. The Captain of our salvation is *made perfect* through sufferings—The finished completeness of satisfaction rendered to eternal justice by the sorrows of Jesus, is the thing here expressed.

We may here indulge in a few practical reflections.

1. Let christians learn the greatness of their privileges, in that they have a High Priest without infirmity. He was and is so perfectly pure, holy, harmless and separated from sinners, as to make him infallible absolutely. Not, as Unitarians affirm, a fallible man have we as our High Priest. This form of infidelity insists that Jesus must have been fallible, or he could not be virtuous. Capability of sinning, is with them an indispensable element to moral virtue! Paul, on the contrary, thinks that having infirmity, was a serious obstacle to the efficiency of the Aaronic High priests. The saints in glory can no longer sin—they are pillars—and go no more out—therefore moral virtue is impossible in heaven!

2. Not the counsel—as we have seen, but the manifesta-

tion of its unchangeableness, is given to us, in the oath of the Priesthood; and therefore,

3. The foundation of all our hopes and consolations, is laid upon the great Rock—the perfect satisfaction rendered by the sufferings of our High Priest.

4. We have a perfect example, in our ever living High Priest, of all moral excellence; and have no just reason for depression, doubts and fears; but in him having a perfected sacrifice, all fears should pass away forever, and all diligence in the ways of holy obedience should mark our whole life. “These are they who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.”

5. For if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, who is always ready to plead our cause, and to procure for us remission of sins; because he ever liveth, and has been exalted to give repentance to Israel.

6. Let us, therefore, hold fast and repent, that our sins may be blotted out when times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. If our sins cease to exercise dominion over us here and now, they never can rise in the judgment against us there and forever.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Vs. 1, 2. "Now of the things which we have spoken, *this is* the sum: We have such an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not Man."

Two modes of exposition have been adopted here, by different critics. The first, which has been followed in our translation, assumes these verses and what follows, as a summing up—a summary statement of the preceding discussion—a resume of the topics previously handled. Against this arises a single objection, which is fatal to it; and which precludes the necessity and propriety of any others: viz., there is not here in fact any such summary—we find no gathering up of the preceding points or heads of discussion, and presenting of them in a condensed and briefer form. If such resume had actually followed, this translation would have been justified, for the expressions would bear this construction. But, as there is no such summing up of items, we fall back upon an exposition, at least equally consistent with the original expression, viz., "Now the *chief thing* among those spoken, is, such an High Priest we have, who has taken his seat in the right of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens," etc. The word for *Sum* in our translation is the adjective formed from the word for *head*—*kephale*; and of course signifies, of or belonging to the head. It occurs in but one other place in the New Testament—Acts xxii. 28, where it is used by the chief Captain to designate the cost to him of his Roman

citizenship—"With a great *sum* obtained I this freedom"—the price of his enfranchisement is expressed by the word—we might say, the *capital* which he paid for it. So here, *the capital idea*—the *master* thought—the *grand*, the *leading principle* amid all our discussions is, the glorious truth, that we have such an High Priest as we have described; and He exalted to supreme dominion in the heavenly world. This grand conception, the Master himself had long ago expressed, without much figure, "The Stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the Head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes." Ps. cxviii. 22, 23. Alexander is probably right in maintaining, that *head* in the Psalm means *chief*, and is really not the top stone, but the foundation on which the building rests. This is the idea in Isa. xxviii. 16.—"Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a Stone, a tried Stone, a precious corner *Stone*, a sure foundation"—And consistent with these are Acts iv. 11: Eph. ii. 20: and 1 Pet. ii. 7. In Lev. vi. 5, we have this word (in the lxxii.) rendered *principal*, meaning the *capital*, the aggregate *amount* of the property unlawfully abstracted. And in Num. iv. 2, "Take the *sum* of the sons of Korah"—*i. e.*, the aggregate number; and in v. 7.—"And he shall recompense his trespass with the *principal* thereof"—So xxxi. 26—"Take the *sum* of the prey"—And v. 49,—"thy servants have taken the *Sum* of the men of war"—*i. e.*, the aggregate amount, or entire number. And thus, it is evident, the word in our text, means, not a *summary*, but the *whole*—the *sum total* of the things spoken; all are condensed into this one grand and glorious truth, that our High Priest, such as we have described him, is exalted to universal dominion, and now officiates for us in heaven.

Let us note on this grand truth,

1. The qualities of this High Priest, described by the ex-



pression, *such*; as in v.v. 26 and 27, preceding; and which we need not repeat.

2. The great fact of his being an High Priest. This is involved and discussed in v.v. 3-5; upon which we will remark shortly.

3. The relation he sustains—*we have such*; he is to us a Priest. This implies faith in him: for those only who believe in him, are profited by his ministrations. To those who reject his sacrifice and despise his person, he is not, in any real and practical sense, a High Priest. It is only in the appropriating action of a true faith he is recognized as our passover, sacrificed for us. A precious stone, a sure foundation he is to the true, spiritual Zion—the Church invisible—*We have such*; not, *we shall have*; not, *we have had*, but he is gone, like Aaron, and we have him no more—no longer. But we *have* him now; he is still, though unseen by us, our High Priest.

4. His position—his locality, if we may so say. And here we have to detail and note (a.) The place in general—in *the heavens*. (b.) The place more specifically—in *the throne*. (c.) The particular part of the throne—in *the right hand*. (d.) The characteristic of the throne—*of the Majesty*. (e.) His entrance upon and occupancy—*who has taken his seat*.

(a.) By *heavens* here cannot be meant the expanse above us, with all its brilliant decorations—the visible heavens. Through this he is said to have passed; and David in Ps. viii. tells us God hath set his glory above the heavens. But in our Father's house are many mansions, and He has gone to prepare a place for us. The presence-chamber of the great King and all the myriads of his holy ones, angels and his redeemed, is here to be understood. This is what Solomon (1 Kings viii. 27) calls "the heaven of heavens," which could not contain God. See what is said on chap. i. 3, 4.

(b.) More specifically—in *the throne*. Our glorious High

Priest is, as Zechariah (vi. 13) declared he should be, "a Priest upon his throne." And Peter assures us (Acts ii. 30), David spake of him, "that God had sworn with an oath to him, that he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne." Throne is the seat of royalty and the symbol of supreme dominion. Our High Priest is enthroned, and He himself bases the evangelical commission upon this foundation; that all power in heaven and earth is given unto him. Obviously, power cannot be given, bestowed, conferred upon Godhead; because in him it was and is from everlasting. As God our High Priest could not be elevated; nor as man could he be made actual possessor of all power. It is only as God-Man—as Mediator, he could be enthroned, and the sceptre of universal dominion placed in his hands.

(e.) The particular part of the throne is mentioned—*in the right hand*. This is a figure. By the right hand man wields his power; his strength is put forth in action by this member. It is therefore the honored member; and marks the honored place. As throne notes the ruling supremacy or right to govern, so right hand symbolizes the actual practical exercise of the ruling power and dominion.

(d.) The charter of this investiture with power—*of the Majesty*. This word signifies greatness. This we have already discussed, on chap. i. 3, and may not now repeat. It includes all that is grand and glorious in the Godhead; and to this grandeur and glory is our High Priest exalted—the Mediatorial person is Lord of the universe: because in him, as embodied, dwells all the fulness of the Godhead; and by him has been fulfilled all that, as Surety of the covenant, he guaranteed to perform.

(e.) His entrance upon this transcendent glory, is a necessary and legal consequence of the completion of his work, which he announced, when he bowed his head and cried, "IT IS FINISHED." Our translation is not equal to the

force of the original—" *who is set*" implies rather a passive than an active sense: whereas the word is active, though not transitive: but it is frequently reflective. He took his seat—or as in i. 3, *sat down—seated himself*. By his obedience and death he purchased for himself the right of dominion over the universe of God; and his proceeding to occupy his place in the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, was not an act of arrogant assumption, but of the purest justice and the most perfect propriety. Whilst he was thus active in taking his proper place, God the Father, because his Son had finished the work assigned him, "raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places."

From all this, we learn the pre-eminent glory of this High Priest above him of Aaron's line. The latter went into the most holy place, the type of heaven, once only in the year, and remained but a very brief space, standing before the Ark and the glory between the cherubim, and then retired; the former entered into heaven itself, and took his seat in the right hand of the glorious throne, and there he abides for ever.

We see how steadily the Apostle keeps before his Hebrew brethren, the main design of the epistle—the dehortation from apostasy. What an argument this for steadfast adherence to our High Priest, in preference to those of Aaron's order!

5. We proceed to the work of our High Priest. It is expressed by the epithet, "a *minister* of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle." This word—*leitourgos* we have had, in one of its cognates—in ch. i. 14, but passed it without special remark. It is used in its different forms, fifteen times in the New Testament; eight times in connection with religious services, as we use it now exclusively—*liturgy*. It is, nevertheless, applied, to service of a secular character,

Rom. xiii. 6 and xv. 27 ; to angelic ministration, Heb. i. 7, 14 ; and to charitable service—2 Cor. ix. 12 ; Phil. ii. 25, 30 ; the remaining eight times, to sacred service, which points out that as its general application. Our Lord was in fact a servant or minister in all these respects. He ministered as an angel ; as a dispenser of charity ; as a collector and payer of taxes ; but mainly as the servant of God in sacred things. “ Behold my Servant, whom I uphold ; mine Elect in whom my soul delighteth.” It is in this relation, as the Servant of God for the salvation of men, that we are here called to consider him. A minister of the *sanctuary*—literally, of the holies. This phrase may be understood either of persons or things, a minister of the holies ; for, as Owen remarks, the adjective *holy*, may be either neuter or masculine : if the latter, then Christ is the Servant of the saints, which is scarcely allowable : if the former, it may still be a question whether it refers to things or places. But this, it is hardly necessary for us to decide, for, as Christ’s body must occupy a portion of space, that space may be included by the word things : and if things be taken, he is the servant of the holy things, which services must be related to *place*. And thus we may say he is the minister of the holy things and places. The Scriptural use best suits this comprehension. In Heb. ix. 3, the inner apartment of the tabernacle is called holies of the holies ; which our translation views as an Hebrew superlative, “ the Holiest of all.” And in v. 8, the same translation is given, when it should be *the way of the holies* ; and *the holies*, simply is taken as equivalent in v. v. 12 and 25, *to holy of holies* : and in v. 24, we have the same, in connection with the qualifying expression—*made with hands*. So x. 19, where the literal rendering gives us *an entrance of the holies*, the translation renders it *into the holiest*. In Heb. xiii. 11, where the inner apartment is meant, we have only *the holies*, places being implied ; and

our translation gives, *Sanctuary*. Usage, therefore, justifies the interpretation of the phrase, *holies of holies*, and also, *the holies* alone, as meaning the inner apartment of the tabernacle.

Here the question at once meets us, But did our High Priest minister in "the holies of holies" behind the veil? Is not this denied in express terms in ix. 24? "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands"—And we shall see shortly that such entrance was utterly impossible; he could not serve at the altar, or in any thing or place about the tabernacle of Moses or the temple, except in violation of law. And this position the Apostle proceeds to prove. The holies of holies—the holy things and places to which his ministrations are devoted, are the originals, of which this gorgeous tabernacle and temple are only shadowy representations. "Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?" Isa. xlvi. 1. Why our translators use the singular here, I know not; but certain it is, Isaiah—or rather Jehovah, uses the plural, and that with the article, "For the heavens *are* my throne." Accordingly in Ps. cii. 19, we read, "For he hath looked down from the height of the sanctuary; from heaven did the LORD behold the earth." Here we rest for the present. The sanctuary or holy place of this ministry, is the heavenly home, where Jesus sitteth in the right hand of the throne; and not any earthly habitation.

Another limitation to his ministrations, is "the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man." The reason just given against referring "the Sanctuary" to the most holy place within the veil, is equally available here. Our High Priest could not minister at the tabernacle made by the hands of Bezaleel and Aholiab. Moreover, this is intimated by the expression "of the true tabernacle." *True,*

here is not used as opposed to *false*, but to figurative, typical, symbolical. What is this true, real, substantial, original tabernacle, of which that of Moses was only a shadowy type? In my little book—"THE TABERNACLE," I have endeavored to show that material structure, in its symbolical or typical meaning, to be a representation of Christ's mystical body, the Church, under its threefold historical epochs; viz., the Patriarchal, the Mosaic, and the Messianic. Over each and all of these the Son of God, as Messiah, reigned and ruled: but pre-eminently and in form only in the latter, after his passion. But he becomes Messiah by the covenant of grace, wherein the Father furnishes his Son with a body. In chap. x. 5, he quotes from Ps. xl., "Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me." And the whole body of his redeemed were and are included in this covenant, which guarantees to him in the fulness of time, this body—this perfect humanity in which and by which the hypostatic union constitutes him a divine Mediatorial person, and makes it possible for him to finish the work assigned to him. Of this Mediatorial person, thus constituted by the covenant and including his true, spiritual Church or elect body, the tabernacle of Moses was a shadow, and, the court inclusive, a representation of the Church visible: but the human nature of Messiah is the true and substantial and living temple. As the things holy and the place of his service constitute heaven, so the tabernacle of his ministration, is his humanity. In support of this, note (1.) The expression, John i. 14, "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." The verb *dwelt* means *tabernacled*—*resided* in a *tabernacle* or *tent*. And, inasmuch as the temple succeeded to the tabernacle, and embodied its substance on a larger scale, Christ, (2.) John ii. 19, 21, calls his own body a temple—"Destroy this *temple*, and in



three days I will rear it up"—“ But he spake of the temple of his body.” (3.) So was it promised, Lev. xxvi. 11, “ I will set my tabernacle amongst you.” This is prophetic, and was spoken after the tabernacle of Moses was established; its fulfilment is noted in the passages just quoted. (4.) The prophecy, Rev. xxi. 3, obviously refers to Christ’s second advent in human nature, “ Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them,” etc. (5.) The Lord and not men pitched, *i. e.*, set up and fixed it, stable and firm as the eternal covenant of redemption and of grace could render it. That of Moses and all its fixtures, being an imperfect shadow and type of the true and a symbol of the visible Church, was manufactured and set up by men’s hands: it was indeed, for a material structure all glorious within (as was in a higher degree the temple of Solomon), yet movable and perishable: but this true tabernacle is pitched and established forever, like the priesthood administered therein.

Thus we have the grand idea—the master-thought of all that has been uttered—The ENTHRONEMENT, IN POWER AND GLORY SUPREME, OF THE INCARNATE GOD, AS OUR REDEEMER—PROPHET, PRIEST AND KING. And now, in the face of this *head-idea*, it is obvious to remark, that the Church loses nothing by the removal of the Aaronic Priesthood, and the substitution of the MAN of Calvary instead. On the contrary, we gain access into the Holy Place on high, through a spotless humanity, perfected by his sufferings, and consequently able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him. Let us, therefore, hold fast our profession. How beautiful this logic of dehortation from apostasy!

V. 3. “ For every high-priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity, that this man have somewhat also to offer.”

Here a general truth, as recognized in Levitical law, is presented as a reason in support of the preceding statement. *For*, it is the purpose of the office of high-priest. *Ordained*, we have discussed this term on chap. v. 1. There is a slight omission: the particle usually translated, *both*, is passed over—to offer *both* gifts and sacrifices. The Hebrews use three words on this topic. *Corban* is a general term, comprehending all kinds of offerings: its contents are divided into two classes; viz., offerings of fruits, bread or meal, etc.—all unbloody or lifeless things; and things having life, and which are to be slain and burnt in part or entirely. These two kinds of offerings, but especially the latter, it becomes the priests to offer. And some were proper to the High Priest alone: ex. gr., that on the annual atonement day. It was a high offence for any but the priests to offer sacrifices, in any other sense, than bringing them to the altar. When presented, the priests alone could offer upon the altar. This rule was violated by King Uzziah, when he “went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense.” He was resisted and punished with leprosy “unto the day of his death.” 2 Chron. xxvi. 16, 21. This law teaches very effectively the important truth, that other method of acceptable approach unto God there is none, but through the rent veil of the Redeemer’s flesh. In other words, that satisfaction to divine justice, by the sufferings of our High Priest, is the foundation of all our hopes for eternity.

Now, such being the law,—offering of sacrifices being the essence of the office, Christ must have something to offer. It were better to say this *person*, or this priest, than this *man*, must have an offering. He was both Priest and sacrifice, for he offered himself: but of this hereafter. Let us proceed to a reason for the necessity just mentioned.

V.v. 4, 5, “For if he were on earth, he should not be a

priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount."

After the logical link, *For*, connecting this with the preceding verse, we have the reason itself; in which note,

1. There cannot be two *orders* of priesthood in the church on earth at the same time. For if they should offer the same sacrifices—sacrifices whose spiritual substance is the same; viz., such as take away the guilt of sin, the one is superfluous. If they offer sacrifices different in their spiritual substance, one of them must be erroneous and cannot be of divine authority.

2. Priests, divinely ordained, there were, from Mount Sinai to the days of Calvary, who ministered according to law, offering sacrifices which constantly pointed out a Saviour-Priest, yet to come and offer the true, real and efficient sacrifice which takes away sin. Therefore,

3. If the Priest, promised after the order of Melchisedek, were on earth, during the legal existence of Aaron's priesthood, and there to abide, he could not minister at the only altar divinely appointed in the church: nor, if he could minister at the altar, could he enter into the holy of holies. This is seen in the case just cited. If King Uzziah was violently thrust out and smitten miraculously with leprosy, for entering into the holy place where the incense altar stood, much more must any man be reprimanded and punished, who should attempt to pass within the veil into the most holy place. Aaron's priests, being typical of Messiah, must continue until all their sacrifices are fulfilled in Him; and then they must cease. But Judah's Priest, the Son and Lord of David, never ministered or could minister at

Aaron's altar; nor enter into Aaron's most holy place. Such entrance for any but the Levites was to be punished with death. Num. iii. 10—"Aaron and his sons shall wait on their priest's office; and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death." v. 38, and xviii. 7.

4. But the services of those priests are for an illustrative example, shadowing forth the heavenly originals from which they are taken, and of which they can at least afford but a very imperfect conception. Nevertheless, these imperfect representations accomplished the divine purpose for which they were given; and, by the grace accompanying them, made manifest, through the sanctification of his people, the wisdom of their appointment, and the faithfulness of Moses in obeying the divine injunction, to make all things according to the pattern exhibited to him in the Mount.

5. We know not the mode of their exhibition. It may have been a scenic presentation—a picture sketch or draft; as an architect proceeds in his operations. It may have been by an oral description, though the phraseology rather implies an actual objective vision. Perhaps both methods were adopted; and a kind of photograph picture, with the aid of verbal description, imprinted an indelible type on the tablets of memory, and enabled Moses to actualize the conceptions in the material structures and utensils. In like manner, David was divinely instructed and prescribed to Solomon the plan of the temple, "And the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit, of the courts of the house of the Lord" 1 Chron. xxviii. 11, 12.

6. We must note the expression, about *to make* the tabernacle—the word here signifies, to complete, to finish—"it is finished;" all the parts and portions included in a perfected work are here found.

We proceed, with our author, to sustain the pre-eminent grandeur and glory of our Priesthood above Aaron's, and

to show that such is the doctrine of the Old Testament Scriptures. And we have first the contrast noted severally in the fourth and the sixth verses. "For (on the one hand,) if he were on the earth, he should not be a priest."

V. 6. "But now," (on the other hand), "he hath obtained a more excellent ministry," (or liturgical service,) than even those priests whose presence excluded him from ministering at the earthly tabernacle. And this greater excellence of the ministry is measured by the higher nature of the covenant of which he is the Mediator—"by how much also he is the Mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises." This contrast is the more obvious, if we adopt the opinion of Griesbach and others, that the fifth verse is a parenthesis. Thus the fourth and the sixth are brought into immediate connection.

Here we must note (1.) the contrast in time. In the *olden time*, the shadowy system of types, which had origin along with the Sinai covenant, was needful and greatly beneficial to the church; but *now*, in the fulness of time, when the hour is come for the larger development of the gospel scheme of salvation and the glories of Messiah's reign, a superior degree of excellence must characterize his dispensation. This is affirmed in the first analysis of his argument, Chap. i. 4, where the original term is the same as here. The Son, "being made so much better than the angels as he hath a *more excellent* name."

2. A very important epithet is here for the first time introduced into our discussion. This *more excellent* name, and *more excellent* ministry, are in the hands of a more illustrious Mediator. Of this our Apostle treats in Gal. iii. 19, 20; where, speaking of the same law ceremonial, he tells us, "it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator," referring to the transactions on Sinai and the agency of Moses, who was the Mediator. He also explains what the office of

mediator consists in ; viz., he comes between two, and so ministers as to bring together the parties at variance. "Now a mediator is not a *mediator* of one, but God is one;" and he gave the inheritance to Abraham by promise to his seed. "He saith not, And to seeds, as many: but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, That the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law—of the Sinai covenant and ceremonial law—it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise. Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made"—Now, of this superadded law—added as a yoke of bondage to restrain and keep down this stiff-necked and rebellious race, Moses was the mediator: and the legal system ordained in his hands was not hostile, but auxiliary to the promise and covenant with and to Abraham: it was, in fact, a great helper, as a pedagogue, to bring the church in its pupillage to the feet of Christ, the promised Seed, the Great Teacher. But now the pedagogue's function is accomplished, when he has brought the children to the school house and placed them before the Teacher. The pedagogue is now discharged, because his work is accomplished. The Seed promised to Abraham, under the oath of him who cannot lie—the oath-confirmed Priest from the house of David, has taken charge of the pupils, and for their care and instruction he has abundantly better provided.

3. The Mediator between God and man is the same as the Surety mentioned before, vii. 22; and the *better covenant* here, is the same with the *better testament* there; and expressed in the same identical words. The reader will see, therefore, at a glance, that the *better promises*, here are



the word and the oath given to Abraham and to David, concerning the Seed and the Melchizedekian Priest who is ordained *forevermore*: moreover, it is equally plain, that the *covenant* inferior to this—than which this is better, is the Sinai covenant. Lev. xix. 3-8. Moses went up to the Mount and God proposed the terms of the covenant: then Moses came down and called for the elders of Israel, and laid before them all the words that God spake to him; and they answered—"All that the Lord hath spoken will we do." And again in Ex. xxiv. 7-10 Moses, having written down the words of God, and having ordered bloody sacrifices to be offered, "took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath said we will do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people: and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words. Then went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet, as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in its clearness." Such was the dread solemnity attending the confirmation of this covenant; and yet there was no oath of God, and no sacrifice but of the typical offering which could not take away sin and secure the soul's salvation.

4. We note, that this is the covenant which initiates, establishes and confirms the Aaronic priesthood and the ministrations of the sons of Levi in all the services of religion. Its mediator Moses, though highly honored and distinguished, was nevertheless fallible and imperfect. But the Mediator of this better covenant, is the infallible and eternal Son of God. The sacrifice in confirmation of that was the blood of a dumb beast, of this, the Lamb of God—the humanity of the Mediator himself. And then we have

the most interesting items of distinction before mentioned, the promise and repeated oath of the everlasting God as the guarantee of its unfailing permanence. Well may it be called "an everlasting covenant."

5. We ought, before passing on, to remark the force of the word translated *established*: which covenant has been established—by law—has been legislated into existence. The cognates are seen in Rom. ix. 4—"the giving of the law;" and James iv. 12—"there is one *Lawgiver*"—Besides, there is probable reference here to the fact, that this covenant, whilst it secures the eternal salvation of God's children, accomplishes its glorious results without any infraction of law: not a jot or tittle of the law, ceremonial or moral, fails of the most complete fulfilment. Its covenant head came not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfill; that God might be just whilst he is the justifier of him that believeth.

Another reason for this, is found in the force of the expression in the beginning of the verse—*he hath obtained*. The primary idea of it is *chance, fortune, luck*. The Greeks idolized *Tyché* as the Romans did *Fortuna*, and as too many among us do *chance* or *luck*, which to them is the goddess of lotteries and other gambling. In counteraction of this idea—lest room should be left for the supposition, that by *fortune, good luck*, Christ had obtained this more excellent ministry, the Apostle throws in this expression, assuring us, that His obtaining it was not "a chance that happened" as the Philistines said, 1 Sam. vi. 9, but a result of intelligent deliberation—an act of divine legislation: the conferring of it upon Him was a part of that glorious plan, laid in eternity, for the glorification of the divine mercy in the salvation of sinners.

With his polar star in his eye—the dehortation from apostasy—our Apostle proceeds, v.v. 7-13, to prove the

greater excellence of the covenant, which is administered by the Mediatorial High Priest, above and beyond that of Sinai, established by Moses and administered by the Aaronic Priesthood. This he does in the form of argumentation called in the technical language of logic, the *modus tollens* of conditional syllogisms. He lays down an hypothetical proposition, which, if proved true would be followed by a certain consequence; but if not so proved would be followed by the contrary.

V. 7. "For, if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second." Let well enough alone. When we have everything that heart can desire, and there is no feeling of want—no ground of complaint—no fault-finding, let things remain so. Supposing the first covenant—that legally established at Sinai, answered every and all purposes, and secured perfectly the welfare of the Church, why should there be any change? If there is no defect, why propose amendment in the constitution or organic law? Such proposal must be most unreasonable. If the former covenant were faultless, no later or second would be called for: but a new—a second is required and promised in the Scriptures: therefore, the former is defective and must be removed. If the writer can prove that a new, a second covenant, is called for in the Scriptures, he will thereby prove the defective nature and perishable character of the former. This is accomplished by an extended quotation from Jer. xxxi. 31. This he introduces by the usual logical link.

V. 8. "For finding fault with them, he saith"—*For* intimates a sustaining reason of what precedes. But the matter, in v. 7 that needs support is the defectiveness, the faultiness of the old covenant. If it were not for this, no second would have found place: but not being faultless, therefore he, finding fault with it,

saith to his people, by the pen of Jeremiah, "Behold, the days come," etc. The reader will see that we differ from the interpretation given in our translation, which makes the fault-finding refer to the people—*them*; and not a repetition of the idea in v. 7, that the covenant was not faultless. This is true—God did blame and censure Israel and Judah, but then, thus has it been always; the Church has ever been faulty; but the reasoning of the case requires the faultiness of the covenant, as the ground of its rejection. The faultiness of the people would be a good reason for enforcing upon them reformation. So it is now in regard to the moral law: God finds fault with us, but this is no reason why that law should be replaced by another. But here, when He says the covenant of Sinai is faulty or it would not be replaced, he immediately gives the natural inference, therefore I will give you a new covenant, not cumbered with such defects. In opposition to this, Owen alleges that the law is holy and the commandment is holy and just and good. But this creates no difficulty. We admit that the entire Sinai institutions were good and excellent, and answered the ends of their appointment, during the non-age of the Church. Still, they were shadows, and foretold the more substantial and excellent promises of the coming dispensation.

V.v. 8, 9. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand, to lead them out of the land of Egypt: because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord." Note,

1. The present tense is used—"the days are coming." It is for the Church's good, that God reserves the times and the seasons of great events in his own hands. Precise dates

are not given. There is a chronology of the past, which lies within our intellectual range: the chronology of the future is God's; and he deems it for our good that at most, a general conception only of coming events is permitted to us. Doubtless this exercises our faith more favorably than would a more definite prescience. Here events six hundred years off in the dim distance, are given to us in the present time. Thus all events are before the divine mind, and He will teach us our dependence on himself for knowledge of matters the most important.

2. The bearing of this promise upon the then present condition of Israel and Judah, was important in their distressed condition. It was uttered after the first invasion of Nebuchadnezzar and the carrying away to Babylon; and it is difficult to explain the preceding context without involving a return to their own land, on a larger scale than has yet been fulfilled. The covenant at Sinai they had broken, in their unfaithfulness, and God had given them over to punishment, as though he was no longer their God. Their privilege and blessings under it were all forfeited, and despair had settled down upon the public mind. In great condescension and love, they are here assured of better times to come; yea, and a better covenant than this under whose breach they were suffering such sore chastisement.

3. They are assured, that this new covenant of the coming times, should differ essentially from that established at Sinai; and so differ as greatly to exceed and excel it. Had the prophet promised merely a re-establishment of the one they had broken, and a restoration to their forfeited privileges, it were to them a great consolation: but he far exceeds this; the new covenant is not according to that. It shall indeed comprehend the whole seed of Abraham according to the flesh—the house of Israel and the house of Judah, and probably their restoration literally to the land

of promise: but certainly it will comprehend the spiritual seed of Abraham as the heir of the world—the father of many nations.

He goes into some detail; and so must we.

4. V. 10. “For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.”

(1.) Note the time, “after those days.” Not after the termination of the old dispensation; but after these same coming days, of v. 8. When they shall have come and the sacrifice shall have been offered for its confirmation, this new covenant, or testament shall be inaugurated. In point of fact, the days of the Old and the days of the New confine; but it is the latter that marks the date.

(2.) It guarantees their spiritual illumination. “I will put my laws into their mind.” An intelligent comprehension of the divine laws is promised. There is allusion to the hearing of the outward ear, at Sinai; whilst, alas! there was sad deficiency, as to the permanent lodgment of the truth in their understanding.

(3.) There shall be an enlistment of the affections into God’s service—“and write them in their hearts.” Here is allusion to the writing upon the tables of stone. The whole work of grace is included. It is the same referred to in Isa. lv. 5. “I will make with you an everlasting covenant, even the sure mercies of David.” The sound of my voice may pass from the careless ear: the sculpture in stones may wear away; but my glorious truths of the eternal covenant will I inscribe on fleshly tables of the heart; and these inscriptions of the Spirit shall last for ever.

(4.) The consequence is a permanent, and actual relation between us: “I will be their God and they shall be to



me a people." No more bondage shall there be in Egypt or in Babylon: but pillars shall they be in the temple of the Lord, and shall go no more out for ever.

(5.) A further consequence is the universal diffusion of saving knowledge: "for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand as an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek; and his rest shall be glorious." Isa. xi. 9, 10. These are the same days, to which our context refers. This is stated negatively and positively.

(6.) Negatively. V. 11. "And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord; for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest." Some prefer to read, as Griesbach, "every man, his *fellow citizen*"—but the sense is the same, and we need not delay on the question of criticism. Some from this infer, that under the gospel dispensation there will not be, and ought not to be, any such order of officers as ministers of the word—that religious knowledge will be so common, that instructors and teaching masters will no longer exist. This however is a strange inference, seeing such teachers are not mentioned at all and negatived: but private teachers—*every man* is expressly negatived. The more plausible inference is, that such abundant instruction will be afforded and pressed upon men everywhere, by those who are commanded to go and teach all nations, that private instructions and teachings will not be needed.

But the truth is, that those who are of the true Israel, will not be and cannot be taught, in the sense defined in the preceding verse, by every man or any man. The Holy Ghost alone can and will teach the true covenanted people of God. He only can take the things of Christ and show them unto sinners; and so make them saints. And this is

the *positive* matter here set forth: "for all shall know me from the least to the greatest." So the prophet tells us, Jer. xxiv. 7. "And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord—for they shall return unto me with their whole heart." So Ezek. xi. 19 "And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh." Beyond controversy, the teaching and renovating energy of the Holy Ghost is the thing here intended. No created teachers can produce this change. The conversion of sinners is by no moral suasion; it is not the work of man; not by words which man's wisdom teacheth: His influence and power characterize the New Testament. "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring." Isa. xlv. 3.

(7.) "All shall know me"—all the true Israel on whom the Spirit comes. Here it means the remnant; for the great majority of Israel according to the flesh rejected Him, for "they are not all Israel which are of Israel."

(8.) "From the least to the greatest." This is proverbial, and means the totality. Jer. vi. 13; xlii. 1, 8; xlv. 12. All the *subjects* of the Spirit's renovation are comprehended: "from a little one of them, even to a great one of them:" thus limiting this knowledge to them who are the called according to his purpose.

V. 12. "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." This gives a general reason for what has just gone before; viz., Because I will be *propitious* to their unrighteousnesses: and their omissions of duty and their actual transgressions of law, I will not at all call any more to remembrance. *Merciful*, implies propitiation, by the sacrifice offered for that purpose—the Messiah is the propitia-

tion for our sins. And his satisfaction to divine justice, rendered as our Surety, opens the door and secures to us the pardon of our sins of omission and of commission: neither class of unrighteousnesses can ever rise in the judgment against us. This is pardon bought with blood; and the way laid open for our justification by the imputation to us of our High Priest's active obedience, *i. e.*, his righteousness—his conformity with preceptive law.

Here ends the quotation from Jeremiah, thence he deduces his grand conclusion.

V. 13. "In that he saith, A new Covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old, is ready to vanish away." He has disproved the condition set forth in v. 7; and shown, that the first covenant, or Sinai institution, is faulty and defective; and that in opposition to it Holy Scripture calls for a second; therefore "in saying a new, he antiquates the first. Now that which is antiquated and become old is near evanishment." Thus the Apostle proves the First covenant faulty and defective, and therefore removes it out of his way; and thereby finds place for the Second.

## CHAPTER IX.

VERSES 1-10. "Then verily the first *covenant* had also ordinances of divine service," etc.

From the proof afforded by Jeremiah, that the first covenant, or Sinai institutions, are limited, must grow old and vanish away, and consequently, the new covenant promised, must take its place, the Apostle deduces an inference of the superiority of that which succeeds, over that which yields its place. Our translators have not given us the force of the inferential particle, *therefore*: nor have they noted the comparison and contrast, by which the Writer evinces this superiority. Undoubtedly, v.v. 1-10 include the first branch of such a contrast: and v.v. 11-28, the counter-part. As if he would say, "Therefore, on the one hand also, the first had ordinances," etc.; and "on the other hand, Christ—the Messiah being come, a High-Priest of good things about to be," etc. v. 11. The matter referred to by the inferential particle, *therefore*, is the whole chapter, which consists of this proof of pre-eminence: and with the conjunction *also*, implies rather matter superadded, than deducted strictly from what preceded. Our business is to examine the two covenants, or dispensations as detailed by the Apostle, and to bring out the grand points of superiority of the second over the first.

V. 1. "Then verily the first *covenant* had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary."

The first point of difficulty here regards the filling up of the ellipsis: should it be with the word *covenant*, as our translation is, or with the word *tabernacle*, as many Greek

manuscripts read it? To me it appears best to harmonize with the context and the design of the Apostle, to read it *covenant, i. e., testament*. The preceding discussion contrasts the two covenants, that of Sinai, the first, the old about to vanish away, and the new and merciful covenant under Messiah's reign. Besides, *tabernacle* would not seem consistent with what follows.—“the first *tabernacle* had also ordinances of divine services, and a worldly sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle made:” The incongruity is apparent. But supply covenant, testament, dispensation; and incongruity gives place to harmony.

This verse is a general statement, and consists of two distinct propositions; viz., that the old covenant had ordinances of divine service—and these administered in a worldly sanctuary.

Note 1. The word translated *ordinances*, signifies the decree or decision—the thing decreed by a *judge* as right and proper. The verb from which it is formed, signifies to declare a person just—to declare that he is possessed of the righteousness of the law—that his conduct, in the matter before the court, has been and is in conformity with the law: and, by consequence, that he is entitled to the law's protection, and to whatever reward the law holds out to such upright action. Common law principles are established by such decisions: and so the word before us, *dikaïoma*, is analogous to them. Accordingly, it is contradistinguished from statute law. Luke i. 6, “Zacharias and Elizabeth were both righteous, walking in all the commandments and *ordinances* of the Lord blameless.” So Rom. i. 32—“the *judgment* of God.” Rom. ii. 26.—“keep the *righteousness*—the *ordinances* of the law.”—“of many offences unto *justification*”—V.v. 16th and 18th, viii. 4, “That the *righteousness* of the law might be fulfilled in us”—It occurs also in Rev. xv. 4—“for

thy *judgments* are made manifest"—and xix. 8—"for the fine linen is *the righteousness* of saints,"—it is plural—"the *ordinances* of the saints." These with v. 10 of this chapter are all the cases in the New Testament where this word occurs—"ordinances of the flesh—carnal ordinances"—All combine to show, that positive decrees—subordinate rules, regulations and ceremonies are designed by the term: all the special regulations of the Jewish worship under the Sinai covenant.

But (2), these are connected with a *worldly sanctuary*. This corresponds with the phrase in v. 10, *carnal ordinances*. It is designed to comprehend the court, the altar, the laver, the tabernacle, and all its contents. It is called worldly, because it is constructed by men's hands, of worldly materials and perishable, and in comparison with the new covenant, they are, as our Apostle elsewhere says, "weak and beggarly elements." The meaning of the word rendered *worldly*, is *beautiful, highly ornamented*.

Vv. 2-5. A reason is here given in support of the preceding. "For, there was a tabernacle made: the first wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shew-bread; which is called the Sanctuary: And after the second veil, the tabernacle, which is called the Holiest of all; Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein *was* the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; And over it the cherubim of glory, shadowing the mercy-seat: of which we cannot now speak particularly."

1. My first remark on this refers to the last of it. The Apostle declines going into much detail; and this, without a specific reason. Yet it is easy to see his reasons. (*a.*) He is speaking to a people who were familiar with the details: for the Temple worship was but an expansion of the Tabernacle services, of which the Hebrews had acquired



a knowledge from infancy. (*b.*) The logical purpose of the whole citation, is limited to the pre-eminence of Christ's priesthood: and therefore the construction of the Tabernacle; its twofold division; the principal items of furniture of each, afford sufficient data for the reasonings he is about to institute.

2. I may add here, a reason why I shall be brief also on these points. My book, *THE TABERNACLE*, recently issued by The Presbyterian Board of Publication, is easily accessible, and goes more fully into this subject, than is consistent with a simple commentary. I shall, therefore, give here only a general and rapid touch to the several points made by the Apostle.

3. The expression, "there was a tabernacle made," covers more than the building itself. It includes the complete fitting up and furnishing of it with all necessary appurtenances thereto: of which he mentions only two items of furniture in the first apartment; viz., the candlestick and the table; together with the shew-bread on the table. This part of the Tabernacle was about two-thirds of the whole: the length of the entire building being forty-five feet and the breadth thirteen and an half. This building faced the East: the gates of entrance being at the eastern end; so that all persons entering in at the Court gates and at those of the tabernacle, had their faces westward: the Altar of burnt-offerings, which he does not here mention, stood between the Court gate and the tabernacle gate: the laver, also not here named, stood between the Altar of burnt-offerings and the gate of the tabernacle.

The candlestick was placed on the south side of the sanctuary, or holy place: and opposite to it stood the table. The golden or Incense Altar stood in front of the blue curtain, which is here called "the second veil"—the first being the gate of entrance on the east end: it is not mentioned in

this place. In the rear—after or behind this veil is the holy of holies, or “the Holiest of all”—the most holy place. This was about fifteen feet by thirteen and an half. In this the Ark of the Testimony was placed; and it had the golden censer, the golden pot, Aaron’s rod and the two tables.

But we must particularize, as to the meaning. (1.) The candlestick is a type of Christ in his prophetic office as the Great Teacher—the light of the world—of course also his mystical body—Ye are the light of the world. (2.) The table is the type of Christ as the bread of God that cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world. (3.) The bread of faces—or shew-bread, teaches the omnipresence of Christ; he is ever present with his people; and especially with those that minister in holy things; a very present help in time of need. “It was called bread of faces.” Face is applied to Jehovah in reference to something of him revealed to us. The face is the seat of expression, of character: faces answer to persons. The meaning is, that life comes from him whose faces are revealed to us. The table, with the twelve loaves, replaced every Sabbath, was set there, in acknowledgment of the divine persons, and designed to prefigure the bread of life which came down from heaven.

And after—behind, the second veil, the second apartment—the Holiest of all. This is, like the former called a tabernacle; although, mostly the entire building is so called. Of its contents we must note—(a.), *which had*—it is the participle—*having*—this expresses the relation of the following details, to the whole. These, especially the golden censer and the ark of the covenant, belong to this apartment and are peculiar to it. (b.) Diversity of opinion exists as to the golden censer. Owen and Mason think the incense altar is meant. Our translation however is correct. The Greek word here—*thumiaterion*, is used in no other place

in the New Testament. It occurs, however in the LXX. 2 Chron. xxvi. 19. Uzziah went in to burn incense on the incense altar, but was resisted by force—"Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer—*thumiaterion*—in his hand." So Ezek. viii. 11—"with every man a censer—*thumiaterion*—in his hand." In the case of Uzziah there is a clear distinction made between the censer, which he held in his hand, and the incense-altar, which is expressed by a different word—*thusiasterion*. Besides, this last word is used in Rev. viii. 3, as the golden altar—and ix. 13. The golden censer in viii. 3 and 5 is a different word—*Libanos*, and aids us not on this point. That there were many censers is certain. Lev. x. 1, Num. iv. 14, xvi. 16, 17, two hundred and fifty are mentioned—"take ye every man his censer"—and 1 Kings vii. 50—Solomon had "censers of pure gold," 2 Chron. iv. 22. Such is the view taken by Dr. Sampson, and I think it the true one. That no express mention is made in Moses of a golden censer, specially appropriated to the service on the great day of atonement, has little weight. Some censers were of brass, Num. xvi. 39. These were those of Korah's company and they were rolled into broad sheets for a covering of the altar. There is therefore little room to doubt. There was a golden censer for special use, when the High Priest went into the most holy place. "And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense, beaten small, and bring it within the veil. And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy-seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not." Lev. xvi. 12, 13.

Where this golden censer was kept, we are not informed; no more than we are about the deposit of the spoons and dishes and snuffers, etc. Nor is the omission of the incense-altar a difficulty; for, as said before, the object is to illus-

trate the High Priest's office duties: and the burning of incense morning and evening was not a special duty of the High Priest; but this of ministering within the second veil was. Hence, the censer used on these occasions yearly, is said to belong to the Most holy place—it hath it; which does not necessarily imply, that it was deposited in the Holy of holies.

(4.) As to the ark and the two tables we have no difficulty. Abundant testimonies show that the Ark was placed in the Most holy place: and that the two tables were deposited inside of it. Ex. xxxviii. 20, 21: “And he took and put the testimony into the Ark, and set the stones on the Ark, and put the mercy-seat above upon the Ark. And he brought the Ark into the tabernacle and set up the veil of the covering, and covered the Ark of the testimony.” The symbol meaning of these the reader may find fully spread out in “THE TABERNACLE.” I shall now only say,

Let the reader turn to “THE TABERNACLE,” Chap. ii. or if not at hand, to Exod. xxxvi. 1–9 and the following extract. “We have here an analysis of the Ark into two parts; the chest or body—we may say, the Ark proper; and the cover or lid, the mercy-seat.

1. The Ark proper. Let us note the materials of which it is made—shittim wood. From all we can learn, the probability is, that this was the black acacia—a species of locust, which abounded in that region. The term implies a thorny tree; and as the boards of the tabernacle, which were twenty-seven inches wide, were made of the same, it must have been a tree of large growth; but of what particular species, is perhaps a question whose difficulty is inversely as its importance. Of this the chest and staves for transportation were made. The length, taking the cubit at eighteen inches of our measure, was forty-five inches, the width and the height, twenty-seven inches; the same as the

breadth of the tabernacle boards. This box or chest and the bearing staves were overlaid with gold. The crown of gold round about this upper part of the chest, was doubtless an ornamental network curving outward and forming a guard to prevent the lid or mercy-seat from slipping out of its place. Rings of gold were attached to each corner on the sides, through which the staves passed and lay continually ready for use in carrying the whole structure.

2. The cover was a plate of solid gold; the ends turned up and wrought into figures called Cherubim, with wings extended toward each other, and their faces turned inward and downward, as if looking intently toward the contents of the chest.

3. These contents were the two tables of the law. The words were first uttered, in thunder tones, from the summit of the burning mountain. Exod. xx. They were afterward delivered to Moses, recorded by immediate divine power on the two tables of stone, and handed along ranks of angels. Acts vii. 53: "Who have received the law *by the disposition* (into ranks) of angels, and have not kept it." These tables, prepared supernaturally—without any human agency—were broken by Moses when he came down from the mount—Exod. xxxii. 19: "And Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and broke them beneath the mount." Afterward, by divine command, Exod. xxxiv. 4—"he hewed two tables of stone like unto the first—and took in his hand the two tables of stone."—And in Deut. x. 4, 5, we are told, "he (the Lord) wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the ten commandments, and I turned myself and came down from the mount, and put the tables in the ark, which I had made, and there they be, as the Lord commanded me."

4. The Ark, thus furnished and covered, is a symbol or type of Messiah as the fulfiller of preceptive law: that is,

it sets forth justification proper. The two tables are the jewels; the rest are the casket. The cover or mercy-seat shields the law from all pollution. In this law is no penalty mentioned at all. The penalty of law is met by the symbol of the altar of burnt offerings: setting forth Christ as the suffering sacrifice.

5. The cherubim are the symbol of the living agency which our Lord employs to wing the message of salvation to all the world. The high Priest coming in on the great day of atonement, sets forth the connection between the brazen altar—the atoning sacrifice and the Ark, or justification, proper and strict: The brazen altar is Christ suffering for us: the Ark is Christ fulfilling for us all righteousness.

6. But there remain the golden pot and the budding rod. These belonged to the inner tabernacle: it *having* them. But Moses tells us Exod. xvi. 33 “Take a pot, and put an omer of manna therein, and lay it up before the Lord, to be kept for your generations.” This was long before the tabernacle was built. And Num. xvii. 10 “Bring Aaron’s rod again before the testimony”—And nowhere does Moses say the pot or the rod was put inside of the Ark: but 1 Kings viii. 9. “There was nothing in the Ark save the two tables of stone which Moses put there at Horeb.” This difficulty we must remove. And (a.) as already stated, the inner tabernacle had the golden censer, and, in what sense we have seen. (b.) It had the Ark, but in a clearly defined sense—other passages show it had the Ark within itself—included and inclosed. (c.) The vagueness of the *wherein* here is so great, that nothing certain can be concluded from it. Dr. Owen remarks—“Now this preposition (the Hebrew Beth translated through the Greek—*wherein*) is so frequently used in the Scripture to signify adhesion, conjunction, approxima-



tion, appurtenance of one thing to another, that it is mere cavilling to assign it any other signification in this place, or to restrain it unto inclusion only, the things themselves requiring that sense." It signifies *by, with, in, upon, alongside, etc.*, and as in Num. xvii. 10—*before*. The pot of manna and the rod, were placed in front of the Ark, as standing memorials of the supernatural—the divine power and goodness of Zion's king; and of the rebellious temper and disposition of his stiff-necked and obstinate people.

7. But above the Ark arose the cherubim of glory—The bright shining light—the same which appeared to Moses in the bush at Horeb, is the familiar symbol of God's gracious presence in the Church. This is the *Shekinah*—"the cloud of the Lord"—the non-consuming fire, which always accompanied the cherubim; at the Garden of Eden; the burning bush; the fiery pillar at the Red Sea; here in the tabernacle; in the dedication of the temple; in Ezekiel's vision; in John's glorious throne. See "THE TABERNACLE," chap. xiv.

8. The wings of the cherubim extended and met each other over the cover of the ark, of which cover, as it were, they were a part: being one beaten work of pure gold. They overshadowed the mercy-seat: the *Hilasterion*. This word our Apostle uses in Rom. iii. 25. "Whom God hath set forth a *propitiation* through faith in his blood." The Hebrew word for which *hilasterion* is here used, signifies a cover—any thing which conceals and protects—a covering over: and so it is used constantly for the lid of the ark: and is translated *mercy-seat*; because, as this lid covers and protects the law or testimony against all defilement, and thereby symbolizes Christ as the fulfiller of law; and because the blood from the brazen altar,—signifying Christ's meeting the penalty of law, is brought in and sprinkled on and before this covering; it is established as the audience

chamber—the throne whence the Lord dispenses mercy and grace. “And then will I meet with thee, and I will commune with thee, from above the covering, from between the two cherubim, which are upon the ark of the testimony.” Ex. xxv. 22.

V.v. 6, 7. “Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of *God*. But into the second went the High-Priest alone, once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the errors of the people.”

We have here a contrast between the many offerings of the many priests, on the one hand; and the one offering of the One Priest on the other. True, Aaron, it is said, Ex. xxx. 7, 8, “shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps he shall burn incense upon it,” etc.; but this he does, not by his own hands: and the priests placed and replaced the bread and ate it in the holy place. But v. 10, he “shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year”—And Lev. xvi. 2, 11, etc., his services are described, “he shall bring the bullock for a sin-offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house”—v. 15, “Then shall he kill the goat of the sin-offering that is for the people, and bring its blood within the veil, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the covering lid and before the covering—lid—or mercy-seat.” And to give increased solemnity to the transaction,—“there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in”—So our Lord went away, alone, when he was about to offer the great atonement. Look back to Chap. viii. 27.

The main significance of all this, as it regards the Apostle's grand design, is, that it proves a deficiency of know-

ledge, and an absence thus far of something very important to the highest well being of the church.

V. 8, "The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing"—This is the thing clearly pointed out, that the body of the people were excluded and prevented from a near approach to the most solemn rites of worship. None but the High Priest, and he but once or on one day in the year, could come right up to the audience chamber and the divine throne, whence mercy is dispensed. Nor can it be otherwise, so long as the typical tabernacle, Levites and priests continue to minister.

V. 9, "Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience: v. 10, which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances imposed *on them*, until the time of reformation." The word *made manifest* is of strong force, indicating such light thrown in as removes all obscurity, and causes the subject to stand forth clearly defined—fully revealed. And it is to us now matter of astonishment, how little the mass of the Jewish people comprehended of their own scriptures and the gospel revealed therein. Even the Apostles until the day of pentecost, seem amazingly in the dark, even in reference to the resurrection. But let us lay our hands upon our mouths and both in the dust. Where should we be, if a clearer light had not shone upon our path?

In these verses, 9 and 10, the Apostle proceeds to demonstrate the inherent defects of these ordinances, for any thing but as a temporary expedient. And in general, first he tells us they were a figure—a *parable*. This word primarily means, a *laying along side*—that is, a comparison. All metaphors and parables are based on resemblance; but

chiefly resemblance of relations. The parable of the Sower is a comparison between that particular operation of husbandry with its accompaniments, and a teacher of religious truth. The former is familiar to the mind, and we are pleased and edified to find points of resemblance in the latter—resemblance of relations—of analogies. Here the points which make the whole a parable, are found in the similarity between the sufferings of the animals in sacrifice, and those of our Lord: the washing of the priests and Levites, and the cleansing away of spiritual defilement: the removal of ceremonial guilt, and the cleansing of the conscience from guilt before God: etc.

Now, all these have their utility, yet their limit, for the time then present. We may note those he presents. (1.) Gifts, as contradistinguished from sacrifices, are thank-offerings; at least chiefly; and they aid in gratitude to God for spiritual blessings. (2.) Sacrifices of animals are types of the great sacrifice—our passover; for their day useful as types, but incapable of real removal of the curse. All these combined can never make satisfaction for our sins and give peace to the conscience. (3.) “Him that did the service,” refers not to the officiating priest, but to the person who offers through him, and for whose sin the sacrifice is accepted. (4.) All our dealings with God by sacrifice have ultimate reference to the conscience. It is a burdened conscience that brings its burnt-offering; and if the faith of the worshipper stop in the offering, and look not to the sacrifice of which this is a faint resemblance, the conscience obtains no relief. (5.) The ceremonial laws distinguished all animals into clean and unclean, and prescribed what might be eaten and offered in sacrifices, and what might not: and so of drinks. And the use of the unclean, renders an offering for purification necessary. (6.) “Diverse washings”—*Baptisms* of different kinds. This

refers to the "washings—baptisms of cups, pots, and brazen vessels and tables." Mark vii. 4. And the washings of the persons of the priests, and the frequent washings of the hands and feet of the priests, and of the various parts of the sacrifices. These are referred to in chap. vi. 2. which see. (7.) "And carnal ordinances"—ordinances of the flesh. Some have supposed this phrase is comprehensive of the preceding: but the conjunction, And, precludes this, and shuts us up to the understanding of a general expression, including all the other ceremonial rites. (8.) The imposition or laying of this grievous yoke, is next to be noted: it was added because of transgressions, and kept upon their restive necks, as a perpetual remembrance of their bondage condition, and to prepare them for the liberty of the gospel church. (9.) "Until the *time of reformation*"—time of straightening up—of putting to rights. It is analogous to the expression, Acts iii. 19, "times of refreshing"—reviving influences: the expression here—*straightening up*, looks a little farther than the other. The effects of reviving influences, are reformation of life and manners: so that the church displays her inward purity, by outward holy-living.

V. 11. We come now to the other side of the contrast. From v.v. 1–10 inclusive is a partial summary of the items of the first, or Sinai covenant. Now, on the other hand, we take up the points of the new covenant more in detail. This runs in fact from ix. 11 to x. 18, after which he proceeds with an exhortation, 19, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness" etc.

In all this, we must ever keep in mind the general analysis on chap. i. 1–4, and refer the detail to the Priestly office, as on this hangs all his authority as Prophet and all his power as King. This it is, that gives infinite value to the sacrifice our Highpriest offers, and places the functions

of this office so transcendently beyond the former Priesthood.

V.v. 11, 12. "But Christ being come, an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building: Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*."

1. Note the name Christ, that is in Hebrew, Messiah. There is a reason why he does not use the name Jesus, or Son of God; but Messiah; for this is the epithet most familiar to the mind of the Hebrews: under this, they were in constant expectancy of him that was to come. Aaron and his successors were created and came in succession one after another: still there was an expectation of the Shiloh promised by Moses: and the question of John, "Art thou he that should come; or do we look for another?" was pertinent ever on, until it was answered by the miraculous works which He performed, and which constrained them to exclaim, We have found the Messiah, of whom Moses and the prophets did speak. We have seen, on chap. viii. 3, that, being a Priest he must have a sacrifice: here

2. There is an expansion of this necessity to his whole ministrations—"of good things to come—of good things about to be:" and of which we have spoken on chap. vii. 11, as alluded to in the priesthood of Aaron, but not secured. But now that Messiah has come, all the blessings promised are to be realized by the church here and now under his government and rule. For

3. I cannot agree with those who make these *good things to come*, to refer to heaven itself and the boundless felicities of that perfect bliss. We must not forget the Apostle's logic. He is proving the pre-eminence of the gospel dis-



dispensation or new covenant, above the old; and that as an argument against apostasy. Heavenly bliss was reached by the Old Testament believers as truly as under the New: this therefore could constitute no argument for or against either. But these good things—such as fuller light, stronger faith, removal of the yoke of ceremonial bondage, boldness and freedom of access to the Father, through the Son and by the Spirit of adoption—are characteristics of the New covenant or dispensation, and therefore evidences of its superiority, not over the heavenly state, but over the old priesthood. And this because

4. Our High Priest ministers in a greater and more perfect tabernacle than did Aaron. See Chap. viii. 2. Those priests served in a splendid tabernacle, it is true, of divine planning, and supernaturally directed workmanship; and, therefore, highly cosmical—ornamented, beautiful and gorgeous: yet, after all, it was made with hands, human and imperfect. But our High Priest's tabernacle was built by a Divine Architect. No other structure in the universe can compare with it, for perfection of beauty, for thoroughness of adaptation to its destined uses, for every excellence that can adorn created existence and command the admiration of the moral universe. No mark of human frailty and imperfection can be found in it or upon it. It is not of *this building*: literally—*not of this creation*. It is the same word as Rom. viii. 19–22. “The earnest expectation of the *creature*”—“for the *creature* was made subject to vanity,” etc. “If any man be in Christ, he is a new *creature*”—2 Cor. v. 17—“neither circumcision availeth any thing, but a new creature.” Gal. vi. 15. Obviously, the Apostle designs us to understand, that Christ's humanity is the direct product of creating power: that, whilst it is a perfect humanity, it is a creation of God—a body hast thou prepared me: and thus he transcends all Aaronic Priests and

tabernacles; and is more excellent and perfect than any earth-built temple.

V. 12. "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Having thus placed Messiah the High Priest personally and officially above all, he proceeds to speak of his sacrifices. This he does first negatively, and then positively; so as to bring into direct contrast the subject matter of the offerings, and the times. Neither by the blood of goats and calves. Such was Aaron's sacrifice. First he offered a bullock or calf for himself, and carried the memorial, *i. e.*, a portion of its blood into the most Holy place. Lev. xvi. 11-16. So the goat for the sin offering, that is, for the people: and also the incense is to be burnt before the Lord. Not such sacrifices does our High Priest offer: but his own blood. Here is the strong point of the contrast, from which he afterward argues.

2. Another point is the number of times. Aaron yearly accomplishes this service: And on each year goes in three times. (*a.*) With the incense censer, v. v. 12, 13. (*b.*) With the blood of his own sacrifice. V. 14. (*c.*) With the blood of the goat, the sin-offering of the people.

In contrast with this, is the *once* entering and offering of Messiah: and this too becomes a basis of argumentation hereafter.

3. Having obtained eternal redemption—This requires several distinct remarks. (1.) The redemption, whatever it includes, was obtained prior to his entrance. This is expressed in the very terms before us;—having obtained—*euramenos*—having discovered, found out—secured whether by searching or incidentally, he entered in once only. (2.) The type proves the same. Aaron first offers his sacrifice, slays his bullock and goat; and, whilst the sacrificed are dead and their bodies burning on the altar, he enters into

the most holy place. So Messiah offers himself; and, having paid the price and secured our redemption, he enters into the most holy place, not made with hands, but into the true sanctuary, typified by the earthly tabernacle. (3.) We infer, therefore, the error of those who deny the atonement, in its true, vicarious nature, and teach, that Christ did not offer any true and real sacrifice; but only, that he entered into heaven and offers himself now as our High Priest. That which they call his offering, so far from being a painful sacrifice,—a dreadful suffering—a curse to be shrunk from in terror, is an exaltation to glory—the highest conceivable blessing! This will farther appear. (4.) From the assumption always included in the idea of redemption, viz., that the thing redeemed is lost, and, when a person is in a condition of bondage. Slavery originated in war: all captures were the property of the captors: prisoners became slaves. The friends of slaves often redeemed them by the payment of the price demanded by the captor. This price was by the Greeks called *lutron*, from the verb to loose, to set free. The idea of redeeming one who is not a prisoner or slave is an absurdity. (5.) The natural state of man is that of a slave under sin. The wages of sin is death. That is justly due, and, therefore, the friend who undertakes to redeem a sinner must pay this price of redemption. It is usual to say, there is a redemption by price and a redemption by power. But the latter is involved in the former: or if not, it is *rescue* not *redemption*. But if the redeemer has paid the *lutron*—he has a right to the release of his friend: and if the party holding him in bondage refuses his release, force may be employed in vindicating the right; and this is redemption by power. (6.) It often occurred, that actual release was not thus vindicated: or that captives redeemed, were retaken and reduced to bondage. The phrase before

us excludes this idea. Our angel Redeemer does his work thoroughly: and secures forever the objects of his love. He hath paid for us the ransom price and secured *eternal* redemption. Both redemptions are sure; for the price is full and adequate, and infinite in value: and all power in heaven and earth is given unto the Redeemer and wielded by him; so that he is able to vindicate the rights of his blood. These are both included in the word before us—*lutrosis*—the process of redeeming.

V.v. 13, 14. We have here an argument from the less to the greater. The Hebrews believed that ceremonial pollution and guilt were removed by their sacrifices, and he presses them with this inference; much more must the blood of the Messiah cleanse the soul. “For if the blood of bulls, and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” The ordinance of the red heifer is detailed in full in Num. xix. The animal is without blemish, is slain; is burnt; the ashes are gathered up; they are put into a vessel of clean water, and a clean person, with cedar and hyssop, sprinkles unclean persons with the ashy water, and they are accounted cleansed, and are allowed to approach in sacred things. This water of purification, and the blood of bulls and goats, already mentioned, removed ceremonial defilement—to the purifying of the flesh. Now the Messiah, who was typified by all these purgation sacrifices, offered himself a burnt sacrifice, without the gate: he was, like these, without spot or blemish; he offered himself voluntarily through the eternal Spirit as a consuming fire; how much more reasonable is it to believe, that his precious blood should purge your souls and consciences from dead works, and qualify you for serv-

ing God in newness of life? Your conscience testifies against you, that you have sinned and that the wages of sin is death: and Isaiah testifies liii. that whilst we all have turned aside, yet the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all, and by his stripes we are healed. These works are called dead, because all works springing from an unholy heart are devoid of spirituality, and can only merit condemnation and death. Judge ye then which is most reasonable, purification from ceremonial defilement, by such means: or purification of conscience and sanctification from the guilt and pollution of sin and escape from the death which is the wages of sin, by the blood of God's own dear Son, who suffered the just for the unjust that he might bring us to God.

V. 15. This verse shows the dependence of the Old Testament—or dispensation, upon the sacrifice provided in the New, for its vital efficiency; and thereby evinces the superiority of the latter. “And for this cause he is the Mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.” There is here a good deal of complexity. Let us note,

1. The connecting word, *And*; It is used in its ordinary sense of *additional* to what precedes; which is, the life securing energy of the sacrifice offered by Messiah. Not only does it purge your conscience and qualify you who have access to it; but *additional* to this, is its bearing upon the sins and transgressions of all past generations: redemption from them depends upon it. As he says in xi. 40—“they without us, should not be made perfect.”

2. The words translated, *for this cause*, are a settled and undisputed formula, pointing out the *final cause*—that is, the grand end and object in view. Here its antecedent, which is the life-giving energy of the sacrifice which Christ through

the Eternal Spirit offered up, points out and defines the grand purpose and glorious end for and on account of which he was and is constituted Mediator of the New Dispensation.

3. All sacrifices of living animals, from Eden to Calvary, were typical and promissory. They could not, in the estimation of common sense, remove the legal guilt and moral turpitude of sin: mankind always, where a knowledge of the true religion was not entirely lost, beheld in the bleeding and burning victim, an emblem of the bruised head of the woman's Seed, and a promise, that in the fulness of time he should come and complete the proto-euangelion; by lifting the bond, which he had given in eternity, and sealing the covenant in his own blood. This is the reason why he became (in eternity) the Mediator, and in due time revealed and displayed the evidence of the fact. For the whole doctrine of Mediation, and the shade of difference between a testament and a simple covenant, turn back to chap. viii. 6.

4. Observe why our translators have wisely put down here the word Testament;—New Testament and not Covenant. They have their eye upon the Hebrew word, *Berith*, and its more extended meaning than the Greek here: and they thus limit and connect it with death, giving the sense of a *will* or *testament*, which becomes of force after the testator's death.

5. He is Mediator, in order that by the actuality of death—*death being*; not promised to be; but, most literally,—*death being*—being actualized, so to speak—and that, by his own voluntary offering up of his infinitely precious life, the Covenant of eternity, which guaranteed eternal redemption, might become a Testament; and the myriads of lives for which he paid the redemption price—the lutron—might come in and (“as many as were ordained to eternal



life believed." Acts xiii. 48) claim their right of inheritance under the WILL. But of these we must note,

6. Two classes. They are both included under the common term, *the called*—"they which are called." The (a) first class are those who were called according to his purpose, prior to the death of the Testator. In the high and true sense, there is but "one Mediator between God and man." The salvation of all who were called before Messiah's death, was secured by the one sacrifice which he offered then and there. How could they be saved by the payment of a price—a *lutron*—which was in fact not paid for thousands of years after these *called* ones had gone to glory? The answer is easy. The price paid by the great Surety of this better testament, the Apostle tells us, was "for the redemption of the transgressions which were under the first testament." The *Lutron* was paid for the *Apolutrosin*: the *price* of redemption, for the *release* of those who had transgressed thousands of years before the actual payment of the price. But yet another phase and which includes the other (b) class also. The redemption is not half accomplished, if the price is all paid, but the redeemed, the *called*, are left in bondage. To complete the work, they must be set free from all the bondage consequences of sin and made partakers of eternal life. And this the Apostle states, and its importance deserves a distinct general note.

7. The called receive the promise of eternal inheritance—the *promise*—surely not the objective, verbal pledge that the inheritance shall at a future day be given. This they had before—it was written in the will. But the *promise*, subjectively—the thing promised is now placed in their actual possession: for the Testator is dead and the *called* come in as inheritors absolute. The blessings objectively presented in the distance, are now brought nigh and subjectively communicated to the mind and heart. They are

now alive in Christ—free in fact and in law—*redeemed*. For though dead for all legal purposes of the Testament, the Testator ever liveth, and is the acting Executor of his own Will. Let us add,

8. The inference, The children of God need indulge in no distrustful apprehensions about the distribution of the inheritance. In such hands it is safe; and ye are safe; if indeed “ye are sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption—the *Apolutrosin*—of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.” Eph. i. 14.

V.v. 16–22. “For where a testament is,” etc.

This discussion goes to prove and support the main position of v. 15, viz., that the death of Messiah our High Priest was indispensable to complete the redemption, even of the Old Testament believers, and to make the promised inheritance under the Will an actual possession. The particle *for* intimates this. For, where a testament or will is anything more than an escrow—a paper laid away, as possible to become useful at a future day,—when it comes to life, it is by the death of the testator. The testament expresses the Will of the maker, as to the disposition of his property after his decease: such a disposition before death as actually confers his property, is not a Will and testament, but simply a gift or donation. The Will is made indeed—the instrument of writing is drawn up before death: But it may be changed, abrogated, annulled and another take its place, so long as the maker lives. In order to give it force and make it binding; evidence must be presented of the testator’s death. In accommodation to these common ideas, the old dispensation provided a bloody sacrifice for its confirmation. “For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament (or Will) is of force after men [the

makers] are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all whilst the testator liveth. Whereupon, neither the first testament was dedicated without blood"—Here are virtually two negatives—"Neither—without blood" is equivalent to an affirmative—the first was inaugurated, instituted, brought into practical existence with blood. "For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves, and of goats, with water and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people." Some difficulty meets us here. (1.) How could Moses speak to three millions of people? And how could he sprinkle them all with the blood and the water of purification? Both these are obviated by the simple fact, that the elders represented the people; just as we say "the United States in Congress assembled." (2.) What law is meant? Was it the whole Levitical law? Surely not: for only a small part of it was then written. It was the law uttered from Sinai and written on stone, with probably part of chaps. xxi. to xxiv. of Exodus. The first formal ratification of the covenant was before the utterances from Sinai. Ex. xix. 8. Then after the ten words were uttered and written on stone, Moses copied them, "And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord and all the judgments; xxiv. 4; and v. 7. And he took the book of the covenant and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do and be obedient. V. 8. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people: and said, Behold the blood of the covenant," etc. But now (3.) It was the blood of oxen that Moses took in basins—v. 5, and not of calves. This difficulty vanishes, when we consider that the word translated *oxen*, is more general, and means *cattle* inclusive of all the bovine genus. (4.) Moses makes no mention of goats; how then can the Apostle say he took the blood of calves

and of goats? This is obviated by the fact, that Moses mentions two classes of sacrifices offered—"he sent young men of the children of Israel which offered burnt-offerings, and sacrificed peace-offerings of oxen [cattle] unto the Lord." But of what animals the burnt-offerings were is not stated. But we know that kids and goats were often sacrificed. Lev. iii. 12—"if his offering be a goat." (5.) Moses makes no mention here of water, or of scarlet wool, or of hyssop. These constitute the brush or instrument of sprinkling, and the omission is surely no contradiction to Paul's insertion: and especially, as they are mentioned in another part of Moses' narrative. When small portions of blood are sprinkled, the finger only of the priest is used. Lev. xvi. 14. But in larger operations a brush was used: as in cleansing a house of leprosy, running water is used, and cedar wood, and hyssop, and scarlet. Lev. xiv. 52, 53. To this reference is made in 1 John v. 6. "This is he that came by water and blood"—and when his side was pierced "there came out water and blood." The sprinkling of Moses typified the water and blood of the true sacrifice, and the death of his victim sealed that first covenant and made it typically a testament. The same ceremonies were gone through in the dedication of the tabernacle and all its furniture and all its implements of service. "Moreover, he sprinkled likewise with blood, both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood: and without shedding of blood is no remission."

The consecration by blood holds up conspicuously, the necessity of satisfaction to divine justice by an adequate sacrifice. It is the offering that sanctifies the altar and tabernacle: on the sacrifice depends the entire value of all the material fabric: and nearly everything connected with the service felt, as it were, the pre-eminent importance of the

sacrifice. Blood, in which is the life, must be poured out. The penalty of the law is death—the loss of life is indispensable to meet the claims of justice: and thus, is strongly enforced the great doctrine of satisfaction; without which there can be no remission or forgiveness of sin. And thus again are we brought squarely up to the reason, why Messiah must be made perfect through sufferings; and we learn, how God can be just and yet the Justifier of every one that believeth in the great sacrifice: who, because he humbled himself even unto death, is exalted, a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

V. 23 is an inference from the preceding. “Therefore there is a necessity, that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.” A necessity may be absolute; as the beings and perfections of God: or it may be conditioned, as that of holiness in order to happiness; or the necessity of the effusion of blood as the condition of our forgiveness. That our sins be pardoned is necessary, only on the supposition that we are to be saved. There is a necessity, in order that the Church—the called—should *know* the way of purification and pardon, that the patterns of heavenly things be cleansed with such sacrifices as these; but especially the things themselves;—that is the Great High Priest, of whose office, obedience, atonement there are patterns, with better sacrifices. As the model, type or plan of a building is to the building itself, so are the ceremonial sacrifices to the true and the real. All necessity in worship springs from the divine appointment. Whatever God commands must be complied with—it is necessary; and the ends of worship can be secured in no other way.

This is further supported in

V. 24. “For Christ is not entered into the holy places

made with hands, the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:" He could not so enter, as we have seen, on viii. 4, because none but those of Aaron's line could minister in the tabernacle; and only one day in the year, could even he enter into the typical heaven, the most holy place, which was the antitype of the true Holy of holies. But He has entered into heaven itself:—the presence chamber of the Great King, there, and now, and forever, to appear as our Advocate with the Father, to plead our cause for us, and show reason why our sins should be, not in figure or symbol, but in deed, in reality and truth, blotted out for ever.

There is here manifest allusion to the customs of human tribunals, wherein legal advocates appear and plead the cause of their clients: and this is still more directly set forth by the Priest of Aaron's line, when he enters with blood; not to offer, as we have seen, the sacrifice; but with the blood-evidence, that the life has already been offered up; the victim has been slain. The barrister does not go into court, to make his client pure, righteous, just; nor even to *procure* the evidence; but to *present* the evidence of his just and upright conduct; and thereby secure his acquittal. The Levitical Priest does not go into the most holy place to offer the sacrifice that takes away sin; but to prove the fact of its having been offered, and by this proof to obtain remission. So our High Priest has not gone to Heaven, then and there to offer himself a sacrifice for us; but then and there, to *present the evidence* of his having already offered on Calvary, the true and only sacrifice for sin.

V. 25. Prosecuting the contrast and comparison begun in v. 11, the Apostle proceeds to show that Messiah did not, like Aaron's Priests enter in order, "that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy



place every year with blood of others:” And he proceeds with the reason, which is very obvious,—

V. 26. “Because then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world:” There is an ellipsis after Nor:—nor did he enter in order that he might offer himself often—as the High Priest went in three times on the great day of atonement; and so every year: this would involve the inadmissible doctrine of his frequent sacrifice. In contradiction of this, he proceeds to sustain its opposite, and to prove the absolute oneness of Christ’s sacrifice. This occupies the remaining part of the contrast introduced at v. 11; and runs on to x. 18.

“But now once, in the end of the world, hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” And here we have 1. The one appearance of Christ. 2. The time or period of it. 3. The object. 4. The way of its accomplishment.

1. Once hath he appeared. We must subdivide. (1.) It is the passive perfect.—hath he been manifested. Or it may be considered in the middle voice, then it would read, hath he manifested himself. The former is preferable—hath he been manifested. Socinians hold this to be the same as in v. 24, *now to appear*; viz., his presence before God in heaven. Thus they expect to shut off the doctrine of satisfaction to the penal requirements of law by his death. But this is an equivocation, based on a false assumption. For (*a.*) the word is different. On v. 24, the word, as we have seen, implies a presence to do and act for another: But here the same word occurs as in 1 Tim. iii. 16 “God *was manifest* in the flesh”—and in John it is used nine times in the sense of an open display, xxi. 1. Jesus *showed* himself again—and on this wise *showed* he—v. 14, this is now the third time that Jesus showed himself. So John i. 31.—“but that he should be *made manifest* to Israel”—and 1 John iii. 8—“the Son of God *was manifested.*”—The

true sense, when it is applied to Christ, is to describe his incarnation—So here—was manifested in the flesh. But (b.) the Socinian interpretation is contradicted by what immediately follows, as we shall see. (2.) *Once* is in contrast with the annual manifestations of the high priest at the altar. He appeared in all the pomp of his gorgeous apparel year by year continually: but Messiah in humble garments took station at his altar once and once only.

2. The time—in the end of the world. This phrase, as we translate it, occurs five times in Matt. xiii. 39, 40, 49—xxiv. 3.—xxviii. 20. The meaning is uniform: the conclusion or termination of things. For if we take *world* to mean age or dispensation, and hold this to be the last age, the result is the same. It is the end of time. But the word is plural in our text—the end of the ages or dispensations. The expression foundation of the *world* is quite different, meaning the organized system of material things. Here world is an age—a long time; and completion of the ages may, and most probably does mean the confining or point of junction of the two ages or dispensations.

3. The object of his one manifestation—the chief work which he came to finish up—to put away sin—the annulling or abrogation of sin. On this (1.) Sin is any want of conformity unto or transgression of the law. In other words, sins are divisible into those of omission and those of commission. Of the ten words of Sinai, nine are regulations—prohibitions: yet all involve positive duties; for, obviously, where a sin is forbidden, the opposite duty is enjoined, and *vice versa*. (2.) Sin must be viewed in a legal aspect and in a moral aspect. That is its guilt; this its pollution. The guilt of sin is its liability to punishment. The wages, (that which is justly due to it—to the person who has sinned) of sin is death. (3.) The putting away—the abrogation of sin, must, therefore, involve both its aspects—The removal

of guilt can be effected only by enduring the punishment justly due—the wages must be paid and received. “Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished.” Prov. xi. 21. The putting away of pollution is equally indispensable; and is secured by the former, on which it depends, and from which it springs. The two ideas, the removal of guilt and the presence of unrestrained pollution in the same person, cannot be conceived. If his sin is taken away, as to its condemning power, it follows by an eternal necessity, that his pollution as its consequence must be removed. Pardon, justification and sanctification—this triunity of graces is an everlasting Unity.

4. The way of his accomplishing this grand mission, is “by the sacrifice of himself.” On v. 14, we saw that Messiah is both priest and sacrifice—the offerer and the offering—he was appointed to this by the father—“it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed,” etc. With a hundred such testimonies staring him in the face, it is a most amazing effrontery for a man to stand up and affirm, that nothing more is meant but simply, that Christ offers his services as an intercessor. His being made sin for us; his drinking the bitter cup of divine wrath; his soul’s being exceeding sorrowful even unto death; his living anguish and his dying agony; his bearing our sins in his own body on the tree; his “Father, forgive them,” and “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me,” all this is nothing to proud man, boasting his morality, and determined to be indebted to no crucified Jew for his soul’s salvation! These men, despite all this, deny that Jesus, “his own self bare our sins,”—by enduring their punishment,—“in his own body on the tree!”

Nevertheless, in farther illustration and proof of the infinite perfection and glory of the one only great and efficient

sacrifice for sin, the Apostle institutes a comparison between it and the one death to which, because of sin, man is appointed by the righteous edict of high heaven ;

V.v. 27, 28. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin unto salvation."

Keeping in mind the main point—the oneness of the things compared, let us note

1. The appointment. It implies a decree of a court of record. It is written and laid away for safe-keeping and execution in due time.

2. This recorded decision regards mankind in general, and is legal and judicial; and the finale of an investigation in which the law under which men are placed, and their actions in view of it, are brought together, and the agreement or difference duly noticed.

3. The result is death and judgment. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." As it is appointed unto men in general, I see no reason why we should not consider the reference here to the sentence recorded in Gen. iii. 17-20—"and unto dust shalt thou return." This death is to be once endured and no more. But the main thing in the threatening—"thou shalt surely die," may not be excluded: that is the death of the soul. Moral death—the alienation of the soul from communion with God—the loss of the joy and peace and all the holy activities in which its life consisted, passed away once; and, except by the regenerating process of the Holy Spirit restored, it is gone forever. I cannot agree with those, who think judgment here, is not the general judgment of the great day; but limit it to the condemnatory sentence on the finally impenitent; but not

including the judgment passed on the righteous. It is true, the original word does often, but not necessarily, signify a sentence against—a sentence of condemnation: but often does refer to the final process—“day of judgment” “in danger of the judgment.” Moreover, “but after this” seems to imply that death precedes the judgment. If so, there is an execution of the sentence before it is pronounced. I therefore remark,

4. That, whilst the general sentence stands recorded against the whole race, and there is a partial execution of it in the spiritual death of the soul and the animal death of the body, yet there remaineth after both a general and formal edict to be uttered upon the race after the resurrection, and therefore very long after the actual application of the general sentence and the death to the individuals. Thus, whilst natural death puts an end to the period of gospel probation, and leaves nothing to the impenitent “but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation”—x. 27, it has the effect of fixing unchangeably the condition of the soul, as absolute as the looked for judgment and fiery indignation. “There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.”

“There are no acts of pardon past  
In the cold grave to which we haste;  
But darkness, death and long despair  
Reign in eternal silence there.”

Turn we now to the other side of this comparison. And  
1. Mark the terms of resemblance—*So*—or *So also*. Our translation omits the conjunction usually rendered *And*, but frequently *also* and *even*.

As it is appointed that men shall die *once*, *even so* the Messiah was *once* offered.

2. The thing that was *once* done. *He was offered.* We have already noticed the change from the active to the passive signification, and the reason; he was both the offerer and the offering—the Priest and the sacrifice.

3. The purpose or work to be accomplished by this once offering—to bear the sins of many. And here we must particularize. (a.) The term—it means to lift up and take away. So Peter 1, ii. 24, “he his own self bare our sins in his own body”—And John Baptist expresses the same idea by a different word—“Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.”—(b.) So the sin-offerings—as of the goat on the great day of atonement—are said to bear the sins of the offerers—that is to die in their place. So the scape-goat—“And Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat: and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat—and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited.” Lev. xvi. 21, 22. Nothing can be more expressive than these words and acts, of the idea of legal transfer and entire removal, from the persons, of all liability to punishment on account of their sins. (c.) The limitation—“the sins of many.” There is a contrast between the universality of appointment of men to death, and the undefined, but restricted mass, whose sins he bore away. “The LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all”—“surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows”—“he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.” Isa. liii. 4, 6, 12. If all this does not express the idea of legal substitution, and the consequent vicarious nature of Christ’s sufferings, human language may and must despair of its ability to express such an idea, and to



awaken in the souls of men the conviction, that He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. This alone can justify God the Father in putting the bitter cup into his hands and holding it to his lips until complete exhaustion: this only makes it consistent with the divine perfections, in His making the Captain of our salvation perfect through sufferings. See on chap. ii. 10.

4. If there is to be a judgment after death, there must be a Judge. "He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people. Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice. And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself." Ps. l. 4-6.

The self-same Mediator who offered up the sacrifice which alone takes away sin, is to preside in the grand assize. "The Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father which hath sent him." John v. 22, 23.

5. This judgment is to take place on the earth—"But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men." 2 Pet. iii. 7. "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened—and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books"—Rev. xx. 12.—"We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." Rom. xiv. 10.

6. There must be a second advent of this righteous Judge. "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Acts i. 11. "For the Lord himself shall

descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God :” 1 Thess. iv. 16.

7. We have an implied contrast between the first and the second. The first was his manifestation in the flesh—his incarnation. This is past and gone forever : the second advent is future, and stands most intimately connected with the final judgment. Let us note some items in detail. (1.) His second coming is to be a real locomotion in space. The humanity of our Saviour is not omnipresent. It exists somewhere in space. The angels’ testimony is explicit—“ shall so come—in like manner—according as ye have seen him go.” This regards the actuality of his motion from one portion of space to another. It cannot be understood as including the accompaniments of the second and limiting them. (2.) These accompaniments are either physical merely ; or moral, legal, spiritual. To the former class belongs the one just named—a locomotion.

(*b.*) Another is mentioned by the apostle in 1 Thess. iv. 16 —“ a shout, with the voice of the Archangel ;” viz., the Lord himself. (*c.*) A third is mentioned here and in 1 Cor. xv. 52, with the sound of a trumpet, as if to wake the long slumbers of the tomb. (*d.*) His retinue may be arranged with either class. This consists of angelic hosts innumerable ; and the souls of his redeemed. “ Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints ; to execute judgment upon all ”—Jude 13, 14—“ at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.” 1 Thess. iii. 13.—“ When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels ”—2 Thess. 1-7. “ For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels ”—Matt. xvi. 27. “ So shall it be at the end of the world : the angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just ”—Matt. xiii. 49. What a glorious retinue this ? And how different from the first personal Advent. (*e.*)—“ in

flaming fire" 2 Thess. i. 8. "A fiery steam issued and came forth from before him: thousand-thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set and the books were opened." Dan. vii. 10.—"they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory." Matt. xxiv. 30.

The moral, legal and spiritual accompaniments, or circumstances of the second Advent, must be quoted. (1.) Without sin: implying that his first manifestation was with sin. This, the very purpose of his mission assumes. He came to put away sin, *from us*, by lifting the burden from us and bearing it himself: *from himself*, by enduring the wages of sin—death. (2.) In bold contrast with this is his second Advent, when neither upon his called and sanctified ones, nor upon himself there lies any sin. For all was put away and forever abolished in the days of his flesh, when he exclaimed, It is finished.

(3.) He shall appear—literally he shall be seen. But, "Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him and they also that pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." Rev. i. 7. Can this be a blessing—a beatific vision? It is therefore not the vision absolute, that is here set forth undoubtedly as a blessing of the second Advent. But it is the vision attended by the two blessed accompaniments or circumstances; viz., *without sin*; and *unto salvation*. Now, our Lord, like the High Priest within the veil, is, not visible; but by the eye of faith that pierces within the curtain: but he will come forth, like the Aaronic priest and make himself manifest in the higher and more glorious sense. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." 1 John iii. 2.

(4.) To whom shall he appear? By whom shall he be seen with comfort, satisfaction and joy? To those who look for him. Those who no longer contemplate him as still burdened with the awful load of their sins, that crushed him down in Gethsemane and nailed him to the accursed tree. But hearing, in their inmost soul, his dying testimony, *It is finished*—the cup of bitterness is exhausted—the agony is over—the ransom price is fully paid; they behold him as “the most beautiful of ten thousand, yea He is altogether lovely.”

One more item requires attention—the final cause or purpose of this second Advent: viz., *unto salvation*. The completed idea of salvation includes three things: 1. Redemption from the curse of the law: this is by the payment of the price—endurance of the penalty due: 2. Investiture in a title to eternal life; the fulfilment of the precepts of law—righteousness to which and to which only life eternal is promised: 3. Regeneration and sanctification—restoration to actual life; and holy and everlasting communion with God. The first two belonged to the office duties of the first Advent. The third was then and is now partly accomplished: but much remains to be accomplished. The perfecting of holy life in even those who have been savingly called, is not yet filled up. Immense multitudes—inconceivable numbers are yet to be called, pardoned, justified, regenerated, sanctified, and their souls fitted for heavenly society. But even when the last of these is thus fitted, much remains to be done. It was not the souls, not the bodies, but the persons of those given to him by the Father in the covenant of grace, that he pledged to bring to eternal glory and there to secure them for ever. Hence the Mediator's work includes all before mentioned; but, moreover, resurrection of the body, union with the souls, and the judgment of them to life eternal. Now this second,

the glorious Advent has this completion for its object; and until it is all finished the salvation is not perfected. The work is progressing under the administration of the King, to whom all power is given, and he will complete it in his own good time and way.

Practical remarks. (1.) Here is one of the ends of his delay and his present invisibility. "We walk by faith and not by sight:" but, like other graces, faith can grow only by its own activity. If our enemies taunt us, as they did Noah of old, saying, Where is the promise of his coming? we respond, the kingdom of heaven cometh not by observation. Our faith annihilates time and space, when it penetrates to that within the veil. We know that our Redeemer, though once dead, liveth, and by his own power regulates the affairs of the universe. He is not slack, concerning his promised Advent, as unbelieving men count slackness.

(2.) Let not your ignorance of the time lead to doubt as to the event itself. He will come. If revivals of religion seem slow, and do not flow upon the church as our feelings call for them, it is to teach us patience and to bring forth our efforts in the use of appointed means.

(3.) Let not unbelief take comfort from the delay: He will come, sooner than will be for the comfort of those who profess to doubt the fact in the distance. Their unbelief will not make this promise—fearful to its deniers, but felicitous and consolatory to the children of the covenant—of no effect. Remember the folly of those who ridiculed Noah, and laughed at the promised terrors of a deluge of water. For "the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same Word of God are kept in store, reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." 2 Pet. iii. 7. For now,

(4.) This concealment of the time of his coming, is a necessary element for the security of its own end—that is, to

try the grace of our faith ; to enhance to us the magnitude of its blessing by its suddenness and unexpectedness ; and to make, by these same, its terrors more terrific to all those who abuse His long-suffering in giving to them time, and warning, and space for repentance.

(5.) For ; whatever be our uncertainty as to the *time* ; the *Advent* and the *Judgment* are inseparably connected. The reason is plain : His covenant guarantee for the salvation of his Church involves their security, in right and law, to everlasting life ; and therefore, there must be a decision according to law in their behalf—an infallible Judge must pronounce upon them a sentence infallibly true and irrevocable. No appeal must be possible ever again to put his redeemed in jeopardy. This sentence, from this Judge, is an award for eternity ; and “ we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” “ And these shall go away into everlasting punishment ; but the righteous into eternal life.”



## CHAPTER X.

VERSES 1-4. "For the law, having, etc." These verses introduce an argument in support of the preceding, which runs on to the eighteenth inclusive. The first branch demonstrates the inefficiency of the old dispensation to accomplish the grand end of perfecting the saints. The proposition asserting this is in v. 1, "For the law, having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never, with those sacrifices which they offered year by year, make the comers thereunto perfect."

Note the precise point asserted, the law never can make the worshippers perfect—it lacks, and always did lack, ability to complete the work of purification. (1.) For the idea of this perfection, see on chap. ii. 10. The perfected sacrifice of the Captain of salvation, secures a corresponding perfection in his followers. (2.) The law here is the entire system of Levitical institutions, but especially the priestly services. (3.) The reason is, it had but a shadow of good things about to be; but nothing more than a rude outline: not such an accurate image as practical efficiency requires. This same idea we have seen expressed in the illustration from the office of a pedagogue—the law was our school-master. (4.) The Levitical offerings—even the most important of them, were mere dumb brutes; and, (5.) They were presented yearly—year by year in regular succession—continually. These items show plainly the inadequacy of that service to secure the inward, spiritual consecration of the worshippers—the comers thereunto.

V. 2. "For then would they not have ceased to be offered?" On the hypothesis, that those sacrifices were efficient to take away sin—in its guilt and pollution, is it not manifest they must cease? If you have made real atonement, by an efficient sacrifice that blots out your sin from the book and from the conscience, wherein is the reasonableness of repeating and repeating the same sacrifice—"because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those *sacrifices there is* a remembrance again *made* of sin every year." The very purpose of their yearly recurrence obviously is to call up afresh and keep before the minds of the people the humbling truth of their continued sinfulness, and to constrain their attention to the necessity of the great sacrifice, of which these were rude and shadowy representations. Then he falls back upon the common sense of the matter, for further support of his reason. "For the blood of bulls and of goats is not able to take away sins." It is impossible to conceive how the slaughtering of an innocent animal and the burning of its body, could make amends for the injuries done to the divine law. Where part of the sacrifice is used for food, we can see a utility in it: but the utter destruction of God's creatures, how can it be pleasing to their Creator? "Every creature of God is good and to be used with thanksgiving;" but what a use is this? Rather, what a monstrous perversity and abuse? Take away the idea of typical use, and you make sacrifices like these, a grievous offence against the benevolent Creator of these animals. It is impossible to give a rational history and account of bloody sacrifices, on any other ground than this; viz., that God, whose creatures they are, appointed them to be used for this express purpose, to be shadows of the great and only efficient sacrifice, which, in the fulness of time, should be offered by our High Priest. This ap-

pointment was made in paradise and the institution has been observed ever since, in the same general sense. Reasonable men, in no age of the world, ever believed that the blood of dumb brutes was able to take away sins. All true believers, in every age, beheld in the blood of their offerings and the smoke of their altars, the blood of Jesus which cleanseth from all sin: and, like Abraham, rejoiced to see his day, and saw it and were glad.

V.v. 5-10. Give us a confirmation of this argument from the xl. Psalm. He introduces it as an inference—"Wherefore." For this reason it was, that our Lord, personified by the Psalmist, "when he cometh into the world, saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body thou hast prepared me. In burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God."

This is from v.v. 6, 7 and 8, and our Apostle's authority is reason enough, why we should believe the Messiah to be the speaker. We may have difficulty in expounding every thing in the psalm of Him; but not so much as we meet with if we apply the whole to David the penman. Another difficulty is the question of quotation from the Greek of the LXX. It is nearly, but not precisely their language. Owen's opinion is probably correct, "The words, therefore, in this place, were the words whereby the apostle expressed the sense and meaning of the Holy Ghost in those used in the psalmist, or that which was intended in them." He also affirms, and says he has proved, "That sundry passages have been unquestionably taken out of the New Testament, and inserted into that translation."

In v. 5 of the Psalm is an apostrophe of the Son to the Father—"Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works," etc. And then, in v. 6, he states the wonder of

wonders, that into which the angels desire to look—and which Paul describes to Timothy, “Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh,” etc. And he here tells us this was, when he cometh into the world, he saith—the Son, addressing the Father saith, “Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not; but a body hast thou prepared me.” Here we have stated, first the Father’s rejection of the sacrifices and offerings of the first covenant; and second, his furnishing to the Son a body in which to serve and to offer up the real, and true, and only efficient sacrifice. Then in the 6th v. the first is expanded and extended, “In burnt offerings and offerings for sin, thou hast had no pleasure.” Then in v. 7 the Son presents himself. “Then said I, Lo, I come to do thy will,” and refers to a record far back, wherein this is mentioned. (“In the volume of the book it is written of me.”)

An apparent inconsistency requires attention, and is explained on this general principle; that acts of required duty in worship, if performed for outward substance, yet with wrong temper and disposition, are not acceptable service at all; but become positively offensive and sinful. We have a clear instance in Isa. i. 11–15—where many of the required services, expressly ordained of God,—sacrifices, burnt offerings of rams and fed beasts, new moons and *set feasts*, we translate it—but it is *Sabbaths*, calling of assemblies—all are repudiated—“they are a trouble unto me, I am weary to hear them—it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.” The reason is manifest. Amid all these outward services, there is no heart religion—“who hath required this at your hand to tread my courts,” that is, in such a state of mind. So, in lviii. 4, etc., he rejects their fasts, although fasting is a solemn duty. Thus, in the case before us. All their sacrifices, offered in the sad mistake and supposition, that they do cleanse the heart and free the soul

from moral guilt and pollution, are null and void. They were never designed to accomplish such results, and so relied upon, become abomination in the sight of God. In none of these doth the Lord take pleasure, when thus put into a wrong position, and relied upon as meritorious and efficacious. A duty (for substance) out of place and out of time, is no longer a duty, but a sin.

2. The translation in the Psalm—"mine ears hast thou opened"—and that in our text—"a body hast thou prepared me"—though apparently incongruous, yet really coincide in sentiment. For (*a.*) the opening of the ears is a preparatory move in the direction of obedience. If a man's ears are shut, commands are excluded—he cannot hear; and, of course, cannot obey. "The Lord hath opened mine ears, and I was not rebellious"—Isa. l. 5. And a little before, in xlvi. 8, the shut ear is a figure for the disobedient heart and hand—"thine ear was not opened." And Jer. vi. 10.—"their ear is uncircumcised"—it has not been *cut* open, as the word for *opened* in the Psalm means. It is applied to cutting a covenant. See Gen. xv. 18. Ex. xxxiv. 10, 27. Jer. xi. 10. The plain force, therefore, and meaning of the expression, "mine ears hast thou opened," is this—viz., thou hast furnished me with the means and instruments of disobedience—I am thus qualified to meet the engagements of the covenant long since cut, confirmed and established. (*b.*) But this is the force and meaning of Paul's translation,—“a body hast thou prepared me.” Two things, the covenant cut before the foundation of the world—(Eph. i. 4) requires of our divine Mediator. He must obey the law actually—fulfil all righteousness: and he must endure the penalty due to the transgressions of law by his people. Now, neither of these is possible, but in consequence of his possessing our nature. Obedience in these two senses, by him as God, is inconceivable: God cannot fill

up, by practical compliance with law, all the social duties of humanity. God cannot suffer the agonies of the curse. The thought is blasphemous. Besides, if we could conceive the impossibility and suppose it a reality, of what avail could it be? It was man that neglected and refused to fulfil the law: and man's nature, pure and holy, alone could meet and fulfil it. The righteousness of an angel might meet a requisition upon angels, and secure their justification; but how could it meet the law's demand upon humanity? It was man—human nature in human persons, that earned the wages of sin, and to humanity they must be paid. But this humanity, alone and unsustained by the mighty one of Jacob, must sink and become annihilated under the curse of the law. Unite these three ideas, and you see the indispensable necessity for the incarnation. He must be man, to obey and die; He must be God to sustain humanity and carry it through the burning, fiery furnace. "A body"—a human nature complete and perfect—"hast thou prepared me."

3. Another difficulty meets us in v. 7. The parenthesis ("in the volume of the book it is written of me"). The word for volume means a little head. *Kephale* is the head; and so we use the Latin word to describe subdivisions in a book or treatise—chapters 1, 2, 3, etc. But the apostle's translation is exceedingly specific—it is the diminutive, and occurs only here in the New Testament. Our adopted Latin word volume means simply a roll: and in this form were writings made of old. See Ezra vi. 2. Jer. xxxvi. 2, 6, 23, 29. The Hebrew rolls are written from the right side to the left: and when the parchment was filled up, it was rolled up in the same way. Now the expression, *little head*, directs us to that part of the sacred roll first formed, and before it becomes large. And this can be none other than the first rolled part of the parchment volume. What



record do we there find concerning the Mediator? The inevitable response is, the first gospel promise: Gen. iii. 15—"he shall bruise thy heel." In the beginning of the roll of the book there is a record concerning me.

V. 8 of the psalm is separated from the declaration of a record: whilst the Apostle places it, somewhat abbreviated, in immediate connection with said declaration—v. 7. Upon the Father's refusal to accept the offerings as presented, the Son steps forward, as promised to the human race in the garden, and declares his readiness, being duly furnished with a body, to fulfil the whole will of God concerning the revelation of his mercy to the moral universe, by performing such obedience and offering such a sacrifice as will delight the Father, because it will evince to the intelligent creation, that God is just whilst he justifies sinners who believe in the promised Mediator and High Priest.

Verses 8, 9 and 10 contain an argument based on the quotation from Psalm xl.; but very similar to that built on the quotation from Jer. xxxi. in chapter viii. above. One covenant becomes unsatisfactory; and another is promised as preferable and abiding. So here, from the expressed dissatisfaction with the sacrifices of the old law, as being inefficient in their very nature for the removal of sin, and never having been designed for more than types of the time, and being by the offerers put out of their proper place, their removal must take place.

V. 8. "Above, when he said, Sacrifice, and offering, and burnt-offerings, and *offering* for sin, thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure *therein*, which are offered by the law." This removes the former dispensation;

V. 9. "Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second." The voluntary offering of the Great High Priest comes in

for the accomplishment of all, in which the other failed. And

V. 10 contains the conclusion, that the true church—God's chosen and called—are completed in their sanctification and eternal safety by that one offering. "By the which will—(decree, thing decreed—thelemati)—we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once."

Again, in closing this as a distinct argument, let us note its bearing on the grand end of the Epistle, as a dehortation from apostasy. One sacrifice and none but one could take away sin; take heed therefore, brethren, how you allow yourselves to think lightly of this one offering; and place the shadow above the substance.

Also, let us keep in mind the origin and the end of both dispensations, and all the diversified instrumentalities in their conduct. The *origin* is the *sovereign will* of the great God. This sovereign decree has no antecedent: no reason outside and beyond himself, does God ever give why he planned and determined on the glorious scheme of redemption. "Even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." The *end* as to Himself—his own glory in the revelation of the new attribute of *mercy*—that is, love going forth to sinners. The *end*, as to the church, we are sanctified—and this as to the aggregate mass, that he might present it to himself a glorious church without spot or wrinkle. As to the individuals of which it is composed. Each member of this one body, is not only consecrated to his service by the divine decree: which indeed is what secures the sanctification of the individual in the highest and holiest sense—that is, makes certain his deliverance from the punishment of sin, and all liability of it forever; from the death spiritual, in other words, restoration to spiritual life by the

renewing of the Holy Ghost; and his everlasting growth in grace onward forever.

And all this argument and its consequences, it will be seen, belong to the Priestly office. And to its further application our Apostle proceeds;

In verses 11-18. "And every priest," etc.

We have another comparison and contrast between the Priests of the old law on the one hand, and Him of the New, on the other. This too, is partly a recalling of the matters already passed over. The 11th verse contains the former. "And every priest standeth daily ministering, and offering often times the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins."

Then v. 12 contrasts the other side, "But this man after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God." The points of contrast we have had before—(1.) The *frequent* offerings, with the *one*. (2.) The *ineffectual*, with the *efficient*. (3.) The *standing*, with the *taking his seat*: that indicating that work is yet to be done; this that it is finished and complete. (4.) *Daily*, with *forever*. But the principal object of this repetition is to mark the results—the necessary consequents: to his enemies on the one hand; and to his friends on the other. V.v. 13, 14. "From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool: For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified."

His exaltation we have had, on i. 13—and the promise of his enemies being made his footstool. Here this as a result of the one offering; and his expectancy of it is the point to be brought out. If his sacrifice was completed, when he bowed his head and said—"it is finished," it was not possible he should be holden of death, the last enemy; but rise and reign he must. The promise in the ex. Psalm, confirmed by an oath stands sure, and, as in the parable, Matt.

xxi. 33-42, the vengeance belongs to the Father, "He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen." There can be no doubt, as to the utter destruction of the Jewish nation, being here specially referred to. Their entire social and ecclesiastical fabric was hurled to the ground, and most fearful calamities followed them. But we may not limit this vengeance to any one nation or people. All who rise up against the Lord and his Messiah must come under his avenging rod. To be made a footstool implies deep social degradation; but individual destruction is included. All his enemies, who are also enemies of his redeemed church, are doomed.

The particular attitude of Christ may be noticed—henceforth *expecting*. Expectation implies a coming good—some promise, expressed or inferred as about to take place: a thing looked for with longing desire. The Lord awaits the destruction and utter subjection of his enemies, with confidence that it will come; and that it will be a benefit to the cause of righteousness and truth. This is made certain by the very character of the divine government. God is just, in his own nature; and therefore sin must be punished. The counterpart of this results from the one offering; that being full and perfect, must, in the very nature of the case, secure a corresponding escape from the degradation of the footstool; and the full and lasting possession of the opposite blessings.

The position, that, after he had offered the one sacrifice for sins, Christ sat down in the throne, is destruction to the Socinian doctrine, that Christ did not offer his sacrifice, until he went to heaven. It is equally adverse to the Papal doctrine of the mass, which teaches that Christ is really and truly sacrificed every time the Priest consecrates and drinks the wine himself and distributes the bread to the people.

Rome thus multiplies sacrifices indefinitely, and thus sets aside the one offering of the true High Priest.

What a source of comfort to know, that our mighty Redeemer accounts our enemies his also; and will enable us to secure victory over them.

Let us stand still in faithful expectancy of his divine interposition on our behalf: but let us expect nothing but what is covered by a promise.

V.v. 15-18. "Whereof the Holy Ghost is also a witness to us; for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them: and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now, where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin."

Here we have a restatement of the substance quoted from Jeremiah in chap. viii. 8, etc.; but for a different purpose. There it is used to prove a new and superior covenant; here it is more restricted and, in a sense, more important: it is adduced in proof, that the one offering of Christ renders all others unnecessary, because it secures remission of sin; and by consequence precludes any further sacrifice: For if sin is remitted, forgiven, for ever wiped out, there is no place for further offering. And thus is brought to a close, the direct dehortation from apostasy. The precise point in which it terminates is that which magnifies the Priestly office of Messiah. The power and efficacy of all arguments from His prophetic and His Kingly offices depend on the perfection of his sacrifice. Had He failed here, all was lost: but having received at the Father's hand the bitter cup, by his agonies on our behalf, he exhausted it; and the government of the universe, and the salvation of his chosen and called church, was placed beyond all doubt and peril, when he cried, **IT IS FINISHED.**

The dehortation,—the dissuasion from apostasy being closed; the apostle proceeds forthwith, to the exhortation—the persuasion to hold fast the profession of our faith. This fills up the remainder of this most interesting and important of all letters.

An analysis of the whole for our purpose in general stands thus;

Chap. x. 19–23. A grand inference of actual, practical duties, based upon the perfection of the great sacrifice.

V.v. 24, 25. The social bearings of these duties upon the members of the spiritual body.

V.v. 26–31. Motives to active duties, from the ruinous consequences of drawing back.

V.v. 32–36. Arguments from past experience.

V.v. 37–39. Additional arguments, from the shortness of the time to the coming destruction; and the divine interposition on their behalf.

Chap. xi. contains what Doctor Mason characterizes “the biography of faith,” which is really an extended and powerful argument from the experiences of God’s redeemed from the creation to the Cross: and xii. 1 contains the grand inference.

Chap. xii. 2–4 continues this same form of argument, but with an infinitely grander feeling—the matter is the example of Jesus himself.

V.v. 5–13. An argument to submission and profiting thereby, from the relation we sustain to God as a father; which converts all our afflictions into chastisements.

V.v. 14–17 urge peace and holiness in all social relations.

V.v. 18–29. The grand contrast of the two covenants, or dispensations, enforcing the duty of universal obedience and steadfastness, by the awful displays of the divine glory.



Chap. xiii. repeats the injunction to embody love in the duties of social life everywhere. The detail in its time.

X. 19-23. The inferential particle, *therefore*, looks back to the perfected and perfect sacrifice, and its necessary consequences—the utter abolition of all sin, as to guilt and pollution. Then it directs attention to the most weighty and important obligations to perseverance in the ways of well doing.

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the living veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an High Priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith; having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful that promised.”

Remark 1. The injunctions, Let us draw near—Let us hold fast, are one in substance; and the master idea in this context: all the others are subservient thereto.

2. The word translated *boldness* we have already had. In iii. 6 we render it *confidence*, and in vi. 16, *boldly*—with boldness. It signifies that free, confidential, filial liberty of speech, which characterizes an affectionate child's supplications and requests, poured into the ears of a yearning parent. This distinguishes our approach into the way or entrance of the holy place; and because it is by the blood of Christ.

3. The way of entrance into the most holy place made with hands, was with blood of slain beasts, through the holy place and the veil; but this new way is through the heavens and the blue veil above. It is made new—newly sacrificed, as the word for *consecrated* signifies—renovated; and it is called living, as it leads to life and glory on high; it

is by the rending of his flesh, this way is laid open. The atonement opens the gates of glory.

4. "For us," who in every age believe in him. But a contrast is implied. Those of old, whose faith was dimly enlightened by the shadows of which we have the substance, had a faith proportionably feeble: whilst the clear light that shines on our new and living Way, makes travelling therein free, bold, pleasant, joyful.

5. And besides these immense advantages, having a *great* Priest over the house of God, let us draw near. We read it, *an High* Priest. But there is a change of phrase from High as usual, to Great; and I cannot think it intended to present the same precise idea. High has reference to other priests of inferior condition, and is relative; but Great, is absolute. "*Great* in his person, God and man, as the Apostle described him in Chs. i. ii. iii; *Great* in his glorious exaltation; Ch. viii. 1, 2; *great* in his power and the efficacy of his office. Ch. vii. 25; *Great* in honor, dignity and authority; the consideration whereof leads both unto the confirmation of our faith, and the ingenerating of a due reverence in our hearts toward him."

6. He is over the house of God: his official relation to his redeemed church must be ever kept in mind. He orders the entire worship: the government, the offices in the church, their duties, their rules for their own conduct and for their directing the conduct of the people—all are under the control of this Great Priest. And we may add, the Kingly and Prophetic offices are here, as it were, off-shoots of the Priesthood, and it is no easy task to draw the line between them: the very attempt to do so, reveals the fact of his Greatness, and magnifies the glory of his Priesthood, the basis and spring, as we have seen, of his whole official power.

7. With all these advantages, he exhorts us to engage

and continue in the worship of the house of God : “ Let us draw near.” And several things are involved. (a.) The temper of our soul—“ with a true heart.” Truth may regard the understanding ; and then is opposed to falsehood and error. Now God requires doctrinal truth. If a man reject fundamental truth he cannot be a true and accepted worshipper. *Ex. gr.*, one who denies the Trinity denies and repudiates salvation. He who rejects the atonement—denying that Christ bare our sins—suffered the penal evil—the death due to us, is off the foundation.

On the other hand, a man may perceive these and similar important doctrines and admit their truth—but hold it in unrighteousness, and so cannot draw near. For truth may regard the affections, and is equivalent to sincerity—a right state of heart—with the heart man believeth. Neither of these alone, can consist with the duty of drawing near unto God. Both truth and sincerity must dwell in the soul. (b.) Full assurance of faith—the manner of approach. Without faith it is impossible to please God. A true believer only can find acceptance. He that believeth not God hath made him a liar. Unbelief consists in rejecting God’s testimony concerning salvation through Christ ; and, therefore, persevered in, ensures eternal ruin. On the other hand, that faith that works by love, sets to its seal that God is true. (c.) Faith, whilst in nature the same in all, and at all times the same, yet differs in degree in different persons ; and in the same person at different times. The original here used occurs in Rom. iv. 21 and xiv. 5, and is rendered in both *fully persuaded*. It is not of small importance here to observe, that this full assurance is not a persuasion—a fixed and firm confidence that the soul is born again, and has certainly an interest in the great salvation. This makes my experiences the basis and foundation of my hope. This is faith, not in God, but in the frame and feeling of my

own spirit: and will be characterized by instability, fluctuation, uncertainty. But this "full assurance" is persuasion, a firm and immovable confidence in the truth, reality and perfection of the work, and especially the crowning work of our Great Priest. This gives him the honor; and this assurance gives stability—it is the soul's anchor. But of this more hereafter.

8. We have another pair of qualifications—*an heart sprinkled from an evil conscience*: and *our bodies washed with pure water*. Here (a) note, The conscience may be evil in two ways—it is evil and hostile to us, when it does its duty in condemning our conduct and causing uneasiness, distress and apprehension of punishment—So in v. 2, above. Or conscience may be blinded, obtuse and unobservant of our secret or heart sins. They lie hid and give us no uneasiness. This is the evil conscience in the present case: and for removing such, the legal provision was by sacrifice; to which reference is had in the expression *sprinkled*—the mode of applying the blood of sacrifice. Without this the Israelite is excluded from the congregation. The spiritual meaning of the type is the blood of atonement. (b.) *Our bodies washed*—Very numerous were the Jewish washings: in them all the one idea of purification prevails. The water, everywhere thus used, symbolized the Holy Spirit, the purifier. Outward baptism may be alluded to; but 1 Peter iii. 21 seems to exclude it, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." The good conscience results from the Spirit's washing the evil away. Sanctification is made sure by the great sacrifice.

V. 23. "Let us hold fast" etc.

This is the precise contrary of the grand dehortation.

It furnishes five points for consideration. 1. The characters addressed—believers, professed followers of Christ. 2. It is the duty of believers to make a profession of their faith. 3. Believers may be under great temptations to waver and renounce their faith. 4. The profession of the faith is worth holding fast. 5. A farther reason enforcing this duty—for he is faithful that promised.

1. The reception of the gospel is a duty—all who hear are bound to believe. It always comes to us in the mandatory form. Believe, repent, turn ye, come—etc., all commandments emanating from kingly authority. No man can pass them by and continue sinless.

2. It is our privilege and duty to make profession of our faith. We have had this—see on iii. 1 and iv. 14, and in this last the injunction, *hold fast*.

3. Whilst compassed with infirmity, we shall be in danger of backsliding. “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” Whilst our firmness and steadfastness result from the immutability of the covenant of grace; yet our vigilance and diligence are necessary means to that end.

4. The value of a profession is realized in its social bearing. A man may be saved without publicly professing Christ; but his own spiritual life will always be a sickly wavering, flickering flame—ever apparently on the eve of extinction: and his social religious life a nonentity. His neglect and refusal to acknowledge Christ publicly, will write him down among the Lukewarm. Them that honor me I will honor; and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. There is no neutrality in morals; “he that is not with me is against me.” Of this social value, more anon.

5. The faithfulness of a covenant-keeping God, who has confirmed his promise with an oath, lays a sure foundation

for the confidence of his believing people. Other foundation can no man lay, that will sustain its superstructure.

V.v. 24, 25 bring up the social bearings of this public holding fast our profession. "And let us consider one another, to provoke unto love, and to good works. Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see the day is approaching." Note,

1. The force of the expression *consider*. Let us exercise our understandings—let us *mind* one another—let us *study*. It enjoins close attention, as contradistinguished from mere passing, loose, roving thoughts. Christians are not to treat each other as they do bricks and stones and lamp-posts, or even unknown men and women in the streets.

2. This implies a felt interest in the matters to be considered. Though many, they are all one in Christ Jesus. Now, unless this unity is felt; unless we perceive our common relation to our common Lord, the disposition to study each other's persons and interests cannot embody itself in action.

3. Christianity is essentially social; therefore Christians may not, and without greatly sinning cannot, stand aloof from each other. "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." Phil. ii. 4. But this looks like encouraging a meddling disposition; the preceding verse however forestalls this, by inculcating humility, and rebuking strife and vainglory. Let no man be so absorbed in his own pursuits, for personal aggrandizement and worldly gains, as to trample on or utterly disregard the interests of his neighbor. This is more fully disclosed by the after thought.

4. The purpose for which we are to study each other's personal character and condition: to provoke, in two regards. But our English word provoke, is used almost



exclusively in an ill sense—as implying the excitation of bad feeling, tending to retaliatory action. The original here is more general, and specifies only the stirring, the rousing and exciting to action, leaving out the particular character of the excitation to be determined by the connection, and so it is here—to love and the consequence of its action,—good works. “If every Christian leave every other Christian to stand alone, they will soon all fall together.” (Mason.) Such is not the nature of heavenly “Charity.—Emphatically the principle of social goodness. If you want to cool a man effectually—to divest him of what chiefly makes a man of him—set him alone.” Now this arousing up of the bond of perfectness, can be effected only by throwing into the chain of friendship the very stream of the heavenly fire itself. “Love and love only is the loan for love.” In the absence of it, solitary and dead lie the individuals of a community—I should rather say of an inert mass. But where love is, life must be; and where life is, activity cannot be absent. Good works are an indispensable result of that charity, whose essential activities constitute so large an amount of practical religion.

5. One important movement of this aroused charity is prophylactic; it guards against a great and very dangerous evil—neglect of public worship, “not forsaking the public assemblage.” Such forsaking is the first fearful step in the road to apostasy. “Abolish the social Assemblies, and the religion of Christ must soon take its flight from the earth. The preservation of these is the greatest blessing the Sabbath perpetuates. Men who habitually neglect the Sabbath, soon become the most wicked. Do not so, but exhort one another, to the assembling of yourselves together. This is the great means of keeping alive the spirit of religion in the soul of the individual and of the social body; and if

you turn your back upon the means, you have no right to expect God will send after you."

6. This vigilance of eagle-eyed charity has its especial times and seasons: and one of those was then approaching the Hebrew city and nation—"and by so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." Our Lord reproved the people for neglecting the signs of the times. They could look upon the sky, scan the winds and the clouds, and divine the coming storm: but the predictions of holy prophets, and the warnings of his own blessed lips, they let pass unheeded. And now the signs indicate the coming, not of the day of general judgment, but of special judgment upon the Hebrew city, nation and church. The mass of the nation and church had crowned their long course of sin, by the final act of rejecting the Messiah. The stone was refused by the builders; he was made of them a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence: but he has become the head of the corner; yea, because they would not rest under the shadow of this great Rock—it is just about to fall upon them and grind them to powder. The exclamation, "Crucify him—Crucify him," was the knell of their annihilation as a nation and a church of God. "His blood be upon us and upon our children." And God took them at their word: they trampled under foot his blood, and the history of the Jew is the history of God's vengeance. That blood stain can never be washed out: it follows him in all the earth. *Hierosolyma est perdita.*

But it is not the Jew only that this blood stain follows. The nation and kingdom that persecute Messiah in the persons of his people, feel the weight of his indignation. The grand antichristian Roman apostasy has for centuries brought the curse of high heaven upon the apostate nations. He hath given them "blood to drink for they are worthy." Still, their day is approaching—the day of a

terrible vengeance, such as never befell any nation heretofore. They dream more incoherently than the Babylonian Despot, who suppose that the agony in apostate antichristian Europe is over, and past, and gone. Oh no: they have yet to be made drunken with their own blood as with sweet wine; until they learn that the Most High God, our Redeemer ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to the people of the saints of the Most High. Apostasy from God brings the blood of vengeance on the land.

V.v. 26-31. Here is an argument addressed to fear. He depicts some of the terrible consequences of forsaking the true religion; and thus labors to awake the soul to activity in guarding against them.

“For if we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.”

In these two verses we have a very clear statement of the sin of apostasy. Let us note particulars.

1. Preparatory and necessarily antecedent to this sin, is a knowledge of the great doctrines of salvation. How can a man depart from a place or a thing where he never was? How can he reject what was never offered to him? How can he go out from us, if he never was in among us? Knowledge is antecedent to renunciation of it.

2. This knowledge involves a perception and conviction of its truth. The doctrines of the gospel are perceived to be true: his judgment is convinced, and he confesses it, that there is no salvation but by the blood and righteousness of Christ; that except a man be regenerated and sanctified by the Holy Spirit he can never go to heaven: that without repentance he cannot see the kingdom of God.

3. Now, all this may be, and yet no change of heart: nothing but head religion. Yea, these may be accompa-

nied by a professed belief and public avowal of his self-dedication to God: and moreover, by an outward reformation of morals and a reputation unblamable before men. Such cases abound in every age of the Church: and such persons only can possibly commit the sin of apostasy. "Orthodox opinions cannot save the soul."

4. Evidently then this class of people—nominal professors—persons who have a name to live, but are really dead, can commit a sin, which lies beyond the possibility of a heathen to commit, who never heard the name of Christ, and who is ignorant of the true God.

5. Sin *wilfully*. This is opposed to an act by constraint—by thoughtlessness, by sudden surprisal. It cannot signify the presence of voluntariness as essential and peculiar to this sin. For there is no actual sin that does not involve this element. Owen thinks *wilfully* a little too strong; it is as if the point of aggravation lay in the persevering, obstinate wilfulness; whereas it lies in the matter rejected. It is a willing, deliberate rejection of Christ—a turning away from him, whom it knew and confessed was the only Saviour of lost men. And this,

6. Because the sentence goes on—"there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." This, therefore, settles the matter, and seals up the rejecter of this one only efficient sacrifice, in hopeless condemnation. If there is but one sacrifice, and this man rejects it, it is not conceivable how he can be saved. But this was discussed on ch. vi. 4-6, which see.

7. But, though there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins; there is something remaining—a certain "fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." This dread expectation is not voluntary: nor is it instantaneous in the future. Yet will it come upon the soul. It is according to the unchangeable will of God: and though the seared conscience of the

calm and cool and deliberate turner away from the only efficient sacrifice, may feel perfectly self-satisfied for a time, to us not defined; yet it will come, and the awakened soul will feel the scorching fires of a condemning conscience; dreadful premonitor of a still more fearful flame, which the angry breath of the Almighty will kindle up, but which the waters of a thousand seas can never quench.

The certainty and awfulness of this coming fiery vengeance, is next sustained by an argument from the less to the greater.

V.v. 28, 29. "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of Grace?"

1. By the law of Moses is here meant not simply the law of the priesthood; but, in a more general sense the entire code, and especially the penal enactments. These were various, and in several of them the penalty was death, ex. gr. murder, idolatry, incest, blasphemy. Not only was the penalty severe, but it was never pardoned. "Thou shalt take no satisfaction for the life of the murderer—the murderer shall surely be put to death." Accordingly

2. For this class of criminals there was provided in the Mosaic system no atoning sacrifice. The law must take its course. In this particular, it may well be questioned, whether modern legislation has wisely left so wide a margin to executive clemency; and whether pardons sensational have not encouraged murder, piracy and treason. The theory of a pardoning power, is, that human tribunals are so defective, it seems desirable to keep a door of life open as long as possible. One great error may here be

mentioned. Juries sometimes bring in a verdict, and judges pronounce the accused guilty of death; and then turn round and request the Governor to set aside their own sentence. This is monstrous!

3. But a protection against injustice is provided by Moses. No man shall be convicted of a capital offence, but by the testimony of at least two witnesses. It forefends innocence against condemnation; but when the proof is full, clear and unequivocal, it protects justice against the assaults of pity and compassion. He dies without mercy. The nearest relations were forbidden to let natural affection retard the current of justice—"neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him. But thou shalt surely kill him." Deut. xiii. 7. Now, such being the statutory provision against the transgressor and contemner of Moses law: judge ye, brethren! how much more severe the punishment and irrevocable the doom of the gospel despiser! So confident is the Apostle in the force of his argument, that he leaves it to themselves to measure, if they can, the enhanced criminality, and the deeper damnation of those who sit under the clearer light of the New Law. But he assumes, as perfectly unquestionable, (*a.*) That the apostate is worthy of punishment. (*b.*) That it must be worse,—more severe, than the punishment inflicted by the old law—a temporal matter but the highest, even death by stoning. (*c.*) Now, as the penalty for apostasy, is not temporal but spiritual; not of the body, but of the soul; not in time, but in eternity, judge ye as to the excess of it above and beyond the death by stoning.

4. But in order to a correct estimate, you must look into points of aggravation—the counts of the indictment of which he has been found guilty. And (*a.*) He hath committed a grievous personal offence against the Messiah, our King—"who hath trodden under foot the Son of God."



A bold figure this, expressive of a most outrageous personal insult—an indignity, capable of resulting from nothing less than the most inveterate hatred: “they have both seen and hated both me and my Father.” (b.) His sacrifice is despised and his entire official work, as the sin atoning Priest, is scouted and contemned—“hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing”—a common or unclean thing—such as the Aaronic priests would not offer. A question has been raised here—whether the blood is Christ’s own, or the blood the apostate himself had professedly offered. Against the former it is alleged, that if Christ’s blood be intended, then the inconsistency of Himself being sanctified meets us. How could Christ be sanctified, being in himself perfectly holy, harmless and undefiled? We answer, it is as our Priest, he officially and not personally, is sanctified by and with his own blood. It is his official consecration that is intended; not his personal purification. (c.) The remaining offence, is the insult offered to the Holy Spirit—“hath done despite to the Spirit of grace,” by whose agency alone, the grace of Christ is applied to the sinner, “but they rebelled and vexed the Holy Spirit.” The Greek word in our text means, *insult with injury*. Now “whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in the world to come.” Matt. xii. 32. “Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost.” It is by the application of the truth, through the Spirit, that the measure of illumination reached by the sinner, is attained: and his labors to quench the Spirit, are therefore, peculiarly aggravating.

In v. v. 30, 31, he argues the fearfulness of this expectation, and the terribleness of this punishment, from the essential nature of God’s government. “For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his peo-

ple. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

These quotations are from Deut. xxxii., that grand poetic effusion, wherein the dying Prophet uttered his last sublime message to Israel. Doubtless, if we could appreciate the grandeur of Hebrew poetry, "as all the congregation of Israel did the words of this song," we should feel awestruck with its majesty, and unite in its closing sentence with palpitating heart. V. 43, "Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people; for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people."

The first quotation is from v. 35, "To me belongeth vengeance and recompense." And herein is clearly established the doctrine of God's vindicatory justice;—or that holiness and justice in Him, that leads to the punishment of wickedness, and the rewarding of righteousness. And the other quotation is from v. 36, "The Lord shall judge his people; *i. e.*, Vindicate their right, and punish their enemies according to truth and righteousness. The existence of such an attribute in the Jehovah is by some denied, who allege that it is not in God's nature, but it is optional with him to take vengeance or not. This ground is held by all who deny the atonement; and it is vital in their theory: on the contrary, those who hold that an atonement is indispensable, find their foundation in the essential justice of God. We think, if the sufferings of Christ as our Surety, could have been avoided, without periling the interests of moral government throughout the universe, his pathetic and filial appeal would have reached the Father's heart; and this cup would have passed; and the Son would not have exhausted it of its bitter contents. As we have seen, on ii. 10, the only foundation for justifying the Father in making the Captain of our salvation perfect through sufferings, is

in the essential, infinite and eternal rectitude of his own nature, whereby it belongs to him—it is part of his nature to punish sin. Let us refer to a few places where this word vengeance occurs. Luke xviii. 7, 8—“shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him?—he will avenge them speedily”—This process of taking vengeance—of punishing the enemies of his people, is surely not a malicious feeling in God. So in Luke xxi. 22. “For these be the days of vengeance.” Moses, seeing a brother severely injured, interposed and “avenged him that was oppressed.” Acts vii. 24. He, being called of God to do his work, inflicted just punishment on the brutal tyrant. But I may not repeat; vengeance is simply the application of justice in the punishment of crime. And this belongs to God alone as a last resort. He has delegated its exercise to civil magistrates, but in a limited degree. Justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne.

The word *Revenge*, as now in English used, means the outgo of bitter, malicious, wicked feeling toward a person that has given offence. It is essentially demoniacal, and savors not at all of the idea of justice, but is pure malignity.

It is to be regretted that a nearly related term, Rom. xiii. 4, is translated a revenger to execute wrath—an *avenger* manifestly expresses the true idea.

Now, it is this essential justice, that makes it a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. The fearful looking for—the *expectation* of judgment, v. 27, springs up in the soul from the inborn and inbred conviction that God is just and will punish sin. Conscience, God’s vicegerent in man, utters the dreaded sentence, and the heart quails before it. The elements of such fear are the apprehension of great power for evil; of God’s hatred for sin necessarily leading to the exercise of this power; of a present conscious-

ness in the mind of its desert of punishment; hence it is a fearful thing to come under his sentence of judgment; and the zeal of fire which executes the sentence. This it is, to fall into the hands of the living God. The dead gods of the heathen are objects of terror, less or more: which shows the tremendous power of human conscience, and the deep and ineradicable conviction of God's existence. Ignorant of the true God, they make to themselves gods of gold, stone, wood—and clothe them with attributes which belong only to the God of life. His being the author of life, and holding the power of its destruction, and the supreme right, by way of just punishment, to make it a curse—this, to the unbelieving, gives life to the worm that never dies—fierceness to the fire that is never quenched.

But we are told, Your doctrine makes God a cruel, fierce, terrible being, whose attributes, as you describe them, are repulsive: and men cannot love such a God. I reply, (1.) this is true so far and so long as men persevere in wickedness. Unbelief, which tramples underfoot the Son of God, can never look upon him with complacency and delight, as the Judge and Avenger of God's elect. (2.) It is not true of those who bow before him, repent, believe, delight in his commandments. There is nothing terrible but the contrary, in immutable justice, to the good, the upright, the holy. But, (3.) God hath revealed himself most clearly in this very light. This, in his word, as we see, and more abundantly in his providence. The world's history is a revelation of God's wrath and fiery indignation against all unrighteousness. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men."—The supposition, which unbelieving men try to believe, that this wrath of God, that "abideth on" the impenitent, is a corrupt, malicious feeling, as human wrath often is, is too absurd to merit special reply. All Bible readers

know that God's anger, God's indignation, God's wrath, is nothing more than his love and holiness manifesting themselves, in redressing and crushing sinful and corrupt actions, and promoting purity, peace, and harmony in his government. Punishment of wickedness is love to holiness and truth.

In v.v. 32-39 we have exhortations tending to counteract movements toward destruction and to establish the hearts of believers, and brace up their souls against the terrors of falling under the judgment and wrath of Almighty God.

“But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; Partly, whilst ye were made a gazing stock, both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in your selves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.”

1. The word *But*, signifies opposition of meaning to what precedes: a fearful thing it is to fall under the judgment of the living God, whose wrath against apostates, kindles a fire that can never be put out: But we are persuaded better things of you, brethren! Your conduct on former occasions, has afforded evidence, that such is not the destiny upon which you are rushing; but the reverse.

2. He bids them, not simply to *remember*, for memory, to a large extent, is not voluntary; but to call up intentionally the scenes of former days. Memory is conception with a feeling of relation to the past. We often conceive, or have a thought, without being able to locate it in past time; even when we have a vague impression that we have had it before. Then a desire to locate it, keeps the mind dwelling on it, until finally we succeed in connecting the whole series of events, and bring all up distinctly before the mind. But

in this effort, which is properly called *reminiscence*, we are often greatly aided by hints from without, and allusions to particulars at first insulated.

3. As here, reference is made to the time of their first illumination,—or introduction to the knowledge of gospel truth—the time of their conversion. And he raises no question as to its reality. He assumes it to be what they professed it to be—a real enlightenment of the soul by the teachings of the word and Spirit. Remember now the former days of your espousals, and the abundant flow of a warm, first love. This soon leads to

4. A view of the trials of their young faith, and of the love which it brought into action. It happened to them, as to believers now and in all ages, that they were soon led up into the wilderness of temptation. The adversary does not give long respite to the young recruit under the Captain of salvation. His assaults, however, though painful are generally profitable: for the trial of their faith is precious and results in increased strength. It is stated as enduring—standing firm under a great struggle. The word for *fight*, is used to describe the contests in the Grecian games. We have adopted several of their terms into English—so this, *athletics*—a great contest for the mastery: *agonize*, by which the ancients described the painful exercise of strength in the fight—*antagonist*, the rival or opposing champion. These contests or fights called forth the utmost self-denial and painstaking preparation: and after all the hardening training, the battle was always severe, often fatal: and always disastrous to one of the athletic champions: the conquered was disgraced, and the victor crowned. To these games our Apostle often alludes. Here he divides the great fight of afflictions—of *sufferings*, into two classes. (a.) When, on the one hand, they were made a gazing-stock—they were exhibited as a public show in the theatre



—or, if you will allow another Anglicizing of a Greek word—they were *theatrized*. The Greek *theatron*, which Webster would corrupt, in orthography, into *theateron*, by writing it *theater* instead of following the Greek, is derived from a word which signifies to look at, to behold; and is used to describe the place in which public shows were exhibited. Among these were fights of gladiators, who were compelled to fight until death; men also with wild beasts—as Paul (1 Cor. xv. 32) at Ephesus; and as many Christians were in that and subsequent times. Gladiatorial shows, and casting Christians to the lions, were common exhibitions for the amusement of the most refined Roman ladies. Whether the destruction of real, vital Christianity, is not much more effectual and extended, by the theatres of our polite age, is a question of no small importance, and might well employ the time and pen of many an able Christian writer. From all appearances and reports, it is exceedingly probable, that our theatres do more toward abolishing Christianity, than did those of the Greeks and Romans. But the Apostle names two forms of these exhibitions — *Reproaches*, contemptuous, scornful treatment, false accusations, base slanders. So David, personifying Christ, says, “Reproach hath broke my heart, and I am full of heaviness—they gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.” Ps. lxxix. 20. So they called him a winebibber, a glutton, a malefactor, and all hateful epithets were hurled at him. *Afflictions*—sore, grinding oppressions, and bodily pains. The word is mostly translated *tribulations*. Rom. v. 3—“We glory in *tribulations* also: knowing that *tribulation* worketh patience—.” (b.) The other class of sufferings are referred to their social sympathies; “partly whilst ye became companions of them that were so used.” True religion is courageous, and shrinks not from the duties of friendship.

If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; for the body is one. The social principle of our nature is not suppressed, but cherished, and strengthened, and perfected by the powerful operation of brotherly love. Peter indeed and the disciples all forsook him and fled; but they were not fully imbued with the spirit of their faith. When they received power from their Lord on high, they stood firm and bare one another's burdens. So the Apostle proceeds, "For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance." Here we have 1st, the activity of their kindly sympathies—2d, the manner of their exhibition—3d, the reason sustaining them in their liberal sacrifice.

1st. Ye sympathized—we have adopted this word from the Greek and in the same sense—ye sympathized with my bonds. Paul had been arrested at Jerusalem and put in bonds—hurried off to Cæsarea and there imprisoned for two years: then carried to Rome, where he lay in prison two years more. Many, doubtless, had done as the Philippians (iv. 16)—“sent once and again to my necessity.”

2d. They exhibited their sympathy by their loss of goods. This does not refer to the goods they voluntarily contributed to his necessity; for the expression *spoiling*, means the act of robbery—the seizure by violence: and shows, that, in consequence of their open avowal of friendship and his cause, they had been despoiled of their property. But how could men rejoice at their own losses? Were it not much more reasonable for them to rejoice in their continued possession, in order to be able to contribute to the wants of the Apostle and others? This difficulty may pass away, if we look at what James says, chap. i. 2—“Count it all joy when ye fall into diverse temptations”—not for the temptation's sake, surely: but from the results,

“knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience”—etc. So Peter and the other apostles “departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer shame for his name”—Acts v. 41. Their joy arose not because “they had beaten them,” not because they suffered pain; this could not be; but, that God had given them to endure maltreatment patiently for his name. And moreover,

3d. From the evidence they had of a glorious inheritance laid up for them in heaven. Or the words may be read, knowing that ye have in yourselves a better etc. The former seems preferable; and makes the reason more forcible. Their clear evidence that a heavenly, a better, an un-failing substance, is laid up for them in heaven, may well cause their hearts to rejoice, and reconcile them to the temporary losses by spoiling of their goods.

Verse 35 is an inference from the preceding, and falls exactly in the positive line of exhortation. Hold fast the profession of your faith; “Cast not away, therefore, your confidence”—your just and bold freedom in all the acts of divine worship—“which hath great recompense of reward.”

“Internal evidences of the beginnings of glory in grace, a sense of God’s love, and assured pledges of our adoption, will give insuperable joy unto the minds of men under the greatest outward sufferings.”

V. 36 enforces the duty of doing and suffering as they have done, in order to ensure the reception of the thing promised. “For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.” (1.) The word translated patience, is beautifully significant of the idea—*bearing up under*. It implies a load or burden, almost too heavy to be sustained; yet the person on whom it lies, stands firm, does not sink down, or remove to escape

it. The Latin word *patience*, which we have adopted, is not so significant—it means simply *suffering*—being the subject of painful feeling. (2.) In saying they have *need* of patience, he does not insinuate that they have it not; nor even that they are deficient in degree; but only, that this ability to bear up under trials—to endure hardness, is a grace constantly called for. It is a concomitant of our Christian warfare—a necessary item to the progress of the life of faith.

(3.) This is pointed out—ye have need of patience, to the end that—for the purpose of leading on to the desired object—the securing of the promise: that is, the matter of the promise: promise here is objectively understood. The recompense of the reward can be reached, and its blessings secured, only by compliance with the will of God—having done the will of God includes both active duty and quiet, uncomplaining acquiescence in the chastisements of his rod.

(4.) And we hence learn that, in the most strict sense, the services of the true Christian are rewarded. The smallest act of true charity will be rewarded; not on the question of justification—not as a ground of our acceptance before God. But being justified, and the new life begun by grace purely, the activities of the new man are rewarded. Marvellous condescension and love! God bestows grace on us, and rewards its action in us. He makes the tree good, and blesses its products. Such is the true position of good works. They are the fruits of faith, repentance, regeneration, not the tree: the effects, not the procuring causes of these graces. They are, moreover, indispensable as evidences of true conversion. Without holiness no man shall see the Lord: and without heart obedience—practical holiness in the life, it is impossible any man can have evidence of his true conversion.

(5.) Nor will patience be overborne by too long and too severe trials. She must be exercised and have her perfect work: but in all cases of the real grace of patience, this exercise toward perfection has its proper limit. Be not ye therefore discouraged. "For yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come and will not tarry." The *Comer* will come. "Art thou the *Comer*?"—the person promised to the church of old, that he should come and sit as a refiner and purifier of silver. Under this epithet Messiah had been expected for ages. The church's mistakes as to the meaning of the promises, occasioned her own disappointment. He will come, in time, manner and circumstance, as he had always intended to do. No time will he waste. His first advent was punctual. "Father, the hour is come." The second advent is just as truly and certainly arranged and determined. We may form unscriptural notions about it; but these change not the divine plan. The same is true of us personally. His time to come and call us home is fixed and absolute. "What I say unto you, I say unto all—*Watch.*"

(6.) Moreover, another view ought to be taken, in especial reference to these Hebrews, viz., the providential advent, for the destruction of the city of Jerusalem, the temple, the whole system of worship. This awful calamity was then just at hand; and would be a severe trial of their patience and faith. He designs to warn them of its near approach, to the end, that their faith fail not in the face of this sudden calamity. In accordance with this, he reverts to first principle again, and shows that the same faith which brings the soul at first into a safe condition, continues to work and carry on the believer in the practice of holy duties even to the end.

V.v. 38, 39. "Now the just shall live by faith; but if—*any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in

him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition: but of them who believe to the saving of the soul."

Observe 1. This quotation from Habakkuk ii. 4 is Paul's text, Rom. i. 17, on which this whole discourse of justification is built. He quotes it also for the same end in Gal. iii. 11. The collocation of words is such, both in Hebrew and Greek, that we may read it, "the just by faith shall live." In this reading the meaning is, that the person who is justified by faith, shall be saved from death, and continue alive and active. Or we may say, "the just shall live by faith," when the point affirmed is, that by his faith he continues alive and active in holy duties. The sense ultimately is the same. The question is, whether faith is connected with justification, or with sanctification—or holy living. The former is the design of the prophet: for in the former half of the verse, he tells us, that a vain, puffed up, self-righteous man is not just—"Behold, his soul which is lifted up, is not upright in him:" On the contrary, the humble and self-denying sinner, who trusts in the Lord as his righteousness, shall be accepted as righteous, and rewarded with life—"but the just by faith shall live."

2. And this best suits the writer's design here. "Ye have need of patience; for very soon there will come a sore trial of your faith; and unless it rests firmly on the Rock, it will fail you; and patience will not be able to stand under its burden unless supported by a firm faith." Now, the object of faith, viz., Christ, the Rock; and he alone, can sustain your souls under such trials: and your successful endurance glorifies your Lord: but, on the other hand, if any man's faith be not true and sincere, and he consequently shrinks back—*draws back*—if any person, pushes, drives himself away and hides from duties and trials, "my



soul shall have no pleasure in him." God's soul is God himself: in the apostate he takes no delight.

3. But true believers are never apostates. It is an utter misapprehension, to suppose that the just by faith is the same as the back-drawer unto perdition. The words *any man* are very properly supplied by our translators; for it was indispensable to have an agent for the verb drawback: and *any man*, with the *if*, shows this agent or the person who may draw back to be, not the same, but contrasted with the just by faith. And this he proceeds in the next verse to state more explicitly. V. 39. "But we are not of them," etc. Here note,

1. The adversative particle, *But*; it intimates the denial of drawing back, in regard to true believers, who are just by faith in the righteousness of Christ.

2. Mark again, how he identifies himself with all that class—we, who are justified by faith, belong not to the class of apostates. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life"—the spiritual life, now begun in the soul of the sinner, by the renewing of the Holy Ghost—shall never end—I will never leave thee nor forsake thee—he shall abide with you for ever. For himself the Apostle rested on the Rock: a debtor to grace, free and sovereign he felt himself to be: and well did he know, that his perseverance in grace, depends not on the firmness and strength of his resolution; but on the unfailling faithfulness of a covenant keeping God. This—this is the reason why we turn not back unto perdition. Again, we see how exactly his dehortation from apostasy, has its counterpart, in his exhortation to actual holiness in the life.

## CHAPTER XI.

THIS chapter, as we have said, is a BIOGRAPHY of FAITH. We have here held up to view a grand collection, chiefly in historical and chronological order, of the acts and doings, and sufferings of believers: the trials and the triumphs of faith. Its connection with the train of exhortation is obvious and most naturally introduced. The reader glides along with his conductor, and is hardly aware of it, ere he finds himself in the company of the ancient worthies. He has just stated the work of faith in saving the soul; and, as if anticipating his reader's inquiry, "But what is this principle which operates such happy effects and secures such happy consequences?" His response is a philosophical definition:

V. 1. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." And he supports this by showing its efficiency in giving a reputation to the elders of ancient times. "For by it the elders obtained a good report." And in v. 3 illustrates the latter part of his definition, when he presents a large amount of knowledge, concerning things unseen by human eyes; but which comes to us by faith. "Through 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."

The definition of faith: it is twofold, the *substance* of things hoped for: the *evidence* of things not seen. And note

1. The *substance*—the *hypostasis*. It is the same word which we have in i. 3, where our translator renders it *person*, which is a Latin word and of too limited a meaning.

*Persona* was a mask or cover of the face, and so called from the sound of the actor's voice coming through it. Then the actor himself is so called. But there is another Latin word of common use with us, that quite truly and effectually expresses the force of the Greek:—*Substance*, which simply means *standing under*. We perceive the *qualities* of things, their *essence* or substance we see not; yet is the belief a law of the mind, that there is an *essence*, a *reality*, a *being* of which we perceive the properties. This real being, which we see and know by its perceived qualities, is the *substance*—it stands under and is, as it were, hidden beneath its properties.

2. Now faith is this substance: if objectively taken, it brings the soul into immediate contact, as it were, with the God whose promise it relies upon: if subjectively taken—*i. e.*, the grace of faith—the principle of habitual resting on the veracity of the promiser, it stands up and sustains the soul in the passion and enjoyment of the things presented in the promises of God: so that whilst they are objects of hope, they are also, in actual possession and enjoyment. Thus there is a reality—a present subsistence in the believing mind and heart, of the things held up before us in the gospel.

3. The *evidence* of unseen realities. “This word is used by the Greek writers to express that argument and conclusion which refutes every objection: shuts up the mouth of reply, and silences every opposition.” Such an argument gives confidence to the mind. What is demonstrated becomes henceforth a practical reality: it is never again called in question: all doubt is for ever gone.

4. The subject matter—things not seen: *i. e.*, with the eyes of the body. Of things invisible to mortal eyes, we gain a perfectly satisfactory and true knowledge by faith. Such are the being and incommunicable attributes of God—

spiritually—at least the immortality of our own souls—the gospel scheme of salvation—the future judgment—eternal felicity of the righteous, etc. “The sacrifice, resurrection, ascension to glory, intercession of our Lord Jesus Christ, and all these we know not by sense but by faith. So, the present ministration of angels, and, for the most part, the workings of the Holy Spirit in our own souls: the whole anticipations of heavenly bliss, the glorious sentence—‘Come ye blessed,’ the crown of glory, the everlasting song. Of all these we have by the eye of faith a spiritual perception; clear, sure, satisfactory, as much as we can have by the perceptions of sense. Hence all the sophisms of ingenious belief, fall upon the soul of the simple believer who trusts entirely to the word of God, lighter than a feather. They never move him. He admires the ingenuity of ignorance: he pities the reasonings of infidel philosophy. That this faith, thus defined, will carry him through all difficulties in triumph to glory, he never for a moment doubts.” Accordingly, the Apostle proceeds to establish, by an extended arrangement of facts, that so it has been in times past, and thus creates the strong ground to infer that thus shall it be in all coming time.

5. The first is a general statement as to the activities of faith among the ancients. “For by it the elders obtained a good report.” Literally “For by it the Presbyters were testified unto”—were witnessed. This extends from Abel to Stephen: the detail we shall look into, after we shall have referred to the influence of faith in giving us a knowledge of the world’s origin. For the testimony to the Presbyters, we are indebted to the Scriptures. God is their witness, and the things which he testifies to their praise, are, in general, very different from those which human historians for the most part write in commendation of the great ones of the earth. Blessed is the man in whose favor the Lord

bears witness: and not unfrequently such receive only reproaches from the world; for the friendship of the world is enmity toward God.

1. In v. 3 our knowledge of the creation is said to come to us by faith. "How came the world into existence?" Let any man answer this question, who does not draw his information from the word of God: and what wild speculations he propounds! Theories innumerable have been formed; but all only prove the ignorance and presumption of their framers. Where were you speculatists, when God laid the foundations of the world? When he stretched out the heavens, and appointed the stars to their stations, and ordered the planets in their endless rounds? "An undevout astronomer is mad." 'Tis true, and many such madmen there are. Europe is full of them. They would not retain God in their knowledge, and He gave them up to a reprobate mind—the madness of infidelity. Is it because the heavens do not declare God's glory? Not at all; but because they shut their eyes against the illumination of his word. On the contrary, the believer, who with swelling soul looks upon all this grandeur of the heavenly bodies, and can say in the humble confidence of a heart sanctified by his grace, my Father made them all—this is the man who does behold the beauty and glory of the visible heavens; because the eyes of his faith pierce beyond, and behold the glory of a heaven infinitely more elevated and grand and sublime, than mortal eye and telescopic tube ever revealed to human intellect. Then you cannot turn your attention to earth or heaven, but you have monitors innumerable for the strengthening of your faith. The hand that formed these orbs, and the arm on which they hang, are pledged for my protection and safety. This is my Father's house which he builded for his own glory; and I shall dwell therein for ever. "Let the saints be joyful

in glory"—“Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord.”

2. The term translated *worlds*, we have had often. On chap. i. 2 (which see), we referred to this place as an instance of its including the universe,—the arranged system of created material things. It means an age—a long period of time, including its events; and so is applied to the dispensations, under the law of Moses and under Messiah's reign. In the theory of modern geology, I see no reason why it may not refer to the long periods of transition from one age to another. And this,

3. Because the word translated *framed*, as we have seen on x. 5, signifies, not an act of creating power—or the bringing into existence of what was not before: but the adjustment—the fitting up, and setting in order of things already existent. It implies the pre-existence of the substance and things fitted up. The matter of which the systems of the ages are constructed, was created before: that is, it was brought into being by a preceding or a previous exertion of divine power.

4. For this is the thing referred to in the latter clause—“so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.” This is the true idea of creation. The maxim of the ancients—*ex nihilo nihil fit*—out of nothing, nothing is made, had a long reign, and indeed must ever prevail, where there is no knowledge of the true God. Hence the eternity of matter was extensively believed in. The human mind had no knowledge of a cause, adequate to the production of material substance from nothing; and nothing remained but the assumption of its eternity. But God has given us a history of both operations—the production of the materials, and the arrangement of the chaotic mass in systems of beauty and order. And this we know by faith in the divine testimony. In this 3d v. the fitting



process, as applied to the preparation of Christ's body, x. 5, is stated first; and then the creation of the matter—visible things were made from things not apparent, not visible. For the negative particle qualifies the expression *which do appear*. Our translation makes the negation qualify *made—were not made*. The result is about the same; yet the sense is more plain and obvious, in the former arrangement.

4. The producing power—"by the *word* of God." The ordinary force of this term (*hrema*) is speech—flowing forth of language. Some contend that it is never used as a name for Messiah, as *Logos* often is. Whether this be so, I shall not undertake to determine. Unquestionably it signifies the going forth of a divine energy, as we have seen on i. 3—the word of his power—his resistless—his powerful word. In which person of the Godhead this active energy resides, and from which it flows forth, must, we think, be determined by the connection where it occurs. Our question here is, by and in which the creating energy is exerted in the matter before us—the creation of the substance and adjustment in due order, of the universe. Now, if we turn to John i. 2 and 3, we find, that creation is ascribed to the *Logos*—or personal Word: "and without him was not anything made that *was made*:" and this last word is the same as that in our text: so that to the *Logos*, is there attributed the very same work, which is here ascribed to the *hrema*—or spoken word. It cannot therefore be, that a different person is meant, and a different power put into exercise. So in Gen. i. 1-4, to which John evidently has reference, the word is the spoken word. And God *said*—he spake: it is the outgo of the divine energy; the *Logos* or personal Word puts forth his divine power: "Let there be light and there was light." Though it may not be proved that the *hrema—word*, is a proper designation of the second person in the Godhead; it is undoubtedly true, that

in Gen. i. 3-5, and in John i. 2, 3, and here, the self-same divine energy is meant; and of course the same person is its depository. So in Psalm xxxiii. 6. "By the *word* of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the *breath* of his mouth." Here is the Trinity Jehovah, the Word, and the Spirit. The creating energy belongs to the Trinity: in the work of creation, it is distributed, so to speak, it is exercised according to the arrangements of infinite wisdom, to be exercised by the Son and the Spirit. The Jehovah brings into being the matter of the universe; the Logos (or hrema) arranges and systematizes the whole into beauty and order; the Spirit breathes life into everything that has life. And thus it is, that "the invisible things of him from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; even his eternal power and Godhead"—Rom. i. 20.

Before proceeding to the detail of faith's trials and triumphs, let us ask ourselves, whether ours be of the right kind. Amid the storms of life, what support does it give our souls? Is it able to keep our vessel firm before the storm? Can it—will it ensure her full advent into the now unseen haven of eternal rest? Is it now within us a substantial reality of a hoped for heaven? Does it quell all doubts and prove incontestably that we have a home eternal in the heaven?

Chap. xi. 4. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and by it he, being dead, yet speaketh."

The preceding discussion regards chiefly the latter half of his definition of faith—the evidence of things not seen. This 4th verse turns our attention to things hoped for, and directs us to fundamental doctrine. It leads us at once into the very citadel of evangelical truth, and to the central

doctrine of revealed religion. We are about to contemplate the first bright illustration of the great Atonement. Let us,

I. Examine and compare the two sacrifices.

II. Enquire into God's testimony to him.

III. Abel's testimony to all succeeding ages.

I. (1.) Sacrifices, as we have seen, are of two classes. The fruits of the ground, and those of the herd. Offerings of fruits, grain, flour. These are natural acknowledgments of gratitude and of obligations of fealty. When William the Conqueror landed in England, one of his men seized a handful of straw from a cottage-roof and presented it as seizin; that is, as significant of his entering upon possession of the country as his own. Accordingly, the person seized of an estate and holding it under the protection of the lord or sovereign, presents some product of the soil as a thank-offering and a pledge of fealty. This, I said, is a dictate of natural reason: it has an obvious meaning. It betokens friendship, dependence, subordination, as well as gratitude for past favors and protection; and promises a continuance of the same. Such was the offering of Cain.

(2.) Therefore, in itself, this was a good and proper offering. "The fruit of the ground," is excellent in itself: and, therefore, such offerings were very abundant under the Levitical law; and were regulated by detail of rules. No objection can be raised to the matter. Natural religion and revealed law, fully confirm the propriety of such sacrifices.

(3.) If offered in faith, such sacrifices, therefore, were acceptable to God and profitable to the offerer. Hence the presumption, and, from this passage, the proof that faith was lacking in this case. The same is strongly insinuated in Jude 11. "Woe unto them, for they have gone into the way of Cain"—The context in Gen. iv. makes the same

evident. "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted:" plainly intimating that he had not done well. But, moreover,

(4.) The point in which his faith was deficient, is set forth in the same, v. 7.—"And if thou doest not well, sin is at the door." A sin-offering is ready, take and offer it, and all will be right. Cain's faith, such as it was, did not lay hold on the promised seed of the woman. Those who had gone into the way of Cain, Jude says, v. 4, "denied the only Lord God, even our Lord Jesus Christ." Cain's soul-destroying error, lay in denying the divinity and atonement of Christ.

In regard to Abel's offering, remark,

1. The origin of bloody sacrifices as a religious rite, cannot be found in natural religion. Reason never could teach, that the slaughtering of a lamb, and the burning of its body, would be a service, well pleasing and acceptable to God. At that time, and until after the flood, animals were not given to man for food: so the milk and the fleece, the horns of such as cast them or died, and the eggs of birds, might be useful. But to kill and burn up, seems well calculated to give offence to God their Creator. Hence

2. The offering of such, as a religious rite, must have been appointed of God. Accordingly, the history tells us that, "Unto Adam also, and to his wife, did the Lord God make coats of skin, and clothed them." This was before their expulsion from Eden; and before the cherubim were appointed as symbols of the ministrations of gospel light, and to protect and perpetuate the knowledge of the way of life, as intimated in the primitive gospel—"he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." (See my Lectures on Prophecy, under the head Cherubim—also The Tabernacle.)

3. This bloody offering was the appointed symbol of the atonement—an exhibition of the doctrine of the vicarious sufferings of the promised Seed, whose heel—his inferior nature, is to be substituted in the law, place and stead of the offerer, and to die for him—“to make atonement for him.”

4. The garments, made of the skins of these slaughtered substitutes, teaches, that the clothing of the worshippers, and concealment of their moral nakedness, is furnished by God and secured by the sacrifice. That is, the connection of justification with the satisfaction of penal justice, is forcibly set forth. The atonement secures the full salvation.

5. Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock: no defect—no blemish must be found in the victim. The very best must be offered, and of the fat thereof. This all points to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the faithful worshipper.

6. That the offering was commanded of God, is manifest farther by the fact, that it was offered in *faith*. Now faith must have a command or a promise of God, on which to rely. If such a sacrifice could have been suggested to Abel, by his own reason or fancy, and without a divine command, surely he would have met the stern rebuke—Who hath required this at your hand?—Who authorized you to tread my courts, and slaughter my living creatures? “Bring no more vain oblation.”

7. But precisely the contrary happened; for the sacrifice of Abel was *manifestly* accepted. The Lord had respect unto him and to his offering; but to Cain and his offering, he had not respect. And this partiality was seen and known by all by-standers. For I should have noticed, this was public worship on the Sabbath day. It was the publicity of it that enraged Cain. Hypocrites are not offended because their worship is not accepted of God. This they

disregard: but to have their defective service exposed to public scorn, this is unendurable. But

8. How was this acceptance manifested? Doubtless, by spontaneous, *i. e.*, miraculous combustion. So in Lev. ix. 24: and the Lord answered David by fire—1 Chron. xxi. 26. And so to Elijah (1 Kings xviii. 23, 38), the Lord answered by fire.

9. Abel's offering was more excellent. The Greck means greater, broader, more comprehensive than his brother's. It contained all that Cain's did: and this besides, a confession of his sinfulness and his forfeiture of life; and an avowal of his hope to escape deserved destruction, through the efficacy of the great sacrifice of which this lamb is a type and a promise. And

10. Thus his faith is the substance of things hoped for. It gives a vivid conception of the promised Seed, who was to suffer the just for the unjust: and brings into the soul a present substantial enjoyment of these glorious realities.

II. Let us advert to God's testimony to Abel's righteousness.

1. We have already seen how God testified his acceptance of Abel's offering. But this amounts to a declaration that his person was accepted. For the tree must be good before its fruit can be. The person of the worshipper must be accepted before his works can be acceptable. In the spontaneous combustion of his sacrifice, God proclaimed him accepted through the atonement and righteousness of the coming Messiah.

2. God is faithful to his own, and will not deny them. "Them that know me I will honor." No acts of holy obedience shall ever pass without their ultimate reward. Christ's martyrs he will testify unto in his own good time and way.



III. But the first martyr bears witness to the truth still. The first death on record continues a living witness, in the realms of glory, to the all sufficiency of His sacrifice, who, as our High Priest, sitteth in the right hand of the throne.

And to us, the knowledge of all this is through faith in the divinely inspired historian. By this same faith, though dead, he speaks to us: And what are his utterances?

1. Be ye faithful unto death, and your Lord will receive you to eternal life.

2. All that will live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. He that is after the flesh will persecute, in hatred, him who is after the Spirit. For,

3. Truth and falsehood can never be reconciled. Errors in fundamental doctrine, necessarily lead to conflict. Truth *cannot*, and falsehood *will not* yield. Friendship with the world is enmity with God. "Marvel not if the world hate you."

4. In another sense, it hath a voice, as all innocent blood shed by wicked men,—it calls aloud for vengeance—for just punishment; as the history shows—"thy brother's blood calleth to me from the ground." So in xii. 24 we may find the same. "Shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily." Luke xviii. 7, 8.

5. Therefore let not a persecuted and afflicted church sink in despondency. Let her know that these things are for the trial of her faith. It is not a mere figure of speech, when we say the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.

V.v. 5, 6. "By faith Enoch was translated, that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testi-

mony that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

The case of Abel illustrates the activity of faith upon fundamental doctrine: Enoch's case exhibits faith as the life principle of practical duty. Let us note his *translation*, the *reasons* for it as testified unto, and the *argument* proving his faith to be true and genuine.

I. 1. His translation is his removal over the great gulf, without passing through the iron gate of death. In the record, Gen. v. 21-24, we learn that at the age of sixty-five he begat Methuselah; which name, as translated in the margin—"At his death the sending forth of waters," seems prophetic. For immediately after his death, the flood burst upon the world. He was therefore at that age a prophet of God. His public ministry extended unto his translation in his three hundred and sixty-fifth year; so that he was three hundred years a prophet, (see Jude 14) and prophesied in the language of severe reproof against the excessive wickedness of his generation: warning them "of the coming of the Lord with ten thousand of his saints; to execute judgment upon all."

2. The circumstances of his removal and change were most likely public; and in the midst of sore conflict and painful persecutions. From their scornful treatment of his great grand son Noah, and the kind of service Jude describes, it is very certain his prophesyings were very unpleasant, and must have excited the furious hostility of an excessively infidel and corrupt age. Three hundred years of severe reproof and solemn warning, resulted, no doubt, in a fixed and maddened combination to destroy him: and from the very midst of their malignant and furious onset, the Lord snatched him away, and he ascended, like Elijah,

in a chariot of fire: and left the ungodly infidel mob gazing in mingled amazement, rage and terror, as he ascended beyond their vision.

3. Great is the probability, that search was made for him, both by friends and foes, but with very different feelings and purposes: as did men search for Elijah. The expression *he was not found* implies as much.

4. His character for piety must be noted—" Enoch walked with God." This implies familiar friendship and confidence. Can two walk together except they be agreed?

Enoch had a specific promise from God, that he should not fall under the murderous hands of his malicious persecutors. Yea, the promise must have designated this very form of deliverance: otherwise, there could be no room for faith: whereas it is directly affirmed, *by faith* he was translated: in the exercise of faith, which must have had its own precise objective pledge from God.

II. The reasons for all this, as testified unto. Before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. It is contained in the declaration of Moses, as noted in v. 4 above. He walked with God. But practical piety can flow out, only from a heart sanctified by the Spirit. This walking comprehends the essence and substance of all that is doctrinally set forth in Abel's sacrifice and deportment. It does not imply the giving of this record of the testimony before his translation; for on the contrary, eighteen centuries passed after the translation, before the record was entered up. But God's testimony was given in the support, countenance and protection of his servant; and in the manifestations of trust and confidence in his integrity, diligence and faithfulness; and in all the providences, which displayed the divine favor and tender regard and love of God toward him.

III. This argument is very nearly a formal syllogism.

Without faith it is impossible to please God :—or, to throw off the two implied negatives,—Faith is pleasing to God,  
 Enoch was pleasing to God,  
 Enoch had faith.

It follows, that in the absence of faith, divine complacency could not be extended to this preacher of righteousness. Not to believe God, is to make him a liar, but he that believeth hath set to his seal that God is true. And as is most usual, the second, or minor premise of the syllogism calls for proof. If this be sustained, as the major is undenied, the conclusion is indispensable. Two reasons are given : First, belief in his existence is indispensable to him who cometh in acts of religious worship. Second, belief in his readiness to receive worship—that he is a rewarder of the diligent and attentive servant. True, the Athenians had an altar with this inscription—“to the unknown God :” but, of course, their religion was a mere heartless and soulless ceremony ! But ours has life and substance. Enoch’s worship was pleasing to God ; because he believed in his being and his attributes ; and especially in his condescension, love and mercy : and this faith entered into that within the veil, and drew him up into the holy place not made with hands.

Before we pass on to the tenth from Adam, admit two remarks more. (1.) Enoch and Elijah, the only persons taken to heaven, by a translation and a change into spiritual bodies, without the intervention of death, were characterized as to their ministry, by bold and sharp prophesying against the fearful profligacy of their day. This shows that God never lacks instruments suited to his purposes ; and that he never forsakes them whom he calls to such severe and uncomfortable work : he is a rewarder of them who diligently seek him. (2.) Adam was seven hundred and eighty-seven years old when Enoch was carried over the

gulf of death, and was, therefore, his survivor by one hundred and forty-three years. So the Father of the race witnessed the horrible corruptions, that, for three hundred years, occupied the ministrations of his seventh son in a direct line. Oh! with what feelings of sorrowful repentance must his soul have been often harrowed up, when he was forced to contemplate the sad evils, he, in an evil hour, had brought upon himself and his descendants! Let fathers now take warning hence, how they prefer the counsels of the wicked one to those of God, and plunge their posterity into interminable woes; and expatriate the family blood from the kingdom of our Lord.

The third illustrative personal example of the definition in v. 1, regards things not seen. Not things in their nature invisible; but of matters not as yet seen, because they lie in the future so far off, as to be beyond the range of human eyes.

V. 7. "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which, he condemned the world, and became the heir of righteousness, which is by faith."

Here we have to note, (1), the person, (2), the divine warning given to him, (3), its effect on his mind and heart, (4), what he did, (5), the objects of his action, (6), The effects of these objects accomplished (*a.*) upon the world, (*b.*) upon himself. These in their order.

1. The person Noah, was the son of Lamech, grandson of Methuselah, and great grandson of Enoch. His name was prophetically given; meaning rest, or relief from harassing troubles; his father applied it in faith, saying, "This same shall comfort us"—Gen. v. 29. He is described in 2 Pet. ii. 5 as "the eighth person," not from Adam, for he is the tenth in line of descent; but the eighth, or head of the eight saved in the ark. He is there also called "a preacher of righteousness." This is con-

firmed, and more in Gen. vi. 8, 9: where he is said to have “found grace in the eyes of the Lord”—“a just man, and perfect in his generation, and Noah walked with God”—he was a man of good talents, and of exemplary uprightness, and consistent piety. These last testimonies have reference to a period long before he built the ark.

2. He received a divine warning, or intimation of coming calamities upon the world: and was by it instructed in his duty relative thereto; as the record goes on to mention in detail. This was probably given to Noah about the time when the Lord said, “My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh.” Gen. vi. 3.—Their corruptions were horrible; and God gave them up to the freedom of their own will; and the consequence was, they wrought all uncleanness with greediness. Yet I see nothing to shut off the idea, that Noah had preached righteousness to them through the promised Seed, for hundreds of years before the limitation of farther forbearance was defined to be “an hundred and twenty years.” v. 3.

3. The effect of this divine warning must have been like that of the command relative to the fig tree, “cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?” No doubt Noah still farther plead for them, and redoubled his diligence for their instruction and conversion. All this is contained in the expression “moved with fear”—a holy, godly, filial fear: not that fear which hath tormented: a holy dread, which stood in awe of the divine majesty about to take vengeance, while his heart bled for his unhappy and doomed neighbor.

4. What he did—*he prepared an ark*. The Greek word here used, covers not only the building of this vast vessel, but all its furniture, fixtures, stores and provisions of all descriptions. Everything necessary to its being “put in commission.” The time occupied in this work is not speci-



fied. Many suppose the whole hundred and twenty years of v. 3d, from the exhaustion of the divine patience and the success of a wicked world in quenching the Spirit, was devoted to the structure and its outfit. Of this I can find no evidence, and the question of time may be disposed of, like hundreds of others that might be asked, by writing thereon *ignoramus*.

5. The leading object of the whole action is obvious—"unto the salvation of his own house." This was the immediate object: the preservation of the animals is subordinate; and the final cause, was the combination of justice and mercy to the glory of the Supreme Ruler. As to the salvation,

(a.) It is temporal, not eternal; physical not spiritual: salvation from destruction by the flood. Some of his house were not partakers of like precious faith—as Ham. (b.) For temporal deliverances, the faith of good men often avails and accrues to the benefit of unbelievers. Ten believers in Sodom would have saved from the ruin that befell the whole city; but their faith could not save one soul from hell. For this the faith must be in each person's own heart. This shows, how vastly an ungodly world are indebted to God's people for their present respite from perdition, and for their temporal favors and enjoyments.

6. The effects of the work of faith when accomplished, (a) upon the world—he condemned it, in two senses: he announced the coming condemnation of God upon their wickedness, and its execution. This, in his constant preaching of the way of righteousness by faith in the promised Saviour. And by the whole tenor of his virtuous life. *By the which* refers to his faith, yet inclusive of all its various displays in action: the principle was abiding in his soul; but not a cold abstraction, laid up in dead inactivity. It was alive and worked by love. And thus Noah was an

assessor with God in judging that generation; as he and all of like faith will be, at the grand assize. "Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" "This honor have all his saints."

(b.) "He became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." But he was a righteous—a justified man before God and men, hundreds of years before he built the Ark! How then could he *become* heir of it, in consequence of its activities in this one work? Besides, the direct object of his faith in this case—the special testimony and command to build the Ark—did not regard the righteousness: yet was this faith the same *principle* by which, hundreds of years before, he set to his seal, and secured the righteousness of Christ as his own for his justification. For, there can be no reasonable doubt, but this is what the Apostle here means by "the righteousness which is by faith." In Rom. i. 17; iii. 21–31; ix. 30; x. 6; Gal. v. 5; and many other places, he demonstrates the righteousness or obedience to law—*preceptive* chiefly—though intimately connected with obedience to the penalty, by which the sinner is justified, to be that of Christ, imputed to us and received by faith alone. Far, therefore, is it from Paul's thought, to affirm here, that it is Noah's faith *subjective*—his own activity within himself, that now for the first time makes him an heir of the righteousness of faith. For this were utterly inconsistent. If it is affirmed, that *his act* made him an heir, it is a contradiction; because an heir is one who receives an estate by reason of relationship; but this by reason of his own act of faith: it is salvation by works. Or if it be meant, that his own act of believing makes him a son—adopts him into God's family, then the work of the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of adoption, is ignored; and the adoption is not the Father's act, but the act of the adopted himself—he puts himself into God's family, by his own act of

faith; then he becomes an heir of the Father into whose family he had thrust himself; then he becomes an heir of righteousness—which righteousness, yet is his own righteous act of faith; and then for the first time he inherits by faith, the estate which he earned a title to, by his own work in believing. Oh! no; such confusion is not chargeable upon the clear, logical intellect of Paul; and Paul's Master always taught salvation by grace, not by any work or action of any man's hands or mind. As Abraham "our father was justified by works, when he had offered up Isaac his son upon the altar," so Noah was made heir in this place. But Abraham was a justified man scores of years before, and had the inheritance secured to him: so Noah was a just man and perfect in his generation, centuries before he received the command to prepare the Ark, and, therefore, before it was possible for him to exercise faith in that particular command and the promises involved in it. The language, *became heir*, can mean nothing more than that he was *manifested*, by his faithful obedience in this matter, to be a child of God and heir to righteousness and life eternal. "As his condemnation of the world was declaratory, so was his being made heir to righteousness."

Let us further learn from this case, that there is no knowledge more stable than what we have by simple faith in the divine testimony: for the word of the God of truth to whom there is no past, no future, is a better basis of confidence than the word of any human historian.

Damnation may linger long and slumber, but its day will come.

Scorning infidelity may have its day, but the triumph of the wicked is short. Infidelity, no doubt made itself merry a thousand times at Noah's expense. "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep all

things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." But these scoffers, walking after their own lusts, forget that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years; nor do they believe, that "the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment, to be punished."

Chap. xi. 8-10. The Father of the faithful must, of course, furnish the most illustrious example, illustrative of faith in both parts of our definition. An analysis of these verses gives us the following results, which we must note in order, and will quote the texts in place, and point out the appropriateness of the whole, to the Apostle's grand end of exhortation.

1. Abraham's native country. 2. His call from it. 3. His obedience: notwithstanding his ignorance of his destination. 4. The promise to him of an inheritance. 5. Sojourning. 6. The great object of his faith, and desire, and hope.

I. Abraham's native country was Ur of the Chaldees. Gen. xi. 28, 31. Acts vii. 2: an improved yet idolatrous land. From this his *call*. This requires a sub-analysis. (*a.*) His inward vocation by the renewing of the Holy Ghost—his conversion: and, (*b.*) the order to separate himself and go forth whither the Lord might direct. Of the former we cannot settle the date with divine authority. It may have been in his childhood, his youth, his manhood: but certainly we can rest assured, that it was at or before the latter vocation. God would not call him to become the Prince of believers, whilst he was personally an unbeliever.

The date of this latter vocation, as the head and prince of the faithful, is of some importance. From the expression in Gen. xi. 26, "And Terah lived seventy years and begat Abram, Nahor and Haran," careless readers have supposed Abram was born in the seventieth year of his father. But this is an error of sixty years. For by v. 32, we learn that

Terah died at the age of two hundred and five: and from xii. 4, that Abram was then seventy-five, which subtract from the two hundred and five, and we have the age of Terah at the birth of Abram—one hundred and thirty. But does this settle the date of the CALL? Certainly not. For he was so *called* in Ur of the Chaldees; Stephen says, “before he dwelt in Charran—or Haran.” Haran, who was doubtless the oldest of the three, (for his daughter married Nahor) and the father of Lot, died in Ur. Terah removed with all his surviving children, except Nahor and his household, “to go into the land of Canaan.” Before this remove, Abram’s call had come from God, and Terah had made up his mind to remove in consequence of it. “The God of glory had *appeared* to Abram”—and “had said unto him, get thee out of thy country”—xii. 1. But Terah died in the country where they sojourned, which they called by the name of his deceased son, Haran. Probably the burden of two hundred years arrested his progress, that Abram, released from the care and control of an infirm parent, might be the more perfectly free to obey the divine CALL. How long before this death occurred this *call*? Can this be answered? Look at Gen. xv. 13—“thy soul shall be a stranger and they shall afflict them four hundred years.” But the total sojourn of the children of Israel as a people, was four hundred and thirty years, to a day, Exod. xii. 40, 41, which sojourn began the day of Abram’s departure from Ur, his native land. The difference between the whole sojourn, and the sojourn of his seed, measures the time from Abram’s departure to the birth of Isaac. But the birth of Isaac was at the hundredth year of Abraham. Deduct these thirty from the hundred, and we have seventy as the age of Abraham at the time of his call. This was four hundred and twenty-two years after the flood and Anno Mundi 2508.

Two things are noticeable in the vocation: (1.) He is to leave his native land, and all the endearments of home and kindred, and become a pilgrim and a sojourner, dwelling in tents among strangers. This seems to us a small matter, accustomed as we are to emigration. But there is a great difference. When we emigrate, it is in the strong hope founded on evidence of soon locating in permanent habitations: we know whither we go, and where we are to locate. But Abraham went out ignorant of all this. For the remark in Gen. xi. 31—that Terah left Ur, “to go into the land of Canaan,” does not express the idea, that he and Abraham, knew *then*, the place of their future sojourn. For it is here said, “By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for inheritance, obeyed: and he went out, not knowing whither he went.” (2.) And this certainly is the other idea. Uncertainty in any important matter is painful. For a man to cut loose from country and kindred, and every endearment and local attachment, and all property except the few movables he can bear with him, and set forth, blindfold as it were, seems very much like the movements which result from mental derangement. Whither bound? some old friend and youthful companion asks Abraham. To which his answer must have been: I know not—God has appeared to me in glory and ordered me to go; but whither, I know not.

Undoubtedly, he would be looked upon as a deranged man. But God can make himself known to the soul, so as to remove every shadow of doubt, that it is his voice: and thus give him a faith that surmounts all possible obstacles.

II. And this calls our attention to the second item in our analysis—his obedience. Immediately, like Paul, when the same voice penetrated his soul, he conferred not with flesh and blood. “What wilt thou have me to do?” Faith gave



to his soul a knowledge and experience of things hoped for, and fixed upon his mind the full conviction, that the things as yet unseen would appear in God's own good time. He, therefore, obeyed implicitly, without asking a reason or raising an objection: he went out.

III. The promised inheritance regarded, in its lowest conception, the land of Canaan. He was permitted to traverse it, and dwell in it as a sojourner. But no permanent occupaney was conceded to him and his descendants for four hundred years. "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God." But in the higher sense, the promised inheritance was spiritual. He looked for a city which hath foundations. And this stands in contrast with the temporary residence, called

IV. A *sojourn*, which we may as well take up in connection with the principal object. The temporary abode, in which he occupied a residence, by sufferance, but had not right and title to so much as a foot breadth: it was a strange land—a foreign country to him and his fellow heirs, Isaac and Jacob. They were aliens in a land which was theirs by promise. This temporary abode kept up, and perpetually suggested to their minds, the thought of a permanent residence—a city, not a movable *tent*; which hath foundations—stable, firm, permanent; not to be overturned by every wind of the desert. And this leads us to

V. The great object of his faith and hope, his desire and expectation—The heavenly inheritance. And here

1. Note the frame of his mind—he *looked* for it. The word expresses expectancy—the conception of some great benefit, and a firm persuasion of its speedy reception. Examples of its use we have in John v. 3. The diseased of all descrip-

tions lay at the pool of Bethesda, "*waiting* for the moving of the waters"—and James says, "the husbandman *waiteth* for the precious fruit of the earth." 2. Cities in the East were places of safety; very generally they were surrounded by strong walls for defence. Government, refinement and all the comforts of life were more abundant in them, than in the open and unprotected country. So the glorified state of the church is represented in the Revelation, under the notion of a city; with high walls, foundations of precious stones, gates of pearls, etc. Rev. xxi. The real promised land is the heavenly Canaan and the New Jerusalem. 3. Of this glorious city, to which Abraham's faith ever led him, God is the Builder and Maker. Builder is the architect, who plans the edifice and superintends its construction. Maker is the Proprietor, who employs the Architect, and whose is the building. Another workman, or class of workmen is requisite—the mechanics and laborers, not here mentioned. Recognizing God the Father as the Maker of this glorious city—this true spiritual church; and the Son as the architect, who by his Spirit garnished the visible heavens, and much more the spiritual house not made with hands; Abraham's faith, overlooks, as it were, all the beauty and splendor of the visible heavens, and feasts perpetually upon those substantial realities presented by it to his own soul, in the evidences of things not seen.

Let us farther observe, as to this *Call*, it gave origin to the visible church. Prior to this, for twenty-five centuries, there was a constant succession of true worshippers; and the smoking altar never ceased to call attention to that blood, which only can take away sin and save the soul: nor was there ever an age without its prophet to warn and invite sinners: warn of the coming judgment and of eternal wrath: to invite them to flee to the only safe refuge. Neverthe-

less, we lack evidence of such an organization among those who professed the true religion, as to give them visible and permanent union as a society. The call and covenant God made with Abraham, gave permanent, organic, visible unity to the society of believers. When he obeyed the call, came out from the mass of refined and educated idolaters, and formed the nucleus of a nation, he also formed the foundation of the church visible. As with Abraham, so in all succeeding ages, God's electing love separates and calls forth his people from the mass of mankind. The very word *call*, in Hebrew and in Greek, implies this. Whenever the call is obeyed, and sinners come out and openly segregate themselves from the mass, there is visibility; and when they unite with the body of professed believers, they are in the church. To this visible body all ordinances are given, and the lively oracles are entrusted as their statute book.

How appropriate, and how beautifully adapted these illustrations of faith, to the argument of the Apostle, and the condition of the Hebrew Christians. Their beautiful temple and city are soon to be swept from the earth. But fear not, there is a city which hath foundations. Follow the faith of your father Abraham, holding it fast with a firm grasp: the same promise on which he relied is here for you; and the same faithfulness pledged.

Chap. xi. 11, 12. "Through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, *so many* as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable." The faith of Isaac's parents was sorely tried by the apparent slackness of the promise. "This promise had all circumstances of natural improbability

against it: nay more of impossibilities. There are certain laws of God's establishment against this promise. General laws, commonly called laws of nature, are established in the sovereignty of God—they are but the mode in which the first Cause acts. He is not bound to continue things following each other in a fixed order; unless he has promised specifically: hence he can suspend the order, whenever he pleases. And when he gives a promise, running counter to the general law, he binds himself, in that particular to suspend the law,—to work a miracle. "Sarah shall have a son." On this they rested, and the consequence is they have sons as the stars of heaven. This comparison to the stars and the sands, is simply indefinite; giving to our minds the conception—the idea of a practical infinity.

How does this apply to the case of the Hebrews? God had, in his sovereignty, set up a system of religious worship among them; he had established by the hand of Moses, a law regulating all the forms and rites of sacred service. It is of divine authority; but now he commands, Come out from Moses, abandon the Aaronic priesthood, give up all your offerings and sacrifices. How can we do this—objects the Jew: it is contrary to the order established by our God, in his own house! How can we abandon the whole? Nay, but look ye, these are positive institutions. You are called to give up nothing purely moral and religious; but only ceremonial, which of course he suspends at his own pleasure. So did he with natural laws, when he gave the child of promise to Sarah and Abraham. So now, he suspends what in their nature are dependent on his sovereignty, and proffers you a better and an enduring substance. Their faith triumphed over the laws of nature; let yours triumph over those of Moses. They held on simply to the promise; see to it that you hold fast.

He that cannot trust God for the life that now is, how can he trust him for the life to come?

The Old Testament believers were not altogether in the dark: a bright lamp often shone upon their path. The Socinian figment, that all the promised rewards to them, regarded temporal things; and had no necessary connection with things spiritual and eternal, displays, alas! the nature of their own faith, in their rejection of Christ's blood.

Let not the hearts of the Lord's people despond, because few come out and the flock is small. Canst thou, oh doubting Christian, count the number of the stars, or the sands upon the seashore? So is the family of the faithful? Great shall be the day of Jezreel.

Chap. xi. 13-16. In these words we have to enquire first, of whom they are spoken: and then what are the things affirmed of them.

I. "These all died in faith"—Who? Not all the persons adduced as distinguished examples of that grace. For Enoch did not die: and others, as Abel and Noah, had not forsaken their country and had opportunity to return. But to Abraham and Sarah; to Isaac and Jacob these words refer. They are only partially applicable to Abel, Enoch and Noah. Indeed, they are not referable to Isaac and Jacob, without qualification: these can be scarcely said to have had opportunity to return, in the sense that Abraham and Sarah had: they were born in the land.

II. What are the numerous things affirmed of these persons? Let us note them in order.

1. They all died in faith—*according* to the faith. True believers in the promised Messiah, having knowledge of heavenly glory immediately after death, and of deliverance from the sting of death, whose poison is neutralized by the blood of the great sacrifice, and assured of a resurrection at the last day, might be expected to meet death undis-

mayed, and calmly await their Lord's coming and their own release from fears, and a quiet and peaceful departure. Accordingly, such was their departure. Their souls held to their faith, and according to it was their death. Abraham is noticed in Gen. xxv. 8. "Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years; and was gathered to his people." The ghost, or spirit which he gave up, went to heaven, and joined the society of his people who had preceded him in the faith and its triumphs. This expression—*gathered to his people* surely, neither here nor elsewhere, has reference to the graveyard where kindred dust sleeps together: for none of Abraham's people were laid in the cave of Machpelah, except Sarah. But *their* souls, who die in the faith, do at once join the society of the faithful: and, I cannot but think, at the moment of release, they are in this society; and an escort of angels guides their flight through the uplifted everlasting doors. Ps. xxiv.

Of Sarah's mental state and exercises at the approach of death the record is silent. Isaac's and Jacob's closing scenes are mentioned. Gen. xxvii. 2; xxxv. 29. "And Isaac gave up the ghost, and died, and was gathered unto his people." So xlix. 33—and Jacob "gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people." He had with perfect calmness given all necessary directions, as to his burial.

2. "Not having received the promises." Here, (a.) The promises are spoken of as many: in v. 39, as one—the proto-evangelion—first gospel—the seed of the woman:—salvation by faith in the Messiah. This is *the* promise; which by frequent presentation and appended circumstances, is often named in the plural. (b.) *Promises*—here are taken objectively; meaning the thing promised: the object to which the mind is directed. Subjectively—as the



pledge of divine veracity, they had received them and set their seal of approbation to them; and lived upon them. But the incarnate Redeemer, the God-man, had not yet appeared.

(c.) They saw them afar off, their faith was the evidence of things not seen as yet: and by reason of a blessed assurance, which gave substance in their souls of the objects of hope, and thus embraced them—folded them in their arms and kissed them. (d.) In all these earnest movements, they “confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth.” They felt themselves far away from their own home—foreigners; and pilgrims—sojourning in a land where they had no civil, political or social right, but such as humanity calls upon man everywhere to extend to his fellows.

3. Now, in this strong language of their conduct, they plainly indicate the object of their pursuit. “For they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a country.” The word rendered *country* here, means a *fatherland*—a *home*. It is a slight modification of the word *father*; and cannot be properly used of any but one’s native land. Thus, their whole conduct proclaims their belief in a home far away from this sin-cursed earth. The eyes of their faith see the King in his beauty, and behold the land that is very far off. They have it not as yet in full possession; but are pressing on in earnest and diligent search for it. But

4. It is not everywhere that such a country can be found. Nor is it necessarily to be secured in the land of one’s natural birth. “And truly if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.” No hindrance was in their way. They had left no reputation behind them which could have barred the door against them. Nahor’s inter-

course with Eleazar, and Jacob's temporary residence with Laban show this. There is great wealth and refinement, and luxurious living and exuberant soil in the valley of the Euphrates; but such is not the home, the fatherland of heaven's future occupants.

5. For "they desire a better *country*, that is, an heavenly; wherefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city." Here, (*a.*) the word rendered *desire* is of great force; expressing earnest entreaty and effort to obtain an object, by stretching out the hands for it. It occurs only twice, besides this. 1 Tim. iii. 1—"if a man stretch forth his hands for the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." And vi. 10—"For the love of money is a root of all these evils [before described] which while some *coveted after*, they have erred from the faith"—reached out their hands eagerly to grasp hold of the silver. So these who all died according to the faith, stretched forth the arms of their faith to lay hold of that better land—even the heavenly home, that land of pure delight, where saints immortal reign. (*b.*) Believers' efforts for the possession of the heavenly land, should be like the eager energy of the worshippers of Mammon. Oh, if we would put forth a zeal, diligence and intensity of desire and effort, to secure our titles to and possession of the heavenly fatherland, such as the children of this world do to secure coal-lands, and oil-lands, and gold-lands, what glorious results would soon be realized? (*c.*) These believers seem to have expected this happy home at once, as soon as released from trammels of clay: and in fact, literally they do reach forth their hands eagerly to grasp the promised inheritance. Many a dying couch has witnessed such scenes. Saints of old knew they had an inheritance, immortal in the skies. No purgatory lay in their way: no masses uttered by wicked priests were deemed necessary to

put them in possession of that beautiful and glorious fatherland.

6. What an expression—*God is not ashamed! He does not blush!* This is an inference. *Wherefore* refers us to what precedes and intimates a reason there, for what follows. Because all these lived according to the faith, and died in faith: Because they expressed themselves pilgrims and strangers away from home: Because they openly professed their faith, and proclaimed themselves heavenward bound, and refused to turn back to this world's inheritance; therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God. Shame implies guilt—a sense of just liability to punishment. This guilt implies sin somewhere: it may be in the offender himself, as in our first parents; or it may be in other persons in whom we have a special interest: and this secondary sense is the more common. If a man's conduct be disgraceful, his friends are ashamed of him and show their disapprobation of his conduct, by shunning his company—"keep no company with him that he *may be ashamed.*" "Paul was not ashamed of the gospel"—We have seen on ii. 11, that "he is not ashamed to call them brethren." Similar is the meaning here. God permits himself to be called the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob; and this, because their deportment, through his own grace, is, to a great extent, consistent with their profession of love to him and his cause. "Whosoever, therefore, shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed; when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels."

7. A reason is given for his condescension in letting himself be called their God: "for he hath prepared for them a city." It is true, they were without reputation as a nation; wanderers to and fro, and having no certain dwelling

place: and to be called the God of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob, could give no additional repute and glory in the eyes of the nations, to Jehovah the God of Israel. Nevertheless, he had prepared for them a glorious habitation, eternal in the heavens—a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God. As the great ones of earth found cities, and call them after their own name, so in the fatherland of these pilgrim sojourners, is built the glorious City of our God, which for beauty and perfection stands, and shall stand, unrivalled forever and forever: as it was prepared from the foundation of the world.

How insignificant the pomp and splendor of the most gorgeous palaces, temples, cities, in comparison with the eternal city of our God!

How effectually a glimpse of this eternal habitation shakes loose the soul from its hold on earthly homes and habitations.

Reader! does your faith thus give substance to things hoped for; and evidence of things not seen as yet?

Chap. xi. 17–19. Abraham's faith—its last and greatest trial: its final and most signal triumph. "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises, offered up his only begotten *son*, Of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called; Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead: from whence also he received him in a figure."

1. The first point is the trial—*here he was tried*. The word signifies to put a person in such a position, as to call into action his principles and capacities. The prime thought is to make an effort; to put forth and exert power toward the accomplishment of any work. Then, as just said, so to arrange circumstances around a person as to shut him up to such efforts and exertions. And this, irrespective of the design of such arrangement, whether for evil or for

good: it may be either: and so is the word used. But in the great majority of instances in the New Testament, the trials or temptations are for evil: the tempters desiring and designing mischief to the person tempted. Such are the temptations by the Devil in the wilderness to our Saviour; and such were those of the Pharisees. Still, the general idea is simply that of a test or trial; the context must be scrutinized to know whether the word is used in an ill sense or a good; whether with the hope and wish of injury to the tried; or of good, by strengthening the powers and principles tried. In English, *tempt* is generally used in a bad sense, as in the New Testament. Yet sometimes we say, I was almost tempted to do a thing that is good. The Apostle James applies the word in the specific and limited sense of evil. 1, 2, "My brethren! count it all joy when you fall into diverse temptations; knowing that the trying of your faith worketh patience," etc. The assaults of your enemies shall be overruled for good; and the *proof*, the demonstration of its genuineness, worketh patience, etc.

In the general meaning of *trying*, God, in his providence tempts men every day: but in the specific meaning of trying, endeavoring, wishing to draw men into sin, God never tempts—"God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able: but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." 1 Cor. x. 13. Such was the nature of the trial to which Abraham's faith was subjected.

2. The action of Abraham—it is all comprehended in God's address to him. Gen. xxii. 18—"thou hast obeyed my voice." This is expressed in our text in two forms. He (having been tried, as we have seen) offered up Isaac: and he, having received for himself the promises, offered his only begotten son. Duly to appreciate the value of this

obedience in each form, we must note a variety of attending circumstances.

(a.) The promise of an innumerable posterity was long delayed. His brothers both had children long before he had. Nahor had eight sons. Haran had Lot at least. But Abram seemed doomed to unfruitfulness. No small trial this of his faith. (b.) After long delay he was favored with a single son of promise. Sarah's faith had failed—at least faltered: hence Ishmael, but he was not within the promise. At length Isaac, the sober son of laughter came. (c.) He is specifically designated as the promised seed, through whom Messiah is to descend; of whom it is expressly said, in Isaac shall thy seed be called. (d.) He is therefore named the only begotten, although preceded by Ishmael and followed by Keturah's six sons. Still, the son of laughter is the only-begotten within the covenant of promise: and to him in most express terms is it limited. If Isaac, the heir-apparent to more than a kingly throne, should perish without issue, alas! the hope of the kingdom itself and heirship of the world is lost. Hence (e) extreme solicitude, as God reminds Abraham. "Take now thy son, thine *only son Isaac*, whom thou lovest." Here reference is had to the first form of offering. The second regards the collision between the promise formerly given and the command now uttered. Therefore

3. This unhesitating obedience in the face of all these circumstances, is the most amazing instance on record, of an unfailling faith. After such a salutation.—Take thy son!—thine *only son*—thine Isaac—in whom thy heart's affections are centered—on whom the life of the covenant hangs—take the lovely youth, and go to the land of Moriah, near to the habitation of God's ancient priest-king, Melchisedek, and there — what? What? Have him crowned by the venerable priest of the Most High God;



crowned and anointed as the head of a dynasty, the monarch of the world?—Alas! alas!! No—“And offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.” Did ever such a thunderbolt burst upon the soul of mortal man? Oh! how it must have riven the heart of the fond father! There stands the promise of the God of truth on the one hand: and here stands the command of Jehovah, Governor of the universe, on the other. How can this antagonism be reduced to a pacific unity? Let reason try her strength on this problem, and work out her demonstration. “Contradistinctions,” she will say, “can never agree. There must be some mistake here. Yea, hath God said! Never mind the command, Abraham. God is not tempted of evil, neither tempteth he any man. The voice of such a command must be a delusion. Hold fast to the promise so oft repeated, and let this one command go: God cannot have ordered you at once to commit murder, and to annihilate the hopes that centre in Isaac.”

Not so Abraham. The truth and reality of both promise and command he knew; for God had told him. The promise was a benefit *to* him; but the command required action *from* him. The promise was God’s to fulfil, the command was Abraham’s to obey. The latter well understood relative duties. It was clear to his mind, that inferiors—persons under the authority of others and bound to obedience, are not responsible individually for their acts, in obeying the orders of their superiors. In a just war, it is the duty of the gunner to fire when the officer in command gives the order. He is not responsible for the life destroyed by his shot; that is an affair of his superior. Therefore, Abraham proceeded without a murmur or a moment’s hesitancy, to carry out the order of his superior, leaving the responsibility where it properly belonged. God will justify his own

acts in due time before the moral universe. God had given a son to Abraham, and what he gives, he has a right to take away at pleasure; unless he has covenanted and promised not to do so. God had promised in this case, and in his hands Abraham leaves the matter, whilst he does his duty. The same power that gave Isaac life, could restore it from the ashes of that altar. All life is God's; and he may do as he pleases with those lives especially, that have been forfeited by sin. Thus did he with the first-born in Egypt; with the people of Sodom, Gomorrah, etc. Thus did he with the Canaanites: thus does he with all men—for it is appointed by his divine sentence, unto man once to die. These principles were perfectly familiar to Abraham. He needed no space for reasoning about them; but, by an instantaneous intuition, saw through the whole matter, and felt where duty for him lay. The morning's light found him on the weary way to the execution of his solemn mission.

An objection often rises in the mind, that after all Abraham did not expect to slay and burn up his beloved Isaac—that God would arrest his hand; and he would return with him in safety. Certainly; this last was Abraham's expectation. Here his faith never failed. He knew that God was able to raise him from the dead: and he accounted him and viewed him as dead, as it were—in a figure. Accordingly, the word rendered *received*, signifies the recovery—the regaining of a thing that had been possessed before; had passed away; and is again restored. But how this reclamation of the devoted sacrifice should be carried out, and the dead brought back again, Abraham did not know; and he seems to have exercised no speculation, and given himself no anxiety about it. But, that he felt himself bound to offer his son; and that he proceeded in good faith to do it, is patent on the whole face of the transaction.

Similar figures occur continually. My dearest friend is prostrated by disease; medical aid is called in; everything possible is done, but all in vain; death is at the door; physicians give up the patient; they can do no more; my beloved is dead. Hope expires. But nature rallies; God interposes, and my dear friend is restored to life and my warm embrace—he returns as from the dead in a figure. The Greek word *parable*, which we have adopted into English, means a comparison, and is based on resemblance. The points here are obvious.

This is the highest victory of faith. This is its severest trial; this its most illustrious triumph. It conquered reason. It vindicated right. It vanquished natural affection. It conquered God himself. It held him to his word: and, by asserting its own claim under the promise, it secured forever the thing promised. The Angel Jehovah himself conceded the victory to Abraham's faith. And, as this is the most illustrious trial, and the most glorious success, so is it rewarded with the highest assurance that God himself can give to a creature—the oath of him who cannot lie. “By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only *son*; That 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.”

So Abraham returned to his young men—and to his family at Beersheba—the well of the oath: And oh! with what altered feelings, who can imagine? How he related the journey to Sarah; its object and its blessed termination! Who will undertake to describe the strange and varied emotions depicted in her countenance as the tale proceeds?

Chap. xi. 20-22. In these three verses, we have three exemplifications. "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come." This is the official, prophetic announcement of God's benediction. It is not the ordinary prayer and good wish of a parent, although all parents ought to imitate it thus far, by prayer for Heaven's bounties upon their children. The precise object of Isaac's faith, was the great promise of the Saviour: and although through a sinful partiality toward Esau, Isaac made an effort to frustrate the known purpose of God to give the promised seed through Jacob; when he discovered, that, by the cunning and false representations of their partial mother, in which Jacob seems reluctantly to have acquiesced, he saw the divine purpose accomplished as before expressed by the phrase "the elder shall serve the younger;" he did not and would not—we may say, could not recall the blessing, and accomplish toward Esau his own improper desire. His trembling upon the discovery of the fraud, was an evidence of self-condemnation for attempting to thwart the divine purpose: and he repeated the benediction, as referring to the great promise. But he conferred temporal blessings on Esau; who, as the history shows, prospered in these respects more than Jacob did for a long time. This shows, that the pre-eminence of Jacob regarded the great promise, and the spiritual posterity. In fact, however, Esau obtained the blessings his heart craved. He had bartered away the natural claim upon the primogeniture and the blessing of the great promise, for a mess of pottage.—His heart was for this world and its pleasures, and he obtained them. We learn from the history of this case, that God is not frustrated in his purposes, concerning the promises; not even by great human infirmities, and the shameful conduct of his own people. This whole transaction proves how greatly even the people of his

love fall below the line of duty and dishonor their Lord. Nevertheless, his purpose shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure. Phares, one of the line of succession of this very promise, was a son of incest. Let us blush for the sins of God's people, but not imitate them.

V. 21. "By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph : and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff." Here remark,

1. It was a serious and solemn occasion. The dying scene of any parent is impressive. But the last silence of one who had lived a hundred and forty-seven years ; seventeen of them in Egypt, where thus far he and his race had been highly respected ; and where his long lost son, had long held the whole ruling power, save only the sceptre, could not be otherwise than deeply interesting. This interest must be vastly increased by the fact, that he sent for his Joseph, and, thus summoned, the Governor came and received instructions regarding the place of his burial. A little while after Joseph was again told—"Behold thy father is sick : and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim,"—"and Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed." Gen. xlviii. 2. But it was at the close of the former visit, Gen. xlvii. 31, when Joseph at his father's request swore to bury him in his own grandfather's cemetery at Hebron, that Jacob "bowed himself upon the bed's head."

2. The word translated *bed*, ch. xlvii. 2, punctuated diversely, gives diversity of meaning. When it is pointed to read *matteh*, it means a staff, when it reads *mittah*, it means a bed—this is owing to the general sense, to extend out and downward, to lean or rest on a thing. The LXX. have mistaken the pointing and have written *staff*, whereas the Hebrew requires it to be read *bed*, or couch. Again, the LXX. read worshipped, and correctly, as Sampson asserts ; whilst our translation reads, *bowed himself*; after Joseph

had sworn, v. 31. But then we meet the difficulty, that Paul follows the LXX. in reading it *staff* instead of *bed*. The purely literal translation of v. 31, is, "And Israel worshipped on or upon the head of the bed." But in v. 2, it is well translated, "Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed." The close affinity—almost sameness of the words, arises from the generic idea of support from under—the *staff* is a support, and the *bed* is a support on which feebleness rests. Dr. Owen probably strikes the right point, when he intimates that Jacob seized his *staff* at Joseph's approach, and leaned on both *staff* and *bed*.

But whatever may be the true explanation, Paul gives the true meaning. And in any construction, there is no room for the papist figment—Israel worshipped the top of his—Joseph's or his own?—*staff*: hence they imagine the figured head of the cane was an object of religious veneration: as is the toe of Peter or the Pope. But, in both the Hebrew and Greek, we have the preposition equivalent to *on* or *upon*: he worshipped on or upon the head of the *staff* or *bed*.

3. The blessing of Joseph's sons—both, not collectively but severally—*each* and *every* of the sons. The historian describes the touching scene. The venerable grand-father was nearly blind. The father of the boys wished to follow nature's law, and give preference to the older son, Manasseh, and so arranged them, that stretching a hand to each head at the same time, his right hand would rest on the older and his left on the younger. But Jacob, crossing his arms, placed his right hand upon Ephraim who stood opposite to his own left, and his left upon Manasseh, who stood opposite to his right. This displeased Joseph and he remonstrated. But the old prophet, as he now really was, refused to gratify the Governor of Egypt, who, a little before had gratified him by taking an oath to bury him in his family's own pur-



chased graveyard, the acquisition of which was the first commercial operation recorded in human history; as it was the only<sup>3</sup> ground Abraham held in fee simple in the land of promise. Yet Jacob refused, because he was a prophet and was fulfilling the command of his Lord.

The matter of the blessing, so far as prayer is involved in it must be noted. And first, negatively, it did not regard the line of descent of the promised Saviour. This was given to Judah, on its being forfeited by Reuben the first born. But affirmatively, it did embrace, at least that part of the forfeited right of primogeniture, which gave temporal rule and great worldly prosperity—"The Angel that redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them; and the name of my fathers, Abraham and Isaac:"—and they became heads of tribes in Israel; so making thirteen tribes.

One point only remains. How does this benediction illustrate the definition of faith in the first verse?

It gives to Jacob and to Joseph present substantial enjoyment of the glorious and blessed things hoped for: and so to the lads, if only they believe in the promised blessings. It is, to them all, the evidence and proof, that the glorious things not yet seen, shall come in their time—the time of God's appointment. These things yet future, included the incarnation and all the benefits of the new dispensation. But the same blessing we now enjoy, by exercising faith in the same promised Messiah.

In v. 22 Joseph furnishes our next illustration: and very similar to his father in two points.

V. 22. "By Faith Joseph when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones."

At his death he cast a longing look toward the promised land. "Behold, said Jacob, I die: but God shall be with

you, and bring you again to the land of your fathers." "And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land, unto the land which he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence." Gen. xlviii. 2 and l. 24, 25. Thus faith was to him substance and proof of heavenly things—for to the Israelite, Canaan was a type of the land that is very far off; and his instruction about his bones, implies belief in the resurrection of the body, and an everlasting home in the heavenly Canaan.

V.v. 23–29. Moses furnishes illustrations in various points, and we shall quote the passages as they are required for exposition.

The first regards the faith of his parents. They had received a divine monition, in what form we know not. But somehow they were apprised, that the child about to be born, was ordained of God for a great work. V. 23. "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents; because he saw that he was a proper child: and they were not afraid of the king's commandment." We must revert to the history. 1. From the call of Abraham, in his seventieth year, until the death of Jacob, was two hundred and thirty-seven years—thus from Abraham's call to Isaac's birth, 30 + to Jacob's 60 + to Judah's death 147, (see Gen. xxi. 5, xxv. 26, xlvii. 28) = 237 years. This deducted from 430, the whole period of sojourn from Abraham's call to the exodus, leaves 193 years from the death of Jacob until the Exodus. The age of Joseph at his father's death, could not have been more than forty: for he was thirty when he stood before Pharaoh and was put into command (see Gen. xli. 46). After this the seven years of plenty followed, and perhaps three of famine, making forty.

Deduct this from one hundred and ten, the age of Joseph when he died (Gen. l. 26) leaves seventy years between the death of Jacob and that of Joseph; and fixes the date of Joseph's death on the three hundred and seventh year of the sojourn. This leaves one hundred and three years of residence in Egypt, between the death of Joseph and the exodus.

2. Jacob had been seventeen years in Egypt before his death, which, added to the seven, which transpired before Joseph's departure, gives eighty-three for the residence at Joseph's demise. Now the fact is noted of their exceedingly rapid increase. Exod. i. 7. "And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceedingly mighty: and the land was filled with them." Hence jealousy. The Egyptians were Hamites—a dark race—at least differing from the Shemites in material points. The Cushites, or Ethiopians as we translate the word Cush, who was the first son of Ham, were a dark race, and so probably—yea certainly, were the descendants of Mizraim the second, and their prejudices against these red men of Shemitish blood, combining with their evidently rapid growth in number and wealth, and their segregation and indisposition to intermarry and amalgamate, resulted soon after Joseph's death, and when his policy had passed from the minds of influential men, in a war of races. Violent measures were resorted to, in order to depress and keep them from growth. Severe bondage was forced upon them, and murderous cruelty was practiced.

3. This brought into play one of nature's laws, which the Egyptian philosophers, and some economists of later days, had not duly regarded; viz., that the oppressed race, always increases faster than their oppressors. By this simple law of progress, God has secured man from permanent oppression by his fellow man. Without understanding the phil-

osophy of it, the Hamite race noticed the fact. The result was reached in a generation or two, in a scheme to prevent their growth, by desperately wicked and systematic murder. By a royal edict, all Hebrew male infants were doomed to destruction—"every son that is born shall be cast into the river." Let us not be surprised, that ingratitude for eminent services could be so soon forgotten—a king arose which knew not Joseph. (*a.*) Ingratitude is the sin of tyrants. How soon did Saul forget David? How soon did Nebuchadnezzar forget Daniel? How soon did Brutus forget Cæsar? (*b.*) Royal ambition, or ambition aiming at royalty, knows naught of either justice or mercy. Seventy heads, or half a million of heads, lying in the way of a Jeroboam, must not obstruct his approach to a throne. There may be wailing all around Bethlehem, Rachel mourning for her children; it matters not; if only the infant king in the manger may be cut off, lest he should compete with Herod for his petty throne. Nilus may hear the scream of ten thousand infant voices, inviting the crocodile, less brutal than Egypt's ambitious monarch, to a delicious feast: but the dangerous growth of the oppressed race, must be checked; otherwise the dynasty of the people may overturn the pyramidal power of Egypt's king.

4. But vaulting ambition, sooner or later, overleaps itself. The very schemes of wicked men to gain, or to hold unrighteous dominion, are overruled of God for its destruction. It threw Daniel into the lion's den; but it raised him to the premiership of the mightiest nation of earth. It hurled Daniel's three friends into the burning fiery furnace; but it placed them beside one whose form was like unto the son of God: and, ultimately, it "promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the province of Babylon." It cast Moses into the river, but it made him the scourge of tyrannical rule, the avenger of human wrongs, the vindicator of

human rights, the protector and guide of a nation's liberties, and the Legislator of the world! This infant, floating among the sedges, is ordained of God to legislate, not for Israel only, but for humanity; this babe of the manger—this voyager in the panniers on the ass's back, fleeing into Egypt, to avoid the wrath and jealousy of a petty sovereign, shall come again in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations: and there stand Herod, and Pontius Pilate; and proud Pharaoh also, called by the voice of the Archangel's trump from his long resting-place, into which he sank like lead in the mighty waters. "Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

5. This child Moses, must have been the subject of promise, as intimated above. And when his countenance was observed, the heart of his parents told them, this is the child of promise. They believed that God would use him for his glory and the good of Israel: therefore they hid him for three months, at the peril of their own lives. No command of man to violate God's law can ever bind the human conscience. They might have been called to suffer from this disobedience: but if they had, it would have been the suffering of martyrs. "We ought to obey God, rather than man." And he who obeys human laws or edicts merely as human, without regard to God's authority vested in the civil magistrate, is a slave and dishonors God. Our translation *proper*, is very vague—scarcely giving any definite idea, if any idea at all. Stephen, in Acts vii. 20, gives the clew to the truth—*exceeding fair*—we translate it. As simply a Greek word, it means, *of refined manners—beautiful; of, or belonging to a city*. And the Hebrew word in Exod. ii. 2, which we translate, *goodly*, is applied, in Gen. xxiv. 16, to Rebecca; and ours translates it, "*very fair to look upon;*" and in the margin, *good of*

*countenance*. But Stephen, using the same Greek word as in our text, appends to it the phrase—*to God—fair to God*: implying some extraordinarily beautiful appearance, approaching to divine excellence.

To this agrees the impression made upon Pharaoh's daughter: and when to this beauty was added the tear-drop on the infant's cheek, her heart, stern stuff as from its origin we might suppose it, could not resist: and who knows, but that through her intercourse with Miriam, Moses' nurse, she learned the religion of the despised Hebrew, and bowed in sympathetic sorrow with him who wept at the tomb of Lazarus?

6. The story of the employment of the mother as nurse to her own child and receiving her wages therefor; bringing the boy to her, when he was old enough to enter upon his higher education and his training in all the learning of Egypt, lies beyond our line: and we may only repeat the practical remark that God often causes his enemies to do work for him. Paul was trained with the hope, that he would contend for a false view of religion; but God took him, with all his learning, and taught him to serve and suffer for Jesus. There is now accumulated in Europe, learning and money in the hands of Jews which Jesus will some day, and that, as I suppose, not very distant, levy upon for the restoration of Israel to his own land—the land of his fathers' sepulchres. The conversion of a dozen Jews to the gospel may accomplish all this.

V. 24. "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter," etc.  
Note,

1. This was very probably at the period referred to by Stephen, Acts vii. 23, "when he was full forty years old." The phraseology there shows, that up to this period he lived an Egyptian, and dwelt not among the despised race from



which he sprung. But all this time his faith in his mother's God never failed him. Her teachings were sanctified by God's Holy Spirit; and the grace bestowed upon the child never forsook the man. Nor can fancy adequately depict the vigilance, the caution, the meekness of prudence, necessary to his guidance in a corrupt court, and among superstitious and idolatrous priests and nobility. All these graces God watched over, and cherished, and cultivated in the heart of his servant. But matters were approaching a crisis. The cruelties to Israel continued and became so horrible, that Moses could no longer endure to witness them in silence. His spirit burned within him at these indignities, and therefore remark,

2. God commissioned him as a deliverer: and made it his duty to take such measures as were necessary to accomplish this. The iniquity of the Amorites was nearly filled up: Gen. xv. 16. Four hundred years before, God had told Abraham, one reason why he would not, until the fourth generation expel the Amorites and put Israel in possession of the land. That time is approaching, and Moses is called to his work. He therefore forsakes the court, and avows himself an Hebrew, and the seal of the covenant attests the fact. Thus he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. The choice was open to him, to abide in honor, and grandeur, and riches at court; or to throw himself off, and take up his residence among, and to contend for the rights of his nation. The latter alternative he adopted. V. 25. "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season: Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward."

3. This was not an abstract, mental election: but an actual movement: the purpose of his mind was speedily

embodied in words and acts. For a brief detail we must turn to the history. In Exod. ii. 11, 12, it is stated, that Moses “spied an Egyptian smiting a Hebrew, one of his brethren. And he looked this way and that way; and when he saw that *there* was no man, he slew the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.” Now, from this passage, some have supposed that Moses killed this man unlawfully—in fact, that he committed murder. This opinion is wrong. For (a.) Moses had a commission from God, authorizing and commanding him to rescue Israel from the tyranny of Egypt. And this act is covered by this commission. (b.) Moreover, Stephen, Acts vii. 25, assures us Moses supposed his brethren would have understood, how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not. (c.) Moses’ act in the case was an act of justice—he defended and avenged him that suffered wrong. He looked this way and that way and saw no man—no help was near to interpose, and prevent the Egyptian from killing the Hebrew, and therefore he interposed himself, and executed just punishment upon the would be murderer. For (d.) The Hebrew word, translated *smiting* sometimes means *killing—slaughtering*. Josh. x. 10, 20. “And slew them with a great *slaughter*.” So Judg. xi. 33—“a very great *slaughter*.” So xv. 8, Samson “smote\*them hip and thigh with a great *slaughter*.” So in 1 Sam. vi. 19—“the Lord had smitten many of the people with a great *slaughter*.” We are at liberty, therefore, to suppose that this smiting of the Hebrew by the Egyptian, was evidently with intent to slaughter; and that Moses’ interposition, was as an officer appointed of God to prevent murder, and punish the wretch endeavoring to commit it. And this the more, because the Hebrew word for slay here, “he *slew* the Egyptian”—is used sometimes to express justifiable homicide. 2 Sam. xxiii. 10, He arose and *smote* the Philistines, and xxiv. 17—“the angel

that *smote* the people"—Ezek. ix. 7—"And they went forth and *slew* the city." Moses did right in smiting to death the intended murderer. It may be asked, why then did he hide him? I reply it is common to bury dead men. And, *if* he wished to conceal his interposition in this case, it was not because it was unjustifiable; but because the time was not yet come for an open rupture with the king. But (*e.*) the resistance of the wrong doer next day, implies that Moses' action in avenging, was professedly the action of a ruler and judge. "Who made thee a prince and a judge over us?" And Stephen's censure, (Acts vii. 35) of this conduct, proves the previous commission—"the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer." (*f.*) We are asked why Moses fled? Perhaps his faith for a little while failed him. He knew the king was seeking to slay him, because of his declared purpose to take sides with his own people and to vindicate their rights. "At first, when he killed the Egyptian, in rescuing the Israelite he fled with fear: he was a little too fast for his commission. It had not been fully revealed to him what was his duty on that point; hence he had not faith to stand. But when he obtained the special command, he went to the very foot of the throne of the same king, without fear, and delivered the command of his God and the threatening of rescue. Nothing is so invincible as faith. The same man who is weak and trembling, when he acts without faith; with it is strong and courageous. God will not honor *natural* powers as much in his own people, when they attempt to act without looking to him for strength, as he will honor the same principles in unbelieving men." (Mason.)

4. In his practical choice above noted, Moses was not blind to the sorrowful consequences. He had seen sufficient of the afflictions of his people, to convince him that their deliverance would cost much distress. But the reproach of

Christ—the contempt and contumely which believers endure, because of their holding fast the profession of their faith, is not loss to them—“but if, when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.” What is the wealth of Egypt to the man that loses his own soul? Moses made a wise choice, even when it was a question of happiness; for God never remains in debt to his servants that obey him in faith. “The recompense of the reward.” He never entered Canaan, that was not his recompense: but he passed into the heavenly country, and there he enjoys, not the pleasures of sin for a season, but the joys of communion with all that is holy, forever.

5. It is not sin to love self, and to desire and seek our own happiness. Self-love is sinful, when it degenerates into selfishness, and seeks its own, regardless of others' welfare. All God's dealings with us imply the law of self-love. Promises are nothing but pledges of veracity to bestow some good thing. Heaven is the promised reward of holiness: and is constantly held out as a motive to stimulate to exertion: but the holiness that fits for heaven, and the righteousness that entitles to its felicities, are to us by faith alone. By faith Moses secured the title, and the fitness, and the eternal recompense.

V. 27. “By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing him that is invisible.”

1. The first difficulty here is in regard to which occasion. Was it at the time he made his election?—when he executed the murderous Egyptian? We think not. For (a.) “Moses feared and fled; because he knew the king sought to slay him.” Ex. ii. 15. This was when he was full forty years old. His flight was assuredly under the influence of fear. But here—not fearing the wrath of the king. And this is the account given after his sojourn in

the land of Midian: which was forty years. Ex. vii. 7. "And Moses was four score years old—when they spake unto Pharaoh." (b.) In their last interview there were no signs of fear on the part of Moses; but the very contrary. He announced to the king the death of all the first-born of Egypt; and, what was even more irritating to the sovereign, and his surrounding courtiers, their humiliation—"And all these, thy servants, shall come down themselves unto me, saying, Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee: and after that I will go out: and he went out from Pharaoh, in a great anger." Ex. xi. 8. (c.) If the great anger is in the mind of Moses, this confirms the opinion that Paul's reference is to the last period—the final departure. But I see no appearance of wrath in the mind and conduct of Moses. His demeanor on this occasion, is, perhaps, unsurpassed as an instance of the true, moral sublime. There stands the man of God, who had fled at the age of forty from Egypt before the jealous wrath of Pharaoh; now, at four-score, he faces, probably another Pharaoh, with a heart hardened by forty years' exposure to the furnace of cruelties unheard of in human history. His heart quails not; his eye does not blench; his bosom trembles not: but in calm composure he delivers the fearful—the terrific message from Jehovah. Very similar this to Daniel before Belshazzar; and Luther before Charles V. and the Diet of Worms. There is no room amid such sublime grandeur for a slavish fear: nor, in my opinion, for "a great anger." For this reason I said *if* above. *The heat of anger*, as in the margin very correctly, was in Pharaoh's bosom. There was much occasion for just such heat and swelling of the bosom, and expanding of the nostrils as these terms describe: and I see nothing in the text to prevent its being so understood: certainly Moses displays no crouching fear—no heat of rage.

2. The reason why he feared not the hot wrath of the King, is, because "he endured, as seeing him who is invisible." This seems paradoxical. But let us note first the force of the word for *endured*. It is used by the Greeks to describe endurance of the hardships of military life—hunger, thirst, severe and long marches, and all the struggles of the battle field. These the soldier braces himself up under, though he rarely sees his general leader. So the christian soldier endures. - Confidence in his Commander, is the guarantee of success. The paradox is easily understood. With the eyes of his faith he looked into the Spirit world, and beheld him whom the eyes of his animal body could not behold. The invisible things of him are clearly seen through the evidence of faith: not *as if* he saw, but he did actually see.

The next example of its power is in the institution of the passover. v. 28. "Through faith he kept the Passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first born should touch them." This Jewish feast is commemorative of their deliverance. It is to be observed on the fourteenth day of the first month, annually. Every family must have its lamb or kid, and kill it, reserving the blood, and sprinkling it on the lintel and door posts of their dwelling. The promise of God is, that the destroying angel shall not smite the first born of the houses thus marked; whilst the first born, in all the land besides, both of man and of beast, shall be smitten down. The significance of all these observances is obvious. Faith sees in this blood of the lamb sprinkled, the blood of Messiah, our passover sacrificed for us. It gives substance in the soul—actual enjoyment of the blessed things hoped for—the sacrifice, in the fulness of time, of the first born for the salvation of his church; and their consequent deliverance from all the bondage power of sin. These are such familiar matters that we



shall not delay : except to notice one objection. “ There is a great propensity in some people, even men who are not enemies to divine revelation, to philosophize and explain away important truths. *Ex. gr.* They suppose that the angel of the Lord, which destroyed so many in the camp of Assyria, and the one here mentioned, must be a pestilence or a poisonous wind : because *angel* means one sent : therefore, any thing God sends may be called his angel. Well, it would be a strange wind that would pass by one house and enter another ; a wind that would enter only the lungs of the first born in the family domicile or the barn-yard !— But what do we gain by rejecting the scriptural doctrine of angelic ministering spirits ? Is it not more glorious to the church, that her enemies are cut down by those holy beings than by a pestilential malaria ?—a simoom of the desert ? But how could one angel do so fearful a work in so short a time ? How does electric matter do its work, and yet it is material.” (Mason.)

V. 29. One instance remains in this connection—the ministry of Moses. “ By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land ; which the Egyptians assaying to do, were drowned.”

For the same reason just mentioned for brevity, we need only observe a single point of difficulty ; meet an objection, and deduce some practical instructions.

The point regards the vast body of the people, many of whom were unbelievers. How can they be said to pass through by faith ? We answer, this language does not at all affirm that all passed through in faith : but only that Moses and Aaron, and many others were true believers, and their faith secured the passage of all. Ten true believers in Sodom would have saved it. This social body, like every other, is largely benefited, and therefore, is largely indebted to even the small number of pure-minded and

holy men included in the mass. "Ye are the salt of the earth."

The objection is that natural causes alone may account for this passage. Moses took advantage of the ebb tide, and led his people through that shallow arm of the sea. Well, if the sea were as shallow as the brains of the objector, perhaps the objection might be accepted. But there would still be a difficulty. How could Moses move three millions of people, and all their cattle, and household goods, even ten miles over the bed of a bay, varying from ten to seventy feet deep, during ebb tide? And then, how could Pharaoh and his generals be so foolish as to rush in after them? Could they be ignorant of the tides? But we may not delay with such an unreasonable attempt to shut off God, and his miraculous power from the work of Israel's deliverance. Remarks practical.

1. The necessity of making a choice destroys not moral agency. Moses *must* choose between the reproach of Christ, and the riches and pleasures of Egypt. He cannot avoid choosing, and yet he did it with his whole heart.

2. There is no deliverance from corrupt affections, but by faith in the God of purity and of truth.

3. Alliance to the church is voluntary. If a man be born in it, his abiding is voluntary: if he be born outside, he can come in only by his own voluntary action—which involves the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit.

4. Whatever is not sprinkled with the blood of our Passover, is still exposed to the touch of the destroying angel.

5. The judgments of God—the outpouring of his wrath never make the heart soft. The more Pharaoh felt of them the more wicked he became.

6. Whenever God gives a specific command, and makes himself clearly understood, faith leaves no license, and should obedience put the believer into a position requiring

a miracle to extricate him, the faithfulness of God is pledged, and his power will produce the requisite miracle. Let us not however look for such cases now.

V.v. 30, 31. "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days. By faith the harlot, Rahab, perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace." These are taken from the same time and place. On the borders of the earthly Canaan, through a multitude of miracles, Israel had arrived. It is important to their success in the wars of the Lord, that a signal blow be struck at the very opening of the campaign. This necessity has two aspects: one face turns to the camp of Israel; the other toward that of the enemy: that to give courage and confidence to the Lord's hosts, this to strike dismay and terror into the hostile and doomed legions of the Canaanites. Two phases moreover are important to be perceived; destruction of persons and property who sustain a hostile attitude; and deliverance and safety to such as anticipate the truth and believe in Israel's God.

Of course, the faith is not in the stone and mortar: but in the heart of Joshua, and many, not by any means in all, of his officers and men. Here, as always, in regard to miracles, there must be a specific promise—a pledge from God that he will exert his divine power in the premises. You have the history in Josh. vi. The army were ordered to march round the city, and the priests bearing the ark, and seven trumpets to sound, six days successively: but on the seventh, which would be the day after the sabbath; for they could not violate the sacred day, they must compass the city seven times: and at the long and loud blasts, the walls should fall down flat. This was the specific promise. The cabalistic meaning of the number seven in all this may not detain us: it was the sacred number with the Jews—doubt-

less because of the six days of creation work and the crowning sabbath. All this took place: and the two spies whom Rahab had hidden, as directed, rescued her from the walls, before the ruin came.

We need say little more. The believers in the camp and army, who had long relied upon the great promise, rested now upon the lesser promise, and secured the things specially covered by it. We admit the faith of miracles cannot save the soul; but faith in the Messiah is not at all inconsistent with faith in his almighty power, in reference to any specific work.

Rahab had been, like her of Magdala, an unholy woman; and like her also, had heard of salvation by the seed of Abraham: and James ii. 25 intimates that her faith was a living, working principle, and, by receiving the messengers of Joshua, and protecting them at the peril of her life, proved her faith in the Messiah to be true saving faith.

V.v. 32, 33, 34. "And what shall I say more? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedcon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae, of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets; who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens."

We have in these and following verses a summary whose detail would be tedious and unnecessary. Why *do* I yet *talk*: it is the present tense. Let me name a few more examples, and refer, without naming them, to a still greater number—the *prophets*. Gideon's history is found in Judges vi., and affords a good general illustration of the state of things in Israel, from their settlement in Canaan to the days of Samuel—a period of some three hundred years.

The grand defect in their government was want of unity. The thirteen tribes or states were each a kind of aristocracy. Their elders were civil magistrates and ecclesiastical rulers also. The line of demarcation was not delineated accurately. The priests and Levites were devoted to religious matters, and had control of all that belonged to public worship. But ecclesiastical rule seems to have commingled often with civil affairs, in the hands of the elders. Of these, the Grand Sanhedrim was composed, at the suggestion of Jethro, and was a Court of high commission: it was composed largely of Levites, who were the literati of Israel, and the High Priest generally presided. It lacked however the democratic element. It nowhere appears, that its members were elected from the tribes as popular representatives, and therefore it was a very defective bond of unity. The government of Israel was a theocracy. Special providences called out Judges in times of great peril, and reformation of public manners; and reformation of abuses in government were effected at great labor and peril often. Anon, the judge disappeared—"when the judge was dead, they returned and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods." During this state of things great irregularities occurred. "In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes." Judg. xvii. 6.

From the Judges, our Apostle selects five examples including Samuel. Of course you will not expect here a delineation of their history severally: but simply, in regard to their faith—the point for which they are cited. One remark is applicable to them all—they were called to important and perilous service; and each had special promise of divine support.

Gideon levied an army of 30,000 men to break the yoke of Midian. God directed him to reduce it to 10,000; and

again to 300 men with earthen pitchers and lighted lamps. When called of God, as most worthy men do, he shrank from so great a work, under a feeling of his incompetency: and therefore God gave him strong miraculous proof of his divine call. The specialty of his promise is in these words, "By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand." Thus, his faith in the Angel Jehovah (v. 12), that secures his personal salvation, has a particular promise, and on this it acts and secures its object. And thus again we see, how faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen. Before a pitcher was broken or a shout raised, Gideon knew the victory was his. He looked forward and saw it, just as we, relying upon God's testimony in his word, look back to it and see it.

We should have remarked, that Paul does not follow historical order in these selections. His second looks back to Barak, the son of Abinoam. See Judg. iv. and v. Through the agency of Deborah the prophetess, he received his commission from God—"hath not the Lord God of Israel commanded, saying, Go, and draw toward Mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali, and of the children of Zebulun. And I will draw unto thee to the river of Kishon, Sisera the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude: and I will deliver him into thine hand." v.v. 6, 7. Here is God's promise and Barak believed it; and gloriously did he find it, the substance of his hopes and the proof of divine faithfulness. "And Deborah said unto Barak, Up, for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: is not the Lord gone out before thee? So Barak went down from Mount Tabor and ten thousand men after him. And the Lord discomfited Sisera and all his chariots—ten thousand chariots of iron,—and all the host with the



edge of the sword before Barak"—(v.v. 14, 15). Thus faith gains the victory; and thus it may be again, on this very plain of Jezreel, or as now written, Esdraelon. "It has been," says Clarke, (*Travels* vol. I. 303) "a chosen place of encampment in every contest carried on in this country, from the days of Nebuchodonosor, king of the Assyrians—until the disastrous march of Napoleon Bonaparte from Egypt into Syria. Jews, and Gentiles, Saracens, Christian Crusaders, and Anti-Christian Frenchmen, Egyptians, Persians, Druses, Turks, and Arabs,—warriors of every nation which is under heaven, have pitched their tents upon the plain of Esdraelon, and have beheld the various banners of their nations wet with the dews of Tabor and of Hermon."

3. Samson's history is detailed in *Judg.* 13 to 16, inclusive; and is not marked very distinctly as to its influence upon his religious character. Indeed, most of those called by name, had been guilty of serious moral delinquencies: by which God rebukes the boast of sinless perfection in this life. Samson's consecration as a Nazarite unto God, contained a promise to his parents of a blessing to him; which his parents, of course, communicated to him: and on which, his faith relied. He was, however, characterized from the beginning, and raised up as an Avenger to punish the cruel enemies of God's people. Every time the Spirit of God came upon him, he had the power of a promise, in which he obeyed.

Jephthae's history is found in *Judg.* xi., xii. The evidences of his repentance and piety are few, and not very explicit. His high regard to justice, and anxiety to prevent bloodshed, as exhibited in his diplomacy: and his firm reliance upon the promises, expressed or implied, of success in his battles, are the chief points: and, apart from this affirmation of Paul, give a tolerable ground for a favorable judgment.

The cases of David and of Samuel are so prominent and so familiar to all Bible readers, that we see no occasion for comment. Their long tried and devoted piety, is a beautiful illustration of the power of faith. The writings of Samuel, and the Psalms of David, are full of evidences of faith, working by love, purifying the heart and overcoming the world.

V.v. 33 and 34 allude to the preceding, as resulting from faith : we shall note them in order.—“Subdued kingdoms” —this is peculiarly applicable to Joshua, who may be included among the prophets, for such he was. It is also applicable to most of the others. “Wrought righteousness”—this may apply to all of them, both personally and officially, as rulers. So also the next—“Obtained promises,”—which may refer to the great promise of Messiah, and to the specialities in their several cases.

“Stopped the mouths of lions,”—this may allude to David’s fight with the lion and the bear—but more obviously to Daniel the Prophet, who gave an illustrious proof of the power of faith : very similar to which is the next case, which manifestly refers to his three friends in the fiery furnace. “Quenched the violence of fire.”

“Escaped the edge of the sword.” This is true of all those named ; but especially of David. 2 Sam. xxi. 16, where we are told of an assault upon David on the battle field. When he was much exhausted, Ishbi-benob, the sons of the giant—“thought to have slain David :—But Abishai, the son of Zeruah, succored him, and slew the giant.”

The remaining illustrations are also true of most mentioned already. Restoration from sickness, like Hezekiah—courage and skill in battle, as most, but especially the poet, prophet King, who assures us, God taught his hands to war and his fingers to fight.

V. 35. “Women received their dead raised to life again.” So Elijah—1 Kings xvii. 8, 22, 23—restored to life the son

of the widow: and Elisha did so to the Shunamite's son. 2 Kings iv. 36.

“Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance,” that is not accepting it on the terms proposed usually to martyrs. Renounce your religion—kiss the image of the Emperor—or pray to the Virgin, and your life is your own. Or, still later, acknowledge Prelacy to be of God, and all is well; submit to the Bishop.

“That they might receive a better resurrection.” Some difficulty is here. Better resurrection, than what? The most natural response,—better than that of the widow's and the Shunamite's sons; who were raised from the dead; but died again. Not so with believers; their resurrection is glorious—not to shame and everlasting contempt: but to eternal life and glory. Or reference may be to the first and second resurrection. “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power,” Rev. xx. 6: and they are those who were beheaded for their witness to Jesus—*i. e.*, martyrs.

V.v. 36, 37, 38 refer to a large class of sufferers, who could have endured their trials only in the exercise of an all conquering faith. “And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment”—So Elijah, 1 Kings, i. 23, 24.—“there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head, Go up, thou bald head.” This is the precise idea of the word here, it is formed from a word that means a little boy. So the Philistines called for Samson, that he might make sport for them; and they pour contempt upon him and his God. So Jer. xx. complains—v.v. 7, 8. “I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me. For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the word of the Lord was made a reproach unto me, and a derision daily.” So in v. 2 “Pashur smote

Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks"—So xxxvii. 15. "Wherefore the princes were wroth with Jeremiah, and smote him, and put him in prison"—In like manner—Zedekiah—smote Micaiah on the cheek, and said, "Which way went the Spirit of the Lord from me to speak unto thee?" 1 Kings xxii. 24. "Moreover of bonds and of imprisonment"—is illustrated in Joseph's case—Ps. cv. 18, and other instances of Jeremiah.

"They were stoned"—1 Kings xxi. "They carried Naboth out of the city and stoned him with stones, that he died." So "they conspired against Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, and stoned him with stones, at the commandment of the king." 2 Chron. xxiv. 21. Thus also, Stephen, and many others.

"They were sawn asunder." This kind of death was inflicted sometimes. See 1 Chron. xx. 3. "And he brought out the people that were in it, and cut them with saws, and with harrows of iron and with axes." This fearful punishment did David inflict upon the doomed race of the Amorites; in view of their excessive treachery and wickedness. Such methods of execution were frequent, prior to the ameliorating influence of the gospel. Amos i. 3, mentions as a reason why Syria shall meet the vengeance of God, "because they have threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron." And Isa. xli. 15 alludes to a new threshing instrument having teeth. There is no recorded case of believers having been put to death thus—but doubtless it had been done. "Were tempted," this is a repetition, thrown in here, it is difficult to see why. In the preceding verse it is expressed by the noun—they had *trial*. Here it is in the verbal form, "they were *tried*," perhaps it may have special connection with the most common form of death, mentioned next,—“Were slain with the sword.” More literally, “by slaughter of sword did they die.”

“They wandered about, in sheepskins, and goatskins.” David wandered about, when persecuted, hiding from his pursuers. So Elijah the Tishbite, “he was an hairy man, and girded with a girdle of leather about his loins.” Paul, in 1 Cor. iv. 9–13, gives a good comment on this. “Even unto this present hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and have no certain dwelling place.” And during persecutions—under Antiochus as recorded in 2 Maccabees—under pagan Rome—under Christiano-pagan Rome—under the Scottish kings. In thousands—yea millions of instances were realized all that this language implies—“being destitute”—short of supplies of food and clothing: “afflicted”—ground, like a grain between the millstones—“tormented”—made to endure evils in every form.

V. 38. (“Of whom the world was not worthy.”) *World*, here, means the people; and the world’s unworthiness is their unsuitableness for the society of such godly persons—such they did not merit or deserve to have company with. “They wandered in deserts, in mountains, and in dens, and caves of the earth.” The persecutions in Scotland afford melancholy illustrations in abundance, of what happened in the same kind, in the ancient church. On this score there is nothing new under the sun.

V.v. 39–40. “And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they, without us, should not be made perfect.”

1. Here the Apostle turns back to the position he laid down in v. 2. “For by faith the elders obtained a good report”—they were testified unto by their Lord, as good men, faithful and true. This he has demonstrated by giving us the biography of faith—by an extended induction. Now he deduces his proposition as a demonstration proved beyond contradiction.

2. While the testimony to their faithfulness is abundant, it nevertheless is true, that all these fell short of the promise—they did receive it back to themselves. *Promise*, then manifestly is here understood objectively, meaning the thing promised. That they received the promise *subjectively*; that is, they apprehended the veracity of God, pledging their salvation and his divine aid in their works, is manifest: for faith is impossible except where veracity is pledged in a promise, or a command involving a promise. But still there is a promise which they did not receive; viz., the *matter* of the promise—the great object held up to the eye of their faith—the *incarnation* of the Son of God. This *grand fact* they saw in the distance and rested on it; but they received it not, as an existent reality.

3. This deficiency is made up to us, to whom the gospel is preached as well as unto them. The angels at Bethlehem announced the fact; and the shepherds believed it. This is the better thing which the Lord had reserved for us under the new covenant. Until he should come, *in fact*, and obey, and suffer, and die, and rise from the dead, the covenant of our redemption cannot be sealed: for no promise that does not rest on the covenant sealed by the blood of the Testator, can ever make the inheritance sure; therefore,

4. They, without us—*i. e.*, without this better thing given to us, could not be made perfect. This word *made perfect*, is the same which we had in chap. ii. 10, and often since. It sounded out from His own dying lips—“it is finished;” atoning work is completed. The cup of agony is exhausted. Thus is rounded up and finished, redemption work for all periods; and without it, nothing.



## CHAPTER XII.

VERSES 1-11. This context contains an inference hortatory, from the preceding historical proofs of the mighty power of faith.

Verse first gives us the inference proper to diligence, in preparation for duty and for its actual performance. V.v. 2 and 3 support this by the still higher example of our divine Lord. V. 4 chides for discouragement under the circumstances. V.v. 5-11 contain arguments to patient endurance, from their relations to God as a Father.

V. 1. "Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." Note,

1. The inferential word, rendered, *Wherefore*, is one of very great force; and indicates reasons of great power as having preceded; such as to remove all doubt, and ensure the fullest conviction of the truth advocated. And certainly the array of facts presented do give overwhelming proof, that the ancient believers obtained witness of God, that their faith was to them the substance of things hoped for; gave them such proof of the reality of things not seen; whether things in themselves naturally visible when they came; of spiritual things, in their nature not visible by the natural eye.

2. The reference to the contests in the Grecian games is obvious; and the particular struggle of the contestants is also plain. The proposition in the original, is one, but with

accompaniments. It is thus, rigidly translated, "Let us also run the race set before us." Some detail is indispensable. (1.) *Also* implies that other persons had been running a race, and with certain important accompaniments: wherefore, Let us also, do the same. *Also*, undoubtedly qualifies the verb *run*, and not the word *compassed* about: for such was not the fact in regard to the elders called up as witnesses: the apostle does not mean to assert—and does not in fact, assert that the elders, testified unto, were so surrounded. But (2.) This thing he does assert, of the present company of believers. We are surrounded, by the elders, who hang over and around us like a cloud, as did the assembled thousands around the race course and the theatres in Greece. (3.) He qualifies this vast assemblage of elders, by an indefinite expression, just as he often does in the preceding chapters, so great—so many as we have referred to. (4.) The witnesses previously adduced and now thrown around us like a cloud, are so called mainly, I admit with Dr. Sampson, as testifiers; but also, as it were, spectators to witness our struggles and encourage us in the race, by their presence and example. (5.) Usual precautions are required in the Christian race. He does not detail the long training, dialectic and athletic, to which the competitors were subjected. He only mentions one—the removal of every *weight*—burden, hindrance, which in action endangers success. What is this weight? What endangers success in the Christian race? With the whole xi. chapter before us, there ought to be no hesitancy in the answer:—*unbelief*. (6.) I must think, the conjunction here, ought to be read, *even* the easily surrounding sin. If the racer start with a toga around him, it will wrap itself about his limbs and retard his movements. Now from the whole xi. chapter—and indeed, from the entire drift of the Epistle, it is plain that where there is faith there will be victory—"this

is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith:" but *vice versa*, if unbelief control, all is lost. (7.) We see then that not any particular sin is here meant, that belongs particularly to an individual, into which he is apt and liable to fall, more than into other sins; for then the caution is not against all sin. It is the well circumstanced sin, and common to us all—the old man working in the particular form of *unbelief*. (8.) Characteristic of the running—with *patience*—we have had this—bearing up under trial—courage, persevering energy; all which imply the exercise of faith. (9.) The agony, as we have adopted the word in English. It involves the utmost possible exertion of power. It is set before us. A providential arrangement brings about the agony. We may not expose ourselves wantonly to trials, difficulties, conflicts, but wait and watch the leadings of providence; neither shrinking from, nor rashly putting ourselves into posts of difficulty and danger. (10.) The first last. Let us bear in mind the witnessing spectators of our agony. This cloud of ancient worthies, whose reputation for faithfulness and efficiency is certified in the divine record, are present with us: the eyes of our intellect behold them—our faith recognizes their presence. Every one of them has long since carried off the prize. This gives double weight to their decision. The palm of victory awarded by such judges must be invaluable. There may however be a presence different from this. "Why may not the spirits of the departed saints, which are made like to the angels of God, be also present? What is to hinder these spirits from going and coming like a flash of lightning?" Are we sure that spirit and space have any relation to each other? May not therefore our departed friends be among this cloud of witnesses? But more of this hereafter. (11.) "The angels of God encamp round about the saints who shall be heirs of salvation. Yes,

they are spectators of each worshipping assembly: solemn thought."

But v. 2 brings forward another witness and exemplar. "Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of *our* faith; Who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

1. Faith is on trial in this agony, of such thrilling interest to the spirits of the ancient elders, and to the surrounding cloud of the angelic hosts. The believer's eye should, therefore, turn away from all adventitious and temporary aids, and be steadfastly fixed upon the Healer. If faith is ever to be perfected in us, and to secure the palm of victory in the day of glory, it must and will be, through His divine support, who is its Beginner and Finisher. *Author* comes not up to the full idea here; it is too general. "In the *beginning* was the Logos"—and so Genesis—"In the *beginning* God created," etc.—The word translated *Author*, is composed of this beginning, and a word that means to lead or direct by going before a company. It includes, therefore, both the idea of *originating*—*creating, giving existence to*, and that of *conducting, leading, governing*. We are to contemplate Jesus as the originator of faith; and I would not put in, as *our* translators do, the word *our*: it enfeebles the passage by apparently limiting it to us. The original is general, and includes the article, as Paul gives it. "Looking unto the Beginner of the faith, and Finisher, Jesus." Finisher is the same with "it is finished"—and with *making perfect*, of ii. 10. There is here enjoined, a realizing sense of dependence on Jesus for the generating of faith in the soul, and for its lead and guide in all its activities; and this to continue until it is finished—completed in glory, and swallowed up in vision of the heavenly bliss. He begins faith, and he never begins a work and leaves man to com-

plete it. The Father, who sent him to do the work of salvation, expects him to finish it; and for this, the Father and the Son send the Spirit, who regenerates the dead soul, sheds abroad the love of God in the heart, and implants that faith which must ultimately triumph.

2. Our attention is here directed to the patient endurance of our Lord, its motives and consequences.

(1.) Its motives—"for the joy that was set before him." The preposition *for*, usually means, *instead of*—one thing put in the place of another. In this, the two things are the proposed joy, on the one hand; and the cross and shame on the other. And, like Moses, he had his choice; and instead of joy, he preferred and substituted sorrows and anguish in its room. But with this view we are led to enquire, why? How could he so decide? What is the motive? And the answer brings out what is the more obvious and the common, and, I suppose, the more correct view of the passage, viz., on account of the infinite glory and blessedness—the eternal joy that was proposed as the reward of his faithful service; he endured the cross, etc. Thus we have the substance of Phil. ii. 5–11. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, etc. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him," etc., etc. (2.) The alternative which he chose, is in two parts—(a) bodily suffering—he endured the cross—endured is the verbal form of the *patience* mentioned in verse first—he was *patient*, sustained firmly the cross. Dr. Sampson thinks the articles ought to be omitted as in the Greek. But we cannot say *endured cross*. Our idioms forbid it; yet they admit—*endured crucifixion*, which expresses precisely the true idea. So also, we can say, (b) despising shame—all shame; not the particular shame of crucifixion: and this gives more truly the strength of the passage.

As to (a) above, The sufferings of death by crucifixion

are utterly inconceivable. Oh! the long lingering, acute anguish from the lacerated nerves and torn flesh—the thirst—the writhing of the body—the tossing of the head, and the burning and reeling of the brain. Then add to these (*b*) above, the shame and contempt—the ridicule and scorn, during the very agonies in which he died; and much of the same throughout his whole public ministry.

(2.) The consequences. His rising from the dead, his ascension to glory; and his sitting on the right hand of the throne; and all the glory of judging the world and saving men.

V. 3. “For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your minds.”

The word rendered *consider*, we have not adopted into English; but have the noun from which it is formed. *Analogy* has been long naturalized; but *Analogize* we have not made a denizen in our republic of letters. But, obviously, it means to reason from analogy: that is, from points of resemblance—from *proportion*, as we translate the word in Rom. xii. 6.—“according to the *proportion* of faith:” from resemblance of relations. We are ordered to look into the points in which our Lord’s trials bear a resemblance to our own; to mark his course of action under the circumstances, and thus to reason ourselves into a course of action consistent with the duty. What are the points of resemblance? 1. He came into collision with false doctrines in opposition to his teachings: and these not theoretical, but carried into acts of resistance to law and right: against him personally, many grossly slanderous charges were often made. His humanity was subject to many sinless infirmities—he could suffer from hunger, thirst, buffeting—crucifixion—the nails and the thorns, and the spear could pierce him. Now in many of these things he was tried. Study, therefore, his conduct in all these contradictions against himself, and learn



from these analogies how you should demean yourselves in similar cases. Thus you will be taught to bear up against temptations, reproaches, and all kinds of trials—and not to be wearied and exhausted, and faint hearted; so as to fall back in the race and lose the palm of victory. This he carries into the next verse.

V. 4. “Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.” *Not yet*, contains a hint, that they might be called to present such determined opposition as would occasion persecution unto death. And this he adds, bearing still the allusion to the athletic struggles—striving against sin—*agonizing* against sin:—not against sinners. This would not necessarily include self. But against sin, whether operating in men or devils, or within their own bosoms. Indeed, I think we ought to translate the article, and read—striving—*agonizing* against *the* sin: *i. e.*, unbelief, the root sin, from which all others spring. Against principalities and powers we have to contend—against spiritual wickedness in high places: Eph. vi. 12, and those fleshly lusts “which war against the soul.” 1 Pet. ii. 11. This christian life is a warfare; and no man may hope to indulge in idleness and ease in the progress of this war. Vigilance, diligence, endurance of hardships as good soldiers of the Great Captain—these are to be expected.

V.v. 5, 6. It is characteristic of faith, not to rest in second causes, but to look beyond, to Him who orders and controls all the elements of nature, yea, wicked men and malignant spirits, and makes all things, however apparently hostile, to work together for good to his people. Thus, what are the outbursts of wicked and malicious passions of men and devils; aiming at destruction of peace to God’s people or even their lives? These are often a rod of chastisement in the hand of a kind Father. Learn submission to his rod. V.5, “And ye have forgotten the exhortation which

speaketh to you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him. For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.”

1. Had the Hebrews duly considered the superintending providence of God—that He worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, for his own glory and the good of Zion, they must have seen, that the sore trials of believers above recited, did really, but instrumentally, advance them in holiness; they would not have lost sight of the important distinction between punishment and chastisement. But forgetting—not duly attending to the divine admonition by Solomon, Prov. iii. 11, they lost sight of a Father’s rod, and felt its strokes to be those of a Judge inflicting punishment.

2. Punishment is privation or suffering, inflicted by the executor of law, as his expression of displeasure against its transgression. It springs from the relation of ruler and ruled. But chastisement, is suffering imposed by a paternal hand for the purpose of reclaiming an erring child, by letting it see and feel, that law cannot be trampled upon and a parent’s love set at naught with impunity. It is this love in a parent’s bosom, that makes the difference between punishment and chastisement. This is intimated by the word for *exhortation*; — it means *comforting* advice. A slight modification we have in application to the Holy Spirit, when he is called the *Comforter*. Let us not forget the consoling admonitions of a parent’s love, which *reasoneth* with you as with sons. Let us not account it a little thing. The same is suggested by the word for chastening. It means simply a boy’s—a child’s treatment; and so the verb at the end of the verse, whom the father *chasteneth* not—doth not treat as a son.

3. That no doubt might exist, as to a father’s love expressing itself sometimes in a form so ungainly and for-

bidding, he adds—scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. To scourge is to impose stripes, as Pilate did on our Saviour, Matt. xxvii. 26; as was often done to Paul—five times was I beaten with rods—and as our Lord told his disciples they should be. Matt. xxiii. 34. “The rod and reproof bring wisdom.” “He that spareth his rod, hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.” Prov. xiii. 24. The rod is a divine ordinance in moral government and belongs to a parent. It is with great propriety also put into the hand of the school teacher, who acts by delegated parental authority. In this case, the practical difficulty lies, in first convincing the pupil that love holds the rod. For unless this can be done, the rod and the scourge are worse than useless. For it is then of the nature of justice, and the suffering is punishment, which always hardens and never softens the heart. The consequence is discouragement, faintness, and sinking of the spirit under the reproof. But if the parent or teacher succeed in convincing the child, that the pain of the rod is occasioned by a sincere wish to promote his good—that it springs from love; then it will beget love and secure reformation. But the rod used with passion, only begets passion.

V.v. 7, 8. “If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth. But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons.”

1. We have had this word *endure*, in x. 32, xii. 2, 3, and the sense is here the same. If ye bear up under—exercise patience in afflictions; this is an evidence that ye are children of God; having been adopted into his family; for thus does he deal with all the children of his love.

2. On the contrary, the absence of a child's treatment, proves the absence of a child's relations; ye are outside of the family: for all children of the family are submitted to

the discipline proper to the relation. He speaks of what is proper, and right, and general; although, many heads of families are not so conscientious and strict. Still the law and the rule abide: their unfaithfulness does not abrogate the law. Sonship has security for its proper treatment in life—drilling and training of the family: and heirship to the inheritance: bastardy—illegitimacy has no such rights. The professor of religion who is called to no trials and afflictions in consequence of his profession, and does not endure—patiently bear up under his trials, has reason to doubt the soundness of his profession. The child that does not smart under, and yet kiss the rod, has lost his inheritance. “Let professing Christians, and all others who enjoy uninterrupted temporal prosperity, without corresponding afflictions, take heed lest God be dealing with you as non-heritors of his heavenly kingdom.”

V.v. 9, 10. Here we have an argument from the less to the greater. “Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us; and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us, after their own pleasure: but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.” This is a proof from natural religion, additional to the preceding from revealed. It presents a contrast between the case of subjection to natural parents; and to our spiritual father. Our earthly parents from whom our material bodies of flesh, bones and blood are derived, exercised authority and discipline over us; and we submitted to them, with diffidence and reverential regard, turning our faces away from their frown and censure; acknowledging ourselves in fault: this was right, and reasonable, and profitable.

By how much more then, should we exhibit reverential submission and holy fear before the God of the spirits of

all flesh, who created these spirits and these bodies in which they dwell? And how much greater shall we find our profiting, both in this life and in that which is to come. "For, on the one hand," *etc.* The contrast is continued; let us note its points—(1.) The time, *for a few days* they exercised authority over us—But, (by implication) He forever.

(2.) According to their own judgment and discretion—not after their own fancy, or passion, or whim—but, as appeared to them proper and right: But he in perfect wisdom.

(3.) Their end and design are good, but they cannot ensure the result: But he can and does, *for our profit*—unto our benefit, which under his parental rod is ensured to all his sons.

And this is explained—that we might be partakers of his holiness. More literally—"unto participation of his holiness." Not the essential purity of the divine nature: but that purity and measure of excellence which He sheds abroad in us, when we are renewed and sanctified by His Holy Spirit. And this regards what I have elsewhere called by a forced expression negative holiness,—the removal of pollution out of the soul: and also positive holiness; *i. e.*, the implantation and the indefinite enlargement and growth of all spiritual graces. Such is the end and aim of our Heavenly Father in all the chastisements of his rod. Similar ought to be the object of the fathers of our flesh.

V. 11 closes the discussion about chastisement, by pointing to first effects as unpleasant—2 to secondary consequences, as felicitous—3 The parties to whom they are beneficial. "Now, no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous." (1.) For the time, the suffering lasts—the smarting of the rod is painful. (2.) *Seemeth* does not mean, is *apparent*—but not *real*. But appeareth as it really is—no chastisement is productive of pleasurable

emotions. It is not in the nature of sentient beings love to pain, as such. I may like to swallow a nauseous potion, but not for itself. (3.) Is not joyous—productive of pleasure; but the reverse—painful and unsatisfactory.

2. Secondary, or remote consequence—afterward—after the felt reality of the stinging scourge has passed way, benefits result. (1.) “Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept thy word.” Ps. cxix. 67. Reformation of morals often follows. Prune the vine and it will bear fruit. Let it run long without applying the knife, and the fruit degenerates in quantity and quality.—“he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.” (2.) If we are by chastisement made partakers of his holiness, we must be filled with the fruits of righteousness. “And the work of righteousness shall be peace”—(3.) Thus chastisement yields, not will yield, but as soon as the anguish is over, it doth yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness, active fruit bearing—actual holiness in the life—practical purity must follow.

3. The parties who are thus benefited—they “who are exercised thereby.” Here is again allusion to the games—who exert and exercise gymnastics. Only to such as lay out their strength—such as stir up their faith and all the graces; and who *consider* Him that tries them; who study to analyze his providences; and their own hearts under the afflictions that beset them, will ever realize these blessings. Peace can pervade the soul only in connection with practical holiness. How blessed the soul, that has been tried and proved as silver in the crucible!—who has been subjected to the storm and the tempest; and now, that all is past, sits down in the calm consciousness of peace with all men, peace with conscience, peace with God!

V.v. 12, 13. These contain a practical inference from the preceding. If the afflictions of God’s people are not outbursts of judicial wrath, intended as punishments for sin;



but if, on the contrary, they are only the frown and the rod of a kind and loving father; be not discouraged, brethren! let not your hearts fail, and faint, and give up, as if all was lost forever. But, on the contrary, “lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.” We cannot read this, without feeling its force as an exhortation in the exact line of the Apostle’s argument—both his general and grand logical dehortation from apostasy, and his practical exhortation and persuasion to the steadfast and continued exercise of faith, enduring trials and practising holy duties in God’s service.

The general drift and meaning are plain: yet a few remarks may be useful. 1. It contemplates the persons addressed, as rather in a desponding, timid state of inactivity; or at least of but feeble action. This is expressed in two forms—(a.) *hands which hang down*. Literally, which *remain at the side*—alongside of the body, and so are not in proper, vigorous use. By the hands our physical powers are exerted; and thus we often speak of faith, as the hand that lays hold of the promise. (b.)—*the feeble knees*—this word translated *feeble*, we have since adopted in English—*paralyzed*; and it signifies, loosened, nerves unstrung, joints not duly controlled by the muscles and tendons. And how admirably does this express the mental state, resulting from belief that all is in danger—lost: the heart faints, the soul sickens in terror, in view of all these trials as judgments of God; Belshazzar like, knees smite together, and almost refuse to bear up the trembling body. 2. Then comes the command—*lift up the hands*—believe in a father’s love—go to work; the energy of the hands of faith will soon reach the knees, and bring all the powers into proper action. Faith is the motive power, that keeps the entire

machinery in play. But power may be wrongly directed, and therefore productive of mischief. Hence he adds—"Make straight paths for your feet." Here again is allusion to the games,—straight tracks—the marks made by the wheels of the cars in the chariot race. The idea is simply, direct toward the goal must all our efforts be; every obstruction is to be removed and the rules of the course followed. A man is not crowned except he strive lawfully. These precautions in regard to the track, are to prevent unjust hindrance to the feeble—in order that the lame may not be turned off; when he may be healed and enabled to reach the goal. The track is marked out for the Christian by the word of God, the course we must pursue; and it has the Master's footprints in it. "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." "A Christian is lame when he is in darkness; when he has not just apprehensions of the doctrine of God's covenant, his providences, as controlling all things. He must be borne with tenderly in his weakness. What shall be done with this lame brother? Jostle him about? Throw him off the track? This were cruel. No, cherish him, nurse him, feed him with knowledge, heal him. The minimum of knowledge and of grace, in order to salvation, has not been laid down in the Scriptures; and we are not authorized to reject a professor because he may not yet be up to our standard. We must receive the weak believer, but not to doubtful disputations. Weak faith may become strong; and it will be the more likely to do so, if we set before it a godly example. One feeble kneed soldier may demoralize a whole regiment; one of firm nerve and uplifted hand, may infuse his spirit into a thousand."

V. 14. Love is living Christianity, and peace is its outgrowth. "Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Of course, the loving

spirit which compassionates the lame, soothes his wound and helps him along the track, will seek for him and for all, peace. The following here is diligent, earnest and rapid; such as a hunter practices in pursuit of his game. Of course, it is prudent, wary, cautious. Real peace must be founded on principle. How can two walk together, except they be agreed? Indeed, I think *men*, here supplied by our translators, is not the best word: for to be zealous in seeking peace with profligate persons, is in great danger of leading us to compromise truth; and ultimately to wound charity herself. Hence in Rom. xii. 18, he qualifies the injunction—"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." So in this place, we must connect holiness with peace. They are to be both together followed up with earnest, zealous and cautious diligence. A peace, whether between individuals or nations, that has not right, justice, truth—in a word, *holiness* for its foundation, cannot be permanent; and will not be profitable. James iv. 1, intimates as much. "From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members." The only certain cure for wars and fightings, is the removal of their cause out of men's hearts. Take away the pollution—the wicked lusts, and the enmity is slain. Cleanse the fountain and the stream will be pure. Thus only can we have peace with God.

"Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." To see life, is to live—to enjoy life. To taste death, is to die—to suffer death. To see the Lord, is to enjoy his presence—to be glad in the light of his glorious presence—to be in heaven.

Now without holiness this is impossible: and for two reasons. (1.) In view of God's own character as a just and holy being. These attributes exclude the unjust, the wicked, the polluted from his presence and enjoyment.

(2.) There is an impossibility on our part. Happiness for such beings as we, by nature and practice, are, in presence of so holy and glorious a being as is the Author of all being, is utterly inconceivable. We cannot think of it as a possibility. Hence the necessity of our being *made* holy and just. Hence the entire gospel scheme. Hence, especially, JUSTIFICATION and SANCTIFICATION.

A long, long time ago, a certain man was asked a very civil question—"Where is thy brother?" His answer was scarcely civil—"I know not. Am I my brother's keeper?" We have here a denial of the fundamental law of human association, and a plain proof, by example, of the unsocial nature of infidelity. But the denial, in word or action, or in both, of the existence of a law, does not repeal and abrogate it. This would subvert all government. It is the principle now held by the infidel interest that clamors for the repeal of our Sabbath laws. These laws are disregarded, therefore let them be repealed. In which, there is a false assumption; viz., that the laws are universally trampled underfoot. The contrary of this is more true. The Sabbath laws are respected. But even if it were true, that a moral law is despised very generally, the conclusion does not follow, unless the despisers are the makers. The laws against profane swearing are extensively disregarded, therefore let them be repealed: the laws against murder, are every day violated, therefore let them be abolished. The laws against theft are violated every hour, therefore repeal them. The law of love, which makes every man his brother's keeper, is violated every day, therefore Cain's denial of its binding force, is not right and proper. Thus infidelity subverts all law, all society—and God himself. But Paul agrees not with this philosophy, for he proceeds,

V.v. 15, 16, "Looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God," etc. Observe

1. This phrase, *looking diligently*, is a participle, and refers to the command, *follow peace*, and has the mandatory force. Believers are commanded to look diligently after one another. This word we have adopted into English, in the words *episcopacy*, *episcopate*. The meaning is universally admitted by scholars, to be, to *oversée*. It is a compound word, the latter part of it we have in a great many English words—*telescope*, *microscope*—*skeptic*. To look after, to inspect, to see over: as we translate it in Acts xx. 28, *overscers*. Thus, all believers are overseers of one another: bound to exercise a guardian care for each other. “Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.” Phil. ii. 4. No meddling spirit is here enjoined; but simply the duty of caring for our neighbor’s welfare as for our own. Every man is, by the law of God, his brother’s keeper.

2. This vigilance has several objects pointed out—“lest any man fail of the grace of God.” Lest there be any one *falling short* of the grace of God. I have italicized the words for the participle. It is wrongly translated in Scott’s Margin Bible—*fall from*. Such is never the meaning; but simply falling short. We have it in John ii. 3—the wine failed—ran short; the supply being too small. In Rom. iii. 23,—we have it correctly rendered—“come short.” And in 1 Cor. i. 7—*come behind*. On chap. iv. 1, we had this sufficiently—seem to *come short* of it: the very thought here to be guarded against by mutual oversight.

3. The second evil for which this oversight is to be a prophylactic remedy, is, “lest any root of bitterness springing up, trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.” This is an illustration from agriculture, which Paul borrows from Moses, Deut. xxix. 18. Drawing near his end, the Law-giver warns the people against the abominations of the heathen around them: especially their idolatry. “Lest

there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the Lord our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood." What the particular vegetable referred to may have been, we cannot be certain. Hemlock and wormwood are spoken of. But doubtless there were some very noxious weeds then, as now with us, doing great injury to the farmer. We might instance in our country, the Canada thistle—the wild garlic too has been and is a very great pest, and almost impossible to subdue. Now such was the danger against which Moses warns—idolatry—turning away from God was the bitter root: and this turning away still continues to annoy the church. The spiritual cultivator may, and must watch its springing up; nip it in the bud; root it out. Yet, still, through the subtlety of the enemy, who sows the tares, all his care only keeps down the vile weed. It shoots out in new places, and makes trouble, turmoil and distraction. These bitter roots are sometimes errors in doctrine, and most usually such as magnify human merit. The most annoying, perhaps, of this class of bitter roots, is the Pelagian heresy, as it has proved itself the most tenacious of life. Its fibrous roots twining around the heart-strings of human pride, become invisible, and seem to be extirpated. But anon they spring up again and create trouble, and so many are led astray. Immoralities in conduct spring up from false doctrine. False theories lead to bad practices. Heterodoxy in the head leads the heart astray from God; and sinful customs turn men again to false doctrine for their own justification.

4. The third evil, which episcopating guards against, is the existence in the church of members grossly sinful in life and manners.

V. 16. "Lest there be any fornicator or profane per-



son, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." There are several difficult points here to be noted. (1.) The toleration of gross sexual impurity in the church is to her a disgrace, and must by all means be prevented, or the parties be dismissed from her communion. (2.) We have no unequivocal Old Testament authority, fastening this sin upon Esau. The most like it is in Jer. xlix. 9, 10. This is not decisive and it may refer to Edom nationally. Doubtless as to this particular vice, some have suggested that by dropping the point after person, as Griesbach does, we disconnect Esau from the former vice—"Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person like Esau," etc. This we may do, for the punctuation is not a part of the inspired writing. But however charity may wish to cover his shame, enough is known certainly of his character, to create a very strong presumption of his sin in this behalf. Whether he was a debauchee or not, he certainly was a sensualist. The materialist—the animal predominated. He was what the world calls a good hearted fellow; always ready to enjoy life by the pleasures of taste and animal appetite. He was a profane person, regardless of God and sacred things—a gourmand, an epicure; a mere sportsman. His moral character is read in Gen. xxv. 27–34. He came home hungry from a hunt, and asked his brother to feed him with that same red pottage. Jacob took advantage of his condition, and bargained with him for his birthright privileges—including a double portion of the goods: Deut. xxi. 17: and thus Esau despised his birthright. Our text says "he sold it for one morsel of *meat*"—not *flesh*, as we use the word meat now; but food—"bread and pottage of lentiles," "bread for your *food*,"—eating: properly it means the act of eating—hence a meal of victuals. His repu-

tation for reckless sensuality was well established. Hence the Apostle appeals to their knowledge of it. "For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." His determination to kill Jacob (see Gen. xxxvii. 41) in the burning of his hate toward him, must not be lost sight of in forming an estimate of his character. His marriage also among the idolatrous Hittites (Gen. xxvi. 34, 35, xxvii. 46) was a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebecca. The sale of his birthright was before his marriage, which was at his fortieth year, and of course when his father was an hundred. Gen. xxv. 26.—v. 20. The exact time in his life when he sold his birthright cannot be ascertained; but it was when he was a young man. The "afterward" of v. 17 must have been after many years: for his effort to obtain the blessing was after his marriage, and after Isaac was almost blind, and he lived one hundred and eighty years. Now it was amid the feebleness of age, and in the exercise of a fondness, for which, as its occasion, cause and outgo, no apology can be rendered; and when he must have known that Esau had sold and thus contemned his birthright, that Isaac attempted to turn away the blessing of the promised seed from the line marked out by the Lord. Isaac had been told before they were born that "the elder shall serve the younger"—Gen. xxv. 23. It was therefore a grievous sin in Isaac, which he attempted to accomplish. No wonder therefore, when he discovered the fraud by which he had been prevented from doing this wrong thing, and led to pronounce the blessing on the right person, that "Isaac trembled exceedingly." It was the recoil of conscience, upon his discovery of his misguided *design*, which was frustrated by means which morality condemns. He saw the hand of

God in it, and was reproved; and repented; and did what in him lay to make amends for his designed counteraction of God's expressed purpose. All his own sighs and tears and anguish of mind, combined with all Esau's sobs and distraction and earnest pleading, failed to produce a change of mind. God did not repent and order Isaac to give the blessing to Esau. Isaac did not repent of what he had ignorantly done, and recall the blessing from Jacob, which was promised specifically before he was born. Esau did not repent of his own sin in selling his birthright; but now perpetrated more sin, in endeavoring to get back from Jacob the birthright which he had sold, and rejected by a solemn oath. For really it was not the spiritual promise he regarded; but the temporal advantages usually connected with it.

The reader perceives that I understand the word—the Greek word for repentance, in the generic sense of *change of mind*. It usually means, a saving change. This would here force us to inquire, whether Esau sought a change of heart and mind in himself, and that a careful seeking with tears, and yet did not find place for it? This is too absurd to be maintained. Was it true repentance in Isaac, that Esau sought so importunately and so tearfully? Then he must have viewed his father as an impenitent person, and been zealous for his salvation. Can any man believe this, and reconcile it with the character of Esau? Did he seek saving repentance in God? There is then left but the one other conceivable meaning. What Esau did seek—the thing which he manifestly and plainly did labor after, was a change of mind in Isaac, so that he should confer temporal blessings on him: which Isaac, in a degree did; but no change of mind took place in reference to the spiritual blessing.

From this history, let us be warned against the spirit

of sensuality. In this materialistic age, we are drifting toward epicureanism; animal pleasures are the rage.

We see how faith conquers the strongest desires of nature. Isaac submitted to God, despite his undue attachment to his favorite son.

V.v. 18-24. This context is introduced as a reason supporting the exhortation in v.v. 12, 13, etc. "Lift up the hands which hang down"—Let your religion show itself in active, zealous duties, beyond any thing under the old dispensation, for your privileges are greatly superior; because they came to a mount that was tangible, etc. He takes the two mounts, Sinai and Sion, as symbols of the two covenants. Let us note the characteristics of each, and bring them into contrast as we proceed.

1. The Old Testament church was a tangible mountain. Sinai was a material mass, which men could touch with their hands and their feet. To such you are not come; v. 18,

But ye are come v. 22, to Mt. Sion, a spiritual mountain, not cognizable by the bodily senses: but present to the faith.

2. Mt. Sinai to them was all ablaze, it was arrayed in blackness at times, "and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words"—all adapted to fill the soul with terror. To such, they of old came; but not so ye. Here in our Spiritual Mount are no such fearful displays—our mount is not a barren and terrific wild, but it is the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, built of living stones; heavenly in its origin, and its citizenship is holy—the city of the great King in his new kingdom. To this spiritual habitation, this renovated society of saints on earth, are ye come.

3. They of Old were suitably influenced and affected by the fearful scenery around them;—terror stricken, they entreated "that the words should not be spoken to them any

more; and so terrible was the appearance—and so fearful the sounds, that they could not endure that which was commanded; and if so much as a beast touched the mountain, it shall be stoned or thrust through with a dart; and even Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake.” Not to such are ye come. For though God still uses the ministrations of angels, and ye are come to them, and they are all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to you who shall be heirs of salvation; it is not in fearful exercises of their powers, as often to the Old Testament church: their ministrations are unseen, but effectual and comforting to his people. See remarks on Chap. i. 14.

Before we proceed to other points, let us be sure of our geography. Can it be possible, that the Apostle is speaking on the one hand, of the Sinai church and covenant; and on the other hand, of heaven? Has he lost his logic? Or is he not laboring to draw the Hebrews out in determined steadfastness, in view of the trials before them here in the New Testament dispensation? I cannot persuade myself into the belief, that farther argument is necessary. Surely, the precise things he is here contrasting, are the two dispensations in their characteristic features; their respective advantages and disadvantages. Those of the Old Testament have been stated on v.v. 18–21, contrasted with which, are v.v. 22–24. Verse 22 contains three points, already noticed. The other two present six or seven. Continuing the numbers, we proceed.

4. We are come, v. 23, “to the General Assembly, and Church of the first born, which are written in heaven.” The word thus translated, signifies a general meeting of the entire people. In political movements, we have a phrase very expressive of the idea—*a mass-meeting*: where an entire people are assembled for business. The more common, and perhaps correct opinion, is, that this is but another name

for *church*; both words meaning the same thing. *Church* has, however, more especial reference to the vocation and organization of the mass, inclusive, indeed, of the mass itself. The phrase *first born* is vague in English—it might refer to the caller, and ruler of the church—the *First born* of many brethren—the Saviour. It is, however, in the plural—the first born persons. Then it may be connected with the general assembly of the first born; and the church of the first born, or with both. The latter, I take to be the sense.

*First born*, in Hebrew phraseology, means the more honorable; the first born son had a double portion of the inheritance, and the ruling power in the tribe. But I forbear—see on i. 6. The General Assembly of the first born children: and the church of the first born children; these are both included, and compose the one body of God's redeemed. In the highest sense, the elect of God; the whole body of those whose sins he took away by the sacrifice of himself—that Lamb of God, "of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." This the only true catholic or universal church. No visible body of Christian professors ever was, or ever will be on earth before the millennium, catholic. Of this general assembly and church of first-begotten ones—persons pre-eminent, it is further said, they "are written or registered in heaven." Reference is had to Num. iii. where Moses is ordered to make a register of all the male population; from which that book takes its name—Numbers. And, Luke x. 20, "rejoice rather that your names are written in heaven." And into heaven they only shall enter, "whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life." In these and other similar passages, is set forth the idea of God's perfect knowledge of his elect. He needs no register; infinite knowledge sees them at all times and under all circumstances: and this is the thought presented



in the expression *written in heaven*. To this church we are come, in all the exercises of sacred, spiritual worship; our spirits hold communion with the myriads of angels and with the distinguished first begotten: not with slavish fear as in the presence of a burning mountain; but in sweet accord, in harmony and love; in holy freedom and boldness of access as to a kind Father. For,

5. We are come "to God the Judge of all." Judge is here taken in the general sense of governor, presiding magistrate; and not in its strict and limited sense of presiding court officer to pass sentence according to law. Thus we have a book of Judges—who judged Israel—administered the government, like Samuel, who was the last of that class. Our method of approach, and submission to God is very clearly different from theirs under Moses' law. The clearer light, the fuller development of the gospel scheme, make a vast difference in our approach: and we can think of him as a Judge without terror, knowing full well that he is reconciled in fact by the blood of atonement; and consequently his judicial decisions are always in favor of his chosen. The want of sensible evidence of the divine presence in our worship is nothing, as against the fact that God is with us: for this contradistinguishes us from them. Their dreadful display of that presence at Sinai, is an evidence of its inferiority, and of the superiority of the New Testament worship, which is spiritual and involves a felt, practical reality of that presence. Thus we are come to God, who is now and will be in the great day our Judge; our intercourse and communion with him is real and abundant and heartfelt; though not addressed to our bodily sight or hearing, as to theirs.

6. We are come, in the same sense, "to the spirits of just men made perfect." "I'll be often with you, when you won't know it," said one of these spirits to the writer when it was

just on the eve of departure from the body; and added: "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation?" That the souls of the redeemed, being separated from the body, should be employed as the angels are, ministering to the living saints, is in itself so reasonable, that I should entertain the sentiment, if the Bible were silent on the subject: not however as a matter of faith, properly so called, but as an opinion—a pleasing notion. The general prevalence of ghost stories, the popular belief on this subject so extensively prevalent, must have some foundation in truth. Superstition itself is but a perversion of truth. If utterly inconsistent with reason, superstitious notions could not control men as they often do. It is their consistency with reason, which gives them their power. I can see nothing unreasonable in the conception, that the souls of dead believers are employed, like the angels of glory, as messengers of mercy to living saints. It may be objected to this, (1.) that we have no knowledge of it. Answer (*a*), we have no knowledge of angelic ministrations; and yet the Bible affirms them as realities. (*b*) We have no knowledge of our soul's activity when we are asleep; but do you believe the soul is then inactive? (*c*) We have no knowledge now, of ninety-nine hundredths of our soul's activities during our waking moments, are they therefore repudiated as nonentities? Ah! the judgment day will show, that facts and man's knowledge of them are often very different. (*d*) We often come very near to actual knowledge of such intercourse. What are dreams, but the imperfect memories of our mental activities, in the brief moment, when we are just awaking to consciousness out of sound sleep? The train of our thought courses along with lightning speed, and in the moment of its interruption, when it is being hitched on again to the sluggish bodily machine, we seize upon a part of the careering

train and retain a few broken fragments. A dream has one of two characteristics; "it cometh from a multitude of business;" or from physical excitation from without, some disturbance of the nervous system. There is a third class moreover, which I never could reduce to either of the former; and of which I can give no other rational account, but by reference to the intervention of spirits of the departed. They are so distinct in their conceptions; so animated and life like in their feelings; so consoling, soothing, and lingering in their influences, that I can find no explanation for them, but the language of our text—"we are come to the spirits of just men made perfect."

(2.) A second objection to this doctrine, is, how can these things be? How can spirits, disembodied, hold conscious intercourse with spirits still in the body? Answer (a) I do not know; any more than I know how spirits in different bodies here, hold intercourse with each other. Your soul and mine communicate with each other; can you tell how? Can you explain the mode of your soul's ingress into my body; and when in there, how it communes with mine; or, *vice versa*—how my soul passes in through your eye, ear, and confers with yours? If no man pretends to knowledge here, how unreasonable to make this ignorance an objection. (b) Apply this to our intercourse with the angels—how do they minister, encamped round about us, as we know they are, to our protection, safety, comfort, and we have no conscious knowledge of it? or, (c) How do angels know each other, and confer between themselves? How do they know God's commands, and obey them? Or, (d) How do the souls in glory recognize each other, and confer about the things of earth and time? How do they know Jesus? How do they receive thoughts from God, and pour out their hearts before him there? Or even here?

Plainly then, difficulties as to the mode of cognition, and

of coming to a knowledge of spirits of the just, are no counter proof; or then, intercourse must be denied every where. *How* did he open thine eyes? I know not, nor do I care. Here is the fact—I was blind; now I see.

7. Of *just persons perfected*. We must again refer you to our comment on ii. 10; and also on xi. 40 for the meaning of this word—*made perfect—completed*. Believers, under the Old Testament, were not finished, completed; the sacrifice of Christ was not actually offered up until he said—*It is finished*. But when the sacrifices all, from Abel's to Calvary, centred in the last, and he said, *it is perfected*, the old believers and the new, all were completely secured. It refers not to their personal character or to ours; to their regeneration, faith, repentance, sanctification; or to ours; but to the simple grand fact, that the price of redemption, which, in the covenant of grace, He pledged himself to pay—this whole price is PAID: the *chureh's redemption is perfected*.

8. We cannot withhold the practical remark, How pleasing the thought, that our beloved friends, who enjoy in glory the benefits of the completed atonement, are permitted to visit us whilst we still linger in the vale below? In how many ways do they snatch us from temptation, do they whisper to our spirits, this is the way we travelled—it leads to the heavenly home. How sweet the thought, that our dear departed ones, stand by the dying couch and witness our last struggle, and strengthen us against temptation: and the moment of our release; oh, with what glad emotions do our freed spirits, now in open recognition of their presence, embrace them, and with them wing their way to the heavenly glory? Who, oh, who, among the countless throng—"the thousand thousands that minister unto our blessed Jesus, where he sits in the right hand of the throne"—Oh, who, among the ten thousand times ten thousand that stand before him, who so likely to desire and

expect the embassage to our dying couch—who so likely to obtain it, as those who with us, have fought the good fight of faith, and finished their course with joy: and, who have but recently traveled the road to glory and to God? Oh, yes; we are come now to the spirits of the just made perfect: they now minister to us; and await us at the gates of death.

9. “And to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant.”

In the general force of the word, Moses was a mediator: he stood between God and the people; communicated God's commands to them, and their acceptance of the covenant proposed to God. See Gal. iii. 19. But in a far higher sense, is Jesus the Mediator. He stands and ministers in the highest, and most important services; as Prophet, Priest, and King, he leads the church to all saving knowledge; for the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy. All that we know about salvation, comes to us through him. He fulfilled all righteousness, and as our Surety, endured for us the full penalty of the law, until he could say with truth, *It is completed*. And He only, by his Holy Spirit, subdues us unto himself, and he reigns in and rules over and defends us. Now, the point affirmed here, is, that we are come to Jesus, the healer, as to a Mediator. But, it may occur—to every reader who *thinks*, it doth occur, did not the Old Testament church come to God in the faith of this same Messiah; where, then, is the difference? I answer in a similar sense, as I have just used the word church,—calling it the Old Testament church; though there are not two churches, but one only, which he hath redeemed with his own blood. They of old came unto God, through the same Mediator; but under very different circumstances. We have seen, that it was God in the second person, that delivered the law on Sinai, amid the flame, and the smoke, and the darkness, and that fearful sound of the trumpet,

before which awful displays, the souls of three millions of people did quake and tremble. And at the sound of the same voice and the same trumpet, in the great day of God Almighty, the hearts of all the living and all the dead, from Abel, until that same day, shall quake and tremble, and come to the Judge of the living and the dead. But, oh! with what different emotions!—"Some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

Now, it is in the former sense we are come to him—as "the Mediator of the new covenant"—as the finished Mediator, who has completed his work and entered into his rest, and consecrated a sabbatismos for his *called*, and *sanc-tified*, and *saved church*.

V. 24. "And to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than *that of Abel*." Note,

1. Universally is it agreed, that this blood of sprinkling, is Christ's own blood, shed for many for the remission of sins. There is manifest reference, first in chronological order, to the blood of the paschal lamb: its sprinkling on the lintel and door posts, was a sign, and restrained the sword of the Angel of death in the fearful night of Egypt's sorrows. The next reference is to the sprinkling of the book and the people. See on ix. 19, etc. Another is to the language of Isa. lii. 15—"so shall he sprinkle many nations." And, concerning the restoration of Israel to his "own land" in days to us yet future, he says, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean," etc. Ezek. xxxvi. 25, etc.

2. This sprinkling hath a tongue, and speaks a very intelligible language. It bears upon the one grand point discussed in chap. ii. 10, "the making of the Captain of our salvation perfect through sufferings."

3. This intelligible language is placed in comparison with Abel's sacrifice, or his own blood; and has the preference.



It speaketh better things. In the close of chap. xi. we are told, that God had some better things in store for the church under the New Testament, better than under the Old. Now this better thing, is not a sacrifice differing in its nature and moral and legal substance from those of paradise, or of Abel at the first sabbatic public worship recorded. Adam's, and Abel's, and Enoch's, and Noah's, and Abraham's sacrifices of living animals, slain and burnt on the altar, all meant one thing: and that one thing was identical with that of Christ on the cross. In what respect then did they all fall short, so that some better things are required? Thirteen times in this epistle, does the author use this comparative word; and always in reference to the superiority of Christ's sacrifice. Not by way of contrast, as if the others meant a different thing from His; but always and only, in regard to the degree of security suggested to the minds of the worshippers, arising from the fact, that to them of old, the sacrifice typified, was yet in the dim future. It was not a thing embodied in actual fact; and never was, until he bowed his head and said, "It is finished." This is the point of contrast. If the reader has any doubt, let him take his reference Bible and examine the thirteen cases: then, if he agrees in this, he will also agree, that the sacrifice or sprinkling, speaking better things than *that of* Abel—means, not than Abel's own blood; but than the blood of his sacrifice; which, we have seen, pointed to Christ.

4. This will appear more decidedly, by inquiry after the meaning, if it be referred to the blood of Abel himself—"the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." *For* what did it cry? For vengeance, most assuredly—for justice? But is justice the better thing that God had provided for the New Testament church, that the Old might be perfected? xi. 40. Can you raise the question of good, better, best, between justice on the one hand

and the perfection of a sacrifice on the other? Can you compare directly, unlike quantities? It is the *degree* of excellence in the sacrifices—in the blood of sprinkling and its efficacy and practical utility, that is inquired after: not at all does he inquire whether Christ's sprinkling speaks better things than the blood of murdered Abel.

On this much mooted point, I have been a good deal exercised, because it pains me to be obliged to differ from Dr. Mason—a thing that has very rarely occurred. He held once the interpretation here advocated; but states that he had been constrained to adopt the sentiment, that it is Abel's own blood which is here meant, and in this he adopted Owen's exposition.

V.v. 25-29. We have here, I. An earnest dehoration from apostasy. II. An argument in support of the same—v.v. 25-27. III. An inference, shutting us up to the necessity of obtaining grace to support us. IV. Closing with an appeal for warning, to the jealousy and the justice of God.

I. An earnest dehoration. "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh:" Take heed how ye hear. Not every speaker is worthy to be heard. Why should I listen to a man babbling nonsense; even if he profess to do it in the name of the Lord? The matter of the message must be looked into. "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." Hence, it seems to be inferred by some, that it is not necessary to speak sense, in order to the salvation of men. But the foolishness of God—that is, His wisdom revealed in the gospel, which the world calls foolishness,—is wiser than men; and the proclamation of his blessed gospel which the world calls the foolishness of preaching, is the great instrumentality for the conversion of sinners. Nor are we to disregard the messenger wholly; yet is it our duty to try the spirits whether they be of God. It is the truth believed that saves the soul: the truth re-

jected ruins the soul, simply because it leaves all its sins upon it; which must crush it down to endless death.

2. But the term *refuses*, implies more than a negation. It implies a knowledge of the truth, and a deliberate action in throwing off. Unbelief has a positive quality; and this constitutes its great aggravation as the damning sin. But, moreover, the wilful refusal to hear a speaker, includes, besides the sin against the truth, a contempt cast upon the speaker himself. It is a personal offence.

3. There is no question as to who is here meant. Christ speaks to us: in his word; in his works; in his law; in his gospel; by his angel messengers of Old; by his ambassadors now; by the whispers of his spirit; by the terrors of his judgments.

II. The argument in support of this dehortation. It is in a form with which we are familiar: *i. e.*, from the less to the greater. "For, if they escaped not, who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven."

The logical substance is the same as we have had on chap. x. 28, 29. If those who rejected the ministrations by Moses, who spake on earth, despised his laws and contemned his person, could not escape the punishment due to their crimes: much more impossible will it be for us to escape, if we turn away from the Son of God, who speaketh from heaven. The expression *turn away*, is stronger than the other—*reject*; it implies, if possible, a more deliberate movement,—who *turn ourselves away from*; and marks very distinctly the sin of apostasy.

But we have seen, long since, that the dispensation under the Sinai institutions was really set up, and ordered by the

Lord our Redeemer. It was he that flamed out on Sinai, amid his thousands of angels; it was his voice, and the clang of his trumpet, that shook the hearts of the people, and made the mountain to tremble. But he tells us, by the mouth of Haggai, ii. 5—nearly a thousand years afterward,—“I covenanted with you, when ye came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth among you; fear ye not. For thus saith the Lord of hosts; yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth and the sea, and the dry land. And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come:” From this our Apostle quotes, and proceeds to prove the entire change of the whole system of worship and ordinances. Note

1. The Hebrew people only were at once affected by the Sinai wonders: yet they, both in regard to the civil government and to the ecclesiastical. Earth and heaven, in prophetic language, very commonly mean, civil government and the church: and Haggai is here prophesying. But

2. This shaking spoken of by the prophet, regards not the literal earth—the trembling mountain; but the civil and the ecclesiastical—the symbolic earth and heaven. Yea, it is to be such a shaking as shall reach all nations, in all their interests—the sea, and the dry land: a universal revolution shall follow; for the Desire of all nations shall come.

3. This shaking plainly intimates the movable nature and condition of the shaken things, as things that are made, *i. e.*, by human hands and minds—as the contrary of that house not made with hands, which is to remain. Thus your own prophet, more than five hundred and fifty years ago, predicted the removal of the entire system of civil and ecclesiastical ordinances, in order that the glorious, spiritual temple, not made with hands, and which cannot be shaken,

may be introduced under Prince Messiah, and extended over all the nations of the earth.

III. An inference, urging us to seek the grace needful to duty in the incoming glorious and immovable kingdom. V. 28. "Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom, which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear." Note

1. The immovable kingdom is the church of God; of it, Jesus is the King: it comprehends all his people, who, by faith, embrace the great salvation. Having become members of this great spiritual commonwealth, our first business is to look after the attributes and qualities indispensable to fit us for the duties of citizenship.

2. These duties are comprehended in the verb *may serve* God acceptably. Very various are the services required in the service of this King. These are private, belonging to every citizen; and public and official. They call for hard service—severe labors of patient endurance; and also active exertion. Hence, infinite variety of gracious qualifications. Of these

3. *Let us have*, implies two things—let us procure, and let us hold fast or keep. The acquirement of gracious qualifications is to be effected by application to the source of supply—Go to those that sell, and buy for yourselves—"Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." The holding fast of what we have, is effected only by the constant use. Occupy till I come.

4. The characteristics of the service—the manner. Two are mentioned. With reverence—bashfulness, self-distrust—humility. God knoweth the proud afar off: he resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.—*godly fear*—piety. We have had this in chap. v. 7—which see.

IV. This exhortation is sustained by a reference to the holy jealousy of the Lord. V. 29. "For our God is a consum-

ing fire." This is quoted from Deut. iv. 24. "For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, *even* a jealous God:" And it is there given as a reason of caution against the sin of idolatry. "Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the Lord your God—for thy God is a consuming fire—a jealous God."

How beautifully all this falls into line with the grand design of the epistle! God is just, and holy, and jealous over the waning affections of his own beloved children, let us, therefore, hold fast the profession of our faith, for he is faithful that promised.



## CHAPTER XIII.

VERSES 1-7. From the solemn warning and admonition to faithfulness, in view of the great change now in progress, our Apostle passes on to the prime social duties and characteristics of Christianity. This is the only religion known to man, which sums up all its practical substance in one word—"LOVE is the fulfilling of the law." This principle of communicative goodness—Charity, must have an object. It is ever active, and its outgrowth varies in character with its object. As love to God is the sum of religious duties; so love to man comprehends all social duties. Assuming its existence in the bosoms of the Hebrew Christians, he *first*, enjoins its continuance; v. 1.

*Secondly*, he divides it into two classes, by its objects—viz., *hospitality* in regard to strangers; v. 2: and benevolence and sympathy for the body of Christians in afflictions: v. 3.

In v. 1 we have a command for the continuous exercise of Love to the brethren. "Let philadelphia, (brotherly love) continue." This, as just stated, implies its existence. Where there is no love to the brethren of the household, there is no love to the head of the house. All true believers have the love of God shed abroad in their hearts; and he that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him. If a man say I love God, and yet hateth his brother, he is a liar; for the thing is impossible. Love is like the spiritual life of the soul; if it cease to act it is not. The con-

tinuance of this prime grace involves its perpetual activity ; yea, its continual growth : for it is under the law of progress. Its constant activity necessarily ensures its advancement : and thus it will continue for ever. "Charity never faileth." Its origin is in the heart of God and thither it ever returns.

2. But objectively, it analyzes itself according to its relations, which are twofold—the love of benevolence and the love of complacency. This takes delight in the brethren, because of their moral excellences—their nearness and likeness to the family of the faithful : that wishes well to all and labors for their good.

V. 2. "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers;" hospitality, though not exclusively, is a Christian virtue. It has always been accounted, even among the heathen, a moral virtue and highly praiseworthy. But much more, when sanctified by true love, it becomes a grace. It grows up from the perceived and appreciated relation of a universal brotherhood. No sooner does the sanctified heart perceive, that God hath made of one blood all nations of men, than it yearns for the welfare of all and works for their eternal good. Nor is such labor in vain. It recoils upon itself in the rewards of a good conscience : and it is encouraged by the fact, that in the exercise of hospitality "some have entertained angels unawares." Here is reference to Abraham and Lot, Gen. xix., who extended hospitality to apparently strange men, who were yet messengers—angels of God.

The love of complacency recognizes a nearer ; a more intimate relationship.

V. 3. "Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body." Here 1. The word for remember, signifies more than simply, memory, which is

largely involuntary. *Keep in mind*—let your desires for their relief coalesce with tender sympathy with them in their imprisonment: keep up a fellow feeling for them: so that you share in their sorrows, and relieve them of half their distress. Thus prayer was offered for Peter—prayer, that broke off his fetters, and burst open the iron gate. “Bear ye one another’s burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ.” All sympathy springs from community of nature; and is called into action by similarity of circumstances. Hence, one reason why Christ assumed humanity: otherwise he could not have been a sympathizing High Priest. Whilst we are ourselves in the body and liable to similar trials and sorrows, with others, let us bear their burdens and share their triumphs.

*Thirdly*, Our attention is called to two of the strongest passions of our nature, whose perversion causes most of the sorrows to which flesh is heir: the *sexual appetite*, v. 4 and *avarice*. v. v. 5, 6. The objects of desire in both are, in their nature, legitimate: the sin and the ruin result from unlawful indulgence.

V. 4. “Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers, God will judge.” Two remarks expository are here required. 1. The word to be supplied may be, *is*, as our translators give it: this makes the sense a simple affirmation of the fact, that marriage is honorable: or it may be hortatory, imperative. *Let it be*; as in Rom. xii. 9. “*Let love be* without dissimulation.” The three imperatives, in verses, 1, 2 and 3, are fixed in the form of expression. So is it in the 7th v., in the 9th, the 13th, the 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th; and these create a high presumption, that in the 4th, when the verb must be supplied, it should also be in the imperative mood; as a command and exhortation. Protestant commentators mostly take this view: and probably have been too much

influenced by the papistical use of the other form, "Let marriage be honorable." To the nine instances, above mentioned, of the imperative hortatory, we must, in honesty add the two of v. 5, where we are under the necessity of supplying the substantive verb, in the imperative form; "*Let* your conversation *be* without covetousness; *and be* content," etc. Here are eleven instances of the hortatory imperative: the two of v. 5, being precisely similar to that of v. 4; and yet we make this last an exception by using the indicative, "Marriage *is* honorable." Is not this dishonorable and uncritical? Is there any just reason for it? Can we avoid in any way whatever, the imperative hortatory in v. 5? Can we say, "your conversation *is* without covetousness"? Can we say, "you *are* content with such things as ye have? I am persuaded we ought to read it, "Let marriage be honorable"—*i. e.*, be held, reputed, and accounted honorable. If papists can make any capital out of it, in favor of celibacy of their clergy, let them have it; for assuredly this horrible, dishonorable and soul destroying and sex polluting doctrine of theirs, needs ground to stand on. But how this avails to them, I cannot see. They are commanded and exhorted here to account marriage honorable; how do they this? By prohibiting this honorable relation to their clergy! Does this put honor on it? or disgrace? If their clergy are a debased, libidinous, immoral, corrupt set of men, whose contact is pollution, then indeed their prohibition from matrimony is an honor to marriage. On what other hypothesis they can gain anything, is not easily seen. Let them make marriage a sacrament and prohibit their clergy from it; this may balance their account for withholding half the sacrament of the supper, viz., the wine from the laity; but how it honors marriage it would take a Jesuit to explain.

Our Apostle, in 1 Tim. iv. 1, 3, puts the seal of reprobation

tion upon this lust-born heresy—"forbidding to marry." God, knowing what corruptions would arise in Rome, forewarns the church in both these places, and affirms the purifying influence of marriage upon social man; and its honorable character, to all lawfully introduced into it: and this leads to,

The 2d expository remark; it regards this expression, *in all*. It cannot mean in all cases of actual marriage; for many are unlawful from various reasons; incest, pre-engagement, ante-nuptial pollution, etc. It cannot mean, in all persons absolutely, for all are not, and never can be united in marriage. It cannot mean merely, in all circumstances and conditions, for many are disgraceful. But it does mean, that marriages, contracted and consummated according to the law of God, therein made and provided, among all classes and orders, and conditions of men and women, are, and are to be deemed and esteemed, right and proper, praiseworthy and reputable. In short, it has express and specific reference to, and prohibits the doctrine of papistical celibacy. Marriage was instituted during the state of innocency in paradise; but the Romish clergy are holier and purer than Adam and Eve! They would be polluted by obeying God's law and Adam's example! But they are not polluted by their intimacy with the thousand brothels around the Vatican! Alas! the nearer the Pope, the more dishonored is marriage, the deeper the damnation of sexual impurities, the more crimson the dye of the great Babylonian harlot, and mother of abominations.

But the marriage which is urged as honorable, is based on chastity, and honors its foundation—the bed undefiled—It is a union for life, and is a most effective prophylactic against all the impurities prohibited in the seventh commandment. Corrupt this primitive social relation, and debase it, as Rome does, and you uproot society: destroy it,

and you annihilate the race. It is the regulator of that deep seated passion, without whose existence, the race must run out very shortly ; and yet, in whose abuse, very many of human woes have their origin. Curbed, and checked, and regulated by the laws of marriage laid down in the word of God, this sexual feeling works only good to man, and glory to God: but unchecked and unregulated, all the terrible ills of an overgrown and brutal—yea, worse than brutal population, must soon sweep over and depopulate the earth.

And this opens the door to our exposition of the fearful curse that follows—"but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." These terms well express the ideas. The former points out sexual impurities between unmarried persons; the latter between persons one or both in the married relation. The judging here is unto condemnation. Man may fail of justice in many cases, because the sins are secret; but God knoweth the misdeeds of the secret chamber—and will expose the villainy before an assembled universe. One practical lesson let us press. The relation of marriage is honorable, when honorably entered into. This requires prudence, chastity, careful study of the scriptures in the premises—prayer and humble trust in divine direction. Let christians, having such relations in prospect, remember, that "a prudent wife is from the Lord." And let them remember, that a reformed rake—reformed as a condition of marriage, makes a perilous husband; and a subdued Xanthippe, a poor chance for a good wife. Let them marry, but only "in the Lord."

V.v. 5, 6. Here the other strong passion is discussed—"*Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man*



shall do unto me." Here is a sin to be guarded against; a duty contrary thereto enjoined; encouragement by faith in the promised protection of providence; and the high and calm confidence which results to the believer who thus honors God.

1. The sin to be avoided is covetousness—rather, I should call it, avarice—literally, love of money—love of silver; showing that then, as now with us, silver is the standard by which all other things are measured. The silver dollar is our money unit, by which all values—even that of gold, are measured. Hence it is generalized, and signifies property at large—goods of all kinds—lands and houses, carriages and horses, railroad cars and ships, and all the riches of trade and commerce. But now, "every creature of God is good, and to be used with thanksgiving." Money is not the root of all evil, to which Paul refers in 1 Tim. vi. 5-11, and which he traces to the love of silver. The sin lies in making gods of gold, and worshipping at the shrine of Mammon. Hence, in Col. iii. 5, he commands us to mortify "covetousness, which is idolatry." In commanding us to be without covetousness—not to be controlled in our general conduct by the love of riches, he really prohibits idolatry. This is the prominent sin of our age and our country; and we suffer immensely in consequence. "He that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent;" or, as in the margin, *unpunished*. How extensive and how fearful the calamities of the country, growing out of this eager pursuit of riches, let the public prints testify. Almost the entire dark catalogue of crimes, can be traced to the love of money—the impatience of men to become rich.

2. The countervailing virtue is enjoined—"be content with such things as ye have"—with things present. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil therefor." *Sufficient* here, is for a form of the same word; and the command not to be

careful, over anxious, and thus torment ourselves about the morrow, illustrates this duty of contentment. Not that it is wrong to labor and toil to better our condition, for this is always our duty; but having used all lawful means to provide for ourselves, and those dependent on us, let us leave results in the hands of God.

3. "For he hath said," may refer to many passages, but more especially to Joshua i. 5, where the Lord declares, "I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." And Moses commands him, "Be strong, and of a good courage." And this is,

4. The high and calm confidence of the believer, which emboldens him to say, the Lord is my helper. "I was brought low and he helped me." There is a sublime grandeur in such faith as this. "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in him." Man's wrath He will restrain: and this faith is needed in times of persecution, such as the church was passing through, and such as these Hebrew believers must soon experience in all its bitterness. Thus he nerves them up for the dread conflict. What has he to fear who fights the good fight of faith under the banner of his glorious Captain? "The Lord is my Rock, and my Fortress, and my Deliverer." "The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me? The Lord taketh my part with them that help me: therefore shall I see my desire upon them that hate me. The Lord is my Strength and Song, and is become my salvation." Ps. cxviii. 6, 7, 14.

V.v. 7, 8. "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation: Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." Having dwelt upon the moral virtues of a personal character, the Apostle here enters upon such as are of a social nature—which belong to the relations of life. The form of

expression as already noted is the hortative imperative. Let us mark the relations, our duties, and the result.

The persons referred to, and whom we are urged not to forget, are in some regards our superiors, and therefore entitled to diligent attention. Human affections are often unstable; and the heart oblivious of obligations and even benefactions, that should always be fresh and progressive in their influences upon us. We need to be reminded even of the Sabbath day. Old friends are left behind in the distance, and new ones supply their places. Hence this exhortation, *Remember*. The objects of this reminiscence are presented in two distinct aspects. 1. "Which have the rule over you." The original word is a present participle, and signifies simply leading persons, who go before and show us the way. It is used at times to designate civil rulers; but manifestly here, religious teachers and governors. And the command to remember, and the next remark, "who have spoken"—imply teaching leaders, whose time of service has passed, and who have gone to their rest. We have this official designation mentioned in Acts xv. 22, where Judas and Silas are called "*chief* men among the brethren"—influential men in training, instructing and governing. The other designation—"who have spoken unto you the word of God," evinces unequivocally, that the main reference is to the doctrines taught. They are urged to remember and esteem their officers very highly, mainly for their work's sake; not exclusive, however, of their excellent faith and personal qualities. Ruling power is necessarily implied in the office of teacher, and its correlate duty is obedience. But aptness to teach, which requires knowledge of the matter taught, finds its correlate duty in an attentive ear.

The matter taught—the word of God—the doctrine of God; or it may be the Logos, or personal word—Christ Jesus and him crucified. But the sense is the same, for the

Saviour is the burden of all their teaching. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." And this he proceeds to illustrate. "Whose faith follow." Faith here may be taken *objectively* for the matter of their belief—the things which they taught. Or it may be taken *subjectively*, for the grace of faith, by which they lived to the glory of God. Both meanings are true; and, being consistent, may both be understood. The former calls for treasuring up the doctrines taught, and thus expressing their reverential regard for their teachers: the latter requires holding the truth in righteousness—walking in the ways of holiness, and evincing the reality of their faith by their works. Be ye imitators of their living faith.

But in order to this, close attention must be given to its actual operation—its issue—its *outgo*, literally. "Considering the end of their conversation." *Their conversation*—the sum of all their activities—their entire conduct; as this term always signifies. We may say, their life is directed always and everywhere to this one issue. Begin their lessons where they may; teach how and what they may; act as they may, the issue or exit is the same: the winding up of all is the same—"Jesus Christ [and him crucified]; the same yesterday; and to-day; and for ever." Such I take to be the sense of the language. The form indeed does not place it in opposition with the *end* or *exit*: for that is in the accusative: and this is a nominative. Still, as an independent sentence—"Jesus Christ yesterday and to-day the same; and for ever," it tallies exactly with the preceding end as pointed out to their attention. The passage thus taken runs parallel with Rev. i. 4. "He who is, and who was, and who is to come," *i. e.*, Jehovah. And it is but a repetition of the idea we have had in i. 12, of this Epistle—"thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail." The unchangeableness of Messiah—his existence in all preceding ages; his

present being, and his sameness in eternal ages—all this is included ; and all this collates exactly with the grand dissuasion of the Epistle from apostasy. Moreover, it equally suits the subjoined context, which contrasts with it, the fluctuations and uncertainty of all that is not built on this eternal Rock.

V. 9. “Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines ; for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace, not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.”

Stability of christian character, is the lesson of this verse. It is assumed, that the preceding, central point of all teaching, and all practice, Jesus Christ, and him crucified, is immovable as the great Rock in a weary land. By consequence, all true believers are bound to be, and really are, settled and stable upon this foundation. But the great enemy cannot rest himself, and he will not let any rest whom he can disturb and distract : hence, novelties in doctrine are invented : new theology is concocted in Satan’s seething pot, and served up to a perverse taste, that palls and nauseates this angels’ food. Questions about meats and drinks, and ceremonies, and forms, and robes, and bells, and surplices, and perfumery, and incense, and washings, and grimaces, and genuflections, etc., etc., address the vain vagaries of empty minds. Then false philosophy, hairsplitting metaphysics, transcendental flights of fancy amuse, puff up, and carry away the ships, which lack ballast, compass, helm and anchor. Against all these phantasies, we are here solemnly warned.

On the contrary, it is good to be firmly anchored in the safe harbor of truth, that has outlived a thousand generations of these idle fancies. The heart filled with the love of Jesus, cannot be tossed to and fro, like a ship at the mercy of the bounding billows. He who rests his soul’s immortal interests on the simple doctrines of the atonement, jus-

tification, sanctification and the affiliated truths, abides firm as the everlasting hills: whilst the profitless dealers in fancy wares—the restless seekers of some new thing—some star preaching, is like the troubled sea, which cannot rest, whose waters cast forth mire and dirt.

In v. 10 he proceeds to show that Judaizing teachers, who look back after the types and shadows of the old economy, may not expect to enjoy and secure the sweet consolations of gospel grace. “We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat, which serve the tabernacle.” Here is pressure upon his Hebrew brethren, to constrain them who have not taken sides, to come out at once for God and his Christ.

The sacrifices of flour, fruits and flesh, all of which last are to be seasoned with salt, set forth and represented that only true, real and efficient sacrifice, which our great High Priest alone could offer. They all, from Eden to Calvary, were prophetic and promissory of that one offering for sin, which Messiah only could offer up; and which, having been offered until he said, “It is finished,” the continuance of the promissory typical sacrifice, is the exhibition of a falsehood: for it plainly teaches, that the substance—the real, atoning sacrifice, is yet future: and thus amounts to a rejection of our High Priest, who is also both altar and sacrifice. The reasoning of our Apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 1–15, from the doctrine of resurrection, is applicable to the case here. To deny the resurrection, is to deny the sacrificial death of Christ, and thus to reject the gospel. So also with the Galatians, he remonstrates and shows, that their turning back after the Levitical services, amounts to a denial of the Lord’s offering—and to becoming children of the bond woman and not of the free; to resting on “the weak and beggarly elements,” to holding to the shadow, and neglecting the substance. If you still cling to the typical priest and sacrifice, what is it, but to say, that the anti-type has not yet come? And thus you



have no right to, and can have no enjoyment of the rich festivities of our altar. The joys and consolations of true religion, are only theirs who do put their trust in Jesus, our Lord. Such is the condition of the Jews at this day. They look for a Messiah to come, and still reject the actual Messiah of Abraham, Moses and the Prophets.

In verses 11 and 12, he gives us a beautiful argument in support of this, from the well known rule of Aaron's sacrifices. "For the bodies of these beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the highpriest for sin, are burned without the camp." Now this was not an accident and an inadvertence. It was so ordered—Lev. iv. 5-12, as a type of what should and did come to pass. "Wherefore, Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." In the tabernacle services, although the fat, the kidneys, etc., of the offering be burned upon the altar, before the tent of the congregation, yet shall the body be burned without, not the court only, but outside of the camp; thus showing, that the efficacy of the sacrifice is to extend indefinitely beyond the bounds of the Israelitish people. Then follows the practical inference; v. 13 "Let us go forth, therefore, unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach." How beautifully logical this argument! The great High Priest, offered up the true atoning sacrifice without the gate, as, and in fulfilment of, the burning of the Levitical sacrifice on the outer verge of the Jewish camp, which is co-terminous with the Gentile world. The people, of v. 12, are the children of God, whether of Hebrew or heathen origin. "For he is our Peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall or partition; Having abolished in his flesh the law of the commandments."

But this separation cannot take place without feeling. Those who feel the obligation to come out and be separate,

must part from many, near and dear by nature's ties and social intimacies ; and parting is painful. Those, moreover, who will not go forth, feel aggrieved at being forsaken, and charge the separatists with apostasy and unfaithfulness to Moses and to God. Hence reproaches and persecutions. So it is in this day. A Jew embraces Christ and goes forth after him, instantly the maledictions of his nearest relations are poured upon his head. The father that begat, and even the mother that brought him forth, invoke heaven's wrath upon him. But he has taken his cross, and persevere he must ; and lo ! soon he finds the yoke to be easy and the burden to be light.

Beautiful as is the reasoning, and strong as is the argument, still the Apostle supports it with a consideration drawn from the law of necessity. We have no choice. Like the lepers in 2 Kings vii. 3-7, our choice is between death by starvation where we are, and the peril of death by the sword if we go. V. 14. "For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come." On this remark. 1. A continuing city is a place of safety, and of permanent security and enjoyment. But the Hebrews' beautiful city, and the house where their fathers had worshipped for a thousand years, must soon be swept from the earth ; and the entire system of their ritual worship—priest, altar and sacrifices must pass away under God's judgments on the nation for their crowning sin, wherein they said, "His blood be upon us and upon our children." Ichabod is written upon it all, and we must follow the Ark and the true tabernacle, or perish in the fires of God's wrath.

2. The city about to come, is this Ark and true Tabernacle. Jesus, who suffered without the gate is this Ark, and Tabernacle, and Altar, and Sacrifice, and Priest. This is our continuing city, which hath foundations, whose maker and builder is God.

3. All these, in the height of their spiritual reality, lie before the conscience smitten sinner, when all refuges of lies fail him, and he hears overhead the thunderings of Sinai; when he sees the lurid flashes of divine wrath; behind him the roaring whirlwinds and the howling tempest, and before him a gaping hell. But all these do not avail to prevent the believing sinner from hearing the exhortation, "Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach."

V. 15. "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually; that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name."

1. Let us note the inferential particle, *therefore*. It directs our attention to the reason going before, why the duty following should be performed. Why should we offer praise and thanks to God continually? Because He hath set before us an open door of refuge into a continuing city—a glorious, holy, happy, permanent abode.

2. The general nature of the duty thus inferred. It is the offering of a sacrifice. Sacrifices are of two general classes—sin-offerings, and thank-offerings. We have an example of each in the first record of public worship. See Gen. iv. 1–5. As our love to God is necessarily, the love of gratitude for benefits received; so the sacrifice that expresses it is a thank-offering, and such was the first on record. Cain brought a thank-offering—an offering very proper, even if he had never sinned. But Abel's was a sin-offering, whose blood was poured out—and the life is in the blood; and this, as we have seen, pointed to the Lamb of God.

3. But now every sacrifice implies and requires a priest through whom it is offered. In the primitive times, we know of no order of priesthood. The head of the family was priest, king, and prophet.

4. All acceptable sacrifices, of all kinds, must be offered through the one only efficient High Priest. Through Christ alone is there acceptable approach into the gracious presence of God. His mediation by his own blood, is indispensable to the acceptance even of thank-offerings from sinners. Hence, the essentially anti-christian nature, of all the mediators of popery—saints, angels, virgins, crucifixes, etc. All are utter blasphemy, and as dishonorable to Christ as the images of Jupiter, Juggernaut, Vishnu, Ram, etc. Has the Virgin, or Peter, or Pope Alexander VI., any more than Vishnu, Ram, Juggernaut or Jupiter offered up a sacrifice to God's justice—that really does take away sin?

5. There is no material altar provided here, or anywhere in the word of God, as an instrument or medium of sacrifice. It was otherwise of old, when there were divinely appointed material sacrifices, typical of the true. But since the death of Christ, all material altars, are unauthorized and dangerous, a relic of the old superstition, and an encouragement to that abomination of abominations; called by its mother, who is also "the mother of harlots"—the sacrifice of the mass. Deeply to be deplored is the fact, that thus, Protestant churches should give currency to a phraseology, so well adapted to give aid and comfort to Rome.

6. The sacrifice here enjoined, is not material, but spiritual. It is the love of God, swelling in the bosom, and bursting forth from the lips in songs of gratitude and praise. No room here for a machine made altar. No possibility of any mediator, but the one whom God has appointed. The same Holy Spirit which genders this love in the soul, fans it into a flame, and breathes it forth from the lips—blessed fruit, giving thanks to his name.

7. And this is to last forever—*continually*—literally, *through all*—eternity. In boundless ages will sound out

the highest and loftier notes—"and heaven's eternal arches ring with thy beloved name."

Christians are endowed with a social nature, and their religion is never contradictory to its lawful activities. We may not, under pretence of devotion to direct religious duties, neglect and ignore those of a social character. The first table of the law does not infringe upon and break the second.

V. 16. "But to do good, and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." This is again the hortatory imperative; and we have had the command in verse second. The sense is the same here, but applied to different matters. "Be not forgetful of beneficence and communication:" which is equivalent, to do good works; and communicate of your goods to the poor. This latter word occurs twenty times in the New Testament, in fourteen of which, it is translated, *fellowship*: three times *communion*, and *contribution* once, *distribution* once, *communication* once. In the last three, the sense is the same—the giving of money for charitable uses: the three *communions* refer to the participation of the sacred supper; the fourteen *fellowships* generally refer to friendly intercourses in christian society; not often, certainly, to the participation of the Lord's Supper. In Acts ii. 42, it seems contradistinguished therefrom. "They continued steadfast in the Apostles' doctrine and *fellowship*, and in *breaking* of bread, and in prayers." In our present text, it is to be understood as in the last three cases—the *distribution* of funds to the needy; and in this it is distinguished from other acts of beneficence. The word, *good doing*, occurs not elsewhere; but its force is not equivocal, but very general; covering all works that are right and proper; and so comprehending the other term; which is thrown in to provide for the troubles of the times. All good works are enjoined, but

especially should christians be ready to communicate of their means to assist brethren in need.

These good deeds, the Apostle calls sacrifices, in the sense that praise and thanksgiving are so called. We use the word very commonly in the same sense. And the context shows, that the word is used in a modified and figurative meaning: with *such* sacrifices God is well pleased. If a man give his time, labor, money for the purpose of benefiting his fellow men, whether christians or heathen; honestly and in true love seeking their good, it is thus a sacrifice acceptable to God, because it is called forth by his Holy Spirit, and it passes up through our High Priest, even as the songs of praise and thanksgiving.

V. 17. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you." This is the second imperative exhortation, enforcing upon private christians the duties they owe to their spiritual guides. In v. 7, especial regard is had to their leading and guiding influence as teachers of religious truths: (see the exposition.) Now the same officers are viewed in a somewhat different aspect: obey your leaders and submit. The former is a little too strong. *Be persuaded* by your leaders; still, as in v. 7, regarding the doctrines taught as operating an authoritative and commanding force, because of their truth. The word does not express the idea of a mere royal dictum, forcing obedience by naked authority. The other term is stronger—and *submit* yourselves. It signifies prompt and ready yielding to authority. Still, it does not mean to succumb to mere power, but marks the promptness with which submission is yielded, as soon as the truth and right of the thing commanded is perceived. Blind bowing to arbitrary power, is quite a different thing from cheerful acquiescence



and subjection to truth in the hands of a divinely appointed teacher and ruler. It is God, and not man that christians obey, and submit to in the spiritual government of the church.

2. The argument evinces this—for they are accountable to God, whose commission they bear: and sensible of this, your guides are watchmen—*they spend sleepless nights*. “I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace, day nor night.” Isa. lxii. 6. This eternal vigilance is the price of safety. Your souls are its special objects. How reasonable and how right, therefore, is it, that you receive their instructions, succumb to God’s truth in their hands, and follow them so far as they follow Christ?

3. A dread account this is, which your leaders and guides must render; and if it be awful, and solemn to them, what must it be to you? Can you expect them to peril their own souls, by neglecting yours? Shall they, to avoid exciting a little painful anxiety, fear, or even displeasure in your minds, by due warning, reproof and admonition, risk the frown of their divine Master, in the day of reckoning? How unprofitable this is to you? If you force them to their account, with grief—*groanings*, as the word signifies, how sad, how sorrowful, how full of groanings must your account be? On the other hand, if you submit yourselves, what a happy day will that be; when your teacher shall stand in his account, and say, “I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men; for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.” “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith”—Oh, happy pastor! happy people!

Now that it may be so: v.v. 18, 19, “Pray for us. For we trust we have a good conscience; in all things willing to live honestly. But I beseech *you* the rather to do this,

that I may be restored to you the sooner." On this remark,

1. It is evident the writer did not conceal himself, or wish to be unknown. The Hebrews at Jerusalem, to whom more especially, but not exclusively, he addresses himself in the Epistle, had long known him. He had preached boldly among them; had been arrested for alleged violation of law in polluting the temple by the introduction of Greeks. Acts xxi. 26-28. The whole city was moved, and the people ran together, and took Paul, and drew him out of the temple. So violent was the mob, that the military commander had to interpose with a band of soldiers, to prevent him from being torn to pieces. Then a conspiracy was organized for his assassination; and, to forestall the difficulty, the chief captain sent a detached guard by night, of four hundred and seventy soldiers, to carry him to Cæsarea; where, after repeated hearings before Felix, he was left in chains two whole years. Then, arraigned before Governor Festus, he appealed unto Cæsar, and was sent to Rome in chains. There he remained two whole years. Now these matters could not be unknown and forgotten; and he alludes to them obscurely by the hint about his being restored to them. Therefore,

2. Paul's reason, as Owen remarks, for not prefacing this Epistle, as he did all his others, with his name, was not, that he might obviate prejudice by secrecy; but because he does not rest his claim to be heard, upon his apostolical authority, but upon the authority of the Old Testament, which they recognized, and whence are deduced the matter and substance of his arguments.

3. Therefore—This is a request, rather than a command—*Pray for us—I beseech you.* The duty is universal, and is one of the most common modes of holding communion with all other Christians, and making this communion

special. We meet each other before the same throne, occupied by the same gracious Mediator; we are influenced by the same Spirit of grace and supplications, who creates the desires in our hearts whose outgo is prayer, and which, *therefore*, our common Father will grant. There is no form of the communion of saints so general, so efficient, so consoling. It annihilates space and engulfs time. It brings together around our common Parent's knee, not merely and only, those scattered far and wide on earth, but also those who are gone to glory, and who know by sweet experience what is meant by the beatific vision. Oh! who can duly appreciate the glorious privilege of intercessory prayer!

4. The reason in support of this request for prayer, is his humble hope of honest sincerity, in all the conduct of life. Whatever may have been my failings and shortcomings in duty, you brethren! I trust, will credit me with honorable intentions. Even when my conscience was under the darkness of unbelief—before my conversion, I acted up to the dictates of conscience, believing it to be my duty to suppress, if possible this sect of the Nazarenes. I therefore said before the council (Acts xxiii. 1)—“Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.” A good conscience, therefore, is an honest purpose of heart, though it may be in error, to do what it deems right: but if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart—knows better, for he knows all things, and he will condemn us. An evil conscience is a condemning conscience. (See comment on ix. 9.)

5. The efficacy of prayer is recognized. He speaks as if their prayers would facilitate his release, and hasten his return to them. For the force of the expression for *the rather*, see ii. 1. It occurs also in 2 Cor. xi. 23—in labors *more abundant*. So here—“But *more abundantly* do I exhort you to do this; in order that sooner I may be restored

to you." But will God change, rearrange and readjust his plans in consequence, or rather subsequence to our prayers? This objection lies against prayer in general, and is often embarrassing; and, where there is little sense of dependence on God, fatal. Two answers may suffice to relieve the honest conscience. (1.) God, in his word, and in the voice of natural religion—that is, the dictate of man's understanding, commands prayer. (2.) The connection between asking and receiving—(a connection practically assumed by all mankind) is no more difficult to be understood, in prayer to God than in petitions to men: and yet all men do pray.

Prayer is a means to an end; and the incomprehensibility of the *modus operandi*, deters not from the use of the means. This difficulty occurs in thousands of other cases.

6. Whether Paul was ever permitted to return to Jerusalem, is uncertain. Inspiration does not make men omniscient: it only ensures infallibility in the matters supernaturally inspired. One thing only is certain, they were restored to each other's society, when they crossed Jordan, and stood on its right bank, in the heavenly Canaan.

V.v. 20, 21. "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." And thus the Apostle closes his epistle, except a brief postscript, with a most comprehensive and solemn prayer. This prayer centres in one grand point—it asks the perfect fitting up and preparing of the church and people of God, for all their duties and enjoyments. We must notice the connecting particle *Now*; the person whom it supplicates—the *God of peace*;—the same as described by his work—the *raising*

of *Christ* from the dead; its relations and means; the point itself, *makes you perfect*,—the object of this perfecting—for every *good work* in *accomplishing his will*—the medium power—the Lord Jesus Christ; the doxology—to whom *be glory forever*.

1. The adversative meaning—*but*, is very properly here omitted; and the word, *now*, more accurately expresses the transition from the Apostle's request for their prayers, to his own prayer for them.

2. The person supplicated, is the *God of peace*. But a holy God is ever angry with the wicked, and at war with all the interests of the evil one; how then can you call him the God of peace? This question finds its response in the entire gospel of his grace. Note then, (*a.*) Man is by nature at war with God; his heart is enmity, and this enmity must be slain. (*b.*) The gospel salvation slays the enmity. "For He is our peace, who hath made both one—to make in himself of twain, one new man, so making peace." (*c.*) The power by which this is effected, is the Holy Ghost—"For through him—Christ—we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." It is the Spirit that quickeneth. (*d.*) The Spirit that giveth life, is sent; and only can be sent from the Father, in consequence of Christ's work, obedience, death, resurrection and intercession. (*e.*) Over all this gospel scheme the Father presides, and thus He is the God of peace. (*f.*) We secure peace with God, in consequence of our justification through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (*g.*) We have from him also, peace with our own consciences; peace with all holy beings; peace on earth—good will to man. Oh, when the God of peace shall have extended his reign over all the world, what a world it will be! How glorious! how holy! how happy!

3. This God of peace "brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus." His resurrection is ascribed to the

Father by Peter, in the Pentecostal sermon, Acts ii. 24, 32, and his argument establishes the necessity of it—not a physical, but a moral, a legal necessity. Because it was not possible that he should be holden of death, for he had finished his work; he had paid the debt of our sins, by his suffering; the whole penal demand was satisfied, and the prison house of the grave could no longer hold Him in bondage. It is not the simple physical fact, that makes it important. Lazarus and the widow's son were raised. But the legal ground and reason of the fact, are all important.

This importance hangs upon the two circumstances, of his relation to the redeemed, and the consequent shedding of his own blood for them. "That great Shepherd of the Sheep." Christ is not simply a Shepherd. Such relation all ministers of the gospel sustain. He is a great—the chief Shepherd; that Shepherd emphatically, who had authority to lay down his life for the sheep. This authority had its origin in the everlasting covenant. For in the very terms of this covenant, by which his sheep were chosen in him, and assigned to him before the foundation of the world—(Eph. i. 4) the Father, "having predestinated us unto the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ, unto himself," required Him "to fulfil all righteousness." Therefore, being his people's Surety, when they failed, the bonds of the covenant held Him; and die he must, the just for the unjust. Now, it is through this blood—because it made full restitution to injured justice, that the God of peace raised Him from the dead. Moreover, every shepherd must have care of sheep; a flock must be entrusted him. A shepherd without a flock, is a contradiction. It may be great or small—"a few sheep in the wilderness," or an immense multitude, which no *man* can number: but a flock he must have: so it is here, "that great Shepherd of *the* sheep." The article is not to be despised and thrown out. They were put under



his care by the God of Peace, and he is responsible for them:—"those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them—no one of them—is lost." John xvii. 12 and xviii. 9, "Of them which thou gavest me, have I lost none." The sheep of Christ, the Good Shepherd, will all then be found in the heavenly fold at last. I cannot believe, that any of them will be shut up in hell! Oh, no! it was not an indefinite flock, for which the Good Shepherd laid down his life—but "*my sheep hear my voice.*"

4. The point of this prayer—the precise object for which he invokes the God of Peace, is that He would *make you perfect*. The word here is not the same as used in ii. 10 and many other places. We have had it in x. 5 and xi. 3, which consult for the sense. The God of peace furnish you in every good work. He prays, that all the gracious influences may operate in them, which are necessary to enable them to glorify God in working always that which is good. We have the noun in Eph. iv. 12. "For the perfecting of the saints"—that they may exercise their graces in all the works of holy obedience.

5. This adornment of gracious furniture has for its final cause or proper end, the fulfilment of the divine decree establishing the covenant everlasting. "This is the will (thelema—the decree) of God, even your sanctification." 1 Thess. iv. 3. "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his *will*"—(thelema—his decree)—and all this "that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." Eph. i. 5, 4. And ii. 10—"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." The everlasting covenant, then, is the spring head and fountain of all holiness.

6. The Medium—"through Jesus Christ." This divine

working in the hearts of God's people, that which, being the fulfilment of the divine purpose must be acceptable to him, is all through the Shepherd of his flock. Other foundation can no man lay. He is the Rock, and perfect is his work. "It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Phil. ii. 13.

7. The doxology—"to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen." Glory is the manifestation of excellence. We have considered this, and need not now enlarge. The ascription of glory is here to the Son of God: elsewhere it is to God the Father. It is worthy of notice, that the article limiting the force seems to refer to a glory peculiar to Christ; to whom be *the* glory; viz., of revealing and carrying into full operation the new idea—the blessed truth that God can be just and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. To him belongs a glory which he had with the Father before the world was. But there is to him a superadded glory, peculiarly his due, as he is the God-man—the Mediator.

Now all this is without end—"for ever and ever"—for ages of ages—eternally. No language can be used more strongly to express the idea of time, or duration without end. Those who limit this language to mean a long time, but not for ever, do thereby limit the duration of God's existence and of Christ's glory: to which we cannot say, Amen. We believe the glory of Christ is, and will be eternal—that God's being is for ever—that "he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him:" "and these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal." Amen and Amen.

V.v. 22-25. "And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you

in few words. 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."

1. As I prefer the translation in v. 20, *now*, to *but* the most common; so here, *now* is preferable to *And*. It expresses a new phase of thought, and constitutes the pivot of an easy transition. "Now I beseech you," etc.

2. The conciliatory character of the expression should be noted. It is the language of affectionate entreaty—a kind of bland apology for any utterances, which, peradventure, might seem to them somewhat severe. Be assured, brethren, that undue sharpness has been all along very foreign to my intentions. It has all been the product of brotherly love. Be patient, therefore—bear with me under this word of exhortation; or,

3. "The doctrine of consolation." The correlate—*Paraclete*—occurs in John xiv. 16, 26; xv. 26, and xvi. 7, and is uniformly translated, *the Comforter*, and is affirmed to be "the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father." The same word is applied to the Saviour, in 1 John ii. 1, "And if any man sin, we have an ADVOCATE with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;" and it occurs nowhere else. The verbal noun, in our text, by its natural force, means the process of *ministering consolation*. It occurs twenty-seven times in the New Testament—all but six of them in Paul's epistles. Of these, it is translated ten times by the word *consolation*, five by *comfort*, six by *exhortation*, and one by *entreaty*. The true sense, therefore, is comfort, *consolation*, as resulting from the presentation of precious truths to the minds of Christians, by the word, the teachings, the doctrines of grace. This, as we have seen, on vi. 18 and xii. 5, is the grand burden of the Epistle.

Hence he urges his brethren to take in good part all he has written, that they may know by sweet experience the strong *consolations* of an assured hope.

4. The "few words" must be viewed as of relative import. His Epistle to the Romans, and his first to the Corinthians, are the only ones of the fourteen written by him, longer than this. The brevity, therefore, is relatively to the vast importance of the subjects treated, and the high and glorious ends aimed at.

5. He informs them of Timothy's release from prison. This young disciple was Paul's most intimate friend and fellow missionary. 2 Tim. i. 3—"without ceasing, I have remembrance of thee in my prayers, night and day." Timothy was now with him: he had been in prison, but is just recently set at liberty; as Paul himself expected to be. Which facts show, that this Epistle was written from Rome, at least from Italy, and about the time of this general jail delivery.—"With whom—along with whom, I hope to see you." The second Epistle to Timothy was written in Rome, and shortly before Paul's execution, see 2 Tim. iv. 6. "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand." Before this departure, which was by decapitation, he had an earnest desire to see his young friend, who was absent—v. 9. "Do thy diligence, to come shortly unto me"—and v. 21,—"before winter." Timothy, therefore, had left Rome, and the probabilities are, that Paul also had been released. For, referring to his first answer before Cæsar, he says, "I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion,"—*i. e.*, the Emperor. But whether he went along with Timothy to Jerusalem, history doth not say; and she has left no distinct record of Paul's second arrest, its time, place, and circumstances.

6. Salutations are forms of expressing friendship, at meeting chiefly; or parting; or as here, by proxy, when absent.

Generally, in those times, upon actual personal meeting, the outward expression was by kissing—or putting lips in contact with lips, cheek, forehead, or even hand, accompanied with a mutual embrace, or enfolding in the arms. Such customs, less or more, are prevalent in different countries in our own day, which shows their natural adaptation to express friendly feelings. In epistolary intercourse, we express the same by—"love to all," and the like.

7. The salutations here, are addressed to two classes—"All them that have the rule over you"—all your *guides*, instructors and rulers. This is the third time he specifies the duties of private members of the church, to their office-bearers. But the speciality here, is, in my name—my love to them all. The other class is more numerous—"and all the saints." Those are accounted saints, who make a consistent profession of religion: all such are set apart by baptism, to the holy service of God, and are to be accounted as holy brethren. No decree of a college of cardinals and a pope, is requisite to make a saint. I, therefore, never say, "Saint Paul, or Saint James, or Saint John, or Saint Bridget," lest, in so doing, I should encourage the idea, that "the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth," is the mother of the Apostles, and of the thousands of papal manufactured saints. Sainthood belongs to all the people of God. No such pre-eminence, as is implied by the captions in even Protestant Bibles, as St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Paul, St. Peter, is known to the Bible itself: and it is best to avoid this bow to Rome.

8. The salutations from Italy, imply Paul's presence in Italy. Nevertheless, it is true, the phrase—*they of Italy*, does not necessarily imply presence in Italy, at the time. Literally, it may be read *they from Italy*,—the Italian christians salute you. But then, if Paul had written this letter from Corinth, where he might happen to have a score or a

hundred Italian christians about him, he certainly would not have sent their compliments to the Hebrews, and have omitted the salutations of the Corinthian brethren altogether. Moreover, such was not his custom. In Rom. xvi. 20-24, he sends salutations from many around him, by name, and from all. In 1 Cor. xvi. 20, 2 Cor. xiii. 13, and Phil. iv. 23, he says, "All the saints salute you," *i. e.*, all those around him, in the place and at the time. So Tit. iii. 15. "All that are with me." In Philemon 23, he names the individuals, even in this private note. In 2 Tim. iv—"all the brethren." In short, wherever he sends salutations, he comprehends all the brethren around him in the place. He never selects persons near him, but absent from their proper home, to the neglect of those around him, where he writes.

9. The benediction—"Grace be with you all. Amen." This is an authoritative utterance. It is appended to all his fourteen Epistles, with but slight variation in the words. It is a prayer, but more than a prayer. It pronounces grace—all the blessings of the glorious gospel of the blessed God, upon all his true and faithful followers. Then it sets the seal of the Hebrew *Amen* upon the whole. This is not a mere hint, that the matter is ended—*Finis*. It is Hebrew, and means TRUTH. Formed from a verb, which means to establish firmly—to make immovable, it expresses belief in the matter to which it is appended, as that which shall abide forever: firmly fixed, immutable, eternal TRUTH. Amen.

THE END.