

# COMMENTARY

ON

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL, THE APOSTLE,

TO THE

# HEBREWS.

BY

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UNTO

HIM THAT LOVED US,

AND

WASHED US FROM OUR SINS IN HIS OWN BLOOD

AND BATH

MADE US KINGS AND PRIESTS UNTO GOD AND HIS FATHER

*TO HIM BE GLORY AND DOMINION*

FOR EVER AND EVER.

*AMEN.*

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## INTRODUCTION.

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**F**OR many thoughts respecting the Word of God in its different forms, in particular the epistolary form so abounding in the New Testament, the reader is referred to the author's Introduction to his "Commentary on Paul's Epistle to the Romans." To the same source he must point the reader for many things relating to the private and public history of Paul, the order and time of writing his epistles, the places whence they were written, the subscriptions to them, the excellence and eloquence of his writings, in what sense he is hard to be understood, the state of the world during his life, his fitness for such a state of things, his inspiration, various translations of his epistles, the number of them, in what language he wrote, the number of his commentators, and other like matters. On the matters there discussed, the author has seen no cause for materially changing his views. A few points there discussed, it will be necessary here briefly to state anew. Other things now claim our attention.

### I. THE EXCELLENCE OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

It would be impossible for lively and intelligent Christians to decide whether the loss of the Epistle to the Hebrews or of the Epistle to the Romans would be most seriously felt. Both are precious. Both are excellent. Both are essential to the panoply of the Christian and the preacher of righteousness. Gouge enumerates five prominent excellencies of this epistle: 1. The mysteries couched therein, concerning God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost; concerning the natures, person and offices of Christ; concerning the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice, and the efficacy of his intercession; concerning the excellency of the new covenant; concerning the life of faith; concerning the privileges of gospel times, etc. 2. We have in it a rehearsal of most of the memorable histories from the beginning of the world to the last age, including some that refer to times after the close of the canon of the Old Testament. 3. This epistle gives us an inspired and so

an infallible explication of legal types, and an application of them to their distinct truths. No other book is in this respect comparable to this epistle. 4. It confutes many heresies respecting the person and offices of Christ, particularly his priesthood. If many of the false doctrines of modern times had been rife in the first century, the apostle could not have more effectually oppugned them. 5. It contains many pithy persuasions to all holiness and new obedience; powerful encouragements to constancy and perseverance; dreadful denunciations against apostacy and impenitence; sweet consolations to such as for Christ's sake endure the cross, and one of the sweetest benedictions in all the Bible. Origen: "The sentiments of this epistle are admirable, and not inferior to the acknowledged writings of the apostle. This will be assented to by every one that reads the writings of the apostle with attention." A late writer says: "The peculiar preciousness of this epistle is that it is so full of Christ. Its peculiar character is that it reveals him as the sum and substance of all that had been shadowed forth concerning him in the Jewish law." Lardner: "The Epistle to the Hebrews is bright and elegant from the beginning to the end; and surpasses as much the style of St. Luke as it does the style of St. Paul in his acknowledged epistles." In short, this is an admirable epistle, but singular in sentiments and language." Delitzsch: "The Epistle to the Hebrews has not its like among the epistles of the New Testament, resembling in this uniqueness of position, as well as in tone and spirit, the great prophetic exhortation of Isaiah 40-66, which in like manner stands alone among the prophetic writings of the Old Testament. The tone of thought in both these portions of Scripture has the same transcendental character." Tholuck speaks of the preparation of his commentary on this epistle as having afforded him "peculiar delight." Many have said as much. Lindsay: "The Epistle to the Hebrews is one of the most important books of the New Testament. It contains a minute exposition of some of the leading doctrines of Christianity; the plan of it is constructed with great beauty and logical accuracy; and it is written in finer Greek than any other book in the sacred volume." Slade: "The style is singularly beautiful." The remark of Saphir has peculiar force in regard to this book: "It is not too much to say, that as a dictionary is necessary to explain the words of a new language, so the words and facts of the gospels and epistles require the explanation of Moses and the prophets." The two Testaments, like the cherubim over the ark, look toward each other. Augustine: "Novum Testamentum in Vetere latet; Vetus in Novo patet;" The New Testament lies hid in the Old; the Old is plain in the New.

## II. IS THIS REALLY AN EPISTLE?

Some have raised this question, and have contended that it was a treatise, not an epistle. But there is a great variety of form and structure in epistolary writings. Epistles may be general or catholic, as those of James, 1st and 2d Peter, 1st John and Jude; or they may be particular as are all the epistles of Paul. These also are of two kinds, some being addressed to whole churches, and some to individuals. Some epistles are fairly logical treatises; some are casuistical; some are doctrinal; some are for a single purpose, and some are designed to affect faith and practice on many points. An epistle may contain as solid and weighty matter as the most formal disquisition in another form. We may say with Ebrard: "It was then no ordinary epistle; it was more than an epistle; it had in reality something of the nature of a theological treatise." The same may be said of more than one of Paul's writings. Delitzsch: "We seem at first to have a *treatise* before us, but the special hortatory references interwoven with the most discursive and dogmatic portions of the work soon show us that it is really a kind of sermon addressed to some particular and well-known auditory; while at the close the homiletic form changes into that of an epistle." Very few good orations begin without an exordium; but will any one say that Cicero did not make a good oration against Catiline because he omitted the exordium? There are many ways of writing a good letter or of making a good speech. This epistle certainly has all the essentials and most of the forms of an epistle. The whole of chapter thirteen, and parts of many preceding chapters, have the form of direct address; and parts of the last twenty-five verses are directly addressed to individuals, who were known to the writer, as he was to them. See particularly the last three verses of this epistle. Gouge: "The apostles' epistles were no whit inferior to their sermons; but in the matter contained in them, and in the manner of penning them, they were as full, ponderous and accurate, as any other parts of sacred scripture. All the mysteries of godliness are in them distinctly, plainly, and fully laid down."

## III. TO WHOM WAS THIS EPISTLE ADDRESSED?

I. None will deny that it was addressed to Hebrew Christians. To this effect the title, the contents, and consenting traditions all are clear. Conybeare and Howson: "Throughout its pages there is not a single reference to any other class of converts. Its readers

are assumed to be familiar with the Levitical worship, the Temple service, and all the institutions of the Mosaic ritual." But by Hebrews some understand such Jews only as resided in Judea, and not such as 'from' non-residence in Palestine were called Hellenists or Grecians. This view may be correct. From Acts 6:1; 11:20, it is certain that this distinction was sometimes made; though we have no evidence that it was always kept in mind. But Clement of Alexandria, Jerome, Chrysostom, Theodoret, Theophylact, and others think this epistle was sent to Jews, who had become Christians, and who lived in Judea.

2. It is evident that it was not addressed indiscriminately to the Jewish converts to Christianity among the dispersion; nor to all the Jewish converts in Judea; but to a particular church or body of believing Israelites. It contains proof that the church addressed had for some time enjoyed the gospel, 5:12. Now the church at Jerusalem was the oldest on earth. It also shows that their past conduct had inspired confidence in their sincerity, 6:9; that they had been very kind and serviceable to God's people, 6:10; that they had endured a great fight of affliction, both for their own profession of Christianity, and for their avowed friendship to Christ's people; that they had shown marked kindness to the writer of this epistle, and had for their zeal in religion gladly endured the loss of their worldly wealth, 10:32-34; that their prayers were now desired that the author of this epistle might be restored to them, 13:19; and that they were acquainted with Timothy, and felt an interest in his welfare, 13:23, etc.

3. It is not certain, but it is highly probable, that the particular church addressed was that of Jerusalem. Paul was well acquainted with that church, and they with him, Acts 9:28. He had a great and tender love for them, manifested by his diligence in collecting and forwarding money for their relief, Acts 24:17; Rom. 15:25-28. In Jerusalem persecution raged violently soon after the gospel began to have success, and seems to have continued, more or less, until the close of the Jewish State, Acts 8:1; Heb. 10:32-34. Lindsay: "After a careful consideration of the various opinions, I deem the opinion by far the most probable, that Palestine was the country to which it was sent, and in all likelihood Jerusalem the particular church." Ebrard: "We are at liberty to seek these Jewish Christians only in Jerusalem." Duncan: "This epistle is addressed to those Jews converted to Christianity, who made the church at Jerusalem." Guyse: "The Jews, to whom this epistle was sent, seem to have been the whole body of them, that had made a profession of Christ; but it was probably sent directly and immediately to those of *Judea and*

*Jerusalem*, to be communicated from them to their brethren that were dispersed through various countries."

4. Though this epistle had a special address, yet it had a natural and powerful application to all Christians, who should be made acquainted with it. It as well suited the tastes and ideas of the converted Hellenists of the dispersion, as the Israelites in Judea. And to Gentile Christians it was and is a delightful key to unlock the mysteries found in many of the types, rites and offices of the Old Testament. . Gouge: "Though this epistle was in a special manner directed to the Hebrews, yet was it not written only for their use, but for the use also of the Christian church; and, therefore, it hath ever been read in all churches." McLean: "There can be no doubt that it was intended to be circulated also among the Jews of the dispersion: And, indeed, the sublime doctrines, instructions, and admonitions, which it contains, are of the highest importance, not only to the Jews, but also to the Gentiles."

#### IV. THE TIME WHEN THIS EPISTLE WAS WRITTEN.

This epistle probably comes next in order after the Epistle to the Ephesians; though Hug thinks it the last of all Paul's epistles. But this supposition is not admissible. The 2nd Epistle to Timothy almost certainly came after it. Basnage dates it in A. D., 61; L'Enfant and Beausobre date it in 62; Horne and Bagster in 62 or 63; Pearson, Lardner, Tomlin, Mill, Wetstein, and Tillemont, in 63; the authorized version and Lloyd in 64; Michaelis, in 64 or 65; and Scott, in 65. Ebrard very safely thinks it could not have been written before the year 58, nor later than the year 66. The year 66 was the first of the Jewish war, which lasted four or five years, and ended in the subversion of the Jewish State, the destruction of the Temple, and the termination of the Levitical rites and sacrifices. But it seems clear from forms of speech used in 9:8 and 10:1 that sacrifices had not ceased when this epistle was written. It is a general and plausible opinion that it was written after Paul's imprisonment at Rome; and yet his request for their prayers that he might be restored to them (13:19), is by some good scholars interpreted as meaning that he had not yet been set at liberty. But this may be inferring too much.

#### V. AT WHAT PLACE WAS THIS EPISTLE WRITTEN?

Some think it was written from Rome. Horne regards this

opinion as probable. With him agree Slade and many others. The subscription and authorized version say it was written from Italy. In Heb. 13:34 the writer says: "They of Italy salute you." This may indicate, but does not certainly prove that it was written from Italy. Lardner: "I cannot perceive why it may not be allowed to have been written at Rome. St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians was written at Ephesus; nevertheless he says (16:19) 'The churches of Asia salute you.' So now he might send salutations from the Christians of *Italy*, not excluding, but including those at Rome, together with the rest throughout that country." Paul seems to have kept himself well informed respecting all the churches, and was probably a frequent channel of communication between them.

#### VI. WHO WROTE THIS EPISTLE?

There has been more doubt as to Paul's writing this epistle than any other ascribed to him. But that he was the author of this book seems now to be generally conceded. The argument on the subject is fair and conclusive. The reader, who wishes to examine it thoroughly, may look into Carpzov, Spanheim, Bengel, John Owen of Oxford, Lightfoot, Whitby, Hales, Rosenmuller, Lardner, Townsend, Macknight, Tholuck, Stuart and many others. It is, however, but candid to say that some think it was written by Barnabas; some by Silas; some by Clement of Rome; some by Luke; and I have somewhere met with the conjecture that it was written by Zenas the lawyer. Luther and Moll surmise that it was written by Apollos. And Kendrick "believes that the suffrage of the Christian world will concentrate itself more and more upon Apollos." But he goes too far when he says that "nearly all scholars" look elsewhere than to Paul for an author. Such language is extravagant. On the authorship of this epistle these remarks are just and seasonable. 1. As writers of inspired epistles we know nothing of any one of the persons above named, Paul only excepted. 2. The evidence of the Pauline origin is very strong. No man can read either of the discussions already referred to without conceding that the argument is far from being flimsy. 3. More show of argument could be made in favor of the authorship of Apollos, than of either of the persons named above, Paul only excepted. 4. No Latin writer of the first three centuries directly ascribes it to Paul; yet those of the fourth, fifth and following centuries do not seem to have any doubt as to the Pauline origin. 5. Among the Greeks Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Dionysius of Alexandria, Alexander of Alexandria,

Eusebius of Cesarea, Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Epiphanius and the Council of Laodicea, A.D. 363, all give the weight of their judgments in favor of the Pauline authorship. Many later writers in the Eastern churches might be cited to the same effect. 6. If any would see a statement of the argument drawn from the style of this epistle, he will find it fully made in Lardner. Lightfoot says: "The very style of it may argue the scholar of Gamaliel." 7. The author of this epistle was imprisoned in Judea, Chap. 10: 24. We know Paul thus suffered. But where have we any account of the bonds of any other one claimed to be the *author*. The objections to Paul's authorship are such as these. 1. His name is not prefixed to this epistle, as it is to the other thirteen epistles ascribed to him. But Lightfoot correctly says: "Paul's not affixing his name to this, as he had done to his other epistles, does no more deny it to be his than the first epistle of John is denied to be his on that account." Moreover, if Paul is proven not to be its author because it lacks his name, the same reasoning would prove it had no author at all, for it bears no name whatever. 2. From the days of Origen this epistle has been remarked upon for the elegance of its Greek. From this some are led to doubt whether Paul wrote it. But Paul never had a theme every way so well calculated to call forth all the genius of his nature and all his scholarship, as the matter of this epistle. Nor is it unusual for authors to write in styles widely differing in elegance, and even in nervousness. This is true of Moses. The books of Leviticus and Numbers are not at all like the thirty-second chapter of Deuteronomy. Paul's Pastoral epistles in style differ as widely from those to the Ephesians and Colossians, as do either of those from the epistle to the Hebrews. Nor is it at all uncommon for good writers exceedingly to vary in style. Edmund Burke wrote with far more force and elegance on the French Revolution than on any other subject. Robert Hall's discourse on Modern Infidelity is far in advance of any other production of his pen. 3. Some have thought there were expressions in this epistle unworthy of an apostle. But this line of remark seems to be in the main frivolous; or it goes on the supposition that Paul stood much upon his dignity, whereas he condescended to the feeblest; or the same line of remark would prove that Paul was not the author of several epistles, which bear his name. Scott: "The general testimony of antiquity, the current tradition of the church, and the judgment of the most competent modern critics determine the epistle to have been written by the apostle Paul." Moreover, in every manuscript, with a single exception, it is ascribed to him.

## VII. THIS EPISTLE IS DIVINELY INSPIRED.

It is a pleasing fact that the question of penmanship does in no way impair the strength of the argument for the divine inspiration of this epistle. We are not certain who wrote some of the books of the Old Testament, which yet are universally received as of canonical authority. That the author of this epistle spoke as he was moved by the Holy Ghost is admitted even by those who express doubts as to authorship. Duncan: "We have no reason to doubt, that it was dictated by the same unerring Spirit of God with the rest of the New Testament. . . Our faith of the things contained in scripture is not built on the credit and authority of the writer of it, but on the testimony of the faithful and true Spirit of God who inspired him." This is the old doctrine long since avowed by Chrysostom respecting the authorship and inspiration of the Psalms. Conybeare and Howson: "Every sound reasoner must agree with St. Jerome, that it matters nothing whether it were written by Luke, by Barnabas, or by Paul, since it is allowed to be the production of the apostolic age, and has been read in the public service of the church from the earliest times." Calvin freely admitted his uncertainty respecting its author; but he did not doubt that it was written by some disciple of the apostles, and he 'embraced it without controversy as one of the apostolic epistles,' as containing apostolic doctrine. Kendrick no less decidedly expresses his opinion that the question of authorship does not 'derogate in the slightest degree from the canonical authority and the intrinsic excellence of the epistle.' In short, it is chiefly those who are decidedly infidel, or who have denied the self-existence, the vicarious atonement, or the plenary satisfaction of the Lord Jesus Christ, who have at any time expressed serious doubts respecting the canonical authority and divine inspiration of this epistle.

## VIII. IN WHAT LANGUAGE WAS THIS EPISTLE WRITTEN?

Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Jerome, J. D. Michaelis and others, have decidedly favored the opinion that this epistle was originally written in the Syro-Chaldaic language, in the New Testament called the Hebrew, Luke 23:38; John 19:20. This was the vernacular of the people of Judea in the days of our Saviour. Those who think this epistle was first written in Hebrew, suppose, or leave us to suppose, that it was subsequently translated into Greek by Luke, Barnabas, or Clement of Rome.

But the whole supposition is encumbered with difficulties. The quotations from the Old Testament found in this epistle are generally made from the Septuagint version, not from the Hebrew, and that even when they widely vary from the Hebrew. This would surely not be done in writing to those who were most familiar with the Jewish scriptures in the original. If it were first written in Hebrew, why should the words *Melchisedek* and *Salem* be translated? No Hebrew in Judea needed to be told that the latter word signifies *peace*, and the former *king of righteousness*. In this epistle are found many things no less opposed to the idea of our having only a translation of the original. There are also in it several paranomasias on Greek words, which would not be possible in a translation from Hebrew. Then this epistle reads like an original; it is free, flowing, not cramped nor strained. Moreover, the Greek was well known in Judea, as might be argued from Luke 23 : 38; John 19 : 20. The fact that great numbers of Jews in the first century well understood and highly esteemed the Greek language is incontestably proven in many ways. Josephus and Philo both wrote in Greek. The latter was sometimes called the Jewish Plato. He adopted the philosophy of that disciple of Socrates, and wrote elegantly in the language of the Athenian. In the time of Paul, there were probably more Jews residing elsewhere than in Judea. There are known to have been more than half a million in and around Alexandria, in Egypt. Nor is this all. There is extant no copy of the Epistle to the Hebrews in the mother tongue of the Israelites of the first century, which any respectable writer claims to have been in existence at that time. Barnes: "None of the fathers say they had seen it, none quote it." Nor is there any history or tradition entitled to credit, and opposed to the views here presented. Ebrard: "There is nothing in the epistle itself that could lead to the raising of such a question." If, in the fitness of the case, Paul should have written to the Hebrews in their vernacular, the same argument would show that the Epistle to the Romans should have been written in Latin. These general views are supported by the line of remark found in Beausobre, Capel, Basnagle, Spanheim, Mill, Wetstein, and other good scholars. So decisive is the evidence that Conybeare and Howson do not hesitate to say: "It may be considered as an established point, that the Greek epistle which we now have is the original."

#### IX. THE SCOPE AND DESIGN OF THIS EPISTLE.

When one conceives that any portion of scripture deserves to be

so spoken of as to present a low or mean conception of the design and intent of the writer, it is not uncharitable to impute a wicked state of heart to him, who can thus degrade sacred things. But among devout and learned men, there may be quite a variety of opinion respecting the scope of a sacred book. This sometimes occurs even where the design is stated in the book itself. This variety of view results from the fact that the word of God is very rich, and presents great truths with an unsparing hand, and in rich profusion. One man is most struck with one aspect of the truths presented; while another looks at the blessed revelation in quite another light. Hence, the variety, and even diversity of views respecting the scope of this epistle. Gouge: "That main point which is aimed at throughout the whole sacred scripture, especially in the New Testament, is the principal scope of this epistle, and the main work whereat the apostle aimeth therein, namely this, that Jesus Christ is the all-sufficient and only Saviour of men." The objection to this statement is that it as well suits one of the Gospels, or half the epistles of Paul. It does not state the specific design of this writing, as distinguished from others. Ebrard; "The *aim* and *object* of this epistle is to consider the Old Testament institutions with the intent to discover, and in how far, they point forward to something more perfect." This epistle does certainly accomplish the end here stated. Mestrezat: "The shadows of the Old Testament are so many reflectors, contributing light to the Gospel." But is that the main scope of this writing? I trow not. Tong, with whom Lindsay substantially agrees, says: "As to the *scope* and design of this epistle, it is very evident that it was clearly to inform the minds, and strongly to confirm the judgment of the Hebrews in the transcendent excellence of the *gospel* above the *law*, and so to take them off from the ceremonies of the law, to which they were so wedded, and of which they were so fond, that they even doted on them." Beyond a doubt this epistle shows how the types and rites of former dispensations were fulfilled in Christ. In this sense we may ask as one of the ancients, "What is the Law but the Gospel predicted? What is the Gospel but the Law fulfilled?" Yet is this its end, or one of the means of gaining a higher end? The epistles of Paul to the Romans and to the Galatians do, as clearly as this epistle, declare and evince the superiority of the gospel over the law; particularly to all the ends and purposes of a complete justification; yea, and of sanctification also. Guyse takes very much the same view as Tong. Diodati, with whom McLean virtually agrees, says: "The principal end of this epistle is to show that in Christ is the end, foundation, body, and truth of the figures of the law, which

of themselves were of no virtue for the soul, so that having accomplished them in himself, he hath annihilated the use of them, and hath taken away these veils and shadows to give way unto the clear and naked truth of the expiation of sinners, and of man's full reconciliation with God, by the only sacrifice, perfect obedience and continual intercession of himself. The ends here suggested are doubtless accomplished by this and several other epistles. But that does not evince the special design of this epistle.

Turner, with whom virtually agree Doddridge, Tholuck, F. S. Sampson, Ripley and others, says: "The evident design of this epistle is to confirm and establish the faith of the Hebrew Christians, who had been exposed to persecutions, and were in danger of apostasy." It is true that Paul here gives solemn warnings against forsaking Christ and his gospel. He utters solemn thoughts on this subject more than once. But there are several whole chapters in the body of the argument, where apostasy is not even alluded to. To warn against renouncing the gospel cannot then be the main or "evident design of the epistle." We must look further. Moll: "The entire epistle turns upon the idea that true constancy in the Christian faith is absolutely indispensable to an entrance into the rest of God." No doubt this is true, but it is no more true of this than of a large number of books in the Bible. Besides, this whole epistle turns on other ideas no less fundamental and generally taught in scripture.

In this state of things one wonders that so few have consulted the epistle itself, and from it learned what was its great theme, scope and design. This is considered in other cases a fair mode of proceeding. Thus Luke tells us the scope of his Gospel. He says, it was a "treatise of all that Jesus began both to do and to teach," Acts 1:1. In like manner Paul declares the intent and aim of his first Epistle to Timothy. It was to teach a young minister what line of conduct he should pursue: "These things write I unto thee . . . that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God," 1 Tim. 3:14, 15. This sentence has always been deemed conclusive. In like manner all but those, who hold dangerous errors, accept the statement John makes concerning the intent and scope of his first Epistle: "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God," 1 John 5:13. In none of these cases are the scope and design of the writing more clearly stated than in the Epistle to the Hebrews. After the apostle has written seven whole chapters of this epistle, he says, in language clear and un-

mistakable, that his object has been to give us the true doctrine respecting the priesthood of Christ. At the opening of Chapter 8 he thus tells us his theme: "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." Could language more clearly declare that all the preceding part of the epistle was a treatise on the glorious priesthood of the one Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ? This testimony is unimpeachable. It is from the sacred penman himself. When we read the epistle we find the same theme continued for at least three chapters more. Nor is there anything in the last three chapters contrary to this belief. They fairly carry out this view in the practical use they make of it. The scope and design of this epistle, then, is to enlighten us on the priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to teach us the uses of the doctrine thus set forth. Christ is the Mediator. And the distinction of his offices into those of Prophet, Priest, and King is not a human invention. It is taught in the scriptures. It is true we have no entire books of scripture devoted to the discussion of Christ's prophetic and kingly offices. What we learn on those branches of truth we gather from many parts of the sacred volume. But here we have a whole epistle consisting of thirteen chapters containing two hundred and ninety-three verses, given to the great theme of the priesthood of Christ, and of the truths and duties rightly connected with the knowledge and acceptance of the doctrine of that priesthood. Mandeville: "The unfolding of the Priestly office is the principal subject of this Epistle." Gray: "The apostle's view in this epistle is to demonstrate, that the Jewish priesthood and its atonement never took away sin, nor brought in righteousness, nor saved a soul: that it, and in fact the whole law, had but 'a shadow of good things to come;' that Jesus was the substance of that shadow; the real priest, who made the true atonement, and 'obtained everlasting reconciliation' for his people. The readers of this epistle will have perceived with what care the apostle keeps this subject before their eyes from the beginning to the end." McCheyne: "This is the sum of the Epistle to the Hebrews to show you the work, the beauty, the glory, the excellence of this High Priest."

#### X. ERRORS CONDEMNED BY THIS EPISTLE.

In the Introduction to his Exposition of this epistle, Tait occupies several pages in showing how it condemns several

forms of false doctrine and dangerous heresy. He specifies Unitarianism, Popery, Sabellianism, Tritheism, Nestorianism, Eutychianism, Apollinarianism, Antinomianism, etc. Much more might be said to the same effect. In the study of the epistle, the intelligent reader can hardly fail to see how this two-edged sword turns every way, and flames out against wickedness both in doctrine and in practice.

#### XI. THE RITUAL OF THE TEMPLE SERVICE.

It seems strange that the ritualism of modern times is not effectually checked and reprov'd by the memory of the abolition of the most splendid ritual the world has ever seen. The ritual given by Moses was minute, prescribing everything. It was truly gorgeous, and, to the believer, very significant. If salvation could have been by any ritual, it surely would have been by that given by Moses. At the beginning of the Christian era it had received the marked sanction of heaven for fifteen or sixteen centuries—a period as long as Christianity had been known and received when Martin Luther began his career. For long centuries its priests and high priests had worn their costly and solemn robes; its altars had smoked with the fat of victims and with the sweetest incense; it was given on an occasion to human senses the grandest ever witnessed on earth; by the ministry of angels it came through Moses as mediator—Moses, the greatest of all the old prophets. Therefore it is not marvellous that those Israelites, who had no saving knowledge of God, should have had a blind and enthusiastic attachment to it. And so weak is human nature, even though it be regenerated, that we can easily see how the converts from Judaism were slow in entirely renouncing a form of public worship in which their famous and devout fathers had truly honored God and been profited.

#### XII. COMMENTARIES ON THIS EPISTLE.

The commentaries on this epistle have been very numerous. Many of them have been truly valuable. Among the Fathers, Chrysostom has left us thirty-four lectures; and Cyril of Alexandria has left us some fragments. The same is true of Theodoret, Euthalius and Theophylact. Anselm and Aquinas have given us some good thoughts on this epistle. The same is said to be true of Peter Lombard and Hugo de S. Victore, though I have not met with their productions. During and since the XVI. century the number of writers on this part of God's word has been large.

Among them are Erasmus, Luther, Melancthon, Zuingle, Calvin, Bullinger, Cornelius a Lapide, Calmet, Piscator, Pareus, Brent, Osiander, Hunnius, Gerhard, Oecolampadius, Wetstein, Grotius, Semler, Limborch, Beza, John Owen of Oxford, Peter Van Hoke, Junius, Drusius, LeClerc, Carpzov, Hammond, T. Dickson, Doddridge, Pyle, Whitby, Michaelis, Morris, Beausobre, Gouge, Diodati, Dutch Annotations, Assembly's Annotations, Bengel, S. Schmidt, Ernesti, Burkitt, Deering, Duncan, Slade, Pool, Lawson, Tong, Rosenmuller, Cramer, Vaughan, Baumgarten, Calov, Scott, Clarke, Kuinoel, Hawker, Tholuck, DeWette, Olshausen, Conybeare & Howson, Ebrard, Koppc, Stier, Hahn, Bloomfield, MacKnight, McLean, Turner, Starr, Stuart, Mandeville, Tait, Alford, V. G. Sampson, Barnes, F. S. Sampson, Ripley, Lindsay, Patterson, Moll, Delitzsch, etc.

### XIII. OF THE TITLE TO THIS EPISTLE.

In our authorized version the title is, "The Epistle of Paul, the Apostle, to the Hebrews." If Paul wrote it, the title is quite correct, designating the character of the book, its author, the office he held, and the persons he addressed. But neither titles nor subscriptions to epistles are supposed to be inspired. Some of the latter are known to be incorrect. See Introduction to the author's Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, § 6, p. 12.

THE  
EPISTLE OF PAUL, THE APOSTLE,  
TO THE  
H E B R E W S.

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CHAPTER I.

VERSES 1-7.

OUR HIGH PRIEST IS DIVINE.

GOD, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

2 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;

3 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;

4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?

6 And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.

7 And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.

**T**HE apostle takes but little time in introducing his great theme. He refers to the foundation of his whole doctrine to be set forth in this epistle. He alludes to a great fact admitted by all Hebrews, viz. that their prophets were real prophets, whose words were divinely inspired.

1. *God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time*  
(19)

*past unto the fathers by the prophets.* Peshito: In many ways and many forms, God anciently conversed with our fathers, by the prophets; Wiclif: God that spoke sumtyme by profetis in many maners to our fadris; Tyndale and Cranmer: God in tyme past diversly and many ways spoke unto the fathers by Prophetis; McLean: God, who in sundry parts, and in various manners, spake of old to the fathers by the prophets; Stuart: God, who in ancient times spake often and in various ways to the fathers by the prophets. The chief diversity of rendering and of interpretation refers to the two words which we render *at sundry times* and *in divers manners*. Both of them are compound adverbs, which occur no where else in the New Testament. Chrysostom gives, he thinks, the sense of both by one word, meaning variously. Both Bretschneider and Robinson allow that we may render them both *in many ways*. But there is serious objection to giving them precisely the same sense. Paul never uses tautology. Nor are these terms used for mere amplification. Quite a number of commentators regard the first word as pointing to times and the second to forms of communicating the divine will to men. This is the idea conveyed by our authorized version. This teaches no error and gives the substance of what is taught. McLean: "The original signifies in several parts or parcels, which must also imply at sundry times." But the exact idea is obtained by strictly adhering to the meaning of the words as learned from their derivation. The first word clearly means in many parts or portions. Guyse: "By degrees, with increasing light, in several parcels." F. S. Sampson, "In many parts." We have God's will given us in the Old Testament in thirty-nine separate books. Of these some contain prophecies uttered during the reign of as many as four successive kings, Isa. 1:1; Hos. 1:1. Some are condensed histories of long periods. One consists of one hundred and fifty independent compositions. From Moses to Malachi there elapsed more than a thousand years, during which God gave to the Jews a *written* revelation. But God revealed his will to Adam, and Enoch, and Noah, and Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and Joseph, long before any part of his word was written. For more than thirty-five hundred years God spoke to the ancients, giving to one a promise, to another a history, to another a prediction, to another a song, etc. till his whole will, as designed for them was revealed. He gave out truths to them in parcels. This was particularly true of the way of salvation by a Redeemer. Although it was always a welcome theme to the prophets, and often by them introduced without formal notice, yet God did not design that men should fully understand it till the coming of Messiah. It is only

under the gospel that faith has ceased to ask for more light concerning the method of salvation, "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect," Heb. 11:40. It is true the way of salvation to sinners was always the same, just as the light of the morning in its various stages is the same light, yet it is granted to us in very different degrees at the successive steps of the rising of the sun. So the scheme of saving man was always perfect, and needed no amendment. But men's views of it have not always been equally clear and satisfactory. Jesus himself said: "Verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them." Matt. 13:17. Compare Luke 10:24; John 8:56; Eph. 1:17, 18; Heb. 11:13; 1 Pet. 1:10-12. Thus God made known his will and his grace in many parcels, and at sundry times.

He did it also *in divers manners*, or in various methods. Sometimes God revealed himself by a theophany, or divine manifestation, as to Adam in Eden, and to Moses in the burning bush and elsewhere, Num. 12:6, 7; sometimes, by dreams and visions, as to Jacob and Joseph; sometimes, by the ministry of angels, as at the giving of the law; sometimes, in great grandeur by audible utterances; and sometimes, by writing with his own finger, as in giving the precepts of the Decalogue on tables of stone. Often he inspired men to speak and write his mind. This was his most common method of revealing his will. Whatever were their private views and feelings, the prophets were controlled by divine inspiration. They spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Even Balaam confessed his inability to speak counter to the divine will: "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more," Num. 22:18. See 1 Pet. 1:11; 2 Pet. 1:21. Many were prophets, who wrote nothing. The Spirit of Christ, which was in the prophets, infallibly secured the utterances of the truth. God also taught his ancient people by making men and things to be types of good things to come; by rites and ordinances; by a ceremonial the most exact; and by services often costly and gorgeous. The phrase—*in time past*—simply means formerly, and fixes no date. The Greek word so rendered marks the distinction between all former days and those of the gospel. The whole force of Paul's argument in this epistle turns upon the fact, admitted by Jews and Christians, that the Old Testament is the word of God, and that the prophets spoke the truth, for God spake in them.

But God did not tell the old prophets all that he would have his people to know. For the same God

2. *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.* If the author of the law is not the author of the gospel, then the gospel is not true, and the Jews are not to be blamed for rejecting it. But the same God, who spoke to the fathers, has in these last days spoken to us by his Son, and by the apostles of the Lamb. The old prophets foretold the time of Messiah in various terms. But they and the apostles agreed in often calling it the latter days, or last days, Isa. 2 : 2 ; Hos. 3 : 5 ; Mic. 4 : 1 ; Acts 2 : 17 ; 1 Tim. 4 : 1 ; 2 Tim. 3 : 1 ; 2 Pet. 3 : 3. There is great fitness in this designation. The gospel is God's last dispensation of mercy to man. It is the *everlasting* gospel. For the recovery of man to God there is no scheme to succeed what is now fully revealed. Jesus says : "All things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you. No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him," John 1 : 18 ; 15 : 15. And the Samaritan woman said : "We know when Messiah is come, he will tell us all things," John 4 : 25. The gospel is a full revelation. God hath spoken unto us by his *Son*. In scripture Christ is many scores of times called the Son, the Son of the Blessed, the Son of the Highest, the Son of God, the only begotten Son, the only begotten of the Father, God's well beloved Son. Wherever the corresponding term Father is found in relation to the first person of the Trinity, the Sonship of the second person is by implication declared. In a sense angels are called sons of God, Job 38 : 7. They derive their existence directly from God and they wear his image. The same is true of Adam, who had no earthly parent, Luke 3 : 38. In a very pleasing sense believers, being renewed by the Holy Ghost, and adopted into the Lord's family, are called sons of God, Rom. 8 : 14 ; 1 John 3 : 1. But the whole argument in the early part of this epistle shows that Jesus Christ is the Son of God in a far higher sense than can be claimed for any mere creature. He is pre-eminently God's own Son, Rom. 8 : 32 ; and God's dear Son, Col. 1 : 13 ; and God is pre-eminently his Father, John 5 : 18. The first proof here given that our high priest is divine is that holy men, inspired of God, call him the Son of God. The next is like it. *Him hath God appointed heir of all things.* A Son is an heir, Rom. 8 : 17 ; Gal. 4 : 7. Believers are heirs of God, but their heirship is through their Redeemer. "They are joint heirs with Christ." But in his own right, and by reason of his infinite and glorious righteousness the Lord Jesus is heir of all things. He merits all honors and riches.

He deserves all the glory he has ever received from men, from angels and from God the Father. The heir had great rights and honors, Gen. 8 : 17; Gal. 4 : 1. How greatly God has honored his Son is no secret. See Ps. 2 : 10; Matt. 28 : 18; John 3 : 35; 16 : 15; Rom. 8 : 29; 1 Pet. 3 : 22; Rev. 1 : 5; 17 : 14. God appointed his Son to be heir, 1. in his eternal purpose; 2. in giving him so great a work, whose just reward is great; 3. in highly exalting him. The next proof here given of the supreme divinity of our high Priest is that *by him also God made the worlds*. The term worlds here used may designate the eras or dispensations past or present, all of which have been arranged in reference to Christ and by his authority; or, it may point to all that came into existence in those times. The latter is probably the true meaning here. Jesus Christ is truly Creator of all things. On this point the word of God leaves no room for doubt. It lays down the great truth: "He that built all things is God," Heb. 3 : 4. It proceeds to say that the Son of God is Creator. "All things were made by him; and without him, was not anything made that was made;" "To us there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him;" "By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him." John 1 : 3; 1 Cor. 8 : 6; Col. 1 : 16. We have no higher proof of the divinity of the Father than that he is Creator. Yet here is the same evidence that the Son is divine. Paul goes on to speak of Christ,

3. *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.* The next proof of the divinity of our high Priest is that he is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person. Peshito: Who is the splendor of his glory, and the image of himself; Wiclif: Which whonne also he is the britness of glorie, and figure of his substance; Tyndale and Cranmer: Which sonne beynge the brightnes of his glory and very ymage of his substance. For image Rheims and Doway have figure; but the Doway has a note saying that the word means express image, and most perfect resemblance. For brightness McLean has effulgence, and Stuart and Craik have radiance. For express image Stuart has exact image, and Craik, impress, or exact impression. The word rendered brightness occurs here only. It declares how Jesus Christ is the effulgence of all that is excellent in the divine nature. God's glory is the sum or fulness of his perfections. The

Son is also the express image, or exact impress of that excellence. We use the same term in regard to stamps on wax. And he is the exact impression of the Father's *person*, or substance. The Greek is the word used by the eastern church to express personality in the divine nature. The same word is in Heb. 11 : 1 rendered substance. Here it means essence, or being, or substance, as those terms have long been used by theological writers when speaking of the divine nature. See also Bretschneider and Robinson. Thus the Son has the very being, essence, or substance of God, and so he is God. Whoever has the nature of God is divine. The divinity of the Son is further proven by his *upholding all things by the word of his power*. For upholding some of the old versions use bearing, bearing up, carrying. We have the same idea in Ps. 75 : 3, "I bear up the pillars of it" [the earth]. In Col. 1 : 17 the same idea is thus taught : "By him all things consist," stand together, are continued in existence and in order. Some prefer the idea of bringing into existence, or creating ; but it may be doubted if the word ever has that meaning. Besides, both here and in Colossians that idea is expressed in previous passages. The word clearly points to the care of the world in preserving and governing it, and in conducting its affairs to good ends. Hawker : "He controls all things in all the departments of nature, providence, grace and glory." He is the great bond of union and a new head to all holy rational creatures, Eph. 1 : 10. All this proves the divinity of our high Priest. The apostle next says, *When he had by himself purged our sins*. Peshito : And by himself he made a purgation of sins ; Wiclif : He makith purgacioun of synnes ; Tyndale : Hath in his owne person poured oure synnes ; McLean : Made purgation of our sins ; Stuart : After he had by himself made expiation for our sins ; Craik : When he had by himself made atonement for our sins. To purge is to cleanse, or purify. The literal rendering here is, made purgation. The cognate verb is commonly rendered cleanse or make clean ; sometimes purge, as in Heb. 9 : 14, 22 ; sometimes purify, as in Tit. 2 : 14. This cleansing refers : 1. to the washings of men's hands or persons, John 2 : 6 ; 2. to the ceremonial purification of a leper, Mark 1 : 44 ; Luke 5 : 14 ; 3. to the putting away of sin by a sacrifice, by blood-shedding, by atonement. Compare 2 Pet. 1 : 9. Christ made purgation of sins by shedding his own blood for them, by expiating their guilt. This is the matter here referred to ; although he does also by his word and Spirit renew and sanctify his people. But to atone was Christ's great work. As our high Priest it was his greatest work on earth. It required his deep humiliation and dreadful death. No mere creature could have effected this cleansing. He could not have

borne the weight of our sins, nor of the wrath of God due for sin; nor could he have brought in ample and everlasting righteousness. All the service any mere creature can render is due for himself to God his Master. This purification of his people Christ made *by himself* alone, without the aid of another, by his own blood and not by that of any other victim. In its plan, in its execution and in its application, redemption is by the Lord. It is as necessary that the author of redemption be God, as that the author of creation be divine. Hawker: "The purging of our sins is made to appear a greater work in the heir of all things, than even the creation of the worlds by him. For the one was simply the act of his almighty power: but the other is not only the act of his almighty power and his almighty love, but the giving of himself in the purging of our sins." Blessed be God, it is as certain that, if saved at all, we are saved by Jehovah, as that we are made by him. Having put away sin and made an end of transgression by offering himself, Jesus *sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high*. This is according to that promise: "Also I will make him my first born, higher than the kings of the earth;" "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Ps. 89: 27; 110: 1. The first step in Christ's exaltation was his resurrection; the second, his ascension to heaven; and the third, his session at God's right hand. But our apostle passes by the first and second, and mentions only the third. The last implies the other two. Jesus claimed to have been with God, to have known the Father as the Father knew him, and to have all authority in heaven and in earth. When his body was laid a lifeless corpse in the sepulchre of Joseph, to the ignorant and unbelieving it looked as if he had set up false claims. Had he continued under the power of death, such an inference would have been fair. But it was impossible that he should be holden of the bonds of death. He, who had laid down his life like a God, took it again like a God, and thus proved he was no pretender. He did more. He ascended up on high. Nor were the gates of heaven barred to him. On the contrary he was received in triumph. Nor was he merely admitted to one of the many mansions in the skies. He sat down on the right hand of God. The Father thus for ever confirmed and established all Christ's claims to be in the highest favor with God, to be equal with God, to be God. If God thus crowned him with glory and honor, he was just what he had claimed to be, just such an high Priest as became us. His divinity was thus proven beyond reasonable doubt. F. S. Sampson: "Had our Mediator been a mere creature, he could not have shared thus in the divine glory and government."

4. *Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.* Peshito: And he is altogether superior to the angels, as he hath also inherited a name which excelleth theirs. Instead of better, Tyndale, Cranmer and Genevan read more excellent; Doddridge, McLean, and F. S. Sampson, superior; Delitzsch, greater; Conybeare and Howson, much greater. Stuart's rendering is: Being exalted as much above the angels, as he hath obtained a name more excellent than they. Christ is rightfully, properly and by nature above angels, the scripture says, *far above all* of them, Eph. 1: 21. There is more difficulty in explaining the word name than any other in this verse. Some think it refers to Christ's power, or authority, or dignity, or excellency. Others regard it as having sole reference to his appellation, SON. The safer and truer exposition is to make it include not only the appellation but also all the glory, majesty and excellence, connected with the idea of essential Sonship with God. This view suits the argument of the apostle. It falls in with the immediate context. It coincides with the idea of *inheritance* so carefully retained in this verse; for a son is by law an heir. Nor is it in conflict with any truth of scripture. It is sustained by the analogy of faith and by many teachings of God's word. Take these three texts in proof. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace;" "And he shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end;" "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." Isa. 9: 6; Luke 1: 32, 33; Phil. 2: 9-11. In the first of these passages the word name clearly designates what he really is. The same thing is done in Matt. 1: 23—"They shall call his name Emmanuel"—that is, he shall be Emmanuel—God with us. So in Rev. 19: 13 it is said: "His name is called the Word of God," that is, He is the Word of God. Compare John 1: 1-4. The second of the above passages (Luke 1: 32, 33) seems to cover the whole ground of Christ's dignity—his Sonship, and the authority and glory resulting from it—his everlasting kingdom. The third passage (Phil. 2: 9-11) sets forth the great fact that the eternal power and godhead of Christ are the basis of that

in **finite** merit, which causes his elevation above all creatures in all **worlds**. In accordance with these views Christ's name also **embraces** his authority, as in Matt. 7:22; Acts 4:7. In these and **other** cases name means authority. In like manner he, who has **this** original and primeval glory, is advanced to the highest **degree** of rule and of majesty. So that McLean is right when he **says**: "The name SON OF GOD is not a nominal title nor a mere **term** of office, but implies both the divine dignity of his person, and the power and dominion he possesses as Heir and Lord of all **things**." Bloomfield: "The apostle shows that Christ is *King, Lord and Creator* of all things, and the angels are but *ministers*." This **exaltation** is true and real, not imaginary; it is proper not **figurative**; it is exceedingly and transcendantly glorious; and it is **of** his whole person, not merely his divine nature, but his **human** nature as well. The apostle of the circumcision concisely expresses the same thought thus: He "is gone into heaven, and is **on** the right hand of God; angels, and authorities and powers being made subject unto him," 1 Pet. 3:22. Tholuck: "What the scripture says of the SON goes far beyond what can be said of the ANGELS. Angels are servants, nay, succorers of his redeemed, while Christ is SON, and EVERLASTING KING." This our apostle proceeds at once to make clear.

5. *For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?* The first of these quotations is made from Ps. 2:7. It is made again in Heb. 5:5. Paul cited the same passage in his argument made to the Jews at Antioch in Pisidia, Acts 13:33. Great stress is thus laid upon it. The second of these quotations is from 2 Sam. 7:14; or from 1 Chron. 22:10; for it is found in both places. In the second Psalm the stability of Messiah's kingdom and glory rests on three things; 1. On the anointing and setting up of Christ as King; 2. On the unalterable decree of God; 3. On the relation subsisting between the Father and the Son, vs. 6, 7. The filiation of Christ is alike declared in the citation last made. Words could not make it more clear. The only difficulty in explaining it arises from the fact that it is inwoven into a prophecy, a part of which respects Solomon, who was the immediate offspring of David; but Solomon was a type of Christ, who was to reign for ever. This is the key to the right interpretation of that whole passage in 2 Sam. 7, as it is also of Ps. 72. Both of the citations are directly pertinent to Paul's purpose. They prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the doctrine of both Testaments on Christ's Sonship with God is the same. Gill: "Christ is the true, proper, natural, and eternal Son

of God, and as such is declared, owned, and acknowledged by Jehovah the Father." The antithesis in the two passages cited is the same. On one side the first person of the Godhead begets or is a Father; on the other the second person is a Son. Now no such relation as this exists between God and angels. He has never used such language towards any of them. If he has, where is the passage? when did he *ever* so speak to any one of the angels? Nor do these Scriptures stand alone. Others no less teach Christ's supremacy over all the creatures he has made.

6. *And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.* The very words here quoted are literally found in the Septuagint version of Deut. 32:43. They are in substance found in the same version of Ps. 97:7. Tholuck thinks that the *form* of the quotation is indubitably taken from the former of these passages, but that as to the *matter* Paul beyond doubt had recourse to the latter. There is certainly no valid objection against uttering the substance of a truth in any appropriate words, wherever found. This has always been regarded as admissible. But in this case it is not best to recur to Deut. 32:43. It is admitted that in that place the authors of the Septuagint version acted rather as interpreters than as translators. The Hebrew does not bear out their rendering. Nor is there any necessity of looking further than Ps. 97:7. That ode is generally admitted to be Messianic. So say the Syriac, Luther, Calvin, Fabritius, Piscator, Venema, Amesius, Patrick, Gill, Henry, Horne, Morison and others. Tholuck: "The theme of this Psalm is the triumph of Christ over an unbelieving world." So that any pertinent citation from it is directly german to the apostle's purpose. The authorized version, Fabritius, Piscator, Venema, Edwards, Jebb and Fry in the clause cited read *gods*. But the Septuagint, Syriac, Arabic, Ethiopic, Vulgate, Deway, Amesius, Tremellius and Junius, Waterland and others read *his angels*. In Ps. 8:5 the same word is rendered angels in our version. In Ps. 138:1 several versions render the same word angels. In all these cases the Hebrew word is *Elohim*, most commonly applied to the true God, but also to angels, to magistrates, and even to false gods. Patrick: "Let all that are called gods, whether princes on earth, or angels in heaven, bow down to him." Horne: "The clause declares the supremacy of Christ over all that are called gods, in heaven and in earth." All sober writers admit that the other citations in Heb. 1 are pertinent to Paul's argument, and that pious Hebrews would see their force. We cannot without violence suppose this to be an exception. It must be remembered, too, that Paul was as much inspired as David, and that in making the citation we may with

infallible certainty follow his interpretation. This quotation, then, proves Christ's infinite superiority to the angels; for at the bidding of Jehovah they worship him. It does more. It proves his supreme divinity; because to worship any one, who is not the Most High God, is idolatry—a sin every where in scripture denounced as most odious to God.

But when did he bring the first-begotten into the world? It is clearly implied that he was the begotten before he brought him into the world. His Sonship has already been proven by our apostle. Bringing him into the world was not his eternal generation. Moreover in the verse are two words, which show that the bringing in was not from eternity. One is *world*, which means the habitable earth, or, by a figure, the people in it. It is not the singular of the word rendered worlds in v. 2; but that found in Matt. 24: 14; Luke 2: 1; 4: 5; Acts 17: 6, etc. The other word here found, proving that Paul is not speaking of things before all worlds, is *angels*. The existence of these holy creatures is taken for granted; for the passage says they were called on to worship him. Still the question recurs, When did God do that act, known as the bringing in of the first-begotten? The answers to this question are various. 1. Milton has a conjecture, not wild but wholly poetical, that the probation of the angels consisted in their being called on, soon after their creation, to adore the Son of God, and own their allegiance to him. Some sober and respectable thinkers have favored this view. To this it is strongly objected that the term *world* is never used to denote angels alone. Indeed, it is only inferentially that it can be said ever to embrace them at all. 2. Some think that the time of Christ's birth in Bethlehem was the time of the bringing in. And it is true that not only was his conception announced by an angel, Luke 1: 31; but his birth was celebrated in the audience of the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem by a great multitude of the heavenly host, Luke 2: 8–15. But angels had rendered to the Son the most exalted worship long ages before he was born in Bethlehem, Isa. 6: 1–4; John 12: 41. Stuart is in doubt whether the time was his birth or whether we must go further, and refer the bringing in in fact 3. To his entrance on his ministry. It is true that angels did minister to him as soon as his temptation was ended, and as his ministry was about to begin, Matt. 4: 11. But they no doubt had often done the same, Matt. 2: 13. Who doubts that angels accompanied him in the flight into Egypt? 4. Others would fix the time of the bringing in at the resurrection. McLean strongly favors this view: "The time referred to is when God raised him from the dead." And it is true that his resurrection and ascen-

sion awakened the liveliest interest among the angels, Matt. 28: 2-7; Mark 16: 5-7; Luke 24: 4-6; Acts 1: 10, 11. In this case the resurrection and ascension are considered as one whole—complete exaltation. 5. A late anonymous writer has revived an opinion formerly held by Mede and others, and places the time in the full blaze of “millennial glory,” when the first-begotten shall be brought into the world in a manner very glorious, all nations calling him Lord to the glory of God the Father. 6. Lyra and others regard the bringing in as referring to the day of judgment, when all things shall be subdued unto Christ, 1 Cor. 15: 28; when all his enemies shall be made his footstool, Heb. 10: 13. It is a great objection to the five views last stated that they postpone the command to the angels to worship the Son until long ages after we know that they adored him. And who dare say that of old they worshipped him without authority? Not a few, both ancients and moderns, have, indeed, founded an argument on the word *again*, connecting it with bringing in. But these are not agreed as to the time, some making it refer to the resurrection of Christ; others to the time noticed under head 6 above, etc. But there is no good cause for giving the adverb *again* in this verse a sense different from what it has in v. 5, where it is the sign of an additional quotation. It is used for the same purpose in Heb. 2: 13 (twice); and in Heb. 4: 5, 7, and elsewhere. See Rom. 15: 10-12.

But in what consists the *bringing in* of the first-begotten into the world? The decision of this matter, so far as philology is concerned, turns very much on two words. The first is the adverb *when*. It is correctly rendered; but our English word, like the Greek, does not necessarily fix any definite time. In multitudes of cases it has the force of *whenever*. In proof see Matt. 5: 11; 6: 2, 5, 6, 16, 23; 13: 32; 23: 15; 24: 32; Mark 4: 15, 16, 29, 31, 32; Luke 6: 22, 26; 11: 2, 21, 34, 36; John 2: 10; 5: 7; Rom. 2: 14; 1 Cor. 14: 26; 16: 5, and scores of passages. The other word, on which the sense turns, is that rendered *bringeth in*. This rendering is very common, as in Luke 2: 27, “The parents brought in the child;” John 18: 16, “Brought in Peter;” etc. There the word pretty certainly means to *introduce*. So say Bretschneider, Robinson, Doddridge, Guyse, Slade, Ripley, Patterson, Lindsay, Conybeare and Howson, F. S. Sampson, Barnes, etc. Gouge: “By bringing into the world is meant a manifestation in the world.” If these views are correct, then we may paraphrase the verse thus: “Whenever by his word or providence, God has brought to men’s notice, or introduced to them his first-begotten and well-beloved Son, he manifestly sets forth his immense supe-

riority to all angels; and he does this explicitly and in so many words in Ps. 97, an ode known to all Hebrews, and by them generally admitted to be Messianic. In that Psalm in the midst of many lively and inspiriting representations, the Father says, Let all the angels of God worship my Son, ascribing to him divine glory, honor and majesty. Let not one decline this clear and solemn duty. For it is my will that all angels as well as men should honor the Son as they honor the Father." If such paraphrase is admissible, it at once relieves the passage of many difficulties. Diodati prefers to confine the sense closely to what is taught in Ps. 97, holding that the *bringing in* is the prophecy there uttered. The objection to this view is that it confines within too narrow limits a declaration that seems to be general. Owen of Oxford: "That which was intended in the Old Testament, in the promises of his coming into the world, is that which is here expressed by the phrase bringing him in."

The term *first-begotten*, as distinguished from begotten, already considered, claims attention. The Greek word so rendered occurs in the New Testament nine times. In seven instances it refers to Christ Jesus, twice as the first-born of Mary, and five times in other connections. It is rendered *first-born* or *first-begotten*, according to the preference of the translator, the original word being the same. The cognate noun is rendered birthright. Two ideas belong to the word *first-begotten*. 1. Priority. Christ was before John the Baptist, John 1 : 15, though according to the flesh John was several months his senior. He was before Abraham, John 8 : 58. Yea, more, he was "before God's works of old. He was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, he was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled; before the hills was he brought forth, while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the earth," Pr. 8 : 22-26. He was "in the beginning with God," John 1 : 1, 2. Language could not be clearer. 2. The other idea belonging to the word *first-begotten* is preëminence, or possession of the rights of primogeniture. In this sense he is the first-born among many brethren, the first-born of every creature, the first-born or first-begotten from the dead; that in all things he might have the preëminence, Rom. 8 : 29; Col. 1 : 15, 18; Rev. 1 : 5.

It remains for us to consider the *worship* here enjoined. Worship is of two kinds, civil and religious. Civil worship consists in paying such civil respect to creatures as their age, office, dignity, or relations to us demand. Thus Lot bowed himself before the

two angels with his face toward the ground, Gen. 19:1. Thus Araunah bowed himself before the king on his face upon the ground, 2 Sam. 24:20. So Joseph's brethren bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth, Gen. 42:6. So also Moses did obeisance to his father-in-law, Ex. 18:7; and Solomon bowed himself unto Bathsheba, 1 Kings 2:19; and the young prophets bowed themselves to the ground before Elisha, 2 Kings 2:15. In like manner, judges are now addressed as "Your Worships," or as "This Worshipful Court." In all such cases it is designed to express, not religious homage, but high civil respect. In such worship the religious sentiment is not at all involved. The act is wholly civil in its nature. But religious worship calls for religious homage and veneration, and consists in acts of devotion, such as prayer, praise, confession, thanksgiving and supplication, in rendering to God all the names, titles and honors which are his due, and in ascribing to him all his own works. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve," is the law of the universe, Matt. 4:10. It is well understood, that neither apostle nor angel desired or dared to accept any religious homage, Acts 10:26; 14:14, 15; Rev. 19:10. While on earth our Lord received worship from men, Matt. 2:11; 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 28:9, 17; John 9:38; 20:28. That the angels have long known it is their duty and privilege to worship the Lord Jesus is evident from Isa. 6:1-4; Rev. 4:2-11; 5:5-13, as well as from Ps. 97:7.

7. *And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.* This is a quotation from Ps. 104:4,—

Who maketh his angels spirits;  
His ministers a flaming fire.

The Chaldee renders it, Who makes his messengers swift like spirits; his ministers strong like flaming fire. Angels are servants of God, servants of Christ. It was their honor and their delight to minister to Christ when he was on earth. They adore him in heaven. They feel an intense interest in every thing relating to his kingdom, greatly joying at the conversion of sinners, and desiring to look into the mysteries of redemption, Luke 15:10; 1 Pet. 1:12. Their worship is conducted with peculiar and awful reverence, as is proven by Isa 6:1-4 already cited. The apostle puts it down among the glorious things in the mystery of godliness that Jesus Christ was "seen of angels," and "received up into glory."

## DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL REMARKS.

1. The Bible is the word of God. It is no fiction, no fable, no falsehood. God spake unto the fathers and unto the apostles, v. 1. "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. 1:21. Compare 2 Sam. 23:2, 3; Luke 1:70; Acts 1:16. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," 2 Tim. 3:16. Blessed be God for speaking to us at all. Blessed be his name for speaking to us so often, so clearly, so fully, so kindly, and with such authority. His word teaches us all the mysteries, reveals all the truths, holds forth all the encouragements, utters all the warnings, and prescribes all the duties, which it behooves us to know. No wonder God's people love it, find it sweeter than honey, and esteem it better than thousands of gold and silver. The prophets, whom God raised up of old formed, in their lives and characters, a more venerable body of men than can be found among all the annals of the heathen world. They were truly great men. By their predictions they sustained the hearts of the ancient saints. Their testimony respecting Messiah was clear and wonderful, John 1:45; Acts 10:43; Rev. 19:10. Men never act more foolishly or wickedly than when they discredit the truth of God's word. Nor can they act more wisely or piously than by believing every word that he has spoken. Heaven and earth may pass away; but never shall one of the words of God fall to the ground. No monuments are so venerable as those of revelation. The genuineness and authenticity of the scriptures are established on the firmest possible basis. Let any man prove that we have the writings of Hesiod or Homer, and it is easy to bring a thousand-fold more evidence that we have the genuine prophecies of Isaiah and the genuine Psalms of David. And as to the evidences of the truth of what we have in scripture, they are varied, abundant, cumulative, complete. No humble man asks for further proof of the divine origin of the holy writings.

2. Nor will a wise and good man be offended because God gave us his will in parcels, at sundry times and in divers manners, v. 1. It is amazing kindness and condescension in God to speak to us at all. His infinite wisdom and goodness chose the right way. To criticise his methods, or arraign his proceedings is both arrogance and profaneness. Moll: "The *fragmentary* character of this revelation produces in it no error; for God is he who speaks to us in the prophets, and all the utterances of revelation are oracles

of God. The great *variety of its forms* best bears testimony to the goodness of God in graciously condescending to human necessities, and demonstrates at once the sincerity and earnestness with which he draws near to us, and the depth of his condescension." If men love history, where can they find such records as in the Bible? If they are fond of poetry, "there are," says Milton, "no songs comparable to the songs of Zion." All the prudential maxims of the ancient wise men are put into obscurity by the consummate wisdom of the book of Proverbs or even by the thirty-seventh Psalm. The doctrines of the Bible are truly heavenly. The worship it enjoins is simple, reasonable and elevating. Its morals are pure, practicable and ennobling. The great secret of successful teaching is, A little at a time and often repeated. This is the precise plan of scripture, Line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little.

3. Yet in all this variety there is no discord. The earlier and the later inspired writers never clash, vs. 1, 2. Great efforts have been made to discover discrepancies between the sacred penmen. The utmost that has been done in this way has been to feed infidel pride and arrogance. The meek have never followed these pernicious ways. Jesus well said to the cavillers of his day, "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" John 5:46, 47. And blessed Paul says, "Having obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come." Acts 26:22. The New Testament does not supersede the Old. It fulfils it. Heubner: "Christianity completes the circle of revelation; it is its perfection, and stands good for the highest reach of culture which man can attain on earth." In a clear day a glorious noontide crowns the light of the morning. Where is the man, who in true faith and love receives one book of scripture, and rejects the rest, or relies on one Testament and rejects the other? If the two Testaments did not accord with each other, one or both would certainly be untrue. As we find them, they do mightily support each other. One religious truth is never inconsistent with any other religious truth: while one error often saps the basis of another error. Moreover Christianity is a finality, the completion of what began to be revealed in Eden. In its luminous pages there is no lack of light. For faith and godliness, for holy thinking, holy feeling, holy speaking and holy living we need no more lessons, no clearer teaching than we find in scripture. Faith says it is enough, though unbelief will cavil forever.

4. In Christianity all turns on this point, Is Christ the Son of God, or is he an impostor? vs. 2, 5. Between these there is no middle ground. He is to be received with all the heart, or he is to be rejected with abhorrence. If his claims were not well founded, they were blasphemous. If he was not equal with God, he was guilty of robbery. Very few in all the earth are ready to deny that the great teacher of Nazareth was a just person, a pious and benevolent man. If this is true he was no impostor. And he is the author of the gospel. The prophets spoke the Old Testament by the Spirit of Christ, 1 Pet. 1:10. But the great mass of the thoughts of the New Testament were uttered by the Saviour's own blessed lips, and the rest were communicated by revelation to his apostles. The Jews blamed their fathers for killing the prophets; yet God forsook them not utterly on that account, but sent the Lord Jesus, saying, "They will reverence my Son." Christ himself addresses us in the gospel, which "began at the first to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him," Heb. 2:3. Christ is far above the prophets, even the best of them. Among them none was greater than Moses. "They escaped not who refused him that spake on earth [*i. e.* Moses]; much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven," Heb. 12:25. It is therefore the height of madness to look for any scheme, which shall by divine appointment succeed the gospel plan. If men will not hear Jesus Christ, they will hear no messenger that God might send. The gospel therefore has overwhelming demands upon us. It comes to us from the lips of him, who made us, and who will be our final judge.

5. Nor can we excuse ourselves from obeying the call of the gospel on the score of any mysteriousness in its revelations. Its mysteries are its glory. They are chiefly mysteries of love, such as that God has *spoken unto us by his Son*, v. 2. But he has not merely *spoken* to us, but he has redeemed us, and he saves us by his Son. By the Lord Jesus justice and mercy, truth and righteousness are made harmonious in man's salvation. By him angels and men are made one family, Eph. 1:10. By him God and man, between whom was utter opposition, are brought together. Let any man embrace in meekness and love these mysteries, without which there is no salvation; and all other things now inscrutable will have lost their power to perplex, even if many of them still remain unsearchable.

6. Nor have we any right or reason to expect any new revelation from God, for he has in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, v. 2. These are the *last days*; that is, this is God's last dis-

penetration of grace to men; and because it is the last he has sent to earth the greatest messenger ever sent to any world. God greatly honored Moses, when he said: "If there be a prophet among you I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all his house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold," Num. 12:6-8. But the great prophet like unto Moses was in the beginning with God, from eternity lay in his bosom, and knew the Father even as the Father knew him. He was ever "by him, as one brought up with him." "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," John 1:17. Moses spoke what he had learned; but Jesus Christ spoke what he had ever known. Moses was a servant; Jesus Christ was a Son. Moses was by nature a sinner; Jesus Christ knew no sin, original or actual. Moses entered heaven by the righteousness of Immanuel; Jesus Christ entered heaven by his own merits. We cannot reasonably expect that God will ever supersede his Son. Starke: "If God has finally spoken unto us by Christ and his apostles, we must not turn away to the next doctrine that may arise, be it Mohammedanism or Popery." Christ is above all the prophets, as he is a Son, and they are but servants; as he holds all the offices of mediator, and they none of them except typically; and as in his human nature he is famously exalted and glorified with excellent majesty, whereas the most glorious of mere men are but servants and worshippers. If these things be so, how great is the privilege of hearing the gospel; how great the blessedness of laying hold of its promises; and how great the honor of publishing it to a dying world. Dickson: "The glory of the ministerial calling of preachers of the gospel is by so much the greater, as it hath the Son of God first man in the roll thereof; as first preacher, and prince of preachers."

7. When we say that Christ is the Son of God, as is claimed in vs. 2, 5, we mean much more than that he is the Son of God in the same sense that converted men are sons of God. Those, who from among men are raised to that privilege, become sons of God only by regeneration and adoption; but Jesus Christ is God's Son by nature and generation. He is begotten of the Father; yea, he is the only begotten Son of God, Therefore God cannot have other sons, that are such in the sense in which Christ is a Son; else Christ would not be the only-begotten. Owen: "Either to exalt believers into the same kind of sonship with Christ, or to depress him into the same rank with them, is wholly inconsistent with the analogy of faith, and the principles of the Gospel." He is so the

Son of God, that he has the same being, essence and nature with his Father. He is not the same person as the Father, for the Father communicates his being and nature to him; but "this *personal distinction* always supposes one and the *same nature*. Every son of man is man." The only begotten Son of God is God. No sound thinker will deny that the filiation of Christ is ineffable. But the scripture clearly asserts that "he is before all things," Col. 1: 17, therefore his sonship is eternal. The Nicene Creed (properly so called) says: "We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, the only-begotten, that is, of the substance of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, of one substance with the Father." The Athanasian Creed says: "The Catholic Faith is this that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity:

Neither confounding the persons, nor dividing the substance. For there is one person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost:

And the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one, the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost:

The Father uncreate, the Son uncreate, and the Holy Ghost uncreate:

The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible:

The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal:

And yet there are not three eternals, but one eternal:

As also there are not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated; but one uncreated and one incomprehensible.

So likewise the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, and the Holy Ghost almighty:

And yet there are not three almighties, but one almighty.

So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God:

And yet there are not three Gods, but one God.

So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord:

And yet there are not three Lords, but one Lord.

For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge each person by himself to be Lord and God; so are we forbidden by the Catholic religion to say, There be three Gods or three Lords.

The Father is of none, neither created nor begotten.

The Son is of the Father alone; not made, nor created, but begotten.

The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son; neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.

So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts.

And in this Trinity, none is before or after other; none is greater or less than another; but the whole three persons are co-eternal together, and co-equal. So that in all things, the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped."

In the foregoing statement definition and exactitude are carried to the highest perfection. The Son of God, though he is not the Father nor the Spirit, is yet very God. Tait: "To be begotten implies unity of substance. For the begotten of the human is human, and the begotten of the Divine is Divine. . . . Let us take all the host of heaven from the Archangel Gabriel, down to the lowest of those shining ones who do the Almighty's bidding, and wait to fulfil his word. Let us then visit the worlds that roll in space. Let us next descend upon the earth, and take the great and good of all generations of mankind—the sages, the legislators in whom nations have gloried, and for the honor of whose birth-place cities have disputed. And having thus gathered from universal nature all that is good, excellent and glorious, let us place them before the Lord on the one hand, and Christ alone on the other. These, says the Eternal, pointing to the illustrious company which we have gathered before him,—these I made, and having made, I could annihilate. And were they now annihilated, millions of creatures as excellent would spring into being at the word of my mouth. But of the Son he says, Him I made not; he is my begotten, of one substance with myself, a sharer of my divinity, eternity and glory. Cease then your impious comparisons: to compare the creatures to him is to compare them to me." Nor is any of this language stronger than that which we find in many scriptures. Take a few specimens: "Whatsoever things the Father doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise;" "As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;" "Before Abraham was, I am." John 5: 19, 26; 8: 58. Indeed John opens his Gospel with this language: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

8. Respecting the generation of Christ these things are generally confessed and received by learned and sound divines: 1. He is in this epistle twice said to have been *begotten* of God, 1: 5; 5: 5. The same is declared in Ps. 2: 7. Indeed this last place is quoted

in the other two, as containing a truth familiar to the Jewish church, and undisputed by any believer in God's word. 2. He is five times in the New Testament called the *only begotten*, John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9. In four of these cases the word *only begotten* is followed by the word *Son*. 3. He is five times called the *first-born*, or *first-begotten* (for the Greek word is rendered both ways), Rom. 8:29; Col. 1:15, 18; Heb. 1:6; Rev. 1:5. Nor is this all, for 4. In human generation the father is older than his son; but in divine generation the Father was never without the Son, nor the Son without the Father. 5. Therefore as the Father is eternal, so is the Son eternal, and so his generation is eternal. 6. The generation of God's Son is not a transient act, but for ever the Father communicates to him his being, essence and nature. 7. As the Son would not be the Son without the Father, so the Father would not be the Father without the Son. There is "a necessary mutual subsistence of him that begetteth, and of him that is begotten, in and with one another: 'Thou in me, and I in thee,' John 17:21." Without the Father the Son never was, nor would he be; so without the Son the Father never was, nor would he be. 8. In the generation of the Son, the whole nature, substance and essence of the Father is communicated, so that he is Lord, God, Jehovah. Yet 9. In the generation of his Son, the Father parts with nothing. In other words he is not diminished by communicating his nature to his Son. 10. The generation of God's Son is divine and above the comprehension of man, as are many things respecting God. Yet the scripture makes it clear that the best idea we can form of the relation between the first and second persons of the Godhead is best expressed by the terms Father and Son, beget and begotten. God himself has chosen these terms, and so we know they are fit. Here we should rest, and not take these terms and overstrain them, making them mean what they were never designed to teach. On such a subject conceits are wholly out of place. 11. There is nothing in the doctrine of the Sonship of Christ that in any way denies or impairs the doctrine of the divine unity. On this point God's word is as clear as on the Sonship of Christ. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, is one Lord" [Jehovah], Deut. 6:4. Nor is the New Testament less decisive: "There is but one God;" "There is none other God but one;" "God is one;" "There is one God and one Mediator," 1 Cor 8:4, 6; Gal. 3:20; 1 Tim. 2:5. When we say God is one, we mean to assert: 1. That **there** is no plurality of Gods, that there are not three Gods, nor two Gods, but one God; 2. That the uncreated, underived substance of God is not mixed, nor compounded, and that it does not

consist of parts; 3. That the divine essence is indivisible, inseparable. One reason why we cannot say much of unity is that it is a simple idea, and therefore incapable of much explication. When we once get any simple idea we can commonly say but little more concerning it.

9. The Lord Jesus Christ is truly, properly and supremely divine. There is none over him, none above him, none superior to him. Nor is he divine metaphorically, but properly; not by fiction, but in truth. This is proven in many ways in all the Scriptures, as might be shewn. Let us see the arguments as given in this clause—vs. 1-7. *A.* He is called and he is *the Son of God*, vs. 2, 5. The force of this truth has been already somewhat explained. The fact of his Sonship is declared in the most excellent variety of scripture, before his birth, Ps. 2 : 7; Dan. 3 : 25; Luke. 1 : 32, 35. In like manner after his birth when he was twelve years old he claimed sonship with God: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Luke 2 : 49. At his baptism the Father declared, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," Matt. 3 : 17. The same form of testimony was borne by the Father at Christ's transfiguration, Matt. 17 : 5. At a later period, Jesus said, "Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again," John 12 : 28. Nathaniel confessed him to be the Son of God, the King of Israel, John 1 : 47. In very many places he is called the Son of God. Christ is also proven to be divine because *B.* He is *heir of all things*, v. 2. The heir of all things is Lord of all things, Gal. 4 : 1. Compare Gen. 21 : 10. "The servant abideth not in the house forever; but the son abideth ever," John 8 : 35. "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ," Acts 2 : 36. To be heir of all things is to have the dignity and glory of the Father. *C.* He is Creator, and so must be divine, v. 2. Lindsay: "God is declared in the most unequivocal and unlimited terms to have created all things; Christ is declared in language equally unequivocal and unlimited to have created all things." "What things soever the Father doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise," John 5 : 19. By Jesus Christ God made all things—Diodati: "All temporal things, subject to the course, divisions, and successions of time, Heb. 11 : 3. Or, all the parts of the world, according to the manner of the Hebrews." He made the glorious invisible world. He made the world of lights and stars above and around us. And he made the world we inhabit. Christ's divinity is likewise established by his being *D.* *The brightness of the Father's glory*; or as De Wette renders it, "A reflection of his glory," v. 3.

Guise: "As no one similitude taken from creatures is sufficient to illustrate both the essential union, and personal distinction of the Father and Son; so, as I humbly conceive, the Son's being the brightness of the glory of his Father, relates to his *essential* and inseparable union with the Father, as all the fulness of the God-head dwells substantially in him." Many writers suppose the metaphor is taken from a luminous body and the light proceeding from it, such as the sun. Thus Ambrose says, "As the flame does not in time precede the brightness which it generates; so the Father was never without the Son." Hesychius thinks the language here is taken from the shining of the sun. Gouge enlarges upon the same idea: "No resemblance taken from any other creature can more fully set out the mutual relations between the Father and the Son, For 1. The brightness issuing from the sun is of the same nature that the sun is. 2. It is of as long continuance as the sun. Never was the sun without its brightness. 3. The brightness cannot be separated from the sun. The sun may as well be made no sun, as have the brightness thereof severed from it. 4. This brightness is from the sun, not the sun from it. 5. This brightness cometh naturally and necessarily from the sun, not voluntarily and at pleasure. 6. The sun and the brightness are distinct each from other; the one is not the other. 7. All the glory of the sun is in this brightness. 8. The light which the sun giveth to the world is by this brightness." These hints are easily applied to the matter in hand. Tait: "Jesus has not a few rays merely of this glory; he is 'the brightness' of it." He is excellent as the Father is excellent, and good as the Father is good. All that is perfect and adorable in the nature of the Father, is equally to be found in the Son. Nor is this all. In Jesus the Father's glory was manifested; he was the brightness, or shining forth of it to men. For says John, "The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," John 1:14. Macknight: "The meaning I think is, that the divine perfections shone brightly in the Son, even after he was made flesh."

Christ's divinity is further proven, *E.* By his being *the express image of the Father's person*, v. 3. He is not a faint likeness, a feeble resemblance, but the *express image* of the Father. Tong: "In beholding the power, wisdom and goodness of the Lord Jesus Christ, we behold the power, wisdom, and goodness of the Father." Christ himself taught this very doctrine in terms unmistakable. See John 14:7, 9. Dickson: When "Christ is called the express image of the Father's person, the similitude is borrowed from a signet's impression, which representeth all the lineaments of the

seal. Then 1. The Father is one person, and the Son is one other person of the Godhead, having his own proper subsistence distinct from the Father. 2. The Son resembleth the Father, fully, and perfectly; so that there is no perfection in the Father, but the same is substantially in the Son." Gouge: "This resemblance doth, so far as an earthly resemblance can, set out these mysteries: 1. The Son is begotten of the Father, Ps. 2:7. 2. The Father is made manifest in the Son, Col. 1:15. 3. The Son is equal to the Father, Phil. 2:6. 4. The Father and the Son are distinct each from other, John 5:32; 8:18." The divinity of the Son is also manifest *F.* From his *governing the world*. He is the author of providence, not to the exclusion of the Father or of the Spirit, but in concurrence with the first and third persons of the Trinity. Nor is it labor, nor does it cost him any effort to preserve and control all things, for he does it *by the word of his power*, v. 3. The term here used is not that rendered *Word* in John 1:1, but a term meaning command or any word spoken. Here the \*power is in the word. Patterson: "Does he sustain the weight, and carry on the government of all things? With what earnestness should the sinner seek his favor! With what confidence should the believer depend upon his arm!" Nothing is so great as to escape his grasp; nothing is so small as to elude his notice. His divinity is also taught, *G.* By his *purging our sins*. For who can forgive sins but God only? Or who can put away sin but God only? To make full satisfaction to divine justice as much required divine perfections as to apply the redemption thus purchased. Indeed, to redeem from sin was a much greater work than to create in innocence. The latter was effected by a word. He spoke and it was done; he commanded and it stood fast. But the former required the incarnation, the sufferings, and even the death of the Son of God. We needed a divine sufferer to take away sin. Such a sufferer was Jesus Christ. Augustine: "If you regard the distinction of substances, the Son of God descended from heaven, and the Son of man was crucified. But if you regard the unity of person, the Son of man descended from heaven, and the Son of God was crucified." The meaning is that the personal union of Christ's natures is so perfect, that what is done or suffered in one nature is fitly spoken of as done or suffered in the person of Christ. It was Christ's human nature that suffered, but his human nature was in indissoluble union with his divine nature, thus forming the person Christ Jesus. Now think how great was his work in purifying his people from the guilt of sin, which "makes the creature loathsome and odious in God's sight. It makes it most wretched and cursed, for it putteth upon the sinner God's wrath,

which is an insupportable burden, and presseth the soul down to hell." He who was not divine could not have done so great a work. Dickson: "The satisfactory cleansing of our sins is not a thing to be done by man's meritorious doings or sufferings; but already done and ended by Christ, before he ascended; and that by himself alone, all creatures being secluded." Patterson: "Did he make expiation for human sin? How meet to celebrate his condescending mercy, to fly for safety to his cross, and then to triumph in his divine efficiency to save!"

The divinity of the Lord Jesus is no less certainly established, *H.* By his exaltation to the right hand of God, v. 3. Every step in this glorious exaltation demonstrated his divinity. He was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead," Rom. 1:4. See the author's Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans on this place. Compare Acts 13:32, 33. By his resurrection, his truth and his innocence were established, for a good God would not work a miracle to establish the idle claims of a mere pretender. Then his ascension to heaven and the manner of it incontestably proved his divinity. The account of it is short, and the event as seen by mortals was somewhat veiled, but the angel who spoke to the disciples compared it to his coming to judge the world, Acts 1:11. There never had been such thrills of joy in heaven as on the day of Christ's ascension. It was grand indeed, and that angel found not its parallel but in the general judgment. Then Jesus went to heaven, not as an angel returns from his errand of mercy, nor as the soul of a redeemed man returns to God, but on reaching heaven he took his seat *on the right hand of the Majesty on high*. Elsewhere it is said, he sat down with his Father on his throne, Rev. 3:21. Hawker: "Paul in one scripture and Peter in another made this return of Christ to heaven as the most complete answer to all the accusations of hell and the sinner's conscience; yea, to all the demands of God's law and justice on account of sin. 'Who,' saith Paul, 'shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth? Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God,' Rom. 8:33-39, as much as to say, What fears can now arise to distress the Lord's redeemed ones? God the Father hath received him at the heavenly court, and said unto him, 'Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool,' Ps. 110:1. And Peter, following up the same blessed truth with a rapture of holy joy and triumph, tells the church that 'Christ is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities being made subject

unto him,' 1 Pet. 3:22. . . Jesus would never have returned to his Father, had his work been unfinished. He hereby proved that he had by himself purged our sins." There in the very glory which he had with the Father before the world was he liveth for ever and ever, his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation, and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? Thus in the space of two verses by eight distinct arguments the apostle proves the divinity of the high Priest of the Christian profession. In doing this he of course establishes another point:

10. Christ is superior to men, even the best, the greatest, the most venerated. He is greater than Moses, and Samuel, and David, and Isaiah, and Daniel and all the prophets. They were servants. He is a Son. They were mortal. He is alive for evermore. They were patriarchs, prophets, and kings; but they all died like men. He died but he laid down his own life and died like a God. By parity of reasoning and by other proofs,

11. Christ is superior to angels also, any one and all of them, vs. 4-7. It is not denied, but in scripture it is clearly admitted that angels are exalted beings. To them are given two of the very names given to God himself. There seems to be no room for doubt that by nature angels are the most excellent creatures God has ever made, and that some of them are so exalted that men, who are most familiar with spiritual things, are liable to mistake an appearance of an angel for a theophany, Rev. 22:8,9. They are vastly numerous. In fact they are countless, Ps. 68:17; Heb. 12:22. They are powerful and some of them are very *mighty*, Ps. 103:20; Rev. 10:1; 2 Kings 19:24. They are pure spirits, Heb. 1:7. They are of heavenly origin. Their home is in our Father's house above, Matt. 18:10. They are ever young, Mark 16:5. They have seen this earth in all its history. They know much. Their faculties were at creation good. They have travelled much, and thought more. They are holy and happy. But they are still creatures, servants, yea, the guardians of God's people in the world. Christ is the Lord of them all. They are denominated in scripture Ministers, Heb. 1:7; Watchers, Dan. 4:13, 17; Spirits, Heb. 1:7; Men of God, Judges 13:6,9; Lords, Gen. 19:2, 18; Gods, Ps. 8:5; Sons of God, Job 1:6; Holy Ones, Dan. 4:13, 17; the host (or army) of God, Gen. 32:2; The heavenly host, Luke 2:13; Cherubim, Gen. 3:24; Seraphim, Isa. 6:2; Thrones, Dominions, Principalities and Powers, Col. 1:16; Messengers, so the name angel in both Testaments signifies. Angels (I speak of those

who never sinned) have long felt and manifested an intense interest in the person and kingdom of the Son of God. Though he is not their Saviour, he is their Lord and head. They were employed to predict his conception, to herald his birth, to guard his life, to comfort him after his temptation and in his agony, to open his sepulchre, to announce his resurrection, to form his convoy on his return to heaven, to come with him to judgment, to execute his sentence against the ungodly, Luke 1:30; 2:9-11; Matt. 2:13, 14; Mark 1:13; Luke 22:43; Matt. 28:2; Luke 24:5, 23; Ps. 88:17, 18; Matt. 25:31; 13:49, 50. They feel an intense interest in the conversion of sinners, Luke 15:7, 10. They wonderfully uphold God's people and protect them, Ps. 91:11, 12; Ps. 34:7. They conduct the souls of believers from their death-chamber to their home in heaven, Luke 16:22. The Jews knew that their law was given by the ministry of angels, Gal. 3:19; and so they were reluctant to give their adhesion to the gospel. And Paul's argument here is to show them that Jesus is far above angels, and Jesus is the author and the substance of the gospel. In nature they are angelic; in his higher nature Christ is divine. They were made after the image of God; he was the express image of God. They are pure spirits; he has his divine nature, a reasonable soul and a true body. They are creatures; he is Creator. They are ministers; he is mediator. They are worshippers; he is the object of worship.

12. We ought to study God's word and become familiar with it, so that when God's ministers appeal to it we will know the truth of their doctrines, v. 5. Yea, we should be so versed in scripture that when an appeal is made to its general contents, we should know the truth of what is said. Nor should our knowledge be confined to any part of God's word, nor merely to what it teaches. We should also know that it does not teach things, respecting which it is silent. Patterson: "Much use may be profitably made of the Old Testament, and that with a direct reference to him, 'the Prince and Saviour,' whom the New with greater fulness and precision has revealed." As the comparison of passages in the two Testaments may explain the meaning, and vindicate the inspiration of the Old, so may it cast a clear and steady light upon the New. Gouge is right when he says, "A negative argument from scripture is a good argument." Let men fairly utter the challenge for a proof from God's word, and, if it cannot be adduced, we need not regard the religious doctrine asserted by any one to be of considerable importance, nor of binding force.

13. The great matters revealed to us in these seven verses are well suited to teach us a lesson of modesty and humility. "Secret

things belong unto the Lord our God." Much that is said on religious subjects is worse than impertinence. If men would but take the dimensions of their own feeble powers, and then get even a tolerable conception of the grandeur and glory of divine things, they surely would think soberly as they ought to think. Such modesty would also prepare us to receive aright things which are revealed, and which belong unto us and unto our children. We are as much bound to receive all that God tells us as we are to restrain our minds from vagaries on points, on which God has not spoken.

14. If angels pure and excellent are required to worship Christ, who are we, that we should hesitate to adore him? v. 6. If they, who are so resplendent in light and glory, delight to honor and serve the Lamb, must not we be vile if we withhold from him our warm affections, and profoundest reverence?

15. If the angels are spirits, they are well suited to the work of guarding the saints, passing about invisibly. And if they are a *flame of fire*, or as the lightning, they must be irresistible, and capable of moving with the greatest rapidity. But all worship of angels is unscriptural and wicked. It gives to a creature honor due to God only. It is truly deplorable to see men even in our day falling into the error against which God so solemnly warned us by the pen of Paul: "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind," Col. 2 : 8.

## CHAPTER I.

VERSES 8 - 14.

### FURTHER PROOFS OF THE DIVINITY OF OUR HIGH PRIEST.

8 But unto the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever : a sceptre of righteousness *is* the sceptre of thy kingdom.

9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity ; therefore God, *even* thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

10 And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid' the foundation of the earth ; and the heavens are the works of thine hands.

11 They shall perish, but thou remainest : and they all shall wax old as doth a garment ;

12 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.

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

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

OUR apostle proceeds with his argument.

8. *But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever : a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.*

9. *Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity ; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.*

Both these verses are quoted from the same place—Ps. 45 : 6, 7. They are taken literally from the Septuagint version, except that in one place the article is thrown in. That Psalm is beyond any reasonable doubt Messianic, though in it Solomon is, perhaps, a type of Christ. The oldest interpreters, both Jewish and Christian, refer it to Christ. Of the applicability of these verses to Christ we can have no reasonable doubt, since Paul was guided by inspiration of God. Strenuous efforts have been made to wrest this passage from the use Paul makes of it. But Hengstenberg correctly says that the non-Messianic expositors have not been

able to bring forward anything grammatically tenable. The true, proper and supreme divinity of our Saviour is here taught. 1. He is called God, and no hint is given that the name is to be taken in any but the highest sense, "O God." 2. He is said to be on a throne, reigning. Jesus Christ never had a kingdom and never sat on any throne, if he is not exalted to the power, which the orthodox Christian world has long ascribed to him, under the teachings of such scriptures as Acts 2:33; Rom. 14:9-11; Phil. 2:9-11; Heb. 2:9; Rev. 5:1-14. All these ascribe or presuppose great power and glory. The high Priest of the Christian is also a King. 3. The whole affairs of Christ's kingdom are conducted in unerring equity. He rose to his great glory, not by deceit, nor by violence, nor by robbery, nor by strategem. He met all the demands of law and righteousness. He never wronged any one. He never injured any one. He met every claim of justice against his people, or against himself as the substitute of his people. There was but one kingdom ever set up in this world conducted in infinite and unspotted rectitude, and that was the kingdom of Christ. Every sceptre but his has sometimes been stained. Omniscient purity saw no fault in him, and so proclaimed more than once in a voice from heaven. 4. Consequently, God has remarkably anointed this great King, far beyond all others that ever held power. This signifies either that the Holy Spirit was remarkably poured upon the human nature of Christ, or that no king ever had such joy as he has. The first of these ideas is often and clearly presented in scripture, Isa. 61:1-3; Luke 4:16-22; John 1:32; 3:34; Acts 10:38. Nor is the second obscurely hinted, but clearly stated, Matt. 25:21; John 15:11; 17:13; Acts 2:28; Heb 12:2. Some happily unite both these ideas, making his abundant joy a fruit of his being anointed by the Holy Ghost beyond all others. 5. All this dominion, righteousness and joy are *forever and ever*; and so have absolute perpetuity. All other kingdoms grow old, fail and vanish away; but this is an everlasting kingdom. He, who shall thus reign supreme and glorious, is and must be divine. The manner of enriching and blessing his people is explained in scripture, "Of his fulness have we all received, and grace for grace," John 1:16. In themselves they are poor indeed; in him they have unsearchable riches. The objection of some to our translation of v. 9 because the name of God in the same case is repeated is of no force. The same thing occurs in Ps. 43:4; 67:6. And indeed the whole effort to wrest this scripture from the obvious meaning of the words, and from the sense in which Paul uses it has been awkward in the extreme. This is the more remarkable as the opposition to the right interpretation has

been led on by Erasmus, Grotius, Wakefield and Rosenmuller—all good scholars. But the orthodox have long since learned to distrust their leadership. Their conduct in regard to this scripture of itself is suited to shake confidence in their soundness as interpreters. The change in translation they favor commonly requires us, instead of Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever, to read, God is thy throne forever and ever. But this rendering is wholly untenable. 1. God is called a Rock, a Father, etc. But where is he ever called a throne? Wetstein truly says such language is wholly unknown to scripture. Stuart: "Where is God ever said to be the *throne* of his creatures? And what could be the sense of such an expression? Throne is an emblem of *dominion*, not of *support*." 2. The very form of the word rendered *God* in this place is that commonly used in the Septuagint to express the vocative, Ps. 3:7; 4:1; 5:10; 7:1; 40:8; 56:12; 57:11 and often. It is a form of the noun in common use among the Attics. 3. Such a rendering is contrary to all the old translations and versions, now at hand. It is wholly a modern device. There is probably but one translation extant that has it, and that was made for purely sectarian and heretical purposes, and is of so little repute that it is not found in the pulpits of those, who favor it. 4. It is not in accordance with the traditional interpretation of the passage for two thousand years after Ps. 45th was written. Neither Jew nor Christian before the XII. century attempted so to explain the words. Aben Ezra, who died A.D. 1174 was the first whose words favor such an idea. If any such rendering was previously offered, where is the proof? It is not found. 5. It divests the passage of all sense, and makes the apostle quote words nothing pertinent to his purpose; for no man can tell us what sense there is in the words, God is thy throne. Accordingly some, who favor it, boldly interpolate the passage and read, God shall establish thy throne. But if we may add words at pleasure, not to get a sense but to destroy the obvious sense of a passage, we cease to be scripture interpreters and become scripture makers. The sense obtained by the common rendering is very good, and is just the same we gather from Luke 1:32, 33, and many other places; for as Theophylact well says: "A throne is a symbol of kingly power." 6. It is not denied that angels, magistrates and even idols are sometimes collectively called gods, yet no individual man or angel is ever called God without some explanation or addition. This is generally conceded. 7. Kendrick: "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever, is certainly the most natural construction of the sentence, and need not be shrunk from, as it is in perfect keeping with the context, and as, at all events, the *idea* is substantially contained in the context."

10. *And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands :*

11. *They shall perish ; but thou remainest : and they all shall wax old as doth a garment ;*

12. *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.* This is a quotation from Ps. 102 : 25-27. The Greek is taken without any important variation from the Septuagint. Beyond a doubt that Psalm is Messianic. Inspiration has settled this. We are in less danger of applying to Christ prophecies which do not refer to him than of not applying to him those which are truly Messianic ; for the prophets delighted in this great theme, Acts 3 : 24 ; Rev. 19 : 10. The grammatical construction of these three verses is not difficult. Nor is there any better translation than that of the authorized version ; yet some others are striking and not opposed to it. Peshito : And again, Thou hast from the beginning laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands ; they shall pass away, but thou endurest ; and they all, like a robe, wax old ; and like a cloak, thou wilt fold them up. They will be changed ; but thou wilt be as thou art, and thy years will not be finished. The common English version has all the excellencies of Wiclif, Tyndale, Coverdale, Cranmer, Geneva, Rheims and Doway ; nor do others give us any material aid, by their translations, in understanding these verses. The reason is obvious : the sense is secured by any respectable rendering, because it lies on the surface of the Greek and Hebrew texts. Even the variation of tense in these verses does not vary the doctrine they teach. Some endeavor to wrest these verses from the use to which the apostle applies them ; but such an attempt is absurd. Paul has given no notice of any change of topic. To prove to a Hebrew that God the Father was Creator, would destroy the world and was wholly unchangeable, was quite unnecessary. No serious Hebrew doubted any of those truths. Paul is writing Christology as the whole context shows. It would be wholly aside from his object here to give a discourse of the Father, and idle to state what no devout Hebrew denied or doubted. Nor is the course of the old Socinians at all supported. They admit that some things in this quotation refer to Christ, but contend that others in it refer to the Father. No doubt what is here said of the Son is true of the Father, for Christ and his Father are one, and the Son doeth whatsoever he seeth the Father do ; and many divine works, as creation, providence and salvation, are common to the three persons of the Trinity. But this is the very doctrine the Socinians oppose. In v. 10 creation is most clearly ascribed

to Christ. In vs. 11, 12, the fact is abundantly declared that the most stable of all created fabrics are perishable, are wearing out, growing old and shall at last utterly fail. The same verses declare that Jesus Christ, who made all things, is eternal and unchangeable. Nor is it possible fairly to evade the force of this ascription of creation, eternity and unchangeableness to Christ by saying that Paul spoke of God the Father only; for himself expressly says the preceding words are addressed "to the Son," and these immediately follow.\* The apostle inserts the word Lord in v. 10. Now the only word rendered Lord in Ps. 102 is the word Jehovah, which occurs eight times in that ode; and that name is incommunicable to any creature, however exalted. So that these verses in this way establish the divinity of Christ. Nor is this all, for in the verse next preceding those here quoted he is addressed thus, "O my God." This is a form never used except in an address to the supreme and infinite God. In this Psalm Lord and God clearly designate the same person, and Paul says that person is the Son. So that it seems impossible for candor to mistake the design of the apostle, as in verses 8, 9 the Son is called God, in verse 10, Lord, and in Ps. 102:24 my God. The term Lord, Jehovah, is never applied to creatures. "I am the Lord: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another," Isa. 42:8. And although the word rendered God is in the plural given to creatures, where there are many of them, as to angels, Ps. 8:5; to false gods, Ex. 22:20; or to magistrates, Ps. 82:1; yet it is never applied singly and simply to a creature, without some addition or explanation being made. Thus in Exod. 7:1 it is said Moses should be a "god to Pharaoh;" in Ex. 32:31 the calf is styled a "god of gold;" and in Judges 16:23 we read of "Dagon their god." Nor do pious men, approved of God, ever address man or angel as "my God." But as soon as Thomas ceased to be swayed by unbelief, he adoringly exclaimed, "My Lord and my God."

13. *But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?* The interrogatory form here used is the strongest mode of denial. It is a challenge which no man can take up. The apostle is still showing Christ's superiority to angels, and he says God never addresses any of them in such language as he employs to his Son in Ps. 110:1. The whole verse reads: "The Lord [Jehovah] said unto my Lord [Adoni] sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." This Psalm is quoted no less than nine times in the New Testament. It is highly and purely Messianic. On the day of Pentecost Peter showed that the verse here cited proved that Jesus was both Lord and Christ. Nor has there ever appeared

any one but Jesus Christ, to whom Ps. 110 can be even plausibly applied. Some of the Jews have said it was fulfilled in Eliezer, Abraham's servant; some, in Hezekiah; and some, in Zerubbabel. But neither of these was a priest, nor was either of them both a priest and a king; and neither of them was *Lord* to David. But this Psalm declares that the person here spoken to was a king and a priest, a priest not of the Aaronic order, and a king who finally gained the victory over all his foes. Christ intending to show that this Psalm had its fulfilment in himself said to the Pharisees: "What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit [or by divine inspiration] 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? And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions," Matt. 22:42-46. In like manner must every one be confounded, who professes to receive the scripture, and denies the divinity of Jesus Christ, and yet who admits, as the Jews did, that this Psalm is Messianic. For the language of David clearly implies that his Lord, as to his divine nature, was already in existence, as the eternal Son of God. On *sitting on the right hand of God*, see above on v. 3, and the author's "Studies in the Book of Psalms," p. 973. Such exaltation was never promised to angels, nor ever procured by them. Their office and station are very different. The word *until* claims notice. Some contend that the force of this word is such as to teach that when Christ shall have made his enemies his footstool, then he shall cease to sit on God's right hand. But it is very clear that the same word elsewhere, in many cases, expresses no such limitation. It sometimes does mean until a certain time or event, and no longer, as in Matt. 2:13, 15; Mark 15:33; Luke 15:50 and many places. But this is not its invariable meaning, as any one may see from Matt. 5:18; 11:12; John 9:18; 13:38; Acts 8:40; 1 Cor. 4:5; 1 Tim. 4:13. It is certain that our Saviour did not intend to teach that God's word should be unfailing till heaven and earth pass away, and then should itself fail; nor that the kingdom of heaven suffered violence from the days of John the Baptist until Christ's ministry, and then should be closed against the earnest seeker. And so in other cases. Pool: "The term of this word *until* doth not denote the end of his reign, as if after this he should not reign, but is declarative of his reign all the time before." Lindsay: "The Hebrew and Greek particles rendered *until* are often employed so as to refer exclusively to the time which precedes a certain point, without implying that any

different result will appear thereafter. God says to Jacob (Gen. 28: 15) 'I will not leave thee, *until* I have done that which I have spoken to thee of; but this by no means implies that God would leave him after all that was done.'

14. *Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?* Peshito: Are they not all spirits of ministration, who are sent to minister on account of them that are to inherit life? Tyndale and Cranmer: Are they not all ministrynge sprites, sent to minister for their sakes which shalbe heyres of salvacyon? Stuart: Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to assist those who are to obtain salvation? Craik: Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to render service on account of them who are about to inherit salvation? Doway: Are they not all ministering spirits sent to minister for these, who shall receive the inheritance of salvation? Conybeare and Howson: Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to execute his service, for the sake of those who shall inherit salvation? The first thing, which strikes us, is the fact here asserted in interrogative form that *all* angels are connected with the kingdom and glory of Christ. All—all are subject to Christ. Then the words rendered ministering and minister are not of the same derivation, nor are they cognate; yet both of them are well rendered; the first being rendered ministering, serving. It indicates that the service rendered is 1. official, 2. public. Angels do not intrude into this ministry; nor is it a secret that they are thus employed. The other word is the cognate of that from which our word deacon is derived, and is rendered relief, office, service, ministry, ministration, administration. It is uniformly used in a good sense. It is applied to every grade of service from that of an attendant or waiter at a table to that of the magistrate, that of the gospel ministry and that of angels, Rom. 13: 4; 2 Cor. 5: 18; Matt. 4: 11. It is the cognate of the first of these words that is applied to Christ in Heb. 8: 2, where he is called a *minister of the true sanctuary*. But the cognate verb is by Christ employed to explain his work on earth, Mark 10: 45. The preposition rendered *for* is best rendered for the sake of, or on account of. They not only serve the heirs of salvation directly and personally, but they are employed to defeat many wicked devices formed against the people of God. For the saints, on account of the saints many an event is by the ministry of angels shaped as it is; for they are heirs of salvation, or are about to inherit salvation. Because Christ is by nature the Son of God, he is heir of all things, and has by inheritance a greater name than the angels, vs. 2, 4, and because God's people are his sons by regeneration and adoption,

they are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. They inherit all those immense blessings indicated by the term salvation.

#### DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL REMARKS.

1. The scripture cannot be broken. It declared the stability of the Messiah's throne; and that has never been shaken. The universal empires of antiquity have all melted away, or been broken to pieces; but Jesus lives and reigns forever, v. 8.

2. So great is the profit of comparing one part of the word of God with another, that even inspired men by their example encourage the practice, vs. 8-13. Indeed there is no exercise of the mind in scripture more edifying than this. It shows us the connections of all the parts, the harmony of scripture and the rich variety of forms, in which truth is revealed. This is clearly implied in Christ's command: "Search the scriptures." It is clearly implied in the commendation of the Bereans, "who received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether these things were so," John 5:39; Acts 17:11. Nor can this work be performed with too much humility, diligence and prayer for the enlightening work of the Spirit.

3. The character and glory of Christ are no secret. God himself has declared them by signs and wonders, by prophets and apostles, by friends and foes, by the unction of his Spirit, and by an audible voice from heaven, vs. 8, 9. The glorious things concerning Christ have not been hid away in a corner, but gloriously revealed.

4. Jesus Christ is a King—a great King, vs. 8, 9. He has a *throne*; he wields a *sceptre*; he has been duly by God himself *anointed* to his office, vs. 8, 9. He has many crowns upon his head, Rev. 19:12, this form of expression denoting the amplitude of his regal authority. He wears the sword with glory and majesty, Ps. 45:3. He has a kingdom, John 18:36. This kingdom is *for ever and ever*. It endures not only beyond all earthly powers, but is strictly everlasting. It runs 'through all the ages of time, maugre all the attempts of earth and hell to undermine and overthrow it, and through all the endless ages of eternity, when time shall be no more.' Dickson: "He is a King enthroned, not only over the world, but in a gracious manner, over the church." Because his throne is eternal, therefore his church shall never perish. Twice does the prophet Daniel speak of this great kingdom: "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed;" "There was given him (the Son of man) dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people,

nations and languages should serve him ; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed," 2 : 44 ; 7 : 14. See also Micah 4 : 8, and many other places. To this kingdom the best names are given. It is called the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God. Names of higher import are not found. All accounts of it by inspired men are suited to magnify our estimate of its excellence.

5. Not only is Christ a king for ever ; but he is *righteous*, vs. 8, 9. Of human governments Solomon said : " The throne is established by righteousness," Pr. 16 : 12. Much more is this true of the kingdom of God's dear Son. Righteousness and judgment are its habitation and stability. His kingdom is not founded on fraud, violence, rapine, wrong, but in equity and in plenty of justice. Tong : " He came righteously to the sceptre, and he uses it in perfect righteousness ; the righteousness of his government proceeds from the righteousness of his person." Christ would save no soul in derogation of truth and justice. His sceptre was not crooked ; he *was* righteous in all his ways. He never desired God to pardon iniquity without a full satisfaction. He never made any statute or decision that was unjust or wrought injury. All his precepts and decrees are based in ample authority. All power in heaven and earth is given to him, Matt. 28 : 18. He has arrogated nothing. All his laws are holy. They work no dishonor to God nor evil to man. They are all practicable ; yea, his yoke is easy and his burden light. None of his commandments are grievous. And all his ordinances are wise. He never carries the instruments of a foolish shepherd. Neither angels nor men can do any thing so wise, so calculated to promote their well-being as to serve him with all their might. No wonder the weeping prophet called him a " Righteous Branch" and a " King that shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth." Yea the same prophet goes further and says his very name shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, Jer. 23 : 5, 6. And Paul calls him the " righteous Judge," 2 Tim. 4 : 8. There is no greater folly, there is no greater daring, there is no greater wickedness than to say, We will break his bands, and cast away his cords ; we will not have this man to reign over us.

6. We must never lose sight of Christ's perfect conformity to law, v. 9. Without holiness he could not have saved us. He loves righteousness and hates iniquity. His rectitude and equity are not based in policy and prudence, as men count these things ; but in his eternal and unchangeable love of right and purity. All this was predicted of him by the evangelical prophet, Isa. 11 : 1-9. Clarke : " This is the characteristic of a just governor : He ab-

hors and suppresses iniquity; He countenances and supports righteousness and truth." Tait: "The essence of righteousness is supreme love to God and perfect love to man. For such love is the substance of God's law, and his law is the standard of righteousness." Our Saviour loved righteousness, fulfilled all righteousness, and to his people will give crowns of righteousness. No marvel, if his Father honored him, for "the righteous Lord loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright," Ps. 11:7. This is probably spoken of good and righteous men, who are yet imperfect. How much more then is it true of him who was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners? Gouge: "*Love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity go together.* They are here joined together in Christ; and wheresoever one is, there will be the other. Righteousness and iniquity are so directly opposed, and contrary each to another, as they do in a manner force from men contrary affections." Men cannot love holiness without hating sin.

7. Such worth and excellence could not escape the regard of God the Father, v. 9. Human governments, however well disposed, are too poor and straitened in resources to reward virtue at least to any considerable degree. But Jehovah's resources, like himself, are infinite. By many of the prophets God had predicted the greatness of Christ's kingdom and reward: "Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high;" "He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many," etc., Isa. 52:13; 53:10-12. It has been stated that good commentators are not agreed whether by the anointing of verse 9 we are to regard Christ's consecration to office, or his abundant joy (Heb. 12:2) after his sufferings were ended. It is not necessary to settle that point. We may safely admit both. His very names *Messiah* and *Christ* mean anointed. He was anointed to his Mediatorial work in an abundant manner and his gladness is in proportion. And so he had both qualification and joy above all the saints, above all the prophets, above all the house of David, above all the angels of God. Clarke: "None was ever constituted *prophet, priest and king* but himself; some were kings only, prophets only, and priests only; others were kings and priests; or priests and prophets; or kings and prophets; but none ever had the *three offices* in his own person but Jesus Christ." None else is fit to hold all these offices. He unspeakably excels all kings, all priests, all prophets. He deserved to be and he was *anointed above his fellows*, above all that

ever held these offices or any of them. So his people will be infinitely blessed when they shall *enter into his joy*. And this anointing is by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ has a "double claim to empire—his claim of merit super-added to his claim of right—his claim as the Lamb slain as well as the Son begotten. These claims," says Tait, "are not subversive of each other; for you cannot pay a more flattering tribute of homage to an earthly king than to say that the splendor of his actions eclipses the lustre of his birth. . . We may well believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; we may well trust in him whom the Father has so honored, whom the Father has declared both by word and act to be Jehovah. To treat him with suspicion is to say that God is faithless. And enmity to him is enmity to God, and shall be visited as such. If we will not be the friends of his bosom, we must be the footstool for his feet to rest on."

8. It is marvellous that the wicked have not long since perfectly understood and submitted to the will of God concerning his Son. The Father has planned, and said, and done so great and so many things respecting his Son that opposition to God concerning Christ Jesus is as wicked as it is marvellous. *A.* There was the eternal engagement—the covenant of Redemption between the Father and the Son, Isa. 49: 5-12. *B.* There was the covenant of grace between God and his church, Isa. 40: 9-11. More than this there is, *C.* God's eternal and unchangeable purpose—his decree—his everlasting plan to glorify his people by glorifying his Son, Eph. 1: 3-6; 1 Pet. 1: 20. Then we have *D.* The great promise made in Eden that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, Gen. 3: 15. We have also, *E.* God's oath on the side of Christ and his people, Ps. 89: 3, 35; Heb. 6: 17, 18. Then *F.* By the space of about four thousand years types of Christ arose, as Joseph, Moses, Joshua, David, Solomon, Cyrus, Joshua the high priest, etc., all of whom shadowed forth his glory. *G.* During the same period promises and predictions greatly multiplied, and in due time they were fulfilled. *H.* In the fulness of time God actually sent his Son into the world in a manner so remarkable and accompanied with circumstances so striking, as to satisfy those, who waited for the consolation of Israel, that he was the promised Deliverer. *I.* The Spirit rested upon him so as he never rested on any other. *J.* His wonderful preservation in a world where his life was sought from the time of his birth, until his mission was fully accomplished, was proof that God was with him. *K.* His miracles were stupendous, countless and never wrought to gratify malice, pride, vanity, covetousness or any sinful affection. *L.* He died like a God. There never has been but one such death. There will

never be its like. *M.* He was marvellously and incontestably raised from the dead. *N.* To him were given all power, and authority and judgment. *O.* His glorious ascension into heaven proclaims the same truth. *P.* His sitting at the right of God is made known by revelation through inspired men. *Q.* The scenes of the day of Pentecost and all the outpourings of God's Spirit ever since declare that Jesus is on the throne. *R.* Nor is it less certain that he will be the Judge of quick and dead. Surely it would be wise to submit to him, who is thus set forth to men by God his Father. Can any serious man think it safe to resist Christ?

9. So far from being sad at this state of case, the saints on earth glory in it. It is for their perpetual joy that in Christ Jesus "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," Col. 2:3. Admirable is the scheme, devised in fathomless love and immeasurable wisdom, whereby our resources are in another and not in ourselves. "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell," Col. 1:19. "And of his fulness have we all received, and grace for grace," John 1:16. The best of mere men do on earth sadly deplore their leanness, and were this all, they would sink into deep sadness. But when they look to Jesus they behold such amazing supplies, that they are no longer straitened. He is a never failing well-spring of all good things.

10. The apostle is intent on establishing Christ's true, proper and supreme divinity, vs. 8-13. Nor does he unduly press this matter. It is vital. If it is not true, we cannot be saved. The scriptures admit that it requires the special grace of God to enable any one in his heart to believe this doctrine, 1 Cor. 12:3. It is only by revelation that any man is enabled so to embrace it as to be profited by it, Gal. 1:15, 16. The arguments by which from this section we prove Christ's divinity are these: *A.* He is called God and Lord, vs. 8, 10. The explanation of this argument need not be here repeated. It is in itself clear and has already in this work been fully stated. Some, who have claimed to be sound divines, have contended that the word God in v. 8 is applied to Christ not to express the glory and excellence, which he originally had as the eternal Son of God, but only as the mediatorial King. But so loose a mode of speaking would render it impossible to prove anything by direct allegation. Let us look at this matter fairly. If the terms God and Lord in these verses refer to Christ not as to his original nature, but only as mediatorial King, then by fair argument everything else said of him in the same connection must be spoken of him as mediatorial King. Thus we would prove that it was the mediatorial King, who in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, whose hands made

the heavens. There is no rule of interpretation whereby we may give to one part of the verse an exposition inconsistent with the remainder of it. Did Christ then make the universe in his mediatorial character? Among all the extreme views men have urged, this has not found favor among those entitled to much consideration. But did our Lord, as God and Jehovah, make the world? Then as God and Lord he is spoken of in these verses, and he is God. The argument is well stated by Pool: "He, who was Jehovah, and the great Creator of the world, is God; such is Christ, the great gospel Prophet." The beloved disciple states the matter even more summarily, "The Word was God," John 1:1. Dickson: "He is called God; and so is fit to reconcile us to God; able and all-sufficient to accomplish our salvation; a rock to lean unto." Tong: "The Lord Christ had the *original* right to govern the world, because he made the world in the beginning; his right, *as mediator*, was by *commission* from the Father; his right, as God with the Father, was absolute, resulting from his creating power. This power he had from the beginning, and he exerted it in giving a beginning and being to the world." And Owen is right when he says: "It is the divine nature of the Lord Christ, that gives eternity, stability and unchangeableness to his throne and kingdom." Even Isaiah went so far as by the Holy Ghost to put these words into the lips of our Lord: "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else," Isa. 45:22. Compare John 10:28-30; Tit. 2:13; 2 Pet. 1:1. *B.* He made the universe—the heavens and the earth. On this point the language is explicit, v. 10. This matter is often stated in scripture, Gen. 1:1, 3; Ps. 19:1: 90:2; 104:1-6; Isa. 42:5; Jer. 32:17; Zech. 12:1; Heb. 11:3. No where do we find any higher proof given of God's existence than is found in creation. Why then does not creative energy establish the godhead of Christ? *C.* He, who made the heavens and the earth shall *fold them up*, and *change* them. Who can destroy, but he that made all things? Creatures may boast. Some do utter great swelling words of vanity. But where is the man or fallen angel, who was so given over to folly as to believe, or persuade others to believe that he himself would destroy this wondrous fabric of nature? Men have sometimes made this world very wretched for a while, though even then they could do nothing except it were given them of God, Isa. 10:5-15. But not one of them has been able to pluck a lamp from the azure vault of heaven. All the blazonry of God is beyond the power of men and angels to extinguish.

Christ's divinity is further proven thus: *D.* While all creation

and all the kingdoms of men shall perish, the Son of God, as the Son of God and as Mediator also *remains*, v. 11. Tong: "Not only men and beasts and trees grow old, but this world itself grows old, and is hastening to its dissolution; it changes like a garment, has lost much of its beauty and strength; it grew old betimes on the first apostacy, and it has been waxing older and growing weaker ever since; it bears the symptoms of a dying world." But Christ's person and kingdom and glory shall forever *remain*. He is *the same*, v. 12. Like truth is declared elsewhere, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever," Heb. 13:8. If any man knows a firmer pillar of Christian joy than this, what is it? Then his *years shall not fail*, v. 12. From everlasting to everlasting he is God. If language can teach constancy, unchangeableness and eternity as attributes, we have all these here asserted of Christ Jesus. Compare Lam. 5:19; Mal. 3:6; 1 Cor. 7:31; Rev 1:8; 22:13. The Lord Christ is immutable in his being, essence, substance. Compare Ex. 3:14; 6:3; John 8:58. He is also unchangeable in his purposes and counsels; Eph. 3:11; Heb. 6:17, 18; and in all his glorious perfections. Who doubts that his mercy, his truth, his grace and his power endure for ever? If he is God, he can neither acquire new perfections, nor lose those he had from the beginning. His whole word, promise, threatening, doctrine cannot be changed, Isa. 40:6-8; Jer. 33:20, 21. He who is thus immutable is truly divine. Some say, But Jesus Christ was born, grew, suffered, died and rose again; how say you then that he is unchangeable? The fair and full answer has been given a thousand times. It is in substance this: When we speak of Christ's unchangeableness we have a chief and primary regard to his divine nature. This was in no way changed by his assuming our nature. It was not his humanity that took upon it divinity; but his divine nature that took upon it human nature. Divinity was not converted into flesh, but assumed a true body and a reasonable soul into ineffable and indissoluble union with itself. There was no confounding of his natures. His incarnation added nothing to his personality. This constitution of his person gives the greatest stability to his kingdom and glory, his counsels and his covenant. Such a view is ineffably consolatory. Owen: "Whatever our changes may be, inward or outward, yet Christ changing not, our eternal condition is secured, and relief provided against all present troubles and miseries. The immutability and eternity of Christ are the spring of our consolation and security in every condition. Such is the frailty of the nature of man, and such the perishing condition of all created things, that none can ever obtain the least stable consolation but

what ariseth from an interest in the omnipotency, sovereignty and eternity of Jesus Christ."

The divinity of Christ may be further argued, *E.* From his sitting at the right hand of God, v. 13. By one of the old prophets God had spoken of "the man that is my fellow," Zech. 13:7. By placing his glorified Son at his right hand, he declared that he had in his humiliation put forth no claims to glory and honor, but such as were well founded; that he was well pleased with all that Jesus Christ had done and suffered; and that he deserved honors above all the creatures of God, men and angels. Nor is it conceivable that all the complicated affairs of the world should be conducted to a wise and holy end by one, who was not possessed of all the attributes of God. Some of his "enemies," terrestrial or infernal, would certainly gain some advantage, pluck some of his people out of his hand, or otherwise bring damage to his interests, unless he is possessed of all the perfections of God; that is, unless he is very God.

The conclusion is that if he, who by inspired men and by his Father is called the Son of God, God, Lord, Jehovah; if he, who is heir of all things, Maker of the universe, the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person; if he, who laid the foundation of the earth, and stretched out the heavens, who upholds all things by the word of his power, and by himself purged our sins; if he, who remains the same in all ages, and is everlasting; if he who is so far superior to angels that they are all commanded to worship him; if he, whose throne is for ever and ever, and whose sceptre is a sceptre of unerring and unspotted rectitude; and finally, if he, who shall fold up the heavens, and lay all nature aside, as we lay aside an old garment—if he is not God, then we labor in vain to know who and what God is; and the Bible is not suited to lead us in a right way, and idolatry is not discouraged in all the scriptures. If on this subject men persist in doubting, there remains one demonstration of the supreme divinity of Christ, yet to be given. It will be decisive and overwhelming. Neither men nor devils can resist it. But then it will come too late to make a change of mind available to salvation. Reference is here had to the judgment of the great day, "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe," 1 Thess. 1:7-10. The controversy concerning the

divinity of the Saviour will never be carried on after men shall have seen him on his judgment throne.

11. It is wise, it is very wise, it is the wisest thing any sinner ever did to kiss the Son lest he should be angry, and we perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him. Patterson: "Let us meekly and thankfully submit to the righteous and everlasting government of Christ. Let us seek to have such a friendly relation to the 'Prince of Peace' as shall assure us that, under his administration all things shall work together for our good." O why will not men accept the gracious offers made them? No pen nor tongue can adequately describe "the misery of those, who have no interest in him, and therefore nothing to relieve themselves against the evils of any condition. All their hopes are in this life, and from the enjoyments of it. When these are once past, they will be eternally and in all things miserable; miserable beyond our expression or their apprehension. And what is this life? A vapor that appeareth for a little while. What are the enjoyments of this life? Dying, perishing things, and unto them, fuel to lust and so to hell." Any day may close the earthly career of any man. Then where will be the hopes and the joys of him, who made not God his trust? Oh that men were wise—wise unto salvation!

12. It cannot be otherwise than that Christ's incorrigible foes shall be ruined, crushed, destroyed, v. 12. Compare Ps. 110:1; Matt. 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 19:27; 20:42, 43; Acts 2:34-36; 1 Cor. 15:25-27; 1 Pet. 3:22. This subjection of Messiah's foes shall be complete. They shall be made his footstool. What this means is explained by a reference to the ancient usages of war, Josh. 10:24. Christ, the glorious King has unlimited authority, and unlimited resources for executing all his plans. Opposition to his will is madness. Christ has many enemies. Of these some are personal, as fallen angels and wicked men. Satan and all his legions shall be utterly crushed. They are never recovered from their hatred. In like manner shall all men perish, if they will not accept the offers of mercy. But Christ has also impersonal enemies, as the world, sin, death, the grave and hell. These too shall be subdued, 1 Cor. 15:26. Not one shall have power against Christ and his people, either to vex or hinder them.

13. A good deal is said by one class of writers respecting Christ's delivering up his kingdom. And it cannot be denied that Paul himself elsewhere uses strong language on this subject. See 1 Cor. 15:24-28. So far as the argument turns on the word *until*, see the exposition given above. The following remarks may somewhat aid in clearing the matter. 1. Christ the Lord, as God, has

with his Father and the Holy Spirit, a natural and inalienable kingdom and sovereign authority over all worlds, and all creatures. He can no more surrender this than he can deny himself, or cease to be God; just as the Father cannot cease to govern the world without denying himself, or ceasing to be God. 2. Jesus Christ, as the incarnate Son of God and the Redeemer of his people, has a peculiar, spiritual kingdom embracing all his chosen people. This he will never resign. This he can never alienate. It is everlasting. All the offices of the Mediator are perpetual. Jesus Christ is a priest for ever. He continues ever and has an unchangeable Priesthood, Heb. 6:20; 7:24. He will ever be the Prophet of his church. Describing a period after the church had ended her warfare and her members were before the throne of God, serving him day and night in his temple, the apocalyptic prophet says: "The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and lead them unto living fountains of waters," Rev. 7:17. And what is this but executing to his ransomed people in glory the office of a prophet? In like manner the Father says to the Son: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever," Ps. 45:6; Heb. 1:8. If his throne is for ever, his kingly authority is everlasting. So Christ shall never cease to be King in Zion. His people will ever see him on his throne. The person of the Mediator cannot be dissolved, nor his honors fade, nor his glory be obscured. 3. Christ, as Mediator holds a sovereign authority over the world, even over wicked men and fallen angels. Devils are now subject to him. He makes the wrath of man to praise him, or else he restrains that wrath. He is Lord of all creation for the perfecting, edifying, rescuing and crowning of his beloved church. He controls the winds, and the waves of the sea. He will not permit men and devils to go further than he sees best in any case. He has subsidized all creation, so that now by his ordering, all things work together for the good of his saints. This has been fitly called his subsidiary kingdom. This kingdom is now universal. It is as perfect over foes as over friends. This kingdom, this sovereign authority over the wicked, Christ will surrender to his Father after he shall have completed the work of redemption and brought all his sons unto glory, having put down all rule, and all authority, and power. It is of this kingly power over enemies that Paul is supposed to be speaking when he tells of Christ delivering up the kingdom to God, even the Father. The place seems to justify this construction. 4. After that great event we may easily admit that there will be great changes in the mode of administering the affairs of Christ's kingly authority over his people. It would be very strange, if there were no changes after wars shall all be ended, con-

flicts for ever terminated, and eternal rest secured to every obedient spirit. Then God will "be all in all" in a sense never before so well understood. More than this seems not to have been revealed to mortals on this great theme.

14. The subject of angels is again brought up in this section, and their official work in Christ's kingdom, at least in part, is declared to us—they are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation, v. 14. The same is taught in other scriptures. In Ps. 91 : 11, 12, we are assured that they bear us up; in 2 Kings 6 : 13–18 we are told how they protect good men; in Acts 12 : 3–11 we are told how one of them rescued a good man from his persecutor; in Luke 16 : 22 we learn that they are convoys to departed saints; in Matt. 24 : 30, 31 and other places, we learn that they shall attend Christ when he comes to judgment, and shall be the reapers in gathering the harvest of the world. But they do all these things at the behest of Christ, whose subjects and servants they are, Eph. 1 : 21; Phil. 2 : 10; 1 Pet. 3 : 22. Tholuck: "The Son *rules*, the angels *serve*, nay, serve those who are subjects in his kingdom; the son is *enthroned*, they are *sent* to and fro as messengers." McLean: "All the angels without exception are *ministering* or *serving* spirits. Their rank and office is that of messengers, servants or ministers of God, Ps. 103 : 20, 21; 104 : 4, and their proper posture is to stand and wait before him, hearkening to the voice of his word, and to be in readiness to execute his will, Kings 22 : 19; Dan. 7 : 10; Zech. 6 : 5; Luke 1 : 19; Rev. 7 : 11." Clarke: "Angels are, no doubt, constantly employed in *averting evil* and *procuring good*. If God help *man* by *man*, we need not wonder that he helps man by *angels*." It is an error of many that the ministry of angels is not now so abundantly employed for the good of saints as formerly. To support such an opinion no scripture can be brought. Barnes: "God has appointed parents to aid their children; neighbors to aid their neighbors; the rich to aid the poor; and all over the world the principle is seen, that one is to derive benefit from the aid of others. Why may not the angels be employed in this service? They are pure, benevolent, powerful." No creatures could be better fitted to minister to the saints. Burkitt: "The angels are the great instruments of providence in the world." Respecting angels these errors may be noticed. 1. Some assert that there are no real beings, who are angels; that angels are mere *Eastern metaphors*. Such assertions fall not short of bold infidelity, and are ridiculous at that. Was Lazarus borne to Abraham's bosom by Eastern metaphors? The same class of writers hold the same respecting fallen angels. Was it Eastern metaphors that entered

into the swine and caused them to rush into the sea? Stuart: "That the sacred writers everywhere regard angels, and speak of them, as intelligent beings, having a *real* existence, appears so plain, that it would seem as if no one, who is not strongly wedded to his own *a priori* and philosophical reasoning, could venture to deny it." 2. Some invoke angels, calling on them for help. Roman Catholic books of devotion are full of such prayers. But for such a practice there is no warrant from God. Angels themselves, even the greatest of them, warn men not to offer them any religious worship, Rev. 22 : 9. Moll: "The invocation of angels, as ministers to our need and mediators of salvation, is no less irrational and absurd, than the denial of their existence and of their employment in the service of God for the benefit of the heirs of salvation, is unscriptural. The position here assigned to them excludes any rendering to them of *worship*." They are *servants*, and not saviours. 3. Another error respecting angels is the assertion that to each member of the human family a particular angel is appointed to be his guardian through life. Some limit this guardianship to such as shall be heirs of salvation. The arguments relied on to establish this doctrine are such as these: Jacob said, "The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads," etc., Gen. 48 : 16. This cannot establish the position, for Jacob himself asks that his Angel might send blessings on two of his grandsons. Nor is it possible that any created angel could redeem from all evil. The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ. And the history of Jacob's life shows that his angel was the Angel of the covenant, the Lord Jesus Christ, the God of Bethel. On this point the scripture is decisive. See Gen. 31 : 11-13; 32 : 24-30. Nor is the point proven by the words of our Lord: "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven," Matt. 18 : 10. This proves clearly enough that there are angels, that these care for Christ's little ones, and that they receive from God their authority to go on their errands of love; but it does not prove that one angel and one only has charge of one and of one only of the little ones. From other scriptures we know that many angels often attend one man, Gen. 32 : 1; 2 Kings 6 : 17; Ps. 91 : 11; and that the same angel has attended and succored several persons at once, Acts 5 : 17-20.

15. The world is wearing out; the earth and the heavens are growing old. The most stable things are losing their power of continuance, vs. 11, 12. "Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they

that dwell therein shall die in like manner," Isa. 51:6. "And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll; and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig-tree," Isa. 34:4. The same is declared in the New Testament: "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which 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," 2 Pet. 3:10. Such is the solemn destiny of this earth. Infidels have attempted to discredit the history of the Noachic deluge on the ground of a lack of a sufficient quantity of water to cover the earth's service, as if "the Father of the rain" could be at a loss for water. But even infidels must admit that there are in the bowels of the earth, and on its surface all the materials for a deluge of fire. Gaseous, oleaginous, bituminous, and sulphureous substances abound in the bowels of the earth. Then a slight chemical change converts both air and water into highly inflammable substances, and in a moment, at the fiat of God, the earth may be wrapped in a living sheet of fire. Some have discussed the question, what shall be the effect of the last conflagration? Shall it be equivalent to annihilation, for ever dispersing the elements of which the earth is composed? Or shall it leave the globe a heap of uninhabitable ruins? Or shall it purify the world, and leave it a fit abode for holy beings for ever? Dwight, Andrew Fuller, Chalmers and a number of writers incline to the last view. They think they find support for their opinion in these Scriptures: "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind;" "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness," Isa. 65:17; 2 Pet. 3:13. Some add in proof Rev. 21:1-5. What will be the precise effect of the last conflagration it is probably not given to mortals to know. There is nothing heretical in supposing that our earth shall be renewed and fitted for the abode of redeemed men or of any other creatures God may plant in it. The question is one of interpretation of the Bible on a subject, on which we have but a few texts, and those capable of another explanation. But the great practical truth to be drawn from the coming end of the world should be much dwelt upon: "Seeing that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat," 2 Peter 3:11, 12. See also verses 14, 15.

16. Though the material fabric of the universe shall thus be dissolved, man's soul shall live for ever, in bliss or woe. If he die in his sins, annihilation shall never come to his relief. Suicide is of the body only, and that in this life. The resurrection body will be deathless. Owen: "Man is made for eternity: He was not called out of nothing to return to it again. When he once is, he is for ever; not as to his present state, that is frail and changeable; but as to his existence in one condition or other. God made him for his eternal glory, and gave him therefore a subsistence without end." Yes, man shall outlive the blazing sun in the heavens. When the everlasting mountains shall have passed away a million of years, man will but be on the threshold of his existence. Nor is there in God the Father, Son or Holy Ghost an attribute, which is not suited to make the thought of this existence solemn to all men; to the wicked terrible and to the righteous glorious.

17. God's children even here are heirs of salvation, but they have not yet the full possession and enjoyment of their portion. It is however sure to all who have truly fled to Jesus Christ, and it is very glorious. Gouge: "What so sure among men as inheritance? Much more sure is this inheritance of salvation than any earthly inheritance can be. For 1. It is prepared for us from the foundation of the world, Matt. 25:34. 2. It is purchased at the greatest price that can be: 'The precious blood of the Son of God,' Eph. 1:14; 1 Peter 1:19. 3. It is ratified by the greatest assurance that can be, the death of him that gives it, Heb. 9:14. 4. It is sealed up unto us by that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, Eph. 1:13, 14. 5. God's promise is engaged for it, therefore they who possess it are said to 'inherit the promises,' Heb. 6:12. 6. The faith of believers addeth another seal thereto, John 3:33. 7. It is reserved in heaven for us, 1 Pet. 1:4. In heaven neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, nor thieves do break through, nor steal, Matt. 6:20." Brighter prospects no man could desire than those before all who love God, keep his commandments, and believe in Jesus to the saving of their souls. Glory be to God for the hope of salvation.

## CHAPTER II.

### VERSES 1-9.

MEN MUST NOT BE HEEDLESS OR NEGLIGENT. WE HEAR THE GOSPEL UNDER AWFUL RESPONSIBILITIES. THE INCARNATION OF OUR HIGH PRIEST.

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.

2 For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward;

3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*;

4 God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

5 For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.

6 But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?

7 Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands:

8 Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing *that is* not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.

9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

AT once the apostle applies the main argument of the preceding chapter thus:

1. *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.* Peshito: Therefore we ought to be exceedingly cautious, in regard to what we have heard, lest we fall away. Tyndale: Where for we ought to geve the more hede to the thinges we have herde lest we perysshe. Cranmer: Where fore we ought to geve the

more hede to the thynges that are spoken vnto vs, lest at any tyme we peryssh. Genevan: VVherfore we ought diligently to geve hede to the thynges whych we haue heard, lest at any tyme we shulde not kepe them. Rheims: Therefore more abundantly ought vve to obserue those things vvhich vve haue heard; lest perhaps vve runne out. Doway: Therefore ought we more diligently to observe the things which we have heard: lest at any time we should let them slip. Stuart: It behooveth us, therefore, the more abundantly to give heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should slight them. Craik: Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should glide aside. The *heed* enjoined consists in having these things constantly in mind, remembering them, thinking on them, seeking better to understand them, firmly believing and highly prizing them, and honestly practising them. But Paul says we ought to give the *more earnest* heed. Our attention to these things ought to be more eager than the attention we give to anything else. *More earnest* seems to be put for most earnest, as in 2 Pet. 2: 19 more sure means most sure, and in 2 Cor. 11: 23 more abundant means most abundant. The gospel is of paramount importance. It is not enough that we *hear* these things. We must fix our minds upon them. Our whole natures must be aroused to attend to them. We have many adversaries. They are bitter, cunning and powerful. They are constantly seeking to ruin us. The verb rendered *should let slip* occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, nor has it any cognates there. Those, who render the verb perish, seem to rest very much on the authority of Chrysostom, but that rendering is not well sustained. The verb expresses a stealthy action or operation like that of theft, or the gliding of waters. Some give the verb a passive sense, but the authorized version is probably correct. Compare Pr. 3: 21. The active signification, though rejected by Robinson, is adopted by several as seen above, and is approved by Buttman and Wahl. See Conybeare and Howson. The argument, implied in the word Therefore, is drawn from the whole of the preceding chapter, where the apostle has proven that Jesus Christ is divine, and consequently greatly superior to Moses and to the angels of heaven. The obligation to give this heed is perfect. We *ought*, elsewhere the same word is often rendered must, must needs, it is needful. God's known will and the very nature of our circumstances make it indispensably necessary that we give very earnest heed to these things.

2. *For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward;*

3. *How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation ; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.* Peshito: For if the word uttered by the medium of angels was confirmed, and every one who heard it, and transgressed it, received a just retribution ; how shall we escape, if we despise the things which are our life, things which began to be spoken by our Lord, and were confirmed to us by them who heard from him. None of the old English versions are so good as that in common use. Nor do any of the modern translations throw any light on these verses. The *word spoken by angels* was the law of Moses. That this is the right interpretation is manifest from at least four other places: "He came with ten thousands of his saints [holy ones]: from his right hand went a fiery law;" "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai;" "Ye have received the law by the disposition of angels;" "It was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator;" Deut. 33:2; Ps. 68:17; Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19. Lindsay quotes that eloquent sentence of Josephus: "We have received the finest institutions and the holiest laws by angels from God," as expressing the common belief of the Jews. So that we cannot fairly doubt as to the meaning of our clause. This word was *steadfast*. It was for an ordinance in all the generations of the Jewish church. It was not advice, or counsel, it was a law, a statute; it had fit penalties. The word here rendered steadfast is in Heb. 9:17 rendered *of force*. From Moses to Christ the law of Sinai in all its provisions was in force. So that *every transgression* [breach, Rom. 2:23] *and disobedience* [neglect to hear, Matt. 18:17] *received a just recompense of reward.* *Recompense of reward*, one word found also in Heb. 10:35; 11:26 and no where else in the New Testament, and so far as I find in no classical writer whatever. The retribution for violating Moses' law was *just*, right, fit, suited to the offence. One general principle running all through the law of offerings was that Jehovah should have the first and the best of every thing. Every species and form of idolatry was forbidden. The penalties were severe and terrible. Its curses wound up with these awful words: "Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them: and all the people shall say, Amen." Those to whom Paul was writing admitted the justness of even the penal provisions in the law of Moses; and defended them on account of the great dignity of Moses and of the angels, by whose ministry the law was given. The argument of the apostle then is that much more have we a right to expect that God will be provoked by any slighting of the gospel. *Escape*, commonly so rendered, Luke 21:36; Rom. 2:3;

2 Cor. 11:33; 1 Thess. 5:3; even where it is once or twice rendered fled it has the sense of escape. Our verse does not say what dangers and ills will come on men, who slight the gospel. It leaves them to supply any word that will make good sense and be consistent with the analogy of faith. How shall we escape blame, guilt, sin, an awful account, Jehovah's hot displeasure, the judgment of God, the damnation of hell, the vengeance of eternal fire? Some prefer to supply these words, a just recompense of reward. No doubt that gives the sense. We may understand either of these words and we shall not therein err. *Neglect*, not regard, make light of, as the word is sometimes rendered. In order to incur God's displeasure it is not necessary to be a scoffer, an infidel, a common liar, a profane swearer, a thief, a murderer, an open and avowed enemy of God and man. O no. Let one lightly esteem and quite neglect the call to life and salvation, and the work of ruin is done. The *salvation* offered to us is here said to be *great*; or, as the same word is elsewhere rendered, mighty, Rev. 16:18. Nor could a more fitting epithet be found. 1. It is God's salvation, devised, executed and applied by him. It is God's greatest work, the only work that cost him any humiliation. 2. It is great because of the vast multitudes benefitted by it. 3. It is great because it saves from so terrible a curse, even the wrath of God and a lake of fire. It puts away all guilt in a way honorable to God, and actually invests with perfect righteousness. 4. It is great in its power to rescue men from sinful inclinations and habits. It takes the vilest and washes him clean. 5. It imparts amazing constancy and courage. It has converted the young, the timid, the feeble into intrepid martyrs, and that by the million. 6. Then it has such sovereign power to subdue the mightiest passions of the human heart, taming man's ferocity, and bringing into captivity every thought and imagination. 7. And it kindles such a flame of love in the human family, extinguishing feuds, banishing old hatreds, bringing forth such forgiveness to enemies and such good-will to all. 8. Nor is there any thing else that so brings peace on earth and good-will to man. The very atmosphere it creates is heavenly. 9. Look at its power even here to disarm death of its terrors. There are old ministers, who have mingled with the sick and dying for half a century, and who have never yet seen a follower of Christ die an undesirable death. 10. Nor does all creation bring such glory to God as the gospel of his Son, the salvation we celebrate. These and like things are suggested by the nature of the case and by other parts of God's word. Yet this third verse states none of these, but suggests two other matters, which make the salvation of the gospel very pressing. One

is that it *first began to be spoken by the Lord*, Jesus Christ, who has been proven in the first chapter to be greater than Moses, greater than the angels. God never sent another so glorious a messenger to this or any other world as his Son Jesus Christ. He is Lord; he is Lord of all. Another matter making it very perilous to neglect this salvation is that it has been *confirmed to us by them that heard* the Lord Jesus, and were eye-witnesses of his glory, and had seen him in his resurrection body. These witnesses were many, were competent, were credible, were honest, were unflinching and were harmonious. Their testimony was accompanied by countless miracles of the most convincing kind, and was followed by effects the most glorious in the history of the world. Under the preaching of Christ crucified, Satan fell like lightning from heaven. The verb rendered was confirmed is cognate to the adjective steadfast in v. 2, and is also rendered was established, Heb. 13:9. Confirmed unto *us* is better supported than confirmed unto *you*, as some have proposed to read. The history of the planting of the churches by the apostles is a glorious demonstration of the truth of all that Jesus began both to do and to teach, and furnishes the key to the true interpretation of John 14:12. Nor was the testimony of the apostles left alone;

4. *God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?* The question begun in v. 2 is here terminated. In v. 3 the apostle states that the gospel had for its author the Lord, *i. e.* Jesus Christ, the glorious Son of God, and so must be regarded as of the highest dignity. He also states that mere men could not be invested with higher authority and could not furnish more convincing proofs of a divine commission than attended the apostles. Their office, course and success did confirm and establish the truth. Moses did no wonders better suited to confirm his office than did every apostle to authenticate his commission. In this verse Paul introduces formally the testimony of the Father and of the Holy Ghost. Thus in the two verses we are assured of the united testimony of the three persons of the Trinity to the gospel and are reminded of three remarkable passages of scripture, John 3:31-34; 5:31-37; 8:16-18. The testimony of the Son was clear and full, yet but few believed on him, John 3:32. Jesus says that if his claims rested on his mere assertion as a man, men would not be criminal for rejecting him. Neither does he rest the weight of his cause on human testimony, even though it be that of John—"I receive not testimony from man," John 5:34. But he expressly declares that the divine testimony in his favor is decisive—"The Father himself which hath

sent me hath borne witness of me," John 5 : 37. It was a principle of law among the Israelites and has been generally accepted among enlightened nations, that the concurrent testimony of two men is true. But in support of Christ's claims and character he says : " I am one that bear witness of myself ; and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me," John 8 : 18. But in vs. 3, 4 of our chapter the Three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, are correctly said to have given a testimony to the gospel of Christ in full accord with that of the apostles. For such is the force of the Greek verb. It is found here only, in its compound form, but its composition clearly and strikingly marks *concurrent* testimony. Robinson well says it means to *bear further witness with* any one. This testimony of God was given first by signs, tokens unmistakable. The same word is rendered wonders, also miracles. It was given also by wonders, the word is uniformly rendered. The words here rendered signs and wonders are in the New Testament often joined together. Nor is there any clearly defined difference between them. The same seems to be true of the corresponding words in Deut. 34 : 11. God also testified by miracles, a word which in the abstract means might or strength and is so rendered, but when used as here it is rendered mighty works, wonderful works. These miracles were divers, manifold or various. It is not possible to classify the miracles wrought for the establishment of the gospel. God also confirmed the teachings of the apostles by gifts. The word denotes partings, dividings, distributions ; according to the teaching of Paul in 1 Cor. 12 : 7-11. The Spirit divides to every man severally as he will ; or, as in our verse, according to his own will. All of these were supernatural, were beyond the power of men and angels, without the endowment of the Holy Ghost.

5. *For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.* In understanding this verse, we get no aid from the versions or translations. The chief difficulty is found in the question, what does Paul mean by *the world to come* ? The difficulty is chiefly philological. The word rendered world is not *kosmos* found so often in the New Testament, even in this epistle, Heb. 4 : 3 ; 9 : 26 ; 10 : 5 ; 11 : 7 ; nor is it *ge*, commonly rendered land, ground, or earth, Heb. 1 : 10 ; 6 : 7 ; 11 : 13, 38 ; 12 : 25 ; nor is it *aiōn*, found in Heb. 1 : 2 ; Rom. 12 : 2 ; Eph. 1 : 21 ; 3 : 9 ; 6 : 12 ; but it is *oikoumene*, rendered earth in Luke 21 : 26 ; but everywhere else world, Matt. 24 : 14 ; Heb. 1 : 6 and many other places. Its derivation shows that, taken most exactly, it should certainly be rendered habitable earth. Whether the meaning here is not

somewhat variant from that is the point of dispute. Those, who expect this earth to be the abode of the redeemed after the last conflagration shall have burned up the works that are now in it, and in particular those, who embrace Chiliasm, take a view peculiar to themselves. For world to come Craik has future habitable earth. Tait: "The world to come signifies, if taken literally, the earth covered with the dwellings of mankind in the condition in which it yet shall be. For God shall bring the heavens and earth out of the fire for which they are now reserved, as in the days of Noah he brought them out of the water. . . Palestine shall then be the royal nation, and Jerusalem its capital, the royal city of the world. And the seed of Abraham shall be honored of God to instruct the world in the knowledge of his name. *Such* shall be 'the world to come,' this earth in the regeneration." But the context says nothing of the state of things after the day of judgment. Paul is showing that the dispensation of Moses is inferior to that of Christ. By far the more common view, with slight variations, is thus expressed by Owen: "The world here intended is no other but the promised state of the church under the gospel." This is pretty certainly the right explanation and is sustained by many. The Dutch Annotations substantially agree with Owen. So does Dindorf who says the world to come means "the times of the New Testament." Koppe says the sense of the whole verse is this: "In that religion which we preach, or in that kingdom of Messiah no power nor authority is given to demons." By the world to come Kuinoel understands "the reign or kingdom of Messiah," and Diodati, "the renewed state of the world." Whitby: "The world to come, I conceive, imports primarily the Christian state; and in order to the government of that, the whole world subjected to Christ from the time of his resurrection and ascension, to the time when he shall abolish death the last enemy of his subjects, and put the crown upon their heads, and condemn all his enemies to endless punishments, and so give up his mediatory kingdom to the Father." Gill takes the same view and adds that "the times of Messiah are frequently called by the Jews the world to come, the gospel dispensation," etc. Tong: "The state of the gospel church is here called the world to come." Clarke takes the same view. Gouge: "The *world*, in this place, is put for the *church*, which compriseth under it the whole number of God's elect, called or to be called. In this sense also it is called 'the kingdom of God,' Matt. 6: 33; 'the kingdom of his Son,' Col. 1: 13; 'the kingdom of heaven,' Matt. 3: 2." By the world to come Guyse understands "the New Testament church." Duncan takes the same view. Doddridge's paraphrase makes it to be

“the kingdom of the Messiah, which extends not only to earth but to heaven.” Slade: “It seems on the whole that the phrase refers to the state of the gospel Church here on earth.” Parry: “It is a *world* or vast society, as embracing individuals of all times, from Adam to his latest posterity, and throughout every ‘inhabited’ region under heaven.” McLean: “The world to come is the gospel economy.” Stuart: “*The Christian dispensation*, the world as it will be in future, *i. e.* the world under the reign of Christ.” Ripley: “The world to come is one of the phrases by which the Messiah’s dispensation, the system of grace for the salvation of men as distinguished from the law of Moses, was designated *before* it was introduced, and the phrase seems to have continued in use *after* the coming of Christ.” The same view is taken by Dickson, Kidd, Bleek, Delitzsch, Turner, Lindsay, Moll, Patterson, F. S. Sampson, Barnes, and by several anonymous writers. The objections to this interpretation are slight and have been often fully met. This interpretation is required by the words, *whereof we speak*, or of which we are speaking. The apostle is not at all speaking of the heavenly state, nor of the world after the last conflagration. He is speaking of the gospel dispensation, and contrasting it with that of Moses. The subsequent context forbids us to look to events yet future as giving the key to the exposition. It expressly says that we see Jesus crowned with glory and honor. The thing is already done. The Son of God, not any angel, is at the head of affairs in the scheme of redemption. In carrying on his work, the Saviour uses the angels, as servants, ministers, but they have no authority whatever in his kingdom. He is Lord of all. All power in heaven and in earth is given unto him, not to Michael nor to any angel.

6. *But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that thou visitest him?*

7. *Thou madest him a little lower than the angels: thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands:*

8. *Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.* The passage cited is from the eighth Psalm, of which David was doubtless the author. That ode is thrice quoted in the New Testament; verse 2 in Matt. 21:16; verse 6 in 1 Cor. 15:25, 27; and verses 4, 5, 6 in this place. And yet there has been more than usual diversity in the views taken of its scope and design. Some wholly spiritualize it, making Christ the only *man* referred to in it, and making the sheep and oxen represent the people and ministers of

Christ, and so on throughout. But it is safe to say that the obvious sense of the words grammatically construed must give us the primary meaning, and then we may soberly use the words in a secondary way, applying them to Christ himself. The Syriac scholiast says that the Psalm is "concerning Christ our Redeemer." Luther, Rivet and many others make the Psalm strongly Messianic. *What is man that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that thou visitest him?* These words are an outburst of wonder and gratitude at the goodness and condescension of God towards one so low as man. The word *visitest* often occurs in scripture, being found in twenty-eight of the books of the Old Testament. It is often used in a bad sense as in Ex. 20 : 5, and indeed is often rendered *punish*. But here and in many other places it is used in a good sense. Calvin: "This is a marvellous thing, that God thinks upon men, and remembers them continually." If to notice at all is condescension, to notice favorably is amazing loving-kindness. *Thou madest him a little lower than the angels.* The two words in this clause, which have occasioned most discussion, are *little* and *angels*. According to our version man even here is but little lower than the angels. But is this so? Is there not a vast difference between them in character, position and attainment? In the next world, in an important sense the redeemed will be equal unto the angels, Luke 20 : 36. To avoid this difficulty for *little* many read *for a little while*. Both the Hebrew in Ps. 8, and the Greek here allow such a rendering as our translators admit in other places, as in Job 24 : 24; Ps. 37 : 10; Hag. 2 : 6; Luke 22 : 58; Acts 5 : 34. The word equally applies to time, space or degree. The context must decide to which it refers. In this case it seems safest to read *for a little while*. Rivet, Moller, Cocceius, Venema, Fabricius, S. Schmidt, Dodd, Morison and Fry all so read in Ps. 8, and John Rodgers' translation has for a season. Tyndale, Genevan and Italian have the same here. The margin of our authorized version reads for a little while. This rendering is either preferred or admitted to be fair by Beza, Grotius, Duncan, Dutch Annotations, Guyse, Hammond, Peirce, McLean, Beausobre, Gill, Rosenmuller, Clarke, Ebrard, Patterson, Cottage Bible, Conybeare and Howson, etc. Thus we may read that God has made even good men for a little while, during their earthly existence, lower than the angels. After that they may be crowned with equal or surpassing glory. As to the other word, of which the original is Elohim, usually rendered God, the pious will rest satisfied with the authoritative decision of an inspired apostle, that in this case it means *angels*. Besides, to say that the Lord made man a little or for a little while lower than God would certainly mislead the

mind; for man not only now is but forever will be unspeakably inferior to his Maker. Moreover, the same word is by the Septuagint rendered angels in Ps. 97:7 (which is approved by Paul in Heb. 1:6 and in Ps. 138:1.) If the name—*elohim*—is given to magistrates, as we know it is (Ps. 82:6), much more may it be fitly given to angels, for they are greater in power and might. In rendering the word angels the Septuagint is supported by the Chaldee, Ethiopic, Arabic, Syriac and Vulgate; by numerous Jewish interpreters, and others. Man is inferior to none of the creatures that God has made except the angels. *Thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands.* There is no better rendering of the Hebrew verb in Ps. 8, than crowned. Paul adopts that rendering here. *Glory and honor*, two words often united and interchangeably rendered glory or honor. Man has great endowments from heaven. He was made both in the natural and moral image of God, and he still retains God's natural image; his existence henceforth is parallel to the existence of God. His reason, his moral sense, his social nature, his capacity for indefinite growth in knowledge, his ingenuity in relieving his own wants, his subjection to law, and his dominion over animated nature and even over the elements show that he is indeed crowned with glory and honor, and is set over all the works of God on earth. *Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.* This seems to be a devout rehearsal of what we are taught in Gen. 1:26, 28; 9:2. At creation this subjection of other creatures to man was perfect. By the fall it was impaired. These verses have a primary and important fulfilment in man. But Paul, speaking by the Spirit of God, declares that they have a higher fulfilment in the Lord Jesus, the head of the new creation. This latter indeed is far the more important view of the passage. The application to man was a shadow; this is the substance. That was a faint type; this is the glorious antitype. The apostle now asserts that the term *all* in Ps. 8:6 is *to be* taken in the absolute sense, as embracing everything in the *universe* and that in perfect subjection, him only excepted who *subjected* them. And he at once adds that this is not true as to *man* in general. Angels and devils, sickness and health, riches and poverty, weal and woe are not subject to man; and even things, over which he at times seems to have control, often revolt against him. So that Paul well concludes that *now we see not yet all things put under him.* We must therefore seek for some other way in which this scripture can be shown to have a perfect fulfilment. This it has in Christ. Sampson: "It requires but little stretch of faith to believe that a passage, which so easily admits of the application here made, is so applied, not *by accommodation*

*merely*, but in consistency with its proper original meaning." Thus far the apostle has conducted an irrefragable argument. Surely he would not now weaken it by introducing into it something unsound and untenable. Hengstenberg: "Although David, in the first instance, speaks of the human race generally, the writer of the epistle might still justly refer what is said to Christ, in its highest and fullest sense. For while the glory of human nature, as here delineated, has been so deteriorated through the fall, that it is to be seen only in small fragments, and what is here said is to be referred rather to the idea than the reality, it appears anew in Christ in full splendor." Yes, says Paul, we must look to Jesus. In him all is fulfilled.

9. *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.* As to his human nature and in his humiliation Christ Jesus was lower than the angels, for they ministered to him and strengthened him, Matt. 4: 11; Luke 22: 43; yea more, he consented to live very much on charity, not that of princely patrons, but of some poor women. He had not where to lay his head. He emptied himself. He humbled himself even to the shameful death of the cross. But this was only for a season—a little while—compared with the history of the human race—compared with the eternity of renown and glory before him. It is not certain whether we are to understand the apostle as here teaching that Jesus was made lower than the angels for the purpose of suffering death, or whether he was crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death. Both these propositions are true. Our translators, if we follow the usual punctuation, seem to have inclined to the former of these views; but the original is not decisive. The construction turns very much on the force of the Greek preposition rendered *for*; and that would rather indicate, not that his object in being made lower than the angels was that he might suffer death, but that he was crowned on account of his having suffered death. See the best Lexicons and Grammars on the use of the proposition *dia* here used. It is not to be understood that Jesus has perfected the work of subduing his enemies, but the work is begun. The foundation of his glory has been laid; his work of atonement has been fully and gloriously accepted; God has famously exalted him, and already crowned him with glory and honor; and he is henceforth expecting all his enemies to be made his footstool. This is the reward of his *suffering death and tasting death for every man.* Phil. 2: 8-11. Jesus was not crowned that he might die, but he was made lower than the angels, that is he took upon him our nature

that he might taste death. All this arrangement was in proof of the *grace* and favor of God. Such kindness was wholly undeserved by any of the human family. This is better than with some to read *without God* he tasted death. To taste of death is to die. This is obviously the meaning of the phrase in each of the Gospels. Matt. 16:28; Mark 9:1; Luke 9:27; John 8:52. Now Jesus is said to have tasted death *for* every man. The preposition rendered *for* means in the stead of, in the room of, as might be showed by many places, Luke 22:19, 20; John 6:51; 11:50; Rom. 5:6, 7, 8; 1 Cor. 1:13; 5:7; Gal. 3:13; 1 Thess. 5:10; 1 Pet. 2:21; 1 John 3:16. Some here raise these questions: Was the atonement universal? or general? or definite? The following statements may clear this matter, if not perfectly, yet sufficiently for one, who is willing to abide by what is clear, and wait for an explanation of what is dark and mysterious. 1. The adjectives all and every one do not of themselves determine any thing. They often have a limited sense. See Matt. 3:5; Luke 2:1; John 12:32; Phil. 2:21; Tit. 2:11. See the author's Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, 5:12-19. 2. The doctrine of the atonement is purely matter of revelation. We know absolutely nothing of it except as it is made known to us of God. 3. God never mocks any of his creatures. He is always sincere. To charge the contrary is blasphemous. God neither mocks nor is mocked. We could not worship a being, whose sincerity was even doubtful. 4. By God's authority full and free offers of mercy are indiscriminately made to all who hear the gospel, Isa. 55:1; Matt. 11:28, 29; John 7:37; Rev. 22:17. 5. The final ruin of those, who hear the gospel and yet perish, is entirely chargeable to themselves and not at all to God. Their coming short of heaven is wholly due to their unbelief, not at all to any scantiness in the provisions of the gospel; to their own enmity, not to any want of merit in Christ; to their wilful rejection of God's infinite mercy, not to any insufficiency in the work or sufferings of Christ. 6. For Christ's merits are infinite. They could not be greater; for they are boundless. His righteousness is like the waves of the sea. It cannot be diminished by our reception of it. It possesses inexhaustible fulness. 7. Christ died with the intention of saving his own people, and his death made it certain that they should all be saved. His language is clear and decisive: "The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep;" "I lay down my life for the sheep," John 10:11, 15; "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out;" "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them

out of my hand," John 6: 37; 10: 27, 28. The old Universalists held to the divinity and vicarious atonement of Jesus Christ, and that in dying the Lord intended that every man should be saved. Of course they believed in universal atonement and universal salvation. How a universal vicarious atonement differs from a general atonement none has yet clearly shown. Hence many say that Christ died for sin, not for sinners. But the scripture is careful to teach not merely that he died for sins, Isa. 53: 5, 6; 1 Cor. 15: 3; but that he died for us, in our room, and in our stead, Rom. 5: 6, 8; 2 Cor. 5: 21; 1 Pet. 2: 21; 3: 18. Indeed the scriptures teach nothing about Christ's suffering for sin in the abstract, but uniformly teach that it was for sins charged to persons that Christ suffered. We therefore believe that Christ died in the room of all and with the intention of saving all, who from age to age shall believe on him—for all that the Father gave him in the covenant of redemption. Compare Ps. 89: 19-37; Isa. 49: 5-12; John 6: 37.

#### DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL REMARKS.

1. All revealed truth is in order to godliness and edification, not for curiosity, nor for speculation, nor for pride, nor for vanity, v. 1. In chapter I. Paul had proved in many ways the divinity of Jesus. He begins this chapter by showing that from the exalted nature of Christ we are bound to be peculiarly cautious and earnest in religion. Such is the force of *therefore* in v. 1. "The basis of all exhortation, peculiar to the gospel, is the incomparable excellency of the person and work of Messiah." Patterson: "The argument is alike clear and forcible. 1. The Son of God is possessed of pre-eminent authority. 2. It is a very special mark of the Father's love to men that he should have sent his own Son to be their Teacher and their Saviour. 3. The mission of this great and glorious One shows what stress Jehovah laid on the message which the Visitant came to teach, and the work which he came to execute. 4. The Revelation and Economy which the Old Testament represents as about to be introduced by God's anointed Son is there habitually described as full and final—as peculiarly clear and copious, and the very last and best ever to be realized on earth." Christ's divine nature calls for a line of conduct on our part very different from that due to the most exalted creature.

2. It is a great privilege to *hear* the messages of love and mercy from God; but it is a privilege often and easily abused by the carnal nature of man, v. 1. This is specially true in times of persecution and great opposition to vital truths; in times of great confusion and public commotions; in times when the propagators

of false doctrine are many and bold; in times of great worldly prosperity and success in temporal enterprizes; in times when great and vital truths are first brought urgently to the attention of a person or community; in times when want and poverty stare men in the face, and afford to them a plausible excuse for slighting the weightier things of religion; in times when the devotees of pleasure gain great ascendancy and influence among men; and in times when ministers and people are alike sunk down into deep and guilty slumbers over spiritual things. The warnings of scripture on the subject of hearing are many and solemn. The parable of the sower recorded by three of the evangelists, Matt. 13, Mark 4, Luke 8, is full and decisive on the subject. "He that is of God heareth God's words," John 8: 47. "My sheep hear my voice, and follow me," John 10: 27. One of the general epistles is very clear on the whole matter of practical and unprofitable hearing: "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any man be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, the man shall be blessed in his deed," James 1: 23-26. "Take heed what ye hear," Mark 4: 24. "Take heed how ye hear," Luke 8: 18. "As every life proceeds from some seed, that hath in itself virtually the whole life, to be educaed from it by natural ways and means, so the word in the hearts of men is turned into a vital principle, that, cherished by suitable means, puts forth vital acts and operations." Fricke: "As a kernel in the shell lies our whole salvation in the words of Christ." "Hear, and your soul shall live," Isa 55: 3.

3. Merely knowing the truth will save no man, v. 1. He must also love and obey it. He must from the heart obey it, Rom. 6: 17. Patterson: "Divine truth, in order to be practicably useful, must be cordially received and permanently retained." A report, heard but not credited, can have no influence over any one. Air must be respired if it is to sustain animal life. Water must be swallowed, if it is to slake thirst. Bread must be eaten, if it is to satisfy hunger.

4. We ought neither to be offended nor surprised that the demand is made upon us for the most earnest heed to the things which we have heard respecting the gospel, its author, its nature, its power and the responsibilities accompanying it, v. 1. Tong: "This is the first way, by which we are to show our esteem of Christ and of the gospel." Let one hear as for his life, Deut.

32:47. Let him read with intense longings for a full understanding of the mind of God, as the eunuch read Isaiah. Let him set such store by the word of God as did the man of Uz and the son of Jesse, Job, 23:12; Ps. 119:72. Let him think upon God's word continually, Ps. 1:2. Let him firmly believe every word that God has spoken, Heb. 4:2. Let him love it fervently and not hold it in unrighteousness of heart, of speech or of life, Rom. 1:18. Let him honestly practise all he knows and humbly ask God to teach him all else, John 7:17; Ps. 119:5, 12, 18 and often. Let him cry after knowledge, and lift up his voice for understanding; let him seek her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures; and his labor shall not be in vain, Pr. 2:3-5. When the people of Samaria with one accord gave heed to those things, which were spoken of Philip, there was soon a mighty work wrought among them, Acts 8:6-8. The great and saving change in Lydia was not until she did *attend* unto the things, which were spoken of Paul, Acts 16:14. Tait: "Want of heed is the expression of contempt. . . To forget Christ and his gospel is to lose our souls." Owen: "If the ministration of the gospel be not looked on as that which is full of glory, it will never be attended unto."

5. The earnest heed we give to divine things must be not merely sometimes, but at all times, not occasionally but continually, v. 1. There is danger lest *at any time* we lose our hold on God, or our relish for heavenly things. Demas seems to have behaved well in a persecution, but was overcome by his love of the world. Peter seems to have been naturally firm and bold; but in the Judgment Hall he was very chicken-hearted. Dickson: "It is not sufficient to believe the word for awhile, and for awhile to remember it; but we must gripe it so as never to quit it by misregard or misbelief." The watchman must not fall asleep. The sentinel must not slumber. "Blessed is he that feareth always;" for there is always danger. That is a good prayer in the liturgy of the church of England, "O holy and merciful Saviour, thou most worthy Judge eternal, suffer us not, at our last hour, for any pains of death to fall from thee." Except for the grace of God the best men would soon become castaways.

6. Terrible as is the thought and sad as is the saying, many do let these heavenly things *slip*, v. 1. In the parable of the sower four classes of hearers are described, and three of them but become the worse for having heard and slighted the word of God. O what ruin many are bringing on themselves by the abuse of God's chief mercies. "When the diamond is once disturbed by the ray of a burning reflector, it is irrecoverably gone." And when the rays of heavenly truth utterly and finally fail to enlighten,

purify and save, they fit the soul for rejection and darkness. To many God gives a wonderful day of grace, but they are hardened in pride. The best things are offered to them without money and without price; and they often resolve that at some convenient season they will embrace them. But they let their lives glide away and all their opportunities pass without effecting their salvation. Many a one mourns at the last, when his flesh and his body are consumed, and says, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof; and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, and my heart despised reproof, Pr. 5: 11-13. Gouge: "Men that hear the gospel may be lost."

7. By whomsoever and in whatsoever manner God sends his word, it is *steadfast*, v. 2. "The scripture cannot be broken." "The word of the Lord endureth for ever." "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven." "I am the Lord, I change not." The prophets called on men to hear the word of the Lord. So the word spoken by angels, not because they spake it, but because God spake it by them, was terribly executed on the guilty. All the law was of force from Moses till Christ. Behold how in that time many for transgressing and rebelling fell in the wilderness. Even Moses and Aaron were not permitted to enter the promised land. Behold too the terrible doom and punishment of Hophni and Phineas, of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, of Achan, of Zimri and Cozbi. See the awful end of many, who worshipped the golden calf. Behold the doom, fixed by the law of Moses, of the blasphemers, the murderer, the false witness, the Sabbath-breaker, yea, and of every soul that did ought presumptuously. The law was strict. It is of the very nature of law to be rigorous. Blackstone: "Of all the parts of a law the most effectual is the vindicatory." Tong: "If men trifle with the law of God, it will not trifle with them." Under the law every transgression and every failure received not a cruel but a *just* recompense. The *justice* of a sentence is the sole ground of the fitness of its execution. Dickson: "There is no evil befalling sinners more than they deserve." When men find fault with the arrangements of providence in the punishment of transgression of either moral or positive laws, it is full proof that they have not any just conception of the evil of sin.

8. It seems wonderful and is proof of the desperate wickedness of the human heart that after so long and painful a trial of the rigors of the law of Moses, the entire Jewish people did not hail with gladness and receive with cordiality the grace of the gospel, the *great salvation* wrought out and made known by Jesus Christ, v. 3. In it are displayed such wisdom, power, grace and glory, as

may well fill all minds with adoring admiration. Neither words can fully describe nor hearts adequately conceive the vastness or the grandeur of the gospel scheme of dealing with men. Blessed is the man who devoutly knows that there are heights and depths, and lengths and breadths in God's way of mercy, and who adoringly cries like Paul, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

9. It must be very perillous to slight or contemn so glorious a plan as that made known by Jesus Christ, v. 3. To the rejecter of this mercy there is absolutely no escape; and all thoughts that there is some unrevealed way of delivering the soul that persistently refuses the salvation of Christ are worse than idle delusions; they are no less than misprision of treason against God and his Son and his Spirit. Owen: "The word heard is not lost without the great sin, as well as the inevitable ruin of the souls of men." In the government of God, it is a just and has ever been an unvarying principle that to whom much is given, of him shall be much required. According to this rule of admeasurement there is no guilt comparable to that incurred by the base and ungrateful slighting of the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. This accounts for the very terrible forms of denouncing the wrath of God against the sin of unbelief, such as: "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins;" "He that believeth not shall be damned," John 8:24; Mark 16:16. Unbelief is a sin against the remedy; a sin against reconciliation; a sin against God's love, and truth, and wisdom, and power; a sin against the most gracious promises; a sin against the most alarming comminations; a sin against our own souls, cutting off from all hope of an eternal well-being; a sin against our fellow-men, as by our example we do what we can to hinder their salvation; and a sin against each and every person of the Godhead. If after such sin men still vainly hope that God is too good to punish his enemies, has it never occurred to them that he was not too good to say that he would deal out justice without mercy? Men forget that our God is a consuming fire to his foes as well as a rock of salvation to all who rightly seek his favor.

10. One of the most common ways of losing the soul and blasting all good prospects for eternity is by simple *neglect*, v. 3. Some, like Pharaoh, openly say, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey him?" Some, like Belshazzar, say, "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High." Some dig their graves with a wine glass, and some, with their knife and fork (their god is their appetite). Some are downright atheists in

desire, in theory and in practice ; but the great mass of those, who hear the gospel and fail of salvation, perish by *neglecting* the precious offers, the kind invitations and the golden opportunities granted them. Dickson : " He saith not, if we reject, deny, or persecute the gospel ; but if we neglect. Then, the neglect of the doctrine of the gospel, the careless receiving of it, the not studying to know it, is sufficient to draw down heavier judgments than ever fell on the breakers of the law." Deringe : " If either we be of a dull spirit, that we have no joy of our hope, or, when we taste a little, if it be straight forgotten, so that the prophet's words be true in us : that ' our goodness is as the morning cloud, and as the early dew, it goeth away,' it is with us according to the common proverb, As good never a whit, as never the better : and all our religion is vain." How bitter will be the lamentations of those who shall for ever lie down in sorrow because they lost their souls through sheer carelessness.

11. It is right in us to follow the scriptures and distinguish between the Mosaic and the Christian dispensations, vs. 2, 3. Many and great errors proceed from a neglect to do this. Mount Sinai is in the wilderness. Mount Calvary is hard by the city of the great King. The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Moses was a servant ; Christ was a Son. The law of Moses was for one nation ; the gospel was for all nations. The law had its glory ; but the gospel has a glory that excelleth. The law paid great attention to overt acts, and many of them were corporeal and ceremonial ; the gospel directs chief attention to the state of the heart. The law abounded in types and shadows ; the gospel has the very image of those things. The law was burdensome on account of its prescribing every thing ; the gospel prescribes a very simple worship, and leaves a very large freedom for all. The law was given by the ministry of angels ; but the gospel came by the Maker and Lord of angels. The law was for a season ; but the gospel is everlasting. The heart of the Jewish dispensation was the moral law, the heart of the gospel is the grace of God.

12. As Jesus Christ was the author and substance of the gospel, so likewise was he the first preacher thereof, v. 3. It *began to be spoken by him*. It is not meant that mankind had not heard of saving mercy until our Lord's personal ministry on earth. Himself says, Abraham saw my day and rejoiced ; and Paul says the gospel was preached to Abraham, John 8 : 56 ; Gal. 3 : 8. In an important sense, the gospel was preached in Eden, Gen. 3 : 15. But the meaning is that Christ Jesus in his personal ministry first made a full and clear exhibition of the gospel plan, was the first who said,

If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. He said and he had a right to say, I am the way, the truth, and the life; I am the bread of life; come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden. Jesus was not only the Prince of life and the prince of the kings of the earth; but he was the prince of preachers. Never man spake as this man. Clarke: "The government is on the shoulder of Jesus Christ; he alone has the keys of death and of hell; he alone shuts, and no man opens; opens, and no man shuts; he alone has the residue of the spirit; he alone is the governor of the universe." This is as conducive to the honor of the first and third persons of the Trinity as to that of the Son, for all Christ's arrangements and teachings are to the glory of God, and are often so declared to be.

13. The evidences of the truth of the Christian religion have from the first been ample and conclusive, vs. 3, 4. And although every experiment made by man on other schemes, every real and thorough conversion to God and every triumph of the godly over the world, the flesh, the devil, affliction and death, add confirmation to what was before established; yet at no time have men been called on to believe the gospel without abundant and appropriate evidence. The scriptures employ four verbs on this subject. One means to give original and independent testimony of something not yet proven. That is the verb so often used in the writings of John, and often in the New Testament. A second denotes thorough testifying, and is used much by Luke, especially in Acts. A third means further to attest, to give confirmatory proof, and is found in 1 Pet. 5:12. The fourth means to give joint and confirmatory witness, and is the verb used here in v. 4. All these verbs are therefore used on the subject of the divinity of Christ's mission and the truth of his gospel. The gospel has all the evidences appropriate to a system professedly demanding candor, uprightness, love of truth, docility and the spirit of obedience. It is not accompanied by proofs to overwhelm the obstinate, the proud, the vicious, who are determined to live in sin. The first, who gives full and decisive testimony of the gospel is "the faithful and true Witness," Jesus Christ himself. Concerning him the first remark respects his personal character. The sun sometimes has visible spots on his disc. But from the birth of Jesus Christ to this day neither malice, nor cunning, nor blasphemy has been able to find a flaw in his character. Not only was he wholly innocent, but he went about doing good. Nor was there any enthusiasm, nor weakness of any kind in his character. Jesus was as majestic as he was condescending. The second remark is that his speech was sound and overwhelming. It could not be

resisted. Never man spake as this man, John 7:46; Matt. 22:46. He spake with authority, Matt. 7:29. The human mind, and heart, and conscience owned his power as their Maker and their Lord. The third remark is that in his own name he established his mission and his doctrine among men. One cried out, "No man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him," John 3:2. Many said, "When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done," John 7:31. Others said, "Can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?" John 9:16. The chief priests and Pharisees said, "What do we? for this man doeth many miracles," John 11:47. A fourth observation is that Christ's predictions respecting persons and events, friends and enemies, were numerous and particular, and were fulfilled in the most convincing manner during his life-time and afterward. The fifth remark is that he so thoroughly convinced those who were most with him of the divinity of his person and mission that they were ready to lay down their lives for the truth of his teachings. Most of them did actually suffer martyrdom in the maintenance of Christianity. This leads to the statement that there has never been any kind or amount of evidence mentioned as appropriate to the office of the apostles, that it was not furnished by them. They taught, they prayed, they wrought miracles in the name of their Master. They did their work well. They glorified God in their lives and in their deaths. No theory respecting the changes wrought among men by them, except that they were true men upheld by God, can cohere. Some say they were madmen, but did madmen ever persuade the mass of mankind of their divine mission, and that solely by fair argument and by suffering? Some say they were impostors, but do impostors ever practise the most rigid self-denial and voluntarily submit to the greatest wrongs, and pray for their enemies, for the sake of doing good to others? The apostles not only taught the very truths taught by Christ, but other things growing out of his teachings. See John 16:12-14. Then we have the signs and wonders and miracles and gifts of various kinds, which God by the Holy Ghost so abundantly granted them. The use of all these was to confirm and establish the truths taught by the apostles. Ebrard: "Miracles may be regarded in a fourfold aspect, first, with respect to their design, as signs, miraculous testimonies in behalf of any truth; secondly, with respect to their nature as supernatural acts; thirdly, with respect to their origin, because wrought by higher powers; and finally, in their *specifically Christian* aspect as gifts of the Holy Ghost." Now concerning all these miraculous testimonies these are the principles, and facts on which the argument rests:

*A.* God can do any thing, which involves not a contradiction ; of course he can work miracles.

*B.* None but God, who established the laws of nature, can suspend them ; of course none but God can work miracles.

*C.* A good and sincere God, the friend and patron of truth, will not exert his omnipotence in the production of a miracle to establish a lie or a system of error.

*D.* There is not within three hundred years of the birth of Christ the least scrap of history going to show that he and his apostles, acting in his name, did not work the miracles recorded of them in the New Testament.

*E.* Jesus Christ and his apostles did appeal to their miraculous deeds and powers as proof incontestable of their being sent of God to establish the truth and institutions of the gospel, John 5 : 36 ; 10 : 38 ; 14 : 11 ; Acts 3 : 12-16 ; 1 Cor. 9 : 1 ; 2 Cor. 12 : 12.

*F.* Thus God made it most reasonable to believe the scriptures to be his own word, inspired by him. Owen : "What means soever God is pleased to use in the revelation of his will, he gives it certainty, steadfastness, assurance, and evidence, which our faith may rest in, and which cannot be neglected without the greatest sin."

*G.* Therefore it is most reasonable and on us all incumbent that we should according to his own teachings and the doctrines of his apostles, believe and profess our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, sent from heaven with supereminent authority, and the Son of man, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, and that by accepting Jesus Christ as he is freely offered in the gospel, we, though great sinners, may have eternal life.

*H.* The power of God, which both by ordinary and extraordinary working did at first establish the Christian verity, does still by special gracious influences maintain the cause of truth and righteousness in the world, else piety had long since been extinct.

*I.* Nor can any creature rightly estimate the guilt of trifling with messages sent from God, and accompanied by such amazing proofs. Lindsay : "The sin of neglecting the gospel, both on account of the dignity of its Founder and the clearness of its revelations, is most aggravated ; and the punishment which it will incur will be correspondingly severe."

*J.* A clear inference from all this is that the office and work of a godly and enlightened ministry are the most important of all the offices and labors in which men can engage. Commonly faith comes by hearing the word of God. Gouge : "Preaching being a means sanctified of God unto salvation, how diligent and faith-

ful ought ministers of the gospel to be in preaching the same! Thereby they may save themselves and them that hear them, 1 Tim. 4: 16. But idol and idle ministers, such as cannot or care not to preach the word, do much hinder men from the great salvation." Preaching and praying are the two greatest things done in this world, Acts 6: 4.

14. Great and honorable as are the holy angels, they are not our Lords, nor our Saviours, v. 5. Christ is the sole head of the church, which is his body. Angels neither instituted the church, nor do they rule it, nor shall they make the awards of the last day. The Lord the righteous Judge will do that.

15. The words quoted from the eighth Psalm receive their true and full exposition, as Paul here shows, in the incarnation and glory of Jesus Christ, vs. 6-9. Morison: "What a reverential view does it convey to us of the spirit of prophecy when we contemplate it as surmounting the imperfection of an obscure dispensation, as penetrating into the hidden mysteries of future ages and generations, and as giving forth to the church, as in historic narrative, an announcement of facts, which could be known only to the omniscient research of the infinite mind."

16. The church will stand. Christ is at the head of affairs, not angels, not mortal men, vs. 5-9; but the Son of God.

17. Glorious is our Immanuel. He is the Restorer, the Lord from heaven, the Ruler of the universe, vs. 5-9.

18. What wonderful revelations are effected by redemption. All man lost by the fall is regained by faith in the Redeemer, or something better is secured in place of what was lost, as glorious righteousness in the place of native innocence to justify us before God, vs. 6-9.

19. Christ Jesus by his humiliation, sufferings and exaltation, has become the cause, the pattern and the representative of glorified human nature. In him saints gain more than we lost in Adam. "Our brother is the God of angels." On the head of the God-man forever rests the crown, the brightest diadem ever worn. Owen: "God having exalted our nature, in the person of his Son, into a condition of honor and glory, so as to be worshipped and adored by all the angels of heaven, it was not meet nor convenient that it should in our persons, when united unto Christ as our head, be made subject unto them."

20. It is God that makes low and it is God that crowns with glory and honor; and one of his ways is to raise those highest, whom for a while he makes lowest, vs. 7-9. This is an inscrutable mystery, but it is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. He taketh the poor from the dunghill, and setteth him

among princes. He taketh his Son from the sepulchre of Joseph and setteth him on the throne of the universe. He that was made lower than the angels is Lord of angels—is Lord of all.

21. The doctrine of Christ's incarnation is a blessed truth, and the fact of his being made flesh was necessary, absolutely necessary to his being our high Priest. He might have been our King and ruled us well without wearing our nature. He might have been our Prophet and taught us by his Spirit, his word, his ministers, and the example of good men (though we should have much missed his spotless example set in our own nature) without being incarnate. But if he had not taken our nature, how could he have been our high Priest? What could he have offered for our sins, if he had had no soul or body to suffer for us? Scott: "Wisdom, power, justice, holiness, truth and love, beyond expression or conception, are displayed by our God, in that union, which was voluntarily formed between 'him that sanctifieth, and them that are sanctified,' when 'the Word was made flesh and tabernacled among us,' and when he 'whom all angels worship,' vouchsafed to become our Brother, and to own and glory in that condescending relation to us." If we would rightly estimate Christ's condescension in being made of a woman, we must look at all his glory as God, and at all his humiliation as man. All he did he did willingly. His language of old was: "A body hast thou prepared me. I delight to do thy will, O my God." Gouge: "Behold here the wonder of wonders. Christ undertakes a task above the power of all the angels, and to effect it he is made lower than the angels. If ever power were made perfect in weakness, it was in this."

22. All that Christ has done and suffered for us was by the *grace of God*, v. 9. Undeserved favor and kindness unbought are the fountain, whence flows all our salvation. If any of us have a good hope, it is through grace. Let us now, henceforth and forever extol the grace, which saves us from a fiery condemnation and from a doom as just as it is intolerable.

23. When Christ's work shall all be done, all his enemies be put down, and all his redeemed brought home, then it will be confessed that the greatest movement ever made respected man's recovery, that the greatest kingdom ever set up was the kingdom which is not of this world, and that the greatest conquerer ever known was the Captain of our salvation. Now indeed nothing is finished. At times all seems "without form and void." But when the top-stone shall be put on the church, and her glory be fully revealed, none will say that Zion is not an eternal excellency, nor that her head is not the chiefest among ten thousands.

## CHAPTER II.

VERSES 10-18.

### THE PERFECT HUMANITY OF OUR HIGH PRIEST FURTHER DECLARED. THE COMFORT THENCE DERIVED.

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.

11 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,

12 Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.

13 And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me.

14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

15 And deliver them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

16 For verily he took not on *him the nature of* angels; but he took on *him* the seed of Abraham.

17 Wherefore in all things it behooved 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.

18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

PAUL proceeds with his argument thus:

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.* Peshito: For it became him, by whom are all things, and on account of whom are all things, and [who] bringeth many sons unto his glory, to perfect the prince of their life by suffering. Some other translations are very similar to that in common use. But often they are different, and so far as they vary the sense they are inferior. The

authorized version is none the worse for being as nearly literal as the idioms of the two languages will allow. *For* assigns the reason of what he has just said. *Became*, always so rendered but once, where it is *comely*, 1 Cor. 11:13; equivalent to befitting, seemly. The prepositions *by* and *for* are the rendering of the same word, it governing in the first instance the accusative and in the second the genitive. In the first case it means by means of, or by reason of, on account of, for the sake of; in the second, *by* or *through* him as the cause or agent. The being spoken of is God who made all things for his own glory and by his own power. Tholuck says that all the moderns with the exception of Cramer and almost all the ancients take this view. This great and adora-ble One is engaged in *bringing*, leading, conducting *many sons*, by regeneration and adoption his own sons. Nor is he leading them to shame, nor to disappointment; he is conducting them to *glory*, *i. e.* to the highest and most enduring honor and bliss. Nor are there but few of them; they are *many*, how many no creature knows, nor can count, Rev. 7:9. This bringing many sons to glory is a great work, worthy of God, the greatest work that God himself has ever undertaken. And so it was fitting that his sons should have a *Captain*, Prince, or author of their salvation, (for the word is rendered in each of these ways, Acts 3:15; 5:31; Heb. 12:2.) It was also fitting that God should *make* this great Leader *perfect*. The verb here used, when applied to discourse or instruction, means to finish, or make an end; to predictions, to accomplish or fulfil; to obedience to any law, to fulfil it; to any work, to finish. In Heb. 7:28 it is rendered consecrated. Every where else in this epistle it is rendered perfected, make perfect or made perfect. The perfectness here and elsewhere spoken of implies completeness or consummation. It is so used also by Christ in Luke 13:32. I shall be perfected. The character of Christ as the Prince of life, the author of faith, the Captain of salvation was finished, completed, perfected *through sufferings*, that is by reason or by means of sufferings. On the word rendered *sufferings*, see the author's Commentary on Romans 7:5. The word is ten times rendered sufferings; twice, afflictions; once, affections; once, motions. In this place it doubtless means all such afflictions and sufferings as came on the human nature of Christ, in particular on his soul. Christ's sufferings were from the imperfections of good men, from the blindness, perversity and malice of bad men, from the audacity and temptations of Satan, from poverty, from reproach, from betrayal, from denial, from weariness, from watchings, from taunts, from mockings, from hunger, from thirst, from crucifixion, from the agony of his soul under the hidings of his Father's

face and from the wrath of God. He was made perfect, not as a man, but as a Captain of salvation through sufferings. As a man he was always holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners. Twice did omniscient purity declare in a voice from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." He "knew no sin." It was not then in his personal but in his official character that he was to be made perfect. But how then did his sufferings fit and complete his character to be the Captain of our salvation? First, his sufferings prepared him to be a tender sympathizing friend to all his chosen. He drank the cup of bitterness to the dregs. He had personal experience of every kind and degree of suffering ever endured by men except remorse and despair. He was incapable of these, nor was there any need of his feeling them, as the whole plan of his grace was to save his people from them both. But he was exceeding sorrowful even unto death, not because of any weakness in his character, or failure of his faith, but through the intolerable pressure of the wrath of God. His prophetic complaint was fully realized: "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax: it is melted in the midst of my bowels." Never was there sorrow like his sorrow. Never did earth see one who so fitly might be styled "a man of sorrows." When or where was ever a Christian in a state of mind, in which he really needed and deserved sympathy, that he was not assured of it in Christ Jesus? Nor is this all. Christ Jesus by his sufferings made full and perfect satisfaction for sin. He bore and he exhausted the penalty of God's law. He was an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour. He suffered the just for the unjust. He made an end of transgression, and brought in everlasting righteousness. Again by his sufferings he procured for himself and for his people an indefeasible title and right to the glory and blessedness, which belong to the heavenly state, Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 2:9. Christ's renown and joy were fully paid for, and all his people were redeemed by blood.

There's ne'er a gift his hand bestows  
But cost his heart a groan.

But how was it *comely* in God to permit such violence to be inflicted on Christ at the hand of man, yea, and with his own hand to lay upon him such *stripes*, yea, more, to unsheath the two edged sword and smite the man that was and was fit to be his fellow? There is but one solution that can satisfy our minds on the subject. It is this. Jesus Christ was the voluntary substitute of his people. He was voluntary not only in the engagement, which he made in the

covenant, but in every step of his life and in every stage of his undertaking. On this point the testimony of scripture is full and clear, Ps. 40:7, 8; John 4:34; 10:11, 15, 17; 13:11; 19:11; Matt. 20:28; 26:53. He took the law-place of sinners not as an intruder, but with the full consent and approval, yea, with what himself calls the *commandment* of his Father, John 10:18. Nor was any more exacted of him than holiness, truth, justice and the glory of God required of him, who would expiate sin. The penalty of the law, like its precept, was holy, just, good and infinite. From the moment justice was satisfied and the prophecies fulfilled, God began to exalt his Son and to let him see the travail of his soul. Jesus said, "It is finished." By raising him from the dead the Father declared that our surety had paid all our debt. Nor has ever even a bloody murderer of the saints or of Christ been brought to see the true nature, design and extent of Christ's work and sufferings, and to accept his gracious offers, that he has not said, This is enough—my conscience is satisfied with this great propitiation.

11. *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,*

12. *Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.* He that sanctifieth is Jesus Christ, and they who are sanctified are his chosen people. The exposition turns on the sense of the word sanctify. It doubtless sometimes means to make holy, as in John 17:17; Rom. 15:16; 1 Cor. 6:11; 1 Thess 5:23, etc. It would make good sense so to understand it here, if we would supply a few words: He that makes his people holy and they who are made holy. But the word certainly has two other meanings in the scriptures. One is dedicated, devoted or consecrated. In this sense the Saviour in one place clearly uses the word: "For their sakes I sanctify myself that they also might be sanctified through the truth." Jesus Christ was wholly devoted to his work and to his Father's honor, that his people might be alike consecrated to the divine service and glory. Some think this sense nearly coincident with the former; but it is not quite so. In the Lord's prayer the word here rendered sanctified is *hallowed*. The third sense of sanctify is to purify by expiation. That in this epistle it is sometimes so used cannot be doubted; "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?" "Jesus, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered

without the gate," Heb. 9:13, 14; 13:12. Perhaps Heb. 10:10, 14 would be regarded as still more conclusive on the subject. The sense then may be that Jesus makes his people holy and they are holy; or, that he devotes himself to God and consequently they are devoted to God; or, that he by his blood redeems them and they are thus consecrated to God, their sins being all washed away in his blood. The latter is the better interpretation. Turner: "He that atoneth and they that are atoned for;" Lindsay: "The reconciler and the reconciled;" Bloomfield: "He that expiates and they who are expiated by him (the redeemer and the redeemed)." Tait: "The Saviour and his saved people." Guyse: "The Redeemer and the redeemed." Our apostle says the sanctifier and the sanctified are all *of one*. In what sense are they all of one? An attempt to supply what is supposed to be wanting has produced quite a variety of explanations. The Dutch Annotations, Guyse, Duncan, Parry, Clarke, Murdock and Stuart supply *nature*; Justinian, Hunnius, Carpzov, Hofmann and Biesenthal understood one *father Adam*; Bengel, C. Schmid, Michaelis, Peirce, Wells, Macknight and Slade would read one *father Abraham*; several old Greek commentators, Tholuck, Lindsay, Moll, McLean, Conybeare and Howson and Tait prefer one *Father God*; Gouge has of one *stock*; Cottage Bible reads of *one family*; Patterson has of the *same Father* [meaning God] and of the *same family*; Doddridge and Scott understand one *father Adam*, or one *father Abraham*; Tong has of one *Father, God*; of one *father, Adam*, of one *Spirit, holy and heavenly disposition*. It would be better perhaps not to attempt to limit the idea to any one word, but to give to the word *one* as comprehensive a meaning as the analogy of faith will admit. Sampson is probably right: "The objection to all these suppositions is that they supply, and thus make definite, what the apostle purposely left general. His object was to include all the respects in which it behooved that the Redeemer should be one with his people." Christ and his people are one in many senses, as is shown in many parts of scripture. "Wherefore he is not ashamed to call them brethren. When it is said he is not ashamed, much more is implied than is expressed; he delights to call them, he loves to own them as his brethren, bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh, the regenerated and adopted sons of God. See Rom. 1:16; Heb. 11:16 where the same word occurs. This acknowledgment of his brethren is no new thing. In proof Paul quotes from an ode (Ps. 22:22), which refers directly, entirely and exclusively to Christ. This was the judgment of Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and from their days a host of others. In it Christ is the speaker throughout. In that ode Christ speaks the words here

quoted literally, with the exception of the first word, from the Septuagint. Just after Jesus rose from the dead, he said, "Go to my brethren." All genuine believers are in a very high sense his kindred, Mark 3:35; Luke 8:21. To declare God's name is to make known his nature, Exod. 34:6, 7. Jesus did this by his preaching and his sufferings and his doings. He did all this to those acknowledged by him of old as his *brethren* and that in the midst of the church [in Ps. 22:22 congregation], Peshito, assembly. It is the same word commonly rendered church in the New Testament. It denotes a company called out.

13. *And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me.* In this verse are two quotations from the Old Testament. The first is in words found twice in the Septuagint version, 2 Sam. 22:3 and Isa. 8:17. But as the next quotation is from Isa. 8:18, and as that chapter is remarkably Messianic, it is safe to regard both the clauses as taken from the evangelical prophet. The pertinence of the first clause to the matter in hand is that Jesus like his brethren had pious trust in God. The appositeness of the second clause to the business in hand is that, as in Mark 3:35; Luke 8:21, Christ says each one, who does the will of God is his mother and his brother, so here he says believers are his children. By thus varying the terms expressive of consanguinity and endearment the Lord would teach us that none of them fully enables us to understand how near and dear to him are all his people. Indeed all of them united fall short of what he would have us apprehend; so in other places he calls his people his flock, his sheep, his lambs, his love, his dove, his undefiled.

14. *Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil;*

15. *And deliver them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.* The passages nearly parallel are Rom. 8:15; 1 Cor. 15:55-57; Col. 1:21, 22; 2 Tim. 1:10. The children of this verse are the same as the many sons of v. 10, they which are sanctified of v. 11, my brethren of v. 12, and the children of v. 13. To be a partaker of flesh and blood is to possess human nature entire, nor can we give to the phrase any other interpretation. Jesus Christ took to himself a true body and a reasonable soul. It was right that the atonement should be made in the nature, which fell, in the nature, which brought sin and ruin upon the race. *The same* is in the plural and refers to flesh and blood. Divinity cannot suffer. Divinity cannot die. The divine nature

of the Son is as incapable of suffering as the divine nature of the Father or of the Spirit. It never did suffer. It was the human nature that submitted to the curse of the law. One great design of the incarnation was that the Redeemer might have a nature capable of suffering and dying—a nature that could be made an offering and a sacrifice to God. The death of death is sought and found in the death of Christ. Some find difficulty in the statement that the devil had the power of death. But it is not intended to be understood that he has the keys of death and the grave, that he kills and makes alive at his pleasure. All this power belongs to God alone. He has fixed the appointed time to man upon earth, the bounds of his habitation that he cannot pass. “The Lord killeth and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave,” Deut. 32:39; 1 Sam. 2:6. In what sense, then, has Satan the power of death, or as Stuart renders it “a deadly power?” The answer is clearly made out from the scriptures. Satan is not omnipotent. He is not the sovereign of this world. Yet he possesses great power for evil. He seduced our first parents into sin, and thus brought death into the world. “Thus he was a murderer from the beginning.” He is the great fautor of unbelief, and error, and falsehood. Indeed he is the father of wicked men and of lies; especially is he the father of such dangerous doctrines and persuasions, as, if embraced, must prove fatal to men’s souls, John 8:44. Such is his influence for evil, especially for moral evil, and such is the willing subjection of evil men to his temptations that he is twice called “the prince of this world,” John 12:31; 14:30; and once “the god of this world,” 2 Cor. 4:4. He is also called the “prince of the power of the air,” Eph. 2:2. He is “the enemy,” “the adversary,” Luke 10:19; 1 Pet. 5:8. He tempts men to all kinds of sins, unbelief, ingratitude, lying, murder, fraud, profaneness, uncleanness. He spreads snares for the unwary, 2 Tim. 2:26. He stirs up men to tempt and to murder each other. He once had much more power in the world than he has now, Luke 10:18. When permitted, he sometimes terribly besets men and rules them with a most cruel oppression. See how he dealt with the great man of Uz, Job 1:6-22; 2:1-8. All Satan’s work in the world is mischievous and deadly. He is leading many captive at his will, and he is terribly oppressing those who are attempting to throw off his yoke. He would have had all the world under the power of spiritual death, and finally under the power of eternal death, and been the tormentor of all men for ever, but for Jesus Christ who came to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. A prophet said, “As for thee also, by the blood of thy

covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water," Zech. 9: 11. Thus Christ destroys, nullifies, makes of none effect, brings to nought, does away with him that had the power of death. And thus he delivers them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. This must mean much more than that Christ grants final deliverance to those timid servants of his, who from nervousness or some shock given them in early life, or from melancholy, dread the mere article of death. He does indeed give deliverance to such; but he delivers also those who never had any such timidity, and yet trust in Jesus. *Death* in this verse, therefore, must mean penal suffering. The word certainly has this meaning in the Epistle to the Romans, as well as here. Clarke thinks that in this writing Paul had the Gentiles principally in view. But Paul is neither writing to the Gentiles, nor to the Jews concerning the Gentiles. The great mass of respectable commentators are remarkably united in their explanation of the word death as found in v. 15. Guyse: Death, the sting and fear of death; Dutch Annotations: an eternal and cursed death; Gouge: death, as it was first inflicted for sin, is the very entrance into eternal damnation; Duncan: the wrath and curse of God; Scott: its sting, terror, and dreadful consequences; Turner: death physical and spiritual, and the terrific apprehensions thus produced; Mandeville: death, as the penalty of sin; Bloomfield: the cause of eternal death, even sin; Patterson: fear of death, the condemning sentence of the law; McLean: fear of death, connected with conscious guilt; Stuart: fear of condemnation; Sampson: the penalty due to sin; Moll: fear of death, and consciousness of guilt; Lindsay: "The tempter seduced mankind into sin, whose wages are death, and Christ by his own death destroyed the works of the devil. He made expiation for sin," etc. Ebrard: "Christ, by giving himself up to death, has *acknowledged* the guilt and *truly atoned for it*; he has, in one act, atoned for the sinner and judged the sin." Now Jesus Christ by his death *delivers*, sets free his people from this *death*, this conscious guilt, this penal suffering, these just and dreadful fears.

16. *For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.* Wiclif: And he took neuer angels: but he took the seed of Abraham; Cranmer: "For he in no place taketh on hym the angels: but the seed of Abraham taketh he on him;" Genevan: For he in no sort toke the angels: but he toke the seed of Abraham; Doway: For no where doth he take hold of the angels: but of the seed of Abraham he taketh hold; Stuart: Besides, he doth not at all help the angels, but he helpeth the seed of Abraham; Conybeare and Howson: For he giveth his aid, not

unto angels, but unto the seed of Abraham; Craik: For verily he doth not lay hold on angels, but he layeth hold on the seed of Abraham. In this verse the same verb occurs twice in precisely the same form. It is sometimes used in a bad sense, as in Luke 20: 20, that they *might take hold of* his words; and Acts 16: 19 they *caught* Paul and Silas. But it is oftener used in a good sense, as *caught* him, Matt. 14: 31; he *took* the blind man *by* the hand, Mark 8: 23; *lay hold* on eternal life, 1 Tim. 6: 12, 19; when I *took* them *by* the hand, Heb. 8: 9. There is no more fitness in supplying the word nature than there would be in supplying the word cause, or case, or salvation. The literal translation is the better—He did not lay hold of angels, but he did lay hold of the seed of Abraham. The margin: He took not hold of angels; but of the seed of Abraham he taketh hold. The holy angels, being clad in robes of innocence, needed no Saviour. For the fallen angels God had no purposes of mercy. They were reserved in everlasting chains under darkness to the judgment of the great day. Their doom was fixed. The Son of God therefore did not lay hold of angels. Many, perhaps most of them being holy, needed no Redeemer. For the others God neither purposed nor provided any Redeemer. But Jesus did lay hold of the seed of Abraham. Parallel passages are Gal. 3: 16, 29. "To Abraham's seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many, but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ. . . If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Jesus Christ laid hold of all the chosen people of God, all who like Abraham were included in the covenant, and so were his seed. He took their nature. He took up their cause. He undertook their salvation. In his love and in his pity he made himself as one of them, sin only excepted, and thus he laid hold on them, and is doing for them the whole work of a Redeemer.

17. *Wherefore in all things it behooved 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. Wherefore,* better rendered whereupon, as in Matt. 17: 4; Acts 26: 19. The meaning is, In accordance with these things. *Behooved*, in the Greek not the word rendered *ought* in Heb. 2: 1, nor that rendered *became* in Heb. 2: 10; but a word that is more commonly rendered owed or ought, or must needs. See the author's Commentary on Romans 13: 8. *Made like*, so rendered in Rom. 9: 29. It occurs often in Matthew in other forms and is rendered *liken* or *be likened*. To what extent was Jesus made *like* his brethren? Our verse says, in all things, that is in all things that could at all fit him for his office as high priest. He was not

like them sinful and guilty. If he had been, he would have been wholly unfit for his office. But he had their entire nature, soul and body, with all the innocent infirmities and warm sympathies of a pure and unspotted humanity. Jesus was the perfection of a man, had an exquisite taste, Matt. 6:28; Luke 12:27; loved his country, so that he wept over its impending ruin, Luke 19:41; was greatly moved at the scene of distress in the family of his friends, John 11:35; apologized for the want of sympathy on the part of his disciples, when he was in his agony, Matt. 26:41; displayed the tenderest concern for his mother, so that even in the agonies of crucifixion he made the best arrangement possible for her support and protection during life, John 19:26; and in all things showed that he was a man, a perfect man, full of kindness, pity and mercy. *Merciful*, the same word so rendered in Matt. 5:7, pitiful, compassionate. *Faithful*, commonly so rendered. It means here trustworthy, although it sometimes means one who believes. Jesus was a merciful and faithful high Priest in things *pertaining to God*, having God for their object; Stuart: in services of a religious nature; McLean: in all their concerns relating to God; Duncan: in these things which he was to do toward God on the part of the people; Conybeare and Howson: in the things of God; Tyndale, Cranmer and Genevan: in things concerning God. *To make reconciliation*; Peshito, Conybeare and Howson: make expiation; several old versions read purge; Stuart: make atonement. Two cognate nouns are rendered propitiation. This making of reconciliation is for sins, the sins of the people. The cognate nouns refer to the same thing, 1 John 2:2; Rom. 3:25; that is they are connected with sins, calling for atonement. The Son of God was incarnate for two purposes, first that he might have something to offer in sacrifice for us, and then that he might have a nature capable of sympathizing with us. Both of these he fully accomplished.

18. *For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.* No better translation of this verse has been offered. The Greek is very precise and the sense in the main very clear. The verb rendered *tempted* and its cognates are used in regard to men both in a good and in a bad sense. 1. They are often found in the sense of trying, proving, or examining, and are even so rendered, John 6:6; 2 Cor. 13:5; Heb. 11:17; Jas. 1:2; Rev. 3:10. 2. They often refer to seductions, snares spread for our feet, Matt. 4:1; Mark 14:38; Luke 4:2. Christ was tried by sinful men and fallen angels. Snares were spread for his feet. The wicked one attempted to seduce him. His trials were without a parallel for severity. They were long continued and

often repeated. They were of every variety and degree that could overtake an innocent being. None of his people are ever tried as sorely as he was. *Succour*, here and in 2 Cor. 6:2 rendered succour; in every other place, help. The cognate noun is rendered helper in Heb. 13:6. When it is said that Jesus *is able* to succour, it is implied, as in many other places where the same word occurs, that he is willing. Owen: "It is a moral power, not a natural." McLean: "Ability here does not mean *mere strength* or *power* to succour, but also *inclination and readiness* to do it." Compare Rom. 4:21; Heb. 7:25; 2 Tim. 1:12.

DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL REMARKS.

1. God does every thing that *becomes* him, and he does nothing which does not become him, v. 10. Christ himself regarded it as proof of great dulness in his disciples that they could not see that he ought to have suffered, Luke 25:25, 26. Dickson: "When the reasons of Christ's death are seen, the scandal of his cross ceaseth." No good man charges God with acting out of character, even in the awful scenes of Calvary. "Wisdom, power, justice, holiness, truth and love, beyond expression or conception, are displayed by our God" in those events the most inexplicable at the time of their occurrence, the incarnation and death of Christ. They will be the events most sung and celebrated for ever by all holy beings. The verbs rendered *becams* and *behooved* "denote," says Ebrard, "not a fatalistic necessity, but a necessity lying in the nature of the thing, and therefore in God's own wise, world-governing will." 'God acted up to his glorious character in the work of redemption, as to the choice both of the end and of the means.' There was a necessity in the nature of the case, a fitness in the whole plan, a comeliness in every step and in every result. His incarnation made the angels shout, "Glory to God in the highest." Christ did not suffer accidentally, but by the appointment of infinite wisdom and love.

2. If any thing *becomes* God, we need seek no further solution of it. That is enough; for he is the first cause and last end of all things, v. 10. All things are by him and all things are for him. "Of him, and through him, and to him are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." Rom. 11:36.

3. If such statements befit the Father and declare his divinity, why do not like statements equally evince the divinity of the Son? 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:16. If inspiration declares any thing seemly, or becoming in the Son, we may safely receive it as true and act upon it, vs. 10, 17. If Genesis 1:1 proves a God, John 1:3 proves

Christ to be God. If Psalm 104:5 proves a<sup>\*</sup> creating Godhead, Colossians 1:16 shows that Jesus has that Godhead.

4. God has sons and many of them, not for the increase or support of his personal happiness, but for the glory of his name and the happiness of his creatures. His own essential glory and blessedness cannot be increased; but the honor and bliss of his creatures may for ever be advancing. So he is bringing many sons unto glory; and that at the great expense of the humiliation and sufferings of his Son, v. 10. Patterson: "O how should we celebrate that love which led the Father, at such a sacrifice, to provide salvation for his enemies, and how should we stand in awe of that justice, which, in order to realize that result, gave up the eternal Son to 'sufferings.' How meet it is, that we should cordially accept of that 'salvation' which the great 'Captain' offers, and faithfully follow where that Captain leads the way." Nor shall the company of the finally saved be small. True, the prophet speaks of Jacob as "small;" and Christ himself calls his church a "little flock," Amos 7:2; Luke 12:32. Many indeed are called and but few chosen, Matt. 20:16; 22:14. These things were said of the church in times of great depression in the interests of religion. Dickson: "Albeit, they be few in comparison of the world, yet are they many of them, all together." The scriptures put it beyond a doubt that great numbers shall be saved, Gen. 15:5; 26:4; 28:4; Isa. 2:3, 4; 53:11; Mic. 4:2; Matt. 8:11; 20:28; Rom. 5:19; Rev. 21:24. The language of all these places is strong. That in some verses is very strong. Several times we have the term nations, many nations, nations of them that are saved. But the strongest language perhaps is that of Isa. 53:11, where it is said that Messiah shall see the travail of his soul and be *satisfied*. Like the angels the company of redeemed men shall be innumerable, Heb. 12:22; Rev. 7:9. God will not fail amply to reward his well beloved Son for all his sufferings, John 6:37.

5. The blessings belonging to those who are sons of God, even in this present life are innumerable and inestimable. They are above all price. Patterson: "There are two ways in which one may be another person's child—birth and adoption. In the writings of St. John and St. Peter the *former*—in those of St. Paul the *latter* is propounded as the fundamental idea of the believer's sonship. Starting from either of the two conceptions, we are free to carry out the figure into the collateral and kindred ideas of protection, guidance, instruction, discipline, comfort, pity, and tenderest love as bestowed by God." Inspired writers now and then begin an enumeration of the blessings of sonship with God, but they never complete the schedule. They say what is most perti-

ment to the matter they are handling and then drop it. The reason is that mortals cannot tell half that is to be told. See Ps. 23 : 1-6; Matt. 5 : 3-12; Rom. 5 : 1-11; 1 Cor. 3 : 21-23; 2 Pet. 1 : 5-8.

6. But the blessings of piety merely begin to be enjoyed in this world. The godly will be carried onward to *glory*, v. 10. "It is as children they are brought to glory. Heaven is a paternal inheritance; although its attainment does not depend, as in the case of earthly families, on the father's death, but is granted by the living Father." "If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." What the heavenly inheritance will be none can tell. It is described by such names as thrones, crowns, crowns of life, crowns of righteousness, life, eternal life, everlasting life, receiving a kingdom, reigning with Christ, glorified with Christ, inheriting all things, etc., etc. But the Bible itself admits that human language is not adequate and human minds are not prepared for such glorious themes, John 3 : 12; 2 Cor. 12 : 4. Most that we know of the heavenly state even from God's word is negative. Grace precedes glory. Grace is glory begun. Glory is grace completed, matured, crowned. In general terms the word of God is delightfully clear and copious: "The Lord will give grace and glory;" "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory;" "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us;" "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;" Ps. 84 : 11; 73 : 24; Rom. 8 : 18; 2 Cor. 4 : 17. The world of glory is heaven, the third heaven, the heaven of heavens, Paradise, the city which hath foundations. Gouge: "*Glory* is a transcendent word, and compriseth under it all manner of excellencies. The infinite excellency of God himself and of his divine attributes, is termed glory." Yet after all, it is safest to say with John, "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 3 : 2.

7. In conducting his people to glory, God offers no violence to their wills. Though he draws, he does not drag them along the heavenly way. His blessed plan is to work in them both to will and to do of his own good pleasure; fulfilling the promise, Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, Ps. 110 : 3; Phil. 2 : 13. The children of God are not taken to heaven as the prisoner is led to his dungeon; no, but as the sheep are led to the fold: "My sheep hear my voice and follow me." This is the method of God's grace; and it is as glorious to him as it is honorable to his people. The Lord utterly rejects a reluctant ser-

vice. And well he may. The heart is the seat of the empire of love.

8. It is a pleasant thought that he, who begins the work of bringing men to glory, is the one, who is to complete and crown this great work in victory, v. 10. God can have no cause for breaking off his love to a converted soul, that was not in force to hinder him from drawing it to himself when it was unregenerate. Having been self-moved to seek the lost sheep in the wilderness, the good Shepherd will not cast it out when it has entered the fold. "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them to the end," notwithstanding some of them behaved very badly about the time of his crucifixion. John 13:1. Compare Rom. 8:35-39; 1 Cor. 1:8; Phil. 1:6; Heb. 13:5. He, who is the author of faith is also its finisher, Heb. 12:2. To all eternity it shall not be truly said by any of the Lord's enemies, He began to build, and was not able to finish.

9. If there ever was need of a "Captain," it is in the matter of "salvation," v. 10. And it is for our comfort that in the times of the Jewish church God often revealed by types, such as Moses, Joshua and David, as well as by prophecies that Messiah should be a Leader and Commander to the people, Isa. 55:4. The poor, feeble, erring people of God are not of themselves sufficient to overcome their enemies. They cannot conquer even themselves. They know not the right way. They are fools whenever God leaves them to themselves. But the great Captain of salvation has all and infinite resources. He has fought and won. He is a tried Leader. We know whom we have believed. He requires of his people neither sufferings nor services, which he did not render or endure himself. He calls them to bear nothing so heavy as the load that was laid upon him. The more we consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners, the less shall we be in danger of growing faint or weary in our minds. In obedience he has left us an example that we should follow his steps. If we will follow Christ's example, we shall never miss the way. His pattern was perfect. Nor can any child of God be called to die any death so dreadful as that, which his Lord has undergone. With the sins of the world resting on him for propitiation, he met death and stripped him of his terrors and triumphed over him as did David over Goliath. He has led captivity captive. He has disarmed our great enemy. He is more than a match for all the foes of his people. He sends his Spirit to enlighten and embolden his children, to quicken their graces and to gird them with might. Under his leadership one chases a thousand and two put ten thousand to flight. He makes the feeble like David, and the

house of David like the angel of God. Deut. 32 : 30; Zech. 12 : 8. O what could we do without our great Commander? And what can we do so wise as to put all our trust in him, and cast all our care on him?

10. How sweet is the word *salvation*, and how precious are the blessings connected with salvation! v. 10. In the former part of this chapter we have considered a little how *great* is the deliverance wrought by Christ. It was so difficult that we risk nothing when we say that none but the Lord Jesus could effect it. It was so glorious that one who was not truly divine could not without idolatry have been loved and honored as Jesus is and deserves to be. As redemption is a greater blessing than creation, so if the Redeemer were not one with the Father, so that he who honors the Son honors the Father, all pious souls would be withdrawing their confidence and placing it on a creature. And what would be a greater indignity to God than that? Let us, then, not be ashamed of the reproach of Christ, but count it great riches. Gouge: "Great reason there is that we should so do, for in Christ's humiliation consisteth our exaltation; in his cross, our crown; in his ignominy, our glory; in his death, our life." Salvation by sin-bearing, life by an awful death, heaven by the cross, these are the mystery of redemption—a mystery of love, and wisdom, and power, and grace unparalleled.

11. Humility is the road to honor, and suffering the path to experience and renown, v. 10. It was so with our Redeemer. It is so with his people. Of this the Lord gave them full and fair warning, Matt. 5 : 10-12; Luke 6 : 20-23. Paul plainly told the churches that "we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God," Acts 14 : 22. Let none of us therefore be offended at any tribulation that may befall us. It is enough for the servant to be as his Lord. There is a "need be" for all our trials. Dickson: "How perfect soever Christ be in himself, yet before his sufferings he lacked one thing which his office toward us required; to wit, experimental suffering of such sorrows as his soldiers and followers are subject unto." Owen: "The Lord Christ, being consecrated and perfected through suffering, has consecrated the way of suffering for all his followers to pass through unto glory." The very undertaking of Christ called for his humbling himself that he might be exalted. Nor can we go to mansions of eternal rest except by walking through scenes of disquiet. To our Saviour "the cross was the indispensable harbinger of the crown." To us the want of it is a sign that our religion is vain, Heb. 12 : 8. Blessed are all they who "glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience expe-

rience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed," Rom 5: 3, 4.

12. In every sense of the term Christ sanctifies his people; he expiates their sins, he sets them apart to a holy use, and by his word and Spirit and providence he makes their natures holy, v. 11. He is made unto them wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, 1 Cor. 1: 30. Sanctification in every sense of the term is as surely by the obedience and sufferings of Christ as is justification. Men have never been redeemed from guilt, have never been devoted to God, have never perfected holiness but by the work and death of Christ.

13. Christ and his people are *of one*, and they are one, v. 11. This oneness is expressed in all appropriate terms and with great strength of language, John 17: 20-23. All grace and mercy flow to sinners through their union with the Lord Jesus. In the divine purpose this union existed eternally, but it becomes vital and actual only when the Holy Spirit leads the soul to embrace Christ by faith. A prophet, speaking for God, says: "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious, and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded." An apostle takes up the figure, points to Christ, and says; "To whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house." Another says to his brethren, "Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, in whom all the building, fitly joined together, groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord, in whom ye also are builded for a habitation of God through the Spirit." No wonder that men having such views should exult even in martyrdom. The sooner dead, the sooner are they crowned. Believers rest their whole weight on Christ. This foundation cannot fail. The deluge of wrath, which shall melt the mountains, dissolve the elements, burn up the sea, and sweep away every monument of human greatness, shall not shake this Rock. Lot in Zoar, Noah in the ark, Elijah in the chariot of fire, were not more safe than are all those who have built on Christ. They are parts of a building the most stupendous and glorious ever reared. It shall stand for ever. The pledge of final salvation to believers is that they are now "lively stones," "an habitation of God through the Spirit."

Sometimes union with Christ is compared to the union of the members in a living body. "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit; ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members

of that one body, being many, are one body, so is Christ." If this be so, how we should watch and pray, that there be no schism in the body; that the hand say not to the foot, I have no need of thee; that we dwell together in love, and seek each other's good! Christ is the head of the body, the church. Then she is sure of his sympathy; as no man ever hated his own flesh, so Christ never hated one of his own members, but loves and cherishes them all. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" "Who art thou, Lord?" "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." He has loved his church of old, from everlasting; he loved her unto death; he loves her still; he shall love her for ever.

Christ is also the husband of his church, and she is his spouse, his love, his dove, his undefiled. "The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved also the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." If the union of Christ and his people be so close and tender, she is safe. His power is supreme in heaven and in earth, He is the wisdom of God; none can deceive or circumvent him. His love to his church is infinite, eternal and unchangeable. None can turn his heart away from his people. None can pluck them out of his hand. He is mighty to save and strong to deliver. Though his church in every member is weak, yet she comes up safely from the wilderness, "leaning on the arm of her Beloved."

Sometimes union with Christ is taught by figures drawn from plants and trees. "I am the true vine, and my father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit: I am the vine, ye are the branches; as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me. Abide in me, and I in you." Wondrous vine! How sweet is its fruit to the taste of all who have been born again! From union with Christ believers draw sap and nourishment, and thus become fruitful. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." All things come from Christ. "Without me ye can do nothing." And all is made sure by love. "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you."

When inspired writers mention this subject, they seem to be all on fire; and no wonder, for it is their life. Union with Christ secures every blessing to lost men, such as pardon by his blood,

acceptance by his righteousness, sanctification by his Spirit, a holy and useful life by his grace, divine sympathy in every sorrow, support in death, a glorious resurrection, a public acquittal in the day of judgment, and everlasting life. If men make light of this matter, it is because they are terribly blind. They err, not knowing the Scriptures, and are sensual, having not the Spirit. To him, who is taught of God, and born from above, union with Christ is a fountain of joy. He has felt, and the longer he lives the more he feels, that Christ is the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Author and Finisher of salvation. Separated from Christ no man is strong, or wise, or righteous, or holy, or safe; apart from Christ every man is a poor, dry, withered, useless thing, whose end is to be burned.

Bp. Hall: "In natural unions, there may be more evidence, but there cannot be more truth. Neither is there so firm and close a union between soul and body, as there is between Christ and the believing soul, forasmuch as that may be severed by death, but this never." So that believers are not only one with Christ in God's counsel and covenant; but he and they have one Father God, form one mystical body the church, alike possess a human nature entire, and have a common destiny, so that his glory is their joy, their salvation is his joy, and their joint triumph their mutual joy, Matt. 25: 21, 23; Heb. 12: 2; Rev. 4: 11; 5: 6-14.

14. Not only are Christ and His people thus united, but he is also their brother, vs. 11: 12. In other words, his people are not only united to him as the building is to the corner-stone, as the members are joined to the body, as the wife is united to the husband, and as the branches are united to the vine; but they are one with him in the bonds of brotherhood. He took upon him our nature, so that he was as truly a man as Adam, or Paul, or any one of us. The Son of God no more denies his humanity than does the Son of Mary deny his divinity. He counts it no disgrace, he is *not ashamed* to call them brethren, even as God is not ashamed to be called their God, Heb. 11: 16. It is a great act of condescension in a virtuous king to marry one of the poorest girls in his realm; but having done so, love, honor, faithfulness, consistency require him not to be ashamed of her family and relatives, but to own and cherish them. So the very word Redcemer, in the Old Testament, means kinsman, or kinsman Redeemer. He is not only a real man as Adam was, but he is the Son of man. He was made of a woman. Jesus Christ did not, never does, hide himself from his own flesh, Isa. 58: 7.

15. And if he is not ashamed to call us brethren and own us as his, let us not be ashamed of him or of his word before this adul-

terous and sinful generation, Mark 8 : 38 ; nor of his gospel with its humbling doctrines, Rom. 1 : 16 ; nor of the testimony of the Lord, nor of those who wear chains for his sake, nor of the afflictions of the gospel, 2 Tim. 1 : 8 ; nor of the reproach of Christ, Heb. 11 : 26. Nor let us ever do any thing, which is in its nature suited to put our Lord to shame, Zech. 13 : 6, or grieve his holy, tender heart, Mark 3 : 5.

16. If any would know what true piety and zeal are let them study the character and example of Jesus, who put his trust in the Lord, and never in the darkest hour wavered in his confidence in the promises of God, and who declared God's name and truth to men, vs. 11 : 12. Compare Ps. 18 : 2 ; 22 : 22-25. Indeed the zeal of God's house consumed him, Ps. 69 : 9 ; John 2 : 17. And his piety was exercised in his early childhood, Ps. 22 : 9 ; nor did it ever fail ; and it was as benevolent as it was holy, Luke 23 : 34 ; Acts 10 : 38. Nor can we have any evidence that we are true Christians, the sons of God, the brethren of Christ, except as we show that we are like his people and like him, trusting in the Lord, hoping in his mercy, and having a pure zeal for his honor. They may be, as they often are, unlike each other in age, color, social position, personal and domestic habits and intellectual tastes ; but in moral tastes, in spiritual preferences, in love to God, his law, his service, his ordinances and his people, they are alike, though their gracious attainments are in degree very various.

17. But Jesus Christ is not only a Captain, a Redeemer, a Sanctifier and a Brother, but he is a Father, for he says, Behold I and the children which God hath given me, v. 13. The title of *Everlasting Father* was given him by the evangelical prophet, Isa. 9 : 6. This honorable title well falls in with others given him in the same verse, and with the pity he has for his people, and the care he bestowed upon them. Ps. 103 : 13.

18. It has already been stated that Christ Jesus bore and wore our nature. It is right here to dwell a little on this truth. It is declared in a great variety of ways that he had our nature. Prophecy required that he should be the "seed of the woman," "the seed of Abraham," "the seed of David," Gen. 3 : 15 ; 3 : 5, 7 ; 17 : 7, 8 ; 2 Sam. 7 : 12 ; and all these predictions have been fulfilled, Acts 13 : 23 ; Rom. 1 : 3 ; Gal. 3 : 16 ; 2 Tim. 2 : 8. Prophecy required that he should derive his nature from his mother alone, Isa. 7 : 14 ; that he should have a body, Ps. 40 : 6 ; Heb. 10 : 5 ; that he should have a soul, Isa. 53 : 10 ; and that he should be the Son of man, Dan. 7 : 13. In the Gospels alone he is more than seventy times called the Son of man. More than sixty times he calls himself so. The year of his ascension Stephen saw him in glory,

and called him the Son of man. Sixty years later John did the same. Christ Jesus had a true body, Luke 24 : 39. He had a human soul, capable of grief, of joy and of other human affections, Mark 14 : 34 ; Luke 10 : 21. He had natural affections, for he loved Mary, and Martha, and Lazarus, and John, and the young ruler. If Jesus did not prove that he had a true body, and a human soul, no man ever gave evidence that he was truly a whole man. Compare John 1 : 14 ; Rom. 5 : 13 ; 8 : 3 ; Gal. 4 : 4 ; Phil. 2 : 7 and many other places. The way, in which the Son of God became man, was by taking human nature into ineffable union with his divine nature. Thus continuing to be the Son of God as he was from all eternity, he became what he was not before, the Son of man. Thus Christ is God. He is also man. He was born of a woman. He was a rod of the stem of Jesse. His two natures are forever distinct, yet not separated. His humanity did not aspire to lay hold on divinity ; but his divine nature condescended to assume human nature. All this was done without change of divine into human, or of human into divine. The two natures united constitute the one person Christ Jesus, who in this and other respects is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. The number of errors in the early church respecting the human nature of Christ was very great. John and after him Augustine tell us of some who denied outright that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh, 1 John 4 : 2, 3 ; 2 John 7. The Manichees maintained that Christ had not a true body, but only the semblance of one, whereby men's senses were deceived. The Cerdonians wholly rejected the doctrine of Christ's incarnation, and, with an awful consistency, the doctrine of the resurrection. The Valentinians held that Christ had a heavenly and not a human body. The Apollinarians taught that Christ had a body with a sensitive nature, but denied that he had a reasonable human soul. Since the dawn of the Reformation arose the sect of the Ubiquitarians, who contended that Christ's body was everywhere, omnipresent. See Augustine de Hæres, pages 11, 21, 46, 55, 60 and Gouge Vol. I., p. 165. Whether any of these wild opinions is likely to be revived and gain adherents among us no man can certainly say. There have of late been given some hints of an intention to revive Apollinarianism, or something very much like it ; but it is so utterly without support from scripture or reason, and is indeed so flatly contradicted by the word of God, that if some one does not formally notice it, it will probably not gain much head. In the meantime let us hold fast the form of sound words contended for by Athanasius, by the Council of Nice, by Augustine and most of all by the prophets, the evangelists, and the apostles of our Lord.

19. Jesus Christ took the only right and safe course in delivering his people and destroying the power of the devil. It was done, it was best done, it was effectually done *through death*, v. 14. Indeed if there was any other way, in which it could have been done, we have no hint of it in God's word. It is right and seemly that Christ should spoil death and at once strip him of his terrors by going into his domains, and then and there gaining the mastery over him. It was right that Christ should gain the victory over Satan by letting that father of wickedness do his utmost, and by defeating all his devices, bringing all his machinations to nought, and delivering poor afflicted souls from his oppressions and temptations. That we may the better understand this whole matter, let us keep in mind these great truths. *A.* God is holy, just and good. *B.* His law cannot be diverse from himself. It is also holy, just and good. *C.* The penalty of the law is as holy, just and good as its precept. *D.* The penalty of transgression is death. The fact that death is common to mankind does not take away its punitive character from any. *E.* Sometimes death is attended with very alarming and dreadful tokens of divine desertion, and even of divine displeasure. *F.* A mere knowledge of divine truth, though minute and accurate, does not of itself save men from uneasiness at the thought of dying. *G.* So far as observation goes, we are led to believe that the more light men have, if they are not transformed by the renewing of their minds, the greater oftentimes is their sense of guilt. This is to be expected. *H.* The Lord Jesus Christ displays his love and wisdom by meeting every demand of the law of God, and every demand of an enlightened conscience; thus taking away the sting of death, which is unatoned and unpardoned sin; and satisfying all the demands of the law, which gave to sin its power to torment. *I.* All the Son of God undertook for his people was wholly voluntary on his part, and with the approval of his Father as the Judge of all. *J.* It is a great fact that millions, who have embraced the gospel, have gloried in the prospect of death, and even when presented in forms most likely to shock the nerves and awaken timidity, even the delicate and the young have declared and showed that they gladly laid down their lives in honor of their Master, and in the assured hope of being for ever with the Lord in peace and joy. *K.* Satan endeavored by every device to make death intolerably painful, shameful and terrible to our Lord himself. The close of our Lord's life was in an awful sense the hour of darkness. But all Satan's plans were subverted and his hopes disappointed. Jesus indeed died but died like a God, and soon burst the bands and the bars of death, and rose triumphant

from the grave, thus giving us delightful assurance that them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. Thus death and Satan, as to believers, were *destroyed*, and the sons of God delivered from Satan as a tyrant and from death as a conqueror. *L.* Such grace, and power, and faithfulness on the part of Christ do work mightily on the hearts of believers. The love of Christ constrains them, and they live to God as no pharisee could ever do. *M.* Thus the power of Christ rests on his people, and is made perfect in their weakness. His grace is sufficient; and from them he has, as he deserves to have, all honor and glory. They are able to glory in the truth that God is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity. God's holiness and justice are in their eyes amiable. They find no fault with the divine character. They would on no account have it different from what it is. *N.* Into the hands of such a God, conducting his government on such principles, having his affairs in the hand of so loving and glorious a Mediator, the dying believer may intelligently and safely commit his departing spirit, and this he commonly does with all the tokens of real gladness of soul. It is amazing that aged ministers seldom tell us of having witnessed an undesirable death of a consistent Christian. Compare Rom. 8:15; 2 Tim. 1:7.

20. There is a Devil, Satan, and he is full of mischief and guile and wickedness, v. 14. Satan is not a sacred character, and therefore it is not profane to speak lightly of him. No reverence is due to him. But he is a merciless, pitiless, powerful adversary, full of all subtlety, and has ruined millions of our race. He is a roaring lion, when that suits his turn best. Anon he is transformed into an angel of light, and beguiles and deludes men. He seems greatly to delight in afflicting and depressing men's souls and filling them with darkness and despondency. It is folly to think and speak lightly of such a foe; or to claim, as some have done, that Satan is merely an Eastern metaphor. Ebrard: "The time is now happily gone by when it was customary to explain away the Satan of whom we read in the Bible, by changing him into an 'evil principle.' An 'evil principle' implies in itself nothing less than an absurdity. The very essence of evil consists in the absence of principle, in a contradiction to principle. If the idea of an evil principle were conceivable, then also might it be conceived that God was evil! But evil is only conceivable as a perverted, selfish quality of the will of the personal creature, to be accounted for by the formal freedom of this creature." If Ahab waxes worse and worse, it is because Satan is a lying spirit in the mouths of his advisers. If Judas betrays his Master, it is not because he knows

any harm of the Saviour, nor because his conscience is all gone, but because Satan enters into him and takes entire possession of him. If the churches of Galatia fall into distress and confusion, it is because Satan has "bewitched" them. It will be happy for this world when this great author of mischief shall be shut up in his prison and bound with a chain, Rev. 20: 1-3. Pool thinks that in v. 14, devil designates the prince of darkness himself, but is put here for all the rest of his evil spirits, Matt. 25: 41. That is probably correct.

21. The *deliverance* effected by Christ is perfect, v. 15. It needs no addition. It calls for no supplement. It demands only that we apprehend it by faith. In this it resembles other remedies, that it avails nothing until applied. Scott: "Let the trembling believer frequently meditate on the love of Christ, and on his cross, his sepulchre, his resurrection, and his glory; and thus, in simple dependence and obedience, let him wait for more complete deliverance from the fear of death, and from that last enemy himself, in the Lord's appointed time." Every one in his order. It is confessed by all Christians that the deliverance of our surety wrought out by himself was perfect from the day he left this world. In due time the same shall be said of all his redeemed.

22. If any ask, Why did not Christ take hold on angels and not on men, we are compelled to be silent, v. 16. We cannot explain. Other scriptures teach the same thing, John 3: 16; 2 Pet. 2: 4; but they do not tell us why this was so. No mortal can tell why it is that the loadstone passes by silver and gold, and draws to itself iron—a base metal. So no one can tell why redeeming love passed by the angels and laid hold of man, an inferior race, and is giving it ineffable exaltation. The best we can say is what our Lord said on a like subject: "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight," Matt. 11: 26; Luke 10: 21. Compare Ex. 33: 19; Rom. 9: 21. Many solutions of such matters have been offered to the world; but all of them have been shallow. Paul's course was much wiser, Rom. 11: 33.

23. It will ever be a bond of affection in the heart of Christians towards Jews that our Saviour was of the seed of Abraham, v. 16. Himself taught us that salvation was of the Jews, John 4: 22. No right minded man can fail to look with admiration at the long line of kings and prophets and heroes and judges, and righteous men and honorable women in Israel, or cease to wish well to that scattered and peeled people, even though they did so maltreat our Lord Jesus Christ, and are still stubborn in their unbelief.

24. In considering the character of Jesus Christ, it is well to inquire wherein he is like his brethren, and wherein he is unlike,

them. 1. He was unlike them inasmuch as he was God as well as man; inasmuch as he was not represented in Adam, and so he was not chargeable with original sin; inasmuch as he was born with original righteousness, and never knew any sin, never had a vile thought, never yielded to a temptation, never felt a sense of guilt and never in anything displeased his Father. Moreover, he was always destined to an infinitely higher position and an unspeakably richer crown than any they shall wear. But 2. He is like them in having a true human body and a reasonable soul capable of increasing in knowledge and happiness. He was really a man, v. 17. He had all the many innocent infirmities of our common nature. He was liable to all sorts of temptations and miseries, which do not imply personal sinfulness. Like his brethren he did suffer and die. He knew what it was to be hungry, and thirsty, and weary, and sad, and grieved. He was familiar with contradiction, and slander, and reviling, and mockery, and derision. As much of human suffering consists in pain from the nerves, Jesus Christ died a death, the theory of which was to extinguish life by nervous distress. Since the world began there never was on earth a more approachable being. He is this day as full of tenderness as when he wept at the grave of Lazarus. He feeds his flock like a shepherd: he gathers the lambs with his arm, and carries them in his bosom, and gently leads those that are with young, Isa. 40: 11.

25. Jesus Christ was a high Priest, and is expressly so called, v. 17, and often in this epistle. All other priests and high priests were as nothing compared with him. They were shadows; he was the substance. They were types; he was the antitype. This priesthood of Christ is the great theme of this epistle, and is declared so to be by the author himself, Heb. 8: 1, 2. In the first chapter Paul proves that Jesus was God. In this he shows that he was man. Of his priesthood much remains to be said. Here it is said that his incarnation and the fruits of it were necessary to his being a merciful and faithful high Priest. Owen: "Mercy in Christ is a compassion, a condolency, and hath a moving of pity and sorrow joined with it. And this was, in the human nature of Christ, a grace of the Spirit in all perfection. . . His faithfulness consists in his exact, constant, careful consideration of all the concerns of the brethren under their temptations and sufferings." Thus in Christ is eminently and literally fulfilled that which in a lower sense was fulfilled in Eliakim: "I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. And the key of

the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder ; so he shall open, and none shall shut ; and he shall shut, and none shall open. And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place ; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house. And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house," etc., Isa. 22 : 21-24. His faithfulness cannot fail. It is to all generations. His mercy endureth for ever. His atonement was fully made and gloriously accepted by his Father. He set forth the glory of the Father in the most illustrious manner, and the Father has given him a name, which is above every name.

26. By his own experience and familiarity with grief and temptation, our high Priest is eminently fitted and disposed to give help to his tempted people, v. 18. He has an infinite readiness of mind to succor all, who cast their care on him. If man ever needs help it is in the day of trial, when the enemy is spreading snares for his feet. Clarke : " Those who are peculiarly tempted, and severely tried, have an especial interest in, and claim upon Christ." Owen : " The great duty of tempted souls is to cry out unto the Lord Christ for help and relief." Pool : " He had the mercies of a God before, and as if that were not enough, the tempted nature of a man, to soften his heart to pity his brethren in their sufferings and temptations."

27. How can men be so little affected by divine things, especially the glorious things of the gospel of Christ? Why does not his condescension move us, his grace charm us, his authority sway us? Surely men never act so contrary to all their best interests as when they slight the Saviour. Tait : " I have often been called, as God's minister to witness affliction and distress. But I have no words to express the desolation of that house of mourning in which Jesus is not found. For there is no consolation in such circumstances, in looking at the sufferings before you : it appears simply as the wages of sin, the begun accomplishment of God's sentence on transgression. But O how different are the afflictions of the righteous ! One is comforted in witnessing their sufferings by the blessed assurance, that they shall one day give thanks to God for every pang, which they are now enduring." Glory be to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be. Amen.

## CHAPTER III.

### VERSES 1-6.

#### THE PIOUS HEBREWS INVITED TO CONSIDER JESUS, WHO IS BOTH GOD AND MAN, AND HAS GREAT EMINENCE OVER EVEN MOSES.

WHEREFORE, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;

2 Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses *was faithful* in all his house.

3 For this *man* was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house.

4. For every house is builded by some *man*; but he that built all things is God.

5 And Moses verily *was faithful* in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after;

6 But Christ as 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.

**N**EXT the apostle proceeds to show that the matters presented in the preceding part of the epistle are worthy of great attention; and thus he begins his statement:

1. *Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.* Peshito: Wherefore, my holy brethren, who are called with a calling that is from heaven, consider the Legate and High Priest of our profession, Jesus the Messiah. Both Tyndale and Cranmer for Apostle read Ambassador. For *profession*, Wiclif, Conybeare and Howson, and Craik read *confession*. In 1 Tim. 6: 13 the authorized version renders the same word confession, and the cognate verb is often rendered confess, and seldom profess. In English both words are often used in the sense of avowing, owning, not denying, openly declaring, and that is the meaning of the term here and throughout this epistle. *Wherefore*, used to signify the close connection of the foregoing with what immediately follows, thus: Our high Priest is perfect God and perfect man, wherefore you are bound to attend to his claims and his mission. *Holy*

*brethren*, found also in 1 Thess. 5 : 27 and no where else. Sometimes we have the epithets *faithful* and *beloved*, but commonly we have the simple word brother or brethren. The addition of *holy* shows beyond doubt that Paul was addressing and wished to be regarded as addressing not infidel Jews, nor apostate Jews, but converted Jews, whose good behaviour entitled them to the confidence of God's people and ministers. They were *partakers of the heavenly calling*. *Partakers*, in Heb. 1 : 9 fellows, found also in Heb. 3 : 14 : 6 : 4 ; 12 : 8. The *calling* here spoken of is not the mere report of the gospel, but that accompanied by the power of the Spirit making it operative. It is *heavenly* because it comes from heaven, is excellent and worthy of heaven, and is a call to a heavenly life and to heavenly bliss. These brethren are called on to *consider* ; the same verb as in these cases, Consider the ravens, Consider the lilies, Let us consider one another, Luke 12 : 24, 27 ; Heb. 10 : 24. Macknight : Consider *attentively*. It is not the word rendered consider in Heb. 12 : 3. Both these words, however, call for attentive thought and survey of the subject. Calvin : "The verb *consider* carries weight with it, for it teaches that singular heed is required, for he may not be slighted with impunity : and at the same time, that to know Christ as he is is sufficient to dispel the darkness of delusion." Jesus Christ is here called the *Apostle* of our profession. The Greek is the same usually so rendered. In no other place is Christ called an apostle. But an apostle is one sent as a legate or messenger. The cognate verb, was sent, is applied to Christ Matt. 15 : 24 ; 21 : 37 ; Mark 9 : 37 ; 12 : 6 ; Luke 4 : 18, 43 ; 9 : 48 ; 10 : 16 ; John 3 : 16, 34 : 5 : 36, 38 ; 6 : 29, 57 and very often in the same Gospel, as many as six times in John 17th. God sent his Son into the world and thus made him to us an ambassador, an authorized messenger to reveal to us the whole will of God for our salvation. Moses was the sent of God, to establish the dispensation, which lasted from his day until Christ, Ex. 3 : 10, 12, 14, 15. And Christ was the sent of God to set up the gospel dispensation. This is a better explanation than that of Braunius, followed by some others, which borrows the term apostle from the minister of the synagogue. Christ Jesus was also the *High Priest* of our profession. This word is found only in the four Gospels, in the Acts and in this epistle. In the plural it is in the first five books of the New Testament rendered *chief priests*, but in the singular always high priest. It is not applied to Christ anywhere but in this epistle, where it occurs seventeen times and in a majority of cases refers to Christ ; and about an equal number of times he is in this same epistle called simply a priest. The Hebrew word, which we render priest, signi-

fies one who conducts a business, or negotiation as with a sovereign, an intercessor. Both the Greek and Latin words, which we render priest, mean one who ministers in sacred things. Our English word priest has very much the same signification. In scripture the office of priest always carries with it the two ideas of offering sacrifices and making intercession. It is often so explained in this epistle. Under the patriarchal dispensation heads of families, the first born son, chief men, or each man for himself made offerings. After the setting apart of Aaron to the time of Christ the priesthood among the Jews was confined to the tribe of Levi, and to such males in that tribe as were of sound and perfect bodies. In the New Testament we often read of *chief priests*. Some think this term always designates the twenty-four priests, who stood at the head of the twenty-four *courses*, or classes into which the priesthood was divided. But at times it probably designates merely leading men among the priests without regard to heads of courses. The office of the priest was sacred. No man might intrude himself into any of its functions. In Israel the high priest was every way a remarkable officer. He must have all the qualifications of a common priest. He must be gorgeously attired according to minute directions. He must be free from all ceremonial defilement. On his mitre was inscribed *Holiness to the Lord*. On his breastplate were inscribed the names of the twelve tribes. He alone entered the holy of holies, gave answers from the oracle of God, and made the offering on the great day of atonement. These high priests in their perfect manhood, in their primogeniture, in their consecration of their brethren, in their anointing, in their vestments, in their breastplates, in their crowns, in their offerings and intercessions, and in speaking the oracles of God, were remarkable types of him, who was to come the great high Priest of his people, the Lord Jesus Christ,

2. *Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house.* Peshito: Who was faithful to him that made him, as was Moses in all his house. *Faithful*, the same word so rendered in Heb. 2:17. He did all that his office and the covenant, under which he acted, required of him. He was careful, exact, unailing in his care of all that was committed to him; even as his type Moses was in his office; for although Moses was a sinful man, and once sadly failed in temper and speech before all Israel, Num. 20:12; yet he was exact, constant and assiduous in the affairs with which he was charged. The nearer approach he made to perfect holiness, the more fit was he to be a type of Christ. *Appointed him, i. e.*, made him a priest. Genevan, Doway, Craik and Stuart have appointed, and Cranmer put hym in the office.

In Mark 3 : 14; Acts 2 : 36 the same verb means to appoint or ordain. *Faithful in, all his house* are words borrowed from Num. 12 : 7. That passage determines that the words *his house* mean God's house, as seems to be generally agreed. God's church is called God's house in Eph. 2 : 20-22; 1 Tim. 3 : 15; 1 Pet. 3 : 5. God's house is his family, Eph. 3 : 15, the whole company of people redeemed by Christ.

3. *For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house.* Peshito: For much greater is the glory of this man, than that of Moses; just as the glory of the builder of a house is greater than that of the edifice. Moses never was the proprietor or Lord of the church, but Jesus Christ is Lord of all. Our souls belong to him. Moses was an eminent and honored minister of the church; but Jesus Christ is her Author and Sovereign. He built the house. He is the God of his people. He was the Maker of Moses and of all things, John 1 : 3; Col. 1 : 16; Heb. 1 : 2, 10. The Jewish church was his church. He was the Angel that led the Israelites and the Rock that followed them. Compare Gen. 48 : 15, 16; Ex. 14 : 19; 23 : 20-23; 32 : 34; 33 : 2; Isa. 63 : 9; Mal. 3 : 1; 1 Cor. 10 : 4. The verb rendered *was counted worthy* is commonly so rendered, Luke 7 : 7; 2 Thess. 1 : 11; 1 Tim. 5 : 17; Heb. 10 : 29. There is no better translation. It is clearly implied that he was justly counted worthy. Indeed the first idea suggested by the word is that of being meet or worthy; the second is that of being thought, judged or counted meet or worthy. By his Father Christ was counted worthy of more honor than Moses. The man whose name is the BRANCH is the real builder of the temple of the Lord, Zech. 6 : 12. It is Christ, not Moses, who was pointed to by the types of the patriarchal and Jewish dispensations. Moses was such a type of Christ, as himself declared, Deut. 18 : 15-19; Acts 3 : 22, 23; 7 : 37. It is Christ, not Moses, who shed his blood for many for the remission of sins. It is Christ, not Moses, who is the chief corner-stone, elect and precious, on which the church rests. It is Christ, not Moses, who sends forth his Spirit, calls men to repentance, imparts to them the lost image of God, and causes them to grow unto a holy temple in the Lord. The word rendered *builded* is sometimes rendered prepared and ordained, Heb. 9 : 6; 11 : 7. In either sense of the word Jesus has done it all, so far as authority is concerned. Though Moses in his day had an honorable ministry, yet by his own power Jesus has set in order, disposed, prepared and built up the house of God and all its members from the beginning. If Jesus Christ made all men, and made all Christians, and founded the church and keeps her in

safety, and if even Moses was a mere man and but a member and minister of Christ's church, it is clear that he is entitled to no such *honor* or *glory* [the words commonly so rendered] as belong to Christ.

4. *For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God.* The word builded has been sufficiently explained. The verse is very pregnant. Its pertinence to the matter in hand is very obvious in many ways. It holds forth in its connection these truths, that every effect has an adequate cause; that God is the all-sufficient cause of all things; that among men houses always have builders; that God is the universal architect, the sole cause of all existence; that though Moses was in God's house for awhile a useful and honored servant, yet Christ is the Maker of the house in all ages; that Moses never put one lively stone into this building, but was by Christ himself built into it; that the church is the greatest house ever built, and if any house ever needed a builder, this is that house, every stone in it requiring a preparation, which none but God could give it; that none but God can rear so glorious an edifice as this living temple, the church; and that as Jesus Christ is the Founder and Builder of the church he must be God. Owen: "This, then, is that which the apostle intends to declare; namely, the ground and reason whence it is that the house was, or could be, in that glorious manner, built by Christ, even because he is God, and so able to effect it; and by this effect of his power, he is manifested so to be." Tong: "No less power was requisite to make the church than to make the world; the world was made out of nothing, the church made out of materials altogether unfit for such a building. Christ, who is God, drew the platform of the church, provided the materials, and by almighty power disposed them to receive the form; he has compacted and united this his house, has settled the orders of it, and crowned all with his own presence, which is the true glory of this house of God." Clarke: "Who could found the Jewish and Christian church but God? Who could support, govern, influence, and defend them but himself? Communities, or societies, whether religious or civil, may be founded by man; but God alone can build his own church. Now as *all these things* could be builded only by God; so he must be God who has built all these things." Jesus Christ is the Maker of this house and that proves his supreme divinity. He is God. He made all things. He made *all these things* of which the apostle is speaking. Scott: "He who built all things, as Creator, and arranged all things in the church of Israel, could be no other than God himself. This honor the Messiah possessed." Duncan: "By *God*, therefore, we

are here to understand our Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal and only begotten Son of God, yea, God equal with the Father." Nor is there any other way of so understanding this verse as to make it pertinent to the matter in hand, viz., the vast superiority of Christ in comparison of Moses.

5. *And Moses verily was faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after.* The meaning is that Moses was a true, and, in the matters committed to him, a trustworthy servant of God, and a faithful witness of gospel truth, so far as made known to him. This is the high and sole honor due to him; and a great honor it is. We are reminded of John 5:46, 47; "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" Compare John 1:45; Gen. 3:15; 49:10; Deut. 18:15-18; Acts 26:22. Duncan: "Moses, while he was the herald of that doctrine, which was to be published to the people of old according to the manner of the time, did at the same time bear witness to the gospel, the right time for preaching which was not yet come." Compare 1 Pet. 1:10-12.

6. *But Christ as 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.* Peshito: But the Messiah, as the SON, [is] over his own house; and we are his house, if we retain unto the end assurance, and the triumph of hope in him; Stuart: But Christ, as a Son, over his house; whose house we are, provided we hold fast unto the end our confidence and joyful hope; Craik: But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope steadfast unto the end. Wiclif and Stuart read, over his house; but Genevan, Rheims and Doway agree with the authorized version, over his own house. The original word, though commonly rendered simply his, is also often reflexive and emphatic, as in Matt. 2:12; 16:26; Mark 6:1, 4; 8:36; Luke 1:23, 56; 2:39; 4:24; 5:25, 29; Heb. 4:10; Jude 16; and so is fitly rendered his own in this place, and doubtless means Christ's own house, here taken in the sense of family. In verses 2, 5, *his* house means God's house; but here the meaning doubtless is, that Christ the Head and Saviour presides over his own church, which he has purchased with his own blood, and of which he is Lord and Master, King and Saviour. He is so by his Sonship with God and by covenant with his Father. And all do belong to that house, who steadfastly rely on the promises of God, and on the person of the Redeemer, and courageously and hopefully go on in the way of duty. The word rendered confidence is also rendered boldness; and the dative case is often ad-

verbially rendered openly, plainly, freely, boldly. The word rendered rejoicing is also rendered glorying. Macknight; boldness and glorying. The word rendered rejoicing and its cognates are found in the New Testament in Paul's writings only. The rendering of the other words could not be better. The end here spoken of is the end of our natural life on earth, at which time trial ceases, and glory begins. Compare Matt. 10:22; 24:13; Rom. 5:2; Col. 1:23; Heb. 3:14; 6:11; Rev. 2:10. He, who is not faithful unto death, cannot be saved.

#### DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL REMARKS.

1. Carnal wisdom is not to be sought; but holy wisdom is a great attainment. The enemy of souls is cunning and crafty; but he that winneth souls is wise, must be wise. The deceiver among men is often politic; but the skilful servant of the Lord has ministerial address. This is well illustrated in the use Paul here makes of the truths established in the former part of this epistle, v. 1. His conduct shows consummate spiritual wisdom in not needlessly attacking prejudices, and in drawing men to a firm adherence to the right course. Gouge: "Instructors must insinuate themselves into the hearts of their hearers." Owen: "Dispensers of the gospel ought to use holy prudence in winning upon the minds and affections of those whom they are to instruct. . . Next to our Lord Jesus Christ himself, Paul is the most signal pattern and example of holy wisdom, tenderness, compassion and zeal, to all ministers of the gospel."

2. In a thorough system of truth there is a place for every sound doctrine, and every sound doctrine has its place, yes, and its use too. The great things of salvation are made known to us, not merely that we may see the harmony of the gospel scheme, but that we may use it for God's glory and for our own edification. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them," John 13:17. The aim of Paul here is to show that the great doctrines stated and argued in previous chapters demanded a particular course of conduct on the part of those who knew them, v. 1. Owen: "To hear and to learn are good; but not for themselves, for their own sake, but only for the practice of what we hear and learn."

3. Are we *brethren*? v. 1. Are we like genuine Christians? Are we like our great elder brother? Whosoever does the will of God is the brother of Christ, Matt. 12:50; Mark 3:35. Many deride all such sacred and endearing appellations. But let men beware how they lightly esteem any thing so precious. "Now

therefore be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong," Isa. 28 : 22. All true Christians are disciples of the same Master, servants of the same Lord, members of the same family, born of the same Spirit, and have the same Saviour. Their special relation to each other is a consequence of their common relation to the Lord Jesus. Owen: "That men be *brethren*, properly and strictly, it is required that they have one father, be of one family, and be equally interested in the privileges and advantages thereof." Is not God the Father of all who abide under his shadow? Is not Jesus Christ their elder Brother? Are they not all adopted into one family? Have they not all one Spirit? Are not their faith, their hope, their love, their fear, their aim and their end the same? See Eph. 4 : 3-7.

4. But who are our brethren? v. 1. All men are our brethren according to the flesh. All are the children of Adam. The word is also applied to lineal descendants of any common ancestor, however remote. Of course it is applied to the immediate descendants of any one man, whether living or dead. But the brethren in the church are such as make a credible profession of Christ's religion and are in fellowship with God's people. That is, they are to be regarded and treated as such. God alone knows the heart. Man can form no judgment of others but by their life. Yet some show so much of the spirit of Christ, are so consistent, and evince so uniform a regard to the mind and will of Christ that it is mere uncharitableness to suspect their sincerity. Tong: "All the people of God are brethren, and should love and live like brethren." The plea of brotherhood according to the flesh is powerful, and has often been used with effect, Gen. 13 : 8; Acts 7 : 26. Much more, then, should spiritual brotherhood, which is to last for ever, and which binds with ties stronger than death, be sacredly regarded by us all. In judging who is our brother, every professed disciple is entitled to a kind and charitable estimate of himself. We may be strict and even severe in judging ourselves 2 Cor. 13 : 5. Yea more, we should earnestly beg of God, even if we trust that we are sincere, to make thorough search of our hearts lest we should be deceived, and come short at last, Ps. 139 : 23, 24. But towards our brethren we must have a charity that thinketh no evil, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, 1. Cor. 13 : 5, 7.

5. But genuine brotherhood cannot be proven otherwise than by scriptural purity. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." So the apostle calls those to whom he was writing and in whom he had confidence, *holy brethren*, v. 1. Compare Heb. 6 : 9. He, who lives in sin, is not born of God. Holiness is moral beauty.

Mandeville: "Holiness is the excellency of all God's excellencies; without holiness, his power would be terror; his mercy, weakness; his judgments, caprice." In a professor of religion without holiness, prayer is a mockery; praise, a pretence; profession, hypocrisy. Owen: "All true and real professors of the gospel are sanctified by the Holy Ghost, and made truly and really holy. It will save no man to have even an evangelical form of godliness if he denies its power, 2 Tim. 3:5. It is then clear that when professed Christians prove that they are perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord, we should regard, treat and call them holy brethren. Parallel scriptures are found in Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 1:1; Eph. 1:1; Phil. 1:1. But we are not at liberty to call a wicked man a holy brother. Justifying the wicked is an abomination to the Lord. We may under no plea knowingly call evil good, Isa. 5:20. Gouge: "When matters are apparent, judgment must answerably be given. Love makes not men blind." It is as hateful a falsehood to give flattering names and titles to the wicked, as it is to slander the righteous, Job. 32:21, 22; Ps. 12:3; 15:3, 4; Pr. 20:19.

6. Let us therefore bend our minds by all prescribed means to acquire holiness. Many are greedy after the things that perish. How few are earnest in seeking those things, which endure to life eternal? Holiness is the moral likeness of God. If we have it not at all, we are the children of the wicked one. Gouge: "Nothing so fits us for glory as holiness. Not riches, for they profit not in the day of wrath, Pr. 11:4. The rich man who died went to hell, Luke 16:23. Not dignity, nor power, for 'the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the chief captains' desired to be 'hid from the wrath of the Lamb,' Rev. 6:15, 16. Not worldly policy. Ahithophel was so eminent in policy, that 'his council was as if a man had inquired at the oracle of God,' 2 Sam. 6:23, yet he hanged himself, 2 Sam. 17:23. Not immunity from death; for many wicked men shall be living at the moment of Christ's coming to judgment, and thereupon shall not die, 1 Cor. 15:51. Not the resurrection of the body; for there is a 'resurrection of damnation,' John 5:29. Not immortality; for the devils are immortal. . . Nothing makes such a difference between men as holiness and unholiness. . . Holiness is the greatest glory in heaven." It is because men have no holiness that they hate God, his people, his laws and his gospel also.

7. All, who read these pages, have received the outward call of the gospel. Would to God that in every case it had been effectual in turning them from Satan unto God. Let every man honestly see to it that he so listens to the call of mercy as to obey it and accept its

glorious provisions. Are we really *partakers* of this calling? Not if we love darkness rather than light, say one thing and mean another, work wickedness, backbite our neighbors, love scandal, honor vile rich men, despise the pious poor, break our own engagements, receive bribes, practise usury, dislike secret devotion, prefer the world to Christ, and count the appointed worship and instruction of God's house a burden. Owen: "We should look at sermons as Elijah did to the ravens; they bring food with them for our souls. The manna, when gathered, was heavenly food; but if, instead of being eaten, it was laid up, it stank, and bred worms. So heavenly truths are spiritual food; but if, instead of being mixed with faith, they are stored up in notions of the head, they breed the worms of spiritual pride and hypocrisy." O has God indeed saved you, and called you with an holy calling? 2 Tim. 1:9. Tait: "To partake of the heavenly calling is to be led, through the teaching of the Holy Ghost, to believe in Jesus as the Christ. . . . There is no holiness save through the knowledge and faith of Christ; and such knowledge and faith infallibly lead to holiness."

8. The blessings connected with this effectual heavenly calling are many and vast. They cannot be over-estimated. Sometimes they are summed up in a single word as salvation. Again they are mentioned in detail, as blessings leading to the most happy results. This calling brings to men the words whereby they may be saved, and the Spirit of grace, who alone can conduct a soul in the right path to glory. It brings them eye-salve, wherewith they may anoint their eyes and see. It brings them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ. It releases them from the fearful fiery condemnation, which otherwise awaits them. When the angel smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, his chains fell off. And when the angel of mercy visits the soul bound in affliction and iron, in the cords of iniquity and the bonds of guilt, his chains fall off and he is set free 'by the blood of the covenant.' This heavenly calling also cures the love of sin. He, who receives it as an honest man, says, What have I to do any more with idols? O how I love thy law! I have respect unto all thy commandments. I hate every false way. I esteem all all thy precepts concerning all things to be right. Such a one perfects holiness in the fear of God. In short God effectually calls his people to glory and virtue, 2 Pet. 1:3; to God's kingdom and glory, 2 Thess. 2:13, 14; to eternal life, 1 Tim. 6:12. No man is renewed and saved unless he be effectually called.

9. It is the duty, as well as the privilege of believers to study the character of Christ, v. 1. They are bound by law and by love to

*consider* his person, work, glory and honor. Such themes should be often before them. Often should they behold the Lamb of God. By faith Abel and Abraham and all the saints of old looked to him, and saw his day and rejoiced. How can men expect to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ, who do not search the scriptures daily and diligently, who do not meditate in God's word day and night, in whom the word of Christ does not dwell richly in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, and whose souls do not often say, We would see Jesus. Scott: "Every renewed contemplation of his person and his salvation will suggest new instructions, or new motives to love, confidence and obedience." Patterson: "The consideration here inculcated comprehends, of course, intellectual apprehension, serious contemplation, and practical regard. . . The want of such consideration is at the root of the unbelief and irreligion which so much prevail." Often are we called on to consider, Deut. 32 : 29; Ps. 48 : 13; Hag. 1 : 5, 7. Nor does the scripture invite us to consider trifles, but things the most excellent and profitable. This is particularly true when they present for our study the wonder of wonders, Jesus Christ. Men, who decline to think on things that are dazzling in their glory, or mysterious in their nature, will of course turn away from such a theme as the Lord Jesus Christ. We are so weak and ignorant that we are often discouraged. Yet who ever devoutly dwelt on such a theme even for an hour without profit? Owen: "A diligent, attentive consideration of the person, offices and work of Jesus Christ is the most effectual means to free the souls of men from all entanglements of errors and darkness, and to keep them constant in the profession of the truth." Hawker: "Thou glorious GOD AND SAVIOUR! I would desire grace and the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of thee, to behold thee in all that concerns thy mediatorial glory, in thy faithfulness to thy FATHER, and to thy people. I would gaze on thee until my whole soul was swallowed up in the contemplation."

10. No one word, no, nor any two words, tell us all we may search into and may actually find out respecting Christ's natures, person, work, sufferings, offices and glory, v. 1. He is God, the Son of God, God over all; he is man, the Son of man, the man of sorrows, the man that is God's fellow. He is Immanuel, God with us. His name is *Jesus*, Saviour. It is *Christ*, Anointed. He is the Apostle of the religion we possess. He is God's great Ambassador to our lost world. As an Apostle he comes to us from God. His credentials are clear and ample. To dispute them is wicked. As God's Minister and Messenger we are bound to hear and obey him. He who despises this Legate despises him that sent

him, Luke 10:16. Indeed the same scripture declares that he who despises gospel ministers despises both the Son of God and his Father. It was foretold by Moses that we should be bound under the most awful sanctions to listen to this great Teacher sent from God, Deut. 18:19. The sanctions accompanying the announcement of his will and grace in the New Testament are of the most solemn and weighty character. Nothing could be more so, Mark 16:16; John 3:18. He was eminently fitted to reveal to us the mind, will and nature of God, for "in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," Col. 2:3. This may explain that remarkable statement of our Lord: "All that ever came before me were thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them," John 10:8. His meaning is that all who came before him, claiming to be the Messiah, "that Prophet," the door of the sheep, were wicked pretenders and deceivers. He says nothing of course against those holy prophets, who during long ages testified of him and his kingdom. They spoke by "the Spirit of Christ," 1 Pet. 1:11. Jesus Christ is also the *high Priest* of the Christian profession. How fit he was for this work, as God and as man, has been already declared. His fitness in other respects will appear as we proceed in this epistle. The high Priest was the chief officer in the Jewish church, and so our high Priest, who is also King and Prophet, is the chief officer in the Christian church. One of his titles is chief Shepherd. Another is First-born. Another is Captain. He is Lord of all. Our high Priest is our representative before God. As such he has effected reconciliation with God. Tait: "It is not the manner of the Lord to make a needless display of love and mercy. We must have been lost indeed to have made it needful that for our salvation the Son of his love should bleed and die! We must have been prodigals indeed to have made it needful that such a messenger should leave his native skies to speak to us in God's name, and bring us back! We must be ignorant, blind and helpless indeed, unable to find the heavenly road, and equally unable to walk in it, to make us need the compassionate succor and gracious guidance of such an High Priest by the way! The provision, which God has made for our spiritual destitution and necessities, declares the reality of that destitution and the extent of these necessities." It is practical wisdom to consider these things, and often to inquire whether we are using them to God's glory and our own salvation.

11. There is such a thing as a Christian *profession*, v. 1. It is of the nature of a confession, an admission in our hearts and before enemies of our belief in the truths of religion, not denying the

Lord Jesus but freely admitting our love to him and our intention to please him. A Christian profession always implies—1, that we have a firm faith in the truths of the gospel; 2, that our purpose is settled to adhere to these truths, cost what it may; 3, a solemn reference of every thing to Christ, as the author and finisher of faith, the Alpha and Omega of the gospel; 4, a practice conformable to our engagements. It must be admitted that much profession in the world is heartless pretence, and this is proven by the great aversion of many to the least suffering for Christ's sake. The word of God is very clear and emphatic in teaching the obligations of a hearty, open, intrepid profession of the truth of God's word and of our adherence to it as our rule, and to Christ as our Head. Thus David: "I will speak of thy testimonies before kings, and will not be ashamed," Ps. 119:46. Jesus taught the indispensable obligation of a religious profession, Matt. 10:39; 16:25; Mark 8:38; Luke 9:24; 17:33; John 12:25. His followers understood him as demanding no less, Acts 5:41; 20:24. Indeed the apostles taught the same thing. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation," Rom. 10:10. "We also believe, and therefore speak," 2 Cor. 4:13. Steinhofer: "Faith and the confession of faith before God and man are the *two* things demanded of a Christian in the gospel of the new covenant."

12. It is well indeed for us that Christ was faithful to God, v. 2. Had it been otherwise all he said, and did, and suffered would have been of no avail. The least failure on his part would have blasted all our hopes. All he said he was authorized to say, and he said all he had commandment to say, John 12:49, 50. Faithfulness includes the fulfilling of any trust one may receive. So fully did God approve of all Christ's work and character that publicly by a voice from heaven the eternal Father twice said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Christ's faithfulness is entirely above that manifested by the best mere servants God has ever had on earth. Even Moses, the greatest of the Jewish prophets, was but a servant, and at least once sadly failed, though "there arose not a prophet in Israel like unto him," Deut. 34:10. There is no risk in our believing all Christ has told us, or in our doing all he has commanded us. His word is truth.

13. If we would have the comforts of religion and prove that we are Christ's people, let us closely follow his pattern of fidelity to God, v. 2. All evidence of piety is inconclusive till we are found keeping the commandments, and following Christ's example. The ground and reason of our fidelity is found in our relation to God.

The extent of it is discovered in the calling assigned to us, and in the patterns God has given us, especially the perfect model of life found in the Lord Jesus. The great blessings secured by it are the assurance of life eternal and kindred graces. The best tests of fidelity are those laid down in scripture and unmixed with human errors. "O Thou who art faithful, make us faithful to Thee."

14. Christ Jesus was no intruder. He was *appointed* to his office by God, v. 2. He was chosen of God and precious, 1 Pet. 2:4. Well might he say, "The Lord God, and his Spirit hath sent me," Isa. 48:16. Compare John 12:16; Heb. 5:5. The engagement to send Christ Jesus is so ancient that it is said to have been before the world was, Tit. 1:2. To his great undertaking Christ verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, 1 Pet. 1:20. He was the substance of the first promise God ever made to man, Gen. 3:15; and from that day on he has been the burden of every prophet, and the joy of every pious heart. But this matter will come up again.

15. Jesus Christ was far above Moses and was so regarded by the Lord, v. 3; and yet Moses was greatly honored of God, Deut. 34:10. If God was highly and justly offended with those, who despised his law made known by Moses, must he not be greatly provoked by those who despise his grace revealed to men by and through his Son? Moses was a deliverer and ruler, the legate of the Most High to the court of Pharaoh, the friend of God, had great discoveries of the divine glory, was profoundly learned, was mighty in words and deeds, and was buried by Jehovah, Ex. 3:10; 33:23; 34:36; Deut. 5:31; 12:8; 34:6; Acts 7:22, 35. But Christ went far beyond all this. He was God's son; he is so in the Father and the Father so in him, that he who has seen Christ has seen the Father; he did no sin; when on one occasion his true glory was allowed to appear, his face did shine as the sun; he is lord of all; he now governs all things; he shall raise the dead; he shall judge the world; he shall for ever receive the highest worship that creatures can offer, Matt. 17:2; 28:18; John 1:18; 5:29; 14:9, 10; Acts 17:31; Col. 1:17; 1 Peter 2:22; Rev. 5:13. God has given Christ a name that is above every name, Phil. 2:9. Moses has no greater joy or honor than to possess the friendship of him whom heaven adores. Moses was faithful as a servant in God's house. Christ was faithful as a Son over his own house. The Midrash on Isaiah 52:13 says: "The Servant of Jehovah, the King Messiah will be more venerable than Abraham, more exalted than Moses, and superior to the ministering angels." How

could Christ have been an ever prevailing intercessor with God, if he were not God's equal and fellow? The highest honor a creature can attain is to be allowed to put honor on Jesus Christ, and to be honored of him. This is as true of Moses as of Paul, Phil. 3:4-9.

16. And yet Moses was faithful, eminently so, considering that he was but a man, v. 5. Are we faithful? Do we stand in our lot? Do we always take sides with God? Do we ever seek to curry favor with men, when they are mad upon their idols, or in hot pursuit of evil? Moses added nothing to his message, in order to soften it. He held back no part of it for fear of giving offence. Blessed be the Lord, there are still good men in the world, men who are on the Lord's side, even in the face of a world of obloquy.

17. Christ is God. He built all things, v. 4. There is not a perfection but he has it in an infinite degree. It is absurd to ascribe to him all and infinite perfection, and yet deny his divinity; to say that he made and governs all things, and yet refuse him adoring reverence. We cannot do a more foolish or wicked act than to deny to Christ the glory that is due to his name, for it is God's expressed will that all men should honor the Son as they honor the Father.

18. The law points to Christ in many, in most of its types, and Moses spake of him and testified of him, v. 5. To how great an extent this is true is most apparent to one who has well studied the book of Leviticus with a good interpreter, or the works of McLaurin, or of the elder Edwards. It is and shall be for a lamentation that so few in our day acquaint themselves with the lessons that may be learned from the types, even the humblest of them.

19. Christ's Sonship with God is the broad and sure basis of his authority over the church on earth and in heaven, v. 6. No wonder the Father confides in him. He and his Father are one. His house is God's house. God's honor is his honor. "All things that the Father hath are mine;" "All mine are thine, and thine are mine," John 16:15; 17:10.

20. In the church Christ is both Brother and Builder, both Friend and Master. He is with his people always, and he is *over* them too. Calvin: "God dwells in Christ, so that whatever is said of God, applies to Christ."

21. Every part of scripture shows the necessity of perseverance in holiness, steadfastness with God, and holding fast our confidence, which hath great recompense of reward, v. 6. All this must come to us through our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall also confirm us unto the end, that we may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. 1:8. Compare Col. 1:21-23. Cobbin: "We pro-

fess to be Christians, but the test of our being genuine Christians is holding fast our confidence unto the end." "He that endures to the end, the same shall be saved." We walk by faith, not by sight. We must gird up the loins of our minds, and hope to the end. Gouge: "All the benefits that we can expect from any grace depend upon persevering therein. . . All Christian privileges and divine promises are limited therewith. . . All the benefit of what hath formerly been done is lost if we hold not out to the end." Nor can any one ever prove that he is a child of God, if he turns away from the holy commandment.

22. Let us have strong faith and firm hope unto the end, v. 6. God's grace warrants us in setting our expectation firmly in him. Laurentius: "Believers may take courage; they are the house and temple of God—In faith firmness is requisite." Let our confidence be joyful and strong. Hope both confides and rejoices, so as nothing else can do in the midst of trials.

## CHAPTER III.

VERSES 7-19.

### THE GLORY AND AUTHORITY OF CHRIST A REASON FOR STEADFASTNESS. AN ILLUSTRATION FROM JEWISH HISTORY.

7 Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day if ye will hear his voice,

8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness :

9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.

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

11 So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.

12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

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

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

15 While it is said, To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.

16 For some, when they had heard, did provoke : howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.

17 But with whom was he grieved forty years ? *was it* not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness ?

18 And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not ?

19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

**H**AVING showed the exalted character, the condescension and tenderness of our High Priest, and having stated the estimate in which he is to be held, and the steadfastness, with which we should cleave to him, the apostle now proceeds to show the danger of making light of God's will under this dispensation. This he does by pointing out the peril it brought on men

to sin wilfully against God under a dispensation set up by the ministry of Moses, who has been shown to be far inferior to God's Son, Messiah. He makes a citation from Ps. 95: 7-11, which he thus introduces:

7. *Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day if ye will hear his voice,*

8. *Harden not your hearts as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:*

9. *When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.*

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

11. *So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.* Pe-shito: Because the Holy Spirit hath said: To-day if ye will hear his voice, (8) harden not your hearts to anger him, like the provocators, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness, (9) when your fathers tempted me, and proved, [and] saw my works forty years. (10) Therefore I was disgusted with that generation, and said:—This is a people, whose heart wandereth, and they have not known my ways: (11) so that I swear in my wrath, that they should not enter into my rest. Except in very slight particulars we get no aid from other English versions or translations. This quotation is made from the Septuagint version of the Hebrew without any change except that in v. 9 the apostle inserts *me* after proved, at the beginning of v. 10 he inserts *Wherefore*, and afterwards always and in v. 11 has *so* instead of *unto whom*. The Psalm, from which the quotation is made, was written by David hundreds of years after the journey through the wilderness. The great body of expositors correctly admit that the Psalm is Messianic. It is divinely inspired. Paul here says the Holy Ghost is the speaker, whose words he quotes. There are several modes of expounding the words, *To-day if ye will hear his voice*. Stuart renders them, *To-day while ye hear his voice*, and leaves them connected with what follows. Others make these words to form a complete sentence, giving to *if* the sense of *oh that*, as in Luke 19: 42. Some think they find authority for this in Ex. 32: 32; 1 Chron. 4: 10. Others say that the Hebrew word rendered *if* should here be rendered *surely*, or *doubtless*, as in Num. 14: 23, 30. The sense would then be, *As I have been a good shepherd to these people, surely they will to-day hear and obey my voice*. Yet others make the clause conditional, terminating the sentence at *voice*, thus, *We are his people, etc. if ye will hear his voice to-day*. But it must be admitted that there are grammatical difficulties in so construing the Hebrew. Moreover Paul follows the Septuagint, which con-

nects the last clause of v. 7 with v. 8. This does not declare that the Septuagint version could not be amended, but it does show that for Paul's purposes that version is sufficient, and substantially gives the sense. In v. 8 as found in Ps. 95, for provocation some read Meribah, and for temptation Massah. If we understand the history referred to, we get the same sense by transferring as by translating these words. Meribah means strife, contention, then, provocation; and Massah, trial, temptation. See Ex. 17:7; Num. 20:13, 14; 27:14; Deut. 32:51; 33:8. The two words clearly allude to historic events well known to Jews. *Harden*, found also in vs. 13, 15; 4:7. Hardness of heart uniformly expresses stubbornness and impenitence. It reveals a sad state of moral character. In v. 9 we have an explanation of temptation in v. 8. It was not Satan seducing the people, nor the people seducing each other, though both of these things were done; but it was the people tempting God. In Ps. 26:2 the same word is rendered prove; but in Ps. 78:18 tempted. The Greek is the same verb we met in Heb. 2:18. It is commonly rendered tempted, once examine, once proved, sometimes tried. See Matt. 4:1, 3; John 6:6; Acts 15:10; 2 Cor. 13:5; Rev. 2:2, 10. *Proved*, the same Hebrew word is in Ps. 26:2 rendered examine; and the same Greek word here found is also rendered try, examine, approve. Both these verbs are here, as in some other cases, taken in a bad sense, because they describe acts of unbelief and rebellion. God should be taken at his word, and neither distrusted nor murmured against. *And saw my works*, in the Hebrew work, as here explained the work of delivering the Jews and bringing them to the promised land during *forty years*. Verse 10 contains the result of such conduct in the treatment they received from the Judge of all the earth. The Hebrew word rendered *grieved*, as in Ps. 119:158; 139:21. Used to express one's state of mind towards himself, it is rendered loathe. The Greek word here rendered *grieved* occurs in the New Testament no where but in v. 17. Of course the use of it involves the figure of anthropopathy. To *err in heart* expresses a radical defect of character. Those who had Moses' law, much more those who have the gospel, and *know not God's ways*, must be wilfully and perversely ignorant, shutting their eyes against the truth. *Sware*, see the oath in Num. 14:21-23, 28-30; Deut. 1:34, 35. The word here rendered rest occurs in this and the next chapter eight times. The rendering is uniform. It seems to denote one of these four things: 1. The *rest* of the Sabbath as kept by God at the end of the work of creation; 2. The *rest* of Israel in Canaan after their long journey in the wilderness; 3. The *rest* of the gospel dispensation after the long service rendered to

the burdensome ritual of Moses. All these prepare the way for another idea, 4, that of the heavenly rest. The Israelites were in Canaan for centuries before David wrote Psalm 95. In speaking of rest he must have contemplated spiritual blessings, yes and blessings of a heavenly nature. In Paul's day it was still future, v. 9, where we have a new word for rest, synonymous with that already used, but with the superadded idea of sacredness as of a Sabbath. But let us not anticipate. Now as men allowedly and knowingly sinned against the law given by Moses, and were condignly punished for their folly, let us beware lest under the greater glory and the more heavy responsibility of the gospel we sin and provoke God to give us over to ruin. Thus Paul uses the scrap of history quoted from Ps. 95.

12. *Take heed, brethren, lest, there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.* Take heed, that is, beware, see to it, look to it. It denotes a strong demand and loud call for vigilance. For *evil heart*, Cranmer reads, froward heart. The word is more than once rendered wicked. It is the usual word to express the quality of moral evil. The rendering of Bloomfield and Stuart 'an evil and unbelieving heart' is no improvement. It gives the sense but no better than the authorized version, which agrees with several old versions and is literal. Unbelief is itself a grievous departure from God. It is a great parent sin. Its presence indicates the root of all evil. Perfect unbelief is complete apostasy from the most High. Jehovah is in scripture often called the *living God*, to distinguish him from the gods of the heathen, who were dead men, or dead images, and can neither see, nor hear, nor help, nor save. The word rendered living is also rendered lively. So used it indicates that God not merely exists, but is the efficient agent, filling all things with his presence, making his power felt over all creatures, all events, all causes and all effects. This living God is Jesus Christ, who is the author of all life natural and spiritual, John 5 : 19, 21, 25. It was he, who was tempted, 1 Cor. 10 : 4, 9. It was he who gave the law, Heb. 12 : 24-26. Compare Gen. 48 : 15, 16; Ex. 23 ; 20, 21, 23; 32 : 34; 33 : 2.

13. *But exhort one another daily, while it is called To-day ; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.* Exhort, the verb usually so rendered. It always implies kindness of address, but does not forbid the greatest vehemence. In Heb. 13 : 19, 22 it is rendered beseech. It is often rendered comfort. This exhortation was to be *daily*, because every time had its own trials and seductions, and no man knew when he or his brother would be called to endure the greatest temptations. For daily Stuart reads

continually. *While it is called To-day* is equivalent to such phrases as this, While life is offered you, While opportunity is afforded you. John 12 : 35 contains a similar truth. As their fathers in the wilderness once had their day with its opportunities, but generally failed to improve them, so the Hebrews of Paul's day had an urgent offer of mercy made them, but it would not be always so. Their nation was about to fall. Moreover any one of them might die any day, and thus his day of grace would be closed for ever, just as many Israelites fell in the wilderness soon after leaving Egypt and long before Joshua and his hosts entered the promised land. Once it was called To-day by them, but many of them missed their opportunity. *Hardened*, the same verb as in vs. 8, 15 ; 4 : 7. *Deceitfulness*, as in Matt. 13 : 22 ; Mark 4 : 19 ; once rendered deceit, Col. 2 : 8 ; once, deceivableness, 2 Thess. 2 : 10 ; once, deceivings, 2 Pet. 2 : 13. Instead of deceitfulness of sin Stuart has sinful delusions, but this is not as strong as the authorized version. Wiclif and Rheims have fallacy of sin. Macknight thus paraphrases the words—the deceitful suggestions of an unbelieving, timorous, sinful disposition ; Guyse thus :—the guileful arts of indwelling sin, and the treachery with which it works in the heart.

14. *For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.* Peshito : For we have part with the Messiah, if we persevere in this firm confidence, from the beginning to the end. Stuart : For we shall be made partakers of the blessings which Christ bestows, provided we hold fast even to the end our first confidence. Craik : For we have been made partakers of Christ, if we hold our first confidence steadfast unto the end. See above on Heb. 3 : 1, where we have the same word as here rendered partakers. There men are said to share in the call of the gospel ; and here, in the author of the gospel. Christ and his people are one as he and his Father are one, John 17 : 11, 21, 22. We shall meet the same word partakers in Heb. 6 : 4 ; 12 : 8. This union with Christ is more important than any other union that can be formed. It is as vital as that of the branch and the vine. Yet there is but one way of proving it beyond all doubt, and that is by persevering in holiness to the end of life. Compare 1 Tim. 5 : 12. By faith we are united to Christ ; by faith we continue our heavenly course. We walk by faith. *Confidence*, the same word is so rendered in 2 Cor. 9 : 4 ; 11 : 17 ; but in Heb. 1 : 3 (on which see above) it is rendered person, and in Heb. 11 : 1 it is rendered substance. The stony ground hearers seemed to begin very well, but they did not long act well. All their goodness soon vanished. *End*, see above on v. 6. where the same word occurs in the same sense.

15. *While it is said, To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.* While, the phrase so rendered may mean inasmuch as, in that, or during the time when. One of these renderings here implies the others. Calvin: "He intimates that an opportunity of profiting is never wanting to us while we live, because God calls us daily. . . It is as if he had said, Since God never makes an end of speaking, it were not enough for us to have embraced his doctrines with a ready mind, unless we submit ourselves to him with the same teachableness to-morrow and the day after." The substance of the verse has been explained. See above on vs. 7, 8. The provocation was that offered to the Lord.

16. *For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.* *Did provoke*, that is, they angered God, as it is expressed in Ps. 106: 32; they insulted him, and provoked him to punish them. We may understand the passage according to the English text given above. It is supported by Wiclif, Coverdale, Tyndale, Cranmer, Genevan, Doway, Rheims, Calvin and many others. In that case the exceptions were such as Caleb, Joshua, Eleazar and the priests and Levites generally, Josh. 14: 1; 24: 33. Paul has admitted in this epistle that Moses was no unbeliever, but was faithful. Who doubts that Aaron was a pious though an imperfect man? See also Num. 25: 6-13; Ps. 106: 30, 31. Calvin: "Undoubtedly there were many godly men who were not involved in the general impiety or presently repented." But some make a part, and some, the whole of the verse interrogative. Peshito: But who were they that heard and angered him? It was not all they, who came out of Egypt with Moses. Stuart: Who now were they that when they heard did provoke? Nay, did not all, who came out of Egypt under Moses? Conybeare and Howson: Who were they that, though they had heard, did provoke? Were they not all whom Moses brought forth out of Egypt? Craik: Who then were they that, when they had heard, did provoke? Why, indeed, were they not all that came out of Egypt? On the same side the following scholars give the weight of their names, viz.: Chrysostom, Theodoret, Griesbach, Pyle, Clarke, Turner, Lindsay, Whitby and Tait. There seems to be nothing gained by making any part of the verse interrogative; but to make it all so seems to be quite foreign from the purpose of the apostle. He is calling on the Hebrews not to follow the example of unbelief set by their wicked ancestors, but that of such of their fathers in the wilderness as believed God, and were good men. To intimate to the Hebrews that all their fathers in the wilderness were unbelievers and terribly pro-

voking to God, would have been not only harsh, but untrue. The verse asserts no such thing but denies it, and calls on the Hebrews to remember the good example of their pious ancestors, and not to follow those who were wicked. There is great tenderness in using the word *some*, when the great mass was intended. See a like instance in Rom. 3:3; 11:17; 1 Tim. 4:1. This interpretation is confirmed by the next verse.

17. *But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?* All agree that the whole of this verse is interrogative. And well they may. That form brings out the meaning with discrimination, and shows that Paul is not detracting from the good name of their pious ancestors, but only warning them not to imitate the bad example of their unbelieving fathers. The verse is parallel to 1 Cor. 10:5-11, which explains some things in this verse and context. "With many of them God was not well pleased," etc. Whatever displeasure God manifested towards Israel in the wilderness was for their sins, and not at all through unjust severity.

18. *And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?* This verse also is uniformly put into the interrogative form by the versions. It closely limits the judicial deaths of the wilderness to such as provoked God by refusing to trust or obey him. I say *judicial deaths*, for we have no authority for saying that no Israelite for forty years died of old age or otherwise than by marked judgments, acts of terrible severity for particular sins.

19. *So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.* This was the form the depravity of this people took. It is commonly the case where God's will is known and men's hearts not made submissive to it, that everything in moral character takes the form of infidelity, which is but another name for unbelief.

#### DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL REMARKS.

1. The Scripture is the word of God; it is the mind of the Holy Spirit; it is divinely inspired, v. 7. David spake the mind of God; so did the writers of both Testaments, Heb. 3:7; 4:7; 2 Sam. 23:2, 3; Matt. 22:43; Acts 1:16; 4:25; 2 Tim. 3:16; 1 Pet. 1:11. The scripture abounds in such phrases as these: Thus saith the Lord, As saith the Holy Ghost, The word of God, etc. Calvin: "It is profitable to accustom ourselves to these expressions, that we may remember that the words cited out of the prophets are the words of God and not of man." Mandeville: "Exhortations to duty ought to be resolved into the divine

authority. The apostle uses various manners of quoting scripture, sometimes naming the instrument, sometimes the books whence quoted, and sometimes, as here, the author." The writers of scripture used words taught them by the Holy Ghost.

2. The Holy Ghost is God, and so Paul intends us to understand, when he cites his authority as decisive in religion, v. 7. He is the author of all the scripture. Many parts of the Bible declare him to be God: "The God of Israel said;" "God spake by the mouth of David;" "God spake by the prophets," 2 Sam. 23:2, 3; Acts 4:25; Heb. 1:1. In Acts 5:3, 4, 9, the terms, Holy Ghost, God, and Spirit of the Lord, are used interchangeably.

3. The Holy Ghost is a divine person. He does the acts appropriate to a person. He speaks or says things, v. 7. He garnishes the heavens, he gives understanding to men. He guides the saints. He comforts God's people. He does many other things that can be done only by a person. Nor was his existence or his personality a secret until Christ came. See Gen. 1:2; 6:3; Ps. 51:11, 12, and many other places. Mandeville: "The apostle uses the title 'Holy Ghost,' as one perfectly familiar to the Jews." Mary was not astounded by the doctrine of the divinity or personality of the Spirit when the angel said, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee," Luke 1:35.

4. Very glorious therefore is our God, the Father whose divinity no one questions; the Son whose divinity has been fully established in the former part of this epistle, and whose personality has been proven in every appropriate way; and the Holy Ghost, whose divinity and personality are fairly implied in v. 7 and abundantly taught in God's word; these three are the holy, holy, holy Lord of hosts, the tripersonal God whom we adore, one in being and essence, not divided, not separated, not confused; "without quality good; great without quantity; everlasting without time; omnipresent without place; containing all things without extent;" glorious in holiness; fearful in praises; doing wonders; the Lord God omnipotent; worthy of all praise and honor.

5. There is no substitute for candor and docility and the spirit of obedience, all of which are called for in the words *hear his voice*, v. 7. If men would thus hear the word of God, they would soon be very different from what we find most of them to be. It is a great privilege to hear a pure gospel; but to hear it captiously makes it a savor of death unto death. When hearers inquire not for the truth, or for the truth that they may cavil or gainsay, but not obey it and practise it, then they do

not, in the scriptural sense, at all hear God's voice. How many first inquire whether a doctrine is popular before they accept it. Owen: "He, that would choose his party by tale, would scarce have joined Caleb and Joshua." The fact is that one is not prepared to make a consistent profession of Christ's name unless he is ready to stand in a minority of one—all around him having cast off the fear of God, and being ready to cast out his name as evil. In hearing God's word aright these things are necessary; *A*, a true apprehension of his mind in the word spoken; *B*, a genuine faith laying hold of the truth as the word of God; *C*, prompt and unhesitating obedience to what it requires.

6. From the beginning of this epistle to the sixth verse of the third chapter Paul had conducted a very powerful course of reasoning. He then addresses himself to the business of showing the practical and urgent nature of the duty arising out of this truth, v. 7. Let us not be offended with a lively application of what we have learned from God's word and ministers. Practice is the life of piety. It is better to know but little and practise that, than to know much and make no good use of it. Owen: "No divine truth ought, in its delivery, to be passed by, without manifesting its use, and endeavoring its improvement unto holiness and obedience. . . Divine knowledge is like a practical science; the end of all whose principles and theorems is in their practice; take that away and it is of no use."

7. Nor ought we, under pretence of love to the practical truths of scripture, in any wise to slight the doctrinal teachings of God's word. It is a great error to build a house without a good foundation. We sometimes hear of building castles in the air, but such language is figurative, and is intended to describe human folly, or a dreamy, unpractical existence. It is idle for men to expect to please God, when they do not act on principle, and that principle resting on his own revealed will. Owen: "The formal reason of all our obedience consists in its relation to the voice or authority of God."

8. Nothing more certainly or terribly hardens the heart than resisting God's merciful calls, vs. 7, 8, 13, 15. The most ordinary pretext for doing this is a promise of future amendment. If men would but hear God's voice when he speaks, and with right affections embrace and obey his will as soon as it is known, their salvation would be secured. Patterson: "Oh, for an unprejudiced understanding, a susceptible conscience, and a tender heart!" The very nature of sin is to harden the heart. This process is often most rapid when least perceived. Indeed its very nature is that of insensibility. Owen: "Such is the nature, efficacy and

power of the voice or word of God, that men cannot withstand or resist it, without a sinful hardening of themselves against it."

9. One of the worst evils in the human heart is this insensibility towards God and heavenly things. This hardness, *A*, is natural. The heart of stone is in our flesh, Ezek. 11:19. When by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, they were made willing sinners. Hardness of heart is the very core of depravity. *B*. By habit its power is greatly increased, Rom. 2:4, 5. It is always connected with unbelief, which is contumacious. It is a fearful power which the most depraved man possesses that he can make himself yet more vile. Hardness of heart is closely allied to every form of sin. It makes men delight in the wealth, pleasure and applause of the wicked. It is akin to vanity, pride, presumption, unbelief, obduracy under judgments, insensibility under the loudest and tenderest calls of mercy and despite to the blood of Christ and the spirit of all grace.

10. Allowed disobedience to the known will of God provokes and angers the Almighty, vs. 8, 15, 16. This disobedience may be continual or occasional. Its nature is the same. It is enmity against God. Calvin: "Our rebellion against God flows from no other fountain than a willing depravity, in that we refuse an entrance to his grace. Already indeed by nature our heart is stony, and hardness is engendered in all from the womb, which God alone can soften and correct. But that we spurn the voice of God arises from voluntary stubbornness and not extraneous impulse, a fact of which every man is his own witness." Lindsay; "God is infinitely pure: sin is repugnant to his nature: he takes pleasure in seeing the obedience of his creatures: he is displeased when they abandon themselves to evil courses: he bestows happiness upon those who truly serve him: and he consigns to destruction incorrigible offenders;—and all is done in perfect consistency with the principles of justice and holiness."

11. The form of sin expressed by *tempting* God and *proving* him is the same; at least, no one has as yet drawn any vigorous line between these modes of offending God, vs. 8, 9. Gouge: "To tempt one is to try and prove whether he be such an one as he is taken to be." Massah and Meribah were the same place, Ex. 17:7. If men will not take God at his word, if they insist on subjecting him to proof, if they will test his veracity, he must be grieved and angered with such a generation. Dutch Annotations: "Man is said to tempt God, when he wilfully calls God's promises or power into question, or despiseth the ordinary means of God's government, and desireth extraordinary." The punishment of those who commit this sin is justly severe and terrible, Num. 14;

22, 23. All distrust of God, all murmuring against him, all doubtfulness respecting the fulfilling of his word, whatever be our circumstances, are very provoking to him. But when they are committed under circumstances suited to make us feel our special dependence on God, or when the tokens of his care of us are marked and abundant, they are peculiarly offensive to him. Almost all sin is strongly marked either by presumption or despair. "Both these arise from unbelief." The former is an impudent assault upon God; it is strongly marked with contempt of his glorious character. The latter is the perfection of unbelief, stoutly refusing divine mercy when offered.

12. Such a course of sin—indeed any course of iniquity persisted in—will ruin the soul. God is continually conferring benefits on mankind, and the wicked are as continually sinning against him. The fact that in God we live, and move, and have our being is itself a fearful aggravation of the wickedness of sinning against him.

13. Nor is it any extenuation of our guilt that we are walking in the footsteps of our ancestors, either remote or immediate. The whole spirit of the passage here cited is against such an error. This is the more true when the sins of ancestors drew down the displeasure of God against themselves in sore judgments. Stephen mentions it as an aggravation of the sins of the Jews of his time, "As your fathers did, so do ye," Acts 7; 51. And Zechariah warns the Israelites of his time, "Be ye not as your fathers," Zech. 1:4. Gouge: "The sins of forefathers are no warrant to successors." Owen: "It is a dangerous condition for children to boast of the privilege of their fathers and to imitate their sins."

14. Sin must be a horrible evil. We cannot too much loathe it. It is said to *grieve* God himself, v. 10. The same Hebrew word is rendered loathe, weary, vomit out, Gen. 27:46; Lev. 18:25; Ezek. 36:31. The Bible is a very sober book. It never uses the language of extravagance. Yet it says that sin is both horrible and abominable. God says he is pressed under the iniquities of men as a cart that is full of sheaves, Amos 2:13. Men may be foolishly afraid of pain or danger or reproach, but no man too much fears sin, even in its least odious form. It is a great mercy when God shows us something of the evil of sin in the ruin it has wrought in the world, in the dishonor it brings to the divine government, in the wretchedness it entails on the sinner himself, in the awful judgments with which it has been visited, and when it makes us cry out, "My sins are too heavy for me." Ps. 38:4. The great deluge which swept over the face of the earth, the

tempest of wrath that beat on the cities of the plain, the weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth in the pit of wo, the clanking of the everlasting chains of darkness, the agonies of Gethsemane and the cross of Calvary, all declare that sin is no trifle, that God cannot away with it and that he will surely and condignly punish it. Of course it is a great aggravation of sin, when it is long persisted in. In the case here mentioned they sinned for *forty years*, that is, those, who did not fall by God's judgments, kept up for that length of time more or less their wicked conduct. Nothing is so opposed to the will and nature of God as sin is.

15. The seat of sin is the heart, v. 10. Men's tongues are lawless and their lives evil, because their hearts are wicked. This is true whether by the heart we understand simply the will and affections or the whole inner man. Both views are true; both are set forth in Scripture, Jer. 17:9; Matt. 15:19; Mark 7:21; 1 Cor. 2:14. Sometimes the word heart includes the conscience, 1 John. 3:20. And sinful men have their mind and conscience both defiled; and some have their conscience seared as with a hot iron. The wicked are all wrong at least in the principles of their actions; and they are all the time wrong. They do always err in heart. "They know not God and they do not glorify him as God." They are ignorant, they are stubborn, they are perverse, they are impudent and hard hearted, Ezek. 3:7; Ps. 18:26.

16. Not to know God or his ways is a great sin. A sin aggravated by the abundant opportunities often enjoyed to obtain sound knowledge. Were our ignorance absolutely invincible the case would be different. But to Israel of old, much more to us under the gospel, great opportunities have been granted of knowing both God's nature and mind; and sins thus committed are clearly wilful, John 5:40. Men who thus sin are blind to the lessons of the most striking Providences and deaf to the sweetest calls of mercy. The guilt of this ignorance is greatly increased by God's great long-suffering. He bore with Israel forty years.

17. Some things are awfully and inflexibly fixed in the divine mind, v. 11. God has even sworn that he will or will not do certain things, which it is of the greatest importance we should understand. O! it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. "Sinners who despise his threatenings will see that there is a reality in the execution of them in that awful day, when the whole creation shall be on fire, the mouth of hell opened, and the glorious, dreadful Judge of all, ready to pronounce final sentence." "Wo unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him for the reward of his hands shall be given him," Isa. 3:11.

18. It cannot be but that the heedless will perish, v. 12. This is as

true of the flaming professor as of the avowed worldling. The Christian has sometimes been compared to one placed on the top of a high and impregnable rock to which there leads one single steep and narrow way. He has every thing necessary for defence. But he must watch, he must use his armor. If he acts well his part, he may easily repel a thousand assailants. But if he is negligent and sleeps upon his post, he may expect soon to hear the cry, "The Philistines be upon thee." Sin is a sorcery. The heart is a traitor. The devil is a roaring lion or an angel of light, as may best serve his turn. O, watch and pray.

19. Nor is mutual exhortation less a duty, v. 13. One of the great benefits of church-fellowship is the tender care and watchfulness of brethren over one another. Lindsay: "Mutual admonition, based upon brotherly affection and love is the method which the apostle recommends the Hebrews to employ for promoting each other's steadfastness. They were to look not simply every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others; and when one saw a Christian brother in danger of falling into sin or deserting the gospel, he was to warn him of the dreadful consequences of the course to which he was turning, and to lure him back to the love and practice of religion." Compare 1 Thess. 5: 11-14; Jas. 5: 19. Starke: "Preachers cannot do every thing and cannot be every where, therefore the fathers of the household must be also bishops of the household; nay, one Christian must be bishop to another, and he has good authority and right to rebuke and correct in another what he sees worthy of reproof." It was Cain who cried out, in a criminal want of just responsibility, "Am I my brother's keeper?" The law is clear, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This care of our brother should be very tender and charitable, Gal. 6: 1, 2. We are impelled to it by the bonds of fraternity. Mal. 2: 10.

20. Blessed is the man who hath wisdom to discern time and opportunity, v. 13. "Opportunity has hair in front; behind she is bald. If you seize her by the forelock, you may hold her; but, if suffered to escape, no power can grasp her." Charron: "There is need of a sprightly and vigilant soul to lay hold on favorable junctures; a man must look before him, descry opportunities at a distance, keep his eye constantly upon them, observe all the motions they make towards him, make himself ready for their approach, and when he sees his time, lay fast hold, and not let go again till he has done his business." No man has any part of time except to-day. In mercy God gives us a summer and a harvest. Sad indeed will be the case of him who at last shall take up the wail: "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not

saved." Clarke: "No man should defer his salvation to any future time. If God speaks *to-day*, it is *to-day* that he should be heard and obeyed. To defer reconciliation to God to any *future* period is the most reprehensible and destructive presumption. It supposes that God will indulge us in our sinful propensities; and cause his mercy to tarry for us till we have consummated our iniquitous purposes. It shows that we prefer, at least for the present, the devil to Christ; sin to holiness; and earth to heaven. And can we suppose that God will be thus mocked?" Scott: "While sinners are procrastinating, God may be about to say, 'This night shall your souls be required of you.' How infatuated, then, must they be to close their eyes and harden their hearts against conviction, to run into dissipation and worldly lusts, to yield to sloth, and to make delays, in such a perilous situation." The youth defers to middle life; the middle-aged defers to riper years, and the old man defers till a dying moment. This is the uniform course unless grace makes men wise. The longer men live in sin the more distasteful are all spiritual and heavenly things. Perhaps no single form of self-deception ruins so many souls as procrastination. One reason why delay so hardens the heart is that it is a refusal to meet the issue God puts before us. It is a base evasion. It deceitfully says, Not now. Around this rock of procrastination lie the bleached bones of myriads to whom it never occurred that they were trifling with God and jeopardizing their eternal well-being by crying, To-morrow, when the Lord said, To-day.

21. The deceitfulness of sin is very great, v. 13. No one overestimates its power to delude. It makes men call bitter sweet, and sweet bitter. It makes them love that which is hateful, and hate that which is lovely. It blinds their eyes to their best interests and to all the most lovely things. It calls good things by bad names, and bad things by good names. Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived and slew Paul, Rom. 7: 11. We cannot with too much care put off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, Eph. 4: 22. And we do certainly know that there is all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, 2 Thess. 2: 10. The scripture fully sustains the strongest conceptions formed by men from experience and observation respecting the guile and treachery found in all iniquity. Tong: "There is a great deal of deceitfulness in sin; it appears fair, but is filthy; it appears pleasant, but is pernicious; it promises much, but performs nothing." One of the worst things in the deceitfulness of sin is that it involves in guilt all who are deceived by it. There is no innocent way of falling under its power. It is a lie; and only he who loves or has loved a lie is beguiled

by it. Lindsay: "The quality of sin which gives it its power of seducing men to apostasy is its deceitfulness. One act of transgression prepares the way for another, and habit strengthens the love of evil, and the consequent disrelish of God's word begets the wish that it were false, and suspicions arise, and plausible objections are entertained, and the love of sinful pleasure and the fear of worldly loss in times of difficulty now operate with greater power; and the result after a time may be, that the service of God is renounced, and the hopes of the gospel are abandoned as a fable." Sin never wears its own filthy rags, but always assumes some fair or gaudy attire. It works by little and little. It teaches men to be so cautious against being righteous overmuch, that it dissuades from prayer. It wondrously adapts its seductions to the tempers and temperaments of men. It gives false rules for every thing. Reader, if you lose your soul, you will probably be *cheated* out of eternal happiness and that after fair warning.

22. A great thing it is to be righteous, for great possessions have all God's people. They are not only partakers of the heavenly calling, v. 1, but they are partakers of Christ, v. 14. His strength is made perfect in their weakness. His Spirit is their Comforter and Sanctifier. His wisdom makes them wise unto salvation. His righteousness is their justification. His redemption makes sure their release. His death is their life. His life secures them from the curse. His joy in glory is the joy into which at death they shall enter. They are Christ's and Christ is theirs. "They are interested in all that is Christ's, in all that he is, in all that he has done." On this point the language of scripture is strong: "We are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones;" "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me;" "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit," Eph. 5:30; Gal. 2:20; 1 Cor. 5:17. The believer in Christ has an interest in Christ's person, and Christ is his Lord and Proprietor, his Friend and Brother, his Shepherd and his all in all. He, who has Christ cannot be poor. We are not naturally partakers of Christ, but we *are made* so in our adoption and regeneration. This is the plan of salvation to unite men to Christ by a faith, which is of the operation of God.

23. All the scriptures declare perseverance in faith and holiness necessary to salvation, v. 14. Compare v. 6.

The fearful soul that tires and faints,  
And walks the ways of God no more,  
Is but esteemed almost a saint,  
And makes his own destruction sure.

All good men wish the godly to persevere in all that is right,

and so to be saved. When Dr. Adam Clarke exhorts the pious to constancy and perseverance, all good men thank him for his fidelity. But when he says on this chapter: "Multitudes of believers have fallen, and, for ought we know, rose no more," he asserts what he does not even attempt to prove, and what no one can prove. He ventures not to name the man. No one can name the man. Nor is there any case recorded. Where is the chapter or verse? Indeed his assertion is in the very teeth of God's word: "A just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again," Pr. 24: 16; "Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand," Ps. 37: 24. If any say that these promises have special reference to falling into calamities and troubles, that is admitted; but if God upholds his chosen in their greatest trials, shall they perish at times when not tried? Besides other scriptures declare in terms very clear the certainty of their salvation. "All that the Father giveth me shall come unto me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out," John 6: 37. Compare John 10: 27-30. The elect cannot be so deceived as to come short of salvation, Matt. 24: 24. God's promise and grace render such a thing impossible. Again says Christ, "He that heareth my word and believeth on me hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life," John 5: 24. But if one can pass from life unto death, surely he may come into condemnation. The author of life in the soul of man is God himself. Shall he give a new heart and then change his mind, and leave the poor soul to sink at last? What say the scriptures? "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ," Phil. 2: 6. Was this a vain confidence in Paul? Much more do the scriptures say to the same effect. Compare Deut. 33: 25; Job 17: 9; Rom. 14: 4; 16: 25; 1 Cor. 10: 13; 1 Pet. 1: 5. All good men are agreed that he, who backslides from God and is not reclaimed will be lost; that he, who does not endure to the end, shall not be saved, and that he, who is faithful unto death, shall receive a crown of life. The reason, why hypocrites do not hold on in a good way, is that they are hypocrites. They never were in heart truly engaged to be the Lord's. So the beloved disciple accounts for the apostasies of his day, 1 John 2: 19. Holy men must persevere. "Previous obedience excuses not subsequent apostasy, and a faith that has been abandoned does not justify at the Divine tribunal." "Perseverance is an evidence of soundness." Nor is it possible to prove one's soundness in faith, if he turns to folly and goes after vanity and makes a lie his confidence.

24. From what has been said it clearly appears that he, who would save his soul, has a great work to do; a pilgrimage to perform; a race to run; a crown to win; a God to glorify and many enemies to overcome, vs. 13, 15.

25. Let us never join in with the wicked, vs. 15, 16. If they provoke, let us not provoke; if they tempt God, let not us tempt God. It was a great error among the Jews who came up from Egypt that they were so much influenced by bad examples. Go not with the multitude to do evil, Ex. 23 : 2. Compare Proverbs 11 : 21 ; 16 : 5.

26. In stating important or necessary truth it is no part of fidelity to use uncharitable language, v. 16. The inspired writers carefully avoid needless severity. Though it was notorious that great numbers of the Israelites perished in the wilderness for their unbelief, yet Paul says *some*, for that was sufficient to make his address pointed. He shows the same delicacy elsewhere. Let us imitate his good example.

27. This Scripture like many others distinctly lays the blame of wickedness at the door of unbelief. In particular note vs. 12, 18, 19. Unbelief is itself a departure from the living God. It hinders all good. It spoils every thing. Unbelief has as many forms as the varied conditions of men permit. Ernesti : "Unbelief is the fountain of all sins, as faith is that of all virtues." Tong : "A heart of unbelief is an evil heart. Unbelief is a great sin, it vitiates the heart of man. It is the great damning sin of the world, especially of those who have a revelation of the mind and will of God." Patterson : "Where there is a departure from God, it needs must spring from unbelief; and where there is unbelief, there must needs be an alienation from God. Unbelief in itself involves the renunciation of God; it is essentially by faith that fellowship with Him is carried on; and the failure to believe necessarily sets the soul aside from his noble service." Most men admit that they have received great gifts from God. But they practically deny that these bring them under any obligation to love and obey God. Rambach : "Unbelief is the single and proper cause of damnation. If any thing could give us right apprehensions of the evil nature of unbelief it would be such an example as that here presented by the apostle in the history of his countrymen, or in this still stranger rejection of their own Messiah. And as unbelief excluded the Israelites from the land of promise and brought ruin on a whole generation, so does unbelief now shut men out from the kingdom of God and blast all their prospects for eternity." Gouge : "The unbeliever regards neither promises nor threatenings, nor any part of God's word, so as the fear of God cannot possess his

heart; and if no fear of God, then no conscience of any sin." Gouge has made a summary of the evils of unbelief as mentioned in Scripture :

"1. Unbelief hardens men's hearts against means afforded for their good, 2 Kings 17 : 14; Exod. 9 : 19, 21.

2. It keeps them from being established in the way of God, Isa. 7 : 9.

3. It makes them reject those whom God sends, John 5 : 38; Matt. 21 : 32.

4. It takes away the profit of God's word, Heb. 4 : 2.

5. It perverts the plainest manner of teaching, John 3 : 12; 10 : 25.

6. It makes miracles not to be regarded, John 12 : 37.

7. It enrageth men's minds against the truth, Acts 17 : 5.

8. It moved the apostles to depart from people, Acts 19 : 9.

9. It makes one unfit to call on God, Rom. 10 : 4.

10. Unbelievers can in nothing please God, Heb. 11 : 6.

11. They are no sheep of Christ, John 10 : 26.

12. They are under Satan's power, 2 Cor. 4 : 4.

13. To unbelievers nothing is pure, Titus 1 : 15.

14. The gifts which Christ bestows upon them are fruitless and without power, Matt. 17 : 20.

15. Christ's own power is stinted to them, Matt. 13 : 58.

16. Unbelief makes men do detestable acts, 1 Tim. 1 : 13.

17. It was an especial cause of the rejection of the Jews, Rom. 11 : 20.

18. It was the cause of many external judgments, v. 19, Heb. 11 : 31; for it makes men run headlong into danger, Exod. 14 : 23.

19. It excludes from heaven, Heb. 4 : 11.

20. It thrusts down to hell, Luke 12 : 46; Mark 16 : 16; John 3 : 18; 2 Thess. 2 : 12; Rev. 21 : 8."

The great cure of unbelief is lively faith. Nor is there any remedy for it effectual until we do believe in God. These two are opposite to each other, as water and fire, light and darkness. One expels the other. We must believe. We must believe with the heart.

28. Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. The historic records of Jewish unbelief are loud sermons to us; and the doom that came on them is a prediction of our ruin, if we imitate their sins. Well and wisely does Clarke say: "Where there are so many snares and dangers, it is impossible to be too watchful and circumspect. Satan, as a roaring lion, as a subtle serpent, or in the guise of an angel of light, is momentarily going about, seeking whom he may deceive, blind, and devour; and

when it is considered that the human heart, till renewed, is on his side, it is a miracle of mercy that any soul escapes perdition: no man is safe any longer than he maintains the spirit of *watchfulness* and *prayer*; and to maintain such a spirit he has need of all the means of grace. He, who neglects any of them which the mercy of God has placed in his power, tempts the devil to tempt him." Scott: "Let us beware of trusting to outward privileges or profession; remembering that unbelief and disobedience will exclude men from God's promised rest, and that nothing else can do it." Guyse: "No outward privileges or professions of religion will secure us from divine wrath, if our hearts are not right with God." Let us never forget that God hates sin as much now as he ever did, and that sins of ingratitude and unbelief under the gospel are much more aggravated than the same sins under the law of Moses, for the plain reason that the present is much more glorious than any preceding dispensation of God's mercy to man.

29. There is a rest for God's people. It is found in the glorious gospel of the blessed God, and, through that, in heaven above.

## CHAPTER IV.

### VERSES 1-11.

#### THE PROMISED REST CONCERNS US. LET US STRIVE TO ENTER IN.

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.

2 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*.

3 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.

4 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.

5 And in this *place* again, If they shall enter into my rest.

6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief :

7 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.

8 For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.

9 There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God *did* from his.

11 Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

**R**EST is the prominent theme of this section. Something was said of it in the last. More is said of it here :

1. *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.* Peshito: Let us fear, therefore, lest while there is a firm promise of entering into his rest, any among you should be found coming short of entering. It is doubtful whether the meaning is that the promise is left to us, or deserted by us. The authorized version

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takes the former view, and is supported by Peshito, Arabic, Conybeare and Howson, Stuart and Craik. The latter is the sense gathered by the Ethiopic, Coverdale, Tyndale, Cranmer, Genevan, Rheims, and Doway. Scholars seem to be very much divided in the same way. Nor does either the derivation, use or form of the word rendered left enable us to decide positively how the question should be settled. It occurs in one other place in this epistle (11:27) and is there rendered forsook. It may mean either left remaining, or forsaken. It is pleasant to know that the sound instruction of the passage is not materially varied, understand the word *left* as we may. If we forsake the promise we fail. If a promise is left us, that lays us under great obligations and we ought to give the more earnest heed not to fail of salvation. The next verse seems to be in favor of the rendering of the authorized version. See also vs. 6, 7, 9. The rendering of the rest of verse 1 admits of no serious doubt. The alarming truth urged upon us in the words *seem to come short of it* is based on the truth that men are seldom better than they seem to be. Commonly if they appear to be without God, they are without God. Sometimes for a season one may seem to be a child of God, and yet be a hypocrite; but if to just people one seems to be a child of the wicked one, the very strong presumption is that he is so. When by scriptural rules of judgment one reaches the conclusion that he is not in the narrow way, he is pretty certainly in the broad way. When all seemings and appearances are against one, the truth is against him. Yet the word rendered seem means more than a bare seeming. But there is nothing to justify us in rendering it imagine as Ebrard does. In judging of one's self this is a very safe rule. The *rest* here spoken of is that into which men enter when by faith they believe the gospel, which in this world gives rest to the weary and promises to them a perfect rest beyond this life. Some would limit its meaning to the heavenly rest, yet admit it is attained through the belief of the gospel. The *fear* here enjoined is not that of dismay, horror, or dejection—terror, which unfits one for any service, nor that which has torment in it, nor even that godly fear without which there is no scriptural piety; but it is the fear of caution, inspiring salutary heed and vigilance. It puts men on their guard and leads them to use all proper means of safety.

2. *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 *gospel was preached* Peshito has, is the announcement; Tyndale, was it declared; Cranmer, is it declared; Rheims, it hath been denounced; Doway, it hath been declared;

Stuart, blessings are proclaimed; Craik, glad tidings have been announced; Genevan agrees with the authorized version, and that best gives the sense. The Greek is one word, a verb. The cognate nouns for gospel and evangelist, which occur often, are rendered with absolute uniformity. In the authorized version the verb is but once rendered declared, Rev. 10:7. It is rendered preach, preach the gospel, bring good tidings, show glad tidings, and, in the passive form, the gospel is preached. This is the sense here. We need find no difficulty with this, for the gospel was preached unto Abraham, Gal. 3:8. That father of believers saw Christ's day and was glad, John 8:56. And he lived long before the time of Moses, and under a dispensation far more dark than that of the Sinaitic covenant. The gospel is no novelty. The law had a shadow of good things to come. See Ex. 6:7, 8; 19:6; 33:14; 1 Cor. 10:2. Offers of rest were made to Israel of old. So it is preached to us in many ways. We have the written word, the oath and sacraments of God. *The word preached*, literally the word of hearing, did not *profit*, or help, or prove useful to them. The reason was, it was not received into good and honest hearts purified by faith, it was not mixed with faith in them that heard it. Divine truth not credited has no more power to save than a fable, or a dream. We nullify all the promises, and we render inoperative the most blessed truths when we discredit or doubt the divine testimony respecting them. The word rendered mixed occurs in but one other place in the New Testament (1 Cor. 12:24), and is there rendered tempered together. It is not certain what is the basis of the figure. Some have thought that it was the mixing of food with gastric juices that it may nourish the body, and this may be so, but this is not made manifest in the words of the clause or in the context. The truth is declared that unbelief rendered unprofitable to many the saving truths made known of old.

3. *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 an explanation of the oath here spoken of, see on Heb. 3:11, 18. The apostle asserts that they, who heard God's offers in unbelief, did not enter into the rest of the earthly Canaan. God's oath determined that matter once for all. But we, who now have true faith, do enter into a rest, of which all other rests mentioned in the more ancient scriptures were but types. We have a glorious system of truths, accompanied by the power of divine grace, working in us all those tempers and sentiments, hopes and persuasions, which are suited to give rest to the weary even now, and which infallibly lead him to expect a more glorious rest hereafter. The

word rendered *although*, means nevertheless, or, and yet, *q. d.* There was a rest provided of old, for God long since finished the heavens and the earth. From the foundation of the world there was a heavenly rest, a home in glory, made ready for his children, who set their hope in God. To it righteous Abel and Enoch and others were long since admitted. The very fact that God rested the seventh day showed that his works were finished, and that a rest was in readiness for those that pleased him. This rest was known long before Abram left Chaldea for Canaan. It was set forth in the early scriptures. The rest which God kept after creation contains the germ of the ideas connected with the other rests spoken of in scripture.

4. *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.* He [that is Moses] spoke in a certain place, which is Genesis 2:2. The same fact is subsequently stated, Ex. 20:11; 31:17. In the last place cited it is not only stated that God rested, but it is added that he *was refreshed*, indicating in terms that we could understand that the rest mentioned was truly a refreshment.

5. *And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest.* The words *my rest* indicate the greatness of the blessing and the sovereign right of property held by Jehovah in the holy day, and in the land of Canaan. The passage referred to is Num. 14:12, 28-31. But the holy day and the holy land both pointed to larger blessings yet to come, which should pre-eminently constitute what God emphatically calls "*my rest*," that is the rest of which the Sabbath and the holy land were but emblems, a rest on high obtained through the gospel of Jesus Christ, in whom alone the weary find rest.

6. *Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief.* Some make verses 7-10 parenthetical. But there is as much grammatical difficulty in connecting verse 6 with verse 11 as with verse 3 or verse 7. Clarke objects to the rendering *some must enter*. But the authorized version is the same as that of Coverdale, Tyndale, Cranmer, Genevan, Stuart and Craik. Wiclif has *summen schulcn entre*; Doway, *some are to enter*. God did not provide a rest without knowing that some should enter into it. Jesus Christ did not die on an uncertainty whether his sufferings should be amply rewarded. The certainty that some shall be saved does not rest on one text but on many. Perhaps very few are prepared to say that it is doubtful whether half the mansions in glory will be occupied, or whether Christ will save as many as he expected. If these views be correct we need not much discuss

whether we shall follow the old English versions or some other. Clarke prefers Owen's: it remaineth that some enter into it. This conveys all that any intelligent commentator contends for—the gospel shall not be without saving effect; heaven shall not be left empty. It has been shown that the word rest is applied to the Sabbath, and to the repose of Canaan, of which last many, who had a fair opportunity of entering, fell short by a wicked unbelief. Then five hundred years after Canaan was settled, David, speaking by the Holy Ghost, warns men not to harden their hearts lest they come short of some blessing which he calls God's rest. This can only mean the saving truths of God's word, somewhat revealed in Eden, much more in later days, until when Jesus Christ came it was fully manifested; or, it may mean the rest in heaven obtained by believers in the gospel, revealed both before and since the birth of Christ. If unbelievers, by reason of their rejection of the divine testimony, cannot enter in, it is evident that believers may by faith enter in. According to the teaching of Ps. 95 there is evidently a rest much later than the Sabbath instituted at the completion of creation, later than the rest in the holy land, and to avail ourselves of it at all, we must have faith. It is a spiritual rest entered by reliance on God's word, and terminating in eternal glory. The chief difficulty in the verse arises from the word rendered *seeing*. It is in three other places rendered seeing; several times else, because, for then, otherwise, forasmuch as, and once since. It must be confessed that there is great difficulty in finding any English word or phrase approved by scholars, exactly corresponding to the Greek. But this is not a rare case. The same occurs in many authors, sacred and profane. Perhaps the force of it may be equivalent to this, it is evident. The difficulty lies in the want of authority for such rendering.

7. *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. Saying in David is saying by David, who wrote Ps. 95. After so long a time, a time so long as had elapsed since the journey in the wilderness. On the meaning of the terms and the import of the whole see above on Heb. 3:7, 8. Stuart well expresses the sense and connection of the whole: "In David's time, nearly five hundred years after unbelievers in the wilderness were threatened with exclusion from the promised inheritance, the Psalmist makes use of the commination which has been quoted, in order to deter those whom he addressed from hardening their hearts as the ancient Israelites did, and so losing the rest, as they did, which God proffered to the obedient and believing."*

8. *For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.* Jesus and Joshua are the same proper name. The person here referred to is beyond a doubt the successor of Moses in leading Israel. The Peshito reads Joshua, the son of Nun; and Theodoret, Joshua the son of Nave. Indeed most of the versions render it Josue, and the Doway has a note saying it means Josue. Paul follows the mode of giving the name of Joshua adopted in the Septuagint. Luke does the same in Acts 7:45. The apostle here says if this man had given them rest—that is, rest in the highest sense, all the rest God intended for his people, all the rest his people sought and expected, then God would not have spoken of another and higher rest. But instead of the rest of the Sabbath and the rest of Canaan exhausting the scriptural meaning of that word, they merely serve to give us some faint idea of a better rest. So David was taught of God to instruct his cotemporaries, as we have seen. So when our Immanuel came, he cried, “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” Matt. 11:28, 29. Calvin well says of the pious of old, “it is certain that they looked higher than to that land; nay, the land of Canaan was so much prized from no other consideration than that it was an image and symbol of a spiritual inheritance.”

9. *There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.* Peshito: Therefore it is established, that the people of God are to have a Sabbath. Wiclif also has saboth; Rheims, sabbatisme; Calvin, Italian, Conybeare and Howson, and Craik, a Sabbath-rest. The old English versions generally have rest. This word rendered rest is found here only in the New Testament. It is formed by taking the word Sabbath and giving it a Greek termination. By the use of it the apostle would show us that the rest, in which God was refreshed, was a type of the rest of his people. There are two interpretations of this verse. One is that Paul means to say that from Ps. 95 it is clear that some rest was promised to God's people above and beyond an inheritance in Canaan, even the rest, which Jesus Christ gives to believing souls, and which is followed by everlasting rest in glory. The other is that in this verse the apostle declares that over and above the rest of the Sabbath, the rest of Canaan and the rest of the gospel, there is yet beyond this a rest in heaven, eternal glory and joy in the presence of God. Both these interpretations bring us to the same blessed result. Neither of them teaches error. The mass of plain readers of the Bible probably prefer the latter, and so do some fine scholars. This

interpretation seems to be called for by the words next succeeding.

10. *For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.* This rest doubtless means God's rest. So Stuart, F. S. Sampson, Conybeare and Howson, and others. God had spoken of "my rest." None other had been named. It is rather overstraining and confounding things to say that this means that when one truly embraces the gospel and finds rest for his soul in the merits of Christ, he ceases to rely on his own works. Although this is truth and very precious truth, yet it is not the truth taught here. What the apostle would have us learn from this verse is that when the believer has finished his course on earth and entered into his everlasting rest in the bosom of God he rests from "those labors and sufferings which make up the toils of his militant state." As on the seventh day God made nothing, but rested from all exercise of creative power, wisdom and goodness, so at death the child of God rests from his labors, and sorrows, and conflicts, and temptations, and fears, and toils; and his soul is hushed and quiet on the bosom of God, God having wiped away all tears. It is an unhappy turn that Gill and Tong would give to this verse, viz.: that it is Jesus Christ who is here spoken of as having entered into his rest as God did into his. Paul is exhorting and encouraging the Hebrews to be firm and endure to the end, and tells them that when the sorrows of this life are ended, then will come a rest provided by God and comparable to that of God after he had finished the work of creation. F. S. Sampson: "The believer's rest is 'God's rest,' in that it is like God's. Glorious as is the exaltation, in comparison with the believer's person and deserts, he need not fear to embrace and triumph in its vastness." The practical duty growing out of this state of case and this line of argument is thus stated:

11. *Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.* The apostle had at some length stated the glorious prize set before us, had shown that it was far greater than the possession of Canaan, that many Israelites came up from Egypt, who for their unbelief never entered Canaan, and that the heavenly rest might be lost in the same way. Thus he appealed to both their hopes and fears to be in earnest and diligent in working out their salvation. *Let us labor, i. e.* let us give diligence, let us study, let us endeavor, let us be forward, as the verb is elsewhere rendered, Gal. 2:10; Eph. 4:3; 2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Pet. 1:10. It denotes intentness, earnestness, diligence, high effort. The *fall* here spoken of is either a fall into unbelief, as some think, or more probably a fatal and final coming short of heaven. Calvin: "To

fall then is taken for to perish ; or to speak more precisely, not for the sin but the punishment." Diodati: To fall is to perish. Where in scripture is laxity of views, of principles or of practice spoken of as either safe or right?

DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL REMARKS.

1. Our knowledge of the fact that some have committed folly and made shipwreck of their immortal interests makes us the more criminal, if we walk in their ways, v. 1. This is a fair inference here made from the preceding chapter. The apostle draws it out much more at length in 1 Cor. 10 : 5-11.

2. Where the danger is common to all we ought to include ourselves in the warnings we give to others, v. 1. Paul sets us the example. Elsewhere he tells how he carried out such warnings in his own case, 1 Cor. 9 : 27. He, who does not himself practise circumspection, is not the right man to put others on their guard.

3. We must nicely discriminate between the different classes of our emotions, else we shall make sad mistakes, and quite pervert the word of God. We are called on to fear, v. 1. Other scriptures say to us, Fear not, and, Perfect love casteth out fear, Isa. 41 : 10 ; 43 : 1 ; 1 John 4 : 18. Some portions of God's word ever seem to the careless and undiscriminating no less contradictory. Beyond a question there is a fear of God, which enters into the nature of true piety in all cases, in all worlds. This is made clear by very many scriptures. Take these as a sample, Ps. 111 : 10 ; Pr. 1 : 7 ; Jer. 10 : 7 ; Matt. 10 : 28 ; Heb. 12 : 28 ; Rev. 15 : 4. This fear may be very strong, and even produce great bodily agitations, Hab. 3 : 16. It is no less clear from God's word that there is a salutary fear, which consists in a lively sense of our dangers and in a strong dread of their power, cunning and malignity, a fear of sin and temptation. This will be made very clear by consulting Pr. 28 : 14 ; Phil. 2 : 12 ; 1 Pet. 1 : 17 ; and many parallel passages. Nor is there any lack of warnings and exhortations suited to inspire this useful fear. The word of God gives us cases of great failures in duty, even where appearances had been promising, John 6 : 66. Nay more, it tells us of even good men sadly suffering for the want of caution, Luke 22 ; 31-34. In this very epistle virtually the same warning is given us in many places. Here we have the words, Let us fear, v. 1. In Heb. 3 : 12 we have the solemn warning, Take heed ; in Heb. 6 : 11 we are called on to show diligence ; in Heb. 10 : 23 the exhortation is, Let us hold fast our profession ; in Heb. 12 : 15 we are commanded to look diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God ; and in Heb. 12 : 25, See that

ye refuse not him that speaketh from heaven. Dickson: "A race must be run ere we come to our full rest." Tong: "One good means to prevent either our real falling short, or our seeming to fall short is to maintain a holy and a religious fear lest we should fall short. This will make us vigilant and diligent, sincere and serious; this fear will put us upon examining our faith, and exercising it; whereas presumption is the high road to ruin." Scott describes the fear we need as an 'humble and jealous distrust of our hearts, a diligent self-examining attention to every means of grace, and a careful watchfulness against temptation.' Duncan: "We are bound to exercise, not a slavish fear, but a watchful fear proceeding from a belief of the desert of sin, and of the greatness of God; and issuing in low thoughts of ourselves, and a watchful using the means God has appointed to prevent our coming short of the promise." The reasons for such fear are many and valid. 1. The best of men are men at the best, Acts 14: 15; Jas. 5: 17. 2. Satan seems to have a great spite against the best men, Job 1: 6-19; Ezek. 3: 1. He assaulted even Christ himself, Matt. 4: 3-11. 3. If Satan can seduce a good man, it seems for a while to give desperate courage to the wicked, and they rage and rail at a fearful rate, 2 Sam. 12: 14; Gal. 2: 13. Nor is this all, for 4. Satan has sometimes gained terrible advantages over the best of mere men, as Noah, and Abram, and Lot, and Jacob, and David, and Peter, and James, and John. Let the strong and self-confident beware. And let the weak cling closely to Christ, to duty and to the promises. Doddridge: "Let us take the alarm, and exercise that pious *fear* which so well consists with a cheerful hope in God." A Christian without care and caution is like a field without hedge or fence. McLean: "Many have adopted a scheme of doctrine which tends to set believers free from every kind of fear, as being inconsistent with faith, which they think is a person's believing that he himself shall be saved at all events; and especially, if he has been once enlightened, and has ever received the word with joy," etc. Now when a man truly believes, his reliance is not on himself at all but on the Lord Jesus. The more confidence one has in himself, the less evidence has he that he has ever believed to the saving of his soul. So that Owen is right: "Gospel comminations ought to be managed towards all sorts of professors promiscuously, be they true believers, temporary, or hypocrites." The wise man thus surms up the whole: "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool; but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered," Pr. 28: 26.

4. Who will finally *come short* of heavenly bliss? This is an awful question, but it is pressed upon us by the language of v. 1. It will do us good rightly to consider it. It is answered directly

and somewhat at length in many scriptures. See Ps. 15:1-5; Luke 6:24-26; 1 Cor. 6:9, 10; Gal. 5:19-21; Rev. 22:15. Owen: "Many, to whom the promise of the gospel is proposed and preached, do, or may, through their own sins, come short of the enjoyment of the things promised." All those will come short of heaven, who live and die scorning, or neglecting the salvation of the gospel, even though they hold the truth, but hold it in unrighteousness, or profess the true religion in hypocrisy, or waste their lives in idle dreams and unpractical resolutions about future amendment, or cherish iniquity in their hearts, or hate any truth of God revealed for their salvation or direction. Men may even commend the truth to others, and yet perish in their own corruptions, Rom. 2:17-23. They may abound in external religious duties and yet be the enemies of God, Isa. 1:11-15. They may be admiring hearers of the truth of God, and yet have no heart to practise it, and so utterly fail of salvation, Ezek. 33:31, 32. Or they may be almost Christians, may be not far from the kingdom of heaven, and yet may not be altogether Christians and remain outside of the kingdom of heaven. Gracious promises not accepted will save no one. Chrysostom: "Do not think that having merely heard the word preached it shall profit you." Theodoret: "What does the promise of God profit those who receive it, not receiving it in faith, not confiding in the power of God, and, as it were, mingling with the words of God?" The best preaching can do us no good if its lessons are not reduced to practice. If an angel from heaven should come and teach us the way of life, blind and perverse conduct would make his discourses wholly powerless. Nay, the Lord from heaven did himself hold forth the most glorious truths to vast multitudes, who soon utterly rejected the message and the messenger, John 6:66. True, "faith comes by hearing;" but it is such hearing as joyfully believes truth, and honestly reduces it to practice. Some hearing is indeed to hope and holiness, obedience and salvation; but much hearing is to hardness of heart and a deeper condemnation. It is a great privilege to hear the pure gospel and a heavy guilt to hear it in vain.

5. Any dark sign respecting our spiritual state ought to awaken concern, v. 1. To seem to come short is itself alarming. Tong: "It is a dreadful thing so much as to seem to fall short of the gospel salvation, to seem so to themselves, to lose their comfortable hope; and to seem so to others, so losing the honor of their holy profession." But if our advantages are great, so are our responsibilities. The stony ground hearers greatly rejoiced in the pleasing views they obtained; but they do not seem to have rejoiced with trembling. It is an awful thing to leave this world in

uncertainty whether the first sound that shall greet our ears on entering the invisible world will be the alleluias of the blest or the wailings of the damned. In judging ourselves, we should be strict and severe, not unjust, nor unscriptural, and never forget that in the last day, God will show no mercy beyond what is promised in Scripture. In judging others, we may and we ought to be mild and lenient, for charity believeth all things and hopeth all things. But in ourselves we should screen no error, and be blind to no fault, If we would thus judge ourselves, we should not be judged of the Lord, 1 Cor. 11 : 31.

6. The conceptions presented to our minds by *coming short* of heaven is of the most terrible kind, v. 1. In the first place it implies that had we been rightly disposed, we might have entered into God's rest. Had we received the glad news with half the good-will with which it was sent, Heaven would have been ours. If men, who hear the gospel, perish, the loss of their souls will be as unnecessary as it will be dreadful. An old writer very reasonably thus conceives of the lamentation of a lost soul: "Ah miserable wretch that I am! Undone for ever!—*for ever!* Oh, those killing words—'*For ever!*' Will not a thousand thousand years bring my misery to a close? No, no; it will never have an end. After the thousand thousand years, it will be '*for ever*' still. Oh, hapless, helpless, hopeless state indeed! It is this '*for ever*' which is the hell of hells! Oh, wretch that I am!—damned to all eternity! I have wilfully, obstinately undone myself! Oh! what stupendous folly am I guilty of, in choosing sin's short and momentary pleasure, at the dear rate of everlasting woe! How often have I been told that it would be so! How often have I been pressed to leave those paths of sin that would be sure to bring me to the chambers of eternal death! But I, like the deaf adder, lent no ear unto those charmers, though they charmed so wisely. They often told me that my short-lived pleasures would quickly issue in eternal pain; and now my sad experience tells me it is so indeed. Now it is too late to help it. It's *too late!* My fate is fixed for ever.

"Why had I reason given me? Why was I made with an immortal soul, and yet should take so little care of it? Oh, how my own neglect stings me to death! and yet I know I cannot—I must not die. Oh! to live on—on—on—on, in bitterness of remorse, is worse than ten thousand deaths; and yet I might have helped all this, and would not! Oh! that is the gnawing worm that never dies! I might have been happy. Salvation was offered to me a thousand times, and yet (wretch that I was) I still as often refused it. Oh, cursed sin, that with deluding pleasures bewitches man-

kind to eternal ruin! God often called, but I as often refused. He stretched his hand out, but I would not mind it. How often have I set at nought his counsel! How often refused his reproof! But now the scene is changed; the case is altered. My doom is fixed. I scoffed at grace: I refused pardon; and now I reap the reward of my own doings. Justice condemns me to eternal banishment from the presence of God."

7. The Christian's life is a pilgrimage, v. 1. The figure here is not of a race as some suppose, but of a journey through the wilderness. To bring that pilgrimage to a happy end, take these directions: *A.* When the pillar of cloud stands still, stand thou still; when it moves, move thou. Eye God's providence in all things. *B.* Obey your leader. Whenever Israel rejected the word of God sent them by Moses, it was ill with them. *C.* Look forward, not backward—to Canaan, not to Egypt. Remember Lot's wife. Remember those who fell in the wilderness, *D.* Be intent upon your work and your journey. Be not slothful. *E.* Beware of unholy alliances. Heathenish men and heathenish thoughts will pour in like a flood. Resist them. *F.* Encumber not yourself with needless worldly goods. They will but prove impediments. *G.* Be of good courage. Cowardice is a great foe to progress. It kept Israel wandering forty years, when forty days should have been enough for their journey. *H.* Never flag till you reach the promised land and have your inheritance among the redeemed. *I.* Guard continually against every form and degree of unbelief. Take God at his word. Distrust yourself ever so much. Distrust God not at all.

8. The Jews had somewhat of the Gospel inwoven into their system by means of sacrifices and other things of a typical nature. This was a great privilege, v. 2. But how much greater is the privilege of living under the full blaze of the light of the gospel. Kings and prophets and righteous men desired to see and to hear the things which are commonly known among us, but died without the sight. Let us not rely on the hearing of the gospel as if it were self-saving; for men may hear and provoke. But let us hear and obey. Listen and believe. The mere preaching of the gospel, ever so purely and ever so powerfully, cannot save him who does not receive it into a good and honest heart. Our salvation is to be made sure, not by mere hearing, but by believing; not by believing with a mere historical, or temporary, or disobedient faith; but with a faith which works by love, Gal. 5:6, purifies the heart, Acts 15:9, overcomes the world, 1 John 5:4, and quenches all the fiery darts of the wicked one, Eph. 6:16. This sort of faith is essential in every part of the Christian life. In God's

plan every thing depends on faith, John 3 : 36 ; Acts 16 : 31 ; Rom. 1 : 16 ; 10 : 10 ; Gal. 3 : 7 ; Eph. 2 : 8. We may have abundance of dead faith, which shall be wholly inoperative ; but if we would be saved, let us have that "mighty, God-begotten principle of faith—a principle with which pardon, sanctity, wisdom, hope, peace, joy, eternal glory, are all so intimately associated, in the doctrine of the Bible and in the experience of the soul!" God cannot admit unbelievers to the blessings which pertain to believers alone. Nor ought we to stagger at any of the promises of God. That which he has pledged is as sure as that which he has already given.

9. Faith always succeeds, v. 3. It succeeds even here. The Apostle is explicit: "We which have believed do enter into rest." That repose of the soul on the bosom of the Redeemer, which is found in believing, is a foretaste as well as a pledge of the rest which remains to the people of God hereafter. Nor is there any danger of our believing too firmly every word that God has spoken. Of the promises of man we may judge, enquire and hesitate. Our faith in human testimony is explicit. But our faith in God's word is implicit. The less it hesitates, the better is its quality.

10. It is vain to hope that God will break his word in order to save any man from the direst consequences of persistent wickedness, v. 3. He has sworn that he will not do it. It is one of the peculiar follies of human wickedness to go upon the presumption that Jehovah will not condignly punish. The devils believe and tremble, Jas. 2 : 19. Men believe and laugh at the most awful truths. Tong: "As sure as God is entered into his rest, so sure it is that obstinate unbelievers shall be excluded ; as sure as the unbelieving Jews fell in the wilderness and never reached the Promised Land, so sure it is that unbelievers shall fall into destruction and never reach heaven." "By his oath God binds himself and is not free to alter it." When the Lord swears, he will not repent, Isa. 54 : 9, 10. Woe to the man who provokes the Almighty to swear that he shall not enter the home of the blessed.

11. The Sabbath is a blessed institution, an emblem of all the good that has come on the just and of all the blessings which shall come on the righteous forever, v. 4. Good and sound men are not entirely agreed whether the Sabbath under the gospel is intended by implication to be sanctioned by vs. 3-9. It is not necessary to solve that doubt. Other scriptures make it clear, that the primitive church under the guidance of the apostles did observe the first day of the week. On that day Christ arose and first appeared to his disciples. The day of Pentecost was a glorious gospel Sabbath. Apostolic example is as safe and correct a guide

as apostolic precept, and both of these have decided the question, Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1. More than half a century after Christ's ascension, John speaks as if all Christians would understand him, when he mentions *the Lord's day*, Rev. 1:10. The Talmud says, "Eternity is all a Sabbath." If men have no relish for the appropriate duties of one day in seven as a sacred rest, how can they hope to be fit for a Sabbath which shall never end? Bonar: "Israel's Sabbath was to be a 'rest-day of rest,' a thorough season of repose from care and toil, Lev. 25:3. So, surely, ought thine to be even in this tumultuous world; and thy soul should thus keep its constant Sabbath, too, since thy work is all ended by thy risen Lord." Whitby: "We shall pass a perpetual *Sabbath* in those elevations of pure devotion, which the sublimest moments of our most sacred and happy days here can teach us but imperfectly to conceive." Owen: "From the foundation of the world, there was a work of God, and a rest ensuing thereon; and an entrance proposed unto men into that rest, and a day of rest as a pledge thereof given unto them." Barnes: "Heaven will be like a Sabbath. The best description of it is to say, it is *an eternal Sabbath*. Take the Sabbath on earth, when best observed, and extend the idea to eternity, and let there be separated all idea of imperfection from its observance, and that will be heaven. The Sabbath is holy; so is heaven. It is a period of worship; so is heaven. It is for praise, and for the contemplation of heavenly truth; so is heaven. The Sabbath is appointed that we may lay aside worldly cares and anxieties for a little season here; heaven, that we may lay them aside forever."

12. It is certain that God will save some men, v. 6. To that end he has, from the foundation of the world, prepared for them a home, Matt. 25:34. Lindsay: "The Apostle assumes it as a point which cannot be doubted, that when God has provided a rest, the provision shall not be in vain. The table of the Lord shall not want guests: the heavenly country shall not want inhabitants. Sooner than this should be, the very stones would be endowed with life, and utter forth the praises of God: if those who were first invited reject the invitation, God's house shall be furnished with guests from the streets and the lanes, the waysides and the bypaths." Gouge: "What God hath promised shall be effected." If unbelief annihilates the promise, it is only to those who practise that great sin. If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful, 2 Tim. 2:13. There is no danger that heaven will be a wilderness without inhabitant. God's covenant with his Son makes it certain that many shall be actually saved, Isa. 49:5-12; John 6:37. Owen: "The faithfulness of God in his promises is not to be measured by

the faith or obedience of men, at any one season in any one generation, nor by their sins whereby they come short of them, nor by any providential dispensation toward them . . . There are many promises whose signal accomplishment God hath not limited to any special season, but keeps it in his own will, to act according to them towards his church as is best suited to his wisdom and love."

13. The offers of mercy, so long continued and so urgently made, prove God's amazing forbearance and boundless compassion, v. 7. Scott: "Let sinners, then, labor to enter into this rest, lest they should fall after the example of ancient unbelievers and perish with heaven before their eyes." In temporal affairs, men do sometimes decline very good proposals. That is by mistake. But in spiritual affairs, they decline the best offers ever made, and too commonly with their eyes open, but always by hardening their hearts.

14. Joshua was a type of Christ, doing for Israel what Moses could not do—leading them into the rest of Canaan, v. 8. John Brown of Haddington: "God solemnly called and fitted him for his office; nor did he ever fail or forsake him. How pregnant his name with *salvation*! Through what rivers of trouble he brings his church into their gospel state, and her true members into their gracious state! how he circumcises their hearts; feasts them on his flesh and blood; powerfully intercedes for them; miraculously conquers their foes, and enables them to tread on their necks; purchases and prepares for them the heavenly inheritance; and puts them into possession thereof; and by bringing them into covenant causes them to serve the Lord after his own example. How ready to receive returning sinners of the Gentiles! Nor, till his victories be finished, shall the luminaries of heaven, or of the church withdraw their shining."

15. Perhaps no part of Scripture is more endeared to the people of God than the ninth verse of this chapter. This has been so ever since it was written, and it will be so till the end of time. It is the foundation of that excellent treatise written by Richard Baxter, when a young man—"The Saints' Everlasting Rest." It is often quoted by the tempted, troubled, sick and dying people of God. One can hardly conceive of more that is consolatory expressed in few words than we have here. From it, Owen makes these observations: "Believers under the New Testament have lost nothing, no privilege that was enjoyed by believers under the Old Testament. Many things they have gained, and those of unspeakable excellence, but they have lost nothing at all. . . It is the people of God alone who have a right unto all the privileges of

the gospel; and who in due manner can perform all the duties of it. The rest of the gospel, and all that is comprised in it, is for them, and for them only." And all this is but a type and pledge of good things to come.

16. For the rest of believers under the gospel infallibly points to a heaven of rest in the skies. Blessed be God! there is no uncertainty concerning the future and eternal repose of the redeemed. "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. 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, that where I am, there ye may be also," John 14:2, 3. It is a righteous thing in God to recompense to those who are troubled rest with all the redeemed, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, 2 Thess. 1:7, 8. Well did John *write*, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them," Rev. 14:13. It is true that we know positively but little of that heavenly state. Nor is it necessary that we should. But God has graciously given us a large amount of negative information respecting it. We learn that there "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away," Rev. 21:4. "And there shall be no more curse; and there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign forever and ever," Rev. 22:3, 5. Even here his children have peace, the peace of God that passeth all understanding, the peace their Lord gave unto them, John 14:27. But in their heavenly home their peace and joy shall flow in upon them, like the waves of the sea, forever. Delitzsch quotes Elijah Rabba as saying "that after the Sabbath of the world to come, there is no more death, nor sin, nor punishment of sin, but only enjoyment of the wisdom and knowledge of God." Theophylact: "Here, below, indeed, many toils and painful contests await the just, as in other things so in the struggles of virtue; above, however, are no labors of moral virtue, but the inexhaustible fruition of God." At death believers enter into the rest and joy of their Lord. Heaven will not indeed be a dormitory for the inert. But "so far is true happiness from supposing a state of indolent inactivity, that it rather requires the employment of the powers and faculties in appropriate pursuits;" and so the redeemed serve God day and night in his temple, Rev. 7:15. Augustine:

“Without end God shall be seen, who is the end of our desires; without distaste he shall be loved, without weariness he shall be praised.”

17. If these things are so, we ought not to grieve for those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. If they sleep, they do well. Verily, there is a reward for the righteous. “They have not worked, watched, and waited in vain. They have served with grateful love a Master who knows how to reward those whom his own Spirit has enabled to bring forth the fruits of righteousness. It is very wonderful, but very true, that God works in his people, and by his people, that which is right and good, and then rewards them according to those works, which, of themselves, they never could have wrought.”

18. Let us therefore be fully warned and readily exhorted to great diligence in our Christian course. Let us not perish with the promised rest before us, as Israel fell in the wilderness, v. 11. Kidd: “The believer is still in the conflict, and therefore must work, and hard, too.” The scripture is full of exhortation. Let us follow the example of Paul: “Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus,” Phil. 3: 13, 14. See also Heb. 12: 1, 2; 2 Peter 3: 14. We must *agonize* if we would enter in at the strait gate, Luke 13: 24. We must not only receive Christ, but we must walk in him. “The labor which Paul here so earnestly recommends, so far from being opposed to faith, or in any way distinct from it, is the *labor of faith*; for he opposes it to the *unbelief* of Israel.” Indeed according to the scriptures, our great work in life is faith in Jesus Christ. So Christ himself taught, John 6: 27-29. Faith naturally begets diligence; and diligence, perseverance. Faith, without works, is dead, being alone, Jas. 2: 17. The necessity for constant labor and diligence in this work appears in many ways: “1. Great oppositions will and do arise against men in the work of entering into God's rest. . . 2. Some gospel precepts are exceedingly difficult to our nature, as it is weak. . . 3. All the commands of the gospel are contrary to our corrupt nature.” The prize to be gained is eternal life, worth all the conflicts and sacrifices ever made to inherit it. What are toil, and reproach, and poverty, and persecution, and self-denial, compared with the eternal enjoyment of God in heaven?

## CHAPTER IV.

VERSES 12-16.

OUR WORK IS SOLEMN, YET FULL OF ENCOURAGEMENT. WE HAVE A HIGH PRIEST. TO PRAYER HELP IS GIVEN.

12 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.

13 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.

14 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.

15 For we have not a 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.

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.

**A**RGUMENT follows exhortation. The apostle had stated in an urgent way the duty of vigilance, diligence and perseverance. He now gives the reason:

12. *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.* There has been a diversity of opinion as to the meaning of the phrase *the word of God*. Some have maintained that here, as in John 1:1; 1:14; 1 John 5:7; Rev. 19:13, it means the second person of the Trinity. Athanasius, Ambrose and other Fathers took this view. It is also preferred by Alting, Spener, Le Clerc, Berthold, Cramer, Gomarus, Capellus, Erasmus, Bp. Bull, S. Schmid, Heinsius, Biesenthal, Assembly's Annotations, John Owen and some Roman Catholic writers as Lyra, Cajetan, Cornelius a Lapide, Ribera, etc. Many others think it

means the word of God written and preached. Chrysostom seems to incline this way. This view is decidedly taken by Calvin, Beza, Diodati, Dutch Annotations, Gouge, Guyse, Dickson, Pool, Doddridge, Whitby, Tong, Hammond, Koppe, McLean, Macknight, Bloomfield, Slade, Scott, Clarke, Kuinoel, Stuart, Ebrard, Conybeare and Howson, Lindsay, Patterson, Turner, F. S. Sampson, Tait, Moll, Delitzsch, Ripley and such Roman Catholic writers as Gatenus, Adamus, Estius and Hussetius. The first thought that presents itself is that no writer in the New Testament, except John ever calls Christ the word of God. Some have maintained that the "beloved physician" (Luke 1:2; Acts 20:32) employs the phrase, *the word of God*, in application to Christ. But it is so obvious that this is overstraining those passages, that words need not be spent upon them. The Greek here rendered *word* occurs several times in this epistle, and no one except some mystics contends that it points to Christ in any other place but here only. In Heb. 13:7 we have the whole phrase, the word of God, clearly designating the truths of scripture. Nor are the power and efficacy here ascribed to the word of God greater than we find attributed to the scriptures in many places. See Ps. 19:7; Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:25; 2 Cor. 3:8, 9; Jas. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23, 25. Nor is it according to scripture imagery to say that Christ is 'sharper than any two-edged sword.' Nor is there any force in the argument drawn from that apocryphal book, the Wisdom of Solomon, 18:15, in favor of making the word of God here mean the Son of God.

Admitting that the phrase, the word of God, means the truth contained in the scripture, does it designate the whole word of God or only its threatenings? Some are earnest in confining it to the minatory portions of scripture. Schlichting and Abresch hold this view. Tait argues for it thus: "'For the word of God,' *i. e.* his threatening against unbelief, is not the letter of an obsolete statute, the enactment of a legislator who has been dead for ages, but is 'quick,' *i. e.* of present living force, being the word of him who liveth and abideth forever. It is indeed many hundred years since he uttered it against our fathers, but the word is as fresh now as when it then left his lips, for from generation to generation his mind remains the same," etc. And Patterson says: "Are we, then, to understand by 'the word of God' the revelation, which God has given of his mind and will? Yes; but obviously in a restricted and special reference. It is not, however, of the bland and blessed energy of the gospel that the sacred writer seems to speak." He then cites Rev. 1:16; 2:12, 16 as parallel.

Others greater in number and equally learned and judicious

apply what is here said of the word of God to all scripture—at least all the truth connected with the gospel. Grotius and Camero would confine it to the gospel, strictly so called. But for this there is no sufficient reason. For the terms employed are applicable to the whole mind of God given us in his word for our conviction, conversion and salvation. Macknight thinks the word of God means “the preached gospel; understanding thereby its doctrines, precepts, promises, and threatenings, together with those examples of the divine judgments which are recorded in the scriptures.” Calvin, Tholuck, F. S. Sampson and others take substantially the same view. The fact is that there is nothing here said of God’s word that is not true of all he has spoken.

Some have raised the question whether God’s word is powerful to all, who hear it, or only to his chosen. The answer is that God’s word is powerful in saving none but the elect; but it is mighty for arousing the soul and bringing wrath on all that hear and despise it. The apostle is here speaking of the nature of the word itself. He first says of it that it is *quick*, or living. The same word is four times used in this epistle in reference to the Lord, where he is called “the *living* God,” 3: 12; 9: 14; 10: 31; 12: 22. In Heb. 10: 20 it is applied to the “*living* way” opened to us by the blood of Christ. Peter applies the same word to the confident expectation of believers, and calls it “a *lively* hope.” So we read of “a *living* sacrifice,” and “a *living* stone,” Rom. 12: 1; 1 Pet. 2: 4. It is the word applied to such as shall be alive on the earth when the last day shall dawn. They are called *quick* in contradistinction from those who shall be then raised from the dead, Acts 10: 42; 2 Tim. 4: 1; 1 Pet. 4: 5. God’s word is not an old dead letter; it is a living mighty power. And we are called to serve God in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter, Rom. 7: 6. The promises, the precepts and the threatenings of scripture are all lively and have an effect on every one, who hears them. Patterson: “It is no empty, inert, unmeaning thing, but has a solemn import and produces a decisive effect.” Then too it is *powerful*, elsewhere *effectual*, 1 Cor. 16: 9; Philem. 6. It works; it is full of energy. It bears directly on the mind and conscience, the heart and life, the state and destiny of all who know it. This is in accordance with what Jesus said: “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life,” John 6: 63. Compare Rom. 10: 8; 1 Cor. 15: 5; 2 Cor. 3: 6–8; 1 Thess. 2: 13; Jas. 1: 18. This same word is *sharper than any two-edged sword*. *Two-edged*, literally double-mouthed. It here indicates a sword that cuts every way and is very penetrating. In other places the word of God is spoken of as doing the work of a sword, Isa. 11: 4; Hos.

6: 5. Several times in the New Testament God's word is spoken of as a sword, Eph. 6: 17; Rev. 1: 16; 2: 12, 16; 19: 15, 21. The word of God is keener than any blade, for it penetrates farther, *piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow.* The word rendered *piercing* is found in any form no where else in the New Testament. It is well rendered. The terms *soul* and *spirit* were in common use among the Greeks to denote the invisible and immaterial nature of man, 1 Thess. 5: 23. Finding them so used, the apostle adopted them as means of conveying his ideas to others. In so doing he does not endorse the Greek philosophy. He merely uses terms commonly employed to denote our immaterial nature. The *joints* and *marrow* represent the most occult and inaccessible parts of our frame. These can be reached only by some sharp instrument. So the word of God penetrates to the inmost recesses of our nature, If, as some suggest, there is a reference to the bodily agitations produced by the word of God on guilty men, as on Felix, then the irresistible power of God's word on the whole man is thus declared. It was that awful mysterious word of God on the wall that caused the joints of Belshazzar's loins to be loosed, and his knees to smite one against another, Dan. 5: 6. But probably the better explanation is that which supposes that Paul here personifies the words of God, and holds them forth as the representative of God. So Tholuck, Turner and others. God's word is also a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Some prefer to read, He is a discerner. This teaches a truth, but is no improvement. *Discerner*, not found elsewhere in the New Testament, but its cognates often occur. It seems to mean not only a discerner, but a ready discerner, a quick judge; Italian, a judge. *Thoughts*, cogitations devices, see Acts 17: 29. *Intents*, designs, or purposes of the mind. *Heart*, the seat of the affections, the most hidden part of our nature, unsearchable by any but God, who made it.

13. *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.* The best exposition of this verse, though not wholly free from objections and difficulties, is that which supposes there is an allusion to the ancient sacrifices. The victim was brought, and, if upon examination of its outward appearance no defect was discovered, it was slain. Then the skin was taken off and its body was *naked*. Sacrificial unfitness might then be discovered; but if not, its inwards were taken out and so its interior was *opened*. After that it was halved through the spine and then quartered. So that if there was any defect, or injury, or disease that made it unfit for the altar, it was rejected. So God, whose

word is sharp and discriminating, does by his word applied by his Spirit, as well as by his omniscience, search us through and through. Thus God sets our iniquities before him; our secret sins in the light of his countenance, Ps. 90:8. One may say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; but then even the night shall be light about him. The darkness and the light are both alike to God, Ps. 139:11, 12. Instead of 'with whom we have to do,' it would be more literal to render it, 'to whom we are to give account.' This rendering is approved by Peshito, Chrysostom, Italian, Beza, Wetstein, Rosenmuller, Stuart and others, and well accords with the original. See Matt. 12:36; 18:23; Luke 16:2; Rom. 14:12; Heb. 13:17. In all these cases the same word is rendered account.

At the opening of Chapter III. the apostle called on his brethren to consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession. From that to v. 13 of chapter IV. he dwells very much on Christ Jesus as a Messenger, an Ambassador, one sent of God to us on the most important business, and shows us how dangerous it is to slight him, or, through unbelief, fail to enter into the rest of God. Our responsibility in the whole matter is most solemn. Paul closes by reminding us of him, with whom we have to do. He now resumes the distinct consideration of the priesthood of Christ:

14. *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.* There is not much in this verse, which we have not had before. The reason for saying most of these things here is to give notice of the formal resumption of the main subject of the epistle. Paul had before stated that Jesus was the son of God, Heb. 1:2, 5, 6, 8; 3:6; that Jesus was a High Priest, Heb. 2:17; 3:1; and that he had ascended on high, Heb. 1:3, 13; 2:9. But two things are here first mentioned: 1. The epithet *great* is here given to Jesus. In one of the gospels he is called 'a *great* light' and 'a *great* King,' Matt. 4:16; 5:35. In another gospel it is predicted of him that 'he shall be *great* in the sight of the Lord,' and that 'he shall be *great*, and shall be called the Son of the Highest.' Luke 1:15, 32. In the same gospel he is called 'a *great* prophet,' Luke 7:16. In Titus 2:13 he is called 'the *great* God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.' In Heb. 10:21 he is called 'a *great* priest over the house of God.' Our translators render it *high* priest, but the word for High Priest is not there, but only the word for priest and the epithet *great*. And in Heb. 13:20 he is called 'that *great* Shepherd of the sheep.' So that in the New Testament he is seven times called *great*, once a *great* priest; and in

our verse a *great* High Priest. 2. Although in Heb. 3:1 Christ is said to be 'the High Priest of our profession,' yet our verse contains the first formal statement that the greatness and exaltation of our High Priest present an urgent and powerful motive to steadfastness in the avowal and practice of Christianity. "Let us hold fast our profession." The argument is substantially this: We have a High Priest, who has made for us a complete and accepted atonement, so that we need not perish for want of a propitiation. He is also our advocate. His intercession is all prevalent. Him the Father heareth always. He understands our case perfectly. He knows all things. No evil can assail us without his knowing all about it. He knows our foes, our wants and our weaknesses. He is omnipotent, and can subdue all his and our enemies. He is the *Son of God*. As a Saviour he is every way great, has been approved of God and so has passed *into* the heavens, rather *through* the heavens, *i. e.* through these lower heavens into heaven, the seat of his glory. Compare Heb. 6: 19, 20; 7: 26; 9: 24. He is every way able to save us. His power and wisdom and grace should encourage us to be steadfast with God. Nor is this all:

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.* The preceding verse presented our High Priest as God; this presents him as man. That showed forth his power and glory. This declares his tenderness and compassion. This verse is parallel to Heb. 2: 17, 18, on which see above. The verb rendered *be touched with the feeling of* is that from which our word sympathize comes, and by Peshito, Stuart and Craik it is here rendered *sympathize with*; but Wiclif, Coverdale, Tyndale, Cranmer, Rheims and Doway read *have compassion*. The word occurs once more in the New Testament (Heb. 10: 34) and is rendered *have compassion*. The authorized version is very good in both cases. *Infirmities*, weaknesses, commonly as here. Our High Priest was qualified to show such tenderness by having been subjected to every kind of trial and affliction, which an innocent being can suffer. He is expressly said in all his trials to have been *without sin*.

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.* Peshito: Let us, therefore, approach with assurance to the throne of his grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace for assistance in the time of affliction. For boldly, Stuart and Craik read with confidence. The same word is rendered confidence in Acts 28: 31; Heb. 3: 6; 10: 35; 1 John 3: 21; 5: 14. It is often adverb-

ally rendered openly, plainly, boldly; also boldness, boldness of speech. It describes a state of mind quite consistent with holy reverence, deep humility, and self-loathing, and far removed from impudence, arrogance and self-conceit. *The throne of grace* is a phrase found no where else in scripture. Instead of throne our translators elsewhere often give *seat*, Luke 1:52; Rev. 2:13; 4:4; 11:16; 16:10. If we render it seat in this place, the English reader would be apt to think of the mercy-seat. But the word rendered mercy-seat is quite another word, Heb. 9:5. Yet not a few respectable writers think the language here is probably borrowed from the mercy-seat, which was over the ark of the covenant, on which rested the visible glory, and to which the High Priest approached once a year and made intercession for the people. Others think there is an allusion to the Jewish theology, which represented God as having two thrones, one of justice whence he gave commandment to punish and to destroy the wicked, and another a throne of mercy, whence he dispensed benefits and gave commandment to save the humble. But this idea of two thrones has no authority from the scriptures of the Old Testament. Yet there is no objection to supposing that as the idea of a throne—an emblem of majesty is often spoken of in scripture, so the apostle adds to it here the idea of *grace*, as elsewhere it is called the throne of his holiness, the throne of his glory, etc., Ps. 47:8; Jer. 14:21. This perhaps gives the best basis of the terms here used. God is a great King, on a throne high and lifted up, and blesses men, 1 Ki. 22:19; Ps. 11:4; 97:2; Isa. 66:1. The object of approaching this throne is to *obtain mercy* and *find grace to help*. Though the words mercy and grace are distinct yet in this case the best explanation not only of these words but of the two phrases is that which makes them both express the same idea. They both indicate succor, aid, deliverance. If there is a difference, mercy is pity and help to the needy and suffering; grace is succor and salvation to the ill-deserving.

*To help in time of need*, literally for seasonable assistance, for convenient help, or for timely succor; Rheims and Doway: In seasonable aid. Mercy and grace granted in a day of temptation and trial will be doubly welcome because seasonable.

#### DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL REMARKS.

1. How excellent are the scriptures! v. 12. This is true of all of them. The promises of God's word are not vain or empty; its laws are holy, just and good; its admonitions, when regarded, are unto salvation; its offers could not be freer or kinder; its exhor-

tations are warm and timely; its precepts are wise and needed; and its threatenings are many and awful. In all these respects it is a book to be trusted. But it transcends all human productions in its influence over the heart and conscience. Plato and Cicero, Seneca and Epictetus, Addison and Johnson wrote many good things; but to all of them the conscience and spirit of man say, Moses and the prophets, Jesus and Paul we know, but who are ye that we should obey your voice? Then God's truth lives on from age to age, losing none of its vitality. "Your fathers, where are they? The prophets, do they live forever? But my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not take hold of your fathers?" Zech. 1:5, 6. "All flesh is grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth forever," 1 Pet. 1:24, 25. Rambach: "Those greatly err who hold the word of God to be a dead letter; yet the law cannot make alive, for this is an honor which belongs alone to the gospel." Nothing discriminates more justly, investigates more accurately, penetrates more deeply, or punishes more condignly and terrifically than God's word. Compare Isa. 49:2.

2. Paul was therefore right in declaring God's word to be *powerful*, v. 12. It is mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, 2 Cor. 10:4. Nothing has ever effected such changes in the moral sentiments and habits of mankind as the scriptures. Lactantius: "Give me a man of a passionate, abusive, headstrong disposition: with a few only of the words of God, I will make him as gentle as a lamb. Give me a greedy, avaricious, tenacious wretch; and I will teach him to distribute his riches with a liberal and unsparing hand. Give me a cruel, and blood-thirsty monster; and all his rage shall be changed into true benignity. Give me a man addicted to injustice, full of ignorance, and immersed in wickedness; he shall soon become just, prudent, and innocent." Under the power of this truth of God, the deaf hear, the blind see, the dumb speak, the lame walk, the dead are raised, John 5:24, 25. Nothing has ever been found adequate to destroy the power of sin, or slay the old man within us, but this sword of heavenly temper. It is enough for God to say to a sinner in his blood, Live, and the new life is begun, Ezek. 16:6. One may be under the power of the wildest illusions, ramparts of prejudice may encompass him, his heart for hardness may be like the nether mill-stone, yet of this man, God, by his word, may make an eminent servant of the church, a burning and shining light in the world, and a glorified saint

in heaven. God's word, read or heard, is never without powerful effects. It must be so. It is a fire and a hammer. It is the sword of the Spirit.

3. We ought therefore to regard the scripture as divine, the very word of God, v. 12. The penman of scripture, under the power of God's Spirit, spoke infallible truth; nor can we, with too profound a reverence, approach its sacred pages. It proves itself divine by the effects it produces.

4. As the scripture is searching, so ought it to be searched in an earnest and humble manner. A proud, careless or negligent examination of sacred truth is wholly inconsistent with success in discovering the mind of God. Nor can one do anything more certainly displeasing to the Most High, or more certainly incurring the divine displeasure than to attempt to cast off God's authority in the scripture: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day," John 12:48.

5. God's word is always mighty for good or for evil, v. 12. This is a doctrine of both Testaments, Isa. 55:10, 11; 2 Cor. 2:14-16. Unbelief causes that to kill which was ordained to life.

6. The omniscience of God is a doctrine revealed with amazing clearness, v. 13. Nearly the whole of the one hundred and thirty-ninth Psalm is devoted to it. Nor is this a perfection of God the Father only. It belongs no less to his Son, for whom the scriptures claim that he perfectly knows God, that he is thoroughly acquainted with the human heart, and that his knowledge extends to what would have been the effect of any given cause in any given circumstances, John 10:15; Rev. 2:23; Matt. 11:21, 23. Nor is it possible for us to have too deep a sense of the solemnity of our circumstances, when we come into the presence of God for worship at any time. "Hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering," Job 26:6. "Heaven, earth and hell are all present to his view. Angels and men—saints and sinners—are alike the objects of his scrutiny. He sees the hidden depths of ocean and the dark mines of earth, no less than the towering mountains and the gorgeous skies." The attempt to conceal the most hidden purpose from his eyes is as vain as will be the cry of the wicked at last on the rocks and the mountains to hide them. Rightly considered, the fact that Christ's eye is upon us all the time will mightily check our disposition to apostasy and mightily encourage our faith and constancy in maintaining our Christian profession, even though our faith be but weak.

7. As concealment from the notice of God is impossible, let us not attempt it, but live as seeing him who is invisible, v. 13. Let

us practise no disguise. Let us hold out no false signals. It is a mercy that our neighbors may not know all that is in our hearts. Had men a perfect knowledge of each other, society would be dissolved. But it is a great mercy, and by the righteous it is so esteemed, that the Lord is acquainted with all that is in our hearts. Accordingly a good man often prays: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting," Ps. 139: 23, 24. The *thoughts* and *intents* of our hearts are as well known to him as our words and overt acts. And we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad, 2 Cor. 5: 10. As God's eye is continually upon us, so ought our eyes to be continually towards him, Ps. 123: 2. As it should be to the terror of every sinner to know that his wickedness is not concealed from the Most High; so should it be to the joy of the humble that God knows our desires and our errors and our secret thoughts, and so is able to apply to the cure of our follies sovereign and suitable remedies, and to strengthen within us all that is good.

8. The whole subject of the imperfections of God's people is full of interest to the pious. Experience coincides with scripture in declaring that there is no man that sinneth not, that there is not a just man upon earth that sinneth not, that in many things we all offend, and that if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us, 1 Kings 8: 46; Ecc. 7: 20; Jas. 8: 2; 1 Jno. 1: 8. These declarations ought to settle the question. The best Christians know what sad truth is expressed by them. All the penitential Psalms declare the same truth. So do all just and charitable reproofs given by one Christian to another. At times thoughts on this subject are well nigh overwhelming, and what better can we do than to follow the example of David, when he said, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults," or to offer that petition, taught us by our Lord, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." It is a glorious truth that the work of sanctification shall not stop till the Searcher of hearts sees that it is perfect. One thing we may rest assured of, viz.: that his grace is all-sufficient to bring down every high look and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

9. To those resolved to cleave to their sins, it is a terrible thought that they must appear at the judgment-seat of Christ. Omniscient purity cannot but condemn all sin loved and cherished. But to the righteous, it is for a joy that their case is to be passed upon by a Judge, who is their Friend, Brother, Advocate,

Redeemer, v. 13. Let no man trifle with such awful themes; but let no humble man be cast down, but rather stirred up to all diligence and zeal, heart-searching and amendment by remembering that wherein he is right, the Lord will bring forth his righteousness as the light, and his judgment as the noonday; and that wherein he is wrong, God for Christ's sake will forgive his sin and in a way that will condemn the sin, while it saves the sinner.

10. Jesus is a Priest, a High Priest, a great High Priest, v. 14. See above Exposition and Remarks on Heb. 2:17; 3:1. This High Priest is Jesus, *Saviour*, the Son of God. In Heb. 1:2, 5, we have already considered Christ's filiation with God. Something also has been said of his priesthood. But we cannot too often be reminded of the purity, innocence, divinity, sufferings and glory of this great High Priest. In several succeeding chapters the matter will come up again. But let us never for a moment doubt that he with whom we have to do, and who pleads our cause above, is a Being entitled to receive, as he actually does receive, the highest worship of the most exalted creatures that God has made.

11. If his people are for Christ, so is Christ for his people; if we are his, he is ours; if we are his sheep, he is our Shepherd; if he has a right of property in us, we have a covenant right to him and his benefits: Paul says, we *have* a great High Priest. Jesus Christ is freely and sincerely offered as a Priest and Saviour; but he is actually the Priest and Saviour of all who have received him. He is a Surety unto them for good. Our Lord is passed into the heavens, v. 14. Therefore, they who hold that his body is everywhere present are in error. By his divinity our Lord does fill immensity, and so his divine nature is omnipresent. But his humanity is finite, limited and in heaven in a sense in which it is nowhere else; and if he is in heaven as a High Priest, it is an honor above that granted to any other priest; for all others laid aside their office when they lay down in their graves. And if Christ is in heaven, his people have great encouragement and good cause to look up and long for full deliverance, that they may see him as he is, and be satisfied with his salvation. Christ's exaltation teaches us the additional lesson that the lower one sinks in self-abasement and holy service to God, the higher he shall rise in honor and glory.

12. Good ministers are and ought to be earnest and urgent in calling on men to be steadfast with God, and never flinch in their profession, v. 14. This urgency is called for, for the adversaries of good men are many and mighty. The wicked will resort to every form of deceit and every species of cruelty to hinder the

elect in their heavenly course. But Christ has gone before. The Forerunner has marked out the way. He pleads the cause of all his people. He has power with God. He is preparing a place for his people. His will is the law of heaven. John 17 : 24. His blood cleanseth from all sin. His Spirit works wonders in the church below. Let ministers tenderly and faithfully warn and exhort their people to see to it that they commit no fatal mistake, nor make shipwreck for eternity. Many are indeed after a fashion professors of religion, but "profession is not principle." It requires no change of heart to run well for a while. False hopes are often as pleasing as good ones. Ahab's humility was very profound. The stony ground hearers with joy received the word. Simon Magus very earnestly asked good people to pray for him. Men have wrought miracles who never wrought righteousness. Matt. 7 : 22, 23. Demas seemed steadfast through a whole persecution, but afterwards was led astray by the love of this present world. Let every man see to it that he be soundly and scripturally converted, and that his life henceforth correspond with such a change. Repentance is no more necessary to salvation than are fruits meet for repentance necessary to establish its genuineness.

13. Jesus, our High Priest, is not merely approachable, but he is the most approachable of all beings with whom we are acquainted, v. 15. His great exaltation has wrought no change in the loveliness of his character, in the graciousness of his heart. "He is the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever," Heb. 13 : 8. He is just as gracious and condescending as when he said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not;" as when he wept at the grave of Lazarus; as when he said to the poor sinful woman, 'Neither do I condemn thee;' as when he poured salvation on the dying thief. O! he is a merciful High Priest, full of pity, full of grace. Christ himself was educated in the school of affliction, and drank a cup of sorrow far more bitter than any he ever puts into the hand of his people. He knows what temptation is for he was horribly tempted of the devil. He knows what poverty is, for he had not where to lay his head. He knows what slander is, for reproach broke his heart. He knows what insult and mockery are, for he was insulted every where. He knows what nervous distress is, for the theory of crucifixion was death by torture of the nerves. Blessed Saviour! Pardon and cure this folly of ours. Since his ascension on high he has once left the throne of his glory and come down to earth to pour salvation on as bitter and outrageous an enemy as he has perhaps ever had upon earth. None of his people ever cry to him in vain. When here below, he wept with those that wept; he rejoiced with those

that rejoiced. He fed the hungry, he healed the sick, he cleansed the lepers, he comforted the afflicted, he strengthened the paralytic, he gave sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf, invited all the weary to come to him and declares that those who reject his ministers reject him and those who touch his people, touch the apple of his eye. "In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old," Isa. 63:9. We have a tried Saviour. His purity and his love were well tried when he was on earth. He has gauged all the depths of sorrow. "The church of God has a standing, perpetual advantage, in the union of our nature to the person of the Son of God as he is our High Priest."

14. Why will the poor prejudiced Jew longer reject Christianity? His high priest was required once a year to offer sacrifices and make intercessions for the people; but at the time of this writing (1872) it is a little over 1800 years since any Jewish high priest slew a victim or entered into the Holy of Holies. The unbelieving Israelite reproaches the Christian with the want of a priesthood. Yet 'Christianity has her High Priest as well as Judaism.' The Jewish high priest was on earth when he interceded for the people, Levit. 16:2. *Ours* is in heaven. When Aaron was taken from the earth, he ceased to be the intercessor for the people. When Christ was taken from the earth (1 Tim. 3:16) to heaven, then did he fully enter upon his glorious work of intercession, which shall last forever and shall forever prevail, Acts 3:21.

15. It is a glorious truth that though our Lord was so beset and beleaguered by wicked men and the powers of darkness that yet he continued sinless and faultless, v. 15. He had no original sin; he had no indwelling sin; he had no actual sin. The prince of this world came, but had nothing in him, John 14:30. Had he himself sinned, he could have made no effectual atonement for us. "Such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." Heb. 7:26. "He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." "He offered himself without spot unto God." He was "a lamb without blemish and without spot," Heb. 9:14; 1 Pet. 1:19; 2:22. If there were any uncertainty respecting the spotless innocence of Christ, Christian comfort would be at an end. But, blessed be God, the scripture is clear and full on this great point. Not only did the judge which sat on his trial declare him innocent; not only has infidelity for more than eighteen centuries sought in vain to find a flaw in his character; but twice did the eternal God by an audible voice from heaven declare, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well

pleased." This was done at his baptism and at his transfiguration.

16. Blessed be God for a *throne of grace*. An open and unmerited way of access to the Father of mercies, v. 16. Had God sat only on a throne of inflexible justice and dealt out nought but condemnation to all who had sinned, he would have been glorious and adorable. But now the supreme authority of the universe is known to be seated on a throne of grace. A throne of justice is terrible to hardened sinners. A throne of grace is delightful to penitent sinners. Both are awful and call for adoring reverence. But a throne of grace speaks of pardon to the guilty and salvation to the lost. The mercy-seat in the holy of holies could be approached by none but the high priest, and that but once a year, and then with blood of a victim just slain. But all are invited to come at all times to the throne of grace, not with blood, nor with tears, nor with human merits for an offering, and yet in the sure hope of audience and acceptance.

17. Let us therefore obey the call, the command and the invitation of God to come boldly to the throne of grace, v. 16. Tholuck : "The more confidently the grace offered by Christ is appropriated, the less danger there is of lukewarmness and apostasy." It is exceedingly instructive to find how full and clear and various are the calls of God to prayer. By Asaph God says, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it," Ps. 81 : 10. In the sermon on the mount Jesus says, "Ask, and it shall be given you ; seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you," Matt. 7 : 7. Compare Eph. 2 : 18 ; Heb. 10 : 22 ; Jas. 1 : 6 ; 1 Jno. 5 : 14. The case is very different with us from what it was with the Israelites. They staid without, far removed from the ark. They knew not what the high priest said ; they saw no tokens of the divine kindness. At one time the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense, and Zacharias had a vision of which the people knew nothing, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple, Luke 1 : 10, 21. But we know from John 17 the substance of the intercession of our Lord, as he appears for us before the throne above, and through him we cannot come with too much confidence. Lindsay : "Believers see the evil of sin, but they see also the infinite worth of Christ's sacrifice, and therefore they can approach with filial confidence to a throne of grace ; and the more they use this liberty, the more will they be fortified in the fear of God, and strengthened for the endurance of trial." True indeed this boldness is quite consistent with godly fear, which is an essential part of true piety, Ps. 89 : 7 ; Heb. 12 : 28, 29. But that godly fear is itself a mighty principle, based upon right

apprehensions of the mercy of the divine character no less than upon God's excellent majesty, Ps. 130:4; Hosea, 3:5.

18. The mercy of God as presented to us in the scriptures is an astonishing theme. God's mercy is great, great above the heavens. It is from everlasting to everlasting. It brings pardon and peace. There are no words in any language that adequately express it. There are great riches in it. It is abundant; it is sure; it is wholly undeserved. Yet we can obtain it. Millions have obtained it, and gloried in it and triumphed by it. Owen: "When we have through Christ obtained mercy for our persons, we need not fear but that we shall have suitable and seasonable help for our duties."

19. And the grace of God is no less wonderful. It dates from eternity. It is rich, free, undeserved, fruitful. Because it is bestowed before there is any goodness in us, it is called preventing grace. Because it purifies the hearts of believers, it is called sanctifying grace. As it upholds the righteous it is called sustaining grace. It is exceedingly abundant.

20. By a time of need, some suppose the apostle has special reference to a season of persecution; and this may be so. But all the time in the Christian life is a time of need. Forsaken by the Lord, we shall surely fail. Left to ourselves, we are as nothing and less than nothing. What was Samson without the presence of God? A poor weak creature. If David leaped over a wall or broke through a host, it was by the help of the Lord. Tait: "All God's faithful people tell us that without the consolation of which we are now speaking, they could not have withstood the shock of the sicknesses, the bereavements, and the other manifold trials of life. We shall do well to think of this. Some hour of darkness is awaiting us all. And that cold-hearted unbelief, which makes up the mind to life's inevitable ills, is a miserable preparation for it. Let our preparation be that of the tender-hearted Christian."

## CHAPTER V.

### VERSES 1-14.

CHRIST A FIT PERSON TO BE A PRIEST. HE WAS DULY CALLED. HE IS A PRIEST AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHISEDEC.

FOR every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things *pertaining* to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins:

2 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.

3 And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.

4 And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as *was* Aaron.

5 So also Christ glorified not himself to be made a high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.

6 As he saith also in another *place*, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

7 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;

8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

10 Called of God a high priest after the order of Melchisedec.

11 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.

12 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.

13 For every one that useth milk *is* unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

14 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.

ONWARD is the course of the argument respecting the priesthood of Christ. Although the apostle now and then turns aside to show the practical use of what is taught, yet he does not wander from his subject, but soon takes up the thread of his discourse ; thus :

1. *For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.* Peshito: For every high priest, who is from among men, is established over the things of God, in behalf of men, that he may present the gift and sacrifice for sin. The other versions remarkably unite in sustaining the authorized version. In previous parts of this work it has been shown that Christ was the Son of God, the only begotten of the Father and truly divine ; and that this was one of the great excellences of his priesthood, clothing him with glory and honor, investing his priestly acts with amazing authority and value. It has also been shown that he was a human being, having a true body and a reasonable soul, that his entire human nature was capable of being offered and was offered in sacrifice to God, and that he was afflicted, tried and tempted that he might be a sympathizing priest and friend. He now adds some general remarks respecting the nature and design of the office of high priest in Israel. 1. The office of high priest was filled by one *taken from among men*. 2. It was not secular, but religious ; it concerned *things pertaining to God*. 3. It was an office, in which one acted in the place and for the good of others ; it was *for men*. 4. The high priest among men was not such of his own motion or act, but he was *made, appointed, ordained* to his office. The word is commonly rendered *made*, though it is once rendered *appoint*, and twice *ordained*. 5. It was an essential part of the office of a priest that he serve at the altar, *offering gifts and sacrifices*. We have the same words in Heb. 8 : 3 ; 9 : 9. All sacrifices are gifts, as Abel's, Heb. 11 : 4 ; but all gifts are not sacrifices, Matt. 2 : 11. Strictly speaking, a sacrifice was a living creature slain as an offering. Its life was destroyed by the act of worship. A gift might be gold, or silver, or flour, or incense, or myrrh, or an animal. 6. But the high priest's office always had reference to the putting away of sins by bloody offerings. One who had broken no law and incurred no guilt, needed no high priest to offer a sacrifice for him. Atonement has no place except in the religion of sinners. 7. Just here appears the utter insufficiency of Jewish sacrifices. They seem to have been confined to three classes of offences, ceremonial pollution, sins of ignorance and sins admitting of restitution. But for murder, profaning

God's name or Sabbath, idolatry, filial impiety, lewdness, covetousness, lying, pride, ingratitude, unbelief, vile words, evil thoughts and such like sins there was no sacrifice appointed under the law. Therefore when he stood convicted at the bar of his conscience of the sins of ingratitude, adultery and murder, David said: "Thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it," Ps. 51: 16. The blood of an innocent victim could in no sense wash away the guilt of such offences. But a high priest among men must also be one,

2. *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.*

Peshito: And he can humble himself, and sympathize with the ignorant and the erring, because he also is clothed with infirmity;

Stuart: Being able to shew kindness to the ignorant and the erring, inasmuch as he himself is compassed with infirmity; Conybeare

and Howson: And is able to bear with the ignorant and erring, being himself also compassed with infirmity; Craik: Being able

to deal gently with the ignorant, etc. It is not well to render it as some, "who sin through ignorance." The preceding verse led

to seven expository remarks. Here are others suggested by this verse: 8. A high priest among men was expected to be mild,

kind, tender, gentle, pitiful, compassionate. The word rendered have compassion occurs no where else. Its primary meaning

seems to be that of moderation or self-control, out of which naturally grew an humble, gentle, compassionate disposition.

Where priests were of an opposite character they were a great stumbling block. 9. Such high priests dealt gently with the

ignorant and erring, Lev. 4: 2; Heb. 9: 7. Their lips kept knowledge, and those, who *understood not* the right way, sought

the law at their mouth, Mal. 2: 7. The priests sought to recover those, who had *gone astray* or were deceived. 10. Where there

was anything becoming in the character of the high priest, his humility and compassion resulted from a sense of his own weak-

ness and sinfulness; for he knew that judged by the very law, under which he acted, he was himself a sinner needing pardon,

for he was compassed (in Heb. 12: 1 compassed about) with such infirmity as called for pity and pardon from God. From this

arose 11. The necessity of his offering sacrifices for himself:

3. *And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. He ought;* Peshito, he is obliged; Wiclif, he

owith; Tyndale, Cranmer, Genevan, Conybeare and Howson, he is bound; Stuart, he must; Craik, he ought. The word expresses

what is due and of indispensable obligation. Had he offered for the people and not first for himself, it would have cost him dear

to go into the holy of holies. This brings us to the THIRD great qualification of our High Priest. We have considered his divinity and the effects thereof, also his humanity and its effect. We are now to consider his Call and Appointment to this high office:

4. *And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.* There is no better rendering of this verse. The translation conveys the very sense of the original, and in pure and simple words. Aaron was in the clearest and most distinct manner called of God to be the high priest. No man ever lawfully doubted his appointment by the will of the Most High. And his successors were no less clearly designated by the law of the priesthood, which was observed in all the generations of Israel to the fall of Jerusalem, except where turbulent persons obtruded themselves into the office of priest, and were never owned of God. The call of Aaron and the law of succession are clearly given in Ex. 28 and onward. Under a former dispensation each man for himself as Abel, or heads of families for the rest of the household as Noah, made the sacrificial offerings; but in Israel one day in the year the High Priest, embodying, as it were, the whole priesthood of the nation in his own person, made the offering. The Aaronic high priest, to a certain extent, was typical of Christ. His office was strictly religious, for the good of others, much related to the putting away of sin by sacrifice, was divinely instituted, demanded tender compassion to the weak and erring, was filled by one indubitably called of God, and served "unto the example and shadow of heavenly things." Among all the types of the law, which had a shadow of good things to come, there is no type of our High Priest more convincing and edifying than Aaron entering into the holy place with the blood of sprinkling, and in the full attire of his office. But that priesthood was not in all respects typical. In holiness Aaron was deficient. He must offer for his own sins. He had not merely innocent infirmities. He had also those which were sinful. Other points of dissimilarity will appear as we proceed. But Jesus was called, and so it is added:

5. *So also Christ glorified not himself to be made a high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee.* Jesus Christ was no intruder into the office of Priest. From the time of the first promise in Eden till his work on earth was done God was continually directing the eye of faith towards the great Deliverer. The first announcement of the gospel had but few words, but never were words more pregnant: "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head," Gen. 3: 15. In due time we read of the *Seed* of Abraham, the *Shiloh* of Jacob, the *Star* of

Balaam, the *Son* of David and the *Stem* of Jesse. In the time of David he is distinctly announced as a King and the Son of God, Ps. 2:6, 7, and for the first time clearly spoken of as both a King and a Priest in Ps. 110. After that God announces him to the world in such a style as this: "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth;" "Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people;" Isa. 42:1; 55:4. And as Malachi is writing the last five verses of the Old Testament he utters in God's name the blessed words: "Unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings," Mal. 4:2. And when the Son of God was about to come into the world, and to become a public teacher, the Spirit of prophecy, which had been withheld for centuries, was again poured out in a remarkable manner. The first chapter of Matthew and the first and second chapters of Luke record no less than nine instances of miraculous communications of God's mind and will to men, and all relating to Christ. At his incarnation there were such joys among the angels that heaven could not contain them, and they came down to earth to sing to the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem. At his baptism the Spirit descended like a dove, and lighted upon him; and a voice from heaven said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, Matt. 3:16, 17. From that day onward wonder succeeded wonder until all, who knew these things, if they had any candor, acknowledged that he was both Lord and Christ, the Beloved, Chosen of God and Precious. If Jehovah ever designated one to any work or service, he did by many prophecies, by many wonderful works and by many infallible signs designate Jesus Christ to be the High Priest of the Christian profession, and did in every appropriate way call him to that office. Truly he glorified not himself, but his Father glorified him in making him a High Priest. Theophylact, Erasmus, Carpzov, Bengel, Bleek, Lindsay, and others interpret the words He that said unto him, Thou art my Son, etc., as meaning God the Father. The proof of Aaron's call was clear and sufficient. The proof of Christ's call was as clear and far more abundant. On the words, Thou art my Son, etc., see above on Heb. 1:5, both Exposition and Remarks. Those very words of Psalm 2 did virtually designate him to his office; that is, if they are rightly understood in their connection with other parts of scripture, they lead us to the safe conclusion that even then God notified the church that his son should fill all the offices of the mediator. Calvin: "His generation includes the priesthood." But this is not all the proof of Christ's divine call to this great honor. Here is more:

6. *As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.* The former passage was cited from Ps. 2:7; this is from Ps. 110:4. The terms are very clear and the testimony direct. In Ps. 2 Jehovah publishes the *decree*; in Ps. 110 he binds himself by an oath to the same effect. Paul does not here mention the oath, but he knew that the people were acquainted with it; and he brings it forward in the right place, Heb. 7:21. God's purpose cannot be shaken. The oath is irrevocable. Compare Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29. If man's oath is for confirmation and is an end of all strife, shall not the oath of God end all debate and uncertainty touching the call of the Father to his Son to enter upon the office of High Priest, and to execute it for ever? In v. 6. three things are specially noticeable: 1. Christ is not spoken of as a high priest like Aaron, one among many, yet their chief and head; but as a priest, without others above or below him, like him who blessed Abraham. 2. His office is declared to be perpetual—*for ever*. 3. It is said to be *after the order of Melchisedec*. This phrase occurs in five other places in this epistle, Heb. 5:10; 6:20; 7:11, 17, 21. In Heb. 7:11 the apostle says that Christ was after the order of Melchisedek, and not after the order of Aaron. The word *order* occurs also in Luke 1:2; 1 Cor. 14:40; Col. 2:5. The rendering is uniform. Such language cannot mean that Christ was typified by Melchisedek and not by Aaron; for we have already seen that Aaron was a remarkable type of Christ. In another place in this epistle Paul speaks of a priest arising *after the similitude of Melchisedec*, Heb. 7:15; and in Heb. 7:3 he says that Melchisedek was *made like unto the Son of God*. From these verses it would seem that *order* probably means *likeness*. If by *order* is meant that one succeeds another with precisely the same powers and functions, rank and dignity, aims and effects, then Christ belonged neither to the order of Aaron nor to the order of Melchisedek. Christ never slew any victim, never wore the robes of a priest, never was in the holy of holies at Jerusalem. When he made his offering, he laid his entire human nature, soul and body, on the altar, Isa. 53:10; Matt. 26:38; John 12:27; Matt. 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:27; 1 Pet. 2:24. "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," Heb. 9:12. Nor is his intercession carried on any where on earth; for "Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us," Heb. 9:24. Neither Melchisedek nor Aaron offered such a sacrifice, nor made such intercession. Had

they done so, 'then would they not have ceased' to make offerings? "Because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins," Heb. 10: 2. Had their offerings availed to put away real guilt, there would have been no work left for Christ to do. Then God would have said, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin," Heb. 10: 17, 18. Where a priesthood is perfect, there is no need of another and a better priesthood. The phrases 'after the order,' and 'after the similitude' probably mean the same thing. This seems to be generally conceded. The *likeness* is such as to make Melchisedec, even over and above Aaron, a type of Christ. Aaron shadowed forth our Saviour, but Melchisedec was a type of Christ in some very important points beyond Aaron. Melchisedec was much more 'like unto the Son of God' than was Aaron. Gray: "TYPICAL SIMILITUDE is the apostle's idea." Thus the points essential to the understanding of the terms here used have been explained. The priesthood of Melchisedec will come up again more than once, and very fully in the seventh chapter of this epistle. Paul goes on to speak of Christ,

7. *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.* The word *flesh* has a variety of meanings, each generally quite apparent wherever the word occurs. See the author's "Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans," p. 128. Here it means his natural life. Peshito: "When he was clothed in flesh." Calvin: "*The days of his flesh* no one can doubt here mean the present life;" Duncan: "The days of our Lord's flesh are the time of his continuance in this frail mortal state, from his cradle to his grave." *Prayers*, commonly so rendered, but more exactly *supplications*, as in Acts 1: 14; Eph. 6: 18; 1 Tim. 2: 1; 5: 5. *Supplications*, found no where else in the New Testament: The Greek word is derived from the olive-branch presented by petitioners for mercy, or for favors. The two words united denote the humblest, and most earnest beseechings. These were offered with *strong crying*, literally with mighty outcry; and with *tears*, a word always so rendered. Some suppose the strong crying is explained by reference to Matt. 26: 38, 39; 27: 46. These were indeed notable instances of Christ's earnestness in supplication. On one occasion we read of his shedding tears at the grave of his friend Lazarus, John 11: 35. Here the verb means shedding tears and no more. But in Luke 19: 41 it is said he wept over Jerusalem. Here the verb used expresses not only the shedding of tears, but every outward manifestation

of distress of mind. The cognate noun is that rendered *weeping* in connection with lamentation and great mourning at the slaughter of the innocents, Matt. 2: 18. Now we have no historical information of Christ's ever weeping at any other times. Nor do we know of his uttering strong cries in his addresses to God except in the cases above cited. But these things recorded of him are mere samples of what occurred in his life. The prophet has foretold that his visage should be so marred more than any man, and that he should be a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, Isa. 52: 14; 53: 3. All this was fulfilled in his life. Jesus Christ had more sorrows than any man that ever lived, and he was greatly given to prayer, Matt. 14: 23; 26: 36-39, 41, 42, 44; Luke 5: 16; 6: 12; 9: 18, 28, 29. See Bennet's Christian Oratory. His life was a life of communion with God. Some liturgical writers have called the Messianic and Typical-Messianic Psalms our Lord's Prayer-Book. It is certain they abound in strong crying and in expressions of dolorous grief. They contain the substance of what often passed in his mind and from his lips. Our Lord himself gives us a key to his secret thoughts and sorrows, when he says, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" Luke 12: 50. Calvin: "By tears and strong crying the apostle means to express the intensity of his grief; even as it is quite common to denote things by signs." Christ's tears and cries were *unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared*. Now it is a fact that our Lord died. Nor was his death involuntary. He willingly dismissed his own spirit. His body lay lifeless and cold in the sepulchre of Joseph. Friends and foes all agreed that he was dead. It is true that the scene of suffering before him was at one time so dreadful to his human nature that he meekly said, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done," Luke 22: 42. Himself recalled the petition as it escaped his lips. Another evangelist records that he once said, "Father, save me from this hour: but, for this cause came I to this hour," John 12: 27. And yet another reports him as saying that if he should escape suffering, "How then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" Matt. 26: 54.

So that we are hardly at liberty to believe that by his strong crying and tears he was beseeching the Father to save him from temporal death. If that were the sense, he was not answered, and this verse says he was. It seems natural to compare the language of this verse with portions of one of the Messianic Psalms: "Deliver my soul from the sword, my darling from the power of the dog. Save me from the lion's mouth," Ps.

22:20, 21. It is generally and correctly admitted that this is a prayer of the suffering Messiah for life. In a verse closely subsequent he claims that he was heard, "He hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; nor hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard," Ps. 22:24; and yet our Lord was dead and buried. What then is the solution of the difficulty? The best is that given by the Peshito: "Likewise, when he was clothed in flesh, he presented supplication and entreaty, with intense invocation, and with tears, to him who was able to resuscitate him from death; and he was heard." Every scholar knows that the preposition rendered *from* is also fitly and often rendered *out of*. This is the generally accepted exposition of the verses just cited from Ps. 22, on which Calvin says: "If it be asked can this be applied to Christ, whom the Father did not deliver from death, I answer, in one word, that he was more mightily delivered than if God had prevented him from falling a victim to death, even as it is a much greater deliverance to rise again from the dead than to be healed of a grievous malady." So also on this verse Calvin says: "He obtained his desire, that he might come forth victor out of the pains of death, that he might be sustained by the saving hand of the Father, that after a short conflict he might gain a glorious triumph over Satan, sin and hell." Tong: "How was Christ heard? Why he was answered by present supports in and under his agonies, and in being carried well through death, and delivered from it by a glorious resurrection." Duncan: "Though he underwent death, yet he was not conquered by it, but came off as victor." Tait: "The expression rendered *from death* is, in the original, *out of death*. And prayer to be saved out of death is prayer to be raised from the dead." Guyse: "He was heard, as to be accepted in his prayer; and was answered, though not by a prevention of his sufferings and death themselves; yet as to the main intention of his importunate prayer, in the seasonable assistances that were afforded him; in the composure of his human passions; in his resurrection and victory over death; and in his obtaining all the desired ends of his sufferings." Delitzsch: "God compassed him with love in the very midst of his mortal agony, and when under the sense of divine dereliction, and therefore of divine wrath, and so translated him through dying to a life of glory. . . . The Son was heard, not by deliverance from the necessity of dying, but by temporal death being made for him the gate of paradise, and the cross of shame a ladder to heaven." McLean: "His being heard and saved from death was by raising him from the dead, God having loosed the pains of death." In like manner

Estius, Baumgarten, Schulz, Macknight and others rest the weight of the answer our Lord received to his prayer on his resurrection. Many indeed mention the support and calmness granted him in his sufferings after he left Gethsemane till he gave up the Ghost; but all else would have been in vain and as nothing, if he had not been raised from the dead and obtained the glory that should follow such sufferings and humiliation.

Some regard the words *him that was able to save from death*, as a circumlocution for the Almighty, God, or his Father. We have such a use of a phrase for a word in v. 5 above. This figure is common to many languages. If we admit its use here, it does not change the interpretation of the substance of the verse.

It is not safe to follow Clarke when he says: "It is probable that the apostle refers to something in the agony of our Lord, which the evangelists have not distinctly marked;" or Moll, when he says: "We have here, perhaps, given us a scene of evangelical history resting upon tradition, which has also found its way even into the text of some recensions of Luke himself." All such remarks are uncalled for. It is dangerous to admit them even for a moment. They are wild, and open a door to endless conjectures. If interpreters may resort to them, there will be no end of vagaries.

It remains to say a few things in regard to the words rendered *in that he feared*. Ethiopic reads: because of his righteousness; Wiclif, Rheims, Doway and Coptic render it for his reverence; Luther and Coverdale: because he had God in honor; Tyndale: because of his godliness; Cranmer: because of his reverence; Genevan: in that which he feared; Stuart: from that which he feared; Conybeare and Howson: because he feared God; Craik: from his fear. The grammatical construction of the words authorizes the sense given by either of these. 1. Christ's piety and reverence were infinitely well pleasing to God at the time of his suffering as they are now. Thus we obtain a good sense. 2. Fear may mean the agitating emotion of fear. From this our Lord seems to have been quite delivered before he appeared on his trial. Calmer dignity was never displayed on any trying occasion. 3. Then fear often means the object of fear, that which is feared. Besides those already cited Chrysostom, Photius, Oecumenius, Theophylact, Luther, Calov, Flaccius, Olshausen, Ebrard and others favor the first explanation. Ambrose, Beza, Grotius, Gerhard, Carpzov, Ernesti, Abresch, Wetstein, Dindorf, Rosenmuller, Bengel, Whitby, Starr, Kuinoel, Tholuck and others favor the second; though the language of some of them would perhaps allow us to put them with Genevan and Stuart in the third class.

The first view is probably to be preferred. The Peshito throws this clause into the next verse, as we shall see presently. It is generally admitted that verses 7-10 belong to one sentence, as we find them in the authorized version. Let this be remembered, as we go on.

8. *Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.* Peshito: And though he was a Son, yet, from the fear and sufferings he endured, he learned obedience. A scholar on examining the Greek text will soon see how a slight change would lead to such a rendering; yet it is not followed by any other version ancient or modern. The sonship here refers to Christ's filiation with God, on which see above on Heb. 1:2, 5. Whitby would read 'he taught obedience' meaning to others. But this rendering is not sustained. No one need be offended at its being stated that our Saviour *learned*, or learned *obedience*. For 1. So perfect was the hypostatical union of the natures of our Lord, that what was done or suffered in one nature is spoken of as done or suffered in his person. It was so perfect that his death did not dissolve his person, though for the time it broke the tie which held his soul and body together. 2. The scriptures do not hesitate to admit that "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man. The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him," Luke 2:40, 52. There is no more mystery in the growth of the mind and body of the Son of Mary than in the growth of the son of her cousin Elizabeth, of whom we have mention in Luke 1:80. If any would see the whole subject handled with lucidness and ability let him examine Owen on the Spirit, Book II. Chapters III. and IV. on the "Work of the Holy Spirit, with respect unto the Head of the New Creation, the Human Nature of Christ." Indeed our Lord himself declared that that great prophecy in Isa. 61:1-3 was fulfilled in him, Luke 4:21. Such a Learner under such a Teacher must have made amazing progress in all that was holy, and good, and great. 3. But our Saviour learned *obedience* (the word so rendered always has that meaning in the New Testament). This was every way necessary, for he was *made under the law*, not only under its penalty but under its precept as well. It was predicted of him that he should be a model of piety according to the standard of God's word: "I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart," Ps. 40:8. He was subject to his parents, Luke 2:51. He fulfilled all righteousness, Matt. 3:15. Indeed his obedience is most clearly declared in the New Testament, Rom. 5:19; Phil. 2:8. He learned obedience *by the things which he suffered*. His obedience had in it every property that could commend it to God. It

was personal, it was in things required of men by the Lord, it was hearty, it flowed from love, it was rendered in faith, it was to the whole law, it was life-long, it was rendered under the severest trials, and under the greatest temptations; yet in it were no flaws, no failures, no spots, no blemishes. Omniscient purity approved it and proclaimed it perfect.

9. *And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.* Perfect, see above on Heb. 2:10, where the same word occurs in reference to the Captain of our salvation. There was nothing lacking in the character of Christ as the author of salvation. He was as kind, as gentle, as experienced, as thoroughly acquainted with grief, as familiar with sorrow and temptation, as any penitent has ever desired, as any humble man can possibly require. We need no more perfect author of salvation, though it is a difficult work; though it is much opposed by bad men and fallen angels; though those who are to be saved are in themselves very ignorant, very guilty, very depraved, very miserable and utterly helpless; yea, though God's moral character and government are utterly opposed to the salvation of such, as they stand naked before God, yet the author of eternal life has rendered so full and glorious a satisfaction to divine justice, and has made arrangements so very honorable to God's law and authority, that now eternal justice itself calls for the complete salvation of those who confess their sins and flee to Jesus for refuge, 1 John 1:9. *Obey*, cognate to obedience in v. 8. No man, who comes to Christ, shall find him either unable or unwilling to save him, John 6:37; Heb. 7:25. The deliverance wrought by Christ has no limit to its duration—it is eternal. Any thing short of this would give no abiding comfort, and would be unworthy of God. Nor is this salvation insufficient in its provisions to meet all the wants of those who accept it and embrace its author. True, neither this nor any other scripture teaches the universal salvation of the human race; but this and many other parts of God's word do unmistakably teach the universal salvation of believing sinners—those who obey the gospel. Compare Mark 16:16; John 3:18, 36; Acts 2:38; 16:30, 31; Rom. 10:9. The word of God as clearly decides that those who by unbelief reject this salvation, shall have no part in its benefits, John 12:48; Acts 13:48; 2 Thess. 1:8, etc. Thus was Christ fully prepared for his work, and

10. *Called of God a high priest after the order of Melchisedec.* Called, not the same word in the Greek as that so rendered in v. 4, but one signifying accosted, saluted, addressed by name. Wiclif, clepid of God. The former word expresses vocation; this, nomi-

nation. That says God called Christ to be a High Priest; this says God speaks of him or to him as filling that holy office. The other terms of the verse have been previously explained. On the High Priest, see above on Heb. 2:17; 3:1; 4:14. On the *order* of priesthood, see above on Heb. 5:6. The order of Christ's office was like that of Melchisedec,

11. *Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.* Peshito: Now, concerning this person, Melchisedek, we have much discourse which we might utter; but it is difficult to explain it, because ye are infirm in your hearing; Doway: Of whom we have great things to say, and hard to be intelligently uttered; because you are become weak to hear. Some, with the Peshito, suppose that *whom* refers to Melchisedec. Others, perhaps more safely, make it refer to Christ, who is a priest after the order of Melchisedec. Hard to be explained or expounded would be better than hard to be uttered. The Greek is one word. He is not speaking of the difficulty of announcing what he had to say, but of the difficulty of causing those whom he addressed to apprehend what he might say. The difficulty was not in the subject intrinsically; but in the state of mind of those to whom the epistle is addressed. Gray: "The whole difficulty lay with the READERS, not with the WRITER. They were so devoted to the Levitical priesthood and the temple worship, that it was not easy to give them just conceptions of the sacrifice of Christ, or to convince them that among men there had ever been a greater priest than Aaron. Moreover, they were not duly alive to these things, but were slothful, sluggish, *dull of hearing*. This verse may be regarded as determining the point that this epistle was addressed to some particular body of Christians, with whose state and temper Paul was well acquainted. He would hardly use such language of Jewish converts indiscriminately.

12. *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.*

13. *For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.*

14. *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.* When the American sees the word *meat*, the first idea suggested is that of flesh for food. But in the New Testament *meat* means nourishment, and nothing more. The same word rendered *meat* is several times rendered *food*, Acts 14:17; Jas. 2:15. The word here rendered *strong* means *solid* in opposition to *liquid*. Accordingly we read *solid food* in the Doway,

Stuart and Craik at this place. This remark is made here as it affects the interpretation of all these verses. In v. 12, for the time means on account of the time, or considering the time, that you have been acquainted with the gospel. *Teachers*, in the four Gospels the Greek word occurs about fifty times and is uniformly rendered Master; in Acts and the epistles it is always teacher—in the plural teachers. Here it means persons capable of giving instruction in the truths of Christianity, even all of them. Instead of their being such, the first truths of revealed religion had become obscured in their minds, *First principles*, literally the elements or rudiments of the beginning of the oracles of God. We have no means of knowing what had been the cause or causes of this sad stagnation among these people. But human nature, if left without special grace and sound instruction and good discipline, will never make progress in the right direction. A human being for want of proper care and culture of its physical powers may at the age of twelve, twenty, or more years be but an overgrown infant, and rickety at that. So was it with these people. Any wise minister of the gospel among them would have seen the necessity of feeding them on milk, and of not giving them solid food, till they were a little strengthened; for as yet they were as mere babes, they were so unskilful in the word of righteousness. In the New Testament we read of the law of righteousness, the ministration of righteousness, the armor of righteousness, the fruits of righteousness, the hope of righteousness, the breastplate of righteousness, and a crown of righteousness; but this is the only place where the truth of the scripture is called the word of righteousness. It well merits the title. Beza, Owen, L'Enfant, Clarke and others think that phrase specially points to the doctrine of justification. The Bible uses the term righteousness in reference to the ground of a sinner's acceptance, in reference to personal rectitude, etc. Duncan thinks it here means the righteous and holy word of God. So it is called the word, the word of God, the word of the Lord, the word of Christ, the word of truth, the word of his grace, the word of salvation, the word of reconciliation, the word of life, the word of faith, the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, the more sure word, the faithful word, the engrafted word, the word of the kingdom, but here only the word of righteousness. It deserves this distinction. It alone teaches the way of righteousness, in every sense of that term rightly used.

There is great propriety in comparing God's word to milk and also to strong meat, or solid food. It is milk for babes. It is solid food to those who are skilled in its teachings. The Bible is

not a primer, and yet it teaches the primary truths of religion. Afterwards it teaches the deep things of God. "It is a lake along the shores of which a lamb may wade, and in the middle of which the elephant may swim." To use the milk is well. It is the best babes can do. But it is sad to see an old professor, who, for the want of diligence and liveliness in the practice and study of scripture, is stumbling at straws, and for the want of sound discrimination is encompassed with childish difficulties. Such are ready to be led into any error that may be plausibly stated. They cannot try the spirits. They will be apt to call evil good, and good evil.

#### DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL REMARKS.

1. The office of priest belongs to the work of Mediator between God and man. If creatures require no mediation in their behalf, they need no priesthood. The angels have none. But among men mediation was required; God and man were separated; and, blessed be God, a daysman has been provided.

2. It should abase all human pride and stain all human glory that under every dispensation of heaven to man, since the fall of Adam, God has regarded and treated men as sinners, v. 1. *Sacrifices for sins* were offered from the days of righteous Abel to Moses, from Moses to the coming of Messiah, when the great sacrifice of Calvary for ever perfected them that believe. But without the shedding of blood there has at no time been remission of sins, or the acceptance of the persons of mere men. Scott: "Fallen men cannot approach God, except on a 'mercy-seat,' through a high priest, and by a sacrifice for sin." Therefore nothing is more becoming in religious worship than that men should confess their sins unto God with deep sorrow of heart, and earnest supplications for grace and mercy. Owen: "It was the entrance of sin that made the office of the priesthood necessary." So wicked are all mere men, so guilty and so vile before God, that no sanctity of office, no holy anointing, no costly vestments, no long line of priestly ancestors can set aside the necessity of some proper sacrifice for the sins of the most venerable of mere men, v. 3. Sins are made black rather than white by being committed at the altar.

3. Ignorance and error very naturally go together, and are commonly just cause for blame, and call for atonement, for repentance and humiliation, v. 2. It is true indeed that ignorance absolutely invincible cannot be ground of condemnation. But this is not the ordinary kind of ignorance on religious subjects, and therefore God expressly ordained that a sin-offering was to be made for it,

Num. 15 : 27, 28. Ignorance marks the loss of the image of God, Col. 3 : 10. It is spoken of in scripture as a punishment for other sins, Isa. 6 : 10; John 12 : 40. It terribly leads men to other sins, even idolatry, murder and persecution, Gal. 4 : 8; 1 Tim. 1 : 13. Owen : "Our ignorance is our calamity, our sin and an occasion of many sins unto us."

4. If the Levitical priest was bound to be compassionate, Christian ministers surely ought to be no less so. Paul himself set us a noble example. Even to the erring Galatians, he writes : "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you," Gal. 4 : 19. And if all Christians are bound as the elect of God to put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, Col. 3 : 12, 13, much more are those who are Christ's ministers. On this point the scripture is clear. "The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth," 2 Tim. 2 : 24, 25. Severity of character ill becomes a redeemed sinner whose only hope of salvation is in the compassion of God. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted," Gal. 6 : 1.

5. In all the divine arrangements for an earthly, visible priesthood made in the family of Aaron there was a constant reference to the great High Priest of the Christian profession, vs. 1, 2. *A.* The Levitical priest must be a man, known to be such, and regarded as such by the worshippers. So our High Priest, Jesus Christ, was truly a man, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. He gave every possible proof of his humanity. So overwhelming is the evidence that for about fifteen hundred years no considerable body of sectaries has ever expressed a doubt on this matter. Many oppugn his being the Son of God; none, his being the Son of man. *B.* Then the priesthood was instituted *for men, i. e.* for their good and in their place. So Jesus Christ acts for others and to their advantage. He does for men all their cases call for. *C.* The priest's office embraced every matter which would belong to one undertaking mediation. It offered gifts and sacrifices. It declared God's will to the worshipper. It declared men clean or unclean, guilty or absolved. So he, who has Christ for a High Priest, needs no other Mediator, needs no more sacrifice for sin, no clearer absolution than that obtained by faith in the shed blood of his Saviour. Duncan; "All the advantage of the priesthood

redounds to men, on whose account it is instituted." *D.* A priest, acting for the ignorant and erring, was in danger of severity towards them, and so it behooved him to be a good man, kind-hearted, tender, full of compassion; else his harshness would repel worshippers rather than draw them to God. There is no substitute for tender love and sympathy. So our High Priest is full of pity. Owen: "The life of our souls is principally maintained upon this compassionateness of our High Priest." Bloomfield: "Having himself experienced the weaknesses, trials, and tribulations of human nature, he can have a fellow-feeling with his brethren who are exposed to the same trials." If any man is ever to be saved, it must be by amazing mercy, by compassions superhuman and superangelic. Nothing but grace, infinite love suits the case of lost men. *E.* All the priests that God ever appointed were men full of infirmity. Nor was the High Priest of the Christian profession an exception. He had hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, trials and temptations. He knows what it is to be slighted, insulted, mocked, tormented, crucified, dead and buried. He was tempted in all points, like as we are. He knows what it is to experience the hidings of his Father's countenance, to walk in darkness, and have no light.

6. But here the analogy is interrupted, not to the grief but to the joy of pious souls, by being told that although every Levitical priest was a sinner and ought to offer sacrifices for his own sins and errors, v. 3, yet our Emmanuel was born, lived and died without any taint of corruption. Never had he any wish but to glorify God, and bless man. Never did his heart sicken with envy, nor burn with malice, nor yield to sinful timidity. His holy purposes never changed. He was filled with incomparable excellences. Guyse: "We may comfortably hope for all seasonable mercy and help in our applications to a throne of grace, while we think of Jesus the Son of God, as appearing there in the character of our great and sympathizing High Priest." He has never done any thing to displease God, to weaken his power at the court of heaven, or to hinder the efficacy of his pleadings in our behalf.

7. If Aaron and his successors were entitled to love and confidence in their offices, and did actually receive much of both, how much more should we give our entire confidence and our glowing love to Christ, vs. 1, 2. Up to his time there had not arisen a greater than John Baptist. Yet that great prophet admitted that he was not worthy to unloose the latchet of our High Priest's shoes. Love to Christ was never excessive. Confidence in him should greatly abound. The faith of every man should embrace him and hold him fast. He is MIGHTY TO SAVE. It ought to in-

spire us with humble assurance in approaching the throne of grace that we there see our own nature exalted to God's right hand. Manoah's wife said to him, "If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt offering and a meat offering at our hands, neither would he have shewed us all these things," Jud. 13: 23. And if God was meditating the ruin of those who have believed the gospel, he would never have given us his Son, nor have raised him from the dead, nor have exalted him at his own right hand, nor have sent forth such sweet proclamations of grace and peace.

8. Jesus Christ is High Priest by no usurpation or intrusion; but by both the indubitable call and acknowledgment of God, vs. 4, 5, 10. We need not fear to own him as our High Priest, whom God calls and salutes as such. Jesus did not aspire to it, but God raised him up to its trials and its glories. He *glorified* his Son in this way. "Such undertakings as bring glory to God do glorify the undertakers." Of all the plans or works whereby the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are glorified, none is comparable to the scheme of gospel grace, at the head of which is God the Son. He has won his way to all his honors and has at every step of his progress pleased him that called him. In his lowest humiliation he had his Father's approval, and never had cause to doubt, and never did doubt his Father's love. How important it is that Christ's call should have been clear and indisputable appears from the whole tenor of scripture. The great sin of Korah and his company was in attempting to seize upon the office of leader held by Moses and upon the office of high priest held by Aaron. This brought awful ruin upon two hundred and fifty men, Num. 16: 1-35. See, too, how ill it fared with Uzziah, when he, after a life in the main exemplary, assumed the functions of the priesthood. The record is brief and awfully impressive: "But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the Lord his God, and went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense. And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the Lord, that were valiant men: and they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the Lord, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honor from the Lord God. Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the Lord, from beside the incense altar," 2 Chron. 26: 16-19. That day he

lost his health, his peace, his honor, and his kingdom—all for his presumption in this one affair. See also an instructive piece of history in Neh. 13 : 4–9, where the attempt to make a store-house for a wicked man out of the chamber of the house of God was publicly and solemnly condemned. God is a jealous God, and will be sanctified of all them that draw nigh to him. But Jesus was no such intruder. O no! Prophecy had determined that matter: “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 he shall bear the glory, 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,” Zech. 6 : 12, 13. When on earth our Lord said, “If I honour myself, my honour is nothing; it is my Father that honoureth me,” John 8 : 54. So Peter said, “The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our Fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus,” Acts 3 : 13. The Lord, he is God. He calls whom he will. Owen: “It is an act of sovereignty in God, to call whom he pleaseth unto his work and especial service, and eminently so when it is unto any place of honor and dignity in his house. The more excellent any work of God is, the more express ought our call unto it to be.”

9. If the nature and design of priesthood is correctly understood, it will settle the question that all official priesthood has ceased from the face of the earth. By once offering himself, Jesus Christ finished the atonement. All the figures and types were fulfilled in him. To make any sacrificial offerings now is to deny the completeness of his work, and to pretend to eke out the sacrifice of Calvary. And it is a very noticeable fact that all men who claim any part of the office of priest in the church of God are sure to claim a part in the kingly and prophetic offices of Christ in the church. Since Christ finished his work on the cross, the Lord Christ has designated no class of men as officers in his house under the title of priests. So remarkably true is this that no man pretends to have found the place in the Greek Testament where the word properly rendered priest is found in such connection. Good old Bishop White excuses the use of the term priest, as being an abbreviation of presbyter. If this were the universal understanding, the term might be harmless, but would not be scriptural. The church of Rome (see Doway Bible) does translate the word for elders in Jas. 5 : 14 by the term priests. But all this is perversion. With God's approval, there are in his church below no altars but human hearts, no sacrifices but those which are spiritual, no priests but the royal priesthood of anointed Christians.

Jesus Christ is a priest forever, and has no successors, and no helpers, and no vicars. It is an insult to him and a contempt of his finished work to claim to offer to God an unbloody sacrifice in the Lord's Supper, or any sacrifice whatever as propitiation.

10. It is therefore manifest that men must accept the great sacrifice of Calvary, or forever perish. No good intentions, nor pious endeavors are any substitute for the atonement then made. To reject that is to defy God's authority and to despise Christ. A Redeemer slighted is a God insulted and incensed. Any device, by which the sacrifice of Christ is set aside, must be exceedingly provoking to God. It declares the incarnation and sufferings of the Redeemer unnecessary. There is no remission of sin but by the cross of Christ. To come to God with any gifts or offerings, while we are yet under a just sentence of wrath, is an act of haughty defiance or of base contumely. Tait: "A criminal sentenced to die may presume to send a present to his sovereign—but will his sovereign condescend to accept it? This question is easily answered: even the offer would be esteemed an insult. And shall the great God then accept from us any service, while we lie under the curse of unforgiven sin? No: obedience first, and forgiveness afterwards is the order of self-righteous man; but forgiveness first, and obedience afterwards is the order of the holy and righteous God. Let us not expect forgiveness then, my brethren, at the close of a life of well-doing, but let us accept it *now* through the blood of Christ our Saviour." Such is the plan clearly revealed in the Scriptures.

11. If Aaron and Christ were fitly called to their office, ought not ministers of the gospel to be duly called also? The purest churches and the best men have always answered this question in the affirmative. It is true indeed that we have no right now to expect an extraordinary or miraculous call to the sacred office. There is indeed a general call addressed to all God's people to make known in all fit ways the savour of the knowledge of Christ. "Let him that heareth say, Come." There are as many as five words in the New Testament rendered *preach*. Still God has set in the church divinely authorized teachers of his word. These must have a *special* call to their work. This is ordinarily made known, 1. By a desire for the work. This seems to be clearly intimated in the first of the pastoral epistles, "This is a true saying, if a man *desire* the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work," 1 Tim. 3:1. One can hardly conceive of a more awkward position than that of him who is in the exercise of sacred functions, and has no relish for them. 2. Another thing of importance in a call is a deep and abiding sense of personal weakness and

unworthiness ; leading one to say as did Paul, " Who is sufficient for these things ? " 2 Cor. 11 : 16. 3. Yet one should have some comfortable degree of confidence that, weak and unworthy as he may be, God will sustain him. Jeremiah shuddered at the thought of being a prophet, but Jehovah said to him, " Say not I am a child ; for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee, shalt thou speak. Be not afraid of their faces, for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord, " Jer. 1 : 7, 8. 4. Another item in a call to the sacred office is a high estimate of its appropriate duties, pleasures and consolations, leading one to magnify his office. 5. Moreover the pious, judicious people of God ordinarily intimate to us their wish and approval of our entering the ministry. When this is connected with the consent of the ecclesiastical authorities and the necessary qualifications for the right performance of our duties, we have in substance the means of knowing the will of God concerning this matter.

12. As it was a great honor, under the law, to be a priest, so is it a great honor, under the gospel, to be a minister of Christ. All the titles given to those that bear this office are intended to commend it to our minds. True, the dignity of the ministry does not consist in any power to act as lords over God's heritage. It is a very dangerous thing to assert a dominion over the faith and morals of God's people. Ministers are helpers of the joy of the saints, 2 Cor. 1 : 24. Never has Christ allowed one of his ministers to lord it over others, but has positively forbidden it, Matt. 20 : 25 -27. Nor does the gospel ministry invest him who holds it with any personal worthiness, beyond what he otherwise possesses. Yet God honors the office with such titles as these, pastors, shepherds, overseers, watchmen, ambassadors for Christ, bishops, men of God and servants of the Lord. Incomparably the best and highest office in this world is that of minister of the Lord Jesus Christ. Owen : " It is a great dignity and honor to be duly called unto any work, service or office in the house of God. True, this treasure is in earthen vessels, but the reason of that is that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us. When the Queen of the South visited Solomon, she was so impressed by a view of the greatness and happiness of himself and his people that she pronounced even his servants blessed. How much more may we pronounce those blessed, whose very office is the perfecting of the saints, the declaration of God's mind and will, who stand in God's stead, who serve the Lord of heaven and earth and shall shine as the stars forever and ever, Eph. 4 : 12 ; Acts 20 : 17 ; 2 Cor. 5 : 20 ; Dan. 12 : 3. So long as Christ's true

ministers confine themselves to the work committed to them, insult to them is insult to their Lord, Luke 10:16.

13. Christ is above Aaron in honor and in authority. He is a Son, in a sense in which Aaron was not. Aaron served a short time, and then was disrobed and went to his account. But Christ holds his office in perpetuity, vs. 5, 6. If the Jews had any cause to venerate their chief priest, much more have we cause to adore and obey the great High Priest of our profession. Owen: "In all things wherein God hath to do with mankind, Jesus Christ should have an absolute pre-eminence." The perpetuity of Christ's office of High Priest is clearly set forth by the words *for ever* in v. 6. But the same subject must come up hereafter and be handled more at length.

14. Some remarks respecting the *order* of Melchisedec have already been offered. See Exposition of verse 6 above. No further observations on that subject are here made as Paul himself brings up the matter fully in the seventh chapter of this epistle. Let us therefore pass on.

15. The sorrows of our Lord constitute a wonderful theme in the scriptures, v. 7. The very first prediction respecting him announced that the serpent should bruise his heel. As we read the Messianic Psalms, in particular the 22d, we have a most affecting insight into his agonies. He says: "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death." These are mere samples of that remarkable composition. When we read the 52d and 53d chapters of Isaiah, our conceptions, both of the extent and the cause of his agonies, are made more clear and definite. In reading Zechariah, we find the appalling words: "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts," Zech. 13:7. And when we see our Lord in his agony in the garden, before his arrest, we can but pronounce him at once the greatest and the most mysterious sufferer, of whom we have ever heard or read. The medical books tell us of a number of cases of men without cutaneous diseases sweating blood. But in all such cases, where the circumstances are fully known, either remorse or despair or both had come to torment the guilty man before he entered the invisible world. But Jesus, who never felt either of these tormenting influences, was yet in such an agony on a cold night in the open air, that he sweated, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground. It was in him a great condescension to become

incarnate, still greater to hunger, and thirst, and want, and bleed, and die. But when we hear his strong crying and witness his tears, we are utterly confounded, till we learn that he is treading the wine-press of his Father's wrath alone, that he is bearing the sins of many and suffering the just for the unjust. There is no doubt that the weight of our Lord's sufferings would have overwhelmed him and swallowed him up, even before he reached the cross, if he had not been supported by his divine nature, and if the angel had not been sent to strengthen him. Such amazing woe ought forever to settle the question of the heinousness and malignity of sin. Surely the Judge of all the earth has ever done right and never exacted more than was due; and yet it was he that put our Lord to grief, when he made his soul an offering for sin. He bore "A weight of woe, more than whole worlds could bear." Clarke: "*Men fear death because of what lies beyond the grave; they have sinned, and they are afraid to meet their Judge.* Jesus could have no fear on these grounds; he was now suffering for men and he felt as their expiatory victim: and God only can tell, and perhaps neither men nor angels can conceive how great the suffering and agony must be, which, in the sight of Infinite Justice, was requisite to make this atonement." Christ's work was finished. It was complete. Owen: "What is to be done with God on the account of sin, that it may be expiated and pardoned, and that the people of God, who have sinned, may be accepted with him and blessed, is all actually done for them by Jesus Christ, their High Priest, in the sacrifice for sin, which he offered on their behalf." Christ's offerings were not without blood, nor without tears, nor without supplications. Well indeed was it for us that the Father did not allow that cup to pass from him, else we must have drunk it to the dregs.

16. These things explain the great difference between the manner of Christ's death and that of many of his people. Not a few of the martyrs have had as great and protracted bodily sufferings as the Lord seems to have had at his crucifixion. Human malice could not have made death appear more appalling than in the case of many of them. Yet multitudes of them have died exulting, while their Lord was overcome even at the prospect of his sufferings. McLean: "Shall we suppose that he was possessed of less fortitude, patience, and resolution, than many of his followers were, who have suffered for his sake, and, through his strength, have been enabled to meet the most cruel deaths with joy and triumph? Such a supposition would be equally absurd as it is impious. There is no accounting for this but by admitting what the scriptures constantly affirm, viz., that he suffered as a sacrifice for sin,

and that the sufferings necessary to expiate and take away the sin of the world, were, in their nature and degree, peculiar to himself. There were bitter ingredients in his cup of sufferings for the sins of men, which none of them can taste in their sufferings for him by all that man can inflict on their bodies. It was death as the effect of the wrath of God against sin, that filled his soul with deadly sorrow, amazement, and fear, and drew from him these prayers, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him."

17. We want no better authority or model for our prayers and supplications than we find in the teachings and example of our blessed Master, who never came heartlessly to God, but made his addresses to his Father with *strong crying and tears*, v. 7. True prayer renounces all other trusts and comes with a powerful sense of dependence on God alone. It knows what it asks and it promises what it ought, Hos. 14:2, 3. All right prayer is offered in the spirit of gratitude, and engages to render the 'calves of the lips.' This kind of worship is the incense and the pure offering that shall be offered to God from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, Mal. 1:11. There is no religion without prayer. And all prayer must be offered in the name of Christ and through his great priesthood, John 14:13. It is a vast encouragement to one who knows the utter worthlessness of his own name to come and plead a name that always stands high in heaven—a name that is above every name.

18. It is not displeasing to God that we should, with submission of will, pray for deliverance from things which God intends to inflict upon us, v. 6. Nature may shrink and shudder at the prospect of terrible sufferings, and faith itself may plead, If it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Christ never pleased his Father better than in his conduct in the garden and on the cross. And yet the cup of suffering was held to his lips till they were swollen with unheard of grief. Patterson: "God may accept a prayer, even when he does not literally grant the thing asked." Paul asked very earnestly to be delivered from the thorn in the flesh. God gave him an answer, which Paul himself esteemed better than the literal granting of his petition, 2 Cor. 12:8-10. So true is it that when our prayers are offered in a right spirit we always get the blessing asked, or something a great deal better. Our Lord himself was favorably answered, although his sufferings were not arrested. Himself said: "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me, and I know that thou hearest me always," John 11:41, 42. Gouge: "If God's hearing the prayer of Elijah did assure the people that he was a prophet sent of God, 1 Kings 18:36, much more doth

God's hearing Christ show that Christ is a priest ordained of God.

19. In expounding verse 7 we have seen how God saved his Son from the power of his own fears, and strengthened him to behave with consummate calmness during the horrid scenes immediately preceding his crucifixion. If we are to understand, as some think, that he was saved from that which he *feared*, then the probability is that he prayed that he might not be swallowed up of death by his intolerable grief, but be strengthened to endure all that was before him, Luke 22 : 43. Very strong fear may exist where there is strong faith. It was not an act of unbelief in Moses to say, "I exceedingly fear and quake," Heb. 12 : 21. So far from Christ having a "heart of iron that felt nothing" he was touched with sorrows and wrung with agonies even beyond anything that mortals ever suffer.

20. It is a very serious mistake into which some have fallen, that Christ did not become our High Priest until his ascension to heaven. Kidd seems to hold this doctrine, "When Christ was taken from the earth to heaven *then* did his office of intercessor begin." Moll asserts the same thing, "Christ is High Priest by virtue of his suffering of death; he is a High Priest *for ever* after the order of Melchisedec, by virtue of his exaltation upon the throne of God." This error has been frequently set forth. It was avowed by Peirce. Guyse argues against it. Whitby pleads for it. He says, "Christ could not exercise his sacerdotal function till after death." But all this is unsound. None could acceptably offer a sacrifice but a priest. This was done upon earth, forty days before his ascension. And as to his intercession almost the whole of the 17th chapter of John is taken up in recording his great intercessory prayer.

21. What a blessed truth it is that now our persons, our prayers, our praises and our eucharistic offerings may all be accepted through our one great High Priest. Calvin: "That the Son of God hath a common nature with us is so far from lowering his dignity that it should rather exalt it in our view. For therefore is he qualified to reconcile God to us because he is man. Therefore, Paul expressly calls him man to prove him a Mediator." If we need any spiritual benefit, pardon, acceptance, purification or victory let us come to him boldly, not unbelievingly. It is only through him that we are "able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge," Phil. 4 : 18. It is only through him that Jews and Gentiles have access by one Spirit unto the Father, Phil. 2 : 18.

22. How foolish it is in us to affect independence of God and not submit to his teaching and discipline, when our exemplar and Saviour *learned obedience*, v. 8. Why should not we do the same? Any thing is good for us, that makes us practically acquainted with God's word. Duncan: "Afflictions are instructive." The Captain of our salvation was made perfect through suffering. Owen: "A practical experience of obedience to God, in some cases, will cost us dear." But let us not mind that. Paul did not learn in whatsoever state he was, therewith to be content, merely by reading or hearing of the duty of contentment; but he learned it in the school of experience. He who would well command must wisely obey. Lindsay: "A great work had been entrusted to him by his father: one difficulty after another rose up to oppose him; unspeakable sufferings were accumulated upon his head near the close. His heart was overwhelmed with agony at the prospect, but he never once wavered in his purpose to obey God. With perfect resignation he met the hour and the power of darkness, and thus was his obedience tried to the very uttermost; and by sore experience he learned what it is to obey; how bitter, how trying, when suffering and death lie in the path of duty." What heightens all this is that he was a Son. He had no sinful reluctance to do or to suffer God's will; nor was he ever unsubmitive to the will of his Father. Oh that we were like him! Oh that we may at least by our sufferings learn to walk in the footsteps of the Redeemer.

23. It is a glorious truth that our Saviour is in every sense *perfect*, v. 9. We need no more power or grace or wisdom or strength or compassion or instruction from example than we find in Christ. No good man whatever his distresses needs more or desires more when by faith he lays hold on the Redeemer as revealed in the scripture.

24. Unspeakably beyond any conception ever attached to the word in regard to temporals is the force of the word *salvation* when used in reference to our souls, v. 9. It is deliverance from sin, from guilt, from wrath, from hell. It brings men out of darkness into marvellous light. It reconciles God to men and men to God. It brings a vast revenue of glory to its author and unsearchable riches to all who embrace it. Gouge: "Christ's priesthood is the main ground of our salvation. Most of the profoundest points of our Christian religion must be known for attaining the knowledge thereof; as the distinction between Father and Son, and betwixt the two natures of Christ in both which he was our Priest,—God, for works of authority and dignity; man, for works of suffering and serving," etc., etc.

25. It unspeakably adds to the grandeur of this theme that the

salvation wrought for us is *eternal*, v. 9. When myriads of ages shall have rolled away, its freshness will still remain. It will be ever new and ever glorious. The redeemed will have no apprehension of any change for the worse.

26. It is now and ever shall be for a rejoicing to saints and angels that the *author* of eternal salvation is every way so glorious and lovely an object, Jesus the Son of God, v. 9. By his bloodshedding he atoned, by his obedience he merited, by his intercession he prevails, by his Spirit he applies, by his sceptre he rules. Tait: "Salvation is both a present and a future thing. As a present thing it is the forgiveness of sin, acceptance for ourselves and our services before the eternal Father, and gracious preservation by the power of the Holy Ghost, from the subtleties and violence of the devil. . . But salvation is also a future thing." "God gives great things here, but are there not greater things yet to come? Adoption into God's family is amazing; but when the last adoption, the redemption of the body, shall take place, the saints will better know what adoption means." Grace—such as God for Christ's sake now shows to men—is a marvel indeed, but glory—grace consummated—will be a source of wonder to all eternity. And then all this was at such a cost of humiliation, tears, anguish and blood. Owen: "All that befell the Lord Christ, all that he did or suffered, was necessary to this end that he might be the cause of eternal salvation to believers."

27. As a great salvation is provided, it becomes matter of the liveliest concern to know who shall partake of it. The answer is given here—those that obey Christ, v. 9. The obedience here called for is to be prompt, hearty, unconditional. The word used is the same as where it is said, "A great company of the priests *were obedient* to the faith;" "Ye *have obeyed* from the heart that form of doctrine," Acts 6:7; Rom. 6:17. He that believes is sure to obey, if he believes from the heart. It is a most solemn question, Have we received the Lord Jesus in all his offices? Have we followed him as our pattern? Do we rely on any merits or atonement but his? Have we bowed to the sceptre of his authority? Do we give up our minds to his instructions? Faith without obedience and obedience without faith are alike vain and rejected. Whoever truly receives Christ as a Priest accepts him also as King and as Prophet. It is only those that keep his commandments that are his friends. Owen: "Salvation is confined to believers." McLean: "By *them that obey him* we are to understand those who, from a principle of faith in him, and love to him, as their Lord and Redeemer, unreservedly keep his sayings and follow his example."

28. Human weakness is very great, v. 11, so great that Christ himself declined to tell us many things which it would have been delightful for us to know, if we could have sufficiently understood them, John 3:12. Nevertheless, we may not decline to speak of many matters, because men may not comprehend them. When a subject is merely difficult, the right course for a religious teacher is to admit that fact, explain himself as well as he can, guard his doctrine against abuse, but hold up the truth as God has revealed it. Owen: "It is necessary for the ministers of the gospel sometimes to insist on the most abstruse and difficult truths that are revealed for our edification."

29. It is very bad to be dull of hearing, v. 11. It makes dark things darker and mysterious things more mysterious. Such dullness is a sinful infirmity, and as such ought to be prayed against. Any thing which disqualifies us to use the word of God aright is of course sinful. Where the heart is simple and upright, the learner though a babe, will become wiser than his teachers, Ps. 119:98-100. We must therefore bring out truths new as well as old. We must ask God to illuminate the understandings of his people. It may be profitable to men, to find out their own insufficiency, which they can do in no way so well perhaps as by discovering that God himself has revealed things as though all men of ordinary understanding would receive them. Such a discipline tests our humility, docility and patience, and if the test is not too severe for us, we ourselves shall soon see the benefit; and if it is too severe for us, it but shows how we are sunk down in sin and ignorance.

30. It seems to us wonderful that converted Hebrews who had enjoyed so long the instructions of the synagogue and the temple, who had witnessed the great reformation under John Baptist, who were acquainted with the wonders of the day of Pentecost and had heard the Apostles and apostolic men expound the things of religion, should yet at the writing of this epistle have failed to be intelligent christians, capable, if called thereto, of *teaching* others the way of eternal life, v. 12. The Apostle probably does not mean that they all ought to have been actual preachers and evangelists, but that they ought to have been capable of instructing their families and their neighbors, as opportunity offered, in the way of eternal life. The word rendered teachers may mean those that have ability to teach, or those that have the office of teacher, Rom. 2:20; Eph. 4:11.

31. The faithful servant of God must admit that there are first principles in religion, fundamental truths without which we do not hold the doctrine of Christ, v. 12. One may not readily be able to

discriminate between essential and non-essential truths, nor can we ever safely deny that any truth wilfully rejected or abused will be just ground of condemnation. But if no truth in Christianity is fundamental, how does our religion differ from that of Hindooism or Islamism? And if all revealed truth is fundamental, then who can be saved? For no mortal man either knows or embraces all truth. All good men are learning something as long as they live and walk with God. The outcry against this distinction is idle. Paul himself makes it, 1 Cor. 3:10-12. It results from the very nature of the case. Owen: "God hath in infinite love and wisdom so disposed of his word, as that there are first principles, plain and necessary, laid down in it, to facilitate the instruction he intended thereby." There are truths clear and plain to honest minds as soon as stated. There are truths concerning which all our doubts may not be solved until we reach the heavenly world. In the meantime let us see to it that our apprehensions of truth be not mere notions or opinions, but *principles*. And when we have settled what are first principles, let us never surrender them. But every truth in its order, elements first, crowning truths afterwards; foundation first, superstructure afterwards.

32. The scripture is excellent. Its teachings are the oracles of God, vs. 12-14. It has something for all docile spirits. It does indeed require candor and humility, prayer and practice, that we may profit thereby. A wrong state of the heart does as certainly hinder our profiting by scripture as a wrong state of the stomach hinders one from deriving strength from wholesome food. Blessed is he who loves the word of God—loves to read it, to hear it, to think upon it and to practise it. Owen: "It is an evidence of a thriving and healthy state of soul to have an appetite unto the deepest mysteries of the gospel, its most solid doctrines of truth, and to be able profitably to digest them."

33. The scriptures everywhere call upon us to exercise a sound discrimination, vs. 12-14. He, who says all is gold that glitters, will often find his coffers filled with brass instead of the precious metal. All truths are not alike seasonable to all persons at all times. He who preaches the gospel to young converts as if they were old Christians may think he is doing his duty. But he is far from the right path. It is a blessed thing to be a babe in Christ, Matt. 18:2, 3. But it is not a blessed thing to be but a babe, when we ought to be strong men. It is a great thing to be an experienced Christian, thoroughly instructed, well acquainted with the treachery of our own hearts and well guarded against the devices of the adversary. If we have not made the progress we should, let us cry mightily to God, let us plead for enlighten-

ing, let us renounce our prejudices, let us remember that any truth in religion is more precious than gold. Let us long for maturity of Christian character and seek to attain unto the stature of a perfect man in Christ. But let us never deny that one is in Christ if he is even a babe and has as yet but little use of his spiritual senses. Uncharitable and harsh judgments are a dark sign wherever found. But let us never be satisfied with a puny Christian existence. Gouge has a section entitled, "Of the disgrace of old babes. A young babe is no disgrace, but an old babe is." Comp. Phil. 3: 13, 14; Eph. 4: 14.

34. Those who teach that the primitive churches, meaning thereby those founded by the Apostles, were wonderfully pure compared with modern organizations, do not seem to have studied the scriptures successfully, vs. 12-14. Nor is the case of these Hebrews solitary, Compare 1 Cor. 3: 1-3; 14: 20. How were the churches of Galatia also rent and torn by wild notions subverting the fundamental truth of justification by faith! When has Christendom of late been disgraced by such scenes at the Lord's Supper as brought down judgments on the church at Corinth? If when men speak of the doctrine taught by Christ and his apostles, they commend its purity, its freedom from any mixture of error, all candid men must unite with them. But when it came to the practice of the truth, poor human nature, just rescued from Jewish prejudice or from pagan superstitions, displayed its weakness and perversity in a manner painful to contemplate.

## CHAPTER VI.

VERSES 1-10.

WHAT ARE FIRST PRINCIPLES. THE NECESSITY OF PROGRESS. THE DANGER OF APOSTASY. PAUL HOPES WELL OF THE HEBREWS.

**T**HEREFORE leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,

2 Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

3 And this will we do, if God permit.

4 For *if it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,

5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,

6 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.

7 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:

8 But that which beareth thorns and briers *is* rejected, and *is* nigh unto cursing; whose end *is* to be burned.

9 But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.

10 For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

**S**OME have expressed a doubt whether it would not have been better to close chapter V. at v. 11 and to begin chapter VI. at v. 12; so that what is now v. 1 of this chapter should have been v. 4. But the division of the books of scripture into chapters and verses is generally known to be merely a convenient device of man. It in no way binds us, either in our reading or

exposition of scripture. Moreover, some think the present division of these chapters is better than any other yet proposed. At all events it is easy to show the connection between this and the preceding context. Paul had there declared that those to whom he was writing had not properly advanced in the divine life, but were babes in knowledge and not well established Christians. He now says:

1. *Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God.* There is a variety of renderings and of interpretations of the words *leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ*. Syriac: Let us leave the word of the commencement of the Messiah; Coverdale; Let us leave the doctryne pertaynyng to the begynnyng of a Christen life; Tyn-dale: Let us leave the doctryne pertayning to the beginning of a Christen man; Cranmer: Leaving the doctryne that pertayneth to the begynnyng of Christen men; Genevan: Let us leave the doctrine perteyning to the beginning of a Christen man; Rheims: Intermitting the word of the beginning of Christ; Doway: Leaving the word of the beginning of Christ; with a note explaining that it means The first rudiments of the Christian doctrine; Stuart: Leaving the first principles of Christian doctrine; Conybeare and Howson: Let me leave the rudiments of the doctrine of Christ; Craik follows the authorized version, which, though not literal, is in idiomatic English, and doubtless gives the sense. The word rendered *leaving* often means forsaking or deserting; but this cannot be the meaning here. We must not forget, nor slight, nor let go first principles. We must hide them in our hearts. Leaving also means passing on, as from one place to another, so from one matter to another, or dismissing from present chief attention. This is the meaning here. In any science he who knows not first principles can make no progress; while he, who confines himself to first principles, does in fact consent to stand still. *Let us go on to perfection.* Some think the perfection here demanded is perfection in knowledge only. Others think it is a call to us to press on to completeness of Christian character in all respects—knowledge, temper, behaviour, etc. The latter is the better mode of interpretation. The scriptures know nothing of a perfection consisting in mere intellectual attainments. All truth is in order to godliness. In Heb. 5: 14 the cognate adjective is rendered *of full age*. In 1 Cor. 14: 20 the word is rendered *men*. The apostle is urging the Hebrews to manliness of Christian character. We have the same word in Eph. 4: 13: "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God,

unto a *perfect* man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Surely sound knowledge is a great attainment, and we must seek after it with diligence and prayer. But he, who would have the character of a thorough Christian must love and practise as well as know the will of God. Tong: "The apostle's advice is that they would grow up from a state of childhood to the fulness of the stature of the new man in Christ." Clarke: "Let us never rest till we are *adult Christians*; till we are saved from all sin, and are filled with the Spirit and power of Christ." Doddridge: "Let us pursue more eminent degrees of improvement in the doctrine of Christ, and more advanced and elevated knowledge." Guyse: "Let us proceed to discourse of, and to embrace with holy care and diligence, those great mysteries of the gospel, that may bring us to more advanced degrees of spiritual knowledge." Turner: "*Perfection*, that is thorough Christian character, both as to knowledge and godliness." *Not laying again the foundation.* He, who spends his life in laying foundations, will die houseless. The apostle now proceeds to mention six of these principles, or foundation truths.

The first is that of *repentance from dead works*. *Dead works* are works performed by men dead in trespasses and in sins, without any life or love in them, wrong often in the matter of them, and always wrong in the manner and motive of them. Men must turn away from such works, must abhor them, must cease from them, and lead a holy life. The word rendered repentance designates repentance unto life, thorough saving sorrow for sin, and turning from it. It is so obviously true that he, who has done wrong, should be sorry for it, that a modern infidel has maintained that the duty of repentance is taught and sufficiently inculcated by natural religion. That natural conscience does call on men to be sorry for wrongs committed is clear, but natural religion does not tell us what sort of repentance will avail, nor does it present adequate considerations to induce godly sorrow for sin. But the doctrine of repentance was so well explained in Psalms xxxii., li. and cxxxi., and in Jer. 31:19; Zech. 12:10; 13:1, 2, that no Jew, at all well instructed in the Hebrew Scriptures, could be ignorant of its nature. When we add that John Baptist, Christ and his apostles often and earnestly called on men to repent, we can hardly suppose that any Hebrew Christian was ignorant of this element of Christian doctrine and experience.

Another of these first principles is *faith toward God*. It is impossible to conceive of any but a heartless, hypocritical profession of any form of piety, unless it is accompanied with a firm and abiding belief in the existence, perfections and government of

God. He, that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him, Heb. 11:6. True faith in God always leads the soul to accept of the Lord Jesus as he is freely offered in the gospel, and of the Holy Spirit as the Sanctifier, Comforter and Guide. Faith also respects all that God has spoken. It practises no eclecticism respecting the truths of the Bible. It has hearty and real delight in learning, in doing and in suffering the will of God. It is not dead but operative. Nothing imparts more energy to the soul. The apostle proceeds to speak

2. *Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.* What does he mean by *the doctrine of baptisms*? This question has perplexed many. The word here rendered baptisms occurs in but three other places (Mark 7:4, 8; Heb. 9:10) and is in those cases rendered washing or washings. In the Ethiopic and Syriac the word is here put in the singular—baptism. Calvin and Owen place the first and second clauses of this verse in parentheses. But for this there is no good reason. And there are strong objections to such a punctuation. Instead of doctrine of baptisms, some would read baptisms of doctrine. So Bengel, Michaelis, Winer. The grammar would admit such a rendering, but there is nothing gained by it. Others prefer to read baptisms, doctrine and laying on of hands. Conybeare and Howson have Baptism, Instruction and Laying on of hands. The grammar will admit of this also, but the objections are serious, and it is generally rejected. The doctrine of baptisms is the best rendering and is approved by Calvin, Beza, Schlichting, Boehme, Starr, Ebrard, F. S. Sampson, Lindsay, Paterson and many others. Owen cannot be followed when he says: "There were two things peculiar to the gospel, the doctrine of it, and the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost. Doctrine is compared to and called baptism, Deut. 32:2. Hence the people were said to be baptized to Moses, when they were initiated into his doctrine, 1 Cor. 10:1, 2. The baptism of John was his doctrine, Acts 19:3. And the baptism of Christ was the doctrine of Christ, wherewith he was to sprinkle many nations, Isa. 32:15." Perhaps the candid reader will judge that not one of the texts cited proves the positions taken. It is very unusual for Owen so to use scripture. It seems fanciful.

Why is the word baptisms—plural—and not baptism—singular? To account for this many things have been said. Bloomfield is so perplexed on the subject that he sees "no ground on which to form any decided opinion." Ernesti thinks the plural is put for the singular. And it is true that we have heavens for heaven, and

sacrifices for sacrifice, etc., Heb. 4:14; 9:23. Yet the scriptures clearly teach that in the world of bliss there is but one house, one city, one country, and that Christ never made but one sacrifice, John 14:2; 11:13; 13:14; 10:12. Grotius, Braunius and perhaps others think the plural form is used on account of the two-fold nature of baptism, internal and external. But baptism is no more significant internally or externally than the Lord's Supper, and yet none of its names are put in the plural. Moreover the apostle expressly informs us that there is *one* baptism, Eph. 4:5. Schleusner thinks baptisms here regard only the washings under the law. It is admitted that the Greek word here rendered baptisms does every where else in the New Testament refer to such washings only. But Paul certainly never taught that such rites or usages were among the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, and of those he is now speaking. Yet Clarke thinks that all the terms in verses 1, 2 belong to the Levitical law, and are to be explained on that ground. Gill rejects all such reasons for the plural form as not solid and sufficiently satisfying, and interprets the word of the divers baptisms among the Jews, spoken of in Heb. 9; 10. Schmid, Peirce and Rosenmuller adopt the same line of remark. The words of Lindsay are of great weight against this view: "If the apostle had been writing to Jews who still remained hostile to Christianity, then he might have assured them that their system was merely a preparation for Christianity, and he might have exhorted them to go on from the one system to the other; but he is writing to men who have already been initiated into Christian doctrine, and have professed their faith in Christ. Limborch and Dindorf think there is a probable reference to proselyte baptism in connection with John's baptism, and Christian baptism. But neither the Old nor the New Testament ever mentions proselyte baptism, although tradition and history assign it a place among Jewish usages. Others suppose that baptisms are spoken of because both John's baptism and Christian baptism were practised up to this time, the former where the people were not well instructed as yet in the gospel. For proof such refer to Acts 19:1-6. The baptism here mentioned occurred more than twenty years after Christ's ascension. The chief weakness in the point here made, is that we know not at what time they received John's baptism. It may have been many years before their Christian baptism. But there are two baptisms in the Christian church—one of water, and the other of the Spirit; one, emblematical, the other, the thing set forth by the emblem; the one, administered by man, the other by the Lord. The scriptures relied on to sustain this view are Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 3:5; Acts 1:5; 11:16; 1 Cor 12:13-

Tong thus explains the doctrine of baptisms as that of "being baptized by a minister of Christ with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, as the initiating sign or seal of the covenant of grace; strongly engaging the person so baptized to get acquainted with the new covenant; to adhere to it, and prepare to renew it at the table of the Lord, and sincerely to regulate himself according to it; and relying upon the truth and faithfulness of God for the blessings contained in it. And the doctrine of an inward baptism, that of the Spirit sprinkling the blood of Christ upon the soul, for justification, and the graces of the Spirit for sanctification." Pool: "The third fundamental doctrine in which these Hebrews were initiated was the *doctrine of baptisms*; containing in it the doctrine which baptism teacheth, as that of the covenant of grace, of which it is a sign and seal, and of their entering into it, who partake of it, which, as to its duties and privileges, is sealed and confirmed: and the doctrine in which baptisms are taught, as that of Christ by water and by the Spirit." See also on this place Turner, F. S. Sampson, Tait and others. Water Baptism is still binding, Acts 10:47. The baptism of the Spirit is essential to salvation, John 8:14.

If the above is the true and scriptural explanation, we have a sufficient reason for the word *baptisms* in the plural without resorting to trine immersion, of which we have no evidence that it was practised in Paul's time, and which was yet but one baptism. Nor need we resort to the supposition that Paul means to say that many were baptized, for he is not speaking of the number but of the doctrine of baptisms. In like manner we drop all Jewish washings whether prescribed in the law, or enjoined by the Pharisees; for none of these were ever treated by the apostles as among the principles of Christian doctrine.

The fourth foundation truth here stated is the *doctrine of laying on of hands*. In scripture the phrase laying hand or hands is used in three senses very diverse. Sometimes it indicates punishment or violence, Gen. 22:12; 37:22; Ex. 7:4; Neh. 13:21; Esth. 3:6. Sometimes it denotes an act of confession over a victim, to which guilt is ceremonially or typically transferred, Lev. 3:2, 13; 4:24; 16:21. But neither of these pertains to Christian doctrine here spoken of. And so the laying on of hands in this place must refer either to an act of blessing, an act of prayer, or an act of imparting a spiritual gift, Gen. 48:14; Num. 27:18; Mark 16:18; Acts. 8:18; 1 Tim. 4:14; 5:22. Owen is confident that the laying on of hands in this place refers exclusively to the communication of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. With him very much agree Lindsay, F. S. Sampson, Ebrard, Bloomfield, Dutch Anno-

tations, Doddridge and McLean. Scott regards the laying on of hands as pointing to the miraculous gifts thus bestowed, and to the ordination of church officers. Tong, Patterson, Tait and Stuart are substantially of the same mind. Turner and Kidd refer the laying on of hands to the rite of Confirmation, still maintained in some churches. Indeed the Greek and Roman churches have exalted it into a sacrament, and some Protestant churches, which allow Presbyters to administer baptism and the Lord's supper, restrict the laying on of hands to prelates, thus making this a greater institution than either of the two sacraments instituted by the Lord. Nor is there any man living, who by the imposition of hands can communicate either the ordinary or miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, and it is presumption in any man to claim such a power. The view of Owen as above is, perhaps, correct. That of Scott and those, who agree with him; doubtless covers the whole case. It is not safe to go beyond it.

The fifth foundation here given is the *doctrine of resurrection of the dead*. The friends of Christianity do not hesitate to admit that this doctrine is still and in all coming ages of the world will be vital and essential to those, who would be saved. Hear Paul: "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God," etc., 1 Cor. 15:13-15. Nor are religious errorists inclined to regard the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead with any favor. The Sadducean spirit is still rife in many places. Like those mentioned by Paul some now contend that the resurrection is past, 2 Tim. 2:18. Among the greatest blessings a good man can obtain is to know the power of Christ's resurrection, and to have part in the first resurrection, Phil. 3:10, 11; Rev. 20:6. But the Scriptures reveal the resurrection of the just and of the unjust, Dan. 12:2; John 5:29. The Old Testament informs us of the resurrection of three persons, while the New Testament tells us of the resurrection of *many*, among whom the most illustrious was our Lord himself. Compare 1 Kings 17:22; 2 Kings 4:32-37; 13:21; Matt. 27:52, 53. To deny the resurrection is infidelity.

The sixth foundation of Christian principles is the *doctrine of eternal judgment*, called *eternal* because its decisions will be irreversible and their effects everlasting. This doctrine was well understood before the flood, Jude 14, 15. David spoke often and largely of it, Ps. 1:5; 50:1-22. Our Lord often spoke of it, and sometimes at length, Matt. 12:41, 42; 25:31-46; Luke 11:31, 32. His apostles proclaimed the same truth, and with great effect on

many minds. "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad," 2 Cor. 5:10.

These six principles underlie the scheme of Christianity. Without them it were futile, and had never commanded the homage nor revolutionized the moral sentiments of mankind as it has done. But let us not suppose that these are all of the first truths of Christ's religion. They are mere samples of them. There has arisen a sect, calling themselves the six-article Christians. They found their creed on these verses and hold that these are the only essential truths of the gospel. Lindsay: "It might as well be affirmed, that the foundation of a house is of itself sufficient to serve for a permanent residence." Paul's judgment was the same. He did not say that in attaining to these things they had gone far enough in practice or doctrine. On the contrary he invites them to go on to perfection, and now adds:

3. *And this will we do, if God permit.* The first clause is clear and plain. It expresses a purpose on the part of Paul to do what in him lay to raise his Hebrews from their present low state of attainment to a completeness of Christian character; but he admits that neither he nor they could do this as of themselves; and so he adds, *If God permit.* The excellency of the power was with God. The dependence of good men upon God for grace and strength to make advances themselves or to be truly and largely helpful to others in their march to glory is absolute. It ought to be constantly kept in mind, and adoringly declared. It is a doctrine set forth in many scriptures, Ps. 37:39; 90:17; Hos. 14:8; Rom. 8:26; 2 Cor. 3:5; Jas. 1:17. Nor does this sense of dependence either dishearten or discourage good men. Nor is it enough that we know and feel that of ourselves we can do nothing. We ought to *say* what we feel on this point, Jas. 4:15.

We come now to a portion of this epistle, which has perplexed and even distressed many. Concerning it several things may be stated. 1. There is not in the bible any equal portion of scripture more awe-inspiring than verses 4, 5 and 6 of this chapter. They have made many a man's ears to tingle and his heart to tremble. Even the lukewarm have been mightily stirred by them. What must have been the apostle's apprehensions of the state of some, to whom he was writing, when he felt called upon to employ language of so great terror! Calvin styles it a "dreadful denunciation." 2. No theory of interpretation yet avowed has been able to avoid all difficulties in these verses. Candor requires the admission that there are here things calling for great pa-

tience and docility that they may be understood. Nor is one preserved from difficulties by adopting Arminian views of doctrine.

3. This is the most prominent text involved in the old controversy with the Montanists and Novatians, who maintained that open deliberate sin after baptism excluded for all coming time the fallen member from the communion of the visible church on earth; and some even went so far as from these verses to maintain that such sin for ever closed the gates of heaven against the transgressor. Those, who are familiar with that controversy, will see how easily and with what terrible power over the hearts of the uninstructed, men might use and in fact did use these awful words in maintenance of their peculiar views.

4. Sometimes the question has been asked, Are there any passages of scripture parallel to verses 4-6 of this chapter? if so, which are they? In answer it may be said that not a few expositors regard Heb. 10: 26-29 as parallel. This reference is probably as fair as any that has been made. Another passage of scripture often referred to as nearly parallel to this is found in 2 Peter 2: 20-22. In some things it very closely resembles this. Some regard in the same way those passages, which speak of the unpardonable sin, and of the sin unto death—Matt. 12: 23-32; 1 John 5: 16. Whether these latter verses are further parallel to our vs. 4-6 than in the awfulness of the doom awaiting those, who sin knowingly and malignantly as compared with other sinners, is not generally agreed. Some also cite as nearly parallel Gen. 6: 3; Pr. 29: 1.

5. It is fair to deal with this passage as with others of difficult interpretation, viz. to explain that which is dark and doubtful by that which is clear and certain. No rule of exposition is more safe, or less liable to mislead. If we find any thing beyond doubt settled in God's word, then any thing which we may afterwards meet in seeming conflict with that, which is so clearly revealed, must not be explained in such a manner as to contradict it.

6. When to this we add the light gained by the grammatical construction of the words, and by a view of the scope and design of the passage as learned from the context, we have no other means of gaining a clear insight into the true intent of the author of this solemn portion of God's word. What, then, is the aim of the apostle in these verses and in the context? In the last three verses of the preceding chapter Paul had complained that these Hebrews had very imperfect views in religion, were but babes in knowledge when they ought to be teachers, and were sadly unskilful in the word of righteousness. In the first three verses of this chapter he urges them to rest no longer on a few elementary truths, of which he names six, but calls them to make advances in the gospel, in its true spirit, its gracious princi-

ples and its precious privileges. There were among them some, who could bear strong meat and were not confined to mere rudiments. And the apostle expresses his determination to lead such and all the teachable among them to better discoveries of the truth, and to greater enlargement, saying, Let us go on to perfection. His aim then is to urge upon them the necessity of growing in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. He seems to say to them that standing still is courting apostasy, that they must go forward, else they will decline from Christ. They must cleave to the whole system of truth and advance in it, or they will relapse into fatal errors. He, who learns a little of the gospel, and is pleased with it, but not well enough pleased to press on to higher attainments in knowledge, experience and holiness, has such superficial views and exercises that beyond a doubt he is in great and imminent peril. That these verses relate to the danger of total apostasy is, perhaps, doubted by no one. Even Clarke says: "These verses belong to *apostates* from Christianity: to such as reject the whole *Christian system*, and its *Author* the Lord Jesus." 7. Some prefer to explain these verses as if they were wholly supposititious, and merely stated an imaginary case. Such hold that the persons described are genuine Christians, true believers. They regard Paul as merely supposing that if such should apostatize from Christ they would perish. And it is true that if men finally renounce Christ, he will finally reject them. It is only they that hold fast their confidence, that shall be saved. If men are not faithful unto death, they shall not receive a crown of life. Without denying that inspired men do at times suppose certain cases, (Lev. 18:5; Matt. 11:20, 21; Luke 10:13; Acts 27:31; Gal. 3:12,) it may be sufficient to observe that there is no necessity for adopting such a course of explanation here. 8. Another class of persons, holding that those here spoken of are the true children of God, do yet contend that some such have been lost. The terms, in which this view is expressed, sound both rash and harsh. Thus Clarke says that one design of these verses is "to show the Hebrews that apostasy from the highest degree of grace was possible; and that those, who were highest in the favor of God, might sin against him, lose it, and perish everlastingly." But such a statement is unsupported by scripture. Although this learned writer asserts elsewhere that such cases have actually occurred, yet neither he nor any one else has ever been able to name the eminent child of God, who ever did so apostatize and perish. Then many scriptures utterly oppose such teaching, and in a great variety of ways. The same grace, that was sufficient for Paul, is sufficient for any one, 2 Cor. 12:9. Our apostle elsewhere says, "the weak brother

shall be holden up, for God has received him, and is able to make him stand," Rom. 14:3. Indeed he says he is "confident of this very thing, that he, which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ," Phil. 1:6. If justification is irrevocable, the believer cannot perish. That God will never condemn the soul, that he has redeemed, pardoned, accepted and renewed is the great truth so irrefragably insisted on by Paul in Rom. 8:31-39. Our Lord also spake very decidedly on this subject, John 10:27-30. If believers decline from the right ways of God, there are precious promises of recovery from backsliding, Ps. 37:23, 24; 89:30-33; Hos. 11:7-10; 14:4. Then there are promises made to believers respecting an increase of grace, Ps. 84:7; Isa. 40:31; 2 Cor. 8:9. In addition to all this we have the promise of Christ's intercession in behalf of all his people, and that is always heard, Luke 22:31, 32; Heb. 4:14-16. Tait also adduces a large class of texts, proving in another way the certainty of final salvation to all who believe—such as say that God's people now have eternal life, John 6:47-51, 56; 17:3; 1 John 5:20. See also those passages which declare that believers are in Christ and Christ in them.

If the foregoing remarks are just, there is a way open for a fair exposition of these verses without in the least impugning any of the great truths of scripture. The apostle is urging the Hebrews to make progress, and warning them against a course, which naturally leads to apostasy. He proceeds to show that one may go far in a way that looks promising, and yet not be a genuine Christian, and finally become so vile and so hardened as to be a hopeless castaway. The three verses read thus:

4. *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.*

5. *And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,*

6. *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.* It will be best to take up in order the several clauses stating what these persons had attained. First, they *were once enlightened*. Syriac, who have once descended to baptism. Suicer has shown that the word here rendered *enlightened* was by some of the early writers on Christianity used both for baptism and for the instruction, which preceded it. But this is not the meaning of the word in the New Testament. In Heb. 10:32 it is rendered *illuminated*; and in Eph. 1:18 we find it in this connection, *The eyes of your understanding being enlightened*. That the word expresses no more than man can do is clear from the fact

that Paul uses the same verb in regard to the grace given him to make all men see, literally, to enlighten all, etc., Eph. 3 : 9. These people had been enlightened, delivered from the darkness of their former state, made to see many of the truths of the gospel. In all ages men are found who attain thus much, without any improvement of moral character, certainly without any saving change of heart. Compare John 9 : 39-41; 1 Cor. 13 : 2, 8. They had also *tasted of the heavenly gift*. The word *tasted* we met in Heb. 2 : 9. Whenever applied to death, as it is in several cases, it is used in the sense of actually dying. But when the word is applied to other matters, it often signifies a very small participation. Thus, "They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had *tasted* thereof, he would not drink," Matt. 27 : 34. "I say unto you, None of those men which were bidden shall *taste* of my supper," Luke 14 : 24. "When the ruler of the feast had *tasted* the water that was made wine," etc., John 2 : 9. The *heavenly gift*. It is not certain what is here meant by gift. There are two places where the same word is commonly supposed to refer to Christ, John 4 : 10; 2 Cor. 9 : 15. But of this some are in doubt. Several times this word is undoubtedly applied to the Holy Ghost, Acts 2 : 38; 8 : 20; 10 : 45; 11 : 17. A reason for supposing it here refers to Christ is that this is the only word among these five clauses which can be construed as having Christ in view; and it would seem as if in this connection something should be said of him. Some, however, prefer to regard the word as equivalent to kindness or benefit. From John 4 : 10 Lindsay argues that it means the knowledge of the truth, which is the gift of God. Tillotson regards the gift of God as the remission of sin, and cites Rom. 5 : 15-18 in proof. Others yet think that faith is the gift of God here spoken of. And were made *partakers of the Holy Ghost*. The work of the Holy Spirit is either extraordinary or ordinary. His extraordinary or miraculous power may be felt without any saving change of heart. Both Balaam and King Saul were very bad men, yet prophesied. Balaam was the man whose eyes were open, Num. 24 : 3. See 1 Sam. 10 : 6. Compare Matt. 7 : 21-23; 1 Cor. 13 : 1, 2. To work a miracle does not prove a man regenerate. Miraculous gifts greatly abounded in the days of the apostles. Many had them. The ordinary work of the Holy Ghost is either special or common. His special influence renews the soul, and conforms it to God. His common operations quicken the conscience, awaken concern, and alarm, make men act as Felix, Agrippa, Simon Magus and Demas behaved, and often cause men for a while to be mightily moved by divine things. They may be almost Christians.

The fourth effect on these men is thus described—*And have tasted the good word of God.* On the word *tasted* see above on v. 4. These persons had some sense of the excellence of scripture. It may have been as strong as that of Herod, who when he had heard John, did many things, and heard him gladly, Mark 6:20. Or like the stony ground hearers, “who when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; and have no root in themselves and so endure but for a time,” Mark 4:16, 17. See also the parallel passage in Matt. 13:20, 21. It is marvelous that all men are not deeply moved and affected with the kind, beautiful and wonderful things of scripture. It is not wonderful that a few are so affected with them as to seem to be nigh unto the kingdom of heaven. This was specially true when men beheld the miracles or *powers of the world to come.* On the word *powers* see above on Heb. 2:4, where it is rendered *miracles.* He that is to come was one of the titles given to Messiah. In Heb. 2:5 the world to come, as we have seen, pretty certainly means the gospel church, the Christian dispensation. If that is the right view in Heb. 2:5, much more is it the right interpretation here. The doubt there arose from the word rendered world being *oikoumene.* But *here* we have *aion*—*the age to come.* This is a better explanation than that of some, who by the powers of the world to come understand those powerful motives which are drawn from the doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments. These five particulars are all that Paul mentions as indicating the religious state of those, who afterwards became apostates. No one thing is stated in their favor, but such as may belong to unregenerate hearts. The strongest clause is that which relates to the Holy Spirit; but that same blessed agent wrought on the hearts of the wicked antediluvians, Gen. 6:3; and he has wrought miracles on and by men, who never were soundly converted, as we must admit.

But the scriptures use in other places language indicative of great effects on men's minds, hearts and lives as any in this chapter, and yet we know that in many such cases there was no saving change of heart. Is not humility a necessary and excellent part of piety? And did not God himself say, Seest thou Ahab how he humbleth himself? 1 Ki. 21:20. Is not delight in good preaching one feature of a pious soul? Yet read Ezekiel 33:31, 32, and see how well the wicked of that day behaved when that mighty prophet declared the truth; and how they praised their preacher; but yet could not be induced to live in holiness. See also Rom. 2:17-20, and many parallel passages of scripture. The persons described

in Heb. 6:4, 5 were greatly affected, knew much, felt much, and perhaps, like Herod, did much. But they did not do enough. They did not close in with Christ on gospel terms. They did not submit themselves to the righteousness of God. The best they did in fruitfulness was to bring forth thorns and briers, v. 8. They were satisfied with past attainments. They stood still and so were in danger of apostasy. Lindsay: "It is not with listless steps we are to advance: it is not with torpid minds we are to study the sacred oracles. . . We must make constant advancement, we must explore every subject which the word of God brings under our notice."

Our apostle says that *if* those, who have been thus enlightened and thus affected, *shall fall away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance.* By *repentance* is to be understood a saving change of heart. The word rendered *impossible* has caused some diversity. Some have endeavored to soften it by rendering it difficult. But it asserts an absolute impossibility. No word could more certainly do so. See Matt. 19:26; Mark 10:21; Luke 18:27; Heb. 6:18; Heb. 10:4; 11:6. It teaches that it cannot be done, Rom. 8:3. The impossibility arises from the inflexible determination of God concerning such cases as are here under consideration. Theophylact explains it as describing a case which causes just despair. God has power sufficient to reclaim any wanderer, but he cannot deny himself. It is impossible for him to lie, and he has said that certain classes of men cannot be brought to repentance. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple," Ps. 19:7. But these men have rejected the whole word of God in its true meaning, setting aside all the truths of saving efficacy. The Spirit of God is almighty, but they have finally and forever grieved him away. He might have brought them to a right state of mind, but they have forever quenched his light and his warmth in their souls. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. There is no limit to its efficacy wherever applied. But these men utterly and scornfully reject him and his atonement: "*They crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.*" There are no means left to lead them to a right temper. The only agent of conversion they have rejected. They have refused to look to the Lamb of God, who alone can take away sin. And they have done all this intelligently, deliberately, malignantly, scornfully—in the very temper of the Jews, who crucified the Saviour, and delighted to see every indignity and ignominy heaped upon him. Such men know nothing, except what they know naturally as brute beasts, or what they know diabolically as the children of

the Wicked One, "They are raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever," Jude 13. They have gone so far from the religious world that they feel not its attractions. They have receded so far from all that is good, and wise, and holy, that gravitation turns the other way, and irresistibly carries them to hell. Such is the act of *falling away*, and such are its dire effects. The conversion of men in this state of mind is out of the question—a contradiction. Men, intelligently identified in feeling with the murderers of Christ, are as surely lost as the Lord Jesus is the only Saviour.

The apostle now proceeds to say that the difference between true believers and such apostates is as great as that between a fruitful and a barren soil—so that none need be surprised at what he had said.

7. *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;*

8. *But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.* Here is a clear declaration that they, who improve the means of grace, advance in the knowledge of God, and glorify God by bringing forth much fruit, shall go from strength to strength, and shall abundantly prosper. God will compass them with favor as with a shield, and they shall be strong and shall do exploits. The Lord will help them and that right early. He will gird them with might by his Spirit in the inner man. He will crown them with immortal honor and immortal bliss. But they, who have the gospel, are pleased with the blessings it proposes to confer, see a beauty and taste a sweetness in its provisions, are sensible of the power with which it is attested, are in fact on the verge of the kingdom of heaven, but at length yield to the power of temptation, and go backward from the Almighty, and renounce all share in God's word, all trust in his Son, and all the joys of his Spirit, shall surely fall under God's irrevocable displeasure. The curse is sealed on such. In both of these verses a form of utterance common to exceedingly earnest speaking and writing is employed, the mind of the writer being so fully occupied with the main matter, that his similitude is almost dropped, as impetuously he rushes on to encourage one class and to warn the other. Lindsay: "The concluding words have a preponderating reference to the main subject, and are less applicable to the figure than the rest of the verse." Some, however, suppose that the reference is to the destruction of the fertility of the land in the plain of Sodom, and find as they think an explanation in

Deut. 29 : 23, "The whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass growth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom, and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which the Lord overthrew in his anger and in his wrath." If this view be taken, then the figure is carried to its natural conclusion. One kind of land receives blessing; the other is nigh unto cursing. Some think the meaning is one parcel is blessed, and so becomes fruitful, according to that phrase in Gen. 27 : 27; the other is cursed, and so is barren, But this is hardly the drift of the apostle's remark. Some think that the blessing is fruitfulness itself, and that the curse is barrenness itself. But it is evident that the blessing follows the fruitfulness, and the cursing follows the barrenness. Admitting this to be the sense, the similitude is very much expended in the productiveness of the one sort, and in the unfruitfulness of the other; and in rational and accountable beings, such results meet with appropriate rewards and punishments. F. S. Sampson, however, thinks that the ground must be taken for that which grows upon it; and that the men, who finally yield the fruits of a sinful life, are, at some unexpected hour, utterly destroyed; in order that their evil fruits may not be propagated farther. Compare 2 Cor. 9 : 6, 10; 1 Tim, 5 : 18; 2 Tim. 2 : 6.

9. *But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.* A parallel passage is found in Rom. 15 : 14, 15. Guyse's paraphrase is long, but seems to give the full import of the verse : "But to the better part of you, my dear Brethren, whom I look upon and love, as beloved of God, and as sincere believers, I am very confident, that ye are favored with much more excellent blessings, than the apostates before mentioned ever have been partakers of; and that your end shall be better than theirs, as ye are enriched with the blessings of special grace, in the renovation of your nature, the forgiveness of sins, justification and adoption, with other distinguishing benefits, that contain in them, stand connected with, and shall certainly issue in the eternal salvation of your souls; though for your caution, and for the terror of false professors, I have spoken so freely of the danger of apostatizing from the profession of Christ, after an enjoyment of such high privileges, as have been conferred upon them, according to what has been said about them." But *better things* here spoken of are things better than apostates ever attained; better than the tenor of the apostle's remarks in this context would lead us to think of; things that invariably "accompany salvation."

10. *For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered*

to the saints, and do minister. Some have undertaken to show that the word rendered unrighteous means unkind; but it cannot be shown that it ever has that meaning. Indeed it has been proven by many that the above rendering is the fair and true one. Some indeed render it unjust, but unjust and unrighteous have precisely the same meaning. The gifts of God to his people, who are in Christ, are in full accordance with righteousness. One of President Edwards' best treatises is the History of Redemption. It rests upon Isa. 51:8, and supposes that there and in some other places righteousness means faithfulness. However that may be it certainly includes it. But the scriptures use both terms. "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." God is just when he justifies the ungodly, Rom. 3:26; 1 John 1:9. Every perfection of God, his justice not excepted, is pledged to effect the salvation of his people. Redemption was begun in mercy, has been carried on in mercy, and shall be crowned in mercy, but not at the expense of justice. God will never, he can never forget the least service of love and faith done to one of his humblest servants, Matt. 10:42; 25:31-40. The scripture has put this matter beyond all doubt. In days of persecution the service here well denominated ministering to the saints was of the greatest necessity and usefulness. The obligation to attend to it was indispensable. Greatly do inspired writers commend it. See Acts 15:25, 26; Rom. 16:3, 4; 2 Tim. 1:17. The word for ministering is that, which expresses the work of a deacon, but it is also used to express any good work of ministry, especially to the poor or afflicted. Some editions omit the word we render *labor*. That does not materially affect the sense. But it is well retained. Compare 1 Thess. 1:3.

#### DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL REMARKS.

1. If professed Christians are babes, as all are at their first conversion, let Christian ministers and friends faithfully labor with them to carry them on to maturity, v. 1. The first part of this chapter is a sequent of the last part of the previous chapter. If men are dull they must be urged to increase their pace. The Apostle of the circumcision well cries "As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby," 1 Pet. 2:2. Moll: "The goal of Christian development is perfection." As medicine is given for increase of health, so instruction and reproof are administered for the increase of grace and stability. Let all who are charged with the spiritual interests of others be

diligent and unfiring, watchful and unsparing in their endeavors for their spiritual good.

2. There is a doctrine of Christ distinct from all others. v. 1. Revealed religion is indeed based upon the truths of natural religion; but the latter, of themselves, have no saving power. It is the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, which renew and cleanse the soul and fit it for heaven. Dickson: "The doctrine of Christ is the sum of religion. He that hath learned Christ well, hath learned all."

3. The doctrine of Christ is based on *principles*, v. 1. Take these away and the fabric of our hopes falls into ruin. Some indeed err by seeking for nothing but first principles. Such should remember that "the realm of truth is very wide. We must not, therefore, stand still, but go on to perfection." One of the best methods of making good and safe progress is to practise all we learn. This was the Saviour's method distinctly pointed out, Jno. 7: 17. No wise master builder is careless of the nature of the truths on which he rears his structure, Luke 6: 48; 1 Cor. 3: 10. "They are bad Christians, or rather they are no Christians, who know not the ground of the Christian religion."

4. There is an order in Christian doctrine, v. 1. It is not all foundation. Something must be reared thereupon. No man finds accommodation in the foundation of his house.

5. There is a life corresponding to the right embracing of Christ's doctrine, v. 1. All truths are powerless for good unless reduced to practice. The axioms and postulates of geometry, though essential to the successful study of that science, of themselves make no man proficient therein. All the rules of arithmetic may be committed to memory; but, if not practised, they will make no one skilful in the science of numbers. "Life and doctrine have in Christianity a very noteworthy reciprocal influence."

6. We ought to seek completeness in all the parts of Christian character, v. 1. Calvin: "As the foundation is laid for the sake of the house; he who having first built that, proceeds not upward to the superstructure, wearies himself with fond and unprofitable labor. In short, like as he must begin with the foundation, so should the exertions of the master builder press onward to rearing the house. Similar is the method of becoming Christians: for we are, as it were, founded in the rudiments; but immediately they should be followed by higher doctrine, to complete the edifice." This doctrine is much insisted on by the apostle to the Gentiles and the apostle to the circumcision, Eph. 4: 15: Phil. 3:

16; 1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:18. Dickson: "There are two parts of Christian doctrine. When people have learned the principles, their teachers must advance them further towards perfection."

7. It is well often to inquire whether our works are *dead works*, v. 1. Have they in them any thing of the life of faith, of the warmth of love, of the self-renunciation of true humility, giving to God all the glory? If our motives in our course of life are chiefly drawn from the principles of natural religion, our works are dead. If the love of Christ does not constrain us, it matters little what else constrains us. How can men, who are themselves dead in trespasses and sins, perform works pleasing to God? Hofmann: "Every act or course of action in which is not inherent a life from God is a dead work." The dead cannot perform the acts of the living. All such acts Peter styles our "old sins," 2 Pet. 1:9. Compare Heb. 9:14. Dead works are sins, however splendid they may be in the eyes of men. Dickson: "It is a main point of the catechism to believe that all our works before repentance and conversion are but dead works."

8. We all ought to institute a solemn inquiry respecting the nature of our repentance, v. 1. Have we truly turned from dead works? Are we fully satisfied that thorough, heartfelt repentance is necessary unto salvation. Under every dispensation of his grace to man God has declared that it is essential. Mere regrets at the evil fruits of our misconduct are not enough. Have we that godly sorrow which worketh repentance not to be repented of? Have we died unto sin? Are we alive unto God? The repentance God will own is no mere working up of the natural affections. It is a special gift and grant from God, Acts 5:31; 11:18. When repentance humbles the soul, abases pride, makes men blush as well as weep, creates self-abhorrence for past misdeeds, and produces a change of life corresponding thereto, and all from a view of Christ crucified, we may know it is of the right sort. Flavel: "Repentance is the tear which stands in the eye of faith as it is lifted up to behold Christ crucified." Augustine: "Then do we truly repent of the sins which we have committed when we do not again commit the sins of which we have repented." Repentance unto life is not a superficial emotion causing one like king Saul or Judas to cry, "I have sinned;" but it is a deep, soul-moving affection, which makes men say like David, "I have sinned against the Lord." It abhors all sin, however secret or gainful, or small it may be esteemed.

9. Nor can we be too careful to see that our faith toward God is unfeigned, and altogether such as is fit to lie at the *foundation* of Christian character, v. 1. True faith toward God rests not in

the mere belief of the divine existence, perfections and government. It embraces that class of truths peculiar to the gospel. The Saviour himself cried, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me," Jno. 14:1. And in the same connection he clearly teaches that living faith in the Redeemer is the only sovereign cure for heart trouble. The greatest engagements God ever made to man respected his Son: the greatest offers he ever made to man are through his Son; the greatest blessings he ever confers on man are by his Son. No marvel, therefore, that whole books of scripture were written that men "might believe on the name of the Son of God; that they might know that they have eternal life, and that they may believe on the name of the Son of God," 1 Jno. 5:13. "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already."

10. True repentance and genuine faith always go together. They must be preached together. They must be experienced together. They are distinct, but not separate from each other. Faith is not repentance. Repentance is not faith. Both are gifts of God. And they twain are as essential to Christian character, as the heart and lungs are essential to the animal life of man. None can tell which is the more important, for both are vital and essential. The want of either is death. Therefore the question, which comes first, faith or repentance? is not a profitable interrogatory. William Tennent was right when he said, "I care not which comes first, so they come." Such an inquiry is uncalled for. It is a pity that many serious persons "are perplexed with the idea that repentance and faith is some condition of mercy, which they are to perform before obtaining it. Or, to vary the error, they imagine that repentance for sin gives the right and title to believe in Christ for salvation!" Both faith and repentance are necessary to salvation. Blessed is he, who truly mourns for sin, and truly believes in Jesus.

11. Let no man despise any ordinance of God, though it be an outward sign of an inward grace, and not grace itself; and a seal of spiritual blessings, and not itself such a blessing, v. 2. There is ground of fear that not a few do slight water baptism in their own case or in that of their infant offspring, v. 2. It is admitted that many foolishly suppose baptism a saving ordinance, or essential to salvation, thus going to the other extreme. Simon Magus was duly baptized, and yet continued in the bond of iniquity and in the gall of bitterness. The penitent thief was not baptized, and yet was with Christ in glory on the day of his crucifixion. It can hardly be denied that many, who talk much of baptism and the Lord's Supper, do make but little of faith, justice, mercy and the

love of God. And it is quite possible to talk much of the baptism of the Spirit, and yet have not the fruit of the Spirit, as delineated by Paul in Gal. 5:22, 23. It is not talking, but possessing the graces of the Spirit, that marks one fit for heaven. Baptism is to be but once administered. It is a great mercy that God has had pity on our dulness, and has aided our poor faith by instructing us in heavenly things in both the sacraments through our senses.

12. If modern pretenders would give to us the proof of their ghostly power, which the apostles gave of their being commissioned of God to bestow miraculous gifts, then their claims would not be absurd and ridiculous, as they often are. Let any of them by the laying on of hands impart the Holy Ghost in the powers displayed of old, and no good man will despise their authority, v. 2. Compare Acts 8:15-18; 19:6. Until they can do this, the utmost that can be modestly claimed is that the imposition of hands in the admission of members to a church is but a decent mode of making a public profession of Christ's religion. If no more than this was claimed, all would agree that pastors might lay their hands on the head of any one, and invoke on him a divine blessing. Nor is there any objection whatever to the laying on of hands in the ordination of church officers. The usage is decent, ancient and scriptural, Acts 6:6; 1 Tim. 4:16; 5:22. Many parents in aiding their children in private devotion lay their hands upon them when they pray with them; and though they cannot with the authority of the Master bless them, Mark 10:16; yet they may in humility and faith invoke a blessing upon them.

13. Come what may, we must maintain the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. To surrender this is to give up the citadel of Christian truth. If we deny the resurrection, how can we have hope toward God? Acts 24:15. The argument of the apostle in 1 Cor. 15:13-20, ought to quiet all doubts on this subject. Duncan: "The resurrection was of the greatest consequence to be taught the young Christians, because much opposed by the Sadducees at this time, who, upon the account of this doctrine, were the inveterate enemies of Christianity." Owen: "The doctrine of the resurrection is a fundamental principle of the gospel, the faith whereof is indispensably necessary unto the obedience and consolation of all that profess it. And ministers of the gospel ought to dwell greatly on the consideration of it, as it is represented in its terror and glory, that they may be excited and stirred up to deal effectually with the souls of men."

14. All who admit the resurrection of the just and of the unjust do also allow a day of judgment, v. 2. That day will surely come, not for the purpose of giving God information respecting the char-

acter of his creatures; but for the purpose of vindicating the rectitude of his holy and excellent government in all his dealings with men and angels, and of vindicating the characters of his people from the aspersions of wicked men in all ages. In that great day he will not only show the wickedness of all the hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him, Jude 15; but he will also bring forth the righteousness of his people as the light, and their judgment as the noonday, Ps. 37:6. The visible Judge will be the Man Christ Jesus in his glory, Acts 17:31. It is called eternal judgment because its awards will be eternal and irrevocable. We should all fear, and tremble, and adore, and prepare to meet our God. One of the Christian Fathers said that he seemed continually to hear the cry, Awake ye dead, and come to judgment. The Apostle Peter made a like use of this great doctrine, 2 Pet. 3:11-14.

15. It is very right to form good resolutions, v. 3. Joshua and David and the prodigal son and Paul and all pious men have set us the example. But then our purposes should be formed in humble dependence on divine aid, and in entire submission to the divine will. He who resolves nothing will do nothing. Tong: "Right resolution is very necessary in order to progress and proficiency in religion; and that resolution is right which is not only made in the sincerity of our hearts, but in an humble dependence upon God, for strength, for assistance and righteousness, for acceptance, and for time and opportunity." And in the forming of good resolutions of a public nature, pastors ought to take the lead and set a good example; for they were ordained for the perfecting of the saints and for the edifying of the body of Christ, Eph. 4:11, 12.

16. Our dependence on God is absolute, v. 3. We are not sufficient as of ourselves to think anything. In all our ways we must acknowledge him if we desire him to direct our paths, Prov. 3:16. The author of this epistle has elsewhere also set us a good example in this behalf, Acts 18:21; 1 Cor. 4:19. Dickson: "He who is busied in the most necessary part of God's service, must do it with submission to God, to be stopped in the midst of his work and cut short, yea and that in the midst of a meditated speech, if it so please God." Many a faithful minister has died in the pulpit; and many others on their way to fill their appointments. Probably more than half the religious books and tracts which have been begun have been left unfinished by their authors. "A man's heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps," Prov. 16:9.

17. Are you a real Christian? Have your attainments and discoveries and emotions and habits in any respect looked more like

sincere piety than those of men, who never were born again, never did love God supremely, never were conformed to his whole law? vs. 4, 5. Is your heart like the good ground, which receives the precious seed, and the rain, and the dew, and makes ample returns to him who tills it? Are you a fruitful Christian? Remember that reprobate silver often has the king's image and superscription upon it. Many things glitter besides gold. We must not only know, but know experimentally the truths of God. They must go into the depths of our nature, making us solemn, humble, penitent, practical followers of the Lamb.

18. The only safety in Christian life is in progress. To stand still is impossible. To go backward is easy and perilous. If the crop does not grow, it dies out. Onward and upward must be our watchwords. This whole section urges advancement. Many scriptures call on us to go forward, and many assure us that God's people do advance, 2 Cor. 4: 16; Col. 3: 10. Doddridge: "It is by continual care to improve in the truths of the gospel, that we shall most happily escape the danger, the dreadful danger of apostasy, to which we may otherwise be exposed." The history of fatal apostasies is brief but full of warning. Professors first lose ardor in their onward course, then begin to decline, then godly jealousy by degrees dies out, then carnal security begins to lull the soul into stupor, then into indifference, then into actual sin but without arousing conscience to do her full office. Tait: "It is, as if Paul had said, I exhort you not to stand still, but to advance. For there is great fear of those who stand still, that they will lose the ground which they have gained, and fall away altogether."

19. There is a line we may not pass, and yet be brought into the favor of God, vs. 4-6. What that line in any given case is, it may not be often given to mortals to say. But there is a limit to man's evil ways and to God's forbearance. The reason why some sinners cannot be saved is not because there is not sufficient merit in the Redeemer. If men would believe on him they should be saved. But some have finally and forever rejected the Holy Spirit, who is the sole author of all good in the heart of man. If the Spirit shall no more strive with man, the deluge of wrath will soon overtake him. In his blessed word, God has forever settled it that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." And when the Holy Spirit is forever quenched in the heart, salvation is impossible. There is no case recorded of any one ever returning to God in a penitent spirit as of his own motion and strength. Sails will not carry a vessel forward if the wind does not blow; neither will any human exertions save the soul without divine influence. Moll: "We may imagine a man reaching a state of abandonment and moral

corruption from which *no deliverance* is possible, and which draws after itself inevitably *eternal damnation*. All endeavors to banish this thought from our passage do violence to the words." How professors of religion may come into this sad state, or into any state of alienation is explained by the beloved disciple: "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us," 1 John 2: 19.

20. All sin is a departure from right and from God; and yet all sin is not apostasy. We must not confound things which are distinguishable. No one contends that sins of ignorance or of infirmity are apostasy. The ignorant may widely err as did Saul of Tarsus in his persecutions; but he obtained mercy, 1 Tim. 1: 13. The weak in faith and grace may often miss the mark; but they shall not therefore be castaways, Rom. 14: 1-4. To sin against light and knowledge is indeed an aggravation of any iniquity, Jas. 4: 17. But every sin against much light and knowledge is not apostasy, else Peter had not been saved. Through fear, an impulse of passion, or sudden surprisal, very well instructed persons may sadly err from the right way. Apostasy is a deliberate act. Tertullian: "The apostate doth weigh Christ and his service against Satan and the world, and doth give the latter the preference, and pronounceth Satan the victor." Apostasy is also an intelligent act. Apostates have known the way of life, and turned from the holy commandment. It is also an act expressive of prevailing enmity against God and holiness. Calvin: "*Falling away* is twofold: one particular, the other universal. He that hath offended in any one kind, or even in more ways than one, hath fallen from the standing of a Christian man; and thus, all sins are so many falls. But the apostle is not here arguing about theft, or false swearing, or murder, or drunkenness, or adultery; but he refers to a universal defection from the gospel, where the sinner offends not God in some one particular, but altogether abandons his grace. . . It is renouncing God entirely." Scott: "Knowledge, gifts, convictions and very strong impressions must *precede*; or an apostasy of this kind cannot take place: great obstinacy and malignity must *follow*, before we are warranted to conclude it fatal or final." Those mentioned in Matt. 12: 31; Mark 3: 29, as having sinned beyond repentance or forgiveness had never professed obedience to Christ. They stood off and scornfully, and intelligently rejected the Lord Jesus, and that contrary to the settled principles which they had received respecting the evidences of a divine revelation. But the persons spoken of in this section

had professedly received the Christian religion. The former were enemies without, the latter were enemies within. The position of men as to professed membership in the church does not necessarily determine the character of their sin against God. The only security against the most dreadful apostasy is found in the intercession of Christ, in the grace of God and in the unfailling promises of Jehovah, Luke 22:32; 2 Cor. 12:9; Jer. 32:40. The Lord is able and he alone is able to preserve our whole spirit and soul and body blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Gray: "We sometimes hear Christians, in their prayers, confessing that they have 'crucified the Son of God afresh and put him to an open shame'—'that they have trodden under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant with which he was sanctified an unholy thing,' We may not charge such persons with any error in idea; but their expressions are in the highest degree improper: for, they confess a sin, which no Christian, at any period of his life, ever committed; nay, one which no *professor* of Christianity has committed."

21. It therefore becomes a grave and practical question: Is our fruit unto holiness? v. 7. Do we bring forth much fruit, and so prove that we are Christ's disciples? John 15:8. Surely God's husbandry ought not to be like the fallow ground of the wicked, or the wilderness of this world, 1 Cor. 3:9. There ought to be a great difference between the temple of Dagon and the temple of Jehovah. If professed believers think, and feel, and speak, and act like men of the world, they are men of the world; and, at any moment, their overt acts may evince the fact that they are wholly unrenewed. Whatever men's hopes or professions may be, these can be no substitute for the purity and piety which the word of God demands. And he, whose heart has been truly engaged to the gospel of Christ and to the Lord Jesus, will not 'contentedly remain at a low degree of religious knowledge and in a languid state of religious affection.' Everywhere the scriptures call on God's people to be up and doing, lively and active, pressing on, running, fighting the good fight, laying hold of eternal life. Utter barrenness is a sure sign of apostasy and ruin. The barren fig tree was cursed, not because it had bitter figs, but because it had no figs. Owen: "Where God grants means, there he expects fruit." If we were not blind, we would admit this truth and act accordingly. All who have so rich a blessing as the pure Gospel may well be held accountable for unparalleled privileges, for 'whilst the gospel is preached unto men they are under their great trial for eternity.' If they do right, they receive *blessing* from the Lord—a blessing not the less rich because wholly

gracious. Were the inheritance through any kind of merit on our part, our hopes must instantly perish. One of the universal laws running through the whole government of the world is this: To him that hath shall be given and he shall have abundantly. Whatever we have, which is worth having, is the free gift of God, whether it be in time or in eternity. It was right that after the Lord had dealt so bountifully towards his vineyard, that he should expect something better than wild grapes, Isa. 5:1-7. The doom of unfruitful professors is never in the scriptures expressed in mild terms. They are nigh unto cursing. Their end is to be burned. They are to be miserably destroyed. Briers and thorns fill the unproductive land. Patterson: "O let us not trifle with religious professions, with religious privileges, with religious attainments, with religious experience; and let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall," 1 Cor. 10:12. The axe is now laid at the root of the tree, Matt. 3:10. Dreadful has been the doom and the suffering of places and people, that once had the gospel, and abused it, or rejected it.

22. This section clearly shows that men may go far, very far, and yet not be Christians. Dickson: "There are some converts, external from the world to the church, who yet stick in their naturals, and are not in the sense of sin, fled unto Christ for refuge, nor converted from nature to saving grace." Every age produces such cases of religious profession. The Bible is the most charming book of history, poetry, proverb, parable, promise, prophecy and doctrine, that the world has ever seen. The wonder is that all men do not study and admire its sacred pages. But admiration of a glorious scheme of doctrine does not prove that one loves it. So the worship of the gospel is simple, reasonable, dignified, elevating. "There are no songs comparable to the songs of Zion." No teachings lead human thoughts so near to the throne of God as the teachings of scripture. But a sense of the sublime is very different from humble piety. A man may know a great deal, may understand many mysteries, be able to show others the way of life, may even preach eloquently, and yet never apprehend Christ by faith. It is therefore a clear and solemn duty, binding on all professors of Christ's religion, to see to it that they build upon the rock and not upon the sand. One of the darkest signs in the character of many members of the church is their marked aversion to habits of self-examination. Some do seem to forget that the righteous are scarcely saved, 1 Pet. 4:18. One's standing in the judgment of charity may be excellent. But how is it in the judgment of truth—truth as omniscient purity will apply it to men's character? The decisions of

the last day will not vary from the judgments God forms of human character on earth. Though every sin is not apostasy, yet it is a step towards apostasy if God shall allow it to go on until it is finished.

23. It is therefore a duty of all who have the care of souls to be faithful, and warn men of their danger; not to heal slightly the hurt of God's people, nor to daub with untempered mortar the tottering wall of false hopes, nor to cry Peace, peace, when there is no peace, Jer. 6:14; Ezek. 13:10-15. Nor should men be offended at the fidelity of their spiritual guides, nor cry out against them, even if they be sons of thunder, and cry aloud and spare not. What conspiracies were formed against Moses, and Jeremiah, and Christ, and Paul, because they would hold back nothing demanded by the good of the people whom they addressed. Of the weeping prophet, of the great Apostle to the Gentiles, and of the Master himself, it was severally said, He is mad, Jer. 29:26; Acts 26:24; John 10:20. This is a favorite mode of assault on God's faithful servants. Often their commission is denied, and they are accused of all malevolent plans and plots against the welfare of society, and even of the state, Jer. 37:13; Amos 7:10; Luke 23:2; Acts 6:11.

24. Yet nothing should lead ministers to the use of harsh language; but on the contrary, they should be kind and loving, v. 9. Even here Paul styles the Hebrews *Beloved*, and the Lord himself saluted Judas, by the name, *Friend*, thus expressing, not his confidence in the friendship of the traitor, but the sincerity of his own good-will towards him, Matt. 26:50. Paul sets us a like example in other places, Rom. 15:14; Gal. 4:12. We may judge ourselves with very considerable severity, and yet not go too far, but our danger is in judging others. Where men are really good men, the more charitable judgment is commonly nearest the truth. In needful severity, let there be no needless severity. Dickson: "The preacher may threaten fearfully those of whom he hath good hopes: yet with prudence, lest he harm them." Lindsay: "The apostle has now uttered some tremendous truths, which, like thunderbolts, were fitted to alarm, to terrify, to appal. His object, however, is not to drive the Hebrews to despair, but through salutary fear to rouse them to effort." The word rendered *Beloved* is found nowhere else in this Epistle, and Delitzsch remarks, that "if it was to be used only once, there was no other place where its introduction could be more necessary or effective."

25. There is salvation, v. 9. That is a glorious fact often declared in the scriptures.

26. "There are things that do certainly and infallibly accompany salvation; things that are never separated from salvation;

things that show one to be in a state of salvation; things that will issue in eternal salvation," v. 9. What those things are, the scriptures declare with sufficient clearness. Some of them have already been stated in the exposition of this section. If you would know them all, search the scriptures.

27. God's righteousness and faithfulness open a sure door of hope to all humble, penitent souls, who love the ways of the upright, v. 10. "God's grace, pity, mercy, truth, power, wisdom and righteousness are all props to our faith." There is not in the divine nature an attribute, the right understanding of which is not suited to give consolation to the believer.

28. In loving his people, we love God and prove our love to God, v. 10. Owen: "Faith, if it be a living faith, will be a working faith. . . The great trial of our love consists in our regard to the saints that are in distress. . . Nothing shall be lost that is done for God or in obedience to him."

29. It is a great reproach to many modern churches and professors that they abound so little in ministering to the saints, v. 10. Read the epistles and see how it was, Rom. 16: 12; 1 Thess. 1: 3; 2 Tim. 1: 16 and parallel places. It is to the reproach of Christians that they have by their negligence, as it were, driven the world to the formation of beneficial societies. Calvin: "There is nothing we are more prone to than weariness in well-doing." Our acts of kindness should extend to all men as we have opportunity, especially to them of the household of faith, Gal. 6: 10. If any lack encouragement to a duty so reasonable and so necessary, it is because he is ignorant of the scriptures, or has not faith to believe the promises therein contained.

## CHAPTER VI.

VERSES 11-20.

FURTHER CALL TO PROGRESS. CASE OF ABRAHAM.  
GOD'S OATH TO HIM AND TO US. HOPE. CHRIST  
OUR FORERUNNER AND PRIEST.

11. And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end :

12 That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

13 For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself,

14 Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.

15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

16 For men verily swear by the greater : and an oath for confirmation *is* to them an end of all strife.

17 Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed *it* by an oath :

18 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 upon the hope set before us :

19 Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the vail ;

20 Whither the forerunner is for us entered, *even* Jesus, made a high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

**H**AVING warned the Hebrews of the danger and ruin of apostasy, and assured them of his affectionate interest in them, the apostle waxes warm, his heart being enlarged, and he continues :

11. *And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end.* Peshito: And we desire, that each one of you may show this same activity, for the completion of your hope, even to the end. Instead of diligence, Wiclif has *bisynesse*; Rheims and Doway, *carefulness*; other versions,

diligence; Sampson, zeal. There is no better rendering than diligence. The diligence called for was the *same*, which they had showed in their works of love in helping their suffering brethren, and commended in v. 10; but he calls on them to give it a new direction—towards assurance. They were living in perillous times. Jewish prejudice ran high. Some apostasies had actually occurred. There was danger of others. He calls on them to be on their guard and to use diligently the means of establishing themselves in the truth and practice of the gospel. *Full assurance*, one word, found in the New Testament four times, Col. 2:2; 1 Thess. 1:5; Heb. 10:22 and here, commonly rendered as here, once assurance. The Syriac has completion; Arabic, persuasion; Vulgate, accomplishment; Wiclif, fyllinge; Coverdale, Tyndale and Cranmer, stablysshynge; Geneva, full persuasion; Conybeare and Howson, full possession; Stuart and Craik, full assurance. Any of these renderings is good. The best is full assurance. It is literal, and has long been in use, and is perhaps better understood than the others. *The end* is the termination of life or of the Christian warfare, though Calvin thinks it means perfection. Paul continues his exhortation:

12. *That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.* Instead of be not slothful, Peshito, Tyndale, Coverdale, Cranmer, Geneva have faint not; Wiclif, be not made slow. The adjective rendered slothful is found but twice in the New Testament, here, and in Heb. 5:11, where it is rendered dull. Followers, imitators, uniformly having the same meaning in the New Testament, 1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; Eph. 5:1; 1 Thess. 1:6; 2:14; 1 Pet. 3:13. The imitation called for is not a miserable mimicry, but a hearty and thorough performance of the duties, of which so good an example has been set for us. The faith and patience were the trust and constancy exhibited by those, who had gone before. They had inherited, or come into full possession of the promises, that is of the things promised. So the word is several times used, Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4; Heb. 11:13, 17, 31; 2 Pet. 3:4. Lindsay: "Without a doubt, actual blessings enjoyed after death are here described."

13. *For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself,*

14. *Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.* God's promise to Abraham was an engagement pledging the divine veracity in the fullest sense. The passage of scripture referred to is that found in Gen. 22:16, 17. The gracious engagement was made on occasion of the offering up of Isaac, and near the close of Abraham's life, as the record shows. It was

an enlargement and confirmation of the covenant before formed with the Father of believers, Gen. 12:2; 15:4; 17:1-8. This promise and oath therefore had no reference to the birth of Isaac, for he was now a young man, nor to the sparing of his life, for that was already done; but must relate to spiritual blessings—his rich inheritance after this life and by the mediation of Christ. As Abraham was held in great esteem by all pious Hebrews, any instruction drawn from his life, example or experience was likely to be very impressive. So Paul reminds them that they were not called to any trials or delays, but such as their great ancestor endured. If they were called to the exercise of faith and patience, so was he. From the giving of the above promise till its manifest fulfilment, was a long time, during which he had need of long patience. God said he would greatly bless and multiply the seed of Abraham. Abraham believed all that God had spoken; and yet during his lifetime on earth there seemed to be but little done towards fulfilling the promise. Yet in Paul's day any one could see far more fully than Abraham, when alive, had seen the wonderful largeness of the blessings thus engaged. But salvation and eternal life through faith in the promised seed were the great blessings promised to Abraham; and he believed God, and waited, and had patience, and all came out right. The reason given for God's swearing by himself is very satisfactory. Swearing is an act of worship, and may not be by any but God; and an oath by him is of the most solemn nature. Lindsay: "If he had sworn by the heavens and by the earth, then, as a writer in the Talmud observes, the obligation of the oath would have ceased with the dissolution of the world." The form of the Greek is taken from the Septuagint, and that from the Hebrew. The use of the participles blessing and multiplying is designed, not so much to give assurance of the fulfilling of the promise, as to enlarge our conceptions of the blessing promised.

15. *And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.* The patience required was long, but it was rewarded at last. He received the promise, that is, he received the fulfilment of the promise. God kept his word, and made good his oath to the letter and in the spirit of it.

16. *For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.* The meaning is that when men swear they swear by a superior; but in swearing by himself God sware by the greatest of beings. He could not have sworn by any but himself, without weakening the strength of his oath. And if among men an oath terminates contention, and confirms promises and covenants, much more ought the oath of God to put an end to

all doubt and uncertainty in our minds respecting the infallible fulfilment of all he has engaged to do.

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

18. *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 upon the hope set before us.* Wherein is perhaps the most difficult word to interpret in these verses. Peshito, Theophylact, Erasmus, Grotius and Tholuck, have Therefore; Robinson, Bloomfield, Conybeare and Howson much the same, Wherefore; Wiclif and Bretschneider, In which thing; Tyndale, Cranmer and Genevan, So; Coverdale, But; Duncan, For which cause; Turner, In which respect; Stuart, in like manner; Doway, Rheims and Craik, Wherein. The words thus rendered clearly show the continued connection of the discourse. The difficulty consists in fixing according to usage the exact sense to be preferred here. *So* is perhaps as good a rendering as any other. It sufficiently marks the connection with the foregoing verses, and carries us on to the main theme. Peshito reads God abundantly willing; but this is not the sense. The word rendered willing rather expresses counsel or purpose, and is cognate to counsel below. God purposing more abundantly to show. For more abundantly Wiclif reads plenteuouslier. The plan of divine grace is not constructed for the entertainment of wicked men, nor to satisfy idle curiosity, but to enlighten, comfort and save *the heirs of salvation*. This is done by manifesting the immutability, or unmovableness of the divine counsel. God's word and oath, or promise and oath are two unmovable things, as fixed as the pillars of the throne of God—things in each of which it was *impossible for God to lie*. *Impossible*, as in verse 4. Even Balaam's theology went so far as this: "God is not a man, that he should lie; nor the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" Num. 23: 19. The wonder is that all men do not believe all that God has spoken. Were men not wicked, this result would soon be seen. God confirmed his promise by an oath, literally *interposed* by an oath. Thus believing we *have a strong consolation*, a mighty comfort—as much solace and joy as we need in all our trials. The word rendered consolation is cognate to that rendered comforter in John 14: 26. Such mighty support belongs not to men universally, but to those, *who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us*. This flight for refuge is the chief, if not the only allusion in the New Testament to the cities of refuge, established in the promised land. The manner of flight is by faith—faith grasping,

seizing or laying hold of the *hope set before us*. And what is that? Some think it is the hope held out in the promises of God generally; some think it is the gospel itself; some think that hope here means the things hoped for; and some regard the hope as that awakened by the promise and oath made to Abraham, and through him to all believers. No error of doctrine is taught by either of these interpretations; but it is doubted whether either of them is right. Is it not better to look further for the specific ground of consolation and hope here referred to? Is Paul speaking of the promises generally, or of the gospel generally, or of the things hoped for? All admit that he had been speaking of the promise and oath of God to Abraham. Does he continue here to speak of the same promise and oath? Does he not rather virtually say, "Your case as Christians is like that of your great ancestor Abraham. Your support and encouragement, like his, must be drawn from faith in the promise and oath of God. He patiently endured, and the engagement of God was fulfilled to him both in his blessedness in heaven and in multiplying his offspring. But all this was chiefly after his death. Exercise like faith and patience, and God will fulfil all his engagements to you. You have a promise and an oath made to you by the Lord. These exactly suit your case and afford full and complete ground of consolation, and are the great theme on which I am discoursing. They are found in Psalm 110. I have cited them in the preceding chapter, (Heb. 5:5-11). It is of these I am now speaking as I told you I would. Having introduced that matter, I turned aside a little to address to you some timely warnings and exhortations, but I now return to it again; and I say to you that as Abraham was made patient and constant through the promise and oath made to him, and has seen them wonderfully fulfilled; so your faith and hope may well rest on the great promise and oath of God made through the prophet David: The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent. Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek," Ps. 110:4. When the foregoing was written, the author was not aware that any one had suggested this exposition. But he finds that Storr, Abresch, Hofmann and Delitzsch decidedly prefer this method of expounding the words. Even some, who reject this interpretation, admit that our apostle is "making for the harbor of Christ's priesthood." Nor is there anything in this view designed to slight the exposition of the promises made to Abraham given by Paul in Rom. 4:9-24; Gal. 3:8-16; or to deny that the covenant with Abraham included spiritual and eternal blessings, and the author of salvation—Jesus Christ, the promised Seed. But it makes the case stronger, if we bring in the second promise

and oath as fairly parallel to the first, which all admitted had been marvellously fulfilled. Some make the two immutable things to be the two oaths, that to Abraham in Gen. 22, and that given by David in Ps. 110. But this rather impairs the force of the reasoning by confusing things that are distinct. This promise and oath are the ground of the hope set before us, and they point to Messiah, the Priest, who is the main object and author of all good hope. Indeed he is once in so many words called our hope, 1 Tim. 1:1. Many prefer to understand hope here, not as the object of hope, but as the grace bearing that name and having Christ for its object. The result reached in either way is the same. This mode of explanation preserves the connection and well falls in with what is said in the verses next following:

19. *Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.* An anchor is used to keep the vessel still and steady in a storm, and to keep her from being driven of fierce winds and tossed. So the lively hope in the souls of believers, begotten by the promise and oath of God respecting the priesthood of Christ, may well cause them to be certain and unmovable. It is itself strong by the power of God's Spirit. It rests upon a promise and oath, which cannot fail. Our Jesus has appeared once, and made his great sacrificial offering here below, and has now passed through the veil to make his intercession, and our faith and hope follow him—into heaven itself.

20. *Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made a high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.* No one doubts that the apostle here fully resumes the subject of discourse introduced in Heb. 5:6; but the connection requires that we go back as far as v. 17, and there resume the thread of discourse, for this verse is connected with that in punctuation and in sense. *Forerunner*, found no where else in the New Testament. It is remarkable how little light the lexicons cast on this word. The skirmishers in a battle were sometimes called forerunners. The first ships of a fleet entering a port were called forerunners. I have heard an able and learned discourse making the word point to a race. At the ancient games before the race began, the course being cleared, in the sight of the contestants and of all the people, a man went round the course, leaving his foot-prints in the earth and showing all the course to be pursued. This man was called a forerunner. This looks like a good explanation. Jesus is our forerunner. He has gone over the whole course. His footsteps have marked it out. If we would know and do our duty, we must follow him, and no other. He has done his whole work and en-

tered into heaven. Let us follow the example he has set us, and we also shall reach heavenly bliss. The difficulty in thus explaining the word is the want of classical authority. Bloomfield quotes Carpzov as saying that the word is often used of running forward to deliver a message, make preparation, etc., and adds: "The best commentary on this passage is John 14:2, '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, that where I am, there ye may be also.'" Duncan: "The high priest under the law was not a forerunner; when he went within the veil none ever followed him into the holy of holies." The other words of this verse have been already considered at length, Heb. 5:6. Having made this digression, the apostle has now also in the most natural way returned to the great theme announced in the preceding chapter—Jesus made a High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. Thus he "holds out the most decided hopes of success to animate their exertions." What we are to understand by the *order* of Melchisedec is explained above in commentary on Heb. 5:6.

#### DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL REMARKS.

1. Ministers of the gospel must be bold and faithful, following Paul's example, not shunning to declare all God's counsel, and keeping back nothing that may be profitable to the souls of men, vs. 11, 12. The fear of man, which bringeth a snare, must be laid aside. Clarke: "He who is more afraid of *man* than he is of *God Almighty*, can have very little religion." Moll: "Love must not cease to warn, to serve, and to hope." Starke: "We must hope good of every one, and not easily despair of the salvation of any." One of the most difficult attainments is that of hope of success, where appearances are very discouraging. But our confidence should not be in appearances, but in the grace, power and Spirit of God.

2. We ought to have, and to cherish good desires, v. 11. They constitute no small part of a gracious character. Without them what is prayer, but an idle form? "The desire of the righteous shall be granted," Pr. 10:24. One reason is it is only good, Pr. 11:23. It is only when the desire of our soul is to God's name and to the remembrance of his holiness that we do wait for him in the way of his judgments, Isa. 26:8. Just so sure as grace operates in the heart effectually, so certainly will it work in us, among other things, a vehement desire, 2 Cor. 7:11. What is heavenly-mindedness without a desire to depart and be with

Christ? We will never effectually persuade men to come to Christ if we do not greatly desire their salvation. Starke: "Rebuke thy neighbor, if there is great need, at the right time and in the right place, with compassion, without too severe words, and without the spirit of detraction. Perchance, thou gainest him." Paul's success among his countrymen, so far as he had any, can be traced to the state of his mind: "My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved."

3. Prayer is a good method of expressing our pious desires, v. 11. For when prayer is fervent, exhortation will hardly be languid. When even the wicked Agrippa showed some little inclination towards right views of serious things, Paul said, "I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds," Acts 26: 29. Compare Acts 20: 26-31; Rom. 1: 14; 1 Thess. 2: 11. And when our prayers and exhortations are of the right kind, other appropriate means will not be slighted.

4. We may, and we ought sometimes to tell men what we desire concerning them and for them and from them, v. 11. Calvin: "Like as he has mingled praises with exhortation, lest he should wound their feelings over much: so, lest that gentleness should savour at all of flattery, he freely admonishes them in what they still came short. Your charity, saith he, you have testified by many practical proofs: it remains, however, that your faith correspond. You have labored diligently that you should not be wanting in your offices to men; but with no less zeal it becomes you to attend to your advancement in faith, that you may approve before God the steadfast and full assurance thereof. By these words he shows there are two parts in Christianity, corresponding to the two tables of the law. Therefore he that separates one from the other will have nothing but what is mutilated and mangled." "Even the diligent have need of exhortation to go on." Owen: "Ministerial exhortation unto duty is needful even unto them, who are sincere in the practice of it, that they may abide and continue therein." How far we may go in expressing our good wishes and benevolent desires is well taught in Ps. 20: 1-5.

5. The best desires we can have for men are for their spiritual and eternal good, v. 11. And it is proof rather of a low state of piety than of modesty, that we are so silent respecting the spiritual state of our fellow-men. Paul did not so. Hear him; "We are glad, when we are weak, and ye are strong: and this also we wish, even your perfection," "Therefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom

the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God," 2 Cor. 13:9; Eph. 3:13-19. How all merely worldly compliments and expressions of good-will pale and grow sickly in comparison with such heavenly thoughts and wishes as we have here. Nor are these rare instances of our Apostle's kind-heartedness. To one church he says, "I desire fruit that may abound to your account;" to another: "We also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with a knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding," etc. Phil. 1:17; Col. 1:9-12. Hear John also: "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth," 3 John 2.

6. There is a good deal said in our section concerning hope. It is mentioned in verses 11, 18, 19. And this is but a specimen of what we find in all the scriptures, Rom. 5:2; Titus 2:13; 3:7. In the panoply of the Christian, hope is his helmet, Eph. 6:17; 1 Thess. 5:8. Without it, he will be ashamed. With it, nothing can daunt him. Duncan: "There is this difference between hope and faith, that faith credits the promises, hope looks to the things promised, and expects them. God hath promised that believers shall be freed from everything that is evil in sin, and be brought to the possession of eternal happiness. Faith, eyeing the power and veracity of God, gives credit to those promises; hope, viewing them as not actually accomplished, desires them, delights in them, longs for their being fulfilled, and expects it in faith. Now as faith may be stronger and weaker, so is hope corresponding to it." McLean in similar words: "Faith is the credit we give to the truth of what is testified or promised in the gospel, and is founded on the veracity and faithfulness of God. The hope which attends this faith is a mixture of desire and joy, and an anticipation of enjoyment in proportion to the probability there is of obtaining the good desired according to the tenor of the promise." All the scriptures make much of hope. It is the mainspring of human action, and a mainspring of a pious life. 'Slavish fear is not a Christian motive.' Pool: "*Hope* here is not synonymous with faith, yet its certain concomitant; and is a vehement desire and longing after, with a patient expectation of, what is possible and sure to be enjoyed, because God hath promised and sworn it;

though it be at never so great a distance, yet to be communicated by him to his in his best time." That which gives our hope such steadfastness is that the thing is established by God, Gen. 41 : 32.

7. Not only do the scriptures speak of hope, but they encourage a high degree of it; and the highest degree of it is authorized by scripture, v. 11. A just and strong hope in God does not busy itself about his method of conveying good, but is sure that he will do it. Hope may be true and genuine, but we ought to aim at its perfection and completion. Under the name of assurance, a form of doctrine has been stated and much contended for and much contended against. Some are of the opinion that the apostle here is contending that our hope "should be eminently vivid and distinct and decided and vigorous and intense." Such is Patterson's view. Still the true doctrine of assurance is closely connected with the teachings of our apostle. No good man ought to rest satisfied with any attainments he may have made until he reaches assurance. That such strong confidence is attainable we do certainly know; for we read in the scriptures of the "full assurance of understanding," of the "full assurance of faith," and "the full assurance of hope," Col. 2 : 2; Heb. 10 : 22; 6 : 11. These declarations are quite coincident with other statements of the word of God. Enoch, before his translation, not by it, had this testimony that he pleased God, Heb. 11 : 5. The man of Uz said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," Job 19 : 25. The sweet singer of Israel declared over and over again, "O Lord, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant," Ps. 116 : 16; 119 : 125; 143 : 12. Isaiah says, "The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever," Isa. 32 : 17. Paul says, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. . . I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day," 2 Tim. 1 : 12; 4 : 7, 8. And if he is not misunderstood, the beloved disciple, late in life, declares that such an attainment was commonly made in the church of God, when he says, "Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. . . We know that we are of God," 1 John 3 : 19; 5 : 19. When we look into the writings of the early Christians, particularly into the martyrologies, we are struck with the strong confidence which seems to pervade the great mass of Christians concerning the truth of all the promises and their assured interest in them. To a large extent the same is true in the writ-

ings of the Reformers. Both then and in primitive times, it ordinarily behooved men not to profess faith in Christ unless they had such confidence in him, and such persuasion of their interest in him, as would make them willing, if necessary, to lay down their lives in his cause. But after a while it became less perilous to stand up for Christ's truth, and men professed Christ's religion when they seem to have been doubtful both concerning the infallible certainty of the things revealed in scripture and of their interest in them. In the early and unabridged editions of his great work on the "Saints' Everlasting Rest," Richard Baxter has a chapter entitled: "Uncertainty of salvation a general and dangerous distemper." After him came a class of writers who, though very able, and doubtless actuated by the best intentions, may yet have fostered rather than checked this doubting spirit. Before going further, it is proper to state these precautions. Assurance is not of the essence of faith. A man may truly believe, but with a trembling faith. He may truly hope, and yet fears may agitate him to a very undesirable degree. Reliance is of the essence of faith. Expectation and desire are of the essence of hope. But the degree of either faith or hope does not determine its quality. A spark may be as truly fire as the glowing embers of a furnace. A drop may be as truly water as the waves of the sea. If we do not rely, we do not believe. If we do not look for, we do not hope. But the vision of our faith may be dim, and the strength of our expectation may be little. Let no man confound quality and degree, genuineness and strength. Again, a man, who commonly has assurance may fall into darkness or uncertainty of mind. David seems sometimes to have been in that state. That assurance, which is not shaken by sin, is not scriptural.

Notwithstanding these things, such as truly believe in the Lord Jesus and love him in sincerity, "may in this life be certainly assured that they are in a state of grace, and may rejoice in hope of the glory of God: which hope shall never make them ashamed. This certainty is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion, grounded upon a fallible hope; but an infallible assurance of faith, founded upon the truth of the promises of salvation, the inward evidence of those graces unto which these promises are made, the testimony of the Spirit of adoption, witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God: which spirit is the earnest of our inheritance, whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption." Thus spake the Westminster Assembly. John Wesley: "The *full assurance of faith* relates to present pardon; the *full assurance of hope*, to future glory: the former is the highest degree of divine

*evidence* that God is reconciled to me in the Son of his love; the latter is the same degree of divine *evidence* wrought in the soul by the same immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost, of persevering grace and of eternal glory." Starke: "Believers can, with steadfast faith, be certain of eternal life. . . The first attribute of faith is, in the feeling of our deficiency in every good, and of our extreme need, to look around after Jesus, in order to seek from him help and counsel. Its next attribute is to lay hold of the blessedness that has been obtained through Christ, and to hold fast with manly strength and power to the blessedness once obtained, and on account of no threat or danger, come as they may, timidly to cast it away." If these things are so, how does it come that so few men attain to full assurance of faith or of hope? The answers are many.

*A.* Some have weak minds. They cannot reason connectedly. They cannot by study and meditation attain to full assurance of understanding. They are babes. Bunyan has well described such under the name of Feeblemind. Though the truths of God are adapted to give enlargement to all our faculties, yet a weak understanding is often incurable in this life. Religion may elevate it and renovate it, but will not make strong that which is essentially feeble. This cause operates in more cases than men commonly suppose.

*B.* Some have morbid minds. A tincture of sadness and a dejection of spirits seem to be inseparable from their religious life. Such cases are not very rare, but they are very afflicting. Whenever found they call for great tenderness and spiritual wisdom. In many such cases, a good physician for the body is more needed than a skilful spiritual guide. Could they be but delivered from this "mud and ooze of Acheron," as Cowper expressed it, they would be joyful Christians. But melancholy is their disease as well as their affliction. Ordinarily this state of mind is discoverable, by noticing the effect of appropriate truth on the poor sufferer. Present it, and for a short time he may seem cheered; but commonly a relapse soon follows and the gloom is worse than ever. Much prayer should be made for such children of sorrow. They ought to be exhorted and encouraged. God has delivered hundreds of them even in this life, and thousands of them at the time of their death.

*C.* Some seem to regard it as a mark of humility to live in uncertainty about spiritual things. At least they seem to think a full assurance rather presumptuous. And so it is, where God's word does not justify it. But is it humility, is it not rather distrust of God, to be uncertain about any thing of which he has clearly spoken, and by his Spirit has taught us?

*D.* It would seem as if in some cases a strong fear of coming short of eternal life was God's appointed means of suppressing the levity, vain-glory, bad tempers, self-conceit and love of the world, which so mar the character of some professors. It is far better to be serious, humble and self-denying, with uncertainty of eternal salvation, than to be ever so confident of our interest in Christ, while we are high-minded, given over to worldliness or addicted to frivolity, or under the power of irritable feelings.

*E.* Many are ignorant of what is not and of what is evidence of piety. They perhaps have regarded their knowledge of scripture doctrine as proof of their interest in Christ. But when they learn that a man may have all knowledge and understand all mysteries, and yet not be a Christian, their hopes vanish. Others suppose that their love of good preaching is proof that they are God's children, as well as evidence that the things themselves are true. At length they discover that Ezekiel's hearers were abreast of them, perhaps ahead of them in this respect, and yet had no piety. Then their hopes quite vanish, Ezek. 33: 31, 32. So of other things also. In like manner, they know not what is evidence of piety. They have not studied the subject with candor and diligence. On such matters they are ignorant; of course, they are confused and must continue so until they are better instructed in the things of the kingdom.

*F.* These and others have false standards of judging of an interest in Christ. They make themselves of the number of those who compare themselves with some that commend themselves; and they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves are not wise, 2 Cor. 10: 12.

*G.* There is in many cases a sad neglect of the great duty of self-examination. Men do not study this great subject with diligence and care. They have no heart for reading, at least they have no habit of reading such works as *The Non-such Professor*, or *Mede's Almost Christian*, or *Alleine's Alarm*, or *Flavel's Touchstone of Sincerity*, or *Guthrie's Trial of a Saving Interest in Christ*, or *Edwards on the Affections*, or *Alexander on Religious Experience*; nor do they read the Scriptures with a spirit of diligent searching into the nature of piety, that they may find out what true conversion is, and what are the infallible signs of a saving change of heart.

*H.* Others have very imperfect views of the gospel. They are like a man born and bred in the high mountains, who has never seen any great body of water. Ask him if there is water enough in the world to bury the heights of land around him; and he says, I have never seen it. I doubt if it can be so. But carry

him across the ocean. Let him take soundings with the best instruments, let him traverse thousands of miles of the watery deep, and then ask him if his mountains can be covered with water, and his doubts are all gone; and well they may be. So he, who has a just sense of his sins and narrow views of gospel grace and divine mercy, can hardly conceive it possible that God should forever forgive all his iniquities. Could he by faith apprehend the true nature and glory of the work done by Christ, he would see how easily God can for ever bury human iniquities in the depths of the sea.

*I.* Others who profess Christ's name live in some allowed or habitual sin. Covetousness seals up their tender sensibilities. Fretfulness disturbs the equanimity of all under their influence. Bad tempers now and then gain a sad ascendancy. Or perhaps the secret of their discomfort is some sin of omission. They neglect family worship. When they see one drawn to death, they do not deliver him. When they behold the tears of the oppressed who has no comforter, they do not stand up in defence of his rights; the cause which they do not understand, they do not care to understand; and without any opposition from them, the widow and the fatherless are wronged and abused. How can such be assured that they are Christ's, or have an interest in the covenant of grace?

*J.* Others live in some doubtful course of conduct. They suspect all the time that they are not doing right. One suspected that his measures were small, and yet he continued to sell by them. Now he that doubteth is condemned if he persists in his doubtful course. To him it is sin, because he has no right to pursue ways of dubious propriety.

*K.* It seems to have become fashionable in the Christian world to live without full assurance. And fashion in religious matters is as mighty as in worldly affairs. It is impossible to read the psychological writings of any period of the church without perceiving the tyranny of popular ideas, or particular notions made prevalent at the time, perhaps by the influence of some one or more great writers. When the preaching and teaching of any time call for a particular state of feeling as a mark of conversion, young converts often bring themselves to think that they have attained it. So that when it is well nigh universal for professors of religion to live without assurance, it is exceedingly difficult for one to make attainments higher than those with whom he goes to the house of God in company. Perhaps many of them would sternly rebuke any strong expression of confidence in his own spiritual state.

*L.* Some continue in uncertainty about their salvation, because

they do not believe that assurance is attainable. They are like Christian in Bunyan, who, with his companion, lay moaning in the castle of the Giant Despair. Many a sound beating did they receive, and their tears were very bitter. But it was not till one found a key in his pocket—the key of prayer, and put it to the lock of the door, and turned it with the hand of faith, that the door flew open, and they went on their way to the Celestial City. Lindsay: “There are some whose pretensions to evangelical sentiment are extremely high, who affirm that we should never look to ourselves for any ground of hope. . . . When the question is, What is the ground of a sinner’s acceptance? the answer is, Christ’s righteousness received by faith alone. When the question is, What is the ground of a true, saving faith? the answer is, The testimony of God applied to the conscience by the Holy Ghost. But when the question is, Has some particular man really believed the gospel and obtained pardon? it must obviously be something connected with the man himself to which you look for an answer. Is he bringing forth fruits meet for repentance? Is he yielding a diligent and cheerful obedience to the commandments of Christ?”

The sum of the whole is, most men doubt their own piety, because it is doubtful, because they have little piety, or because they have no piety. There may be a little fire, some real, live coals buried in the ashes of an hearth. But if there was a lively, blazing ingle there, no one in the room would ask, Is there a fire here? Love to God is its own best evidence. When it abounds more and more, who can doubt its existence? One may lack assurance of faith and yet not question the truth of the gospel. But “the opposite of the confidence of hope recommended by the Apostle, is such a doubt about the promises of Christ as leads one to question the likelihood of their fulfilment, and tempts him to apostatize to some other form of religion.” Tait: “This full assurance of hope, this faith also and this love ought, moreover, to be the attainment of *every one* of us. I know not whether in this day we receive little, because we expect little, but certainly in this respect there is utterly a fault among us.”

• It becomes therefore a matter of great importance that Christians should know and rightly use the means of attaining full assurance. They are clearly pointed out in scripture. One means is love—sincere, unfeigned, ardent love to God and the brethren. So Paul desired that his Colossians might have their hearts “comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of

the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," Col. 2:2, 3. Cold is not more opposite to heat than is indifference to love. "Love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love," 1 John 4:7, 8.

Another means of gaining assurance is obedience—prompt, cheerful, universal, unquestioning obedience to the whole known will of God. "Then shall I not be ashamed when I have respect unto all thy commandments," Ps. 119:6. Lindsay: "It is a Christian's holy life that is the evidence, both to himself and to others, of the reality of his faith, according to our Lord's principle: 'The tree is known by its fruit.'" "If ye love me," says Christ, "keep my commandments." If one say that he has had a revelation from heaven assuring him of eternal life, it amounts to nothing. But if by the grace of God, he is able to die unto sin and to live unto righteousness, that is evidence every way conclusive.

Great diligence in the work and aims of the Christian life is necessary to our full assurance. So says our verse, Heb. 6:11. So says the apostle of the circumcision: "Beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ," 2 Pet. 1:5-8. Gouge: "Let us not be wanting to ourselves. If we think assurance of hope worth the having, let us do to the utmost what God enableth us to do for attaining thereunto. Let us acquaint ourselves with the grounds of hope, God's promises and properties, and frequently and seriously meditate thereon. Let us conscientiously attend God's ordinances, and earnestly pray that God would add his blessing to our endeavors. We are of ourselves backward, dull, and slow to believe and hope; we are much prone to doubting. In these respects we ought to use the more diligence, and to quicken up our spirits unto this full assurance, and not cease till we have attained some evidence thereof." There is no substitute for diligence. Paul insists "that they should not be slothful; that will clothe a man with rags: they must not love their ease, nor lose their opportunities."

Nor is entire devotion to the cause of Christ a less necessary means of assurance. Those were not idle words of the apostle: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto

God, which is your reasonable service," Rom. 12:1. Now sacrifices must feel the knife and the fire, and each of us must be able to say with Paul, I die daily, if like him, we would know whom we have believed. In this work, we have great encouragement from the word of God and from the example of good men who have gone before us, who through faith and patience already inherit the promises. Our usefulness, our comfort and our duty, all unite in urging us to endeavor to make this great attainment—the assurance of faith and of hope.

8. Our work is not done till death, v. 11. It will not be finished till we get our crown. Dickson: "The painful and not the slothful are the true imitators of allowed examples." Old John Eliot was right when he said: "Prayer and pains, through faith which is in Christ Jesus, can do wonders." It is in vain for one to talk of wisdom, if he neglects the culture of his own heart; or to claim any heavenly temper, when he is negligent of his soul's salvation.

9. Sloth is a fatal foe to progress and spirituality, v. 12. The scriptures condemn it in many ways. Solomon has dealt out a terrible severity against it: "The desire of the slothful killeth him, for his hands refuse to labor." "The slothful man saith, There is a lion without; I shall be slain in the streets." Prov. 21:25; 22:13. Compare Prov. 24:30-35. Calvin: "The apostle mentions *diligence* that they may know they must not sit down idle, but strive with all their hearts. For indeed it is no light thing to mount up above the heavens, especially for them that hardly creep upon the earth, with countless obstacles in addition. In truth, nothing is harder than to keep our minds lifted up to heaven when the whole bent of our nature inclines downwards, and Satan pulls us back to earth by innumerable devices." Even those, who on many accounts are to be commended, are still to be warned not to fall into negligence. Saul "clothed the daughters of Israel in scarlet, and put on ornaments of gold upon their apparel," (2 Sam. 1:24); and we may treat ourselves in like manner; but still like Saul, we may neglect everything vital in salvation. It is a sad remark of Delitzsch: "The aspect of the present is far from exhibiting in full developed reality all the rich and glorious blessings contained in the promise." Owen: "Our profession will not be preserved, nor the work of faith and love carried on unto the glory of God and our own salvation, without a constant, studious diligence, in the preservation of the one, and the exercise of the other. Spiritual sloth is ruinous of any profession, though otherwise never so hopeful."

10. We are bound to acquaint ourselves with the good exam-

ples recorded in the word of God for our imitation, v. 12. Compare Phil. 3:17. Calvin: "The Fathers obtained the promises only by invincible firmness of faith. Examples convey the matter to us very efficaciously. If the bare doctrine were set before us, it would not move us the same as when we see what is required of us fulfilled in Abraham's person. Now Abraham's example is cited, not as the only one, but as outshining the others."

11. In religion we can do nothing without faith, v. 12. The faith demanded is not that of devils, which makes them tremble and leaves them unsanctified; nor the faith of Agrippa, which was without intellectual doubt, but brought him to no decision; nor that of the stony ground hearers, who anon with joy received the word, but had no root in themselves; but it is that faith which is of the operation of God and transforms the whole soul. Lindsay: "Without faith there can be no confidence of hope, and without some good degree of hope, there can be no continued effort." Without faith, it is impossible to please God, or to be pleased with God. Only 'he that believeth hath everlasting life.' We are saved through faith, John 3:36; Eph. 2:8. He that believeth not shall not see life.

12. A sister grace of faith is patience, vs. 12, 15. We all have need of patience, that after we have done the will of God we may receive the promise, Heb. 10:36. This grace is what Ebrard well styles "active constancy." Gouge: "A patient mind doth quietly and contentedly wait for the effecting of what it believeth." Compare 2 Thess. 1:4; Rev. 2:19; 13:10, in all which places faith and patience are united.

13. The saints have an inheritance promised, v. 12. It is glorious beyond comparison; and not a whit the less so because it is wholly gracious. Calvin: "We are not made heirs by any other right than that of adoption." Among sinners, grace must always precede glory. If we be Christ's, then are we Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise, Gal. 3:29. Our title to the heavenly inheritance is the promise of God, based solely on his sovereign good pleasure, without any meritorious cause in us whatever, Luke 12:32; 1 Pet. 1:3. Gouge: "The more rare a grace is, the more admirable it is."

14. In the promises made to the fathers, the Almighty has laid an everlasting foundation for the faith and patience, the hope and comfort, the peace and joy of all his saints. This was David's solace in his affliction, Ps. 119:49, 50. Faithful is he which promised. He also will do it, 1 Thess. 5:24, v. 13. All the engagements of the Most High mean all that the words call for, and not a little more than our weak minds are able to apprehend. Bless-

ing he doth bless indeed, v. 14. Owen: "We have need of every thing that any way evidenceth the stability of God's promises to be represented unto us, for the encouragement and confirmation of our faith."

15. Let us never forget that Abraham went the usual way to heaven, v. 15. We must have the same kind of faith and the same spirit of endurance that he had. We must be saved as sinners just as he was. If Joshua 24: 2, 3, is not misunderstood, it teaches that Abraham himself was once an idolater. But even if this is not so, it certainly does teach that he came out of a land and out of a family reeking with the abominations of idolatry; and so his salvation was wholly of grace and of amazing mercy.

16. In verses 13-18, we have the subject of oaths presented, and God the Lord is introduced to us as swearing by himself. The following remarks on the subject present an outline of what now needs to be said. First, oaths were taken and enjoined in very early times, Gen. 21: 31; 24: 8, 9; 47: 31; Ex. 22: 11; Num. 5: 19; Deut. 6: 13; 1 Kings 8: 31. It is also predicted that one of the glories of the latter day shall "be that he that sweareth shall swear by the God of truth," Isa. 65: 16; Jer. 4: 2. Secondly, the force of the argument respecting an oath in this place turns upon these facts: that an oath was the most solemn kind of appeal that could be made; that therefore in controversies which could not be otherwise settled, men were bound to accept the oath of the party litigant, as appears from some of the passages above referred to; and that in an oath a direct appeal was made to God, the Judge of all, the Searcher of hearts, who had power to destroy if one swore falsely. Thirdly, Profane swearing or common swearing is explicitly forbidden by our Lord and his servant James, Matt. 5: 33-37; James 5: 12. No practice is more inexcusable than the irreverent use of the name of the Most High in common conversation. "The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." Owen: "The custom of using oaths, swearing, cursing or imprecation, in common communication, is not only an open transgression of the third commandment, which God hath threatened to revenge, but is a practical renunciation also of all the authority of Jesus Christ, who hath expressly interdicted it." Fourthly, like condemnatory and solemn remarks may be made of all false, rash and reckless swearing, and of a readiness to take a solemn oath on trifling occasions, when we are really not called thereto by any competent authority or by any real necessity. Fifthly, "He who is the greatest and gives authority and weight to all oaths among men, must be esteemed worthy to give weight and authority to his own oath;" and "so God's people could

not have assurance more confirmed than in the word and oath of God." Sixthly, it is a great dishonor to God that men should swear by any other than by himself, whether the form of the oath be borrowed from the heathen, or gathered from the vulgar, or invented for special use. Seventhly, it is an act of amazing condescension in God to humble himself so far, in pity of the weakness of our faith, as to swear by himself; that we may know the certainty of all he has promised. Calvin: "If the name of God pronounced by tongue of man hath so much excellence, how much more ought it to have when God himself swears by his own name?" Dickson: "Except we will deny unto God the honor which we cannot deny unto an honest man, we must believe the sworn covenant of God. Except we believe, the controversy remaineth; yea, and is doubled after the oath."

17. The evidence and strength of scripture are abundant. If the Old and New Testaments are not from God, he has not made any revelation of his mind and will for man's salvation, vs. 17, 18. And if the Lord has not amply authenticated the books of his word as a divine revelation, it is not going too far to say that no revelation he might make could be proven to be divine. And this in fact is the ground substantially taken by the Infidels, who make the highest pretensions to something like reasoning. The scriptures have all the kinds of evidence appropriate to their nature. We cannot reject them without surrendering that principle of natural religion, that God cannot lie.

18. It is wholly of God's sovereign good pleasure and grace that any mercy was ever provided for mankind, or offered to us sinful men. We did nothing to make or persuade God to be *willing* to show us any love or pity, or to persuade us to be his friends. Some men are heirs of promise, v. 17. How or why they are so is resolvable into the eternal counsels of redeeming love. In this world at least, perhaps for ever this will be one of the secret things, which belong unto the Lord. But this need not produce disquiet. For we are allowed to admire and adoringly sing, Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. Compare Rom. 11:33. Some have disputed much whether by the heirs of promise Paul intends only believing Jews, or only believing Gentiles. There is nothing designed to designate any nationality. The heirs of promise are God's chosen of every land, and nation, and tribe, and tongue among men. Owen: "All the children of God have a right unto an inheritance." Abraham and all who are by faith his spiritual posterity are the heirs of promise.

19. God has a counsel, a plan, a purpose, v. 17. Compare Rom.

9:11-22; Eph. 1:3-6, 11. It is well for men that this world is not governed extemporaneously. God's counsels are *of old* faithfulness and truth, Even when wicked men, Jews and Gentiles, were gathered together against Jesus, they but did what God's hand and counsel determined before to be done, Acts 4:27, 28. Compare Acts 2:23; Eph. 3:11; 2 Tim. 1:9, etc., etc.

20. This counsel is *immutable*, v. 17. It is for a joy that it is so. If God could change his plan it must be either for the better, or for the worse. If for the better, that would show that it was not at first perfect, and so had not been worthy of him; if for the worse, then it would become imperfect; and so in either case, our comfort would be gone. It is therefore delightful to hear the Most High saying, "My counsels shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure," Isa. 46:10. Compare Ps. 33:11; Prov. 19:21; 21:30. "He is of one mind, and who can turn him? And what his soul desireth even that he doeth," Job 23:13. Calvin: "It is called God's counsel, that no one may doubt that this doctrine is drawn from the depths of God's heart." Tong: "The promise of blessedness, which God has made to believers, is not a rash and hasty thing, but the result of God's eternal purpose. The reason, why God never needs to change his counsels, is that nothing new can arise to him who sees the end from the beginning." Any one can see the importance of a fixed plan respecting agriculture. Were it not so, none could tell what or when to plough, or plant, or sow. And why is it not equally important that God's counsel for the government of good men should be unalterable? How could our faith be steadfast in a wavering government? God's counsel is unchangeable because he himself is immutable.

21. God is very intent on confirming the faith of his people, vs. 17, 18. So he declares his counsel and gives us his word and his oath. Duncan: "When a man confirms his promise by an oath, we must rest there, we can go no further, and yet after all he may deceive us; but a God of truth, as it is impossible that he can ever lie to his creatures, so when he not only promises, but swears, this gives the highest security." And all this is done that his people may have *strong consolation*.

22. It argues amazing condescension in God to assure us that it is impossible for him to lie, v. 18. God can no more deceive, nor be insincere, than he can cease to exist. In a world where truth is but little regarded, where friends and neighbors and even brothers sometimes fail to keep their word to each other, it is a great mercy that we can rest assured that he with whom we have to do, is characterized by infinite sincerity. So that now Christians need no better guaranty to the promise of God, no firmer founda-

tion of hope and joy. All men need and all men should heed the counsel Jehoshaphat gave to Judah: "Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established." 2 Chron. 20:20. The sweet singer of Israel sought no surer basis for all his joys than this: "Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope. This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me," Ps. 119:49, 50. O why do not all believers unhesitatingly cast all their care upon him, for he careth for them?

23. If men are ever to be saved, it must be by flight, v. 18—a flight from the wrath to come, from self-righteousness and self-reliance and self-will and legal hopes—a flight to Christ, the rock, the hiding place, the true city of refuge, the way, the truth and the life. Dickson: "Every true believer of necessity must be sensible of his own sins and the deserved wrath of God pursuing him for sin." Clarke: "Thou hast sinned against God and against thy own life! The avenger of blood is at thy heels! Jesus has shed his blood for thee; he is thy intercessor before the throne; flee to him! lay hold on the hope of eternal life which is offered unto thee in the gospel! Delay not one moment! Thou art never safe till thou hast redemption in his blood! God invites thee!" Jesus spreads his hands to receive thee! Richer grace was never offered, was never conceived than that set forth in the gospel plan. Let not men object to any writing, or preaching, or conversation suited to make them feel their sinfulness, guilt, misery and helplessness. Tait: "We will never flee for refuge till we feel ourselves undone. The poor publican, who had only a life of dishonesty and extortion to look back upon,—the thief on the cross, who had only a retrospect of crime,—the heathen jailor at Philippi,—these fled for refuge. And in the sight of God, between us and them, 'there is,' says St. Paul, 'no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.'" Let us never forget that so long as we stand aloof from God's promise and from God's son, we are not safe; nor can we be safe till we lay hold—lay fast hold of the hope set before us.

24. Have we that hope which is an anchor to the soul both sure and steadfast, entering into that within the vail, v. 19. It is very pleasant to see how a large class of German writers have taxed their ingenuity and given scope to their pious emotions in writing on this passage of scripture. Delitzsch: "The anchor is used as an emblem of hope in classical writers and on coins. . . The iron anchor of the seaman is cast downwards into the deep of the sea; but the hope anchor of the Christian is thrown upwards

into the deep of heaven, and passing through the super-celestial waters, finds its ground and fastholding there." Tholuck: "A beautiful double image: 1. The world is the sea—the mind is the vessel—the bliss beyond this world the distant coast; the strong hope and faith the anchor, which prevents the vessel from being driven to and fro by the waves. 2. The world is the fore-court—the human mind the uninitiated—the bliss beyond the world the sanctuary—Christ the Priest, who gives the consecration, so that the uninitiated may enter through him into the sanctuary." Ebrard: "The soul, like one in danger of shipwreck, casts forth her anchor; and though she sees not whither the rope is running, she knows that the anchor itself is firmly fixed behind the veil which hides the future glory from her view and feels assured that if she can only keep fast hold to the end, she shall finally be drawn by a Saviour's hand upwards and inwards to the eternal sanctuary." The mariner sees not where his anchor is cast; in this, the Christian is like him. But the sea is treacherous, and in violent storms ships sometimes drag their anchors and are driven on to lee shores; but the anchor cast in heaven never loses its hold. It is as firm as the pillars of the Mediator's throne. Calvin: "So long as we sojourn in this world, we stand not upon firm ground, but are tossed to and fro in the midst of the sea." That is the very reason why we need a good anchor and good anchorage. Dickson: "The anchor is weighty, solid, and firm: it will not drive, nor bow, nor break; it is sure and steadfast." Guyse: "O how safe and solid is the hope, that has Christ, and a promising God in him, for its object, and flies for refuge to him. This is an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast." Owen: "All true believers are exposed to storm and tempest in this world. These would prove ruinous unto the souls of believers were they not indefeasibly interested by faith and hope in the promises of God."

25. Blessed be God we have a friend in heaven, the best kind of a friend, a forerunner who has for us entered, for us taken possession, and for us is making abundant preparation, v. 20. His going before makes our entrance easy. He says "If I go, and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also." Of old, the High Priest entered the holy of holies not only nor chiefly for his own sake, but for the sake of the people also; so our High Priest has *for us* entered within the veil. Some of his great work there on our behalf has been already stated; other branches thereof will be considered hereafter. It is therefore clear that what we want is, not another Saviour, another helper, but more faith and confidence in him, who is in office and in power for us. Blessed be God for

Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day and forever—the same as when he showed mercy to the Canaanitish woman, to Zaccheus, and to the thief on the Cross—the same as when he wept at the grave of Lazarus. His exaltation has indeed changed his state, but in no whit his character. Happy indeed are the true children of God. What more could they ask than that which has been already done or promised? Better hopes cannot be inspired; more gracious promises could not be made. Let faith grasp and hold fast the promise; let patience and constancy endure as seeing him who is invisible, and all will be well—for ever.

## CHAPTER VII.

VERSES 1-10.

MELCHISEDEC BOTH A KING AND A PRIEST.  
GREATER THAN ABRAHAM. NOT IN THE  
GENEALOGICAL TABLES OF THE TRIBE OF  
LEVI.

FOR this Melchisedec, king of Saleti, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him;

2 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;

3 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.

4 Now consider how great this man *was*, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.

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:

6 But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises.

7 And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better.

8 And here men that die receive tithes; but there he *receiveth them*, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.

9 And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, paid tithes in Abraham.

10 For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.

**B**EFORE entering upon the particular consideration of the various parts of this chapter, it is convenient, and will save time to make some general statements.

1. We have now come to the very heart and core of this epistle. Upon the right interpretation of it turns the whole meaning of this remarkable composition. Evidently Paul so esteemed it.

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Some one justly says: "It is apparent, from his writings, that Paul never takes up a doctrinal subject for the mere pleasure of theoretic discussion; but is always compelled to do this by the exigencies of the church: particularly, by the assaults made on the Christian faith by false teachers."

2. The ground of Jewish cavilling against the gospel was to a Jewish mind very plausible. Gray: "Their divine religion, and its divine atonement occupied such a place in their hearts, that they saw no need of another religion and atonement. . . This divine religion and its atonement furnished a convenient theme of declamation to factious men among Christians. . . When we find Paul arguing so strenuously that the law had only a *shadow* of good things to come, that it was impossible the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin, that perfection could not be by the Levitical priesthood;—we may be sure that the Jews had urged that they were already possessed of an atonement, prescribed in their law, and had a divine order of priest to make that atonement." We need not therefore marvel at the earnest and cogent reasoning of the Apostle to show that the divinely appointed priests and sacrifices of the law of Moses were not intended to be perpetual, and that God had long since given them notice, in their own prophets, that he would supersede them both.

3. The passages of scripture (besides this seventh chapter) which mention Melchisedec, are Gen. 14: 18–20; Ps. 110: 4; Heb. 5: 6–11, and 6: 20. The first notice of Melchisedec is in these words: "And Melchizedek, King of Salem, brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram, of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: and blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all." In the second passage referred to, the words are: "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." The other passages are in this epistle, and have already been considered.

4. The great doctrine, which Paul is continually urging in the argument of this epistle, is reconciliation by atoning blood offered by our great High Priest. We have already seen this in considering Heb. 1: 3; 2: 9, 10, 14, 17; 3: 1; 4: 14, 15, 16. That he regards this doctrine as vital to the gospel scheme, and as fundamental in the matter of salvation, it seems impossible for a candid man to doubt. In considering Heb. 2: 17; 3: 1; 4: 14, 15, especially the first of these, something has been said concerning the nature of the priesthood, whose duties principally consisted in offering sacrifices, making intercession and pronouncing blessings.

It is by no means certain that the word, rendered priest in the Old Testament, either in the singular or plural is confined to those, who strictly held the sacerdotal office. Gray thinks it is a title of honor, a subordinate title given equally to officers in church and in state; and he seems to prove his point. Yet doubtless, it commonly designates one who is ordained for men, in things pertaining to God, that he might offer both gifts and sacrifices for sin, Heb. 5:1. In this epistle this is certainly the meaning of the word priest.

5. Now the Apostle has already proven that Jesus is a priest, a great High Priest, chap. 4:14-16. He had all that was fitting and exalted in the priesthood of Aaron. He was "taken from among men;" was "called of God;" "ordained for men, in things pertaining to God;" he entered into the holiest of all, "not without blood," and there performs his intercession, Heb. 5:1, 4; 9:7. And yet Christ was not so after the order of Aaron as that he had not a more illustrious type in the person of Melchisedec. On the phrase *after the order of Melchisedec*, see above comment on Heb. 5:6. Doubtless order is equivalent to similitude or pattern. There are points in which Christ's priesthood was set forth neither by Aaron nor Melchisedec. He offered no calves, nor goats, but his own blood. His great sacrifice was his soul. He obtained eternal redemption for us. His intercession is carried on in heaven; and yet Melchisedec was an illustrious type of Christ. In what particulars, he was such a type, it is the object of the Apostle in chapter VII. to set forth. Gray: "Melchisedec possessed all the typical characteristics of Aaron; but, in addition to these, he had sundry *peculiar* characteristics." No one will contend that Melchisedec was a priest after the order of Aaron. Nor was Melchisedec's priesthood the same as was that of Jesus. When Messiah came, the Jews saw him slaying no victims, wearing no ephod, nor any mitre, and not even claiming to belong to the tribe of Levi. The Jews thought a religion without a priest was nought. It was therefore a great mercy when God, by David, foretold that Christ should be a priest, not of that order, but of the order of Melchisedec. Nor is it possible for us to see how Paul could have met Jewish prejudice by fair argument drawn from the Jewish canon of scripture, if God had not inspired David to write Ps. 110, in which the order of Aaron is not even once mentioned.

6. It may be well here to notice some conceits or unfounded opinions concerning the person of Melchisedec. Some have taught that he was the Holy Ghost. One is almost shocked at such a representation. Gray well says, "This is intolerable. 1. Because the Holy Ghost is never represented as a priest: and

his office, in the economy of redemption, looks towards *men*, whom he sanctifies; whereas, the priest's office looks towards *God*, to whom atonement and intercession are made. 2. Because he is never exhibited as a type of Christ. 3. Because granting the hypothesis, we would then have two *equal* priests: and yet one of them would have no *offering*, and of course could make no *intercession*, not being qualified to enter into the holy place with blood. 4. It would be worse than nonsense to tell us the Holy Ghost is without father and mother, and does not reckon his genealogy from Aaronic priests."

It is not necessary here to refer to the dreams of the Melchisedecians, who taught that Melchisedec was a superior divine influence incarnate as the model after which Christ was made. If he was greater than Christ, he was greater than God, for Christ was God.

Others have held that the Son of God himself before he was born of a woman, assumed human nature, and blessed Abraham, and received tithes of him. But this cannot be so, for then Christ must have made more than one offering, and we are expressly informed that he did not, Heb. 10: 10, 14. Nor can a man be a type of himself, else similitude and identity are the same thing. Again, "it would be extremely irreverent to suppose, that the adorable God lifted up his hand and swore that his Son's priesthood should be like his Son's priesthood." All the scriptures represent Christ as incarnate but once, Heb. 7: 27; 9: 12, 26; 1 Pet. 3: 18.

So also Melchisedec could not have been an angel. The scriptures say expressly that every priest is taken from among *men*. Again it would be idle to tell us that an angel had neither father nor mother, and what need had an angel of tithes? The scriptures never speak of angels as filling the priest's office.

7. Melchisedec was a man. Gray: "The *historical* evidence is complete." We have the same reason to believe that Melchisedec was a man, as that Abraham and the king of Sodom were men. Heb. 5: 1, proves that he was a man. Nor is there the slightest evidence that Melchisedec was Enoch, Shem, Ham, Canaan, Job or any other person whose history is given us. The least absurd, or at least the most urged of these opinions is that Melchisedec was Shem. Some of the Jews have urged this idea. But we know who Shem's father was. The same may be said of Enoch, Ham, Canaan. The fact is, that Melchisedec is a distinct and independent person in history, and we need go no further in our inquiries, except as he is introduced to us by the Apostle in this epistle.

8. The great design of the Apostle in introducing Melchisedec

to his readers is to show that the Levitical priesthood was not the only or the most honored priesthood that ever was upon earth. Gray represents the Apostle as thus addressing the Hebrews: "Look back to the origin of your nation, and there you will find your father Abraham, after he had received the *covenant*, which is the source and sum of all your national glory, *paying tithes to Melchisedec*, a priest of the most high God, and receiving his blessing. And as he was at that time your covenant head and representative, his act was yours, and his inferiority, your inferiority. And therefore to speak plainly, your whole nation, and among the rest, the tribe of Levi, paid tithes in Abraham to Melchisedec and received his blessing." Both of these acts prove the inferiority of the great ancestor of the Jews.

We come now to explain the section as given above.

1. *For this Melchisedec, King of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the Kings, and blessed him;*

2. *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.* Some make little of the connecting particle *for*. Others will give to it its full force, as a logical illative. It connects what follows with the great truth now in hand, viz., that the priesthood of Messiah, as set forth by the prophet David, was to be after the order of Melchisedec, who long preceded the Levitical priesthood, and was superior to it. The first thing noticed concerning this priest is that Melchisedec was both king and priest—King of righteousness as the word Melchisedec means. How he acquired this name we know not. It may have been given him by divine inspiration or revelation. The latter is the more probable opinion. In the bible oftentimes names are things, though even there we find many exceptions. Some, however, think it was a title granted him by surrounding nations on account of his justice in all political affairs. Doubtless he deserved it. But it seems to be rather a name than a title. If so, it was probably given him in infancy. King of righteousness is better than righteous king. But he was also king of Salem, that is king of peace. He was a peaceful king, and seems to have been able to command the peace. He studied the things that make for peace, and he obtained peace. But he was king of a city, or state, whose name was peace, and under his protection and guidance it had great peace. Gray: "Melchisedec, a righteous king, reigning over Salem, a peaceful city, and being at the same time priest of the Most High God, was an excellent type of that High Priest, who reigns in righteousness, over the peaceful city of our God." We cannot certainly know

what particular place is here designated by Salem. Some have thought it was Jerusalem. As the name of a place, Salem occurs only in our verses, in Genesis 14:18, and in Ps. 76:2. In Gen. 14:18 is the first notice of Salem as the seat of Melchisedec. In Ps. 76:2 Salem undoubtedly points to Jerusalem: "In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion." We might rest satisfied with this exposition adopted by many able and learned commentators, but for two reasons. One of these is that the ancient name of Jerusalem seems to have been Jebus, Judges 19:10. Compare Gen. 10:16; Ex. 33:2; 34:11; and other places where the word Jebusite occurs. From Melchisedec to the writing of Ps. 76 elapsed nine hundred, or more probably twelve hundred years. The other is that there was at least one other place called Salem, or Shalem, Gen. 33:18, which was a city of Shechem. Some think this is the same as Salim mentioned in John 3:23. There may have been others bearing the same name. In Paul's day there were at least two cities bearing the name of Antioch—one in Syria, the other in Pisidia—and both founded by the same man in honor of his father. So there were two or more cities called Salem. But no point of doctrine depends on the locality of the city here named. Turner: "Certainty on such a point is unattainable." It is also unnecessary. The type is complete in the name of the place. This king of righteousness and of peace was also priest of the most high God. This is the title given him in Gen. 14 and shows the fulness of the type in his holding the two offices. Aaron and his sons were priests, but not kings. David and Solomon were kings but not priests. For attempting to unite in his own person both offices, the direst earthly calamities came on Uzziah, 2 Chron. 26:16-21.

The priesthood and kingly office of Melchisedec had been asserted by both Moses and David, two great prophets among the Hebrews, and therefore were undeniable. The fitness and fulness of his character as a type of him, who was to come, were thus put beyond all perplexing uncertainty or reasonable doubt. This man met Abram returning from the slaughter [or smiting] of the kings, who had cruelly captured Lot. The apostle proceeds to say of Melchisedec that he was

3. *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.* It is proper to state that there is no doubt respecting the canonical authority of this verse, nor respecting the general accuracy of the translation. If any change in rendering is called for it is in the phrase *without descent*, literally it is *without genealogy*. But then genealogy is family descent.

The Peshito renders it thus: "Of whom neither his father nor his mother are written in the genealogies; nor the commencement of his days, nor the end of his life; but after the likeness of the Son of God, his priesthood remaineth for ever." Wiclif, Rheims, Doway, Stuart and Craik all read, without genealogy; Conybeare and Howson, without table of descent. In considering this chapter let us remember that one design of the apostle is to convince the Hebrews that both before and after the Levitical priesthood their own scriptures spoke of a priesthood distinct from that of Aaron and greater than it. He would so far draw their attention from the sacrifices of the temple as to fix their eager attention on a far greater offering, that of Jesus Christ on Calvary. The law of the Levitical priesthood required that a man be able to prove that he by his father belonged to the tribe of Levi. One's mother might be of that family; but that was of no avail if the father was not a Levite. His father must be lineally descended from Levi. This was required by the very law establishing the priesthood, Num. 8: 5-22. Here none but Levites are even named as admissible to the priesthood. There is also a historic interpretation given of this law less than four hundred and fifty years before Christ—after the captivity. Thus Ezra records the course pursued in organizing the service of God in his time: "And of the children of the priests: the children of Habaiah, the children of Koz, the children of Barzillai: which took a wife of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite, and was called after their name: 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. And the Tirshatha said unto them, that they should not eat of the most holy things, till there stood up a priest with Urim and Thummim," Ezra. 2: 61-63. Compare Neh. 7: 63-65. Barzillai was an honored and excellent man, as may be seen in 2 Sam. 17: 27-29; 19: 31-39; 1 Kings 2: 7; but he was not a Levite, and these descendants of his daughters were not able to show their Levitical genealogy on their father's side, and so they were excluded till by oracle God should declare whether the loss of their register should exclude them utterly. Compare Exod. 28: 1; 1 Chron. 24.

It was no less necessary that a man be able to show who his mother was. For the improper marriage of a priest for ever excluded his descendants from the priest's office. The law was full and explicit. Speaking of the high priest God said unto Moses, "He shall take a wife in her virginity. A widow, or a divorced woman, or profane, or an harlot, these shall he not take: but he shall take a virgin of his own people to wife. Neither shall he profane his seed among his people: for I the Lord do sanc-

tify him," Lev. 21:13-15. In the same chapter the same law in similar terms is applied to all the priests. But in Ezek. 44:22 it is said: "Neither shall they [the priests] take for their wives a widow nor her that is put away: but they shall take maidens of the seed of the house of Israel, or a widow that had a priest before." So that the maternal descent was in their generations as rigidly regarded among the priests as was that by the fathers. Thus it is manifest that one was *profaned*, that is secularized, rendered incapable of filling the priest's office, if he could not show that his mother was such a person as the Levitical law required. She must be an Israelite; she must be a virgin or the widow of a priest. But in these senses Melchisedec was without father and without mother. For he was *without descent*, that is, without genealogy, such as Aaron and his sons had in the tables registering the descent of the priests. Ebrard: "Melchisedec's priesthood had certainly nothing to do with his race and his descent, as nothing at all has been recorded of his descent." It was far different with the Levitical priesthood. Even after long and cruel captivity, which lasted more than two generations, "the register was exacted as the *only admissible evidence*," in the days of Nehemiah, and doubtless at all times when there was any zeal for God's glory or the purity of religion. The priesthood must be kept pure and must be able to establish descent according to the law; but Melchisedec was found in none of the registers of the Levitical priesthood. In v. 6 the words "whose descent is not counted" explains the word rendered "without descent," in v. 3. Indeed the only historic record we have of him relates to a time certainly more than one hundred and fifty years before Levi was born, and four hundred and twenty-two years before the Israelites came up out of Egypt, and the priesthood of the Levites was not established till after that. This fact of itself clearly shows that Melchisedec and his antitype were quite different from Jewish priests, and that perfection was not by the Levitical priesthood.

The apostle proceeds to say of Melchisedec, that he had no *beginning of days*, that is, the time of his birth was not given, as it was given in the genealogical tables of the Levitical priesthood. Among the Jews two purposes were answered by the record of the birth, or beginning of days.

1. The Levite was to enter on the priesthood at thirty years of age, and the fact of his being of lawful age must be proven.
2. He must lay aside the regular duties of a priest at fifty years of age, and this age must be duly proven. The scripture settling this matter is found recorded with great clearness in Num. 4:1-3.

True, the Levites entered the service of God in a subordinate capacity as candidates for the priest's office, at as early an age as that of twenty-five years, Num. 8 : 24-26; and at one time when there was a demand for much light service they were called into their novitiate at twenty years of age, 1 Chron. 23 : 24-28. But they entered at an early age as servants and learners, and not at all as priests.

Whether the priest lived to be over fifty years of age or not, his death, or *end of life*, as Paul well calls it, was no doubt also registered; for, if the priest was at his death under age to retire from his course, some one must be appointed to take his place, or some new arrangement be made. Besides, it was but a decent respect to "those, who had long and faithfully served at the altar that the date of their death should be recorded." This was done of the patriarchs both before and after the flood, Gen. 5 : 3-32; 11 : 10-32. Melchisedec did not go out of office at fifty. Thus by "a mortal type Paul sets forth the eternity of the antitype."

Still we must inquire in what sense we are to understand the words *without father*, etc. The methods of explanation adopted by various writers are such as these :

1. Some take our verse literally, and regard the apostle as denying that Melchisedec had either father or mother; that he ever was born or ever died. Of course such regard him as either a divine or an angelic person. But this has been shown not to be so. And there never was but one man, who was not born of a woman.

2. Some regard our verse as simply denying that Melchisedec had predecessor or successor in office; and so differed from the Jewish priests, who had a long line of succession. It is a fact that neither Melchisedec nor he of whom he was a type had either predecessor or successor. The apostle notices this truth in this very chapter, vs. 23, 24. Yet our verse not only says that he was without *father*, which perhaps may sometimes mean predecessor, but it also declares that he was without mother. Now women were never priests by the appointment of God, and so could not precede or succeed any priest of God.

3. Still others contend that the apostle merely asserts that the human genealogy of Melchisedec is not given among that of the patriarchs. But this quite destroys the typical character of Melchisedec; for the human genealogy of Jesus Christ is given with great care in two forms: first, by Matthew, then by Luke; and in fact there is no woman so renowned as the mother of our Lord. The human genealogy of Jesus of Nazareth was moreover determined by a judicial process ordered by the Roman Emperor to

enrol the Jews for taxation ; and so, both Joseph and Mary were acknowledged to be of the house and lineage of David, before Jesus was born.

And as to the *beginning of days* and *end of life*, the scriptures record with great fulness both the birth and the death of Jesus Christ. The overstrained fancy of some that 'as Melchisedec is without father, mother, birth or death, recorded in scripture, so Jesus is really without father *as man*, and without mother, birth or death, *as God*,' is not entitled to extended consideration. To say that Christ as God is without genealogy, or that he as God is without a mother is simply idle.

4. The explanation, which meets the demands of the whole case, is that the apostle is speaking of the genealogical register of the Levitical priesthood. This view falls in with what the apostle says in verses 13, 14 of this chapter, and in Heb. 8 : 4, and is subject to none of the objections belonging to the other modes of explanation. Let us remember what the apostle has in view, viz., to show to the Israelites that a priest, not of the order of Aaron, but of a much greater than Aaron, was required, under the Christian dispensation. He tells us that Melchisedec was *made like unto the Son of God*, that is, he was raised up and his history is left as it is, that he might be a type of the Son of God ; and presently proceeds to show that he was much greater than Aaron or any of the Jewish priests. It is added, He *abideth a priest continually*, that is, he stands out in history as a priest independent of all the laws of priesthood known to the Jews, not transmitting his office to any other, and so having an unchangeable, or intransmissible office, and deriving it not from the strength of a carnal commandment, but from that authority, which made it independent of all other orders of priests. The great objection of the Jews to Christ's priesthood was that he was not of the tribe of Levi. Paul shows that Moses and David had foretold that such should be the fact concerning Messiah. The record shows no end of the priesthood of Melchisedec ; and so he was a fit type of Christ, who literally continueth a priest in the full exercise of his office for ever. Turner : "The phrase simply means that Melchisedec continues to be a priest *constantly, to the end*. He himself bears throughout his priesthood."

4. *Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.*

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 :*

6. *But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises.* The argument is summarily this: A superior does not pay tithes to an inferior. Abraham therefore was not superior to Melchisedec. Consequently one of his remote descendants, claiming all under the covenant made with Abraham, could not be greater than Melchisedec; and so, the Aaronic priesthood was not greater than that of the King of Salem and priest of the Most High God. Another matter, showing the superiority of Melchisedec over the Levitical priesthood, was that Melchisedec blessed Abraham. This settles the question, for he adds:

7. *And without all contradiction, the less is blessed of the better.* Or as Peshito has it: "But it is beyond controversy, that the inferior is blessed by his superior." Of course then, the priesthood of our Lord was more excellent than that of Aaron, as Melchisedec was superior to Abraham. Tithes themselves were originally due to God, the Sovereign Lord of all; and so, even the paying of tithes was a formal acknowledgment of superiority. No Jew, whatever his office or dignity, would claim any superiority over Abraham. Consequently no Jewish priest could fairly claim to be the equal of Melchisedec. The authoritative benediction in all ages of the church has been pronounced by the minister upon the people; not by a private man on the ministry. The apostle proceeds with his argument:

8. *And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth,* that is, tithes were paid to Melchisedec, whose death the scriptures nowhere record, whose priesthood was liable neither to change nor succession; and who received his priesthood from no man. Of the priesthood of Melchisedec the scripture records no imperfection, no change, no end. It ran through all his dispensation. Calvin: "The type is described as having no end; the order of priesthood, which it represents, is therefore eternal."

9. *And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, paid tithes in Abraham.*

10. *For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.* This is but a strengthening of the foregoing argument, <sup>shewing</sup> the superiority of the priesthood of Melchisedec over that of Aaron and his successors. The apostle admits that the Levitical priesthood was honored and honorable, and by divine appointment received tithes; but he contends that the priesthood of Melchisedec was still higher and more honorable because it received tithes from the great ancestor of all the Jews, and the father of all believers; and so virtually received tithes from Levi

and his descendants, although "Levi as yet had no other than a representative existence; his personal existence had not yet begun." This kind of statement was fitted to have great weight with a Hebrew, who was persuaded that he held under Abraham and through him. The phrase rendered *As I may so say*, at the beginning of v. 9, was not uncommon. It sometimes seems to be equivalent to this, To sum up all. But the more common sense is a notification that what is said is not to be pressed too far, and that the language is rather figurative, than literal. It should however be observed that Levi never paid tithes but in his ancestor Abraham, nor did he ever receive tithes but in his posterity. As Christ derived his human nature through a woman descended from Abraham, some have suggested that Paul's argument proves his priesthood inferior to that of Melchisedec, as his mother's great ancestor paid tithes to that great priest. A sufficient answer is, that Christ's birth was not by ordinary generation, but wholly miraculous; that therefore he was not represented in Adam so as to be chargeable with original sin; nor was he represented in Abraham, so as to have paid tithes in him, or to be personally benefitted by Abraham's faith.

#### DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL REMARKS.

I. We ought to study with diligence and docility every intimation of God's will, wherever or however given in his word. This whole chapter is very much a study of a few words of history written by Moses. The law had a shadow of good things to come. And even before the law there were types and figures of great blessings yet to be revealed. The study of scriptural typology is an act of piety and a profitable exercise. It should be conducted with sobriety, but it should be done with zeal and earnestness. Scott: "Every part of scripture was intended, in one way or other, to honor our 'King of righteousness and peace,' our glorious High Priest and Saviour: and the more accurately we examine it, the fuller will be our conviction, that 'the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.'" We should regard nothing unimportant, if in mercy God has kindly taught it to us. We may not find ourselves perfect masters of all he would teach us at first; but we should meditate, and pray, and read, and inquire, until we make some progress in knowledge. Owen: "When truths in themselves mysterious, and of great importance unto the church, are asserted or declared, it is very necessary that clear evidence and demonstration be given unto them; that the minds of men be left neither in the dark about their meaning,

nor in suspense about their truth." We ought earnestly to implore divine guidance in such studies, and not follow wild imaginings. Nor should we be afraid to let every sentence and type of scripture have all the force and fulness of meaning fairly belonging to it. The first gospel ever preached on earth respected the seed of the woman destroying the serpent: "It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel," Gen. 3: 15. The words are few and simple; and yet they contain the germ of all the truth and grace shown or to be shown to men in Jesus Christ. Then we have the promise of God to Abraham respecting his "Seed;" and the prophecy of Jacob respecting "Shiloh," Gen. 28: 14; 49: 10. Paul asserts that Adam was a type of Christ, Rom. 5: 14. David and Paul make Melchisedec another figure of the great Deliverer. And although Noah and Joseph are not in scripture said to have been types, yet who can read their history and doubt it? Who would have regarded the two mountains in Arabia as giving instruction in divine things, if Paul had not thus spoken of them? Gal. 4: 23-26. It is easy indeed to push the doctrine of types too far, and it is as easy to come short of the truth in this matter. Some have broadly asserted that nothing in the Old Testament is typical unless in the New Testament it is expressly declared so to be. We should not commit a more serious mistake, were we to adopt the canon that no part of the Old Testament is Messianic, unless it is declared so to be by Jesus Christ and his apostles. It is not contended that the ancient prophets always or fully understood their own prophecies, whether uttered in words or in types. Indeed we know they did not, and their predictions are more useful to us and better understood by us than by themselves, 1 Pet. 1: 10-12. And it is well suited to show us that the scriptures are like presses bursting out with new wine, when we find both the name Melchisedec and the title king of Salem pregnant with meaning.

2. The very existence of such a priest as Melchisedec shows that from remote ages God had thoughts of mercy to the Gentiles, and by no means confined his love to one people—the descendants of Abraham. Yea more, the fact that Melchisedec was greater than Abraham, and greater than any priest ever descending from Abraham, shows that God intended that the Gentile church should be very glorious. He, who tithed and blessed Abraham, and who was "priest of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth," had a priesthood of his own, wherein he blessed not his own people alone, but even the great ancestor of the Israelites, and was a priest hundreds of years before Aaron wore a mitre. Thus his office had a wider range and a greater antiquity than that of

the sons of Levi. There is hope for the heathen. God has promised and done very great things for the Gentile church. Owen: "God can raise the greatest light in the midst of the greatest darkness, Matt. 4; 16."

3. It has been thus far true that each succeeding dispensation of God's grace to men has been more glorious than any that preceded it. Thus the Mosaic institute was better than the patriarchal. John's heraldry of Messiah was more glorious than the legation of Moses, Matt. 11:11; Luke 7:28. And the very same scriptures determine that the gospel dispensation far outshines all that have gone before it. The way of life is more plain; the evidences of divine authority are more clear; the work of God more rapid and more powerful. It is for a joy to the believing sinner that he can look back to very remote ages, and see a divinely ordained priesthood enthroned in Salem, and infallibly know that he was a personal and instituted type of our Lord Jesus Christ, who blesses all his people. In like manner we have cause for regarding the heavenly dispensation of grace after this life as unspeakably exceeding in glory all manifestations of God's perfections ever before made. Compare Isa. 64:4; 2 Cor. 12:4; Rev. 22:1-5.

4. In all ages God has had true servants, who delighted to honor him. We are greatly mistaken if we suppose that any ecclesiastical history, extant or ever written, gives an adequate conception of the number and excellence of the true people of God of any age or country. Elijah was a great and good man, but even he thought he stood alone, when God had in Israel seven thousand men, who had not bowed the knee to Baal. Melchisedec lived in a time when general and dreadful corruption prevailed; yet it is recorded of him that he was a priest of the true God, and a king of righteousness and of peace, and so reverend a person that the patriarch Abraham did him great honor and sought his benediction. Lindsay: "The day of judgment will reveal saints who were altogether unknown in this world; and the words of Cornelius will be fully vindicated, that God is no respecter of persons." Compare Matt. 8:11; 19:30; Mark 10:31; Luke 13:30.

5. All former dispensations pointed to Christ, and their institutions and rites were important and valuable chiefly as they drew their significance from their Messianic character, v. 1. If Melchisedec had been no type of Christ, the brief record of him in Genesis would have been pleasant indeed, but of no more interest or value than many another record occupying even less space on the page of history. Calvin: "Melchisedec was made like unto the Son of God, so far as was requisite, that he might be a sign. . . . It is

enough that we behold the outlines of Christ in him: even as the form of a living man can be seen in a tablet, and yet the man is very far from being the picture of him." We, who live under the gospel, having before us both the type and the antitype, both the prediction and the fulfilment of it, can read the scriptures both backward and forward. The event casts light on the prophecy, and the promise or type illustrates the history. If these things are so, it fairly follows that men and actions derive their chief importance for good or for evil, as they stand in a friendly or hostile attitude to Christ. There is a day coming when it will amount to more to have given a cup of cold water to a follower of Christ, than to have ruled a continent.

6. Jehovah is supreme and sovereign—the Most High God, v. 1. There is none above him; there is none with him; there is none beside him; he is God alone. Most High is one of nine or ten proper names given to the personal God of the Bible, and it is most fitly claimed by him; for he is exalted, and dwelleth on high; he rules in heaven and in the kingdoms of earth; he giveth majesty, glory and honor; he is high above all the nations, and his glory above the heavens. Compare Ps. 33:5; 113:4, 5; Dan. 4:32; 5:18. No marvel God is a good refuge to poor souls that flee to him, Ps. 91:1. No marvel that the pious and the wise cry unto him. No marvel that prophets celebrate his condescension in dwelling with the lowly and penitent soul, Isa. 57:15. No marvel that he hates pride and ambition, which lead men to aspire to be as God. No marvel that he blotted out Lucifer, when he said, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God." Honor, and glory, and power, and liberty, and sovereignty, and riches, and happiness, and salvation can have but one author, even God; for he is in all, and over all, and above all. Blessed be his name for ever and ever.

7. Well would it have been for the world if every potentate, who has ever held a sceptre, had been, like Melchisedec, a "king of righteousness" and a "king of peace." Besides him there have been a few good kings, whose wise and benignant sway has been as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender herb springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain, 2 Sam. 23:4. Now and then there has been a Josiah, or an Edward VI. But there have been whole lines of monarchs as in the kingdom of Israel, whose several record, brief but graphic, was, He did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord. No wonder that mankind dread any man invested with unlimited power, whether he gains it by usurpation, election, or inheritance. The lawfulness of a kingly government none will

dispute. Rightly managed it is an emblem of the government of God. But wickedly managed, it is no mean representation of the kingdom of darkness. Often by ambition and cruelty is earth made like the bottomless pit, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. Were sovereigns perfectly wise, and just, and powerful, and good, a monarchical government would be the best. But long and painful history gives us fair warning that they are often weak, and selfish, and pusillanimous, and feeble, and devilish. Indeed history clearly records that much power can seldom be entrusted to any man, under any form of government, but at the risk of all solid constitutional freedom. If God forsakes a people, whatever their form of government may be, they are undone. They will soon find a Hazeel or a Herod in power able to make them groan from the depths of their hearts. Or God may give them a Pilate for a governor, a Judas for a chamberlain, and a Zaccheus for a tax-gatherer. And then their woes come like an armed man.

8. By type, by prophecy and by history we learn that the Lord Jesus Christ is both a King of righteousness and a King of peace. These were titles of his type Melchisedec; much more do they belong to his antitype, who is expressly called "the Lord our Righteousness" and "the Prince of Peace," Isa. 9:6; Jer. 23:6. On these matters the word of God is full and clear. The scriptures declare that the righteous Lord loveth righteousness; that he leads his people in the paths of righteousness, for his name's sake; that the upright shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation; that he loves righteousness and hates wickedness; that he is pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness; that his church shall be called the city of righteousness, etc., Ps. 11:7; 23:3; 24:5; 45:7; Heb. 1:9; Ps. 51:19; Isa. 1:26. Then we have other scriptures which unite righteousness and peace under the reign of Messiah: "He shall judge the people with righteousness, and the poor with judgment. The mountains shall bring peace and the little hills by righteousness. . . In his days shall the righteous flourish: and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth," Ps. 72:2, 3, 7. Compare Isa. 11:5, 6; Jer. 23:5; Zech. 6:12, 13; Luke 2:14; John 14:27; Col. 1:20. So that no results of Christ's reign, however glorious, ought to awaken incredulity. They were foretold.

9. The office of priesthood, always so well guarded, receives its full glory in Christ Jesus, and in none else. Whatever honor pertained to other priests, it was but shadowy and evanescent. For instance it is said of Melchisedec that he *abideth a priest continually*, that he *liveth*, etc. All this can only mean that in the

dispensation of priesthood committed to him, he was sole incumbent, and had neither predecessor nor successor, etc. Nor is there any record of the end of his priesthood. But Jesus Christ is a priest *for ever* in a much higher sense than any man. Melchisedec alone filled up the whole of his priesthood. But it ran only through one life of one man upon earth. But our great High Priest lives for ever, reigns for ever, and alone fulfils his priesthood *according to the power of an endless life*, and so *hath an unchangeable priesthood*. Lindsay: "As the fact that the end of his life is not mentioned is employed as a type of the unending duration of Christ, so the fact that the end of his priesthood is not mentioned is equally fitted to exhibit typically the unending priesthood of the Son of God." So far as the record of his life is concerned, Melchisedec would seem to be a priest continually; but our Lord Jesus Christ is literally a priest for ever. He is actually and everlastingly in office. He never has vacated and never shall vacate his priesthood. His priesthood supposes all others to have ceased and precludes them. Thus we are not perplexed with different priesthoods. The one great priest is all in all. Heubner: "The Levites take a tenth from their brethren; Melchisedec takes tithes from Abraham; but Christ receives the reverence, the service of the whole world." Oh that men would give him the honor and the glory which are his due. There is no danger that any man will too entirely commit his immortal interests to him. Lindsay: "He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. He is a priest in all respects suited to our case, and no danger can be imagined at any time to threaten us, which he will not be ready to ward off. He is ever at his post. All our prayers he will hear. In all our straits and difficulties he will sympathize with us. When we confess our sins, and cry to him for pardon, he will cleanse us from all our unrighteousness, and, through sprinkling of his precious blood, bless us with complete forgiveness. O the privilege of having such a priest to plead for us in the sanctuary above. Let us not for want of earnest and continuous application to him want the blessings which he is exalted to bestow."

10. The going forth of Melchisedec to meet Abraham and bless him on his return from the slaughter of the Kings brings up the question of the lawfulness of war, v. 1. Were all wars of the same character with that waged by Abraham, mankind would be less divided on this subject. He pursued and smote the predatory bands, who had without cause or provocation invaded the plain, and carried captive his kinsman Lot. The aggressors were a cruel

company of outlaws, who regarded not rights or justice, the comity or the law of nations. To punish them was an act of justice, of which they could not justly complain. They loved scenes of blood, and they had enough of such appalling work. Their overthrow was a righteous retribution from heaven. They that take the sword are apt to perish by the sword. Wars of rapine and of conquest are always of bad morals. And most wars are painfully an "abolition of the principles of virtue." Let men, who delight in carnage, remember that they will have an awful account to render. "Let them drink down their cup of blood and tears, poisoned with deadly guilt: this is but the beginning of their sorrows." While these things are certainly so, there is no other penalty for a violation of the laws of nations, but war. Christianity will surely banish war from the world, Isa. 2:4; Mic. 4:3; but this result will be reached by making men just, true and merciful. The wicked will do wickedly. The bloody will delight in violence. If war is for the suppression of violence, it looks like a singular remedy; but sometimes there is no other. One of the horrible things attendant on war is that it brings misery and death alike on innocent and guilty, on base and noble, on old and young. Another is that the arbitrament of the sword often awards victory to the wrong side. In the rage and horrors of war we may always have this solace: "The Lord God omnipotent reigneth." Nor will Christ fail to be honored by all the overturnings of the world. Owen: "All the commotions and concussions that are among the nations of the world, do lie in, or shall be brought into, a subserviency unto the interest of Christ and his Church."

11. We may receive the blessing of God's real ministers, v. 1. It will do us no harm unless we despise it. It may do us great good, as it did Abraham. Duncan: "God, as he has the sovereign power and absolute disposal of good and evil, so he only can bless in a proper sense, *i. e.*, he only can communicate good; but yet men of authority from him sometimes bless, and their blessings are means of communication of good to the persons blessed." Compare Num. 6:24-26.

12. How glorious are Christ's names and titles, v. 2. Some of these were borne by those who were types of him, as Joshua and Melchisedec. A good collection of them can be found in several fine writers. The pious study of them always rewards the good man. We need the comfort to be derived from them all.

13. Nor should we find fault with God for speaking to us in dark sayings, and in parables, and in allegories, vs. 1-3. God has told us so much that is plain and practical, that if we love and practise that, he will enlighten us in many things, which would

otherwise be hidden from our eyes. And the very concealment of some things from our view may operate as a test of our humility, docility and obedience. Owen: "The scripture is so absolutely the rule, measure and boundary of our faith and knowledge in spiritual things, as that what it conceals is instructive as well as what it expresseth."

14. The passage of scripture under consideration inculcates the practice of giving freely of our worldly goods to pious and benevolent uses, vs. 2, 4, 5, 6. Lindsay: "The chief difference between offerings of the old dispensation and those of the new is, that formerly a definite proportion of one's annual increase was fixed by divine appointment, as what should go to pious uses; whereas now it is left to every man to decide for himself how much he will contribute to the cause of God." The general principles of scripture now governing this matter are such as these: "It is more blessed to give than to receive;" "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver;" "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." The scripture every where enjoins that we give God the best of every thing, Num. 18:29. If any thing is clear, it is that they who receive much should give liberally. No man for ever saves all he has, but he who in this life wisely uses all for God's honor. Owen: "Whatever we receive signally from God in a way of mercy, we ought to return a portion of it to him in a way of duty." If men knew what wisdom was, they would never be mean or stingy.

15. God's ministers ought not to be unwilling to receive for their support the voluntary contributions of God's people, vs. 2, 4, 5, 6. If they are not in personal need of them, they can use them greatly to the advantage of the needy and of the cause of Christ. They do a great wrong to the pious poor when they discourage them from casting their two mites into the treasury of the Lord. It did not damage the churches of Macedonia, but was proof of the grace of God bestowed on them, that in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy, and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality, 2 Cor. 8:1. Melchisedec was a king, and he seems to have possessed large wealth; for his kingdom was established by righteousness, and he encouraged the arts of peace. These things naturally tend to prosperity. Yet he, as priest of the Most High God, did not refuse the tithes offered him by Abraham. In this he set an example to such ministers of God as have a support independent of the people, whom they serve. Their successors will probably be poor men, and then the people will think it a hardship to support the gospel.

among them. Let wealthy ministers not refuse a salary; but let them not consume it upon their lusts, but freely help their poor brethren, or give it to the spread of the gospel in other places, or to the founding of humane institutions at home. That, which has clothed tithes for the ministry with such odium has been, 1, that they have been made compulsory; 2, that the means used to collect them were often cruel; 3, that often they were for men, who cared nothing for the flock but only for the fleece; and, 4, that arguments in their favor have been drawn from the Jewish Theocracy, and not from the gospel, where they are not enjoined; but where the support of ministers of the gospel is wholly voluntary and is argued and urged from such considerations as these: "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we reap your carnal things?" "Let him that is taught in the word communicate to him that teacheth in all good things," 1 Cor. 9: 11; Gal. 6: 6. Compare Matt. 10: 10; Luke 10: 7; John 13: 20; Phil. 4: 18; 1 Tim. 5: 18. Owen: "It is the duty of those who are employed in sacred ministrations to receive what the Lord Christ hath appointed for their supportment, and in the way of his appointment." God is wiser than man. His plan is best.

16. The demand here made upon us for careful thought and *consideration* is most reasonable, v. 4. We are too slow to give our minds to things, which will instruct us in the way of life. Our natures are terribly sluggish. Patterson: "Such is the moral lethargy that has settled on the human soul, and that still, in some measure, lingers in the minds of the faithful, that there is great danger of religious subjects, and especially certain of them, being neglected and overlooked." As sure as some subjects are presented to men's minds, they refuse to entertain them. This is specially true of things mysterious, particularly if their bearing is to exalt Christ. Paul would have us study this matter. Lindsay: "Ponder it well. Think of the dignity of Abraham. By how much more your notions of him are high, by so much must your views of Melchisedec rise to a still loftier point. The object of the comparison is not to sink Abraham, but to exalt Melchisedec; to raise Abraham very high, that Melchisedec may be exalted." And all this is for the purpose of giving us just ideas of Christ, the antitype. The lawyers have a maxim: "Qui haerit in litera haerit in cortice"—he who merely reads the letter of the law and goes no further, never truly understands its nature. This is still more true of divine things, especially such as relate to Christ and his salvation. Let men think, study, meditate. For what were our intellectual faculties given us, but that we should use them to the glory of God? Owen: "It will be fruitless, and to no advan-

tage, to propose or declare the most important truths of the gospel, if those, to whom they are proposed, do not diligently inquire into them." If lost men would find the road to heaven, let them ask the way, and ponder the truth of God, and the ways of their own feet.

17. Very few things are more dangerous or unmanageable than religious vanity; and, therefore, it must be rebuked, v. 2-10. The Hebrews had such high and inveterate notions of their ancestors, rites, laws and priesthood, that when the gospel was proposed, it was humiliating and offensive to them. When men are puffed up and self-conceited, they must be humbled. Gray: "They were certainly too much elated with ideas of the dignity of the Abrahamic race, and of the civil and religious institutions bestowed on it. Gratitude to God should have been combined with humility. But pride destroyed humility, and dethroned gratitude: the singularity, more than the value of their religious institutions, gratified: of the latter they had formed a very erroneous estimate; but this much they knew, that their religion distinguished them from all other nations." Men in such a mood cannot be profited by any teaching. They abuse or pervert the truths they hold. Hence the necessity for the course of argument here pursued by the apostle. To the right minded it must have been conclusive. Men cannot be made better by flattering either their personal or ecclesiastical vanity.

18. It is clear that Melchisedec's priesthood was glorious. But he was a type of Christ, and Christ far excels all the types both in his personal and official excellence. Lindsay: "The eternity of Christ's priesthood could not, in the nature of things, be typified by another priesthood literally eternal too; and therefore it was necessary, if it was to be typified at all, that some kind of similitude of it should be contrived. Such a similitude we find of it in the priesthood of Melchisedec. He was made like to the Son of God. His life, his office, purposely exhibited without recorded commencement or recorded close, furnish a suitable prefiguration of the eternal duration of the Messiah. Aaron is known to us as a man throwing off his pontifical robes, resigning them to his successor, and preparing to die; but Melchisedec is never presented in such an attitude. He appears only as a living man and a living priest; and the purpose is, that he might prefigure the enduring priesthood of Christ. . . We may also conclude that an unexampled power of blessing must belong to Christ. Melchisedec blessed Abraham, and blessed him with effect: his words were ratified by Heaven, and the blessing of God came down in copious measure upon the patriarch. As much higher, then, as Christ is

than Melchisedec, so much greater power must belong to him. He breathed upon the disciples, and they received the Holy Ghost. He distributed a few loaves among famishing thousands, and they were all satisfied." There is no limit to his grace, or to his energy, or to his authority, or to his wisdom, or to his control of events and destinies. Of course it follows "that Christ, abiding a priest forever, hath no more a vicar, or successor, or substitute in his office, or any deriving a real priesthood from him, than had Melchisedec."

19. God is a sovereign. He puts Abraham above all who descended from him by ordinary generation. But he puts Melchisedec above Abraham. And he puts Christ above all men and all angels. He has a right to do what he will with his own. He is Lord of all. Owen: "It is God's prerogative to give dignity and pre-eminence in the church, among them which are otherwise equal, and this must be acquiesced in." Not to acquiesce is to fight against God. And "wo to him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth." Isa. 45:9.

20. It is proof of the desperate character of the Romish doctrine of the eucharist that it is made to rest so much upon the bread and wine brought by Melchisedec for the refreshment of Abraham and his soldiers. Calvin: "The Papists are doubly ridiculous, who, after they have denied that there is bread and wine in the mass, yet prate about the sacrifice of bread and wine." The fact is that as a friendly and hospitable neighbor and king Melchisedec refreshed the weary warriors with bread and wine; and what has that to do with the Romish Mass? Did not Christ himself first and alone institute the Lord's Supper? Melchisedec never celebrated that feast. If the transaction recorded in Genesis 14th had been a gospel sacrament, would not Paul have made some allusion to its mysterious character? His silence is certainly significant. Bellarmine admits the silence, but says it was a mystery too deep for the Hebrews. But if they could understand the doctrines of the divinity and incarnation of Christ, one would think they might at least bear some allusion to the sacrament which commemorates his death.

21. There are unquestionable truths, undeniable first principles in religion, against which all *contradiction* is idle, v. 7. Let us hold them fast, and never yield them to any tempter or seducer.

22. Men die, v. 8. Being God's ministers does not give them any dispensation.

23. Our section brings up the interesting subject of blessing God and man—of Doxologies and Benedictions. The record in Gen. 14:19, 20 expressly informs us that Melchisedec blessed both

Abraham and God. These matters deserve more attention than they often receive. Let them be studied. The Bible has a great variety of both.

24. Our section, especially the first part of it shows that we are bound, when edification may be thus promoted, to explain strange words and hard sentences. This is specially needful in religion, for concerning it men are sadly blinded. Gouge: "Strange words or sentences without interpretations are to no purpose; no profit can be reaped thereby. They are as musical instruments and trumpets sounded without any distinction." Paul: "In the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue," 1 Cor. 14: 19. A good minister once said: "Brethren, it will take all our learning to make things plain."

## CHAPTER VII.

VERSES 11-19.

### PERFECTION NOT BY THE LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD. CHANGE UNDER THE GOSPEL REASONABLE: CHRIST DIVERSE FROM JEWISH PRIESTS.

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 rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?

12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.

13 For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar.

14 For *it is* evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.

15 And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest,

16 Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.

17 For he testifieth, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

18 For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.

19 For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope *did*; by the which we draw nigh unto God.

**R**ATHER for convenience than on account of any pause in the sense, this section is separated from what precedes and from what follows it; for the apostle still pursues his main theme—the superiority of Christ's priesthood over that of the children of Levi.

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 rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? On perfection see above on Heb. 2: 10;*

5:9. The perfection here spoken of very much relates to the finished work of atonement. There was nothing in the law of sacrifices and ceremonies in the Levitical priesthood, which met all our wants. The work of Christ in the perfection of his character as a priest completed all that was necessary to be done in the way of sacrifice and in the way of justifying righteousness. In the salvation of a sinner nothing effectual is done till sin is fully expiated. In this the Levitical priesthood did nothing truly and properly, but only figuratively and ceremonially. "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin," Heb 10:4. But the sacrifice of Calvary was real, proper and complete. In it all previous, divinely appointed sacrifices had their significance fully expressed and fulfilled. It was the end. It was perfection. "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified," Heb. 10:14. In this great sacrifice divine wrath is appeased, divine justice satisfied, human guilt covered, the conscience of the believing sinner satisfied, the way of access to God fully opened, gratuitous justification shown to be both possible and consistent with holiness, and thus a solid basis laid for trust, peace, joy, hope and all the animating principles of pious human action. No such perfection as this was ever attained by means of the Levitical priesthood. They acted under a law, which as a ritual was perfect. (*For under it [the Levitical priesthood] the people received the law.*) The word rendered *law* occurs in this chapter six times. In some cases but not in all it would make good sense to understand the moral law; but in every case it makes good sense to understand the Levitical law, establishing the priesthood, rites and ceremonies of the Jewish dispensation. In our clause the noun rendered *law* is not found, but a cognate verb is given—equivalent to *organized by law*, or having *law established* among them. The same verb occurs in Heb. 8:6 and no where else. Now the argument of Paul is that there was a great deficiency and want of *perfection* under the law of the Levitical priesthood; and that the scriptures themselves so admitted. Else *what further need was there*, (as David taught in Ps. 110th) *that another priest should arise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?* Sampson: "The establishing of a priesthood of a new order implies the inferiority and imperfection of the old." Calvin: "If the ministration of the church had been perfect under the order of Aaron, to what end should it be changed to a different order?" The heart of the Mosaic Institute was the moral law, which cannot be changed, and which belongs to the Christian dispensation also. But the heart of that dispensation as distinguished from the present, was its priesthood, on which depended all its rites and ceremonies.

12. *For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.* The law expressly and rigidly required the priests to be of the family of Aaron. Ex. 28: 1; Num. 3: 10; 16: 40. The prediction of a priest not of that family implied a fundamental change of the law establishing the priesthood. There was a great but clearly predicted change in the priesthood of Christ. It was in no sense of the family of Aaron. This demonstrates "that the ceremonial law is not of that fixed and unchangeable nature the Jews ordinarily imagined it; but it was instituted with this view, to make way for a more noble and perfect form of worship, which was to succeed under the gospel." If the priesthood was set aside, all that depended on it was naturally set aside also. Sampson: "The abrogation of the priesthood carries along with it the abrogation of the whole ceremonial economy based upon it." The Jewish system without a priesthood falls to the ground. Its whole ritual becomes nugatory.

13. *For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar.* That is, when David said that the great High Priest should be of the order of Melchisedec, he denied that he should be of the order of Aaron. Indeed the great promise to David (2 Sam. 7: 12-17) settled it that Messiah should be of the house and lineage of David. Now David belonged not to the tribe of Levi, but to the tribe of Judah, *of which no man gave attendance at the altar*, during all the days of the Aaronic priesthood. The argument is this: The scriptures acknowledged by you Hebrews fully authorize the expectation of a Messiah, who should be a prophet, priest and king, a priest after the order of Melchisedec, of course not of the order of Aaron, and a rod of the stem of Jesse, of course not a Levite. Therefore you ought not to be surprised at Christ coming a priest, nor at the superseding of your law of rites by another less burdensome, more simple, and more spiritual. The apostle's argument here takes for granted that the Hebrews, to whom he was writing, acknowledged Jesus of Nazareth to be the Messiah and to have died for our sins.

14. *For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood.* It is evident from prophecy. It is evident from the genealogy of our Lord as given both by Matthew and by Luke. We all admit it. We all know it. From the days of Moses no one had ever maintained that one of the tribe of Judah could serve with the sons of Levi in the temple worship.

15. *And it is yet far more evident; for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest,*

16. *Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.* What is it that is yet far more evident? The best answer is that it refers to the assertion in v. 12, viz.: that a change of priesthood implies a change of the law, under which God's worship is to be conducted. In vs. 13, 14, he shows that the priesthood of our Lord was not under the Levitical law, for he was no Levite. In vs. 15, 16 he shows that Christ's priesthood is not, like that of Aaron, subject to succession or termination; but like that of Melchisedec, who was not in a line, but had an entire priesthood to himself and of the end of which we have no account. By the law of a carnal commandment we are to understand the Levitical law, which prescribed many carnal ordinances. *The power of an endless life* is by Peshito rendered the energy of an indissoluble life; by Stuart, an authority of endless duration; by Doway, the power of an indissoluble life. This power inheres in the life of the priest and that by a divine constitution, which cannot be set aside. His potency is divine, his right divine, his priestly life is endless. This is proven by quoting for the fifth time the prediction of David in Ps. 110: 4.

17. *For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.* This has already been sufficiently explained above on Heb. 5: 6. See it also quoted in Heb. 5: 10; 6: 20; 7: 11.

18. *For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.* Peshito: And the change which was made in the first statute, was on account of its impotency, and because there was no utility in it; Doway: There is verily an abrogation of the former commandment, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. *Disannulling*, putting away, abrogating, setting aside, rendering of no more obligation. *The commandment going before* is the law of the Levitical priesthood, which preceded the promise or prophecy of a priest of an order different from that of Aaron. The coming and finished work of Christ disannulled, put away, set aside that priesthood and the law under which it existed and acted. Nor was this done without cause. That law was weak and unprofitable. It never did take away real guilt; it never did give peace to the troubled conscience; it never did render an adequate, or any real satisfaction for sin; it never did take away the curse of the broken law of ten commandments. It was very weak. It never made perfect any man who came to its feasts, and priests, and altar. It was *impotent, without strength*, as the word is often rendered. It raised no man from his death in sin. It brought no saving advantage to any one. Its chief uses were two: 1, it served to keep the Israelites from mingling with surrounding nations in their idola-

trous worship ; 2, it was typical of the finished work of the great High Priest of the Christian profession and directed attention to the great sacrifice on the cross. Compare Gal. 3 : 21.

19. *For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did ; by the which we draw nigh unto God.* It abounded in sacrifices, but every man, who was saved, had to look through them and beyond them to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. It abounded in washings and purifications ; but the heart of man was never made holy but by the washing of regeneration by the word and Spirit of Christ. It prescribed with great care the vestments of its priests ; but it never made kings and priests unto God, nor arrayed the soul in the beauty of holiness, nor in the robe of spotless righteousness. It finished nothing. It completed nothing. When one had offered all the sacrifices prescribed, he still needed the blood of Christ, yet to be shed, applied to his soul. In fact the law prescribed personal offerings for but three kinds of sins ; 1, sins of ignorance ; 2, sins admitting of restitution ; and 3, sins against the ceremonial law, involving ceremonial pollution. Suppose all these forgiven, there still remained unatoned the sins of forgetfulness of God, of unbelief and ingratitude, of pride and vanity, of wicked thoughts and wicked words, of hardness of heart and stubbornness of will, of profaneness and lasciviousness, of stealing and murder, all classes of sins of omission, and most classes of sins of commission. When David had committed adultery and murder, and was brought to repentance, he freely and fully admitted that he could make no atonement for such crimes : "Thou desirest not sacrifice : else would I give it : thou delightest not in burnt offering," Ps. 51 : 16. To one in his case the Levitical law brought no relief, prescribed no remedy, but was utterly weak and unprofitable. *But the bringing in of a better hope did.* The better hope is the gospel method of salvation. Its full publication and hearty reception gave rest to the conscience. It secured peace with God. The believing penitent needs no more complete justification than that, which is secured to him through the blood and righteousness of Christ. When Christ is formed in him, well may he have the hope of glory. For in this way, by this spiritual ground of hope *we draw nigh unto God.* Sin separates between us and God, puts us far from him, makes us aliens, foreigners, outcasts. Our guilt is terrible. Our depravity is foul. We naturally go further and further from God, and plunge deeper and deeper into sin and misery. But Jesus brings us to God, and thus we are saved. Duncan : "Under the law, only the priests were admitted into the holy place, and the high priest to the holy of holies within the

vail; but by the introduction of this better hope, every Christian is admitted immediately within the veil." He comes to the mercy-seat itself, not with blood, for he finds it already sprinkled with the precious blood of Christ, and God propitious, and inviting him to draw nigh, and make known his requests.

DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL REMARKS.

1. Vain and useless are all schemes of salvation, but that of the gospel, v. 11. It is surprising that all men have not seen this truth. Nothing but the gospel has in it any completeness. It presents to our faith a perfect sacrifice. It offers us a perfect righteousness. It secures to all, who embrace it, full, free, perfect remission of sins. It conducts the soul from glory to glory as by the spirit of the Lord. The only safe scheme is that which makes Christ our wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. As it is ruinous to attempt to unite works and grace, so is it to unite the priesthood of Aaron or of any other man and that of Christ. To go after forms is to let go the substance. Owen: "To look for glory in evangelical worship, from outward ceremonies and carnal ordinances, is to prefer the Levitical priesthood before that of Christ." It is quite as easy to substitute names and forms, for the very essence and image of spiritual good things now as it was under any former dispensation. God always did prefer mercy to sacrifice. Because he is a Spirit, he loves that which is spiritual above all that is formal.

2. When perfection is attained, we seek no further. Why should we? v. 11. The soul that reposes on Christ, needs and desires no other Redeemer, no other helper. Owen: "Put all advantages and privileges whatever together, and they will bring nothing to perfection without Jesus Christ." Give a man Christ in all his fulness and grace, and he is complete, though he lacks all else beside. Christ is the Lord. He is all in all.

3. Any plan or scheme designed for the benefit of sinners ought to rest on priesthood, v. 11. There is need of a priest. If any conviction of conscience is clear, it is that we all need a sacrifice and an intercessor—a sacrifice, that can take away sin—an intercessor, who from his dignity and merits has a right to be heard. Calvin: "No covenant between God and man stands fast and good, unless it rest upon a priesthood." Since the fall of man there has been no way of life ever pointed out by God or his prophets, unless it rested upon the one great sacrifice and intercessor. It is madness to hope for any escape from wrath but by the shedding of blood. Owen: "If, under the law, the whole

worship of God did so depend on the priesthood, that that failing or being taken away, the whole worship of itself was to cease, as being no more acceptable before God; how much more is all worship under the New Testament, rejected by him, if there be not a due regard therein unto the Lord Christ, as the only high priest of the church, and to the efficacy of his discharge of that office."

4. As when the antitype comes, the type is thrown into comparative obscurity; so when the Levitical priesthood gave way to that of Christ, the law establishing an order of priests made up of mere men fell to the ground, v. 12. Since Christ has come a high priest and finished his work, "he that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol," Isa. 66: 3. It was always a great error to intrude into any office, to which men were not called. The Lord Christ himself carefully eschewed such error: "Man, who made me a judge, or a divider over you?" Luke 12: 13, 14. He could have done the work with unerring wisdom, but God sent him not to act as a judge in dividing estates. Other men had been duly appointed to that very work. Let them do their duty. Of all the members of society none are less needed than meddlers and busy bodies, Pr. 20: 3; 1 Pet. 4: 15. Such men may not plot ruin to many, as Absalom did, when he told what great things he would do, if he were only in power, 2 Sam. 15: 4. But they are great pests. And when men set up to be priests, love to be called priests, wish it to be understood that they offer sacrifices and make sacerdotal intercessions peculiarly acceptable to God, they are but bold pretenders. The office of priest in Christ's church no longer exists on earth. All its functions are absorbed in the priesthood of Christ. Christ took not to himself the honor of priesthood, till he was called of God. How dare men claim to be priests now? The arrogance of such claims is fearful. Of what order do they claim to be? The Aaronic priesthood has offered no sacrifices for eighteen hundred years. If they claim to be Christian priests, they must claim to be successors or co-adjutors of Jesus Christ. But if Christ has any such under him or after him, Melchisedec was no type of him, for he stood alone. We are informed (v. 12) that the priesthood being changed, the necessary consequence was a change of the law of priesthood and of rites under it, for he is Lord as well as Priest, and he has ordained no order of priests in his church. Calvin: "Since the law and the priesthood existed under the same condition, Christ is made not only a priest but a lawgiver. Thus the prerogative not only of Aaron but of Moses also is transferred to

him. The whole of it is, that the ministry of Moses was no less temporary than that of Aaron; and that therefore both must needs be annulled by the advent of Christ, because one could not stand without the other." Owen: "Seeing Christ himself had no right to minister at the material altar, the re-introduction of such altars is inconsistent with the perpetual continuance of his priesthood." So that there are no priests now, but the one great high priest in heaven. Christ was not of the tribe of Levi, nor of the order of Aaron. He never served in the temple made with hands. He was not called of God to do so. He fulfilled all righteousness. Christ acted according to the scriptures.

5. The silence of scripture is often as instructive as its formal teachings, v. 13. Dickson: "Negative conclusions, in matters of faith, and duties follow well upon the scriptures' silence. It is not warranted from scripture, therefore I am not bound to believe it. The scripture doth not require any such thing of me; therefore God accounteth it not service to him to do it." This is fair reasoning. When men wish to lead us to any service or course, let them produce God's authority. If they cannot do that, let them be silent. The law of the Levitical priesthood said nothing of priests sprung from another tribe. Therefore it was not right to attempt to bring any man not a Levite into that office.

6. It is not necessary for us to spend much time on the genealogy of our Lord, v. 14. It was settled before his birth by the Roman enrolment for taxation. It was entirely agreed upon in the primitive church. To Paul and his cotemporaries it was "evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda." There we may let the matter rest. It might not be impossible to raise difficulties on that subject now—difficulties, which none could settle with the lights we have. But they were once easily disposed of. Nor is this asking too much of any one. We cannot now meet all the difficulties that might be raised respecting the genealogy of the kings of Judah.

7. It is delightful to find every great truth of scripture well fortified by clear statements and irrefragable arguments, vs. 15, 16. True, our remoteness from the time and place of many a fact, event or usage noticed in God's word tends to create difficulties respecting it; but a difficulty in a truth is no argument against it. The difficulty stated by the Sadducees respecting the woman who had seven husbands seemed to them very plausible. It would seem as if the Pharisees had not fairly met it. But when Christ revealed the fact that in heaven they neither marry nor are given in marriage, their argument against the resurrection all vanished at once.

8. Among true and good reasons and arguments some are better and stronger than others. Compare vs. 14, 15. Ordinarily it is best to reserve the strongest for the last. We ought not to object to an argument because it is not the strongest possible, provided it be fair and sound. Dickson: "Of reasons drawn from scripture some will be less evident, some more evident; and yet all be good reasons and prove the purpose strongly." Owen: "Arguments, that are equally true, may yet on the account of evidence not be equally cogent." It is a great error not to give our strong reasons. It is sometimes no less an error to slight those which are comparatively weak. We do not know which of two truths shall be more honored of God to effect the persuasion of the mind. Little grains of gold are precious.

9. Christ as prophet, priest and king, has an *endless life*, vs. 16, 17. This is a great truth which ought never to be forgotten. Before his death he said, "Because I live, ye shall live also," John 14:19. And more than a half century after he left the world, he declared, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore," Rev. 1:18. The spiritual and eternal life of all his people depends upon the eternal life of Christ. Doddridge: "Let us rejoice that his life is *endless*, and that by him, *we* may likewise attain to an endless life, to an immortality of glory." Dickson: "The eternity of Christ's priesthood proveth it to be forcible, to give eternal life. For if it did not endure in his person, it could not give eternal life; and people's hearts would not rest upon it with any ground." Pool: "Christ was not a temporary priest by a carnal law, but was made a priest for ever, with everlasting power endowed to save all his people." Patterson: "The corporeal life of Jesus was extinguished when he bowed his head and gave up the ghost. But in his divine nature he never died—his mediatorial life continued even when his body rested in the grave—and since his resurrection, even his human nature is immutably alive." In Rom. 6:9, Paul declares that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more.

10. When people are dull and slow of heart to know and believe the word of God, the same thing must be said over and over again, v. 17. Wesley's father said to his mother, "Why do you teach that child the same thing twenty times?" Her reply was, "Because nineteen times are not enough." This truth is of great weight in religious matters. Gouge: "Weighty points must be made more and more clear." It is not wasting our time, nor that of the people to whom we preach, to render important positions in theology impregnable.

11. It is a great mercy to us that the law of the Levitical priesthood is for ever set aside, v. 18. It was both burdensome and unsatisfactory while in force—unsatisfactory, because the good in it was shadowy—burdensome, because it prescribed everything and left nothing to personal freedom of choice. It did indeed preserve the people from will-worship, and put a bar between them and the Gentiles; but much higher ends than these are attained by the simplicity of gospel worship. Any thing so weak and unprofitable as the ceremonial law ought not to be lamented when it is superseded by something so excellent as the better covenant.

12. There is a blessed perfection obtained by the gospel, v. 19. In the way of priesthood and atonement absolutely nothing is wanting. Calvin: "As the figures were referred to Christ, so from him they borrow their force and effect; nay rather in themselves they neither could do or did anything, but their whole efficacy depended on Christ alone." But now under the gospel even the conscience of the most guilty finds a plenary satisfaction to all the demands of justice. Guyse: "Though Christ died in his human nature, *that* was because he was a *sacrifice*, as well as a priest; and his offering up of himself as a sacrifice was an act of his priesthood; and so he officiated as a priest in his very dying; and consequently did not die out of his office for others to succeed him, as the Levitical priests did, since his priesthood suffered no interruption by his dying." In this way the gospel inspires hope and gives us good cause of hope, so that Paul here fitly calls it a *better hope*.

13. The privileges of believers are as inestimable as they are innumerable. No inspired writer claims to have catalogued them all, or to have given an adequate conception of any of them. Who can tell the blessedness of being allowed to *draw nigh unto God*? God has given to his people, through the priesthood of Christ, the spirit of adoption inclining and enabling them to cry Abba, Father. In prayer, in praise, in all the ordinances of worship we are through Christ admitted into the presence chamber of the God of all grace; so that in sorrow and temptation we claim him as ours. God draws nigh to his saints by showing them his covenant and by making to them the most gracious proposals; and they draw nigh to him in filial love and confidence. Thus is their communion with him established. Patterson: "As by Christ and Christianity the sinner returns to God, so by Christ and Christianity the believer holds sweet and profitable fellowship with heaven." Owen: "All our approximation unto God in any kind, all our approaches unto him in holy worship are

by him alone who is the blessed hope of the saints under the Old Testament, and is the life of them under the New." Let us give up life rather than give up Christ, or his glorious priesthood.

## CHAPTER VII.

VERSES 20-28.

CHRIST MADE A PRIEST BY GOD'S OATH. NOT SO THE SONS OF LEVI. THEY DIED. HE CONTINUES. HE IS MIGHTY TO SAVE. HIS PURE CHARACTER AND EXALTED STATE. HIS ONE OFFERING ENOUGH.

20 And inasmuch as not without an oath *he was made priest* :

21 (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 for ever after the order of Melchisedec :)

22 By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.

23 And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death :

24 But this *man*, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.

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.

26 For such a 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.

28 For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, *maketh* the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.

**S**TILL the apostle presses his argument, showing the superiority of the priesthood of Christ over that of Aaron.

20. *And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest* :

21. (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 for ever after the order of Melchisedec :)

22. *By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.* In these verses several things claim special attention. One is that

an office created and conferred by the oath of God is superior to an office created and conferred without the oath of God. The reasoning is like this: If a covenant is made, it ought generally to be observed; but if it be confirmed, no man annuls or alters it; or, If a promise is made, it is binding; but when to it is added an oath it becomes awfully solemn. God ordained the Aaronic priesthood, and it was to be respected, though he took no oath concerning it. How much more should we respect and honor the priesthood of Christ, who was called and glorified as a High Priest by the awful and unimpeachable oath of God. Sampson: "God's word is of itself as infallible and immutable as any oath can make it. But God accommodates himself, to a certain extent, in his dealings with his church to the more infirm and human modes of thought to which our imperfection confines us." The oath here referred to is that contained in Ps. 110: 4, as the apostle expressly informs us. On God's oath see above on Heb. 3: 11; 6: 16-18. Thus in all things Christ has the pre-eminence, Col. 1: 18. Another thing claiming attention here is the word rendered testament, which we have not before met in this epistle, though it occurs frequently hereafter. It occurs in the New Testament thirty-three times, and is twelve times rendered testament, in all other cases covenant. Some have contended that it should be rendered covenant in every case. But this is inadmissible, as it would greatly impair the force of the reasoning, at least in Heb. 9: 15-20, on which see below. The usual classical meaning of the Greek word is a will or testament. It also has the meaning of covenant. In this sense it is applied to the covenant with Abraham, to the national covenant made with the Israelites at Sinai, and to the gospel dispensation, often called the new covenant. In our verse, as also in Matt. 26: 28; Mark 14: 24; Luke 22: 20; 1 Cor. 11: 25, it matters little whether we read *new testament* or *new covenant*, for either word gives us a sound scriptural idea, very precious to the people of God. The generic idea of the word is an appointment, ordinance or constitution; and as both a covenant and a testament had all the force and fixedness of an ordinance, constitution, or supreme appointment, we fitly render the word either way according to the connection. The third thing here found and claiming special attention is the word surety. It occurs in no other place in the New Testament. Nor is the noun rendered surety found in the Septuagint version. But there we have the cognate verb and also the phrase *strike hands*, which was the usual mode of becoming a surety. A surety is a bondsman, one that is bound for the debts or fidelity of another. Sins, exposing men to wrath, are in scripture called debts. These must be paid. Justice must

be satisfied. The law must be vindicated. A debt demands payment. A sin calls for punishment. Christ bore the legal consequences of man's sin. He endured the curse. He exhausted the penalty. He died the just for the unjust. He also for his people rendered a perfect obedience to the precept of the law. And he is their surety for adherence to the gospel plan. And he is a surety to them for the fulfilment of all God's gracious promises made to believers. Not that God can ever fail in any of his engagements. But his gift of Jesus Christ is an earnest, a pledge to us of God's faithfulness and grace. In other words, the promises are in him, 2 Cor. 1 : 20. Christ has come so near to us and has done so much for us that it is the basest ingratitude and the most wilful contempt and rejection of evidence longer to doubt the love and mercy of God. No marvel then that our apostle calls the gospel a *better* testament—for it is better than all the dispensations that preceded it. Indeed nearly all in them that was useful to man, and certainly all in them that led sinners rightly to hope for salvation, was some prophecy, promise, or type that told of good things to come by Jesus Christ.

23. *And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death.* The Aaronic priesthood was only kept in existence by having successors to every man in office, whether a common priest or a high priest. Aaron was disrobed, and his vestments put upon his son and successor, Num. 22 : 22–28. From Aaron to the destruction of the second temple, the Jews reckon eighty-three high priests. Sampson : “It is the long and numerous succession of these priests, a succession the result and evidence of their mortality, and therefore of their feebleness, which he contrasts with the glorious permanence of a priesthood in which the incumbent is eternal and indefectible.” This is made clear by verse

24. *But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.* Peshito : But this man, because he standeth up forever, his priesthood doth not pass away ; Craik : But this one, because he continueth ever, hath his priesthood untransferable ; Stuart : But he, because he continueth forever, hath a priesthood without any succession ; Cōnybeare and Howson : But he, because he remaineth forever, giveth not his priesthood to another. Jesus died as a substitute and sacrifice. But he never for a moment demitted his office as priest. Indeed in his death he was in the full exercise of his office. So that he has a priesthood, as the margin says, *which passeth not from one to another*, and is in no way interrupted. There has been some discussion whether the words of this verse relate to the endurance of Christ's life, or the endu-

rance of his priesthood. It is evidently Christ's priestly life, of which the apostle is speaking. This is the subject he is handling. Duncan: "Although the Lord Jesus Christ had many types, yet he had no predecessor; and he hath none to succeed him, for he hath an unchangeable priesthood."

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.* This seems clearly to show that it is not merely the continued existence of Jesus Christ, but his continued existence in the office of Mediator that the apostle is arguing. This verse is an inference from what went before. The *wherefore* clearly marks the logical connection. That, which chiefly distinguishes this verse from many others, is found in the phrase *to the uttermost*. The margin renders it evermore; Peshito, Rheims and Doway, forever; Wiclif, with outen ende; Tyndale, euer; Cranmer, Craik, Conybeare and Howson, to the uttermost; Genevan, perfectly; Stuart, always; Sampson, completely. The Greek, here rendered to the uttermost, occurs with a negative in Luke 13 : 11 and is rendered in no wise, that is not in any wise, or not altogether. There are six senses, in which the phrase may be interpreted. 1. Jesus Christ is able to save to the uttermost in point of numbers. After he shall have saved the last, who shall believe on him, his merit, his grace and his power to redeem will not be one whit diminished. The multitude he shall actually save shall be beyond all powers of computation known to mortals, Rev. 7 : 9. But the number saved shall not exhaust the Redeemer's resources. 2. He is also able to save to the uttermost in point of obstacles and difficulties, hindrances arising from birth, education, prejudices, oppositions, persecutions, fears, temptations, social relations, political agitations, or tyrannical misrule. The Lord knoweth how to deliver them that are tempted. In all sorts of times, in all states of social existence, in days of the most terrible persecutions, when Satan seemed to be let loose to do all manner of wrong and violence, God has still had a people, whom he has brought out of great tribulation, and who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 3. The High Priest of the Christian profession is able to save from the lowest depths of moral debasement. His grace takes away all the guilt and foulness of sin original and actual, open and secret, against law and against gospel, sin of omission and sin of commission. The offers of mercy to men are never conditioned on their having sinned but little. They are either indiscriminate to all, who hear the gospel, such as Isa. 55 : 1; Matt. 11 : 28; Rev. 22 : 17; or they are specially to the enormously guilty, as Isa. 1 : 18; Jer. 3 : 1. The converts of the day of Pentecost were the convicted mur-

derers of the Saviour. The church at Corinth was made up in part of those, who in their unconverted state had been unrighteous, fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners, 1 Cor. 6 : 9, 10. And the famous church at Ephesus was made up of those, who, though now they were light in the Lord, had been so lost and benighted that the word of God calls them *darkness* itself, Eph. 5 : 8. There stand before the world Abraham, Manasseh, David, Zaccheus, the woman that was a sinner, the penitent thief, Saul of Tarsus, John Bunyan, John Newton and a great army of redeemed men, of whom it is worse than folly to deny that they were saved wholly by rich, free, amazing, unmerited grace. Nor is this all. 4. Our great High Priest saves evermore, always, to the eternity, which has no end. He saves in temptation; he saves in distress; he saves in life; he saves in death; he gives his people boldness in the day of judgment; he saves forever. 5. He saves perfectly. He leaves no guilt unatoned or unpardoned. He leaves no stain or pollution unwashed away. On his people is found neither spot, nor wrinkle, nor blemish, nor any such thing. By his eye-salve he wholly cures their blindness. By his glorious righteousness he covers all their nakedness. By his Spirit he removes their spiritual ignorance. He is a rock and his way is perfect. He finishes all he undertakes. He is a glorious High Priest. 6. The salvation of Christ includes the whole man, soul, body and spirit; mind, will and heart; memory, conscience and imagination. Even here the body is saved so far as that when it dies, it sleeps in Jesus, and, when raised, shall be like Christ's glorious body.

This verse, however, does not teach the universal salvation of all men. But it does teach the universal salvation of all believers, that is, of all *who come unto God by him*, that is, by Jesus Christ. "Without faith it is impossible to please God;" "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him," Heb. 11 : 6; John 3 : 36. If men will not come to God by Jesus Christ, they will not be received, but treated as thieves and robbers, who are attempting to climb up some other way, John 10 : 1. When the apostle says he is *able* to save, it is implied that he is willing also, as in Heb. 2 : 18. We know that he is willing because he says so in many places, because he has never rejected any one who came to him, and because in his incarnation, sufferings and death he has given the strongest proof of his willingness to save. And he is able, because he is the Son of God, because he is the Son of man, because he is God's elect to this very end, because of the infinite sufficiency of his merits, because he

has all power in heaven and on earth, there being no limit to his authority, and because *he ever liveth to make intercession for them*. An idea of the matter of Christ's intercession may be formed from a correct understanding of the seventeenth chapter of John. It is a fact that the Levitical law contained no form of words to be used when the high priest entered the holy of holies; nor can we prove that while near the mercy-seat he actually said any thing. One of the expressions of scripture respecting the Lord Jesus, as our High Priest, is that he is entered into heaven itself, now to *appear* in the presence of God for us, Heb. 9 : 24. If this language is borrowed from the conduct of the high priest in the temple, it may be that in his stay in the holy of holies, he was silent as to words, his breastplate presenting the names of the tribes for whom he interceded and his sprinkling of the blood being both a virtual confession of sin and a call for mercy and favor on those thus represented. So Christ *appears* for us. His very presence, whether he uses words or not, is our ground of hope. He is in the midst of the throne as a Lamb that had been slain. Hannah prayed when she uttered no articulate sound, but she spoke in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard, 1 Sam. 1 : 13. In like manner now many a cry never heard by man enters the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Christ's intercession is properly prayer, for he himself so calls it, Luke 22 : 32. But it is not humble supplication. It is with authority, John 17 : 24. Nor is it doubtful whether it will prevail, for him the Father heareth always, John 11 : 42. He asks nothing but his Father with infinite joy grants it. No wonder, then, that all who come to him are saved, fully, perfectly, eternally saved. He is able to save. He is mighty to save.

26. *For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.* In this verse two things chiefly claim attention. 1. Christ's perfect moral character. He was holy, a word quite uniformly rendered as are also its cognates, meaning pure, hallowed. He was also harmless; for he neither unjustly suspected evil, nor did he inflict evil. He meditated evil against no one. He blessed, but he cursed not. He was blameless and innocent. He was also undefiled, that is, he was not stained by any pollution. There was not a spot upon his character. He was also separate from sinners, by his exalted purity sundered from them, as diverse from them as holy angels are from devils. By his sanctity he is far from them. In no form did moral evil cleave to him. His challenge has stood for centuries and none dare take it up, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" John 8 : 46. It should cover men with confusion to find

themselves indifferent to one, against whom malice itself is not able to bring any charge except in the spirit of blasphemy. His judge found no fault in him. His Father said, I am well pleased in him. His resurrection for ever made good all he had claimed for himself during his ministry. 2. Christ's exaltation. He is said to be *made higher than the heavens*. Sometimes in scripture by the heavens we are to understand heavenly creatures, or angels, Job 15 : 15. Christ is made higher than any of them. But as the heavens are the most elevated objects we can behold with the natural eyes, so to be exalted above the heavens is to be exalted above all that men know or are able to think. See Ps. 8 : 1 ; 57 : 5 ; 106 : 5 ; 113 : 4. Calvin : "No one can unite us to God save he that reaches to God : this is not given to angels ; for we do not read that they are raised above all heavens. Wherefore it belongs to Christ alone to win us the favor of God, since he hath ascended up above all heavens. Now this expression has precisely the same force as if Christ were said to be placed above all orders of created things, so as to surpass the angels." Compare Heb 4 : 14 ; 8 : 1, 2, 4 ; 9 : 11, '25. God hath famously exalted the Mediator, as Prophet, King and Priest. So pure and exalted a High Priest *became* us, befitted us, *suted* us, so as none else possibly could. We needed and our case called for just such a High Priest. If he had been a sinner, he could have made no effectual atonement for us. If God had not gloriously exalted him, we might well have been in doubt whether he could do any thing effectual for us. On *became* see above on Heb. 2 : 10. We do therefore safely trust him.

27. *Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the people's : for this he did once, when he offered up himself.* All the Aaronic priests were sinful men. They were born sinners. And they committed actual sin. They were also subject to ceremonial pollutions. On many accounts they were bound to offer sacrifices for themselves. When he says *daily*, he means continually as the law required, repeatedly, or constantly, or if literally daily, then the high priest was included in the daily sin-offering made by the priests. Then the high priests also offered sacrifices for the sins of the people. And so none of these did actually take away the real guilt of sin, there was no end to bloody offerings. But our High Priest by one sacrifice, not for himself, for he had no sins, but solely for us, for ever put away sin. This he did *when he offered up himself*. Christ's whole person was the offerer ; his entire human nature was the offering ; and his divinity was the altar, on which the offering was made and which sanctified and gave infinite value to the offering

made. It was not and never will be necessary to repeat that sacrifice. Such was its excellence, that making it *once* was infinitely better than all other sacrifices ever made. It was indeed a ransom, a propitiation, an atonement, owned and accepted of God; for he "gave himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour." So it was, and so God esteemed it.

28. *For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.* The law here spoken of is beyond a doubt the Levitical law. *Infirmity*, the same word, as in Heb. 4:15; 5:2, on which see above. Sometimes the word seems to point to sinful infirmity. This verse is an instance. But commonly it designates such infirmities as are not sinful, such as Christ bore. *The words of the oath* refer to the oath, already considered, as contained in Ps. 110:4. This oath was taken since the law. The prophet David, who gives us the oath, lived several hundred years after Moses, by whom the Levitical law was given. This oath makes the Son of God a High Priest. Nothing can unsettle that divine arrangement. He is *consecrated*, everywhere else in this epistle rendered perfected, or made perfect. See above on Heb. 2:10; 5:9. See also Heb. 7:19; 11:40; 12:23. As an atoning priest Christ is perfected; Wiclif, ordeyned perfect; Sampson, glorified; Stuart, exalted to glory; Bloomfield, supremely perfected and exalted; Calvin, adorned and furnished with consummate perfection. This exaltation and perfection are *for evermore*, so that our High Priest needs no coadjutor, no successor, no new call, no new appointment, no further assurance of his Father's approval, and needs to make no new offering. He is within the vail, at the mercy-seat, yea on the throne, to the ages, world without end, *evermore*.

#### DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL REMARKS.

1. Very solemn and awful indeed are the things of religion, vs. 20, 21. Its truths are made so because they relate to eternity and are spoken by the Lord; and some of them are established by the oath of the Most High. Whoever trifles with divine things, let all men know that God is in such earnest as should forever banish levity and instability from every mind.

2. Every solemnity added to the appointment of our great High Priest demonstrates his pre-eminence, vs. 20-22. "Christ's priesthood is the ground of hope." It could not be so if it were common or low. God's oath has imparted infallible certainty and immeasurable dignity to the priesthood of Christ. In his person, he

is the great God and our Saviour, 2 Pet. 1:1. In his office he is a great High Priest, Heb. 4:14. In all things he has the pre-eminence, Col. 1:18. This amazing excellence lies at the foundation of the infinite sufficiency of his priesthood. From the unchangeableness of the priesthood, we fairly infer the stability of the covenant under which it is constituted. Macknight: "God never interposed his oath but to show the certainty and immutability of the thing sworn," Gen. 22:16-18; Deut. 1:34, 35; 4:21; Ps. 89:4. Duncan: "God granted a great many privileges to the Old Testament church, but still it wanted this confirmation to its covenant and priesthood, the oath of God, by which he reserved to himself the power of changing it. But under the gospel the children of God are under no such uncertainty, for Christ is made a priest with an oath." Even Balaam admitted that the veracity of the Most High was unimpeachable, Num. 23:19. And Samuel said: "The Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent," 1 Sam. 15:29. Clarke: "God's oath showed his immutable resolution never to change or abolish Christ's Priesthood; nor to change or abolish the covenant which was established on his priesthood." Lindsay: "Neither Moses nor Aaron really had the power, by all the prayers they offered, and all the services they performed, of blotting out the sins of the people; but Christ undoubtedly can reconcile us to God, and present us faultless before his throne. Faith in the Messiah has always been the only condition of acceptance with God; but there can be no doubt that the nature and operation of it are pointed out with immensely greater clearness under the gospel than ever they were under the law." Owen: "Nothing was wanting on the part of God, that might give eminency, stability, glory and efficacy to the Priesthood of Christ. . . The perpetuity of the Priesthood of Christ depends on his own perpetual life, and is a principal part of the glory of that office."

3. Blessed is the doctrine of the Suretyship of Christ, v. 22. What he is, what he has done and suffered, and what he is doing, is a sure pledge to us of what God will certainly do for us, if we accept his Mediatorship. He is our Sponsor and Substitute to pay our dreadful debt to God and to see that the divine glory suffers nothing in the salvation of man. Duncan: "He undertook as the Surety of the covenant, to answer for the sins of those, who are, or are to be, partakers of the covenant, to undergo the punishment due unto them, and redeem them by his own precious blood from the curse and condemnation of the law." In proof see many places in Isaiah 53. Tong: "The gospel dispensation is more full, free, perspicuous, spiritual and effica-

cious than the old covenant. Christ is in this gospel-covenant a Surety for us to God, and for God to us, to see that the articles be performed on both parts." The Son of God paid our debt both of obedience and suffering. He made good all the damage we had done. In this sense there was no need of a surety on the part of God; for his faithfulness cannot fail. Sampson: "But the scriptures do clearly hold forth the idea that to his people Christ is a pledge of God's faithfulness to fulfil his promises in all their amplitude." Comp. Rom. 8:32; 2 Cor. 1:20. Patterson: "Jesus, that blessed Mediator, is a Surety for God to man, and a Surety for man to God. By his doctrine, and sacrifice, and reign, he assures the believer of Jehovah's immutable and immortal friendship; by his death and intercession, he represents the believer to the Father as one for whom a price is paid, and to whom grace to live a life of new obedience shall be given." These two things have been perfectly done by Christ as the Surety of man; 1, he has rendered an infinite satisfaction to the injured law and insulted majesty of God; 2, he has rendered a perfect obedience to the preceptive will of God in the room and stead of sinners.

4. Terrible indeed is the reign of death, v. 23. No purity of character ever attained by man, no sanctity of office, no amount of usefulness, no earnestness of prayers can save priest or prophet, apostle or presbyter from the stroke of the fell destroyer. Even with his natural force unabated, and with his eye undimmed, Moses must lie down and die; and Aaron must be divested of his robes, and then be gathered to his fathers. Before every mortal lie eternity and judgment, heaven or hell. Baxter: "I must part with my library, and shall turn over the pages of my pleasant books no more." John Nisbet, the younger, when about to suffer martyrdom, said: "Now, farewell, all true friends in Christ; farewell, Christian relations; farewell, sweet and holy scriptures; farewell, prayer and meditation; farewell, sinning and suffering. Welcome heaven; welcome innumerable company of angels, and church of the first-born, and the spirits of just men made perfect; welcome Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; welcome praises forevermore." If we could all thus die, it would matter but little how soon or by what means. Death disrobes the judge, unfrocks the priest, takes the breastplate from the high priest and the crown from the king, and makes the oppressed and the oppressor, the child of sorrow and the child of gayety lie down together.

5. Christianity has a priesthood, and a very glorious priesthood it is; but it is one and is confined to one person, the man Christ Jesus. v. 24. Turner: "The Christian priesthood, properly speaking, is confined to Christ himself; this is a part of that glory which

he does not give to any other. The office of the Christian ministry with its various gifts he dispensed to his church on his ascension; but the sacerdotal is his own peculiar function. It does not pass beyond himself and an assumption of it by any human agent is without scriptural warrant." Whoever attempts to make any offering to God in lieu of Christ's finished work, or in addition thereto, offers a great insult to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. As man, Christ lives forever; as priest, he continues forever. The end of his office work is the complete salvation of all who flee to him for refuge. Salvation proper was never wrought by any mere man. It is therefore for a perpetual joy and solace to the church that her High Priest is God's fellow, is his incarnate Son, and his incarnate Son full of grace and truth, Zech. 13:7; John 1:14. Owen: "If such a High Priest became us, was needful to us, for the establishment of the new covenant, and the communication of the grace thereof to the church, then all persons, Christ alone excepted, are absolutely excluded from the Christian priesthood."

6. Never can we sufficiently praise and adore the grace of God, which offers to the vilest of men and secures to all believers the richest salvation, v. 25. Let the tempted, and the prodigal, and him that is afar off, come nigh to God, and lay fast hold on the covenant of peace. Its priest is not after a carnal commandment, but has the power of an endless life. We need nothing more. There is nothing better. Him that cometh to Christ, he will never cast out, John 6:37. Though all the sins that oppress a generation, and all the temptations that beset an entire people be in the way of one's salvation, yet the grace of Christ can overcome them all. Delitzsch: "Christ is able to save in every way, in all respects, *unto the uttermost*, so that every want and need, in all its breadth and depth, is utterly done away. This all-embracing salvation is vouchsafed to those who through him approach to God, *i. e.*, those who in faith make use of the way of access which he has opened, and which remains open in him; nay more, this very access to full and joyous communion with God, made by the removal of the barrier of sin, is in itself the all-including commencement of perfect salvation." McLean: "The *ability* of Christ to save sinners is a truth of the highest importance. It is the foundation of all faith and trust in him; and the great end of the gospel revelation concerning him is to demonstrate that truth."

7. Therefore, let none despair, crying out in his agony that there is no help for him. Duncan: "The great end of all the gospel revelation is to demonstrate the fulness of the remedy which God hath provided for sinners, and the sufficiency of Christ to save

them." Clarke: "*He is able to save* from the power, guilt, nature and punishment of sin—to the uttermost, to all intents, degrees and purposes; and always, and in and through all times, places and circumstances." Lindsay: "Christ is able to save from all the consequences of sin; he is able to save the most abandoned of the human race; he is able to raise us to the most perfect happiness; and he is able to place us in a position of eternal security."

8. But let us never forget that faith in Christ is absolutely necessary, v. 25. Men must come to him, or they will be cast out, and cannot find rest, Matt. 11: 28; John 6: 35, 37. If men do not receive Christ, they never will have power to become the sons of God, John 1: 12. If men will not look to Christ, they cannot be saved, Isa. 45: 22. If they are ashamed of him, he will be ashamed of them, Mark 8: 38. There is salvation in none other.

9. But let us greatly prize the intercession of Christ, v. 25. The doctrine pertaining thereto is most necessary, and is greatly insisted on. Christ has entered heaven without spot, or wrinkle, or blemish. His precious blood possesses all power necessary to a perfect remission. Though Christ is a King and is on the throne with his Father, he is no less an interceding Priest. Lindsay: "He never forgets his people; he is the friend through whose interest they have access to God; he manages all things for their good; and it is on his account that his Father is propitious to any repenting sinner." If we may doubt the efficacy of Christ's intercession, we cannot be certain of any thing. Christ himself thus presents to his Father the price of our redemption and presents our persons and services before God, asking<sup>g</sup> their acceptance through his merits alone. Delitzsch: "As a priest Jesus is the foundation and the goal of a better hope, surety of a nobler covenant, the eternal and all-perfect Helper and ever-living Representative of those who enter into communion with God through him." McLean: "Though his intercession is not that which satisfies the justice of God; yet it is a real, eminent and continual declaration that satisfaction is already made, it being a pleading on that ground. Next to his sacrifice itself, what could give a more striking impression of God's hatred of sin than such a holy constitution, that none of the blessings of God's covenant are bestowed on sinners, but through the actual and continual interposition of him who made atonement for their sins?" Owen: "The intercession of Christ is the great evidence of the continuance of his love and care, his pity and compassion towards his church."

10. The efficacy of Christ's oblation and intercession depends upon his sinless character, vs. 26, 27. He needed not daily, nor

even once in his life to make an offering for himself. He was born that holy thing, Luke 1:35. Duncan: "Unholy sinners stand in need of a holy priest. Had he been touched with sin, he could have been neither priest nor sacrifice." Nor is there now living on the earth, nor for centuries past has lived a man who denied that Jesus was harmless, or contended that he had wronged any one. Patterson: "Christ was perfect in all the parts of his constitution. His intellect was filled with pure and holy thoughts. His conscience was true to the dictates of eternal rectitude—quick to discern the right, and bold and strong to follow it. His heart was the home, alike of the mild, and the majestic forms of feeling. His ears were ever wont to hearken to the plaint of sorrow. . . His hands—how busy were they in the cause of goodness and of God." His robes are spotless. Satan found nothing in him, John 14:30. He proved that a man could love God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his mind and with all his strength, and his neighbor as himself. He absolutely and perfectly finished the work which his Father gave him to do. Owen: "No sinful man was meet to offer the expiatory sacrifice for the church; much less is any sinful man fit to offer Christ himself." Clarke: "His *greatness* is put in opposition to our meanness. He was *holy*; we, unholy; he was *harmless*; we, injuring both ourselves and others; he was *undefiled*; we, most sinfully spotted and impure. He was *separate from sinners*; we were companions of the vile, the worthless, the profane, and the wicked. He was *higher than the heavens*; we, baser and lower than the earth; totally unworthy to be called the creatures of God. And had we not had such a Saviour, and had we not been redeemed at an infinite price, we should, to use the nervous language of Milton on another occasion, 'after a shameful life and end in this world, have been thrown down eternally into the darkest and deepest gulf of hell; where under the spiteful control, the trample and spurn of all the other damned, that in the anguish of their torture should have no other ease than to exercise a raving and bestial tyranny over us as their slaves, we must have remained in that plight for ever, the basest, the lowermost, the most dejected, the most under-foot and down-trodden vassals of perdition.'"

11. Every way Christ's work is perfect, v. 27. Nothing more needs to be done or suffered in the way of propitiation or righteousness. "Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him," Rom. 6:9. Christ needed to offer no sacrifice for *himself*; and he needed to offer sacrifice for his people but once. Himself pronounced it finished; and God his Father confirmed that declaration by raising him

from the dead. He himself was a victim of infinite value, and so completed his expiation. Tait: "Eternity itself shall discover no flaw in the perfection of his obedience." What more huge error touching salvation and the work of Christ can there be than that of some, who assert that Christ is daily offered up in the sacrifice of the Mass?

12. How gloriously exalted is the High Priest of our profession. He fills his office by the oath of God. He is a deathless and a perpetual High Priest. There is no limit to his power to save. His character is more spotless than the sun. No wonder he is made higher than the heavens. Compare Eph. 4:10; Phil. 2:9; Heb. 2:10; 4:14. Heaven and earth are made subject to him. The government is upon his shoulder. He is Lord of all. In him Law and Gospel, Time and Eternity, Humility and Exaltation, God and Man are marvellously united.

13. Let every man inquire with awful solemnity how he is treating the Priesthood of Jesus Christ. He, who rejects the sacrifice and intercession of the Son of God, and fails to secure the application of his blood to the conscience, is undone for ever. After that, nothing remains but darkness and wrath. Without that priesthood says Gray, "The river which watered the Paradise of the church is dried up in all its streams: the flowers wither, and the trees shed their immature fruit. Say not, we have still left us the doctrine of the resurrection! It is not an escape from the grave, but admission into the presence of a reconciled God that we want. Say not, that even after the doctrine of atonement is set aside, we have excellent rules of morality! What avails it, with regard to our eternal condition, since by the deeds of the law no flesh living shall be justified in the sight of God. And even in regard to the present life, what injury must our morality suffer, by being cut off from approaching the throne of grace 'that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need?' After we shall have renounced the doctrine of redemption by the blood of Jesus, is there no danger that our morality will degenerate into the fretting metaphysics of moral speculation? . . . From what country has this doctrine taken its flight without carrying with it the purity and the dignity of Christian morals?" The reason why there is not weeping in heaven is that the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, there prevails to do all that is necessary for the joy of his people, Rev. 5:5. If there be no atoning and interceding High Priest, men would seek death, but they could not find it; and desire to die and death should flee from them, Rev. 9:6. But blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath

no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years, Rev. 20:6.

14. Let us comfort ourselves with the blessed thought that what Christ is to his people, that will he be to them for evermore, v. 28. Who can find a sweeter thought than is conveyed by these words: "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and for ever." If Christ could die or change, our hopes would die with him and all our prospects change also. Our perpetual glory is God in Christ and Christ in God, one, infinite, eternal and unchangeable God.

15. Let us own and not deny the debt we owe to Christ. Such love, of so ancient date, of such infinite resources, of such unbending determination, of such glorious results, has claims which it is the height of wickedness to deny, and the height of rashness to despise.

## CHAPTER VIII.

VERSES 1-13.

### THE SCOPE OF THE EPISTLE. DESIGN OF A PRIESTHOOD. THE OLD AND THE NEW COVENANTS.

Now of the things which we have spoken *this is* the sum : We have such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens ;

2 A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

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.

4 For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law :

5 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.

6 But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

7 For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.

8 For finding fault with them, he saith, 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 :

9 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.

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 :

11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his

brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.

12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

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.

THE sacred penman, having conducted his argument on the nature of the priesthood of Christ to a conclusion, declares what has been the scope of the whole, and proceeds to apply the whole in a strain well understood by pious Hebrews, whose theology was very much framed after the order of the covenants.

1. *Now of the things which we have spoken, this is the sum: We have such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.* Peshito: The sum of the whole is this, we have a High Priest, who is seated on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven. Instead of sum, Wiclif has capitil; Tyndale and Cranmer, pyth; Calvin and Scott, substance; Slade, the sum and substance; Tong, summary recital; Duncan, summary or recapitulation; Turner, a prominent point; McLean and Macknight, the chief; Patterson, the main point; Theophylact, Theodoret, Oecumenius, Michaelis, DeWette, Storr, Doddridge, Olshausen, Stuart, Sampson, Ripley, Lindsay, Tait, Moll and others, the principal point; Craik, the crowning point. The word is found but twice in the New Testament, here and in Acts 22:28. In both cases our translation and the Doway have sum.

The second clause of the verse contains a formal statement of the scope and design of this epistle, which is to establish and explain the truth of the doctrine concerning the priesthood of Christ, its glory, and its superiority above that of Aaron. The various renderings of this clause but slightly, if at all, affect the sense; and so claim no particular notice. But the doctrine there taught is of the highest importance. *Such a high priest, i. e., such a high priest as became us (Heb. 7:26); such a high priest as he had told us of in the preceding chapters. We have him, i. e., we have him revealed to us in God's word; we have full proof of his existence; and we by faith do lay fast hold on him, and he is ours to all the ends and purposes of a glorious priesthood. His glory is declared and established by his sitting at the right hand of God. This sitting is not designed to express the posture of our Lord's body, for Stephen says he saw him standing on the right hand of God, Acts 7:56; and the apostle of the circumcision says he is at*

the right hand of God exalted, Acts 2 : 33 ; and Paul says he is at the right hand of God, Rom. 8 : 34. But sitting expresses repose, permanency and majesty. Judges and kings sit. He sits at the right hand of the throne, where Solomon placed his mother when he would honor her, 1 King 2 : 19. But see above on Heb, 1 : 3. The peculiarity of this verse is that here Christ is said to be on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. In Heb. 1 : 3 it reads sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. Wiclif reads sete of greetnesse ; but the versions generally read majesty. The great truth of the verse is the unparalleled glory and exaltation of our high priest. He is no longer in a low condition. God has famously exalted him. His is a heavenly priesthood. It is in no sense carnal, but wholly spiritual. When he ascended up on high, all that was low in his condition ceased for ever. Now his whole person, including his true body and his reasonable soul, is receiving immeasurable and imperishable honors. Christ's exaltation demonstrates the perfection of his sacrifice, the completeness of his work on earth, and the riches of the inheritance of his saints in him. The exaltation of Christ proves what he is.

2. *A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.* Minister, a word uniformly rendered, as are also its cognates. Sanctuary, literally holy things, or holy places, here explained as meaning the true tabernacle. Compare Heb. 9 : 8. In scripture *true* is sometimes the opposite of false or deceitful, as when we read of the true riches, the true God, a true heart, true worshippers. But often it denotes some real and abiding thing, which had been represented or prefigured by something else. Thus Jesus was the true Light, of which all prophets, who preceded him, were but faint representations, John 1 : 9. So Jesus was the true bread, prefigured by the manna in the wilderness, John 6 : 32. In like manner the Lord Jesus is the true vine, of which the common vine is an emblem. John 15 : 1. So Christ Jesus is a minister of the true tabernacle, of which the old tabernacle was a figure. The tabernacle in the wilderness was made by man ; but the true and heavenly tabernacle was "pitched by the Lord, and not man." Thus so far as heaven is better than earth and as the work of God is better than the work of man, does the priesthood of Christ excel that of Aaron and all his successors. This is the main position of the apostle. By tabernacle Beza, Diodati, Owen and Dickson understand the corporeal nature of our Lord, and Hawker, Gill and a late anonymous writer understand the church. But neither of these is so good as that above given. He is "in the heavens." Paul now proceeds to state

several particulars, in which the pre-eminence of Christ's priesthood appears.

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.* The translation is very literal. It also gives the exact sense. Ordained means established, instituted. On gifts and sacrifices see above on Heb. 5:1. Of necessity is the rendering of one word, an adjective. What is its force? Peshito renders it proper; but almost every other version agrees with the authorized, at least in the sense given, if not in the use of the very terms needful, necessary, of necessity. The meaning doubtless is, that as some offering is essential to the idea of a priesthood, so the Lord Christ, as a priest, must have somewhat to offer. As he could not be a king without a kingdom, so neither could he be a priest without an oblation. Calvin: "The title of a priest would be vain without a sacrifice." Now it is clear that our Lord never served at the altar in Jerusalem, nor penetrated into the holy of holies in the temple whose foundations were laid by Zerubbabel. He was not a priest, whose office began and ended on earth. He could not serve in the order of Aaron for he was not of the tribe of Levi. The apostle admits this:

4. *For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law.* That is, if his priesthood were earthly, and if its offerings, intercessions and blessings were all confined to this world, there is no law of priesthood that would admit him; for there were priests of the order of Aaron ordained to do all that service. Jesus Christ was, by the express terms of the law creating that priesthood, excluded from it. He was of the tribe of Judah, of which tribe the law says nothing concerning priesthood. His was an independent priesthood like that of Melchisedec, and it was far above that of Melchisedec, for its chief functions are performed in heaven; and in an eminent sense it was a heavenly priesthood. True, Christ's visible death was here on earth, but not after the power of any carnal ordinance. His life was here offered up, but the sacrifice was not understood by any man, who beheld it. The disciples saw the outward suffering, but even they did not then understand the awful transaction of Calvary. It was not till they saw its fruit on and after the day of Pentecost, and had revelations of its true character, that they gloried in the cross. Calvin: "He suffered death after the common manner of men, but after a divine sort he expiated the sins of the world as a Priest: the shedding of blood was external, but the cleansing from sin inward and spiritual: in a word, he died on earth, but the virtue and efficacy of his death

owed out of heaven." Christ's priesthood was the fulfilment of what had long been predicted both by words and types. Kidd: "The sacrifice was not complete, nor the atonement made under the law, *until* the sprinkling before the mercy-seat by the high priest was finished. Hence it is in heaven, not on earth, that the blood of sprinkling is offered on our behalf." But there was a line of priests,

5. *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.* The tabernacle erected in the wilderness was not like any structure that had ever been erected in this world. It was designed to teach men that Jehovah was not like the gods of surrounding nations. It was contrived in heaven and built by revelation from God. Compare Ex. 25:40; 26:30; 27:8; 31:2-5; 35:30-35. Much that pertained to it was certainly and strikingly typical of spiritual and heavenly things. Some have thought that everything in it had such significancy. If we knew more, we could more wisely decide that point. There is no doubt that as a whole it pointed to the blessed truths of the gospel now made known, and to the worship of the temple not made with hands. In our verse it is said that the priests served to an example, pattern or likeness, and to the shadow, shadowing forth or prefiguring of heavenly things, such as we find in the gospel church, and still more shall find in the world of blessed spirits above. Hence the minute, specific and imperative directions concerning the construction of the tabernacle. There was to be no variation from the pattern, fashion or type shewed to Moses in the mount. The truths thus set forth were important and useful. They raised the pious expectations of God's people after good things to come. Yet now there is a higher state of things. So Paul says:

6. *But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.* The word rendered ministry is found again in Heb. 9:21. In Luke 1:23 it is rendered ministrations. In 2 Cor. 9:12 and Phil. 2:17, 30 it is rendered service. Service would perhaps be a better rendering here. We have not before in this epistle had the word Mediator. This word is never found in the English version of the Old Testament. For reconciler or umpire we have there another word, daysman, so called because the umpire fixed a day on which he would hear and decide the case. A daysman must be able to "lay his hands upon both" the parties, Job 9:33. He must understand the cause and the claims

of both, and must be the fair exponent of each to the other. In the New Testament the word mediator occurs six times. In Gal. 3: 19 Moses is called a mediator, that is, he made known God's will to Israel, and the wants and requests of Israel to the Most High. In one case the word mediator refers to no particular person, but is used to explain the nature of the work assigned to a daysman: "A mediator is not a mediator of one; but God is one," Gal. 3: 20; that is, a mediator cannot act for one alone. He, who does that, is an advocate, not a mediator. Mediation supposes parties in conflict. But God is one. The persons of the Godhead are not in conflict with each other. Mediation is called for between God and man, for they are, by the fault of man, at variance. If man would be reconciled to God, he must have a mediator. The word mediator occurs in four places besides those already considered, in our verse, in Heb. 9: 15; 12: 24, and in 1 Tim. 2: 5. In these cases it clearly points to Christ. He is able to lay his hand on both God and man. He counted it not robbery to be equal with God. He was bone of our bone—our kinsman Redeemer. "Christ's mediation consists in his being the middle person between God and us." He is Mediator not typically, but properly; not partially, but completely; not merely to convey God's will to us and our desires to God, but to remove all obstacles to friendly intercourse between God and man, and firmly to reconcile both the offended Creator and his offending creatures. On the word rendered covenant, see above on Heb. 7: 22. It is well rendered here. Some have thought it meant only an institution, or constitution; but this is not tenable ground in some cases where the word occurs. It certainly often means a system of promises graciously and authoritatively proposed by God to the faith and acceptance of his people. Between a covenant and a testament Gouge states these points of difference: "1. A covenant is between two, at least. A testament is the declaration of the will of one. 2. The two or more, between whom a covenant passeth, must be all living. A testament receiveth force by the death of him that made it. 3. A covenant is ratified by the mutual consent of all that make it on every side. A testament is ratified by the will only of him that made it. 4. A covenant useth to be made on conditions on both sides. A testament is made upon the mere favor and grace of the testator." Thordike; "In ordinary Greek the word here rendered covenant means no more than a man's last will and testament; but in the use of the Jews who spoke Greek, such as the apostles, the authors of the Septuagint and others, it signifies a covenant." The word rendered promises occurs often, and is here to be taken in the usual

sense. We met it in Heb 4:1; 6:12, 15, 17; 7:6. It embraces all the provisions of the system of Gospel grace, of which Jesus Christ is the Surety. The truth asserted in the verse is that the worship of the Gospel church, with Christ as its High Priest, excels that of the Mosaic dispensation as much as Christ is superior to the priests of the order of any man. The Gospel excels the Mosaic dispensation in three weighty points; first, it more clearly reveals the whole will of God for life and salvation, Eph. 3:2-7; secondly, the death of Christ gives a wonderful assurance of the fulfilment of all therein engaged, Rom. 8:32; Heb. 9:15; thirdly, by a marked pre-eminence over former dispensations, the Gospel is the ministration of the Spirit, Joel 2:28-32; Zech. 12:9-14; 2 Cor. 3:6-8. The apostle proceeds to particulars.

7. *For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.* The very superseding of the Sinaitic covenant by the Gospel evinces the superiority of the latter. If God had designed the former to be perpetual, he would have said so; at least he would have said nothing leading us to expect a change. Duncan: "When once a covenant is made and established, if it will effect all that he who makes it designs, there is no occasion for another; but, on the contrary, when another is thought necessary, it plainly supposes that the first was not sufficient for all the purposes, and therefore must be changed." The covenant of Sinai was good. It honored God. It was a blessing to many men. But it was not to be compared with the gospel for light and liberty, for rich displays of grace and glory, honoring God and saving man. God himself has so decided. The law was weak through the flesh, Rom. 8:3. The sinfulness of man made every system imperfect or faulty, unless it provided a real and proper atonement for sin and the renewal of our fallen nature.

8. *For finding fault with them, he saith, 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.* For finding fault Peshito has chiding: Wiclif, reprevuing; Tyndale, Cranmer and Genevan, rebuking. The finding fault was both with the covenant, which was defective, and with the people, who were not true to it. The old covenant was to be superseded by the Gospel, and the Jewish church state was to be followed by that of the Christian church, as God by the prophets abundantly declared. McLean: "Unless we keep in view the deficiency of the Sinaitic covenant, we lose the main scope of the apostle's argument, and also his design, which was to disengage the Hebrews from their remaining attachment to that covenant." In proof of his main position the apostle quotes the weeping prophet at considerable length, Jer. 31:31-34. The

quotation extends to the end of v. 12 of our chapter. It is very much to the purpose that the apostle should show the Hebrews (here called the house of Israel and the house of Judah, because at this time, B. C. 630, the tribes were so divided) that their own scriptures required the very changes introduced by the gospel—even a new covenant or constitution, very diverse from that under which they lived in the days of Jeremiah :

9. *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.* This verse clearly settles the point that it was not the covenant of works, but the covenant of Sinai, that is here said to be superseded. Both the form and manner of administering the Gospel are different from the laws and statutes of Sinai. The time of God's manifesting his special kindness to the Israelites is the same designated by prophecy in Gen. 15 : 13-16, and by history in Exod. 12 : 40-42. Taking by the hand and leading are forms of speech indicating great care and kindness as a father to a child. But the great mass of those, who left Egypt, perished in the wilderness. And many of the generations following sadly imitated the example of their fathers in the wilderness. They continued not in God's covenant. The variation between the closing words of the verse as quoted by the apostle and the same as found in Jer. 31 : 32 arises from the apostle quoting the Septuagint and not the Hebrew. Pococke thinks we get the sense by either rendering. This verse shows that when God found fault, it was not only with the covenant itself, but with the people to whom it was proposed and by whom it was professedly adopted. Some properly note the frequency with which in these verses we meet with the phrase, *saith the Lord*. This is fitly construed as making the certainty of all to depend upon the infallible word of him who cannot lie. The last clause of this verse points to the sad state of men rejected by the Lord after mercies bestowed. It further declares the absolute necessity of a scheme more gracious and better suited to the wants of lost men than that proclaimed at Sinai. What that scheme is, he now declares :

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.* The work of salvation is one. Though there be parts to it, yet they are never separated. Sometimes one part is named first ; then another. Here sanctification is first named. This is said to be effected by putting God's laws into their minds and writing them in their hearts. This great work is pre-

sented to us in the Scriptures under many names, as a new creation, a resurrection, a translation, a new birth, a holy and heavenly calling, and other like terms and phrases. But none of these is more striking and appropriate than those found in our verse. The moral law at Sinai was written on tables of stone and put into the ark. The other statutes of Israel were written on perishable material as was the whole Pentateuch, and kept among the sacred books; but often without making any deep or salutary impression on men's minds and hearts. They had the letter and no more. So that, which was ordained unto life, was found to be unto death. The letter killeth. Even divine laws, rules, ordinances, precepts, doctrines and promises are powerless in controlling human nature, unless they are borne to the heart by the Spirit of the Lord. Having given his own image to men, God has complacency in it, and is to such as have it a God, bound to be so by his word, his oath, his purpose and the consistency of his character. Of course such persons are his people. It cannot be otherwise. They who have Jehovah for their God must so belong to Jehovah as to be in every sense his people. Their graces prove it. Their lives evince it. They are different from other men, especially in their hearts. Such blessings when every where enjoyed shall produce a happy state of divine knowledge:

11. *And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.* When by his Holy Spirit the Lord undertakes the work of teaching men, they learn to purpose. Nor is there in Scripture a more gracious promise than this: "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord," Isa. 54:13. The same truth is held forth in Isa. 11:9; 1 Cor. 2:10; 1 Thess. 4:9; 1 John 2:20. Indeed the very words just quoted at length are by Christ himself cited, and confirmed, and this inference drawn from them: "Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me," John 6:45. None opens the blind eyes as does the blessed Spirit. He is the true eye-salve. He causes the deaf to hear. He teaches man knowledge. If he undertakes the work, the babe knows something of the glory of God in redemption, while the greatest man, without such instruction, stumbles and perishes. The meaning of the verse is not that in gospel days there shall be no preaching, no ministry and no mutual exhortation and edification. This would be contrary to the express teachings of Christ and the apostles, Matt. 28:19, 20; Eph. 4:11. Some think the meaning is that under the gospel the knowledge of God shall be much more generally diffused than under the Mosaic Institute. This is a truth, but is probably not

the truth here taught. The real meaning of the prophet seems to be that when God writes his laws and truths in men's hearts, they have the sum of saving knowledge. They are no longer fatally ignorant of the vital truths of religion. This is a good sense, falls in with the apostle's argument and agrees with other parts of God's word. No publication of laws and statutes, no number or power of miracles, no striking history of a man or a people will save the soul, unless Christ be revealed in us. Although sanctification is first mentioned in these verses quoted from Jeremiah, yet the Lord ends not his engagements till he promises justification.

12. *For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.* Some would confine the blessings here promised to sins committed after conversion. But why should they thus limit the grace pledged? We need remission of the guilt of original sin, and of all the sins and follies of childhood and youth and of riper years preceding conversion and after conversion. In all cases these sins are many; in some cases they are fearfully exaggerated. Others regard the promise as having chief respect to sins committed before regeneration. But why should they? Sins committed after renewal are aggravated by the light and grace already received, and by vows and promises made under a sense of the divine mercy already received. The promise clearly includes all sins, sins of omission and commission, open sins and secrets faults, sins committed in the darkness of a natural state, and sins committed after we had heard and obeyed the gospel. Clearly the promise includes all sins and iniquities. If it did not, salvation would not be certain or even possible, for one sin unpardoned would blot out all hope of heaven. One leak will sink a ship; one spark will blow up a magazine; one sin will damn a soul. Accordingly the Lord says I will be merciful, appeased or propitious to their unrighteousness, their want of righteousness, their wickedness. The meaning is, not that he will connive at sin, but that he will pardon it. That this is the real meaning is at once declared by repeating the idea in other words—*Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.* This phrase indubitably points to forgiveness. Although the pardon of sin is not the whole of justification, yet it is an essential part of it, and so it is often used, by a common figure of speech, for the whole of it. Now sanctification and justification secure a complete salvation, and are invariably followed by victory and glorification.

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.* The Jewish Scriptures themselves foretold a new covenant, and

they thereby taught that the first was old. And because it was superseded by the new, it could not continue of force. Its rites, peculiar usages and teachings must give place to those more excellent, because more evangelical.

DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL REMARKS.

1. We should keep in mind the scope, design, pith and main point of each inspired writer, if we would easily and fully apprehend his meaning, v. 1. It is of the very nature of a weighty discourse that it should aim at something particular. Our apostle had explained many things respecting our Lord's office and glory, and now declares the drift of the whole. Blessed is that student of God's word who fully enters into the sense and catches the spirit of the inspired writers. Patterson: "It was common with the ancient orators, after carrying on a lengthened course of argument or illustration, to sum up, within a small compass, what had been already said with greater fulness and detail. This practice was founded on the constitution and wants of the human mind." No marvel that our apostle avails himself of this great power in advancing the cause of truth.

2. The doctrine of Christ's priesthood is vast, and vital, and worthy of all the prominence given it in this epistle and in the Theology of the purest churches. Without it we can have no hope, no good hope of salvation. How blessed Paul dwells upon it! In the first chapter of this epistle he demonstrates that our High Priest is divine, truly and properly God; in the second, that he is human, truly and properly a man; and so is compassionate and merciful; in the third, that he is faithful, and was sent and appointed of God; in the fourth, that he is a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens; in the fifth, that he is no intruder into his office, but was thereunto duly called of God as was Aaron, and is actually the author of eternal salvation; in the sixth that Christ is a priest by the awful and unimpeachable oath of God; in the sixth and seventh, that Christ is a priest after the order of Melchisedec, having neither predecessor nor successor in office; in the seventh, he also shows that our High Priest is holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners, that his priesthood is unchangeable, and that he is able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by him. In the eighth chapter the apostle declares that the sum, pith, and scope of all he had said was to show the excellence and glory of this High Priest, that he is an actual minister conducting a glorious service, and that the scriptures themselves should have led the Jews to expect great changes in-

roduced by Messiah. Here also he begins the application of his doctrine to the whole state and case of the Hebrews.

3. Our High Priest is famously exalted and of this we should often meditate, v. 1. He is a King on a throne as well as a priest interceding. His blood has opened a new and living way, and his intercession is exceedingly glorious. It was prefigured in the law, Lev. 16: 2-17. It is performed in the immediate presence of God, in the highest heavens, in a majesty never seen nor conceived by mortals, our Lord dwelling in light inaccessible and full of glory, even where angels veil their faces, where Jehovah manifests his perfections with unwonted clearness, and holds his court and displays his sovereignty to the admiration of all admitted into his presence. It is by this amazing exaltation that such energy goes forth to make his people willing in the day of his power and to dash his enemies in pieces as a potter's vessel. Owen: "The principal glory of the priestly office of Christ depends on the glorious exaltation of his person." His is very different from the appearance of the high priest, who served in the holy of holies in Solomon's temple. He stood and with awful reverence served before the Lord. In that holy place he never sat, much less did he dare to take a position between the cherubim. But our Lord has his seat on the throne of the Majesty on high. Compare Rev. 3: 21. Some years ago a writer ventured on the rash assertion that since Christ left this world we know neither where he is nor what he is doing. Why, even the children in our Sabbath Schools know as much as that. He is in heaven, Luke 24: 15; Eph. 6: 9; Col. 4: 1. Heaven is a place. Himself says so, John 14: 2, 3. God's throne is there, Matt. 5: 34. And we know what he is doing. He is preparing a place for his people, John 14: 2; he is gloriously and prevalently interceding, Rom. 8: 34; Heb. 7: 25; he is wielding the sceptre of universal government, Rev. 19: 16; he is subduing all things to himself, Phil. 3: 21; he is receiving the highest honors which saints and angels and his Father can bestow upon him, Heb. 1: 6; Rev. 7: 10-17; 2 Pet. 1: 17; John 12: 27, 28. Christ's *ministry* in heaven "compriseth the whole care and all the actings of Christ as our high priest with God in behalf of the church. It is, therefore, the immediate spring of all his gracious communications unto us. Whatever apprehensions we may attain of the manner of it, the *thing itself* is the centre of our faith, hope and consolation." His work on earth was all done and well done. The fruit of such services and sufferings as his is the amazing power and glory, which he now possesses, Phil. 2: 5-11. The call of the gospel is heavenly. Christ Jesus is the Lord from heaven, yea, when he was upon earth he spake of himself as

in heaven, 1 Cor. 15 : 47; John 3 : 13. His intercession is in heaven. Even during their warfare on earth his people sit together in heavenly places, Eph. 1 : 3. The very citizenship of believers is in heaven, Phil. 3 : 20. Erasmus: "Whatsoever Christe did, even in earth, was not done after the fleshe, but after the spirite, and came from heaven, and thither tendeth, the same, compared unto the grosseness of Moses' priesthood, is worthily called *heavenly*. And this God seemeth to have signified, when he prescrib'd unto Moses a forme to buyld a temple." All this glory of Christ is right and fitting; for he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence," Col. 1 : 18. Lindsay: "What a glorious Priest do we possess under the new covenant; a Priest, who, while he expiates our guilt, has power to shield us from every danger; who, while he prepares us for heaven, is himself the Sovereign of heaven, to admit us within its gates! And how unspeakably aggravated will our sin be, if, while we have such a Saviour provided for us, we disregard the mercy he proffers, and live in rebellion against his government. By how much his mercy is great, by so much in this case will our ruin be dreadful." Well indeed is it for us that our Lord went away. He carries on his work, and promotes our cause best by being on his glorious throne, John 16 : 7.

4. Christ's rest, which is so glorious, is not inconsistent with his managing and carrying on the greatest affairs for his people and for his glory. He is a *minister* of the true sanctuary, v. 2. His services are everything to his people. He is preparing a place for them. He causes all things to work together for their good to his redeemed ones. His whole ministry in heaven, like that on earth, is full of love; but, unlike that on earth, is wholly free from works of suffering and of humiliation. It is indeed amazing condescension in him, who is the Son of God, to undertake such a service for us; nor is it possible for us too admiringly to receive, or too heartily to obey the voice of him, who has bought us with his blood. He is as kind and tender now as when he wept at the grave of Lazarus; as when he said to the penitent thief, "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise;" as when he said to the doubting Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing." When Stephen was dying in a shower of stones, he saw the Lord Christ standing, not sitting at God's right hand. Tait: "He ROSE UP when he beheld his first martyr's extremity—our faithful High Priest ROSE UP, that he might bend his eyes with intensest observation on what was passing below." Thus

the Lord was in a posture ready to extend aid and to receive the spirit of this proto-martyr.

5. The gospel has the substance of what was shadowed forth by the Mosaic dispensation, vs. 2, 5. It gives us the antitype of what was set forth by types of old. Several commentators give from the *Ikkarim* of Rabbi Albo, who flourished in the early part of the XV. Century, a remarkable passage on the figurative character of the old dispensation: "When God, who is highly to be extolled, gave the law, he knew, that this form of education was sufficient for a certain period, which his wisdom had fixed, that it was sufficient to prepare those who received it, and incline their minds to receive the second form, although God has revealed this to no man; but, when the time shall come, God will reveal that second form to men. Like a physician who prescribes a diet to his patient until a certain period which he knows, but which he does not tell to the patient; when, however, the time is at hand in which the sick man is to recover, the physician changes his diet,—permits what he had forbidden, and forbids what he had permitted. The patient need not, then, wonder at this; it resembles the manner in which the teacher deports himself towards the pupil, to whom at the beginning, he gives an easy and comprehensible lesson, until he has gradually accustomed him to instruction, when he leads him up to a higher and more difficult stage." How dreadful is the blindness which admits such principles, and yet fails to apply them to the saving of the soul in the reception of the gospel. It is only by Jesus Christ, who is the way, the truth and the life, that we can safely approach God, or see the fulfilment of all that was represented by the types and shadows. If any thing is clear, it is certain that the Mosaic institutions pointed to Messiah, and that before Christ's coming men were saved by faith in a redemption yet to be purchased. The law was not a senseless contrivance. It had a true and important significancy. It specially pointed to a great Redeemer. Though the rites and ceremonies of the law were external and visible, yet they were often and always shadowy and not substantial, but the things they represented were most excellent—the chief things of the gospel itself.

6. It is deeply to be regretted that any Protestant church should retain the term *Priests*, as a designation of its ministers. The Roman Catholics call their ministers *priests*, and contend that they do offer to God a real and proper sacrifice. In this they are consistent with their other errors, though they contradict the scriptures, which represent the whole work of propitiation accomplished on Calvary. But to call men *priests*, who

confessedly have nothing to offer to God, is itself nugatory. It also leads to many mistakes. It keeps up the idea that the one sacrifice of Christ is not complete, and that gospel ministers do in some way, or in some sense offer to God for the sins of the people. True, some say that they use the word priest as an abbreviation of the word presbyter. If so, their lexicography does not bear them out at all. The New Testament never once gives the name priest to a gospel minister. This ought to be decisive. Yet if any one openly and always says that by priest he means presbyter and nothing more, it is contrary both to charity and the rules of controversy to impute to him the belief of doctrines which he rejects and abhors.

7. To deny Christ's offering for sin is to deny the gospel; for if he did not make to God an offering and a sacrifice of a sweet savor, we are yet under wrath and must die in our sins, v. 3. In like manner to pervert the true doctrine of Christ's sacrifice from its scriptural use is to subvert the gospel. If Jesus Christ did not die for our sins, our sins are still upon us. If his atonement was not ample, nothing man can do or suffer will make it sufficient or efficacious. Neither prayers, not praises, nor alms, nor tears, nor sufferings of man are pleasing to God except through the one offering of our great High Priest. Owen: "There is no approach unto God, without continual respect unto sacrifice and atonement. There was no salvation to be had for us, no, not by Jesus Christ himself, without his sacrifice and oblation." It is both madness and wickedness to be offended with Christ on any ground, but particularly on the ground of his shedding his most precious blood for the sins of men.

8. We wrong Christians, and confuse them, when we deny to Christ's person and intercession a locality, vs. 2, 4. Macknight: "That the Deity manifests his presence to his intelligent creatures in a sensible manner, somewhere in the universe, is a notion which hath been entertained by all mankind." The holy of holies in the temple was a type of the most holy place in heaven. In some locality unknown to us are the throne of God, the glorified human nature of Christ, the bodies of Enoch and of Elijah, an innumerable company of angels and of the spirits of just men made perfect. This is the third heaven, the heaven of heavens.

9. We ought continually to remember that Jesus Christ never claimed for himself that he belonged to any order of earthly priests, nor did his apostles ever advance such a claim for him, v. 4.

10. When, in any matter pertaining to his worship or honor, or our lives and duties, God graciously condescends to make known

his will, and instruct us how we shall behave, it is wicked and presumptuous in us to vary from his precepts, v. 5. Whenever God makes known his will, it is for good cause, whether known to us or not. His sovereign pleasure ought to constrain us into hearty acquiescence. Calvin: "We are here taught that all services are perverse and spurious which men allow themselves to invent of their own head, and without God's command. For when God prescribes that all things be done according to his rule, it is not lawful to make any thing at all that is alien from it." Compare Col. 2:16-19. Owen: "God's ordination or appointment gives rules, measures and ends, unto all sacred offices and appointments. Our utmost care and diligence in the consideration of the mind of God is required in all that we do about his worship." Both in the matter and manner of his worship we must regard the whole revealed will of God. The scriptures, which may be consulted on the subject, are many. In particular see Gen. 4:4, 5; 1 Kings 3:6; 2 Kings 20:3; Isa. 1:11; Isa. 66:3; Jer. 48:10. Where the Lord has left us without a precept, we may use our liberty, but not to annoy and rend the church of Christ. We may not use our liberty maliciously.

11. There is none like Jesus, v. 6. He is the most wonderful prophet, the most illustrious king and the most glorious priest in the universe. His ministry is more excellent than any of which we ever read or hear. His mediation is unparalleled. Wonderful is his name. Peerless is his person. Matchless is his glory.

12. It is impossible, without perverseness, to deny or ignore the truth that the mediation of Christ is a great and prominent doctrine of God's word, v. 6. It is vital to Christian peace and joy. Christ is perfectly adapted to this whole work. By his eternal Sonship with God he is equal with God. By his being made of a woman, he is the equal of man. By his divinity he knows all things. By his humanity he had somewhat to offer unto God. His Father safely trusts him with the care and defence of his honor. Man safely trusts him with the care and salvation of his soul. Amply has he vindicated the divine righteousness and faithfulness. Gloriously does he manage the interests of all who believe upon him. Owen: "The provision of a mediator between God and man was an effect of infinite wisdom and grace."

13. It is impossible to have a good understanding of many important parts of scripture without some correct idea of the term covenant and of the truths thereby set forth. On this matter something has already been said. But let the following points be kept in view. Covenants are either human or divine. Human covenants are made between men as equals in the matter of the engagement,

and may be proposed by either party, Gen. 21 : 27. Divine covenants are between God and man, the unequal parties, and are generally but not always proposed by God, 2 Chron. 29 : 10. When a covenant is proposed by man, it is much the same as a vow. We may be quite innocent in declining a covenant proposed by man; but we are not free to withhold our consent to any proposal made to us by the Lord. All the covenants proposed by God to man are worthy of the Most High, and contain proofs of divine benignity. The manner of ratifying a covenant never affects its binding force. Like an oath it is binding whatever be the form of confirmation. It is great kindness and condescension in God to covenant with man. The Bible contains many accounts of covenants made between man and man, and represents all of them as sacred, Gal. 3 : 15. The term covenant is applied to several transactions of God with men. *A.* God's covenant with Noah for all his posterity is fully recorded in Genesis 9 : 8-17, and is full of important and very gracious engagements. Its stipulations binding man are rather implied than expressed. The token of this covenant is the rainbow. It has never failed. It shall never fail. It chiefly consists of absolute promises from God to man. *B.* Then we have the covenant of Sinai, which is very extensive in its provisions, promises, and obligations. It was made with a whole nation: In one sense it is like the covenant of works, for the very core of it is the moral law. In another sense it was like the covenant of grace, for it in many ways held forth promise of pardon and acceptance. But it was neither the covenant of works nor of grace; nor did it supersede either of them. In Gal. 3 : 17 Paul distinctly asserts that it did not annul the covenant of grace. And we know that the covenant of works for ever binds all, who are not by God's act put under the covenant of grace. *C.* The covenant of works is that constitution, under which holy angels enjoy their bliss. Our first parents were placed under it, and so long as they kept its holy, just and good precepts, they were happy. Breaking it, they and their posterity fell under a righteous curse, and so long as they remain under this covenant, they are under wrath. Its great principle is, Do and live. Obey and be blessed. Sin and die. Disobey and be cursed. In other words it is purely a system of law, having both precepts and penalties good. To the innocent and obedient it brings life and happiness. It says and says truly, "The man that doeth these things shall live in them," Gal. 3 : 12. But it says sternly and righteously, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them," Gal. 3 : 10. The covenant of works justifies the spotlessly holy. It condemns all who are not perfectly innocent, unfailingly

obedient. *D.* The covenant of grace is for sinners alone. None others need it. It proposes happiness and peace to those, who have broken the law of works. It offers pardon to the rebel, acceptance to the outcast, salvation to the lost. It is a system of pure gratuity. It has Jesus Christ for a Surety and Mediator. It is gloriously confirmed by promise and by oath. It cannot fail in any case. The gospel is a dispensation of this covenant. It is the clearest dispensation of it that we may expect in this world. By a single promise it was somewhat revealed to our first parents. It was further made known to the patriarchs, and especially to Abraham. For our Lord says, Abraham saw my day and was glad, John 8 : 56. And Paul as clearly says the gospel was preached to Abraham, Gal. 3 : 8. The covenant of grace is in some things like that of works. It has God for its author, is the fruit of his good pleasure, is between God and man, and has seals. It secures great blessedness to those who are true to it. But the covenant of grace differs from the covenant of works in being a wondrous expression of pity and of love, in having a Surety and Mediator, in the conditions annexed, in the grace bestowed, and in the form of the seals and of ratification.

14. Now the gospel is a covenant or reveals a covenant of grace, v. 6-10. It comes to us charged with things good and glorious, all the gift of unmerited kindness. It graciously and eternally pledges the love and faithfulness of God to all who accept it. It has laws and secures grace and strength to enable men to obey them. Does it call for faith? "Unto you it is given to believe," Phil. 1 : 29. Does it demand repentance? God has exalted his Son to give repentance, Acts 5 : 31. Does our will need renewal and strength? He works in us both to will and to do, Phil. 2 : 13. Is man feeble, yea, without strength? This covenant engages that he shall renew his strength and be as David, Isa. 40 : 28-31; Zech. 12 : 8; Rom. 14 : 4. Does man need good secured to him in all the countless ages of coming duration? This is an everlasting covenant, Jer. 32 : 40. Have the effects of sin been vast, ruinous and dreadful? 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the new covenant, in its being, existence, and healing efficacy, is as large and extensive to repair our nature and state, as sin is, in its residence, power and guilt, to deprave, ruin and condemn us.' For where sin abounded, grace did much more abound, Rom. 5 : 20. God's Spirit is omnipotent and can change any heart. His forgiving love is boundless, and can blot out sins that are like a thick cloud.

15. Some ask, Is the covenant of grace conditional, or is it absolute? This question ought to be answered fairly. In reply let it be said that there are two kinds of conditions—conditions meri-

torious and conditions not meritorious but yet essential to our saving interest in this covenant. The meritorious conditions of the covenant of grace are all fulfilled in Christ's becoming our Surety, Mediator, High Priest, Sacrifice and Intercessor. His merits are all-sufficient. We have none of our own; we can have none of our own; we are required to have none of our own. The vilest sinner, the greatest reprobate may avail himself of all the benefits of the covenant of grace on the same terms as the decently moral, and confessedly upright man may do. Both are without personal good desert. Of man in person God asks not the fulfilment of any meritorious condition of the covenant of grace. The Lord Jesus is worthy. He has done and suffered all that was necessary to purchase redemption and to merit heaven for his people. But man must comply with the conditions *sine qua non*, without which he will derive no benefit from the covenant of grace. In God's plan faith and repentance, forsaking sin and turning to God, are as vital principles in the plan of salvation as the atonement itself, yet for a different reason. Salvation provided but yet rejected can save no one. But here comes in the blessed fulness of the gospel in that it secures to Christ's chosen the bestowment of the Holy Ghost, who works in us all those affections and changes, which make the gospel glad tidings of great joy. In other words, God works in his people the very graces required to make their acceptance of his covenant hearty and saving; for all saving graces are the gift of God, as has been shown already.

16. The covenant of Sinai had in it provisions and promises of good; the covenant of grace as explained in the gospel has in it better provisions and promises. The ministration of condemnation had in it glory, but the ministration of righteousness exceeds in glory, 2 Cor. 3:9. The moon is glorious, but when the sun rises the moon pales away. The gospel covenant as far excels that of Sinai as salvation and glory excel conviction and condemnation; as far as Christ's priesthood excels that of Aaron, as far as the Saviour excels the schoolmaster. The Baptist gave the difference in few and striking words: "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," John 1:17. Owen: "The new covenant, as collecting into one all the promises of grace given from the foundation of the world, accomplished in the actual exhibition of Christ, and confirmed in his death, and by the sacrifice of his blood, and thereby becoming the sole rule of new spiritual ordinances of worship suited thereunto, was the great object of the faith of the saints of the Old Testament, and is the great foundation of all our present mercies."

17. How shall we account for the darkness of former dispensations? is a question sometimes asked with apparent reverence. That they were comparatively dark is admitted by the word of God, vs. 7, 8. If the question is designed to intimate that man may question his Maker, it should be rebuked. He giveth account of none of his matters. He has a right to do what he will with his own. But we may without irreverence say that as it is best that the sun should not from the bosom of midnight in a moment burst forth in noon-day splendor on the eyes of men and beasts; so we may see a fitness in the gradual rising of the Sun of righteousness with his healing beams. It was right that the utter powerlessness of all schemes of philosophy and of mere natural religion should be demonstrated before the gospel was fully declared. So says Paul: "After that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe," 1 Cor. 1:21.

18. Various are the names of God's people, as Israel, Judah, the chosen of the Lord, his sons and daughters, his people, etc., vs. 8, 10. Yet they are ever and infinitely dear to him. They are his jewels, his peculiar treasure, his vineyard, his workmanship, a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people. Happy is that people, whose God is the Lord, 1 Pet. 2:9; Ps. 14:15. To his people he says: "Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable," Isa. 43:4. Nor does God hesitate to give names of fond endearment—pet names—to his people. He calls them his love, his dove, his undefiled, his lambs, his sheep, his sons, his beloved. Amazing is his grace. Rich is his mercy. Having undertaken to bring many sons unto glory, he never ceased to work out his plans of grace until he had brought forth the best robe for their adornment, and the richest gifts for their inheritance. Owen: "As nothing less than God becoming our God could relieve, help, and save us, so nothing more can be required thereunto. It is from the engagement of the properties of the divine nature that the covenant is ordered in all things and sure."

19. Some events, not in themselves saving, are yet so wonderful that they are never to be forgotten and will often be mentioned till the end of time, v. 9. Such was the deliverance of Israel from Egypt and of the Jews from Babylon. Almost all nations and tribes have in their history some such remarkable deliverances. Let them not fail to celebrate them often and devoutly, not by drunken and profane carousals, much less by perpetuating memories that show maliciousness; but by gratitude and praise. True, events are not saving because they are startling, even as outward

benefits are not saving because they are great and inestimable. But true piety will not cease to make devout mention of them, and to seek to be profited by them.

20. Into whatever scriptural engagements we enter with God, we should be steadfast, and *continue* in our profession and practice of the truth, v. 9. Covenant-breaking is justly followed by dire judgments—in particular by a withdrawal of God's gracious and cheering presence. Owen: "As the grace of this covenant is inexpressible, so are the obligations it puts upon us to obedience."

21. Rich, free and glorious as are the things promised by the Lord in the new covenant, they are no more than every man needs to a complete and final salvation, vs. 10-12. The reason is our wants are so many, so pressing, and so entirely beyond the power of men and angels to supply. If any man thinks he needs less than is promised in the covenant, he understands neither his own wants, nor the riches of divine grace.

22. The doctrine of regeneration is no novelty, v. 10. It is as old as the days of the prophets. David knew much about it, Ps. 40:8; 51:10; as did also the great prophet of the captivity, Ezek. 11:19, 20; 36:26, 27. Compare Deut. 5:29; 30:6; Jer. 32:38-40; 2 Cor. 3:3. The dead can only be revived by having new life imparted to them. The foul must be cleansed. The vile must be made pure. The sinner must be born again. The deaf will not hear; the blind will not see; the haters of the Lord will not submit themselves. Divine grace must renew every soul of man, that is ever saved. Sinai may thunder, but the idolatrous unregenerate heart will not thereby be cleansed from its idols. Jesus may expire on a cross, but the human heart will remain harder than the rocks. The law is never truly loved and obeyed till it is written on the fleshly tables of the heart. The heart of man is subject to many and great changes; but none of them are saving, till it is divinely renewed. Even those changes, which are apparently for the better, are but temporary until divine grace transforms the moral character of the soul. The truth must be *written* on the soul, or it will be evanescent, as much sad experience shows, and as many Scriptures declare.

23. If we would make good our claim to a covenant relation to God, and prove that he is our God, we must bring forth the fruits of the new birth, v. 10. Every scriptural regeneration is unto holy living. He, who hates not sin, is not born of God. All, who are God's peculiar treasure, do obey his voice indeed, Ex. 19:5. Nor can we prove that we are Christ's disciples, or that we heartily glorify God, unless we bear much fruit, John 15:8. If any man is a child of God, he is so by faith in Christ Jesus and faith is

the fruit of the Spirit in regeneration, Gal. 3:26; 5:22. We but deceive ourselves, when we profess to have passed from death unto life, and find a prevailing and habitual reluctance in our hearts to comply with the commandments. True love joyfully obeys. One says: "A real child of God is so keenly alive to the remainder of sin in his nature, that he ever must be slow in thinking great things as regards himself. To rejoice therefore with trembling is a wholesome sign. But what must those think, who know full well that the law of God is too strict for them; that it is not the rule they try to follow, that the opinions of men and the ways of the world have much more influence over them than the word of God? In such a case, surely, it must appear plain enough that the gospel has come to them in word only." To such it is not life, and spirit, and the power of God unto salvation. So surely as God renews any soul, he will cause it to understand his mind, to rely upon his word, to follow his will and prefer hardship and reproach in the way of duty above ease and public favor in a course of sinning. Whoso loves his duty and his God has infallible evidence of a new birth. Owen: "Nothing but effectual grace will secure our covenant obedience one moment. No covenant between God and man ever was, or ever could be stable and effectual, as unto the ends of it, that was not made and confirmed in Christ."

24. Saving knowledge comes from God only, v. 11. None can effectually teach the way of life but the Most High himself, John 6:44; 1 Cor. 2:14. He, who has not the Spirit, is sensual, Jude 19. We as much need the benefits of Christ's office as Prophet, as we do his offices as Priest and King. Without him we can do nothing, know nothing, attain to nothing.

25. When the Lord teaches, he does it effectually, v. 11. It is eternal life to know God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent, if our knowledge is taught us by the Lord, John 17:3. This teaching from heaven is the only effectual cure of heart-idolatry. Without the impress of heavenly lessons on our hearts, we shall but imitate the example of Israel in falling away from God, Exod. 32:1-6; Num, 25:1-5; Judg: 2:11-13. The light, which comes from divine teaching, is clear. It gives the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. 4:6. It is a great pleasure to attempt to aid such in their heavenly course. Labor bestowed on them is never in vain, 1 John 2:21. Paul did not cease to pray for his Ephesians, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, might give unto them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of their understanding being enlightened; that they might know

what was the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, Eph. 1 : 17, 18. Owen : "To know God as he is revealed in Christ is the highest privilege whereof in this life we can be made partakers."

26. God has promised nothing which we do not need, and, blessed be his name, he has promised all that we do need. In particular he has promised to be *merciful*, greatly merciful, merciful to our unrighteousness, v. 12. No one but God knows how much mercy our every case calls for. No fit term to express compassion and pity is omitted in God's word, when inspired men would give us an insight into the divine love and tenderness.

27. How dare any one deny his own sinfulness in the sight of God? The word of truth speaks as familiarly of our *sins* and *iniquities* as it does of our existence, v. 12. And what the scriptures declare, experience awfully confirms. Men are in fact as vile as the Bible ever represents them to be. They are haters of God and of one another till divine grace makes the needed change.

28. How sweet is pardon! v. 12. It deserves as it often receives, the first place in a catalogue of benefits, Ps. 103 : 3. It is an act of inexpressible love and kindness. It is to the poor sinful soul the beginning of good days and of good things. There is but one being in the universe that ever does a thing so worthy of praise and gratitude, Mic. 7 : 18. To deny our need of forgiveness is an act so foolish and perverse that but few men are left to commit it. Owen : "We cannot understand aright the glory and excellency of pardoning mercy, unless we are convinced of the greatness and vileness of our sins, in all their aggravations." This blessed forgiveness is total, including all sins, both of omission and commission, both secret and open. It is also irrevocable. It blots them out for ever. It casts them into the depths of the sea. As far as the east is from the west, so far does God remove our transgressions from us, Ps. 103 : 12 ; Isa. 42 : 22 ; Mic. 7 : 19.

29. Nor can we overestimate the grace promised and bestowed in the new covenant, vs. 10-13. It is the grace of God. In it are a breadth, and depth, and height, and length known perfectly to none but God. It is pure grace. The causes of its exercise towards us are found, not at all in us, but wholly in God himself, Isa. 43 : 25 ; 48 : 9 ; Ezek. 36 : 22, 32. Then it produces such amazing results. All, who escape final and utter ruin, are saved by grace, Eph. 2 : 8. The very faith, that lays hold of the gracious promise, is the gift of God, Phil. 1 : 29. If men are accepted, it is solely because they are justified freely by his grace, Rom. 3 : 24. It is all of grace, and not at all of works, Rom. 11 : 6. Owen : "Free, sovereign and undeserved grace in the pardon of sin is

the original spring and foundation of all covenant mercies and blessings." Nor can our admiration of such unbought love ever rise beyond the bounds of sobriety and truth. It gives us the greatest possible security. Its pledges are infallible. We ought often and thankfully to recount the benefits and mercies thus graciously promised. Lindsay: "The promises of the new covenant provide, not that a symbol of God's presence shall appear among his people, but that his spiritual and gracious presence shall be felt in the heart of every genuine believer. He puts his law in the inward parts of those who seek him. He blesses them with the enjoyment of his favor. He protects them while on earth, and gives them the prospect of entering his eternal kingdom. Most precious are the promises he has given, and they are all Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus."

30. This chapter and this epistle show how hard it is to give up old prejudices, v. 13. The Jewish commonwealth and the whole Jewish economy had long been dwindling away. The second temple was in many ways inferior to the first, yet that did not seem much to diminish attachment to Jewish ideas. By and by Messiah came and foretold the utter subversion of the Jewish State, city, and temple service. When the nature of his mission was explained, and men were even converted to Christianity, many easily relapsed into old doctrines and practices. Everywhere Judaizing teachers arose and insisted on circumcision and other rites of the law. And even when the doom of the holy city was just at hand, and Christian Jews knew it, some were hardly ready to give heed to the inspired word which said, "Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." Sacrifices were offered in the temple till the Romans drowned out the fires on the altar by the rivers of human gore they shed. The great mass of the Jews never understood the real design of the Mosaic institution. Its great object was to glorify God by awakening pious expectations of good things to come. It prefigured very glorious things. The very coming in of the gospel should displace the old state of things. May not we, under the gospel, indulge prejudices as unfounded and as mischievous? The law had glory; but the gospel has a glory that excelleth. The law made nothing perfect; the gospel points to a perfect salvation—a perfect Saviour. The law was shadowy and typical. The gospel has blessed realities. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. The law inspired much dread. It admitted but one man in all Israel to approach the propitiatory, and that but once a year. But the gospel calls on all to come boldly to the throne of grace, and plead for all they need. Neither man

nor angel can see how the gospel plan could be better. It lacks nothing. It is redundant in nothing. Moses, a fallible and mortal man, was the mediator of the Sinaitic covenant. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the sole, glorious and unerring Mediator of the new covenant. The law was designed to be transient and temporary, but the gospel is the everlasting gospel; the new covenant is an everlasting covenant, Heb. 13 : 20; Rev. 14 : 6.

31. Very dreadful was the fall of Israel, which as a people grew old, as did their institutions, and for their sins were visited with the direst woes that ever befell any people on earth. Let those, who enjoy gospel privileges remember that God has worse plagues than came on the devoted city of the Holy Land. The heaviest woes are reserved for those, who know, and abuse, or slight the most excellent things revealed in Scripture, and those things are the leading doctrines taught by Jesus Christ and his apostles.

32. The scripture cannot be broken. "Little did the imperial Vespasian and the lordly Titus think, as they led their unconquered armies to the desolation of the holy city that they were accomplishing the word of a despised Jewish preacher who had been put to death at Rome under the reign of Nero. But so it was." God is wiser than man. The worm cannot defeat its Maker.

33. We cannot too fervently call on the name of the Lord to open our blind eyes, and to show us the true sense of the word of God, the real mind of the Spirit in all things, pertaining to the plan of salvation. Lord, help us all to read, and hear, and understand, and feel, and believe, and practise thy holy word.

## CHAPTER IX.

VERSES 1-14.

### THE GOSPEL IS SUPERIOR TO THE LAW IN ITS SERVICE, PRIESTHOOD, SACRIFICE AND EFFECTS.

THEN verily the first *covenant* had also ordinances of divine service and a worldly sanctuary.

2 For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein *was* the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary.

3 And after the second vail, the tabernacle which is called the holiest of all;

4 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;

5 And over it the cherubim of glory shadowing the mercy-seat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.

6 Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service *of God*.

7 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 :

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 :

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 ;

10 Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed *on them* until the time of reformation.

11 But Christ being come a 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 ;

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*.

13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh ;

14 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?

**T**HE argument, begun in the preceding chapter, is here continued and enlarged upon in many particulars, in each of which the design is to 'show the superiority of the new covenant over the old, and that pious men ought to have expected great changes under the gospel.

1. *Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.* For ordinances Wiclif has justifyingis, and Rheims and Doway, justifications; Genevan has rites; Peshito, Tyndale, Cranmer and Stuart, ordinances; Bretschneider, precepts; Robinson, decrees, ordinances, precepts. Clearly the word points to the rules given in the law of Moses prescribing the various parts of the temple service and the manner of performing them. The word rendered divine service, occurs below in v. 6, where it is simply rendered service. It occurs in but two other places, John 16:2; Rom. 9:4; but the cognate verb occurs often, and generally points to religious worship, offered either to the true God or to idols, Matt. 4:10; Luke 1:74; Acts 7:42; Rom. 1:25. Worldly tabernacle is literally a worldly holy place; Peshito, Doway, Genevan and Craik, worldly sanctuary; Rheims, secular sanctuary; Tyndale and Cranmer, worldly holynes. The connection requires us to understand the holy place, the tabernacle or temple where divine rites were appointed to be celebrated. The word rendered worldly occurs only here and in Tit. 2:12. We may not adopt the interpretation of Chrysostom, Theophylact, Erasmus and De Wette that here worldly means accessible to all the world. There is little in favor of Kypke's interpretation—world-renowned. It is the opposite of heavenly. It means, belonging to this world. Now the rites and rules concerning God's worship under the law of Sinai concerned the worship of God on earth; they were worldly; in v. 10 they are called carnal. There is no good reason for rendering the word comely or beautiful instead of worldly. Though the sanctuary and its utensils shadowed forth some spiritual truths, they were not in themselves spiritual or heavenly. The apostle goes on to give particulars respecting this worldly sanctuary.

2. *For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary.* The word *first* relates to tabernacle. Tyndale and Cranmer give the sense when they say there was a fore tabernacle. The word may mean first in order of time, in order of importance, or in order of position, Matt. 17:27; 22:25; John 19:32. Here it is

to be taken in the last of these senses. In going into the holy of holies, which was the *second* tabernacle, the high priest passed through the first. In this first tabernacle was the candlestick, of which the Scriptures make a good deal. It was what moderns call a candelabrum, for it had six branches and an upright shaft, and bore on it seven lamps, fed and filled with sweet olive oil. It was very massive, requiring in its structure a talent of pure gold. There was but one such fixture in the tabernacle or in the second temple, but in Solomon's temple there were ten such candelabra. These were not placed in the holy of holies, but only in the holy place, or first tabernacle. They were to be trimmed and put in good order every day. Their general significancy was that of illumination. Lindsay: "In all ages light has been the symbol of knowledge." Then there was the table, of which much is also said. Some have thought this was the altar of burnt-offering, called the table of the Lord in Mal. 1:7, 12. But it is best explained of another table, which was in the fore tabernacle at the northwest corner near the inner veil. It was two cubits in length and one in breadth. It was made of shittim wood, commonly supposed to be black acacia. It was overlaid with gold. It was consecrated by the sprinkling of blood, and by anointing it with oil. On the top it had a cornice. On this table were laid the twelve loaves of shewbread, according to the number of the tribes. In the days of Solomon there were as many as ten of these tables, 2 Chron. 4:8, 19. Every Sabbath bread was set upon this table, and at the end of seven days it was removed and other loaves were laid in their stead. Apart from this bread no particular significancy is claimed for this table. The shewbread was made of fine flour and salted. It was always visible in the holy place, and pointed to the constant and ample provision of God's house. Some have thought it signified God's continual presence in the church. None might eat of it but the priests only, except in cases of necessity arising from great hunger, 1 Sam. 21:3, 4; Matt. 12:4. The place where these things were kept was called the sanctuary, or holy place. But some prefer to read, which is called holy, meaning the bread. So Wiclif, Tyndale, Cranmer and Rheims. But this is no improvement. The scripture is clear that the shewbread was not in the most holy place, but only in the holy place, where the priests generally officiated.

3. *And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the holiest of all.* The veil (or veil, for it is spelled both ways) was a name given to two curtains in the tabernacle. One hung at the entrance of the holy place. This was the first veil. The other separated the holy place from the most holy place, or holy of holies,

here called the holiest of all. See Ex. 26 : 31-33. In this holiest of all were very sacred things. Paul says of it,

4. *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.* The golden censer was not like the censers or fire-pans used by the priests. These were made of brass and were probably of a different shape. According to the law the high priest was required to take the golden censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord, having his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and to bring it within the vail, and put the incense on the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of incense might cover the mercy-seat, Lev. 16 : 12, 13. The spiritual significancy of the golden censer and of the burning of incense is sufficiently indicated by such scriptures as Eph. 5 : 2 ; Rev. 8 : 3, 5. The ark of the covenant was an object of great veneration. It is well described in Ex. 25 : 10 and onward, and in Ex. 37 : 1-5. It was a chest about four feet in length, and upwards of two feet in height and the same in width. It was very rich in gold plates. On its top was the mercy-seat of pure gold. It is called the ark of the covenant, because it contained the moral law, which was the core of the Sinaitic covenant. The stones containing the law are called the tables of the covenant, Deut. 9 : 9-11. It is called the ark of the testimony because it was a pledge of God's presence, a witness of his fidelity. The decalogue was on the tables of testimony, Ex. 31 : 18. It is called the ark of his strength because before it all power and resistance melted away. When the first temple was destroyed by the Chaldeans, the ark disappeared. Nor have we any trustworthy account of it after that time. On the return from Babylon the Jews are said to have made a chest somewhat like the ark, but the glory was departed. In this ark or in the side of it was the golden pot that had manna, for 1 Kings 8 : 9 and 2 Chron. 5 : 10 determine there was nothing properly in it but the tables of stone. Although in ordinary cases the manna could be preserved uncorrupt but a day or two, yet that in the golden pot seems not to have changed its nature for ages, Ex. 16 : 32, 33. It was still manna as long as the ark remained. The manna thus preserved was well suited to remind Israel of their long and perilous journey, during which they were miraculously fed from heaven. This manna was a type of Christ, John 6 : 48-51 ; Rev. 2 : 17. With, or in the side of the ark was Aaron's rod that budded. This budding is recorded at length in Num. 17 : 1-11. The rod not only budded; but blossomed and bore almonds, thus for ever settling the right of the tribe of Levi to the priesthood. This was a wonderful rod. At first it

was a shepherd's staff in the hand of Moses. Then it became a serpent. It was the great rod used by Moses and Aaron in Egypt. With it Moses smote the Red sea, and the rock at Rephidim, and the rock at Kadesh. Many regard this rod as a type of Christ. The tables of the covenant were the two slabs of stone, on which was written the decalogue. God had uttered the words of this law by an audible voice from heaven. No other part of the Pentateuch was thus spoken by Jehovah, Deut. 4:33; 5:4, 22. Then without variation God with his own finger twice wrote it on tables of stone, Ex. 32:15, 16; 34:1; Deut 10:4, 5. These tables contained the moral law of the universe. No marvel that the Jews should be much inclined to think these tables a treasure. Speaking of the ark Paul adds:

5. *And over it the cherubim of glory shadowing the mercy-seat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.* On the top of the ark were placed two figures called cherubim, which is the Hebrew plural of cherub. These were made of beaten gold, were placed on opposite ends of the mercy-seat, with outstretched wings, covering the mercy-seat, with their faces towards each other, Ex. 25:18-20; 37:7-9. There were figures of cherubim on the inside curtains of the tabernacle, curiously wrought; but these were wholly different from the two figures over the ark, here called the cherubim of glory, because the Shechinah was between them. All these cherubim are supposed to have represented the angels, who are ministering spirits, attending the church in all her states and stages, as she passes through this world. Some think that the cherubim symbolized the divine presence also. Perhaps they did. See Ezek. 1:16-25. The word cherubim is commonly explained as meaning Knowing Ones. Cherubim are bright intelligences. They do now, always behold the face of our Father in heaven. The mercy-seat thus covered by the wings of the cherubim was the lid of the ark. It was of the same length and width with it. It was of pure gold, Ex. 25:17; 37:6. To a pious Jew it was an object of peculiar interest. Over it rested the visible glory; so that God is said to sit or dwell between the cherubim, to meet and commune with the high priest from between the cherubim, Ex. 25:22; Ps. 80:1, and often. In the New Testament we have for mercy-seat a word meaning the propitiatory, or place of reconciliation. In this sense the word is found here only. In Rom. 3:25 it is rendered propitiation. The mercy-seat under the law could be approached only by the high priest and always with blood; but by the death of Christ and the rending of the vail we are assured of our right to come boldly to the throne of grace, which is the mercy-seat to all penitent sinners. In this

verse *which* is in the plural and refers to all the things mentioned in vs. 2-5. Paul says he will not speak of these things particularly, each one by itself and in detail. To the Hebrew Christians it was unnecessary for Paul to write at length on these matters, for they generally had a good understanding of them.

6. *Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God.* *Ordained*, elsewhere the word is every where rendered built or prepared, which gives the sense here. Rheims and Doway have ordered. The *first tabernacle* was the place where were the candlestick, shew-bread and altar of burnt-offering. Peshito calls it the outer tabernacle. *Service*, as in v. 1, on which see above. It means divine service, and is so explained by our translators. The verse says the priests went always, that is daily or continually, into this fore tabernacle. They had daily duties there. After a while the priests were by lot divided off into classes, called courses, so that the presence of all was not every day required; but this does not appear to have been done till after the death of King Saul, 1 Chron. 24: 1-31; Luke 1: 5.

7. *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.* The *second* means the second apartment of the tabernacle, the holy of holies. Peshito calls it the interior tabernacle. Into this none but the high priest dared to enter or even look. Nor did he go there but once a year, on the great day of atonement, Lev. 16: 23-34. He went always with blood, which according to the law he first offered for himself, and then for the errors of the people. It is probable he entered the holy place but twice on the great day of atonement. Philo says it was death to him to go in three or four times, though some Rabbins say he went in so often as four times. But some think that he went in thrice, once with the golden censer, once with blood for his own sins, and once with blood for the sins of the people. See Lev. 16: 12-15. This word rendered errors occurs no where else in the New Testament, though we have its cognates. If it be taken strictly, it points to sins of ignorance. This was one class of offences, for which an atonement might be made. The others were acts of ceremonial pollution and offences admitting of restitution. But for pride, unbelief, presumption, covetousness, lewdness, murder, etc., no atonement could be made by the priest, Num. 15: 30, 31; Ps. 51: 16; Heb. 10: 28. Some, however, prefer to use the word errors in a general sense, as comprehending all acts, for which a sin-offering might be made; and some regard it as including all sin. Kidd explains it as meaning all sins, which are not presumptuous,

and refers to Num. 15: 30; Ps. 19: 13. This service by the high priest had a meaning:

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.* Two leading views are taken of this verse. One, by first tabernacle, understands the fore tabernacle through which the high priest entered the second; and by holiest of all, it understands the holy of holies in the temple. If this is the sense, the verse asserts a fact—a simple fact, which was well known to the Jews, but which declared, showed or signified nothing; whereas the verse says that the Holy Ghost taught us a lesson, signified some thing thereby. Every one knows that there was a vail to the most holy place in all the days of the tabernacle and temple. McLean: "According to this the sense would be, that by the exclusion of the people and ordinary priests from the inner apartment of the tabernacle, the Holy Spirit signified, that the way into the inner apartment was not made manifest while its outer apartment was yet standing. But this is to make the sign signify itself." Thus we reach only a lame conclusion. The verse is thus reduced to a truism, but one that has no force. The other view supposes that by the first tabernacle standing we are to understand the whole service connected with that structure, a service approved and blessed of God; and that as long as it stood or was of force, it was both efficacious and significant as far as it claimed to be. When Christ came and suffered, both its efficacy and significance ceased. This view requires us by holiest of all to understand heaven itself. In favor of this view it may be stated that the original is not holiest of all, but literally the holies; and that the same word in the same form is rendered sanctuary in Heb. 8: 2; 9: 2. In the first of these we have seen that it clearly means heaven itself. In v. 12 of this chapter the very same word beyond a doubt means heaven, though it is rendered holy place. See also Heb. 10: 19. Then the connection is thus best preserved. If this is the correct exposition then what we learn is this, that by closing the holy of holies in the temple against all but the high priest, the Holy Ghost taught us that if we would enter into the very presence of God himself, we must believe in that great High Priest, who hath entered by his own blood, and at the offering of whose soul and body the vail of the temple was rent in twain, thus teaching us that we may, each for himself, draw nigh unto God, yea, come boldly unto the throne of the heavenly grace. The apostle continues his argument concerning the service of the first tabernacle:

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.* The word rendered figure is not type, as in Rom. 5 : 14 ; but parable, as in Heb. 11 : 19 ; that is a similitude, or mystic instruction by symbol. In the whole temple service earthly things were employed to teach us heavenly things. In the time of these ritual services, there were offered both gifts and sacrifices. These terms have occurred more than once before we reached this chapter. See above on Heb. 5 : 1. Compare Heb. 8 : 3, 4. The phrase doubtless includes all the offerings made under the law by the priest. The defect of the Mosaic institute was not that it did not abound in sacrifices ; but that none of them were great enough to satisfy divine justice, or to meet the demands of an enlightened conscience. Stuart renders the phrase thus—"that cannot fully accomplish what is needed in regard to the conscience." In his exposition he paraphrases it as meaning that these gifts and offerings were not able "to render the mind of the worshipper secure of pardon for sin, and to produce that quiet which was connected with a well grounded persuasion of this, and that moral purification which must accompany it." The fact is that a conscience well enlightened as to the nature, guilt and enormity of sin never was satisfied with any sacrifice less than that of Calvary. For long ages men have been offering gold, and silver, and beasts, and even human sacrifices, and yet the conscience clamors as loud as ever for some adequate satisfaction to law and justice. Nor can its demands ever be met but by the blood of the Son of God. Guilt is a load too heavy to be consciously borne without anguish, and too fearful to be purged or satisfactorily put away but by a divine sufferer. The enlightened conscience never rested in the ordinances of that service,

10. Which stood *only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.* There is much difficulty in rightly construing this passage. The general sense is clear ; but the grammar is difficult. Our translators supply the words *which stood* at the beginning of the verse, but this does not determine the antecedent of which. Some make which refer to gifts and sacrifices. But this leads to confusion, perhaps to absurdity. Perhaps the best way of getting at the sense is to understand the apostle as still speaking of ordinances of divine service, as in v. 1. These consisted somewhat in meats and drinks, etc. Then the word *only* belongs to the last clause—the ordinances consisted in these things only until the time of the reformation, or until gospel times. This change is admissible. Then instead of *in* some would read *besides*. Of such a use of the word we have many examples, Matt. 25 : 20, 22 ; Luke 3 : 20 ; 16 :

26; Eph. 6:16; Col. 3:14, etc. See the lexicons. Nor is this all. Our translation seems to put meats, drinks, washings and ordinances all in the same case, whereas they are all in the dative except the last, which in the best copies is in the nominative. So most uncial manuscripts. Nor is there in several good editions any conjunction connecting ordinances with washings. If these readings and renderings are admitted, then we have this sense: There were, besides meats and drinks and divers washings, carnal ordinances, which were to continue only until the new covenant should be introduced. This is a good sense, falls in well with the scope and context, and makes the apostle utter nothing, which is not literally true in the obvious sense. The greatest difficulty is in making *only* qualify the last clause. But Stuart well says: "The *intention* of the writer seems to be the best guide; for, interpret as you please, the grammatical difficulties are about the same." By meats and drinks some understand meat-offerings and drink-offerings, and in proof refer to Ex. 29:40, 41; Lev. 3:16; Num. 15:4-10, and like passages. This might be admissible, but these things were gifts and sacrifices, already mentioned, whereas the apostle seems to be going on to speak of things additional. It is, therefore, best by meats and drinks to understand the distinction of meats as clean and unclean, and the distinction between drinks for the priests and their families, and drinks for ordinary worshippers. Most of the passages relating to the wine have just been referred to. See also Lev. 10:9, 10. Some of those referring to clean and unclean food are Gen. 7:2; 8:20; Lev. 11:2-47; 20:25, 26; Ezek. 22:26; 44:23; Luke 11:41; Acts 11:5-10. From these passages we learn these truths: 1, the distinction of clean and unclean was not first made in the days of Moses, but went back at least to the time of Noah. It was probably known to Adam and Enoch. There never was a time when one might lawfully sacrifice a dog or a swine unto the Lord. From the table of the Lord, the distinction was easily introduced to the tables of men. 2. Another truth brought to light by these passages is that the distinction of meats into clean and unclean is now wholly abolished. The divers washings were the many ablutions performed by priests and people. There were washings prescribed for ordinary priests, for the high priest, for lepers who were healed, for the people, and for garments, Exod. 29:4; 30:19-21; 40:12; Lev. 6:27; 13:54, 58; 14:8, 9; 17:16; Deut. 21:6, and parallel passages. Sampson: "The Bible reader needs scarcely to be reminded that these various washings of the Levitical law were chiefly by affusion." Carnal ordinances, literally ordinances of the flesh, were such as cleansed men from cere-

monial defilement, but did not set the soul free from guilt, nor ease the conscience of distress. These carnal ordinances were *imposed*, did press, or lay as a burden on the people. This is according to the saying of the apostle of the circumcision: "Why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" Acts 15: 10. Yet this burden was not designed to be perpetual, but only to the time of the reformation, that is, until Christ should by his authority abolish them. Peshito, Tyndale, Cranmer, Genevan, Stuart and Craik read reformation; but Wiclif, Rheims and Doway have correction. The Doway in a note explains it as the time "when Christ should correct and settle all things." This is the sense of the clause.

11. *But Christ being come a 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;*

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.* Paul here asserts that the time of the reformation has arrived. He and those whom he was addressing agreed that Christ had already come. The proofs of his messiahship were complete. In the early part of this epistle Paul had shown that Christ was a High Priest, just such as was needed by men. It is not necessary to spend much time in enquiring whether by good things to come Paul means good things promised to the ancient church, or good things yet future to the Christian church. For Christ is the author of all blessings hoped for by both ancient and modern believers. Yet there is no objection to that saying of Braunius: "The good things were future as long as Christ was future." A High Priest of good things is an unusual phrase, evidently Hebraistic, but very expressive of the fact that they are all the fruit of his priesthood, and that his office in the church is benevolent and productive of beneficial results to men. The tabernacle in which Christ officiates is *greater* and *more perfect* than that in which Aaron and his sons served. It is not of the same material, nor was it built by the same architect, for it was not built by any created hand, but by Jehovah himself. McLean: "It is clear that the holy place into which Christ hath entered with his oblation, and of which he is the minister, is the highest heaven, where God displays his immediate and glorious presence, and which was typified by the holy of holies in the tabernacle and temple. Neither does Christ offer as did the Aaronic priests. They brought in the blood of *goats* and *calves*, and of other clean animals, all of which were senseless and irrational creatures. But Christ presented his own blood,

called by Peter his precious blood, and by Paul the blood of God, Acts 20: 28. So perfect and indissoluble is the union of Christ's two natures in his one person that we fitly speak of him as a divine sufferer. For reconciliation nothing is comparable to the blood of Christ. It is of priceless worth, of infinite value. Verses 11 and 12 have been thrown together here because Christ in v. 11 is nominative to the verb rendered *entered in* in v. 12. The holy place is heaven itself, the sanctuary above; and not Christ's body as some have contended; for he did not enter his body with blood of atonement. The word rendered *once* means once for all, once and not several times. Christ's one oblation was enough. By it he obtained for us eternal redemption, ransoming or deliverance by paying a price. It is called eternal, because it will never be out of date, never need to be repeated, and will be followed by everlasting happy effects. No doubt the apostle here alludes to the ceremonies prescribed for the day of atonement, fully stated in Lev. 16: 2-34. On that day the high priest was first for himself and for his house to bring a young bullock, in the Septuagint called a calf, for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering; and, having sacrificed them, he was to take two kids or young goats, and casting lots upon them he was to slay the one and carry its blood within the vail and sprinkle it upon the mercy-seat with his finger seven times. Then he was to lay both his hands on the other goat and confess over him all the sins, iniquities and transgression of Israel. This goat was declared to bear upon him all the sins of the people, as he went into a land not inhabited. This was to the ancient church the gospel of God's mercy, showing them how by substitution one might bear the sins of others. One remark is here called for: the types, which to us give such vivid conceptions and apt illustrations of the saving truths of the gospel, and, in particular, of the plan of salvation by a Redeemer, are to us far more clear and impressive than they could well have been to the ancient people of God. When a complicated lock with many wards and bars is presented to us and we look at it alone, we are chiefly occupied with its intricacy. But when we get the key and see how every part is adapted to use, and how simple is the whole invention, we cease to dwell on the intricacies, and are delighted with the ingenuity of the inventor and with the usefulness of his invention. A good riddle and a good parable are plain enough when you know the intent and explanation of them. Pharaoh's dreams, which perplexed him so much, were clear enough after Joseph interpreted them for him. The apostle further presses his argument:

13. *For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh;*

14. *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?* As these verses are very precious, and contain the strongest kind of argument, it may be pleasant and useful to have them repeated in the Peshito version: For if the blood of goats and calves, with the ashes of a heifer, was sprinkled upon them that were defiled, and sanctified them as to the purification of their flesh; then how much more will the blood of the Messiah, who by the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purge our conscience from dead works, so that we may serve the living God? Probably no respectable translation of these verses fails to present the glorious truth of salvation by the blood of the one sacrifice of Calvary. The author has with care compared all the renderings within his reach, and not one of them fails to announce the way of life by a Redeemer. In remarking on v. 12 an explanation was given of one solemn service in which the blood of bulls and goats was employed in sacrifice. But bulls were often slain in sacrifice, Num. 29:23 and many passages. The same is true of goats, Gen. 15:9; Lev. 3:12, etc. In all cases the general design and meaning were the same. But the affair of the heifer needs some explanation. See Num. 19:2-9. The whole process of the sacrifice and ceremony is given in terms very clear, and need not be here inserted. The slaying of a heifer as recorded in Deut. 21:3-8 was for another purpose. That here alluded to was for cleansing those who were ceremonially defiled, as by touching a dead body. The animal was to be a heifer; Wiclif, cow-calf; Cranmer, yong cow. Her color was to be pure red. She must never have worn a yoke. She was taken without the camp, and slain in the presence of the priest. Her blood was then sprinkled before the tabernacle. Then the entire animal including the skin and bowels were burned, the priest casting hyssop, and scarlet, and cedar wood into the fire that was reducing her to ashes. Then one ceremonially clean gathered up the ashes of the heifer, and laid them away in a clean place. This is expressly called a purification for sin. The ashes were mingled with water, and so sprinkled upon persons ceremonially defiled; and thus they were re-admitted to the congregation. Otherwise they were wholly excluded. This rite relieved the conscience of no guilt. It quieted no fears arising from breaches of the moral law. It merely purified the flesh, and so rendered men fit for the outward worship of God. This *was* something. It showed God's readiness to treat with sinners. It *signified* more. It told us that if the flesh could be cleansed, so could the soul. If blood and ashes

and pure water could make one ceremonially fit for the congregation of the Lord, *how much more*, literally by how much more shall actual remission of legal guilt be removed by the blood-shedding of Calvary? The argument is of the strongest species known. Christ's blood was actually shed. The victim died. Without the shedding of blood there was no remission. His death was wholly and every way voluntary. It was not forced upon him. He delighted to do and suffer the whole will of God for our salvation. Our verse says Christ offered himself. That is true. Many Scriptures assert the same. His whole person made the offering. That which he offered was his entire human nature. His body died and his soul was also a sacrifice for sin, Isa. 53:10; Matt. 26:38. The altar which sanctified the offering and gave it incalculable worth was his divinity. Our verse says he offered himself *through the eternal Spirit*. What does that mean? Wiclif, bi the holi goost; Vulgate, Rheims and Doway, through [or by] the Holy Ghost; Stuart, by an eternal Spirit. Some of the opinions brought forward are strange and hardly claim much attention. Such is the view taken by Grotius, Rosenmuller, and Koppe, that by the eternal Spirit we are to understand Christ's endless life, by which he differs from all the sacrifices ever before offered. This seems to be Hammond's view also. It is true that Christ dieth no more. It is as true that it was not possible for him to be holden of the bands of death. It is no less true that he abideth a priest continually, after the power of an endless life, Heb. 7:3, 16. But by eternal Spirit to understand immortal life is taking a liberty with scripture wholly unwarranted. The places sometimes adduced by no means bear out the view contended for. For, a like reason we must reject the opinion of some that by the eternal Spirit we are to understand the glorified person of our Lord. Want of usage must lead to the conclusion that this cannot be the sense. After his resurrection Christ carefully instructed his disciples that he was not a spirit, Luke 24:39. And after his ascension our Lord still had human nature entire. He has it still, Rev. 5:6, 9. Nor can we with any more show of truth understand with Nosselt the unending efficacy of Christ's offering for sin. What part of scripture would warrant us in giving such a meaning to the word Spirit? As little can be said in favor of the view of Stuart that by eternal Spirit is meant Christ's heavenly condition. It requires great violence in the use of language to make eternal Spirit mean any such thing. It is a noticeable fact that the same difficulties are found in the interpretation of Rom. 1:4. There remain two other modes of explaining the terms, either of which gives a good

sense, though they are not alike eligible. The first is that by the eternal Spirit is meant the Holy Ghost. In favor of this view we have the versions above cited and the opinion of Calvin, Erasmus, Bengel, Tong, Cornelius a Lapide, Owen, Tillotson, Doddridge, Thorndike, Macknight, Scott, Clarke, Fell, Tait, Moll, Knowles, Patterson, Kidd, Lindsay, and McCheyne. This view is supported by some manuscripts, which read holy not eternal. It gives a good sense; for the Holy Spirit was granted to the man Christ Jesus without measure, Isa. 11:2, 3; 61:1-3; Luke 4:16-21; John 1:32; 3:34. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost; he was wonderfully taught and made to grow in favor with God and good men by the same Spirit. The great end of Christ's mission into the world was to offer himself a sacrifice, Ps. 40:6, 7. It was the great event in his history. Perhaps none will deny that he was by the Holy Ghost greatly strengthened and prepared for suffering as well as for teaching. See Owen on the Spirit, Book II., chapters III. IV. The other interpretation of the phrase eternal Spirit is that which by it understands the divine nature of our Lord. This is supported by a great army of commentators, as Beza, Diodati, Vitringa, Braunius, Aretius, Limborch, Carpozov, Capell, Calov, Grotius, Outrein, Wolf, Gouge, Dutch Annotations, Gill, Assembly's Annotations, Cranmer, Ernesti, Duncan, Bloomfield, Peirce, Bull, Pool, Burkitt, McLean, Peile, Ripley and F. S. Sampson. In favor of this latter view we find such arguments as these. Some think Christ is called a Spirit, in 2 Cor. 3:17. He is surely so called in 1 Cor. 15:45. Then in the constitution of his person he has a true body and a reasonable soul—human nature entire—a nature created, born, weak. Neither Christ's body nor soul was eternal. Both were of time. The true divinity of our Lord is abundantly taught in Scripture. He is the eternal Son of God. God is a Spirit. The object of the apostle in this place is to set forth the exceeding great worth of the blood of Christ. The indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the man Christ Jesus would indeed show him to be holy. Yet the same Spirit dwells in all the saints; but that in no wise would make the shedding of their blood a fit offering for sin. If the greatest created angel, who has never sinned, had been allowed to take on him our nature, and in that nature to die, it would not have redeemed a soul. His dignity was not such as to give infinite value to his death. Paul is showing the want of high value in the blood of bulls and goats, and the amazing value of Christ's blood-shedding. The objector might say, The blood of Christ was human and how could it redeem? Paul answers that his human nature was indeed entire, but that it was offered

by or through his divine nature—the eternal Spirit. In other words his divinity was the altar, which sanctified the offering of his soul and body, and imparted to his sacrifice infinite worth. No wonder that he, who was the eternal Spirit, should be the author of eternal salvation and eternal redemption, Heb. 5:9; 9:12. The language of this verse is remarkable. The central truth is that Christ *offered himself*. No one else offered him, nor did he offer anything but himself. He brought no kid or lamb or bullock. He brought his whole human nature. He offered himself *to God*, not to popular prejudice, nor to any theatrical effect, nor to any but the offended God of heaven—the Judge of all. He offered himself to God *without spot*. Neither friend nor foe, neither God nor man saw any defect in him. To this day human wickedness and ingenuity have found no blemish in him. The eternal Father twice pronounced aloud from heaven, “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” Then he did all this by or *through his divine nature*, giving to all infinite value. No wonder that such blood should *purge the conscience from dead works*—from works performed by us while we are dead in trespasses and sins—works which justly cause death—evil works—sins, which justly expose the sinner to God’s wrath and curse. The blood of Christ, however, does not set a man free from the curse of the law that he may live as he lists, but that he may *serve the living God*. The service here specified is God’s worship, in which all right acts and thoughts towards him have scope and exercise. Well may it be so, for he is the living God, that is, the true God, the God that lives and reigns for ever.

#### DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL REMARKS.

1. There is no religion, where there is no worship, v. 1. Genuine piety will express itself in acts of devotion. If men are partakers of the divine nature they will not shun divine service.

2. There can be no joint or public worship without some rites, forms, or ceremonies, v. 1. These may be very simple and appropriate, or they may be gaudy and pompous. But there must be some such observances, else men cannot be co-worshippers. Even the quietists have usages, which are rites. All ceremonies in religion should be decent and scriptural.

3. It is a mercy that we, who have the true religion, should have ordinances of worship, v. 1. We should conform to the dispensation under which we live, and thus fulfil all righteousness.

4. The gospel far excels the law, as in doctrine so in worship. The peculiar glory of gospel worship is in its simplicity

and in its constantly demanding the power of the Holy Spirit. God seeks worship where the soul is enlisted, and this is never done but by the Holy Ghost.

5. It is a kindness in God to teach us the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven in prophecy and preaching, in song and saying, in precept and promise, in narrative and epistle, in parable and similitude. The tabernacle and its furniture was helpful to the church of old, and is helpful to the gospel church, vs. 1-5. In all these ways God displayed unsearchable wisdom, mightily strengthened the faith of his people, cleared up their understanding and kept alive their hopes. It cannot be shown that the types and shadows will not aid the redeemed even after they reach their heavenly home. There may be more senses than one, in which they are patterns of things in the heavens.

6. If the worldly sanctuary was so glorious as inspired writers of both Testaments declare it to be, how much more so is the gospel with its clear truths and simple worship, vs. 1-5. The old dispensation has fully ended; but all the truths it taught are yet more clearly revealed under the new. Calvin: "The sanctuary was indeed in itself earthly, and is rightly reckoned among earthly elements; nevertheless it was heavenly as to its significancy." Blessed be God, we know by the gospel what that significancy was. Moreover we have the plan of salvation revealed in plain and simple terms well understood by all, who are taught from heaven.

7. Ordinances of divine service are given us under the gospel, and we have sanctuaries also. "Many of them, indeed, are to the eye humble fabrics. Nor are we required to clothe them with splendor. Christian worship, in its noblest and most characteristic form, is a simple and spiritual thing. That typical design, which God required to be embodied in the very fabric where he chose to dwell, is required no more in sanctuaries erected for his service. Christianity, too, is a missionary faith, and demands a large proportion of what we can afford of earthly substance for the diffusion of its glorious truths. Still it is meet that sanctuaries, and graceful sanctuaries too, should rear their heads in honor of the Lord, and welcome worshippers within their walls." God complained not of the Jews for building themselves comfortable houses; but when they had done so, it showed a contempt of religion that his house should lie waste, Hag. 1:4. No doubt the enemy of souls would have a malignant joy if every house of Christian worship were mean and comfortless. He is probably not less willing to see the rich erecting costly and splendid edifices and then so arranging the management of them as effectually to exclude the poor.

8. God's worship has always been so arranged as to teach us the necessity of light. In the tabernacle was the candlestick, v. 2. The word of God has always been a light to his people. Jesus Christ is the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. God has never encouraged ignorance of his nature or of his will. Ignorance is the mother of superstition and falsehood, never the mother of a devotion pleasing to God. When God would make a world, he said, Let there be light, and when he would make a new world, he says the same. Yea, he sends the Sun of righteousness with healing in his wings; and the people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up. Heaven itself is gloriously luminous. The Lamb is the light thereof.

9. God feeds and sustains his people. There is always bread in his house, v. 2. The gospel is a feast of fat things. It seems incredible that so many poor prodigals will feed on husks, when in their Father's house is bread enough and to spare. And *such* bread! Jesus is the bread of life.

10. God has from the first expressed great delight in hearty believing prayer. It is to him as sweet odors are to men. He has pleasure in those that call on his name out of a pure heart and fervently. All this was represented by the golden censer, v. 4. God wills that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands without wrath or doubting. Oh that there was more prayer in the world! It is a mighty power in the earth. It has subdued kingdoms. No doubt the censer in the high priest's hands specially signified the intercession of Christ; but he and his people pray for the same things. Their prayers are fruitless, if they are counter to his, or if they are not united with his. Our devotions, like our persons, have acceptance solely by his mediation. "It is when the arrow of our prayers is put into the bow of Christ's intercession that it pierces the very heavens."

11. The ark of the covenant was undoubtedly a type of Christ. This is generally confessed, though it is nowhere so declared in God's word. The scriptures of the New Testament do not claim to have explained all that was typical in the Old. It is enough for us to know that the old dispensation as a whole was a shadow of good things to come. We are left to apply that truth in sobriety and humility to all we read. In the tabernacle was no structure so sacred or so valuable as the ark. It was the first thing made for the tabernacle. It was very dangerous for any but the priests to handle it. Remember Uzzah. Eli could bear the saddest message borne to paternal love, but when he heard that the ark

was taken, he gave up the ghost. When the ark was brought into the camp of Israel in a battle with the Philistines, all Israel gave such a shout, that the earth rang again; and the Philistines said, God is come into their camp. Wo unto us, 1 Sam. 4:7. Brown of Haddington: "Was not the ark typical of Christ? How excellent and glorious his person! how marvellous the union of his natures! His Father's law was in his heart; he is the delightful rest of his Father; the great centre of all religious worship, and means of our familiar intercourse with God; the matter of both Testaments, and the wonder of angels, ministers and saints." See a remarkable statement in Rev. 11:19. McCheyne: "As the ark was the main thing in the Tabernacle, so Christ is the main thing in the Gospel; and as the ark was the glory of Israel, so is Christ the glory of his people Israel. . . Have you received Christ?" He has all God's treasures hid in him.

12. As the shew-bread declared the abundant provision of God's house, so the manna distinctly set forth Christ as the true bread from heaven, v. 4. This is the Saviour's own exposition of that corn of heaven, that food of angels, John 6:27-58. To carnal men and arch hypocrites and vain pretenders to piety this doctrine is as offensive, as when our Lord proclaimed it, John 6:66. Shall we then cease to insist upon it? By no means. It is the life of the world. If men hear and obey the invitation to believe in Jesus, they shall live. If they eat not this bread they must die. That this is not a misapplication seems clear from Christ's message to the church at Pergamos: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna," Rev. 2:17.

13. It ought mightily to encourage us that the same God, who made Aaron's rod to bud, can bring to pass the most improbable events, v. 4. Gouge: "God can make dry things to flourish." All things are possible with God. He, who judges by appearances alone, will often be deceived. If God says he will do a thing, it is both foolish and wicked to doubt his word. If he has done a thing once, it is proof that he can do it again.

14. The connection of angels with the work and church of Christ has been already noticed at some length. See Comment and Remarks on Heb. 1:6, 7. It may be added that angels of the highest order are in scripture often represented as having the liveliest interest in the affairs of Christ's kingdom. This is shadowed forth by the posture of the cherubim over the ark, to which some think Peter alludes, when he says the angels desire to look into the mysteries of the gospel. It is expressly declared in Isa. 6:1-8, and in several parallel texts. The cherubim were put as the guards at Paradise, to prevent man's return to Eden. They

have never failed in any work assigned them. Lindsay: "They surround God's throne above. They perform his pleasure. They are perfectly obedient to his law." They delight to do his will.

15. In all branches of theological truth we find nothing more precious than that which relates to the mercy-seat or propitiatory. The ancient church knew nothing more venerable than the holy of holies. There the ark rested, v. 4. The tables of the law in it held forth the great principles of the divine government. They were never changed. The visible glory rested on the lid of the ark containing these laws. Every thing pointed to submission to God's authority, which was founded in justice and in a plenty of judgment. The lid of the ark covered with gold was the mercy-seat. From over it God spake to his prophet Moses. Whenever approached it was sprinkled with the blood of expiation. This was God's throne. Thence pardon was issued to Israel, and that nation was authoritatively admitted to a public and acceptable worship.

16. Well is it for us that provision is made for removing the errors of the people, v. 7. What was done ceremonially under the law is done literally under the gospel. What was typical then is given to us in the death of Christ. As none but the high priest could enter the holy of holies in the tabernacle, "so none but Christ could enter into heaven, in his own name, by his own right, and by his own merits." Dutch Annotations: "Sins are called errors, because all sins (except the sin against the Holy Ghost) are always joined with some error of the understanding."

17. If we take verses 1-9 in connection, they clearly bring out these truths. "First, the arrangements for the Hebrew service referred to are ascribed to the Holy Spirit; consequently their divine origin is implied. Secondly, they are said to have been intended to indicate a most important truth; their symbolical and typical character therefore is affirmed. Thirdly, the truth which the legal institution here mentioned was designed to teach is, not that during the Mosaic dispensation there was no knowledge of a future state of happiness or of the method of attaining it, but only that the way to it was not yet made manifest." Fourthly, it is our duty to study what the Holy Ghost *signifies*. He has taught us nothing which it does not behoove us to learn. Voluntary ignorance of these lessons is impiety. The Spirit of God has always been the teacher of the church; nor does Jehovah ever pronounce a more dreadful sentence than this: "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." Fifthly, the personality of the Holy Spirit is here clearly implied—implied in such a way as to make the strongest kind of argument. Like proofs are given in John

14: 16, 17, 26; 15: 26; 16: 7-14. Sixthly, while we are not at liberty to indulge a roving imagination in regard to any portion of scripture—the types in particular—it cannot safely be questioned that the minuteness with which the tabernacle, its furniture and the rites to be observed were prescribed had a spiritual import. Some of these things are already pretty well understood by the intelligent. Further study may give us more light. It is not impossible that in heaven itself many things which are now dark may be wonderfully cleared up. In the meantime we are always safe in going as far as the inspired writers go; but where they decline to speak of them *particularly*, we ought to be very modest in our interpretation. Seventhly, beyond all doubt the Christian dispensation has great advantages over all that went before it. This is explicitly declared in verse 8, and is implied in the whole argument. When men understood that the sacrifices of bulls and goats had no real expiating power, but were mere types of the great sacrifice to come, they sufficiently discerned the way of salvation, though it was through a glass darkly. But under the gospel we are informed directly that the shedding of the blood of Christ is a full propitiation. It was by some just apprehension of the true intent of sacrifices that Abel and Enoch, Noah and Abram, and all the saints of old were able by faith to lay hold on the great sacrifice of Calvary. Eighthly, we do but pervert the institutions of God, when we deny to the law a typical character. Those *ordinances* were not without their value. Yet to rest in them is a fatal mistake. Doddridge: “Since it is so expressly said that the Holy Ghost signified in some degree the great and important doctrines of the gospel by the constitution of the Jewish ritual; let us think of that ritual, whatever obscurity may attend it in part, with a becoming esteem; and pursue it with a view to that great antitype, who is in every sense the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” Nor need the rich variety of figures under which the Saviour is presented to us produce in us any confusion. If not overstrained, they all harmonize.

18. One of the most blessed fruits of the mediation of Christ is its happy effect upon the conscience, vs. 9, 14. Nor was anything more necessary in the gospel plan than some adequate provision for setting the soul free from the horrors of guilt. McCheyne: “The worth of a man’s religion may be estimated by this—what does it do for his conscience? True religion is this—to give perfection to the conscience.” Good writers on the subject speak of the following kinds of conscience—a doubting conscience, one that is not clear respecting duty. This needs light and instruction. Then some have a scrupulous conscience, which shows itself by

hesitancy in clear cases. It is morbid, and, like a diseased eye, is pained by the light itself. There is also an evil conscience, which is governed by wrong principles, or is defiled with unpardoned sin. Sometimes an evil conscience is so blinded as to call evil good and good, evil. Then it becomes stupid and after a while obtuse and even seared as with a hot iron. But a conscience in every sense good is enlightened, firm, tender, guileless and simple, submissive to the law, and sprinkled with the blood of Christ. Since the fall, no conscience is good unless it is cleansed from guilt by the great sacrifice of the cross. This done, the Holy Ghost becomes a comforter, and bears witness with the soul that peace is made with God—that Jehovah is reconciled, Acts 15 : 8 ; Eph. 1 : 13, 14. We cannot come too frequently to the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. Miller: "If God's people fall into sin, it is not while they are eyeing the perfection of Christ's righteousness, but when they lose sight of it." All the ordinances of Israel, however observed, could do no more than set one free from ceremonial guilt and free one from temporal judgments. They reached not the conscience. They did procure a legal purification, and an outward acceptance, the flesh only being thereby purified. "The tranquillizing of the conscience is the end of all sacrifices. The more the conscience was awakened, the less could sacrifices appease it." This can be done perfectly by the blood of Jesus. Is it not wonderful that while "the ancient world is crying out for a Reconciler; the modern world will not have him," when he is come?

19. Let us not cease to give thanks to God that we are delivered from the burdens *imposed* on the ancient church—burdens which none could bear, v. 10. The time of the *reformation* has long since come. Let us use our liberty as not abusing it.

20. Great is the priesthood of Christ, v. 11. It is conducted in a greater and more glorious tabernacle than was ever erected in the wilderness, or anywhere else on this earth. It was heavenly. His sacrifice was the greatest ever made—the only one that ever satisfied divine justice, or met the demands of God's perfect and infinite law. His intercession is also the most glorious. It is conducted with boundless authority and unfailing success. It can save any for whom it is made. The priest himself is the most glorious and perfect. He counts it not robbery to be equal with God. He is God, as well as man. He is worshipped by every creature in heaven. He mediates alone. Of the people none is found with him. He needs no help. He has no helper. Then he is so tender, so compassionate. He could not be more so. "The bitter cross has revealed that heart of love." Aaron and his suc-

cessors offered sacrifices every year for long centuries ; but Jesus by one offering made full and perfect atonement. It is admitted that the temple service, especially in the days of Solomon, was splendid and gorgeous. But all the glory of that service was no more compared with the glory of the service in heaven than a candle is glorious compared with the sun.

21. Glad are the tidings that *Christ is come*, v. 11. His coming caused such songs to be sung by a heavenly choir over the plains of Bethlehem as never before or since were heard by mortals. Blessed be God for such historic truth. Christ's coming was the signal for peace on earth, good-will to men, and glory to God in the highest. He is not only come, but he is come a High Priest of *good things*—the best things that mortals can possess, or hope for. They are "all the good things which were to come during the Old Testament and are now come under the New ; all the good things yet to come and to be enjoyed in the gospel state, when the promises and prophecies made to the gospel church in the latter days shall be accomplished ; and all the good things to come in the heavenly state, which will perfect both the Testaments."

22. Redemption is eternal, v. 12. It is never to be repeated. It is never to lose its power to bless. It is perfect. Ashbel Green often said : "God hath put more honor on his law by the death of his Son, than if the whole race of Adam had endured its penalty to all eternity in hell." He was right. Man could never magnify the law either in obeying its precept, or in enduring its penalty. Jesus Christ in both these ways magnified it, and made it honorable. Our redemption was "deliverance from the power and punishment of sin, deliverance from hell and the pains of the second death. It is called eternal, because the misery from which it rescues would have lasted for ever. Its consequences are eternal. It is a blessing which nothing can render abortive." Duncan : "This redemption purchased by Christ is everywhere spoken of as being by price. And that price was his own blood, which had its value from the union of the divine nature with the human, by which it became the blood of God, Acts 20:28. And by virtue of the payment of this price, the guilt of sin, the meritorious cause of our captivity, was expiated, an atonement was made to God the supreme Governor and Judge ; the curse of the law, the chains which held the captives, was removed, and the power of Satan was broken." Stuart admits that redemption means "liberation from the penalty due to sin, or redemption from the bondage and penalty of sin. . . Christ removes the penalty to which the sinner was obnoxious," etc. Patterson :

“Redemption means deliverance by price.” See Matt. 20:28; 1 Cor. 6:20; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; 1 Pet. 1:18, 19. Gill gives a remarkable passage from the paraphrase of Jonathan ben Uzziel on Gen. 49:18, “Jaiiah said, when he saw Gideon the son of Joash, and Sampson the son of Manoah, who should be redeemers; not for the redemption of Gideon am I waiting, nor for the redemption of Sampson am I looking, for theirs is a temporal redemption; but for thy redemption am I waiting and looking, O Lord, because thy redemption is an everlasting redemption.”

23. While the law did something, it pointed to something far better, vs. 13, 14. Under the law the high priest did two things—1, he made the people ceremonially clean; 2, he pointed to Christ the High Priest of the Christian profession. But the efficacy of Christ’s one great oblation consists in setting us free from the curse of the law, purifying our consciences from guilt, and delivering us from the power of iniquity.

24. No marvel that the people of God so firmly hold the doctrine of Christ’s divinity, v. 14. If he were not divine, he was not the eternal spirit, and his sufferings could not avail for us more than the sufferings of any other innocent creature. No man with any just sense of his sins could ever be brought safely to rely on an arm of flesh, on the merits of a mere creature. But in Christ the vilest may safely trust for eternal life. God has commanded us to do so. God has in the most public manner declared his acceptance of the death of Christ as an all-sufficient sacrifice. And we risk nothing in saying that the oblation of Christ, on account of his personal innocence and his supreme divinity, was every way worthy of God’s declared estimate of it. The beloved disciple is not rash, but he is very bold in saying, God is faithful and just in forgiving our sins, 1 John 1:10. And as God had appointed his Son to the very work assigned him, nothing could be wanting to the completeness and acceptance of the atonement he made.

25. Nor let any of us forget that Christ offered himself, v. 14. He laid down his own life; no man took it from him, John 10:18. He poured out his soul unto death, Isa. 53:12. Christ’s death was not forced upon him. Having loved his own, he loved them to the end is the scriptural account of all he endured. He died as a sin-bearer. “The Lord laid on him the iniquities of us all.” “He bare the sin of many.” “He his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree.” “He once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust.” Here let our faith rest for ever. Well does an anonymous writer on this epistle say: “The ruin of religion lies in the slight thoughts of men about the blood of Christ.” Duncan: “The blood of the sacrifice only atoned, though the whole sacrifice being

offered to God gave it that efficacy ; so the blood of Christ atones, but it derives its virtue from the offering which he made of himself."

26. It ought greatly to affect us that by Jesus Christ we are saved from *dead works*, v. 14. And we should be exceedingly careful not to put our trust in dead works. All such confidence is vain. Because we are all by nature dead in trespasses and sins, all works of law performed by us are dead works. They fall short of the just requirements of the moral law. They proceed from sinful hearts. They earn not life. Patterson: "Dead works are, obviously, sinful works, and are so called as being vile, corrupt, and mischievous." To be purged from dead works is to have the soul cleansed from the guilt and power of sin. This is a great work and a great wonder. McCheyne: "You cannot serve God with an unpurged conscience. You must get your conscience washed, sinners, or you will never serve the living God." How can the soul, sensible of its guilt and ruin, serve a God, to whom it has not been reconciled by atoning blood?

27. It is a glorious truth that our God is the *living God*, v. 14. He is not a man that he should lie. He is not a dead man, as many of the heathen deities were, nor dead stone, or wood, or brass, or silver, or gold, as were the lying vanities of the Gentiles, He lives for ever and ever. He is the source and author of all life in the universe.

## CHAPTER IX.

VERSES 15-28.

CHRIST'S BLOOD-SHEDDING NECESSARY. THIS IS AN OLD DOCTRINE. CHRIST NOW IN HEAVEN. HIS ONE OFFERING ENOUGH. HE SHALL APPEAR AGAIN.

15 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.

16 For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.

17 For a testament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.

18 Whereupon neither the first *testament* was dedicated without blood.

19 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,

20 Saying, This *is* the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you.

21 Moreover he sprinkled likewise with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry.

22 And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

23 *It was* therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, *which are* the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;

26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment :

28 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.

**H**AVING shown the superiority of the gospel over the law, our apostle goes on to speak of other things closely connected therewith, and first the death of Christ.

15. *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.* For this cause, that is because of the wondrous efficacy of his blood. *He is the mediator*, he is fit to be the mediator and he actually holds that office. Moses was mediator of the Sinaitic covenant, Gal. 3 : 19 ; but Jesus is the sole and glorious Mediator and Surety of the new covenant. On the meaning of the word mediator see above on Heb. 8 : 6. Christ's mediation is always to be thought of in the highest sense, and not only as one which merely conveys the mind of God to men and makes known men's desires to God. All Christ's work and sufferings as Mediator had an end in view. He died to redeem. By means of death he accomplished redemption. *Redemption of the transgressions* means redemption from the guilt of transgressions. Paul is speaking to Jews who had lived under the first testament or covenant, and had sinned under it beyond any provision made by it for atonement. He was pointing them to Christ, and showing how the *called* according to God's purpose *might receive the promise* (that is the fulfilment of the promise) *of eternal inheritance*. In v. 12 we have *eternal* redemption ; in v. 14, the *eternal* Spirit ; in v. 15 *eternal* inheritance. No marvel these things are so connected. The *called* are not those, who are merely invited, but such as are effectually persuaded and enabled to embrace the gospel ; those in whom the truth had power to cleanse and control their natures ; those who heard God's call to life, and had grace to obey it ; real believers, faithful men. See note at the end of Comment on this section.

16. *For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.*

17. *For a testament is of force after men are dead : otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.* We have before met the word here rendered testament. For remarks on it see above on Heb. 7 : 22 ; 8 : 6. It occurs in the verse next preceding, where it matters little whether we read testament or covenant. But the interpretation of vs. 16, 17 turns very much on the word we use

to render the original. Remarks previously made on the word will not be here repeated. Some others are here offered. *A.* Like the Greek, the Syriac has the same word for covenant and testament, but the Peshito so renders these verses as to require us to read testament. The Ethiopic has testament throughout: so also has the Vulgate, Wiclif, Tyndale, Cranmer, Rheims, Doway, Coverdale, Genevan, Fowle, Craik and Stuart. The weight of the authority of versions and translations, therefore, as to these two verses, is very much on one side. *B.* On the same side we have the authority of many learned men. Tholuck says that "many of the older writers were interested in maintaining the sense of testament . . . The small number found among the countless expositors of our epistle, who have attempted to vindicate the signification *covenant*, might almost appear to furnish a strong argument against its correctness." In favor of testament we have Chrysostom, Theophylact, Erasmus, Calvin, Diodati, Beza, Bœhrne, Hammond, Gouge, Owen, Assembly's Annotations, Guyse, Tong, Pool, Whitby, Hawker, Duncan, Gill, Scott, Bloomfield, Stuart, Conybeare and Howson (very strong and decided), DeWette, Knowles, Ripley, Parry, F. S. Sampson and Moll. *C.* Nor is it an unanswerable objection to this rendering that it involves the use of a word in two senses. This often occurs. Tholuck: "A play upon words, when based upon an inward truth, ought not to offend us in the sacred authors. How full of meaning, for example, is the double sense in which Paul uses the word *law*, Rom. 3:27; 8:2." Sampson: "Nothing is more certain than that a multitude of words do bear different senses in different contexts; and where the context changes, even though it be in the compass of two sentences, it is not impossible that a change of sense may take place in the leading term, even as it does when the two differing contexts are far asunder." *D.* Nor can it be shown that the institution of wills or testaments was unknown among the Hebrews in Paul's day. Tholuck thinks that Michaelis has proven that it was in use among the ancient Hebrews. Certainly they had power, under the law, to divide personal property, Deut. 21:15-17. Power to bequeath property by will was certainly known among some of the neighboring nations. It seems incredible that in Paul's day the Jews should have been ignorant of it. True, the lands in Judea were held by a law of descent, which no will could set aside. But many Jews owned much property both in Judea and beyond it not subject to that law of descent. Duncan: "The Hebrew word commonly rendered covenant may signify a testament too." *E.* To represent the blessings of the gospel as secured to believers by will and testament, requires no overstraining of figures of

speech. This mode of speaking requires us only to find first a testator, who is Jesus Christ; then heirs, who are God's chosen; then goods, which are the unsearchable riches of Christ; then witnesses of the testament, who were primarily the apostles, and, since them, God's ministers and people generally; and lastly, a proper authentication of the will by seals, which are the sacraments of the gospel. All these are found in the institution of the Lord's Supper, and so our translators always use the word testament when speaking of it, Matt. 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25. *F.* If we render the original by the word covenant, then we must of necessity instead of *testator* read *victim*; and instead of *after men are dead* we must read *over slain victims*. To these renderings are many objections. One is that the word twice rendered testator never means a victim, nor the offering of a sacrifice for confirming a covenant or for any other purpose. It more commonly means arranging or making a covenant, and is so used in Heb. 8:10; 10:16. Nor is the word rendered *dead* ever in the New Testament used in application to animals but only to men. And if we should even admit the translation asked for, it would teach what is not historically or morally true, viz., that unless a victim be slain at the making of a covenant, it is of no force; or the still greater error that a victim was produced at the making of a covenant, and its life spared for a while, the covenant not taking effect till the animal died. God's covenant with Adam before his fall was not made with a victim; neither was his covenant with Noah; neither was Joshua's covenant with the Gibeonites. It is true some covenants were made by slaying a victim; but we also read of a covenant of salt; and covenants were often confirmed simply by a solemn pledge as that of the spies to Rahab, or by an oath as that of the Israelites to the Gibeonites. Moreover, the verb, from which the word rendered testator is derived, has been by some thought to be used by our Lord in the sense of bequeathing; "I *appoint* unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath *appointed* me," Luke 22:39. So Beausobre and Slade think. Christ is by his Father made heir of all things, and by the same Father all believers are made joint heirs with Jesus Ch. st. Taking these views in connection with remarks made on Heb. 7:22; 8:6, we have a pretty strong argument for rendering the word testament. The argument is not a little strengthened by the admitted classical use of both the noun and its cognate verb. The doctrine then taught is the same as the law maxim admitted in western nations; "No one can be the heir of a living man." Duncan: "Living men have no heirs." A man cannot, even as an heir at law, claim any part of an estate until he can prove that the

proprietor is dead. It may be admitted that Paul's argument does not require that the word should be rendered testament except in these two verses. But here, as in the way of allusion, or illustration, he says that we, who are heirs of God, ought not to be offended by the doctrine of the necessity of Christ's death, for it is notorious that the laws of inheritance every where require the death of the testator. Pyle makes a remark that covers the whole case: "The blessings of Christianity may be thus considered, either as a covenant of God the Father, which was to receive its ratification by the blood of Christ, or as the will and testament of Christ himself, that could not take place but at and by his death." Slade: "It seems least exceptionable to suppose that the apostle is taking advantage of the twofold sense of the word, intimating that it is applicable to the Christian dispensation, not only as denoting a *covenant* (which is its usual signification), but also in its *general* acceptation, of a *testament*." Wells: "The mention of Christ's being the mediator of the new covenant, that by means of his death he might redeem us, makes way for considering the said covenant under the notion of a testament." Although this view is safe and well supported, candor requires the statement that it is not concurred in by such writers as S. Schmidt, Cramer, Steudel, Michaelis, Wetstein, Wolf, Tholuck, Ebrard, Wakefield, Doddridge, Macknight, McLean, Clarke, Lindsay, Kidd, Turner and Barnes. Granting that in these verses testament is the right rendering, the sense can hardly be better expressed than in the words of the authorized English version. A will and testament cannot be executed and in this sense are of no force during the life of him who makes it; but upon his death the law directs the proper steps for giving it effect.

18. *Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood.* It is perhaps best to regard vs. 16, 17, as virtually parenthetical and to connect this verse immediately with v. 15. The word rendered whereupon has the force of accordingly. It shows the connection of this verse with the main argument—the necessity of Christ's death. It declares that the Sinaitic covenant, so full of types of gospel truths, would itself lead us to expect a great sacrifice by blood under the reign of Messiah. For it not only prescribed many bloody sacrifices, but it was actually dedicated, Heb. 10: 20 consecrated, Bloomfield, handselled, literally initiated with bloody rites, as any one may see in reading Exod. 24: 3-8, concluding with the words: "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." Now if the old dispensation was not even instituted

without shedding blood, why should any be offended at the sacrifice of Calvary, which lies at the foundation of the gospel scheme? This is fair argument with a Jew. To an Israelite indeed, one would think it conclusive. The next two verses contain a statement of the facts just noticed.

19. *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,*

20. *Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you.* Paul here refers to a portion of Jewish history well known to all that people. He gives the sense, not closely following the original, nor any translation known to us. That which in Exod. 24 : 3 is called words and judgments is here well enough styled precepts. For the law very much consisted of precepts—"all commandments, without any promise of assistance. The new covenant is not a covenant of precepts, but a covenant of promises. Although it contains precepts, yet it has its foundation in the promise, whereby strength and assistance for obedience to the precept are conveyed." When the apostle says Moses had spoken these things to the people *according to the law*, the best meaning is that he faithfully spoke the truth as it was written in the law, and not merely according to a command given him. In the record in Exodus 24 : 3-8 there is no mention of any blood but that of oxen for peace offerings; but it is also said they offered burnt offerings. In our verse the apostle tells us what these were. He needed no special revelation to tell him this, but being expert in the law, he knew the form of the services observed at such times, shedding the blood of calves and goats, mingling it with water, taking a bunch of hyssop, tied up with scarlet woolen thread, dipping it into the bloody water, and sprinkling it, in this case, on the book of the law and on all the people; in other cases on the people only. The general use of the hyssop, and scarlet, and sprinkling may be seen in such passages as Ex. 12 : 22; Lev. 14 : 4-7, 49-52; Num. 19 : 5-13; Ps. 51 : 7. The word rendered oxen in Ex. 24 : 5 is in the Septuagint rendered calves. The use of goats and kids in sacrifice is very often mentioned, Ex. 12 : 5; Lev. 1 : 10; 3 : 12; 4 : 24; 9 : 15; 10 : 16; 16 : 9; and many other places. McLean: "It has been observed, that wherever burnt-offerings and peace-offerings are mentioned together, as being offered for the people, goats or kids were always a part of the burnt-offering." Paul is showing the necessity of the death of Christ. This he has done by two facts well known. One was the necessity of the death of a testator before his will can be of force.

The other was the fact that even the law itself was solemnly dedicated or initiated as a covenant by the shedding of blood. He proceeds to state another fact well known in Jewish history:

21. *Moreover he sprinkled likewise with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry.* The scriptures, to which he is supposed to allude, are Ex. 29: 12, 36; Lev. 8: 15, 19; 16: 14-16. *Ministry*, as in Heb. 8: 6. In 2 Cor. 9: 12; Phil. 2: 17, 27 the same word is rendered service. No sacred furniture, nor utensil was fit for use till it was dedicated by blood. Paul was writing to those, who knew the law and admitted its typical character, and he says to them, Your own law, even in the establishment of the tabernacle with its utensils, taught you to expect blood-shedding under the gospel; and you ought to see in the death of Christ the fulfilling of the types of your own law. He adds:

22. *And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.* This verse contains two clauses. The first is general. Almost all things under the law were purified with blood. Some indeed were purified by fire and some by water, Lev. 16: 28; Num. 31: 23, 24. But this was under a law abounding with bloody sacrifices. Vessels, lepers, worshippers, and the nation were ceremonially cleansed by blood. Surely then Israelites ought to see and admit that Christ ought to have suffered as he did, and not be offended by his cross. The second is that remission of ceremonial guilt, incurred by violating any precept of the old covenant, is never mentioned as possible without the shedding of blood. This is a negative statement, which is established by no one being able to show that there is a single case to disprove it. Under the theocracy the shedding of blood was the only thing that secured the continuance of life to the transgressor, or admitted him to the public worship of God in the temple. "Remission without the shedding of blood was unknown to the old law." Thus God pointed men to the coming Messiah, who should pour out his soul unto death, and make an end transgression, and bring in everlasting righteousness.

23. *It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.* The tabernacle, its vessels, utensils, furniture and ministry were patterns, examples, shadows of things in the heavens. But what is the meaning of *things in the heavens* and *heavenly things*? Perhaps few if any will deny that they both mean the same thing. The terms and the connection require this construction. They doubtless mean the things prefigured by the rites of the ceremonial law. Now what did they represent to the ancient church but the glorious things of

the gospel, which for their excellence are called heavenly? Calvin: "By *heavenly things* he means the kingdom of Christ, which is spiritual, and hath a perfect revelation of the truth." Duncan: "By things in the heavens we are to understand all the effects of the counsel of God in Christ, in the redemption, worship, salvation and eternal glory of the church. Christ himself, in all his offices, all the spiritual benefits and eternal effects of his redemption on the souls of men with all the worship of God in him in the gospel, they are things in the heavens of which the tabernacle and its service were the patterns, which were purified." That this is not making any wrong use of the terms heavens and heavenly things will be clear, if we remember that Christ's reign on earth is often called the kingdom of heaven, Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 5:19; that Paul's call to the ministry is said to be heavenly, Acts 26:19; that living members of Christ's church on earth are said to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, Eph. 1:3; 2:6; that the church of God in heaven and in earth is one family, Eph. 3:13; and that the heavenly things answer to the types and patterns of things in the tabernacle, which shadowed them forth. When the apostle says it was *necessary* he means to assert that the service in the tabernacle showed that it was necessary. The sacrifices in the temple and the Mosaic dispensation proved it was necessary. Bulls and goats and lambs and turtle doves were very good types. The unerring wisdom of God chose them to that end. By their blood they did purify the old tabernacle, and secure to its worshippers visible acceptance into the congregation of the Lord. But they could do no more. They could not wash away the guilt of sin on any human soul. Salvation called for *better sacrifices* than these; that is, it called for the sacrifice of Calvary, which is better than all the blood of animals ever shed, and which alone could satisfy divine justice and redeem the guilty from the curse of the law. By speaking of *better sacrifices* some suppose that the apostle uses the plural of excellence, denoting the great power and virtue of Christ's death. But Lindsay probably speaks better: "The reason seems to be, that it is not his object here to state the precise sacrifice that was needed for the heavenly tabernacle, but to declare generally, that not bulls and goats, as of old, would suffice, but that something greatly superior was needed; and on account of the general terms of the contrast, a plural is naturally enough employed in both members." Hugo de Sancto Caro: "He employs the plural number because Christ is signified by all those legal sacrifices which purified." Calvin: "He has taken the liberty to use the plural improperly, for the sake of the antithesis." Both Greek and Latin classics furnish examples of a

like use of the plural. But how are the heavenly things purified with sacrifice? Heaven itself needs no purification. Nor does our High Priest need to offer any sacrifice for himself. Nor has anything that defileth ever entered heaven. The best explanation is this: the persons to be admitted to heaven are sinners and need atonement before they can be received into that holy place. If any wish to preserve the figure drawn from the vessels of the sanctuary, which were cleansed with blood, there is no objection to such a course. In both Testaments the wicked are compared to broken vessels, vessels wherein is no pleasure, or vessels of wrath, Ps. 2 : 9; Hos. 8 : 8; Rom 9 : 22. In like manner we read of the righteous, as chosen vessels; vessels to honor, sanctified and meet for the Master's use; vessels of mercy, prepared unto glory, Acts 9 : 15; Rom. 9 : 23; 2 Tim. 2 : 21. This imagery may be borrowed from the tabernacle. At least it fitly represents the use and design of God's people in God's house; and these were all to be possessed in sanctification and honor, 1 Thess. 4 : 4. They must be purified with blood, blood of more value than that of goats and calves, even the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without spot.

24. *For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.* This verse explains and confirms the preceding, and preserves the connection in the argument. The word *true* is not here opposed to false or fictitious, but to figurative or typical, as in Heb. 8 : 2, on which see above. At no time did Christ serve as a priest in the temple at Jerusalem. After pouring out his precious blood, he went not into the holy of holies in the temple, there to intercede; but he entered heaven itself. There in the full glory of his acknowledged priesthood, he *appears in the presence of God for us*. The word rendered *appear* may have a bad sense, to appear as an accuser, or prosecutor, Acts 24 : 1; 25 : 2. But this was appearing *against* a man. Our Saviour appears *for* us, in our behalf, and not against us; as our Advocate, not as our accuser. His own admission into the presence of God was an acknowledgment of all he had ever claimed for himself, showed that he had finished the work his Father had given him to do on earth, and gave an infallible pledge of his success as our Advocate. In this verse the word rendered *figure* is antitype, but not in our sense of that word in modern English; but in the sense of pattern, type, similitude. Compare 1 Pet. 3 : 21. In like manner the lexicons make no difference between *lutron* and *anti-lutron*, rendering each of them by the word ransom.

25. *Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest*

*entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others. Nor yet should perhaps be followed by the words was it necessary.* One such offering as Christ made was enough. It was full, complete, ample and publicly approved and accepted of God in the presence of angels and men. Even the high priest did not make every day a day of atonement for his nation, but only one day in a year. This proves that "a continuous act of sacrificing is not required in the office or person of a priest." Accordingly our Lord needed to suffer and die but once in the ages for us. The high priest entered the holiest of all with blood not his own, but that of clean brute animals. But Jesus entered with his own blood, which being once shed availeth for ever. Were this not so, we should be compelled to adopt the most painful and revolting consequences :

26. *For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world : but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.* A sacrifice, that needs to be repeated, cannot be all-sufficient, infinite in merit, unlimited in power to cleanse ; and, of course, cannot be ground of a safe and perfect confidence to one, whose conscience accuses him of sinning against God. So the sacrifices of the law never did give relief to the conscience. Had the sacrifice of Calvary been like those in the tabernacle, we should have been still in darkness and terror. But now once in the end of the world Christ has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. The end of the world here is equivalent to the fulness of time in Gal. 4 : 4, or to the phrase the time is fulfilled in Mark 1 : 15. It was the end of the past ages, of the old dispensation ; near the close of the national existence of the Jews ; when the moral sentiments of the world were about to be revolutionized ; the time fixed by prophecy for old things to pass away and all things to become new ; when God by his glorious purpose and for cause unknown to us had determined that Christ should come, Acts 4 : 28. Then he *appeared*, not the word rendered appear in v. 24, but one meaning was manifest, or was made manifest. Compare 1 Tim. 3 : 16 ; 1 John 3 : 8. To put away sin is to annul its power, to destroy it, to reject it as a ground of condemnation, to set it aside as calling for wrath, to make an atonement for it, Dan. 9 : 24, 27. To the Jewish mind no idea was more familiar than that of putting away sin by sacrifice, that is, by taking the life by shedding the blood of a victim. The one death of Christ was sufficient to put away the sin of all past ages, as it is sufficient for all time to come. See note at the end of Comment on this section.

27. *And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment :*

28. *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.* The great truths of v. 27 are these: 1. Men die once. True, Enoch and Elijah were exempted, but they underwent a great change, equivalent to death and a resurrection; a change such as men, who shall be alive on the morning of the resurrection, shall undergo. So Lazarus died twice—a rare exception. But the general truth is that men die once. The scriptures tell us how this comes to pass: “By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned,” Rom. 5:12. The death here spoken of is not spiritual death, nor eternal death, but returning to the dust, whence men came. It is a dying once. This death is appointed, Gen. 2:17; 3:19. It is inevitable. It cannot be averted. “This death does not put an end to man’s existence, for as surely as men die once, so surely shall the judgment take place after this.” 2. The judgment is the other truth set forth in this verse. This event is certain. The fact and the day are both fixed, Acts 17:31; 2 Cor. 5:10. Though the day is fixed, it is not revealed to any creature, Mark 13:32; Acts 1:7. The principles on which that judgment shall be conducted are clearly stated in the 50th Psalm and in the 25th chapter of Matthew. From the decisions of that day no appeal can be taken; of course no reversal can be had. It too is once for all. So it is called the eternal judgment, Heb. 6:2, because its effects shall be eternal. Now why are these subjects here introduced by the apostle? or what is their bearing on the matters in hand? It is evident that the emphatic word in both verses is the word *once*. Why then is v. 27 here inserted? Does the apostle employ the one death of men merely as a fact parallel to the fact of the one death of Christ? This can hardly be the whole aim of Paul. Or does he design to reconcile good men to their one death, seeing Christ himself once died? This is evidently not the drift of his argument, though that is an important thought. Nor can we make v. 27 parenthetical. By the words *as* and *so*, verses 27, 28 are closely tied together. Or would the apostle thus show that as the death of men does not terminate their existence, but after death they are judged, so Christ’s death did not put an end to his existence; but that he will appear again, though in circumstances very different from those, in which we once saw him? This is good doctrine, and it is here implied, if not taught. Or would the apostle teach us that as men once die and will afterwards come forth to be judged, so Christ once died, but he will be seen again, not as a sin-bearer, but as a glorious deliverer to bless his people, as the

high priest in his gorgeous robes came out of the most holy place to bless all Israel? This is a good sense, and well coincides with the argument of the apostle. Calvin gives a different turn to the thought: "The sense is; since we look with patience for the day of judgment after the death of a man, because it is the common law of nature, which we cannot resist: why should we show less patience in waiting for the second coming of Christ? for if in the generality of men the long interval of time abates not the hope of a happy resurrection, how unreasonable were it that less reverence be paid to Christ? but less will be paid him, if we should summon him to a second death, when he has undergone death once for evermore." No doctrinal error is thus taught. The truth set forth is pious and agreeable to scripture; but it is hardly what the apostle is teaching us. McLean is still different: "The comparison here is between men's dying *once*, and Christ's being *once* offered, as opposed to the repetition of the legal sacrifices. All mankind became mortal, and were appointed to die once, not for their own personal sins, but on account of the one offence of the first man, their common father and representative: For 'by one man's offence many were made sinners,' having the guilt of his sin so imputed to them, as to fall under the sentence of death denounced upon it, Rom. 5: 18, 19. 'So Christ was once offered,' not for any sin of his own, for he knew no sin, but as the substitute of sinners, 'to bear the sins of many.' To bear *sin* is to suffer the punishment due to sin," Ezek. 18: 19, 20. Stuart: "To bear the sins means to bear the punishment, *i. e.*, to suffer the penalty, *due to sin*. In this sense Christ was made sin for us, and suffered the just for the unjust, Isa. 53: 5, 6, 11, 12; 1 Pet. 2: 24. . . . Christ first appeared once in the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. . . . But when he comes the second time, O how different will his appearance then be! . . . He will then appear visibly in his glory," etc. Lindsay: "Consistently with his position and nature as a man, he could not make a sacrifice of himself more than once. His death was needed but once; and it was also in harmony with the law of mortality in this world that he should die but once." Calvin: "We ought not to be disquieted with groundless and unholy longings for fresh expiations, because the one death of Christ is abundantly sufficient for us." Sampson: "The freedom from sin at his second coming is the contrast of his sin-bearing at his first. In both cases it is imputed sin which is intended."

In v. 28 it is said Christ was once offered. *Offered*, as in Heb. 9: 7, 9, 14, 25. That is his entire human nature was offered by his whole person, as God-man. Bearing sin and bearing iniquity

are phrases of frequent occurrence and always show that one is for the time lying under the guilt of sin, 1 Pet. 2:24 and many places. One is shocked when he finds a modern writer denying that Christ literally bore the penalty due to transgression and boldly saying, this is untrue. But Paul says he did bear the penalty or curse: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us," Gal. 3:13. A law consists of a precept and a penalty—a rule and a curse. Christ did not redeem us from the precept as a rule of life. But he did redeem us from the curse by bearing it himself. If he did not bear the penalty, it is still in force against us. The penalty of the law was the only legal obstruction to the salvation of sinners. If that has not been borne, yes borne away, it still remains against us. It is a sad thing to assault the faith of God's people in this way, and then attempt to explain away the offensiveness of such terms by saying that Christ never suffered remorse, or despair, or eternal punishment, which are never once in scripture called the penalty of the law. The scripture says death is the penalty of the law. "The soul that sinneth it shall die." Jesus died, not for himself but for us. *Looking for* Christ is desiring his return. There is a pious longing and looking for Christ's coming. His people are hasting to the great deliverance then to be completed. Tit. 2:13; 2 Pet. 3:12; Jude 21. This looking is very diverse from the fearful looking of the wicked, Heb. 10:27. Christ's second coming will be without sin, *i. e.*, he will not come to bear sin, to put away sin. He will not bear any marks of grief or anguish as he did in Gethsemane, or on Calvary. His second coming shall also be unto salvation—unto the everlasting deliverance and safety of all his people. The word rendered appear in v. 28 is not the same word so rendered in v. 24, nor that so rendered in v. 26; but a word meaning shall be seen.

NOTE.—In interpreting verses 15, 26 of this section some have made a difficulty respecting the language of the apostle as having a constant reference to the past and not to the future. He speaks of *transgressions under the first testament*, and, *then must Christ often have suffered since the foundation of the world*. Some think it would have been better, if he had spoken of redemption from the guilt of sin under the New Testament and of Christ's suffering again and again on to the end of the world. It seems singular that men should be so ingenious in making difficulties, where there is really no fair ground for them. The answers to such views are fair and sufficient. A. Paul was addressing Jews, with whose nation God had long had dealings of a kind suited to make a deep impression on them; and his discourse with them respected the past

as compared with the gospel, which had just begun to be preached. He was showing them that their law itself saved no one, and he was persuading them not to trust in it but in the new covenant.

*B.* They naturally felt a lively concern respecting their fathers. If the Sinaitic covenant was not saving, were their fathers lost? By no means, says Paul. The blood of Calvary was a sacrifice great enough to atone for the transgressions committed under the old dispensation—great enough to render unnecessary its repetition. Moreover, it had a retrospective operation.

*C.* If the sacrifice of Christ could save men, by its virtue, before it was actually made, it is very clear it can save after it is finished and presented before God; and if it could avail to wash away the guilt of his own murderers, it can surely avail for other sins to the end of the world. Had the blood of Christ been no more precious than that of lambs and goats, he might have died often, and he would still have saved no one.

*D.* “The principle assumed by the apostle throughout this argument is that nothing but Christ’s blood is adequate to the expiation of man’s guilt,” and that this blood is entirely adequate to such an end; and, therefore, the old system of sacrifices ought to be given up, because it is superseded by the one great sacrifice to which it pointed in all its rites and types.

*E.* Reasoning about the great past proceeded upon a great fact; whereas reasoning about the future history or existence of the world could not be so satisfactory; for no man could tell whether the world would exist for any considerable time. All the early Christians, and in particular the church at Jerusalem knew that in one generation, dating from the death of Christ, Jerusalem would be awfully destroyed, and that that event was by Christ himself made an emblem of the destruction of the world, of the time of which latter event no notice was given to men. “Ages upon ages had already gone by, during which Christ suffered not at all; and this was sufficient to show that his sacrifice, the only hope of man, was not a thing needing repetition.” Paul and the Jews generally knew that Abel, and Enoch, and Abraham, and Moses, and David and many others of old had been saved, and as Jewish rites never reached the conscience, nor moral guilt, these ancient worthies must have been saved by virtue of the great atonement, which all the ancient sacrifices prefigured.

*F.* The scriptures uniformly teach that the gospel is the last dispensation of God’s grace to man on earth. The gospel is therefore styled everlasting, Rev. 14:6. Daniel declares that the kingdom of Messiah is an everlasting kingdom.

## DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL REMARKS.

1. It mightily concerns us to understand the great doctrine of the mediatorship of Jesus Christ, v. 15. In it is the life of our souls. By nature we are opposed to God and at war with him. Most justly therefore is God against us with all the power and glory of his nature. The breach betwixt God and us could be made up by no creature. The Son of God undertook our cause. He was by nature equal with God. By taking our nature he became equal with man, yet without sinful infirmities. Thus he could lay his hand both upon God and man. He could meet all the demands of justice, and yet show mercy to the guilty, and pity to the lost. He is God's elect to do his whole pleasure on Mount Zion, Isa. 42: 1. He is the beloved of all the saints. God accepts him as fit for the whole work of mediation. All humble and good men do the same. Never had God a more perfect or more glorious plan than that, which constituted the God-man the Mediator. The Lord Jesus both has and deserves all the honors of Mediator; and he alone has and deserves them according to scripture, 1 Tim. 2: 5. Owen: "There can be no covenant between God and man, but in the hand or by virtue of a mediator." It is as contrary to God's word to hold to a plurality of Mediators as to believe in a plurality of Gods. Calvin: "Paul does not so claim for Christ the honor of Mediator, as that at the same time others may continue such together with him; but he contends that all others were put away when Christ took on him the office." Even Rheims and Doway read he is *the* mediator, not *a* mediator. Let him have all the glory due to his blessed name.

2. Our debt of love to Christ for all his compassion towards us and suffering for us can never be paid. He gave for us a price far above our value. We deserved nothing good, yet through him we have all good things. He submitted to the accursed *death* of the cross and to the sword of his Father's justice for our *redemption*, v. 15. Doddridge: "What praise do we owe to that voluntary *victim*, who made his blood the *seal* of that better covenant?" How can we ever make any adequate returns for such love? It is impossible. But we may make fit returns by giving our whole selves to him and to the promotion of his glory. He gave all for us. Let us give all to him. For ever blessed be his glorious name.

3. So rich are the treasures of divine grace, so feeble are human conceptions, and so great is the poverty of human language, that in order to our obtaining even a tolerable conception of the excellent things of salvation, it was necessary that they should be presented

to us in a great variety of forms. In mercy God has considered this our weakness, and tells us how his gospel is both a covenant and a testament, vs. 15-20. Yea more; it is a word—the word of life; an oath—the oath since the law; a testimony—the testimony of Jesus and the witness of God. By a very rich variety of terms, types, phrases and similitudes does the Lord instruct us in the way of salvation. Blessed be his name for so kindly condescending to the meanness of our capacities. His grant of grace and of life is irrevocable. Let us with gratitude and sobriety use every help the Lord gives us in forming right conceptions of spiritual and heavenly things. It is only when we unduly press or in some way misunderstand scripture types, or terms, or similitudes, or doctrines that we find ourselves perplexed. Thus the covenant of grace is not in all things like a testament; but “as the death of a testator ratifies a testament among men, so the death of Christ ratifies the covenant of grace.” This one point is itself enough to justify the use of such terms as we here find. Others might be mentioned, as their bestowing great benefits, their determining how the beneficiaries shall come into possession, etc. But on these things we need not dwell.

4. Sin is something very dreadful, always at least in types requiring death for the remission of even ceremonial guilt, and so teaching us that for the remission of actual legal guilt, the shedding of the Redeemer's blood was necessary, vs. 15-22. Sin defiles every thing it touches. It is horrible, Jer. 5:30; 18:13; 23:14; Hos. 6:10. It abuses mercies. It is reckless of consequences. It digs every grave. It fills earth with wailings and hell with torments. “Sin is a stain which can be removed only by blood. . . Divine justice demanded blood, and without this God could not be propitiated, Col. 1:14, 20.” “Without a surrender to death there is no reconciliation.” The wages of sin is death. God has put many a mark of abhorrence upon iniquity. The overthrow of Jerusalem, the destruction of the cities of the plain, and the Noachic deluge are often and fitly referred to. But God's most awful displeasure against sin was exhibited in the cross of Christ. Christ was personally holy and pleased God perfectly. He suffered for no sin of his own. Yet when he was voluntarily made under the law and our sins were imputed to him, even his Father spared him not, Rom. 8:32. Never was there such a death as when the great Sin-bearer trod the wine-press of his Father's wrath alone. Owen: “Such is the malignant nature of sin, of all transgressions of the law, that unless it be removed, unless it be taken out of the way, no person can enjoy the promise of the eternal inheritance.”

5. Have we been effectually *called* of God? v. 15. This is a great

point in the Christian life. It is at the very beginning. If we have not been called with that holy calling, we are yet in our sins, and have no evidence that we shall inherit all things.

6. The portion of the saints is as durable as it is excellent—an *eternal inheritance*, v. 15. It lasts world without end, and improves all the time.

7. Judaism cannot of itself save. It never did save. Transgressions under it were never redeemed or atoned for by any of its rites. The blood it called for in various rites gave no title to heaven. The best it could do was to direct the eye of faith to a coming Saviour, v. 15. It always was the gospel scheme that secured salvation. By it Abraham himself was raised to glory, and by nothing else, John 8:56; Gal. 3:8; Rom. 4:3, 9. Calvin: "Nothing can proceed from us that is pleasing to God till we are purified by the blood of Christ. For since we are all enemies to God, before we are reconciled to him, our works also are hateful to him. Wherefore, reconciliation is the beginning of acceptable service." And reconciliation is solely by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without spot, 1 Pet. 1:19.

8. As the blood of ancient sacrifices did not cleanse the worshippers till it was *sprinkled* upon him, so the blood of Jesus must be applied to us before we are cleansed from our sins, vs. 19-22. To ask why the death of Christ will not avail to the salvation of men, who despise his work and reject his person, is like asking why food will not nourish us unless it is eaten, or water refresh us by the mere sight of it without our using it. O we must believe in Jesus, and so eat his flesh and drink his blood, John 6:51, 54, 55. We must set to our seal to show our belief that God is true; and so accept the grace of his covenant. We must own ourselves heirs else we cannot inherit the blessings he has bequeathed to us. He that believeth not is by his voluntary rejection of salvation condemned to eternal death. Owen: "In all things wherein we have to do with God, whereby we approach unto him, it is the blood of Christ, and the application of it to our consciences, that gives us a gracious acceptance with him."

9. All the institutions of religion rightly understood are solemn and humiliating, 19-22. Sacrifices called for confession and abasement, therefore proud Cain would bring no victim, as did his pious brother. It was only when the Jews became proud and carnal, and grossly misunderstood the nature and design of the Levitical law, that they excessively abounded in rites, Isa. 1:11-15. That is, they regarded sacrifices as rendering piety towards God and charity towards men unnecessary. They supposed their crimes were covered by their forms. Then to quiet conscience and make

a show of piety they would go through any tedious routine of services. But all this was in vain. God would have men to rend their hearts and not their garments; to break off their sins by righteousness; to learn to do well and cease to do evil, to perfect holiness in his fear; to forgive their debtors; and to seek to be at peace with men, and then come and tread his courts and offer their gifts. But this doctrine is offensive to the carnal mind, which hates humility, and glories in self righteousness, and a vain frivolity in worship. Owen: "The glory and efficacy of all ordinances of divine worship consist in this, that they represent and exhibit heavenly things unto us."

10. Awful and useful lessons were taught by Jewish rites, and none more so than by the shedding of the blood of innocent creatures, vs. 19-22. This rite continually called men to seek atonement. It was hard to bring men to say, "We believe, that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved," Acts 15: 11. Even under the light of the gospel, it is hard to persuade men not to render Christ of none effect to them, by their seeking to be justified by the law, Gal. 4: 4. To Gentiles as well as to Jews no hope of life is left, while they reject the one great atonement and the one great Redeemer. The law of Moses very clearly said that without the shedding of blood there is no remission. The gospel no less distinctly argues, Ought not Christ to have suffered, and so to enter into his glory? Pool: "Without the death of some living creature as a sacrifice, and the blood of it not only shed, but sprinkled, there could be neither legal pardon of guilt, nor purging of ceremonial filth. By this God signified to Israel, that without the blood of Christ his Son, and the Testator of his testament, shed as a sacrifice to purchase and procure both remission and purification, there could be neither pardon of the guilt of sin, and removal of the punishment, nor purging the filth, or renewing the nature of the sinner, his blood being the inestimable price purchasing both for them." Calvin: "The majesty of God is deservedly a fearful thing to us; and the way to it is but a fatal labyrinth, till we know that he is made favorable to us by the blood of Christ, and the same blood affords us ready access to him." Lindsay: "God passed by the sins of his people under the law; but his righteousness in doing so was not manifested till Christ died as a propiation for sin. This great event threw its blessings back upon all preceding times. Not posterity merely, but ancestors were benefitted by the self-denying scenes of Calvary. The river of mercy flowed backwards from the cross to the creation, as well as onwards to the end of the world."

11. The inference that the blood of Christ should decide and

determine us to holiness is as fair and as logical, as that it should awaken in us the hope of reconciliation with God. To enjoy forgiveness and to love sin at the same time cannot be possible. Lindsay: "The same blood of Christ which as a sin-offering expiates our guilt, as a covenant-sacrifice lays us under obligation to obedience." Whoever argues that because grace abounds he may lead a wicked life is a great enemy to the cross of Christ. He, who by his thoughts and practice would make Christ the minister of sin, displays a vileness of heart wholly inconsistent with newness of nature. No heresy is more loathsome than antinomianism. Owen: "The sacrifice of Christ is the one only everlasting fountain and spring of all sanctification and sacred dedication." He is of God made unto us sanctification.

12. Types ought fitly and fairly to set forth the things typified, else they are meaningless, and so are no types, v. 23. In like manner, when our interpretation of scripture makes the types meaningless, we ought to see that we are on the high road to error, yea that we are quite wrong already. For there was a *necessity* for both the type and the thing typified—for the type, as a truthful representation of good things to come; and for the thing typified, in order to human salvation. If men are to be saved at all, they must be saved by him, to whom all the prophets gave witness, and to whom all the types pointed. Men cannot save themselves. They are lost. They are dead in trespasses and sins. Believers before the flood looked to a Saviour yet to come. So did Abraham and all his pious descendants. They looked and were healed. Nor is there any more difficulty in looking to a Deliverer to come than in looking to one who has come. Blessed be God, no one, who truly believed in Messiah, ever perished.

13. It is delightful to see how our apostle dwells on the advocacy and intercession of the Lord Christ, v. 24. He does the same thing often elsewhere. Prophecy foretells the wonders that should be effected in this way, Ps. 2:8. Our Lord himself did not conceal the fact that the safety of believers depends on his pleading for them, Luke 22:32. Nor should we be backward in expressing our hope in Christ, who ever liveth to make intercession for us, and that with great authority, and in great glory. Calvin: "Christ indeed was our Advocate even then when he lived in earth; but the farther concession has been made to our infirmity, that he should ascend into heaven to perform the office of a patron." Lindsay: "He abides in the most holy place above, and he is constantly occupied with the spiritual concerns of his people. He performs the part of their defender. He appears before the Judge in our behalf. He pleads the merits of his own sacrificial

death." Nor does he plead in vain. Him the Father heareth always, John 11:42. His plea is always good. His pleading always gains the cause. Let us never dare to approach God in our own name, nor in the name of any saint, or angel. There is no other name given under heaven among men, which we may safely trust for mediation.

14. It is a glorious truth that Christ suffered once. It is a no less glorious truth that he suffered but once, vs. 25, 26. All our comfort would be gone, if it were necessary for him often to die. Such necessity would show that the atonement he had made was incomplete, that his righteousness was not infinite, that he was weak and not mighty to save. How could loving followers but wail, like the wailing women, if they knew that their blessed Master could ever be again spit upon, smitten with a reed, scourged and crucified? Blessed be God, that shall never be. Earth and hell may rave and rage, but Jesus sitteth in the heavens, and is far beyond the stroke of their malice. If it were necessary for Christ to suffer often, we could have but doleful views of the case either of the fathers before his coming or of our posterity in the coming ages. Ever since man sinned, there was a necessity of real expiation, yet none was actually made till the world had stood thousands of years. As long as men shall be born, they will come into the world sinners. All need remission, and remission is by blood. If that blood is not infinitely precious, who could trust to its cleansing efficacy, even in one case? Owen: "Such is the absolute perfection of the one offering of Christ that it stands in need of, and will admit of no repetition in any kind." Patterson: "Christ was offered *once*—only once. Blessed thought to those that love him! The sufferings of the Beloved One are for ever past. Christ, once dead, shall die no more. Christ, once sacrificed, shall be sacrificed no more.—Glorious tribute to the value of his sacrifice and the dignity of his person."

15. If these things be so, how vain, how idle and how blasphemous is the pretence of the Roman Catholic church that she repeats and uninterruptedly continues the priestly acts of Christ; that in the mass Christ is offered to God; yes, his soul and body, blood and divinity are by the priest anew offered to God. No pretence could be more grossly unscriptural. If the claim were that in the faithful preaching of the gospel, or in the due administration of the Lord's Supper Jesus Christ was evidently set forth crucified amongst us, that would be scripture doctrine, Gal. 3:1; scriptural doctrine set forth in a bold but just figure. But to claim that this thing is literally done, directly contradicts the clear teachings of this place, vs. 25, 26. The dignity of Christ's

person, the glory and finished character of his sacrifice and the word of God clearly determine that our Lord was offered but once. In effecting human salvation, God does nothing needless or useless.

16. It is not wise in men to shun thoughts of death. It is often brought to our attention, as here by way of illustration, v. 27. "There is a time to be born, and there is a time to die," Ecc. 3 : 2. Death is inevitable. It is *appointed* by God himself. "There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death: and there is no discharge in that war," Ecc. 8 : 8. This death does not result from the constitution of nature, but from the *appointment* of God. God first fixed it as a penalty of transgression. It is still penal in the case of all who die in their sins. In their case it is the precursor of eternal death. But in the case of the righteous it is not inflicted in wrath. They fall asleep in Jesus. They die in the Lord, and in answer to Christ's intercession (John 17 : 24) are taken away from the evil to come, and are sheltered in the mansions above. But whether they be saints or sinners, men die. One of the sad prerogatives of men is that they know their death is approaching. Yet by divine grace just thoughts of approaching dissolution are made the means of moderating our attachments to things which perish in the using, and of raising our affections to things above. The pain of dying is doubtless sometimes indescribable; but when it becomes intolerable, we die and that ends it. But ordinarily the pains of death are probably less than are often endured long before death. One reason why God does not exempt his people from death is that he would by that awful event let all men see something of his displeasure against sin. Another is that it is right that in their death they should be so far conformed to the sufferings of their Lord. Another is, that if none but wicked men should die, the feelings of men would often be intolerably harrowed up by knowing that their friends, who had died, were certainly lost, their death being the forerunner of perdition. But God's people shall not be hurt of the second death. "Them that sleep in Jesus shall God bring with him."

17. After death comes the judgment, v. 27. The examination, which the soul undergoes immediately after death, when it returns to God, and has the seal of immutability set upon it, does not seem to be the judgment here spoken of. The reference is to that great day when all men and angels shall be finally judged, and publicly acquitted, or sentenced. The judgment here spoken of seems to be that, which Christ shall conduct when he shall appear the second time without sin. The doctrine of this judgment

was preached by Enoch before the flood, Jude 14, 15. It was a theme of song by Hebrew poets, as any one may see in Psalms 1, 50. A very striking description of it was given by our Lord, Matt. 25 : 31-46. It is every way right and fitting that there should be such a day for the public acquittal of innocence, for the public exposure of baseness, and for the public vindication of God's government in all things. "We soon lose sight of the effects of our actions, but God, never."

18. Christ will appear again, v. 28. Every one shall see him, and they that pierced him. While he will come to take vengeance on his foes, his object so far as his people are concerned will be very different, viz. to pronounce and to pour blessings on his redeemed in the presence of the assembled universe. Many regard the phrase—*the second time*—as pointing to the appearance of the high priest at the close of the services on the great day of atonement. On that occasion he was attired in full pontifical dress, and only sent with words of benediction from the Lord. This second appearance will be far different from the first—not in a stable and manger, not in flight from Herod, not riding on an ass' colt, not pale and bleeding at Pilate's bar, not lingering and dying on the cross; no, but in robes of matchless glory, and in amazing grandeur, and as he will bear no marks of weakness, so he will have no sin to bear, no atonement to make. He will not come to suffer but to reign; not to preach but to judge; not to weep but to deliver all his people from all the effects of sin. There is no wisdom so high as the wisdom of the just; it secures friendship with Christ. There is no folly so great as the folly of now neglecting him who shall sit on the great white throne. The *salvation* he shall bring will be "to deliver the bodies of believers from the empire of death, re-unite them to their blood-washed spirits, and bring both into his eternal glory." This will be salvation indeed. Hahn: "Happy is he who has laid the foundation of his faith in the first appearing of Christ; he will behold him with joy in the second."

19. Reader, art thou looking for thy Lord? v. 28. Art thou hastening to the day of his coming? 2 Pet. 3 : 12; Tit. 2 : 12, 13. If the cry were now truly made, Behold he cometh, would you answer, Even so, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly? Are you ready for his appearing? Do you accept his salvation? Do you obey his voice? Do you mark his footsteps? Do you love his people, his Sabbaths, his precepts? Tong: "It is the distinguishing character of true believers, that they are looking for Christ; they look to him by faith; they look for him by hope and holy desires."

## CHAPTER X.

VERSES 1-18.

THE INSUFFICIENCY OF LEGAL SACRIFICES CONSIDERED. PROPHECY HAD DECLARED THEY SHOULD CEASE. THEIR REPETITION DECLARED THEM POWERLESS. CHRIST'S ONE SACRIFICE ENOUGH AND EFFICACIOUS.

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 continually, make the comers thereunto perfect.

2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.

3 But in those *sacrifices there is* a remembrance again *made* of sins every year.

4 For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

5 Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me :

6 In burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin thou hast had no pleasure.

7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God.

8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and *offering* for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure *therein* ; which are offered by the law :

9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ *once for all*.

11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins :

12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God ;

13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

15 *Whereof* the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us ; for after that he had said before,

16 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 ;

17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

18 Now where remission of these *is*, *there is* no more offering for sin.

THE main point on which the apostle has been dwelling for some time is vital. He therefore continues it still further.

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 continually, make the comers thereunto perfect.* Peshito: For in the law there was a shadow of good things to come ; not the substance of the things themselves. Therefore, although the same sacrifices were every year offered, they could never perfect those, who offered them. Craik, supported by McLean, for continually has for ever, and the words bear such a rendering in this very section, vs. 12, 14. He also makes them qualify the word rendered make perfect. But this is surely not the sense. For those sacrifices not only did not make the worshippers perfect for ever, but they did not make them perfect for a day, no, not for an hour. For image Tyndale and Cranmer have fashion. For shadow Stuart reads a mere outline ; and for very image he reads complete image. By the law let us understand the covenant of Sinai with all its rites and appointments. *Shadow*, the word occurs more than half a dozen times in the New Testament, and is always rendered as here, as the shadow of death, of a tree, of Peter. It here signifies the setting forth of things obscurely by the law. In Col. 2 : 17 shadow is opposed to body. See the place. *Image*, the word occurs more than twenty times in the New Testament, and is uniformly rendered. It is not the word rendered express image in Heb. 1 : 3. In this verse shadow and image are directly opposed to each other. If one means a faint resemblance, the other means the substance or reality or essence of things. The verse would read fully as well without the *and* supplied by our translators. *Good things to come*, as in Heb. 9 : 11, is a name given to all the blessings of Messiah's reign by means of his sacrifice and intercession. The apostle says that the Levitical law, which abounded in sacrifices, could save no one, could give no title to heaven, and no assurance of God's favor ; could not make the worshippers perfect. The perfection here referred to relates to pardon of sin, acceptance with God, and a good conscience. The whole verse is an inference

from the reasoning of the preceding chapter, where the same thing is clearly stated, Heb. 9:9, 14. That it is an inference is shown by the first word, *for*, meaning wherefore. He proceeds with his argument:

2. *For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.* The mark of interrogation is by Griesbach, Cranmer and Genevan put at the end of the verse. To this there is no objection, as the sentence is not finished till we reach the word *sins*. But the punctuation of the common version does not break the sense, as the word *because* is so printed as to show a continuance of the sentence. The English version also follows some of the best editions of the Greek. Rheims, Doway, the Vulgate, and also Peshito use not the interrogative form at all, but simply declare sacrifices would have ceased, if they had been effectual. The Doway has this note: "If they had been of themselves perfect, to all the intents of redemption and remission, as Christ's death is, there would have been no occasion of so often repeating them; as there is no occasion for Christ's dying any more for our sins." However inconsistent this may be with other doctrines and usages of the Roman Catholic communion, it is pleasant to find this truth here admitted. The reasoning of the apostle is very clear. No wise man attempts to mend or improve that which is perfect. Duncan: "All means of any sort cease, when their end is attained." If the worshippers had found acceptance and ease of conscience by the sacrifices of bulls and goats and lambs, it would have been idle for them to continue to repeat them. When conscience is appeased and God is propitiated, there is no room for further sin-offerings. By saying that when worshippers find a full and adequate atonement, they have *no more conscience of sins*, the apostle does not deny that they might sin again. This would be contradicting the scriptures, 1 Kings 8:46; 2 Chron. 6:36; Ecc. 7:20; 1 John 1:8. Nor does he say that a justified believer need not humble himself, confess his sins and ask forgiveness, for this is not true, Matt. 6:12; 1 John 1:9; Rev. 2:5 and many places. The simple teaching of the apostle is that full atonement, complete satisfaction, perfect sacrifice need not be supplemented. So says conscience; so says God. The Jews had no perfect sacrifices.

3. *But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.* Peshito: But in those sacrifices they every year recognized their sins. Tyndale and Cranmer for remembrance have mention; Rheims, commemoration; but the Doway has remembrance, which is the best rendering. Everywhere else in our

version that is the rendering of the word. The chief reference of these verses seems to be to the sacrifices on the great day of atonement. On that day the high priest confessed not merely the sins of the preceding year, but "all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins," Lev. 16:21. So that every year the same offerings were repeated for the same transgressions, and the people never ceased to sacrifice. This of itself ought to have satisfied all Israel that unless their sacrifices pointed to the Lamb of God, they were useless and meaningless. For inherent efficacy a sacrifice is worthless, if it merely reminds us that by our sins we are ruined. If neither pardon nor peace of conscience can be had, men are undone. Some, however, have thought that the remembrance of sins here spoken of is on the part of God. The chief argument is drawn from v. 17 below. But that is too remote a context to govern the sense of v. 3. Besides the apostle is here talking of men's consciences. But if any prefer to understand such a remembrance of sins as was brought up by repeated periodical sacrifices divinely appointed, there is no objection to such a view.

4. *For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.* Until after the flood man lived upon a vegetable diet; but from that time God gave him permission to eat animal food, that is, the flesh of animals, but with a strict prohibition not to eat the blood. The reason given is that the blood is the life, Gen. 9:4, 5. The same idea is revived in the days of Moses: "The life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul," Lev. 17:10, 11. Now our verse says that it is not possible that the life of brute animals should make a real and proper atonement for sin. In the first place there is no proportion between the value of a brute and the value of a soul though it be a sinful soul. A man is worth more than all brutes. He is intelligent, immortal and accountable. In the next place the earth is the Lord's and the cattle upon a thousand hills. To offer a bullock or goat to him is merely to offer him his own. It can pay no debt. In the next place to admit that the blood of any mere brute was a sufficient atonement for sin would have been an admission that God had no essential punitive justice, and no glorious government over moral agents, that sin was a trifle, and redemption a farce. If the death of bulls and goats could take away sin, the glorious scheme of redemption by Christ would have been useless, and that, which is now the admiration of saints and angels in glory, would never have been heard of. Besides, bulls and goats had not the nature of man, and if

men could have been really saved by their blood, they would have been degraded rather than elevated in their sentiments and moral feelings. Nor could beasts give any consent to be substituted for men. It was therefore not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sin, could make a real and proper reconciliation for it. Whitby has some weighty thoughts on this verse.

5. *Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me.* This and the next two verses are quoted from Psalm 40:6, 7, 8. The apostle quotes from the Septuagint version with very slight alterations. In interpreting that ode difficulties have arisen, and sometimes been unskilfully disposed of. But it undoubtedly contains a prophecy of Messiah, and is best interpreted by classing it under the head of Typical-Messianic predictions. David, the prophet, is in this Psalm set forth as a type of Christ, and yet utters things which cannot but remotely, if at all, have a just application to himself, but are fully true of his "greater Son;" yet so much is literally true of David as to make him a figure of the Redeemer. The words of these verses (5-7) are hardly in any degree applicable to the son of Jesse, but are fully so to the Son of Mary. *Wherefore*, this word marks the connection with the foregoing verses, and has the force of accordingly, or in accordance with these views. *When he cometh into the world* is commonly interpreted of Christ's incarnation. Calvin: "This coming into the world was the manifestation of Christ in the flesh." Owen: "The general sense of the best expositors, ancient and modern, is, that by the coming of Christ into the world, his incarnation is intended." It is not designed by sound expositors to confine the phrase to the mere point of time when Christ became incarnate, or to his early infancy, but to refer it to the whole of his mission into the world. The passages of scripture relied on to sustain this view are such as John 3:17; 6:14; 5:39; 11:27; 12:46; 16:28. The words put into the Saviour's mouth by the Holy Ghost set forth the general design of his mission into our world. Owen: "It is a vain inquiry, when in particular he spoke these words; unto whom or where, any mention is made of them in the story of him. It is no way needful that they should be literally or verbally pronounced by him." His coming as Messiah declared all that is here asserted; "not," says Duncan, "perhaps literally or verbally pronounced by him, but they are a declaration of his mind, design and resolution, when he came into the world." If this view is correct it is not necessary for us to spend time in considering any of the conjectures that have been put forth, as to the meaning of his "coming into the world." The word *sacrifice*

denotes bloody offerings, in which the life of the animal was taken. In Gen. 31:54 where the text reads—Jacob offered sacrifices—the margin has it—*he killed beasts*. *Offering*, in the law the same word is commonly rendered meat-offering, which was not an oblation of flesh, as the English reader often supposes, but an offering of flour, or corn and wine and oil etc. The same word is often rendered gift, present, and so is not confined to any one class of offerings. These things, it is said, God *would not*, that is, did not desire. In what sense did God not desire them? 1. None will deny that God at the first instituted them and that they were obligatory on the Israelites from Moses until Christ. In this sense God had pleasure in them, for he appointed them, and he was angry with the Jews for slighting or neglecting them, Mal. 1:7, 8; 3:7, 8. 2. Whenever these sacrifices and offerings were brought in pride, hypocrisy and unbelief, evinced either by negligence of the law establishing them, or by cruelty, injustice, or bad morals, the offerers thus attempting to supersede the second table of the law by rites and ceremonies, these oblations were an offence to God, 1 Sam. 15:22; Isa. 1:11-17; Hos. 6:6, and many like places. 3. God never put any such estimate upon these offerings as he did upon hearty piety, true penitence, thanksgiving, praise, almsgiving and prayer, Ps. 50:8-23; 51:16, 17; Mic. 6:6-8, and parallel passages. 4. These sacrifices and offerings never did so please God as to remove the guilt of sin. They were shadows and not the very substance of the good things of salvation—not actual redemption. 5. After Christ's coming, they were meaningless. They were even an offence unto God, because the persistent offering of them was a virtual and unbelieving declaration that the Lamb of God had not been slain. So many apply those words of the evangelical prophet: "He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol," Isa. 66:3. For obstinately rejecting Christ and continuing to act as if Messiah had not come, the Jewish temple and State were utterly and miserably destroyed, Matt. 21:33-44. *But a body hast thou prepared me*. This is the Septuagint version of a part of Ps. 40:6, which we render, *Mine ears hast thou opened*; literally mine ears hast thou digged, pierced or bored. The reference is doubtless to Ex. 21:5, 6 and Deut. 15:16, 17. When one chose to be a servant for life his master was to pierce or bore his ears in token of perpetual servitude. So Jesus Christ took upon him the form of a servant when he assumed our nature. The *body* only is mentioned, but the whole

man is included, for his *soul* was a sacrifice, Isa. 53: 10. He did and suffered all God's will. He voluntarily humbled himself to more service and to greater suffering than any other. Taken in this way the two renderings virtually teach the same thing. Hengstenberg: "The thought is not altered by the Septuagint translation." F. S. Sampson's paraphrase is: "Thou hast given me the form and the spirit of a servant." Alexander's: "Thou hast not required ceremonial services, but obedience, and hast pierced my ear, as a sign that I will hear thee and obey thee for ever." How the Septuagint came to be so variant from the English translation is a question of criticism belonging rather to Ps. 40 than to our chapter. It is sufficient for our purpose that the different renderings teach the same things; and that we have the authority of an inspired interpreter, for the sense gathered from these words. The variation from the literal Hebrew was aside from Paul's great argument, and so we need not here spend further time on it.

6. *In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure.* The doctrine of these words has the same explanation as was given to the words of the preceding verse. Clarke: "It is remarkable that all the offerings and sacrifices which were of an atoning or cleansing nature, offered under the law, are here enumerated by the Psalmist and the apostle to show that *none* of them, nor *all* of them could take away sin; and that the grand sacrifice of Christ was that alone which could do it."

7. *Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God.* These words teach three things: 1. The coming of Christ in the flesh, and as the Saviour, who should supersede the bloody sacrifices of the law by making one great sacrifice—even his entire human nature. 2. The readiness with which Christ came to his work. The literal Hebrew is, *I delight to do thy will.* Christ undertook and effected redemption without the least reluctance. He humbled himself; he obeyed the law with delight; he laid down his own life; no man took it from him; he could have been delivered from his sufferings at any moment, if he had so chosen, John 10: 18; Matt. 26: 53; Phil. 2: 7, and other places. 3. The fact that prophecy required both the coming and the sufferings of Christ. If the words have any reference to David, it is slight and merely as a type. In that case the volume referred to is the Pentateuch, and the particular part of it Deut. 17: 14-20. But even in the Pentateuch Christ is very often mentioned, as the Seed of the woman, the Shiloh, the Star, the Angel of the Lord, etc. He is also clearly predicted in all the sacred books, Acts. 3: 24. So that if the words had the

slightest reference to David as king, they had a much more ample application to Christ the Lord, John 5 : 46, 47. *The volume* of the book is language borrowed from the ancient form of books as parchment or vellum rolled up. The word rendered *book* is sometimes rendered bill, letter, scroll, not very different from our word scripture. Now the coming, work, sufferings and glory of Christ are foretold in the volume of the books of the Old Testament generally. Our Lord himself said : " Search the scriptures ; for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me," John 5 : 39. Compare Luke 24 : 27 ; Acts 3 : 18-23 ; 26 : 22, 23. By volume of the book Hammond understands the " roll of contract betwixt God the Father and the Son, wherein is supposed to be written the agreement preparatory to that great work of Christ's incarnation." But all we know of the Covenant of Redemption is revealed in scripture. It is often referred to in the writings of the old prophets, Ps. 2 : 9 ; 89 : 3-37 ; Isa. 49. So that we are still brought back to the Old Testament as the volume of the book referred to in this verse. Does not the language of our Lord himself in Matt. 26 : 54-56 itself justify this interpretation ? Some object, that but little if any of the Old Testament except the Pentateuch, Job, Joshua, Judges and Ruth was written in the days of David, who composed Psalm 40. To this it is sufficient to reply that as these verses contain an undoubted " prophecy concerning the Messiah, it may be carried down to that period in the Redeemer's history, in which the prophetic testimony concerning him was complete ; and moreover, it may be observed, that the apostle, in illustrating and applying this very prophecy, fixes the period of its reference to the time when Messiah ' cometh into the world,' (Heb. 10 : 5 ;) at which time Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms were all complete, and were collected into one uniform record." See Morison on Ps. 40 and McLean on Heb. 10. How Christ delighted to do the will of God is proven by all his history, by the testimony of the judge that sat on his trial, by the fact that it was by clamor not by evidence that his accusers obtained sentence against him, and by the testimony of God himself in twice by an audible voice from heaven declaring his full approbation of him, and then by raising him from the dead and setting him at his own right hand in the heavens.

8. *Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt-offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein ; which are offered by the law ;*

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 first and second here referred to are not the first and second covenant. The form of*

the Greek words fully determines this : but the *first* designates the kind of offerings, which are prescribed by the law ; and the *second* points to the great sacrifice of Calvary. The inspired apostle says that the language of Ps. 40 was by the Lord himself not only suited but designed to lead the church to cease from those offerings of the law, and to cleave to the sacrifice of the cross. It is a wonderful fact that it is now (1872) confessedly more than 1800 years since any man has made an offering according to the Levitical law. Oh that all Israel having ceased their own sacrifices had accepted the one finished offering made by Jesus of Nazareth ! McLean : " Christ in all things did the will of God ; but here the connection requires that it should be more particularly understood of God's will or commandment to lay down his life as a sacrifice for the salvation of sinners, John 10 : 17, 18 ; 14 : 31. This was the leading design for which he came into the world, Matt. 20 : 28 ; 1 Tim. 1 : 15. For this he took upon him the form of a servant, Phil. 2 : 7, 8. For this a body was prepared him, Heb. 2 : 14, 15. This is that one obedience or righteousness by which many are made righteous or justified, Isa. 53 : 10, 11 : Rom. 5 : 18, 19." Could argument be more fair or conclusive ?

10. *By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.* Paul leaves no room for mistaking his meaning. *Which will* points to *thy will* in vs. 7, 9. Now by Christ's obedience to that will believers are *sanctified*, that is are purified in conscience from the guilt of sin, having their sins remitted by atoning blood, and their persons devoted to God. That this is the meaning of the apostle is clear not only from the sense in which the word *sanctify* is several times used in this epistle, but also by this verse itself—*through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ*. Offerings were for remission of sins. Nor was it necessary that Christ should make many offerings. " He once suffered, the just for the unjust," 1 Pet. 3 : 18. He suffered *once for all*. By the *body* of Jesus we are here, as elsewhere often, to understand his entire manhood. The body is specially mentioned, for in it was the blood, which must be shed. So the word *body* is used in v. 5. It sometimes designates the whole man, as in Rom. 12 : 1.

11. *And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.* There is no authority for reading every high priest instead of every priest ; nor would that change be at all for the better. The priests, as well as the high priest ministered before the Lord. In strictness of speech they *only* ministered daily ; while his great work was on the great day of atonement. This verse, Num. 16 : 9 ; Deut. 18 : 5 and like places unite with tradition in saying that the ministry

of the Jewish priest was performed *standing*. They sat not down before the Lord or before the people, while they were serving in the temple, and blessing the worshippers. Their work was onerous and always recurring. Standing may also denote continuance or permanence. They ministered and offered oftentimes. Here was a sin-offering; there was a trespass-offering; and then there was a burnt-offering. But these jointly and separately were powerless in the two great points, in which men need sacrifices. They never appeased conscience. They never satisfied divine justice. In neither of these senses did they ever take away sin. To that end they were wholly powerless. This was felt and confessed by pious priests and people in all their generations.

12. *But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.* In the Greek we find not the word man, but it is well supplied by our translators, as in Heb. 3:3; 7:4; only in the first of these they put it in italics. In the last two cases they evidently thought it so implied by the original as not to mark it by italics. It would not be any improvement to read this priest. For all know he is speaking of Christ as a priest. Many fine editions of the scriptures put the comma just before sat down, and others just before for ever. The former is perhaps the better, but in either way we reach the same doctrinal result—the entire completion, perfection and divine acknowledgment of Christ's one sacrifice. On Christ's session at the right hand of God, see above on Heb. 1:3; 8:1. The subject is not here brought up in any new form. The whole conception is drawn from Ps. 110:1 as one may see by examining that place. Indeed the next verse decides that matter:

13. *From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.* If the importance of a prophecy may be estimated by the frequency, with which it is quoted, then is Ps. 110:1 of very great weight, for it is quoted in three of the gospels, in Acts, by Paul in 1st Corinthians, by Peter in his first epistle, and at least twice in this epistle. Christ is *expecting*, or waiting, nor is his expectation vain. He has but to wait and the work will surely be done. It is now in rapid progress. Christ is wonderfully subduing all things to himself. The work is done in two ways. One is by renewing the souls of men. The other is by taking away their power and rendering them helpless. This is sometimes done before the wicked die. But it is in every case completed when they depart this life. In that very day their thoughts and plans and schemes of opposing Christ perish. The design of here quoting this verse is to show that all Christ's work as an atoning priest was done, and that it would never be repeated. His business now is not to

suffer, but to have triumph after triumph in the midst of the full glories of heaven.

14. *For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.* The words rendered for ever here are the same as we found in v. 12. They strengthen the impression there announced of their connection with the one sacrifice. *Hath perfected*, the same verb as in Heb. 7:19; 9:9; 10:1. *Sanctified*, as in Heb 9:12; 10:10. It designates those, who are by Christ redeemed, he having atoned for their sins, and purified their consciences. McLean: "Both the words *perfected* and *sanctified* are to be taken in a sacrificial sense." All this was done, says Paul, by *one* offering. In that one sacrificial act an infinite victim was provided, whose blood was of priceless value in the sight of God, and made a full end of transgression. The word rendered offering is found five times in this chapter (vs. 5, 8, 10, 14, 18), but no where else in this epistle. It is uniformly rendered in the New Testament.

15. *Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before,*

16. *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;*

17. *And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.* Paul did not ask the Hebrews to take his own fair and logical deductions from their acknowledged rites, principles and history, nor to rest merely on his apostolic authority, though that was perfect; but he brings in the third person of the Godhead as a *witness*. He thus acknowledges the plenary inspiration of the scriptures, and with the apostle of the circumcision admits that "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," 2 Pet. 1:21. *After that he had said before* refers to all that is contained in v. 16. It means that beside this, God gave also the promise, contained in v. 17. As all the terms and phrases found in vs. 16, 17 have been carefully considered while studying Heb. 8:10, 12 it would be a mere waste of time to rehearse what was then said. The apostle shows that as God would remember sins and iniquities no more, and inflict no punishment on his people for their sins, and approve no more sacrifice for sins, it follows that the work of expiation must already be complete, and it is idle to look further than the death of Christ for an adequate offering. Thus he closes his argument:

18. *Now, where remission of these [sins and iniquities] is, there is no more offering for sin.* None is demanded by the Lord, or by conscience. There is no room for any further expiation after

Jesus has shed his blood. So that, as Calvin says, the bringing forward of "Jeremiah's testimony a second time is neither irrelevant, nor superfluous. He cited it before for a different end, to show that the Old Testament must be annulled, since another new one was promised, and that, to reform the weakness of the old. But now he has a different aim. For he takes his stand on that expression alone: *Their iniquities will I remember no more*: and he gathers thence that there is no longer need of sacrifice since sins are put away."

We have now reached what is rightly regarded as the close of the doctrinal part of this wonderful epistle. The rest of it is taken up in warnings, encouragements, exhortations, historic allusions and the enforcement of various duties, all drawing motive or illustration from the blessed truths already discussed, and concluding with two benedictions, one remarkable for its richness; the other for its brevity.

#### DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL REMARKS.

1. It is exceedingly difficult to overcome prejudices, especially if they were early imbibed and have been of long standing. Those, which relate to religion, are probably harder to eradicate than any others. Even a sound scriptural conversion does not always effectually and wholly deliver men from their power. How much Judaizing teachers troubled the early Christians. It is in evidence that they were a hindrance to the gospel, and that they were so far wrong. But we cannot prove that none of them were regenerate men. How the apostle labors in this epistle to satisfy his Hebrews, who believed in Christ, that the old dispensation was superseded by the glorious gospel of the blessed God. It is not till he reaches the 18th verse of the 10th chapter that he desists from his argument, following his hearers with great kindness and no less skill, till he has triumphantly placed the High Priest of the Christian profession so far above all others that we lose sight of them. Before Christ's actual coming Jewish Commentators often said such things as these: "In the time to come all offerings shall cease, but the sacrifice of praise;" and "When the king Messiah, the Son of David, shall reign, there will be no need of an atonement, nor of deliverance, or prosperity, for all these things will be had." But when the Christ came to his own, his own received him not. Many Israelites had long placed strong confidence in their own sacrifices to take away sin. To call on them to cease from offering them was very much against their views. Even pertinent and numerous citations from their own

prophets sometimes failed to produce full and abiding persuasion.

2. Religious teachers, who know and love the truth, ought to be patient, showing all long-suffering and doctrine, dealing gently but faithfully with those, who oppose the truth, and giving line upon line, argument upon argument, and illustration upon illustration. In short let them follow the exhortations so well given by Paul in his Pastoral epistles, and the example he has left us in several of his epistles, particularly in the Epistle to the Hebrews. He never uses harsh language, nor seems fretful; but is always gentle, magnanimous and convincing.

3. However violent men's prejudices may be, time, patience, truth and the grace of God may at least so far prevail against them as to produce in the main a right course of conduct. It was so with the Hebrews. A few years after this epistle was written, the Roman eagle was displayed before the walls of Jerusalem; but all the pious Jews were so fully persuaded of the divine mission of Jesus, as the Son of God, that not a Christian is said to have perished inside the trench of the invading army. Even great opposers and great backsliders have been recovered from the snare of the fowler. Let us labor in hope that we may reap in joy.

4. Let us bless God for giving to us a dispensation of his grace, not dark and shadowy, but full of light and simplicity, compared with any that ever went before it, v. 1. In the gospel we have figures but they are chiefly figures of speech, clearly and boldly setting before us good things already come. Our sacraments instruct us in things true, substantial and strengthening to our faith. The gospel plan is made very plain to the docile. And it is very acceptable to the humble. Little children have seen its glory, and felt its power, and been saved by its mercy. It was the gospel seen and embraced by the ancient worthies that saved them.

5. But let us not throw contempt on any dispensation of truth ever given to sinful men. Each one was a token of undeserved kindness. The law itself was useful to those, who lived under it, and in a right spirit obeyed it. It is also useful to us in many ways, particularly in furnishing many just and beautiful illustrations of the precious truths of the gospel. So that even the ceremonial law is good, if a man use it lawfully. It was so to the ancient church. It is so to us now. Calvin: "It is to be noted that the same things were shown them from afar, as are now set before our eyes. To both the same Christ is set forth, the same righteousness, sanctification and salvation: only there is a difference in the manner of exhibiting them." Owen: "Whatever hath the least representation of Christ, or relation unto him, the ob-

scurest way of teaching the things concerning his person and grace, whilst it is in force, hath a glory in it." This is the doctrine of Paul in 2 Cor. 3:7-11.

6. And yet it is foolish to be given over to forms, and rites, and ceremonies even though divinely appointed, as if they could save us, v. 1. They never can make any one *perfect*. The law shadowed forth substantial and saving truths; but it did not plainly declare them. Rightly understood its usages were useful types; perverted to the subversion of the truth, they became snares to men's souls. In like manner men may wrest all the scriptures to their own destruction, 2 Pet. 3:16. Gospel truths are no exception.

7. The *good things to come*, which were shadowed forth by the Levitical law, were many and of the greatest importance. Some confine them to blessings enjoyed by saints in this life. Others regard them as blessings to be enjoyed in the life to come. The distinction is not here called for. For none can have glory except he first have grace. The good things here vouchsafed to true believers are the beginning of mercies, which shall never cease to be poured out. Tong: "The things of Christ and the gospel are good things; they are the best things; they are best in themselves; they are best for us; they are realities of an excellent nature." They never fail, never wear out. *Eternal* life is begun on earth. Owen: "Christ and his grace were the only good things, that were absolutely so from the foundation of the world, or from the giving of the first promise." Believers now have Christ, and, through him, the Father and the Spirit, and so they have all good things, Ps. 84:11; Rom. 8:22; 1 Cor. 3:21-23. Yet we may safely admit that spiritual good things in the next world will in some things be very different from what they seem to us here; even as Christ risen from the dead and walking with his disciples forty days was the same Christ that John saw in his glory, Rev. 1:13-18. The identity remained; but all the signs of weakness had been superseded by ineffable splendor. The queen of Sheba had a just but a very inadequate conception of the glory of Solomon until she paid her visit. Then there was no spirit left in her, and she said the half had not been told. In glory heaven even more excels the true church on earth, than gospel times excel the Mosaic dispensation. For as under the Sinaitic covenant men had but dim views of things under Messiah (Isa. 64:4); so under the gospel we have very feeble views of what is coming in the glory that shall presently be revealed in us.

8. It is impossible to serve God comfortably or acceptably, without a good conscience, vs. 1-3. And the conscience of no man is good unless it is purified by atoning blood. A strong persuasion

of God's holiness and justice, united with a just sense of the number and guilt of our own sins, will fill us with servile fears and torments, until we by faith lay hold of Christ as a sacrifice, and are clad in his spotless righteousness. Saving faith in the Redeemer maketh not ashamed. If we see our sins, and do not see Christ's way of removing guilt, we cannot but quake and tremble. Therefore "the purification of the conscience is an inestimable good." He who has it can never, like the unpardoned sinner, be justly bowed down with an enormous load of guilt. Any man, who serves God happily and worthily, must have paid a visit to the cross and sepulchre of Messiah.

9. No forms of religion, however solemn or bloody, can do for us sinners the great work we most need. They cannot take away sins, vs. 1-4. They never did do it; and no wise man ever rested the weight of his salvation on so rotten a foundation. The very rites themselves declare, Salvation is not in us. The human conscience loudly proclaims the same truth. God's word in both Testaments says the same thing. But Christ is just the Saviour we need. Sprinkled with his blood we are washed and justified once for all. "Guilt of sin once taken away doth not trouble the conscience." How could it? Sin is dead by the cross of Christ, and the dead speak nothing. Owen: "The declaration of the insufficiency of all other ways for the expiation of sin is an evidence of the holiness, righteousness and severity of God against sin, with the unavoidable ruin of all unbelievers. Herein also consists the great demonstration of the love, grace and mercy of God, with an encouragement to faith, in that, when the old sacrifices neither would nor could perfectly expiate sin, he would not suffer the work itself to fail, but provided a way that should be infallibly effective of it."

10. The true key to the Old Testament is in its predictions, vs. 5-7. Lay these aside, and it is a volume of wrath—a scroll written within and without, Weeping and lamentation and wo.

11. It is a blessed thought that our Lord Jesus did not act ignorantly, but knew all that was before him, when he undertook the work of redemption, vs. 5-7. He was in no wise deceived as to what he must do and suffer, if he would save us. And so nothing took him by surprise. His tender loving heart as a man was made unspeakably sad by many things during his abode on earth. Indeed the anticipations of his own sufferings caused him, as it were, to suffer a thousand deaths, Luke 12:50. But having known all this from eternity, and having loved his people from everlasting, his purpose never faltered, Pr. 8:22-31; John 13:1. Owen: "The Lord Christ had an infinite prospect of all that he was to do

and suffer in the world in the discharge of his office and undertaking."

12. Two schemes so wholly opposite as those of the Levitical law and the gospel can never co-operate in human salvation, except as the first is made typical of the second—except as the latter is regarded as the fulfilment of the types and shadows of the former, vs. 8, 9. God himself has taken away the first, that he may establish the second. So our apostle teaches. So let us rejoice in the simplicity of the gospel. Owen: "It is the will of God, that the church should take especial notice of this sacred truth, that nothing can expiate or take away sin, but the blood of Christ alone." It is a great sin and folly for those who have the means of knowing the truth as it is in Jesus to take the simple worship established by Jesus Christ, and out of it or in addition to it make a gorgeous ritual and hold it forth to the people as the right way of pleasing God.

13. God's *will* is mighty. There is in it more efficiency than in all second causes united, v. 10. By it vile and guilty men are pardoned, purified and saved. His will cannot be defeated. He will do all his pleasure. Resistance to him is like tow or stubble opposing the devouring flame. Owen: "The sovereign will and pleasure of God, acting itself in infinite wisdom and grace, is the sole, supreme, original cause of the salvation of the church." Who can estimate the folly and the guilt of attempting or even desiring to bring about any result known to be counter to the pleasure of the Most High?

14. When we see Jewish priests day by day attending at the altar, and learn it was by the command of Jehovah, we at once see they have the best of reasons for their conduct, even though their priestly acts saved no one, v. 11. But when we see men in solitude or in associations diligently pursuing courses of self-invented and uncommanded tortures, rules or rites, which are as powerless to secure pardon, or peace of conscience as were the calves and kids at Jewish altars, we wonder with exceeding great wonder. Can there be greater folly? If men have conscience of sin, the remedy is in the blood of Jesus, not in will-worship of any kind.

15. We have the highest authority and the best reasons for implicitly and unconditionally relying on the glorious sacrifice and finished righteousness of Jesus Christ, our Lord, vs. 12, 14. Calvin: "Christ found in himself that which might appease God, so that he had no need of external helps." And we all may find in him such boundless stores of grace and strength and wisdom, that it is great wickedness to seek these things in any other. Indeed our Lord himself has solemnly forewarned us that they who do

such things shall be counted among the worst of mankind, John 10: 1. "The Lord Christ, in his ineffable love and grace, put himself between us and our enemies." To turn away from him is to declare our want of confidence in his skill and pity, and to declare our belief that we can save ourselves.

16. Although every part and period of the works of redemption require infinite resources and perfections in the Redeemer, yet as things look to us, by far the hardest and most improbable things in the scheme of salvation are already done. Every thing in salvation is wonderful, and to the redeemed will be increasingly so for ever. But to us it is more amazing that Christ should be incarnate and die on the cross, than that having done and suffered so much, he should be eternally and illimitably rewarded by receiving the profoundest homage of adoring millions redeemed by his blood, and of angels who have, from the first discoveries of redemption, felt the liveliest interest in all that concerns the Son of God. And is there not reasoning very much like this found in the scripture itself? See Rom. 5: 10; 8: 32.

17. We need not fear our foes. They are all Christ's enemies, and he will subdue them every one, v. 13. Men who wickedly refuse to be the trophies of his grace, and would insult him and again crown him with thorns, shall be dashed in pieces like a potter's vessel. Wicked angels, who hate his person and oppose the progress of his kingdom, shall at last sincerely though reluctantly confess that war on the Lamb is a failure. Yea, the whole powers of wickedness shall be overthrown; and sin, and death, and hell shall be cast into the lake of fire. Owen: "It is the foundation of all consolation to the church, that the Lord Christ, even now in heaven, takes all our enemies to be his, in whose destruction he is infinitely more concerned than we are. . . Envy not the condition of the most proud and cruel adversaries of the church." One aspect of Christ's bringing his foes to his footstool is specially cheering to a gracious heart—viz.: the missionary cause. It does look as if the harvest of many populous nations was almost ripe. Old superstitions are losing their power. Spiritual despotisms are disarming or disarmed. Whole nations have been converted in the life-time of some of our old people. God's word runneth very swiftly. Converts from heathenism are becoming earnest and successful heralds of the cross. Men are wondering and inquiring what these things mean. The night is far spent. The day is at hand. Glory be to God. Better far is it for men to bow to the sceptre of love than to be broken to shivers by the rod of wrath.

18. Let us follow the apostle's example, and never hesitate to assert and maintain that the Holy Ghost is the author of scripture,

and that the sacred volume is his testimony, v. 15. If the Bible is not the word of God, we have no guide to life and salvation. The controversy respecting the inspiration of the scriptures is not a contest about a thing of nought. It involves salvation. Even if we accept as true many things, yet do not receive them as clothed with divine authority, they will not save our souls. So the apostle elsewhere teaches, 1 Thess. 2 : 12. Owen : "It is the authority of the Holy Ghost alone, speaking to us in the scripture, whereunto all our faith is to be resolved." We are never at liberty to teach for doctrines the conceits, or reasonings, or commandments of men. If we find no *Thus saith the Lord* for our statements, men are not religiously obliged to receive them.

19. Verse 15 also "furnishes a very decided argument for the divinity of the Holy Ghost; for while the apostle says it is the Holy Ghost who speaks in Jeremiah, we find in the passage itself that the speaker is designated Jehovah, which is the peculiar and incommunicable name of the divine being." The Holy Ghost is Jehovah, the self-existent, independent, eternal and unchangeable God. The New Testament says he is God, Acts. 5 : 3, 4, 9; using the words God, Holy Ghost, and Spirit of the Lord, as convertible terms.

20. If the importance of a doctrine may be decided by the frequency with which inspired men bring it to our attention, then there is no more important truth than that of the forgiveness of sins, v. 17. Perhaps there is no form of speech suitable to the subject, that is not employed to teach or illustrate this doctrine so fundamental to the hopes and to the salvation of men. Our verse has the beautiful conception of divine obliviousness—"Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." Other scriptures present the following delightful variety of pleasing methods of teaching the same doctrine : "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered," Ps. 32 : 1; "Thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back," Isa. 38 : 17; "Thou hast cast all their sins into the depths of the sea," Mic. 7 : 19; "I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgression, and as a cloud thy sins," Isa. 44 : 22; "Who is a God like unto thee that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage?" Mic. 7 : 18; "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us," Ps. 103 : 12; "Pardon mine iniquity, for it is great," Ps. 25 : 11. In this rich variety of terms and figures inspired writers pour out their thoughts on this delightful theme. And all this forgiveness is an irrevocable act of God, the Judge of all, based upon the infinite sacrifice of the Son, and applied to the heart of the believer for the purifying of his conscience by the

Holy Ghost. Let us never betake ourselves to any other scheme for remission than that appointed by God himself. "If all those divine institutions in the diligent observance of them could not take away sin, how much less can anything do so, that we can betake ourselves unto for that end." If righteousness could be had by man in observing any law, it would have been by the Sinaitic covenant.

21. Salvation by the new covenant is complete and entire. Nothing is wanting. Sanctification and justification are both made sure to all the chosen of God, vs. 16-18. No more grace is needed; no more power is required; no more sacrifice is called for; no more atonement would be admitted. "There is no necessity of doing over again that which is perfected." Eternal life is what we need, and that is the gift of God. We are poor and wretched; but in Christ we have unsearchable riches. Not angels in glory, who never sinned, have a better inheritance than we, who believe in Jesus.

22. None can require better reasons for entire devotedness to God than is presented by the whole course of the argument of this epistle, and in particular by the glorious truths of this section. If men are ever to be moved to that, which is holy, the appeal must be made to them on the ground of blended authority and love. Here we have them both. More glorious authority there is not than we find in the Mediator, who sets aside the offerings of the old covenant to introduce his own finished sacrifice, vs. 5-7. Greater grace cannot be than that, which does in us and for us all that our case demands, and does it with delight, without money and without price. Doddridge's remarks on this part of our chapter are just and tender: "Since the shadows are now fled away, and the substance is come; since the most substantial blessings are bestowed by the gospel; let us celebrate the praises of him by whom we have received them; of him, who so cheerfully presented himself a spotless sacrifice to God for us. In the body which God hath prepared for him, he fulfilled all righteousness, and made a most perfect atonement: in that he, once for all, made full expiation for the sins of his people, having no sins of his own to expiate: and O! with what grateful emotions of heart should we commemorate his love, reflecting that when all other sacrifices would have been vain, he should so readily cry out, *Lo, I come; I delight to do thy will, O God.*" If Christ's love was not so undeserved; if his work was not so finished; if his grace was not so rich, there might be some plea for hesitancy. But there is no more need of another sacrifice for sin than there is for another sun to shine by day.

23. Of course the mass as observed in the church of Rome is wholly counter to the teachings of this part of God's word, as well as of many others. It is not even 'a tolerable foolery;' it is truly impious. The Council of Trent pronounces the mass to be "a true and proper propitiatory sacrifice for sin." If it is so, of course there is some call for it, some need for it, some use of it. Who wants it? Who demands it? Not God; for he says by Paul, that Jesus "by one offering hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." And in view of Christ's finished work, the Father says of his chosen, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." Then why do we need another "true and proper propitiatory sacrifice?" Nay more, the apostle says where there is "remission of sins and iniquities, there is no more offering for sin." Why then go about the wicked work of pretending to do what God says need not be done, and cannot be done. To supplement the merits of Christ is impossible. To pretend to do it is blasphemy against Christ. Calvin: "When it is objected to the Papists, that to make repeated sacrifices is superfluous, since that is forever in force which Christ once offered, they forthwith rejoin, that it is not another sacrifice that is made in the mass but the same. This is their solution: but what saith the apostle on the other hand? He denies that a sacrifice which is offered repeatedly, though it be the same, is efficacious or fitted for expiation." Moreover we should never forget, that their own rendering of Heb. 10: 10 is that "we are sanctified, by the oblation of the body of Jesus Christ once," and if this oblation is made *once*, then not every day, or every seven days, nor every year, or every seven years. There was never a true and proper propitiatory sacrifice offered since Jesus suffered on the cross. So that "the repetition of the same sacrifices doth of itself demonstrate their insufficiency to the ends sought after."

24. Blessed Saviour! Most lovingly and wondrously hast thou manifested to us thy love, and pity, and power to save. Matchless is thy name, thy person, thy condescension, thy sacrifice, thy scheme for saving lost men. We give all to thee for time and for eternity. Cast us not off; but take us to thy bosom in pity.

## CHAPTER X.

VERSES 19-25.

### APPLICATION OF THE FOREGOING DOCTRINES. STRONG REASONINGS AND FAIR DEDUCTIONS FROM THEM.

19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,

20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the vail, that is to say, his flesh ;

21 And *having* a high priest over the house of God ;

22 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.

23 Let us hold fast the profession of *our* faith without wavering ; for he *is* faithful that promised ;

24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works :

25 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 approaching.

**W**E have followed the apostle through his close, scriptural and powerful argument to its close, and now come to see the practical uses, which he makes of his doctrine.

19. *Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.* The sentence is completed in subsequent verses ; but the terms and thoughts here presented deserve separate consideration. *Brethren*, this term clearly designates not merely Paul's kin according to the flesh, but believers in the Lord Jesus. It unites with other parts of the epistle in showing that the apostle had confidence in those, to whom he was writing, and a warm Christian affection for them. Paul was indeed courteous, but he never saluted in this style and in such a connection those, who were the enemies of righteousness, or who were not in the judgment of charity lovers of Jesus Christ. *Boldness*, the original is a

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word of great importance in the New Testament. It occurs more than thirty times, and in the dative is often rendered by an adverb, openly, boldly, freely, plainly. When rendered by a noun, we have plainness, boldness, confidence. See above on Heb. 3: 6; 4: 16. It primarily signifies free-spokenness. It is often applied to fearlessness of mind, speech, or deportment. In this epistle it uniformly expresses strong confidence, or assurance; a state of mind far removed from presumption, but no less free from dismay or trepidation. When our Lord died on the cross, the vail of the temple was rent in twain, and the holy of holies was thus exposed to view; and when he ascended to God he gave us assurance that we might come into the very presence of the Most High, even to his very throne, now a throne of grace, and with strong assurance ask for what we need. Believers now have admission into the very presence of God—*into the holiest*, or holy of holies; for there is the throne of grace. By the Levitical law none but the high priest might enter into the holy of holies. Now the whole church draws near to God. To go into the holy of holies was to enter into a place made with hands, where indeed were some emblems of the divine presence; but it was not going into the very presence of God itself. The most holy place, like all the rest of the tabernacle, was a shadow, a figure, and not the very substance of good things. Nor could the high priest enter the holiest every day, but only once in a year. Now all, who love God and love prayer, may come into God's most gracious presence any day or any hour. A part of the bondage of the Jewish church was that her worship abounded with tokens of dread; for it would have cost any man but the high priest his life to enter into the holy of holies at any time; and it would have cost the high priest his life to enter except at the appointed time and in the way prescribed. But now where two or three are met together in Christ's name, there is he in the midst of them, Matt. 18: 20. We no longer worship by types, but we come into the immediate and most gracious presence of God. Our worship is as reverential as that under former dispensations, Heb. 12: 28; but in that reverence there is such an abounding of love as to banish tormenting fear; and so we come with *boldness*, or assurance. And no wonder that we should be thus confident, because we enter *by the blood of Jesus*. The blood of the paschal lamb on the door posts rendered Israel perfectly safe when the angel was slaying the first-born of Egypt. How much more shall the blood of Jesus bring safety to all the souls sprinkled therewith. We enter

20. *By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us,*

through the veil, that is to say, his flesh. Peshito: *And by a way of life, which he hath now consecrated for us, through the veil, that is his flesh.* The way into the holy of holies was the old way. The way to the throne of grace is always the new way. It is the way of the new covenant and it never wears out. Bloomfield: "This way tends to life and happiness." The way into the holy of holies was the way of death to every man but the high priest, and to him also, if he entered at forbidden times and in forbidden ways. But the way to the throne of grace is the way of life, the way by which the life of the soul is made sure, and it is perpetual and will never decay nor wax old. *Consecrated*, the word occurs but in one other place (Heb. 9: 18), and is there rendered dedicated. It signifies literally made anew, then duly appointed by a solemn act, and so confirmed or dedicated. This way is through the flesh of Christ, through his body which was broken for us, as the veil of the temple was rent from the top to the bottom at his crucifixion, Matt. 27: 51. As the rending of the veil laid open the holy of holies, so the rending of Christ's body opened the way into the very presence of God for all who believe in him. Christ has for ever consecrated this way by his own blood. To these things he adds:

21. *And having a high priest over the house of God.* This high priest is none other than Christ. The original is not high priest, but a phrase perhaps borrowed from the Septuagint, literally a *great* priest, the greatest priest of whom we have ever heard, the only priest who ever made a sacrifice really able to blot out sins, or secure peace with God, or offered an intercession which was full of virtue and dignity, and which could never fail. He is "great in his divine nature, great in his exaltation, great in honor, dignity and authority." He is fit to be *over the house of God*, which is the church of the living God. Compare 1 Tim. 3: 15; Heb. 3: 5, 6. Such a high priest must be able to do all that is claimed for him in this epistle or elsewhere, Heb. 7: 25, 26. He has all power in heaven and in earth. Of course he can do what he pleases. Having all these advantages and encouragements,

22. *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.* *Draw near*, the same verb in the Greek in some form occurs frequently in this epistle, and is every where else rendered *come*; "Let us *come* boldly;" "Them that *come* unto God by him;" "The *comers* thereunto;" "Ye are *come* unto Mount Zion;" Heb. 4: 16; 7: 25; 10: 1; 12: 22. Coming to God, or drawing near to God denotes all the acts of piety, by which a redeemed soul approaches its Maker, including faith, hope, love,

prayer, praise, every act of worship and of confidence. The method of approach is *with a true heart*, not with a double mind, nor with a heart and a heart, as the Hebrews expressed it, nor with a feigned sincerity, but feeling all we profess. We must come with simplicity and godly sincerity. *In full assurance of faith.* On full assurance, see above Comment and Doctrinal and Practical Remarks on Heb. 6:11. The cognate verb is rendered are most surely believed, being fully persuaded, etc., Luke 1:1; Rom. 4:21; 14:5. Our apostle agrees with his brother: "Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering," Jas. 1:6. As to what faith is see above on Heb. 4:2; and below on Heb. 11 throughout. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." We must believe. In particular we must rely on the priesthood of Christ. *Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.* The sprinkling called for is that of the blood of Jesus, Heb. 12:24; 1 Pet. 1:2. It must be on the heart, the soul, the whole immortal nature. This only and this alone delivers a sinner from an evil conscience. See above on Heb. 9:14. The blood of Jesus meets all the demands of God's law and of man's conscience, and whenever applied it delivers us from guilt, and makes us clean. *And our bodies washed with pure water.* Whitby, Macknight, McLean, Tholuck, Lindsay and others suppose the reference here is to Christian Baptism. But they seem to forget that Paul is writing to Israelites, to whom his language without such allusion would be both striking and instructive. Gill gives the true exposition, when he says it is "not baptismal water, but the grace of the Spirit, which is often compared to water in scripture: the body, as well as soul, needs washing, and renewing; internal grace influences outward actions, which adorn religion, and without which bodies cannot be presented holy to God. The allusion is to a custom of the Jews, who were obliged to wash their bodies and make them clean when they prayed. So Aben Ezra observes on Gen. 35:2 'that every Israelite, when he went to pray at a fixed place, was obliged to have his body pure, and his garments pure.' So a priest might not enter into the court for service, though clean, until he had washed himself all over; and it is to sacerdotal acts that the reference is here." The great prophet of the river Chebar tells us what this washing was: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them," Ezek. 36:25-27. Calvin gives the

same interpretation and adds: "The whole amounts to this, that we are made partakers of Christ, if we come to him, being sanctified in body and soul." Owen takes very much the same view and remarks: "The apostle Peter tells us that saving baptism does not consist in washing away the filth of the body, 1 Pet. 3: 21, therefore the expression here must be figurative and not proper." Many connect this clause with the next verse so as to read: And having your bodies washed with pure water, let us hold fast our profession, etc. This is specially true of those who make it refer to baptism. The sense then is: And having been solemnly baptized, let us hold fast our profession. But "the sprinkling with blood and the washing with water were both essential" under the law, Ex. 29: 4; Lev. 14: 8; 15: 5-12; 16: 4, 14, 15, 27; 17: 15, 16; Num. 8: 7; 19: 2-10.

23. *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful that promised.* *Profession*, the original word occurs six times in the New Testament, and is rendered profession or confession according to the preference of the translator. When applied to the conduct of our Lord before Pilate, it is rendered *confession*, 1 Tim. 6: 13. The same diversity is noticed in the cognate verb, rendered both confess and profess. Nor is there any important difference between a profession and a confession of one's faith in Christ, and adherence to his cause. In either case there is an avowal of our religious belief, an acknowledgment of the truth. If there is any shade of difference in the use of these words by the best writers, it is that confession is used to denote a profession of Christ's truth when it is perillous to make known our sentiments; and a profession supposes no such peril. But even this distinction is not uniformly maintained. Wiclif, Rheims, Doway and Craik read *confession* in our verse. The word rendered *faith* is every where else rendered hope in the New Testament. Peshito, Wiclif, Tyndale, Cranmer, Genevan, Rheims, Doway, Craik, Stuart and McLean read *hope* in this verse. Nor is there any good and sufficient reason for here departing from the common rendering. Only one or two MSS. read faith. To profess hope is, however, not different from professing faith, for hope is the joyful expectation of the good things which faith believes. *Hold fast*, the verb is uniformly so rendered in this epistle and sometimes elsewhere; also *keep, retain, seize*. Peshito: Let us persevere in the profession of our hope, etc. Wiclif: And holde we the confession of our hope bowinge to no side. *Without wavering*, inflexible, not bending to the storm of fury beating around us, not yielding to the pressure of worldliness or ungodliness. The reason here urged for steadfastness is, *He is faithful*

*that promised.* God's faithfulness is often urged by Paul, 1 Cor. 1: 9; 10: 13; 2 Cor. 1: 18; 1 Thess. 5: 4; 2 Tim. 2: 13; nor is humble trust in God's faithfulness ever disappointed. He has warranted us to trust in him unwaveringly by making us many, great and precious *promises*, not one of which has ever failed or can ever be broken.

24. *And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works.* *Let us consider*, a word very well rendered, sometimes behold, perceive, discover. See above on Heb. 3: 1. It implies an obligation on us, 1, to think of other people as well as ourselves, even when we ourselves are in distress; 2, to weigh well the dispositions, talents and characters of our brethren, making due allowance for all their infirmities natural and moral, trying to find out what they are best fitted for; 3, to pray for them and encourage them in all that is good and useful. *To provoke*, in the Greek a noun with a preposition. The noun occurs but in one other place, where it is rendered contention, Acts 15: 39. In Acts 17: 16 the cognate verb is rendered was stirred. So we ought to stir ourselves up to all that is good, and to stir up our brethren to *love*, or charity as the word is rendered in 1 Cor. 13 throughout; and to *good works*. There are two words rendered good, as qualifying our works. Both are commonly rendered good, but one of them signifies lovely, beautiful, excellent, worthy, noble. This is the word in our verse. We must incite our brethren to all that is lovely and excellent, by our example, by due encouragement, by exhortation and, if need be, by solemn warning against wrong habits and courses.

25. *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 approaching.* Much difficulty often attended the assembling of the early Christians for joint worship. This was true in Judea, especially after the persecution broke out. Christ, his apostles and evangelists used the synagogues as places of addressing their countrymen. This was not forbidden by the rules of the synagogue, Matt. 13: 54; Luke 4: 16; John 18: 20; Acts 14: 1, 17; 18: 4, 26. But as the unbelieving Jews became violent, Christians were not allowed to use the synagogues, and were badly treated if they went to them, Acts 22: 19. The Hebrew Christians were generally poor, and contributions were needed to prevent suffering. Of course the Christians of necessity met in private houses, or in places hardly suited to the convenient meeting of many persons at once. Besides, arrests were often made by their enemies at such meetings as they were able to hold. In this state of case there were strong temptations to for-

sake that joint worship, wherein one might exhort, edify and encourage another. In Judea (Jerusalem was no exception), the social, political and commercial condition was now unhappy and growing more so every day. The wars and rumors of wars, of which Christ forewarned his followers, had either begun or were about beginning, when this epistle was written, if Scott and others have rightly judged. Paul says, "*Ye see the day approaching.*" He does not mean the day of judgment, nor the day of each man's death, for he might have urged such ideas in writing to any church; but he refers to that day, an emblem of the final judgment, when Jerusalem as a city and the civil State of the Jews should be utterly destroyed by the Romans, according to the predictions of our Lord, Matt. 24: 1-41; Luke 21: 5-24. Though Christ had not announced the precise year, yet he had said these events should happen in that generation, and thirty years, more or less, had already passed since the prediction had been uttered. The language of the apostle is striking—Ye see the day approaching. It sounds as if the Roman eagle was already advancing. The great mass of the Jews, too, were still stubbornly and malignantly rejecting the gospel. This of itself was sign enough that ruin was not far distant. It seems to be generally admitted that as early as A.D. 65 there were great commotions and sad confusions in the world. So that it behooved Christians every where to use all possible means to stir up themselves and to exhort one another in every right way to zeal and constancy. This exhortation was shown to be necessary by the conduct of *some*, we know not how many, who had forsaken the assemblies for Christian worship.

#### DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL REMARKS.

1. Doctrine is in order to godliness. A holy life is the proper inference from gospel truths. The word *therefore* connects all that went before with all that comes after, v. 19. We must observe the connections of things. Thus shall we be persuaded to righteousness.

2. There are great dignities and privileges in the gospel church, in it believers are wonderfully endowed and enfeoffed. The most needy are enriched; the most guilty pardoned and accepted; the most timid acquire boldness, v. 19.

3. All God's people under the gospel are priests, and are admitted into the holiest, even into the presence of God, v. 19. Another apostle pronounces Christians to be a "royal priesthood." As a servant of the Most High God Melchisedec was not personally so favored as are all true Christians, except that he was a

type of Christ. Gerok enumerates four sacred priestly obligations as resting on all Christians: "1. Priestly approach to the mercy-seat; 2. The priestly sprinkling of our hearts; 3. The priestly holding fast to our confession of hope; 4. The priestly receiving of one another in love." "And what a priesthood ours is! it takes us not only into the holy place, where the priests of old had access, but *into the holiest* of all! . . . Our faith is hindered by no vail from going into the presence of God."

"How can it be that one so mean,  
A sinner, selfish, dark, unclean,  
Thus in the holiest stands!  
And in that light divinely pure,  
Which may no stain of sin endure,  
Lifts up rejoicing hands!

Jesus: the answer thou hast given!  
Thy death, thy life have opened heaven,  
And all its joys to me;  
Washed in thy blood,—O wondrous grace!  
I'm holy as the holy place  
In which I worship thee."

How Christians are priests will come up more fully in considering Heb. 13: 15, 16.

4. The grounds of strong confidence to Christians are ample, v. 19. The high priest going into the holiest, as the law of his office required, was no more safe from harm, than is the Christian going into the immediate presence of God, at the divine bidding and in the way required. Not only need we not tremble with apprehension, but we may joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, Rom. 5: 11. We must accept and believe in the grace offered us. Starke: "Neither doubter nor disputer can enter into the kingdom of God." The temper of a little child is more sure to gain admission to Christ's house than the profoundest reasoning powers ever granted to mortals.

5. The greatest masters of theology must neither disown nor despise weaker Christians, but like Paul they must own and call them *brethren*, v. 19. He had been deeply exercised with the low state of knowledge and principle manifested by some; but he would not on that account cast them off. He followed his own rule: "Him that is weak in faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations," Rom. 14: 1. Want of thorough instruction in the doctrine or discipline of the gospel can never justify either schism or want of charity. Owen: "It is not every mistake, every error,

though it be in things of great importance, while it overthrows not the foundation, that can divest men of a fraternal interest with others in the heavenly calling."

6. It is a blessed truth that there is a new and living way of access to God, v. 20. And it is an inquiry of the gravest import, Are we walking in that way? The Bible is clear that salvation is provided. Does our life show that we have accepted it? Balp not applied will heal no one. Food not eaten will not hinder starvation. Blessed be God, there is but one way into his gracious presence; so we need not waste time in discussing which is the better of two ways, or the best of many ways. It is death to any sinner to come to God otherwise, John 14:6, 7. Compare John 10:1; 1 Peter 3:18. Calvin: "The blood of cattle, as it soon turned to corruption, could not long retain its freshness; but Christ's blood which is corrupted by no taint, but flows ever pure and florid, will not fail us even to the end of the world." Conybeare and Howson: "We can have no real knowledge of God but through Christ's incarnation." Much less can we hope acceptably to approach to him in names so worthless as our own, for we are all sinners before God. Nothing but the blood of Calvary has ever allayed "the disquietudes of an accusing conscience." It alone and it only speaks peace to the penitent. Capel: "The virtue of the blood poured out by Christ for us never grows old, never loses its power." Diodati: "The blood of Christ is always fresh and fragrant before the face of the Father, to sprinkle and quicken us." Owen: "This way is *new*: 1. Because it was but newly made and prepared. 2. Because it belongs unto the new covenant. 3. Because it admits of no decays, but is always new as to its efficacy and use, as in the day of its first preparation."

Dear dying Lamb, thy precious blood  
 Shall never lose its power,  
 Till all the ransomed church of God  
 Be saved to sin no more.

7. Let us never forget Christ's priesthood, v. 21. It is ever over the whole house of God. Solomon's temple without priests and victims, and in particular without a high priest, would have been no more senseless than are churches and doctrines, which retain not the priesthood of the Lord Jesus. If he is not a priest, there is no hope for lost men. Owen: "The Lord Christ doth peculiarly preside over all the persons, duties and worship of believers in the church of God."

8. By nature we are far from God; if we remain so, we are for

ever undone. Our only safety is in *drawing near* to him in the way he has appointed, v. 22. Tong: "Men must draw near to God; since such a way of access and return to God is opened, it would be the greatest ingratitude and contempt of God and of Christ, still to keep at a distance from him. They must draw near by conversion, and by taking hold of his covenant; they must draw near in all holy conversation, like Enoch walking with God; they must draw near in humble adorations, worshipping at his footstool; they must draw near in holy dependence, and in a strict observation of the divine conduct towards them; they must draw near in conformity to God, and communion with him, living under his blessed influence, still endeavoring to get nearer and nearer, till they come to dwell in his presence." To be far from God is to be far from righteousness, and hope, and salvation. If Christ does not bring us to God, his death is as to us in vain, 1 Pet. 3:18.

9. In all our approaches to God there is no substitute for godly sincerity. The heart must be enlisted and devoted, v. 22. Hypocrisy is as fatal as avowed unbelief. The life we live must be that of faith in the Son of God, Gal. 2:20. And this faith must be unfeigned. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth," John 4:24. The want of the heart will spoil the best prayer ever offered. It proves hypocrisy. We may be very ready to search our own hearts and see that there be no hypocrisy or guile there. But we have no right to charge so flagrant faults on others, except on overwhelming evidence. We may charitably caution all against so dire a mistake, but may not rashly accuse them.

10. Faith has every needed basis, so that it is fully justified in banishing all doubt as to the certainty of what it believes, v. 22. One may not be fully satisfied of his personal interest in the Redeemer, but nothing is more dishonorable to God than a want of "thorough conviction of the truth of what is revealed in scripture, or the existence of a cherished disposition to doubt or question the doctrines of the gospel." Owen: "The person and office of Christ are to be rested in with full assurance, in all our accesses to the throne of grace." Starke: "The faithfulness of God is above all faithfulness." To question it is a sin. Christ's offers and God's promises are true and faithful altogether, unchangeable and irrevocable to the end of time.

11. No knowledge of the way of life, no zeal for the rites and proprieties of the house of God, nor any thing else can avail for our salvation, if the redemption that is in Christ be not applied to us, v. 22. It was the scarlet thread in Rahab's window that saved

herself and family. It was not the slaying of the paschal lamb, but the sprinkling of its blood on the door posts, that saved the first-born of Israel from the death of the first born of Egypt. Our hearts must be sprinkled from an evil conscience.

12. So also must our lives be made pure, v. 22. A wicked life shows the falseness of any profession of faith. Our bodies must be washed with pure water.

13. We ought to confess and profess Christ before men, v. 23. The Christian religion is no secret, and we ought not to try to make a secret of it. It is a public concernment and every man ought to know it and its friends, as he has opportunity. If we are ashamed of Christ, he will be ashamed of us in the last day. If we deny him, he will very justly and certainly deny us, Mark 8 : 38; Luke 9 : 26; 2 Tim. 2 : 12.

14. Our profession should be steadfast and unwavering, v. 23. There is no good reason for making any other kind of profession. If Christ is worthy of any honor, he deserves an unflinching service.

15. He that wavers in his love to Christ and in the profession of his name, is on the road to apostasy, v. 23. Yet honest Christians ought not to be driven into sore amazement by the apostasy of some. Calvin: "When we hear that there were, even from the apostle's time, faithless men, who departed from the church, we ought to be less shocked and disquieted by the similar examples of defection, which we may see in our day." Owen: "No church order, no outward profession can secure men from apostasy." We cannot do without the special grace of God.

16. Yet for our encouragement we need no better promises and no better promiser than we now have, v. 23. We may surely and safely, through grace, live and die "in hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before the world began," Tit. 1 : 2. No man's faith in God is too implicit or too strong.

17. No man is at liberty to spend all his thoughts on himself; but we are all bound to consider our neighbors and brethren, v. 24. Compare Heb. 3 : 12, 13. Parry: "Let us consider one another how much we need each other's assistance in this difficult work. Consider too the influence which your station, or circumstances, or connexions in life, may give you over your relatives or friends, your neighbors or acquaintance, or it may be over a still wider portion of society; and let this influence be used, with Christian consideration and prudence, for the furtherance of the eternal welfare of those who are members together with you of the body of Christ." This is a duty not often well performed. Many give counsel without well weighing the matter submitted to

them. Some reproofs are more like oil of vitriol than that "excellent oil," of which the prophet speaks. "Brotherly love will produce brotherly help." Love worketh no ill to one's neighbor. Compare Phil. 2:4.

18. In particular should we do all we can to incite others to love and good works, v. 24. Every man is liable to fail and to fall. Let his brethren keep alive in him the spirit of doing good in a loving way, and they shall not lose their reward.

19. It is both wicked and perillous in any one to forsake the social and public worship of God, v. 25. Tong: "The communion of saints is a great help and privilege, and a good means of steadiness and perseverance; hereby their hearts and hands are mutually strengthened." "I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness;" "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go unto the house of the Lord," Ps. 84:10; 122:1. Calvin: "Certainly contempt of the brethren, moroseness, envy, an undue estimate of ourselves, and other unholy impulses witness either that our love has lost its energy or that we have none at all." Stick to the church.

20. Let us duly regard and consider coming events whether near at hand, or comparatively far off, v. 25. This truth is often urged in scripture, Rom. 13:11; 2 Pet. 3:11-14. Owen: "Approaching judgments ought to influence unto especial diligence in all evangelical duties." The conduct of Daniel as he saw great deliverances near at hand shows that we ought by special prayer and fasting to prepare for the issues they will bring with them, Dan. 9:2-27.

## CHAPTER X.

VERSES 26-31.

### THE SAD CONSEQUENCES OF SINNING WILFULLY. GOD WILL SURELY AND FEARFULLY PUNISH THE INCORRIGIBLE.

26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,

27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

28 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses :

29 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 ?

30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance *belongeth* unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.

31 *It is* a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

**T**HE apostle further applies the great doctrines of the epistle, particularly to the case of wilful and intelligent sinners.

26. *For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.* This verse and the next belong to a class of texts, of which it is but common candor to admit that they are difficult of explanation, and still more difficult of application. We had a like passage in Heb. 6 : 4-6. Without repeating what was there said, the reader is requested to turn to it, and to examine the principles of interpretation there considered. Let it also be observed : 1. The more any one consider : Heb. 6 : 4-6 and Heb. 10 : 26, 27 the more will he probably be inclined to regard the two places as parallel in their matter and in the right interpretation of them. 2. It is pretty clear that the emphatic word in our verse is *wilfully*. It means not merely voluntarily, in the sense that there can be no act of ours for which we deserve either praise or

blame without some consent of the will. Thus Peter's will was by terror brought to consent to deny Christ; but none of us would say that Peter wilfully denied his Lord. The word is found in the New Testament but in one other place, 1 Pet. 5:2, where it is rendered willingly and is expressly opposed to acting *by constraint*, and is explained to be the same as acting *of a ready mind*. A good man may be brought by intimidation, by deception, by ignorance, by surprise, by the force of old habits or by the weakness of grace to do a very sinful act; but then he does it not of a ready mind; he sins not wilfully; he knows not what he is doing, till he wakes up and finds what folly he has wrought. Then he truly grieves for his conduct, abhors himself, and repents in dust and ashes. But the dog, because he is a dog, returns to his vomit. The sow, because she is a sow, goes back to her wallowing in the mire. And the wicked, because he is wicked, does wickedly. His heart never did like the restraints of holiness, even after he was much affected with religious things. Nor did he ever cease to regard iniquity in his heart. Yet for a time he turned an eager attention to divine things. He heard with deep emotion the glad tidings. He saw how life was in Christ. Like Simon Magus he asked the prayers of God's people. Like Demas he sent salutations to the brethren. Like Saul, he wept over his sins; but the incorruptible seed of God was never so in him that he could not make a trade of sin, 1 John 3:9. So when temptation came, he was of a ready mind to give up the gospel and all its hopes rather than sacrifice his darling lusts, and he sinned with a will. Bretschneider, *spontaneously*; Robinson, *of free will*. 3. The elements commonly regarded as essential to the unpardonable sin, viz., malice and intelligence, are both said to belong to this case. Malice is expressed by the word, wilfully; and intelligence by the phrase, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth. 4. The context shows that it is not backsliding but apostasy, not a fall into sin by surprise, but a permanent renunciation of the gospel that is here spoken of. 5. The phrase there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, seems primarily to declare that as God has no other remedy for human guilt but the blood of Christ, and as these apostates have finally rejected that, their case is hopeless. Neither in prophecy nor in any other way has God informed us of any counsel or plan whereby the lost may be saved but only by the merits of the Redeemer. 6. Other places beside this show that men may and sometimes do so treat the gospel as to prove that they count themselves, and that they are in fact and in every sense unworthy of eternal life, Acts 13:46; 18:6; 28:25-28. Not only does there not remain any other sacrifice for sin,

27. *But* [there remain] *a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.* Peshito: But the fearful judgment impendeth, and the zeal of fire that consumeth the adversaries. Tyndale, Cranmer and Genevan, instead of fiery indignation, read violent fire; Rheims and Doway, rage of fire. Perhaps it is best in this clause instead of *and* to read *even*, as the word is often rendered, as in Luke 12:7; Rom. 5:7; Heb. 11:19. *Certain* here as often means some, not sure or unavoidable. The word rendered *looking for* signifies not only expectation but actual receiving. From the day that one finally renounces the gospel, he is a doomed man. The curse comes into his soul like water. To him every thing becomes evil. Well is such a state called *fearful*. The poor apostate may be hardened and live without apprehension; still that makes his case the more fearful to one, who rightly considers it. To such also remains a fiery indignation, a jealousy of fire, a jealousy that like fire consumes every thing before it. None can resist it. The language may be borrowed from the destruction of the cities of the plain or from that of Korah and his company. Compare 2 Thess. 1:8. *It shall devour the adversaries.* What does this mean? Some have suggested that it refers to the awful judgments about to come on the Jews, who as a nation had rejected Messiah, and had become *adversaries*, or a people *contrary* to Christ and his gospel, whether in Judea or elsewhere, 1 Thess. 2:16. This sense is justified by history. Those adversaries did awfully perish. Others think it points to the final overthrow of all the incorrigible enemies of God. Prophecy says they shall all be overthrown, and the scripture cannot be broken. It matters little which of these interpretations be preferred. The former foreshadows the latter. The latter implies the former. *Devour*, commonly rendered eat. It expresses utter destruction, not annihilation.

28. *He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses.* That law spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, Heb. 2:2. The passages of the Pentateuch here referred to are such as this: "The soul that doeth aught presumptuously, whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from among the people. Because he hath despised the word of the Lord, and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him," Num. 15:30, 31. See also many parallel passages, particularly Deut. 13:6-10; 17:2-13; 27:15-26. The number of witnesses is not only fixed in Deut. 17:6; but it

is cited by our Lord in John 8 : 17, and is approved by apostolic authority as embodying a correct principle of judging, 2 Cor. 13 : 1. The key to the right interpretation of this passage is in the word *despised*, which is a good rendering of the original. All violations of the law of Moses were not punished with death, but only such as were spiteful, presumptuous, in contempt of God's authority. Under this law great numbers were executed, some by stoning and some by hanging. Sometimes God destroyed his enemies by fire from heaven, Lev. 20 : 2, 27 ; Deut. 21 : 22, 23. Some contend however that human bodies were in Judea hanged only after they were dead ; but this can hardly be proved. Such was the rigor of the law under which the Israelites lived for long centuries, and to which as a whole the Hebrews were much attached. This law was good and just. And yet

29. *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 ?* Peshito : How much more, think ye, will he receive capital punishment, who hath trodden upon the Son of God, and hath accounted the blood of his covenant, by which he is sanctified, as the blood of all men, and hath treated the Spirit of grace with contumely ? Doway : How much more, do you think, he deserveth worse punishments, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath esteemed the blood of the testament unclean, with which he was sanctified, and hath offered an affront to the Spirit of grace ? The law was good ; the gospel is transcendently excellent. The one raised Israel above surrounding nations ; the other exalts to heaven the people who receive it. "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." A mere man was the mediator of one ; the God-man was the mediator of the other. One was temporary ; the other was everlasting. One was consecrated by the blood of beasts ; the other was dedicated with the blood of the Son of God. The former was through human weakness the ministration of death. The latter is through faith the ministration of the Spirit. Of course if contempt of the former was terribly punished, despite towards the latter must be far more terribly punished. The matter is referred to men's consciences and conceptions—*suppose ye*, think ye, or account ye. Does it not seem to you that retribution must be far more awful in the latter than in the former case ? *Punishment*, the Greek word so rendered occurs no where else in the New Testament. It expresses the avenging of God. The sin of utterly and intelligently renouncing the gospel is against both the Son and the Spirit—the

Son consecrated or *sanctified* to his full work by his own blood, and the Spirit as the author of *grace* in the heart. For the meaning of the word sanctified as here used see John 17: 19, and several places in this epistle. Some think that the one said to be sanctified is the apostate, but such an interpretation is full of difficulties every way and should be rejected. Lightfoot, Cocceius, Lindsay and many others regard Christ as the one who was sanctified.

30. *For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. We know,* that is we Hebrews, who have the oracles of God and are acquainted with our own history, know. These quotations are from Deut. 32: 35, 36. The doctrine they assert is clear. It is that God will not clear the guilty, but condignly punish his incorrigible foes, and that the fact of a people being his by profession, and so distinguished from the heathen shall not save them from the just displeasure of God. *He shall judge his people.* Where these words occur in the Pentateuch, they seem to refer to God's defending his people from their enemies; but they contain a proposition universally and in every sense true. Compare 1 Pet. 4: 17-19. Seeing that Jehovah is a God of recompense,

31. It is *a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.* This is a sentence of unusually solemn and awful import. *To fall,* a verb usually so rendered, as to fall into a pit, to fall among thieves, to fall into reproach, into temptation or into condemnation. The word conveys some idea of the utter helplessness of him who has fallen. In this case the idea grows to the very end of the verse. This falling into the *hands* of the Lord is for punishment. And he is the *living God*, as in Heb. 3: 12; 9: 14; 12: 9. See above on Heb. 3: 12. Here comes in the whole character of God as independent, almighty, all-wise, infinitely, eternally and unchangeably just, and determined to put down iniquity in every form. He will as certainly glorify his justice on his enemies, as he will glorify his grace on his people. He is not a dumb, senseless idol such as the heathen worship, but able sufficiently to avenge himself of his adversaries, and therefore "it is a fearful thing to fall into his hands."

#### DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL REMARKS.

1. Sin is a dreadful evil. It is every-where so represented in God's word. It is defiling to the soul and dishonoring to God. Its heinousness arises from the fact that it is against infinite majesty, and purity, and authority, and benevolence. No man has

ever thought sin to be a greater evil than it actually is. Owen: "It is the contempt of God and his authority in his law, that is the gall and poison of sin." When we are disposed to think God's punishments for sin to be too great, let us remember that he only can gauge the depths of moral evil. We should also notice the universal fact that slight thoughts of sin always proceed from unworthy thoughts of God. Owen: "It is our duty diligently to inquire into the nature of sin, lest we be overtaken by the great offence."

2. Yet all sins are not equally heinous, but some are more aggravated than others. Some are against more light and knowledge, and are committed with more malice and daring, and more obstinacy and *wilfulness*, v. 26. Peirce: "An emphasis is deservedly laid upon that word *wilfully*; by which a wide difference is made between the case of those who are borne down for a time, and forced contrary to their own inclination, by the violence of their sufferings, to disown the truth, and those who deliberately and wilfully apostatize from Christianity." Such a distinction is well founded and easily made. God himself admits it. All actual sin implies some exercise of will. Whenever we consent to be led away and enticed by temptation, we commit iniquity. But when we cast off all restraint and work with greediness in the ways of folly, we sin rapidly and flagrantly. We may not know which of two men is the greater sinner before God; but we cannot doubt that some sins are more provoking to God than others.

3. All sin requires sacrifice, v. 26. Without the shedding of blood is no remission. Bates: "God will not pardon sin without some satisfaction." The apostle has already proved that the Jewish sacrifices were abolished by the coming of Christ, and that the Lord Jesus would never make another sacrifice; but when he should come again, it would be without sin unto salvation; so that if men rejected the sacrifice of Calvary, there was none else. Prophecy spoke of none else. There never would be any other. There is not, there never was but one effectual sacrifice for sin.

4. Christ's propitiatory offering rejected, there remain to sinners nought but ruin and despair, v. 27. Many scriptures confirm this truth. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," Acts 4: 12. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ," 1 Cor. 3: 11. Calvin: "If salvation be not to be looked for out of Christ, let us not marvel that all who shall forsake him willingly are bereaved of all hope and pardon." Moll: "He who turns the grace of God into *wantonness* has nothing further to hope from divine compassion. The

*wrath* of God burns as *hotly* as his love, and strikes no less surely than justly." Owen: "Though there may be sometimes an appearance of great severity in God's judgments against sinners, yet when the nature of their sins, and the aggravation of them shall be discovered, they will be manifest to have been righteous and within due measure." As eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived the good things which God has prepared for them that love him, so neither has eye seen, nor ear heard, nor heart conceived the woeful things which God has prepared for them that hate him. The destruction of the wicked is utter. God's *fiery indignation* shall devour his adversaries.

5. In particular, does a dreadful doom await those who are guilty of apostasy, vs. 26, 27. This sin seems to be specially referred to in these verses. Macknight: "The character of God makes the punishment of apostates certain." Nor is it possible for us too carefully to guard against everything that may lead to that dreadful sin. The truth on this subject, as on many others, is often most keenly felt by those who have least occasion to be alarmed. Many a gracious soul is much afflicted by these alarming words, while the daring and self-confident are not at all moved by them. But let him who has a tender conscience not forget that "the sin here mentioned is a total and final apostasy, when men with a full and fixed will and resolution despise and reject the only Saviour; despise and resist the Spirit, the only Sanctifier; and despise and renounce the Gospel, the only way of salvation, and the words of eternal life; and always after they have known, owned and professed the Christian religion, and continue to do so obstinately and maliciously." Scott: "By negligence, pride, or carnal self-love, or by gradually yielding to the fear of man, many professors of the gospel are left to 'sin wilfully after they have received the knowledge of the truth:' and, though the fallen, the weak, and the trembling should be encouraged; yet we cannot too awfully alarm the secure, self-confident and presumptuous: as every deliberate sin, against light and conscience, is a step towards the tremendous precipice described by the Apostle." One of the Christian Fathers says: "The apostate deliberately weighs Christ and his service against the world and its charms, and in his heart prefers the latter."

6. We commonly marvel when we think of any one *despising Moses' Law*, v. 28. The precept was so clear, the penalty was so dreadful and imminent, and yet, cases were found where human wickedness bore men along and led them to contemn and to defy the Almighty. Therefore when we see men committing presumptuous sins under the full light of the Gospel, we see nothing new

under the sun. The heart of man is so corrupt that when left to itself, neither love nor authority can constrain it.

7. In all judicial proceedings, both in Church and State, we have a right to require abundant evidence of guilt before we condemn, v. 28. It is a dreadful thing to condemn the innocent. Many are wicked enough to accuse falsely, and even to swear falsely. But it is very difficult for two or three men so to conspire in a false accusation as that their witness shall agree together. It was so in the trial of our Lord, Mark 14 : 36. Gouge : 1. "All punishments are grievous; if therefore they be unjustly inflicted, they do exceedingly exasperate. 2. Capital punishments, if they be wrongfully inflicted, are irreparable; who can restore life when once it is taken away?" So in matters involving human character. The utmost caution should be used, and full proof be demanded. This whole matter is very justly and strikingly illustrated in the history of Susannah, found among the Apocryphal Books of the Old Testament. In one of his Pastoral Epistles, Paul renews the injunction with great solemnity in special reference to ministers of the Gospel, 1 Tim. 5 : 19. Judges and jurors are not to express their views except as they are sustained by the law and the evidence.

8. It was a dreadful thing to die without mercy under the law of Moses. But it is a still more dreadful punishment to fall under the displeasure of God by slighting the Gospel, vs. 28, 29. As some men do now judge themselves unworthy of eternal life, so will they at last judge themselves worthy of eternal death. Out of their own mouth, God will judge them. Dives was compelled to remember that in his life-time he had received good things, and Lazarus, evil things. The modes of rejecting the Gospel are very various. Some, with an air of politeness, say, I pray thee, have me excused. Others bluntly proclaim, We will not have this man to reign over us. Others again daringly cry out, His blood be upon us and upon our children. Yet others express their scorn and their bitter enmity by treading under foot the Son of God. Calvin : "It is more heinous to tread under foot, than to despise." It is the highest act of irreligion. Let men beware how they slight the Redeemer. Hahn : "According to the greatness of his grace, is the severity with which God visits his wrath upon the contempt of it." Owen : "The inevitable certainty of the eternal punishment of gospel despisers depends on the essential holiness and righteousness of God, as the ruler and judge of all;" but the certainty of such a doom is made clear to us by many awful declarations of Scripture.

9. Christ's undertaking for our salvation is exceedingly glorious, and his sacrifice will be matter of adoring and admiring wonder

forever and ever, v. 29. His blood was not common. It was the precious blood of the Son of God. It is and ever shall be the subject of loud and perpetual hallelujahs around the throne of God. If God should countenance contempt towards the sacrifice of Calvary, his moral government would be dissolved.

10. Nor can the Most High ever regard with indifference the treatment given to his Holy Spirit, despite towards whom is the highest kind of offence, v. 29. In the will of the Father, we find the efficient cause of salvation; in the work and sufferings of Christ, we find the meritorious cause of our salvation. But by the power of the Spirit, salvation is applied to our souls; else we perish in our sins. Middleton: "This passage confirms the doctrine of the personality of the Spirit, for it does not appear that the verb rendered hath done despite can have for its object *things* or *qualities*; it is applicable to persons only." This remark is sustained by Bretschneider and Robinson. Indeed it would be very remarkable if the Bible taught that men might say what they pleased against the Father and the Son, but if they blasphemed one of the divine perfections, their sins should never have forgiveness.

11. It seems to be a characteristic of a great truth that it is capable of application to a rich and often unexpected variety of cases and circumstances. This is the case with the truths quoted in verse 30. In Rom. 12:19, Paul cites the first of these for the purpose of warning Christians never to indulge in a vindictive spirit. Here he cites them both to show the dreadful retribution which will surely come upon the wicked. And where they occur in Deut. 32:35, 36, the reference seems to be chiefly to the defence which a just God will surely work out for his people, and all these points are well proven by the same words. Duncan: "This vengeance, which is appropriated to God, is such as belongs to no creature. Sure, vengeance, as vengeance, is not to be intrusted to our nature. Nor is any man capable of managing it without exceeding the just bounds, and hurting his own soul. Wherefore God has reserved it to himself." However heinous the offences, or wicked or cruel the life of any man, the vengeance of God will be enough. Right thoughts of coming retribution should make us cry mightily to God for the averting of his wrath. Even Christians should remember that though they are defended in the right, they may do so very wrong that they shall not escape the marks of the divine displeasure in this life. Of this truth we have frequent notice in the scripture, 2 Sam. 12:10-14; Ps. 89:30-33; 1 Cor. 11:30-32. Owen: "Those properties of God, which are the principal delight of believers, the chief object of their faith,

hope and trust, are an eternal spring of dread and terror unto all impenitent sinners." Let all, who are out of Christ, tremble at the thought of their final account. They will fall into the hands of the living God, not for mercy, as they might now do; nor for chastisement, as David did when called to choose between famine, pestilence and war, 2 Sam. 24: 13, 14; but into his hands for condign punishment and awful retribution. Jehovah has all resources necessary to make vengeance terrible, 1 Chron. 29: 11, 12; Ps. 90: 11. That he will certainly inflict his wrath upon the wicked, he has abundantly declared, Matt. 25: 41-46; Mark 9: 43-48; Luke 12: 45-48; 2 Thess. 1: 7-9. Clarke: "He who lives forever can punish forever. How dreadful to have the displeasure of an eternal, almighty Being to rest on the soul for ever." Compare Nahum 1: 6.

12. As some pious souls are, through want of instruction, or by natural inclination to melancholy, disposed to fear that they have committed the unpardonable sin, it is proper here to state that no sin, of the pardon of which the scripture gives an account, is the unpardonable sin, even though it may be greatly aggravated. Nor is every degree of enlightenment the amount of intelligence necessary to commit this sin. It is commonly supposed to involve clear insight into the nature of the act done, accompanied by malice of no ordinary kind. We may safely infer that no one has committed this sin who loves God or honestly keeps his commandments, or honestly desires salvation through the blood of Christ.

## CHAPTER X.

VERSES 32-39.

PAST EXPERIENCE SHOULD MAKE THEM BOLD.  
THEY MUST BE PATIENT. THE TIME IS SHORT.  
THEY MUST STAND BY FAITH, AND NOT DRAW  
BACK.

32 But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions;

33 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.

34 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.

35 Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.

36 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

37 For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

**T**HE apostle proceeds to apply to practical use the great doctrines of this epistle in several additional particulars.

32. *But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions.* To what former days the apostle refers is not certain. Perhaps he is calling attention to nearly the whole history of Hebrew Christians up to this time. 1. There were for many years many poor saints at Jerusalem. Compare Rom. 15: 26; Gal. 2: 10. Poverty is a great trial, especially such deep poverty as many seemed to endure.

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2. All Christian Hebrews now knew that the great catastrophe of their city and nation was at hand. 3. But probably the apostle chiefly refers to the dreadful persecutions which had raged in Judea and elsewhere against Christian Jews. We read of such revolting work in Acts 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and onward. "And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles," Acts 8:1. Subsequently there was a very fierce persecution on the occasion of Paul's last visit to the holy city, Acts 21:20 and onward. There were not a few of these furious onsets against the church, as Paul elsewhere teaches: "For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews," etc., 1 Thess. 2:14-16. They had had a great fight or combat of afflictions. The apostle would have them call to remembrance these times, not for the purpose of making them sad, but that they might not forget that in the darkest days God's grace and Spirit are all-sufficient. Why should they fear or be inconstant? The wicked had done their worst on Stephen and many such holy men, and prevailed not at all. A martyr's crown, or a confessor's glory had been won by every steadfast soul. Yea these living Hebrew Christians had since their illumination in divine things, both seen and felt how utterly powerless were men, who fought against God. Afflictions, even a great conflict of them, may befall good men; but if they will cleave to God and hold fast a good conscience, the storm will prove harmless. *Illuminated*, rendered enlightened in Heb. 6:4. How they had been tried he next states:

33. *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. Made a gazing-stock*, or spectacle, very well rendered. Tyndale, Cranmer and Genevan: While all men wondered and gazed at you for the shame and tribulation that was done unto you. The taunts, and gibes, and sneers, and derisions, and "cruel mockings" of persecutors are too well known to require a long detail. Both sacred and profane writers tell us how fond the ancients were of gathering in places of popular assemblies on occasion of any excitement. Thus says Luke, "And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre," Acts 19:29. In our verse we have a verb cognate to the noun rendered theatre. The ancient theatres were used for other purposes than dramatic ex-

hibitions. Other shows were there seen. But in our verse the allusion to the theatre is clearly figurative. The trials, to which they had been subjected, were not only those which fell directly on themselves, but also such as came on their friends and brethren, and thus awakened their tender sympathies and painful anxieties. How tenderly and thoughtfully they had acted towards their suffering brethren, he next states :

34. *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.* Peshito reads the first clause thus: And ye were grieved for those who were imprisoned. Some others read those in bonds, But the weight of authority is in favor of the common rendering. The thing commended in them is the same in either case. The clause expresses sympathy with the persecuted people of God. Many acts of violence and injustice in matters of property are always committed in times of persecution. Wiclif: And ye resceyueden with ioie the robberyng of youre goodis. *Spoiling*, elsewhere rendered ravening, extortion. Here it clearly expresses acts of wrong and violence touching property, by pillage reducing the thrifty and even the affluent to poverty. There has never been a persecution in the form of law, that left the rights of property uninvaded. Commonly they are early assailed. They are a prize very highly esteemed by men of the world. With men, who lightly esteem moral principle, the pocket nerve is often very sensitive. The pleas of persecutors are that their victims have no rights; that if any thing can turn men aside from an avowal of their principles, it will be the prospect of poverty; and that such confiscations will mightily deter others. As long as men are carnal, considerations drawn from riches and poverty have a mighty influence. But the regenerate have a principle, faith, which gives them the victory over the world. Faith assures them that there is a better world than this is or ever was, and causes them to *know* that they have in heaven a better and an enduring substance, something which perishes not in the using, something which moth, and rust, and thieves, and the last conflagration itself cannot take away. See Matt. 6:19-34. The knowledge, which the saints have of good things to come, is not unwarranted. The scriptures declare it is prepared for all that love God. The existence of love is proven by a holy life in all regenerate men.

35. *Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.* Cast away, there is no better rendering. Wiclif: Therefor nyle ye lese youre trist. On the word rendered confidence see above on Heb. 3:6 where it is rendered as here, and on

Heb. 10: 19 where it is rendered boldness. The word rendered *recompense of reward* is the same so rendered in Heb. 2: 2, on which see above. It occurs also below in Heb. 11: 26. The exhortation of this verse is an inference, especially from the three verses next preceding. Such experience as they had had should not be lost on them. He adds:

36. *For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.* *Patience*, meaning meek endurance, is always necessary to the believer in this life. It is peculiarly so in times of persecution. The same word is found in Heb. 12: 1 where the very figure employed shows what is meant by the term. The cognate verb we found in Heb. 10: 32, rendered endured. *The will of God* here spoken of is not any particular duty, but the whole will of God made known by his word and providence. The rendering of Peshito is: For ye have need of patience, that ye may do the pleasure of God, and may receive the promise. Wiclif: For paciens is needful to you: that ye don the wille of God, and bryngen agen the biheest. To receive the promise here, as in some other parts of this epistle, means to experience the fulfilment of the divine engagement. See Heb. 6: 15; 9: 15; 11: 13, 39. He that endures to the end shall be saved. Well might the Christians be quiet and meek and firm:

37. *For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.* Peshito: Because, yet a little—and it is a very little time, when he that cometh, will come, and will not delay; Tyndale, Cranmer and Genevan, For yet a very lytell whyle, etc.; Rhiems: For yet a little and a very little; Robinson thinks the duplication in the Greek is like our English, a very very little while. Some have regarded these words as a quotation from Hab. 2: 3. They resemble those of the prophet, but they are not a translation from the Hebrew, nor an exact quotation from the Septuagint. Yet those words of the prophet were doubtless in the apostle's mind, as is shown both by the resemblance between the passages and by the quotation actually made in the next verse. *He that shall come* was to the ancient church one of the titles of Messiah. Paul uses it here as still a fit designation of the Lord; but in a different sense. To the ancient church the prominent thought of Messiah's coming, was his incarnation. That had taken place about sixty years before this epistle was written. Another coming of Christ is his coming to the last judgment; but Paul himself carefully warned the churches that this grand and awful event was not to take place in a little while, 2 Thess. 2: 2, 3. Once or twice the coming of Christ seems to point to the day of one's death. But the coming of Christ here referred to is doubtless his coming to destroy the

Holy City and the Jewish State. This event, the most terrible recorded in the annals of this world, is often called Christ's coming, and was fully predicted in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew—a prophecy well known to the primitive church, and especially to Hebrew Christians, and alluded to more than once in this epistle. Compare also James 5:7, 8; 1 Pet. 4:7. In this great catastrophe prophecy warranted Christians to expect full deliverance, Luke 21:18-22, 28. The Lord had said that these awful scenes should be witnessed during the life-time of some, who heard him, Luke 21:32. About 30 years had passed from the utterance of the prediction of our Lord till the writing of this epistle. So that in fact the release of Hebrew Christians from the hands of their cruel countrymen must necessarily be near at hand, and so it was. Very soon after this writing Jerusalem was laid on heaps, all the Christians having escaped the ruin and the misery, which befell their hardened and persecuting countrymen.

38. *Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.* The first clause of this verse is by our apostle thrice quoted from Hab. 2:4—first in Rom. 1:17; next in Gal. 3:11; and then in our verse. As to the various punctuations and collocations of these words, see the author's Commentary on Romans 1:17. In Romans and Galatians they seem to be cited for precisely the same purpose, and are perhaps best read, *The just by faith, shall live.* In this verse it may best give the sense to read, *The just by faith shall live.* But the words contain great truths, punctuate and emphasize them as you may, such as 1, even among men some are just, righteous, justified; 2, all the righteous are justified by faith, not by works; 3, all who are righteous shall live and not die the second death. 4. The life the righteous now live is by faith, faith in the Son of God. True faith has great power to sustain the soul and give good cheer in the darkest days of adversity and persecution. The second clause of our verse reads, *But if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.* Pococke reads, *If he faint;* Burkitt, *If he sneak and slink away;* Clarke, *If he slink away and hide;* Conybeare and Howson, *If he flinch.* These words are the Septuagint rendering of the first clause of Hab. 2:4. It no doubt gives the substance of the import of the original, but is so far different from it, that one suspects that a different Hebrew text must have been before the authors of the Septuagint version. The words seem to be used by the author of this epistle very much as Paul uses Ps. 4:4 in Eph. 4:26. See the author's "Studies in the Book of Psalms." The Septuagint version was known to the Hebrews. Its rendering of this clause was quite pertinent to Paul's present object, and as such he adduces

these words, probably not as a formal citation, nor as a proof of any position taken by him. It is noticeable that Paul gives the two clauses in an order the reverse of that, in which they occur in the Septuagint. There seems to be no special significance in this, though some have thought that there was. Each clause presents a great and distinct truth precisely suited to the apostle's main design.

39. *But we are not of them, who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.* The rendering of this verse, though not literal, gives the meaning in idiomatic English, and so is to be accepted. Paul indulged no uncharitable sentiments. Those to whom he was writing had given proof of their love to Christ. This was known to the apostle, and he enrols them with himself and says: We are not of the apostasy, but we are of faith. *Perdition*, often rendered as here, also destruction, and sometimes damnation. It points to the utter ruin of all good hopes for eternity, the undoing of one's soul for ever. *But we are of them that believe to the saving of the soul.* Good men abhor uncharitableness. It gives them great pain to suspect the sincerity of the religious profession of any one, and great pleasure to be persuaded of its ingenuousness. We have many like samples of apostolic candor and kindness. Elsewhere in this epistle we have a beautiful instance of the apostle's readiness to act confidently towards consistent members of the church, Heb. 6:9. The same appears often. See Rom. 1:8; 1 Cor. 1:4; Phil. 1:3-5.

#### DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL REMARKS.

1. Trials may confidently be expected by all God's people, v. 32. Burkitt: "The wisdom of God oftentimes permits and suffers persons, at their first conversion, to fall into manifold trials and temptations: carnal relations now first scoff, then frown, and at last cast off. The world hates them, marks them out for persecution, loads them with calumny and slander." So it has always been. The Cainish spirit did not leave the world when the first murderer died. So it always will be till the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together.

2. No small part of spiritual wisdom consists in making a right use of past trials, v. 32. Some soon forget through what straits God has led them, and so show their want of wisdom. Others keep them long in remembrance, and are humbled by them, and are also made confident in God. Owen: "A wise management of former experiences is a great direction and encouragement

unto future obedience." Samuel set up a stone to call to mind the past goodness of God, naming it "Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us," 1 Sam. 7:12. More than once the Psalmist tells us how he used his past trials: "Thou hast delivered my soul from death; wilt thou not deliver my feet from falling;" "Thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation;" "Thou, which hast showed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth," Ps. 27:9; 56:13; 71:20. "Afflictions either strengthen or shake our faith. A storm of sorrow, like a storm in nature, sometimes does good, and sometimes does harm; it may be either a purifying or a destructive blast." Nothing but divine grace makes trials real and lasting blessings. Calvin: "We should not, after a few years, as soldiers that have served their time, solicit a discharge; but we should follow up our service, even to the end." Heubner: "The longer we practise, the easier becomes the conflict."

3. Our natural state is one of great darkness and spiritual blindness, v. 32. Unless we are enlightened from above, we will go from error to error, and commit folly after folly. The very light that is in fallen men is darkness, until God, by his word and Spirit, lifts the veil from off the heart.

4. The day of our first illumination into the mystery of God and of Christ should not be soon or easily forgotten, but should often be called to remembrance, v. 32.

5. Every trial is grievous, but some are much more so than others. Sometimes it is a single trial, a slight disappointment. Then again we have a great *fight of afflictions*, v. 32. God's people are afflicted in body, or in reputation, or in their worldly estate, or in their friends, or in their minds; and sometimes all of these come upon them at once; and the combat becomes fearful. All the trials of God's people are heightened if man has a hand in them. It is so hard for us to remember that the wicked are simply God's sword, or the staff in his hand. Clarke: "To suffer such persecution patiently was great; to endure it without a murmur was greater; to rejoice in it was greatest of all."

6. If any think that flesh and blood is in no danger of being overcome by taunts and derisions, by pillage and persecution, he is entirely mistaken, v. 33. Duncan: "Reproach is a very heavy trial to a generous mind. The Psalmist, in the person of our Lord, Ps. 69:20, says, 'Reproach hath broken my heart.' And false accusations were the common lot of all Christians." Whoever has, by experience, felt the power of such trials knows that they are no trifles.

7. But grace is stronger than all trials, vs. 32, 33. God can strengthen his suffering people with all might in the inner man, to all patience and long-suffering, and that with joyfulness, Col. 1 : 11.

8. It requires grace to enable us to make common cause with those who are persecuted and reviled, vs. 33, 34. To do so is a noble trait in any character. So Paul thought: "The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain: but, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me. The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day; and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well," 2 Tim. 1 : 16-18. Let us be firm and steadfast, do our duty, stand in our lot and leave our good name, our honor, our estate and our life in the hands of him, who knows far better than we do, what is most for our spiritual and eternal good. Lindsay: "Persecutors are ever ready to turn upon those who show any kindness to their victims, and to deal out to them the same measure as to their first victims; so that the task of ministering to the imprisoned is very properly ranked by the apostle as one of the Christian's conflicts."

9. Wealth is in itself a good thing, yet very liable to be abused and to become a source of temptation; but if we find that we must part with property or a good conscience, let us not hesitate to despise all earthly possessions, v. 34. Lindsay: "Temporal blessings are to be received with gratitude, and enjoyed without abuse; but they are ever to be held as of unspeakably inferior value to the prosperity of the soul. They are to be sacrificed without a scruple, when they can only be retained through some compromise of principle." The Marquis of Vico was right when he said concerning his vast confiscated estates: "Their gold and silver perish with them, who count all the wealth of the world worth one hour's communion with Christ."

10. Comparative contempt of things which perish in the using is wise, and will be fully justified in the day of judgment. By faith God's people now *know* this, v. 34. The *enduring substance* "will outlive time and run parallel with eternity. . . This will make rich amends for all they can lose and suffer here. In heaven they shall have a better life, a better estate, better liberty, better society, better hearts, better work, and everything better." Patterson: "By the promises of God, by the sacrifice of Jesus, by the consciousness of faith, and by the influence of the quickening, enlightening and sanctifying Spirit of the Lord, the Hebrew Christians were led to apprehend the fact and to entertain the confidence that this great and eternal substance was their own." Such

persuasions are not fanciful. They are inspired by the Holy Ghost. God has great riches, inestimable goods, invaluable possessions in reserve for his people. Paul never 'reckoned without his host,' yet he says: "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us;" "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 4:17. Heaven "is better in itself than any treasure of this world. It is perfectly adapted to the wants of our immortal nature. It is what infinite wisdom has appointed as the means of ministering to our felicity. It will perfectly satisfy every longing of our glorified spirits. Heaven is prepared for the saints, and the discipline of this life is preparing the saints for heaven." God himself, God in Christ, is the exceeding great reward of all who put their trust in him, Gen. 15:1.

11. Cowardice is bad, very bad. It is contrary to Scripture, v. 35. It is foolish. "Nothing is so rash as fear." It casts away the best things and lays fast hold of the poorest things. A good writer says, "Nothing but cowardice has ever lost to the Christian the victory." Job was as wise as he was pious when he said, "Though he slay me, I will trust him." Luther showed no more courage at Worms than was consistent with consummate forecast. O how many foolish suggestions and carnal fears and frightful objects Satan presents to the suffering people of God. If they are not vanquished, it must be because they conquer by the power of God, teaching us that 'on moments hangs the blessedness of eternity.'

12. It is a great honor to have stood firm in the midst of perils and persecutions, v. 35. This will appear more and more the farther we advance in grace and glory. Duncan: "It doth not become the greatness and goodness of God to call his people to sufferings for his name and cause, and not propose unto them and provide for them what is infinitely better than all they are called to lose." He who shall at last be honored to hear the plaudit, Well done, good and faithful servant—will say that his greatest sacrifices in the cause of the Redeemer were the wisest acts of his earthly life.

13. But all this is not apparent to flesh and blood. It will appear by and by; so that God's people have need of *patience*, v. 36. They have need of 'long patience,' even the patience of hope. It is only by faith and patience that we can inherit the promises. Nothing but God's word has ever yet taught men that it is better, if the Lord so wills it, to suffer for good than for evil conduct, and so to bear with meekness wanton wrongs, 1 Pet. 3:17. Duncan:

"Patience is that grace by which the Christian bears the evils he meets with with quietness and some kind of delight, without fretting and repining at God, or giving way to despondency." Gouge: "They who have attained to some patience have need of more." Patience is not only useful, and in a sense needful, but it is absolutely necessary to the full and ultimate success of the Christian combat. Owen: "He, that would abide faithful in difficult seasons, must fortify his soul with an unconquerable patience." Hedinger: "Impatience destroys all the fruit of the cross." Nothing is more opposed to patience than repining, murmuring, fretting and quarrelling with the dispensations of the Almighty.

14. When one said to the pious Hooker, "You are going to receive a great reward," he replied, "I am going to receive great mercy." To him the word reward seems to have conveyed the idea of reward of debt only. His correction was doubtless called for by the state of his own mind. But there are rewards of grace, not a whit less glorious than rewards of debt. All these are built upon the unmerited kindness and promise of God, vs. 35, 36. They are conferred solely for Christ's sake, Rom. 11:35; Col. 3:24. Owen: "In the times of suffering and in the approaches of them, it is the duty of believers to look on the glory of heaven under the notion of a refreshing, all-sufficient reward."

15. We ought constantly to remember, ourselves, and to remind our brethren that the time is short, v. 37. This is specially needful on two classes of occasions very different from each other: first, when we are in danger of being led astray by prosperity; secondly, when we are in peril of undue depression from afflictions. The latter only is here mentioned, but both of them are stated by the apostle in 1 Cor. 7:29-31. Often deliverance is nearest at hand when least expected. The darkest hour is just before day. And God has so arranged the affairs of his church that there always has been, and to the end of the world, there always will be, a coming of Christ before his people—a coming to which they may look with holy confidence and joy. But let them take heed that they abuse not the doctrine to vagaries, nor, on the other hand, forget it, Luke 21:34-36. For every coming of Christ there has been and is a fixed time. Nothing can postpone it. It will not tarry, Hab. 2:3.

16. There is no getting on in the Christian life without faith, v. 38. At this verse begins really the great subject of the next chapter, which is throughout an explanation of the nature and power of this grace. "We walk by faith, not by sight;" "The life which I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me," 2 Cor. 5:7; Gal. 2:20. Nor is it

possible for us to please God, or to be pleased with God except by a living faith in God's word and perfection.

17. Every thing taught us respecting the nature and effects of apostasy represents it to us as a very dreadful sin, v. 38. The force of the Greek word rendered *draw back* is such as to warn us against every step and degree of declension from God. Actual and utter renouncing of Christ and his salvation commonly begins far back of that dreadful act of presumption, even in slighting some known duty, or proudly rejecting some wholesome truth, or refusing cheerful submission to the will of God in some painful providence. But however brought about actual and final apostasy cuts off all hope for eternity. No man was ever too watchful. No man ever too carefully kept his own heart. "Man knoweth the beginnings of sin, but who can tell the bounds thereof?" said the wretched Spira. Burkitt: "Backsliders from the gospel are in a peculiar manner the abhorrency of the soul of God."

18. Are truly regenerate souls ever left so far to fall away from God as finally to perish? is a question that has much divided the Christian world since the days of James Arminius. It is often discussed ignorantly and with unbecoming vehemence. All agree that if God utterly takes away his Holy Spirit from any one and leaves him wholly to himself, he is a ruined man. But will God so forsake his dear child? The Bible clearly reveals these things: 1. God has chosen his people in Christ before the foundation of the world, and predestinated them to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, Eph. 1:4-6. Now if God's grace cannot save them, where is its power? And if his will can be crossed and defeated here, why not in all cases? And if his choice and purpose are not sovereign, what is? 2. God promised to his Son a great and glorious reward consisting of souls redeemed by his blood, if he would humble himself and bring in everlasting righteousness. So Christ himself often speaks of persons given him by his Father, John 6:37, 39; 10:27-29; 17:12; 18:9. Now if any soul given to Christ shall perish, he will surely lose a portion of his reward. But he himself says he shall lose nothing. 3. Redemption by blood has been wrought out. This was less to be expected than the application of it to the chosen people of God, and yet it was done. Much more then shall it be effectually applied. So Paul reasons: "He that spared not his own Son but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Rom. 8:32. Moreover, 4. God has effectually called, renewed, justified and accepted all believers, Rom. 5:1; 8:1; 1 Cor. 6:11; Eph. 1:6; 2 Tim. 1:9.

Why should he now cast them off? 5. All saints are kept by the power of God, not by their own power, through faith unto salvation, John 10: 27-29; 1 Pet. 1: 3-5. Can omnipotence be overcome or fail in its undertakings? 6. The scriptures say, that God's people shall not come short of heaven: "They shall never perish," John 10: 28; that Christ's grace is sufficient for them in their sharpest conflicts, 2 Cor. 12: 9; that nothing in the universe can separate them from the love of God, Rom. 8: 38, 39; that the incorruptible seed of God is in them, and preserves them from such courses as would bring ruin on them, 1 John 3: 9; that the intercession of Christ never fails and is offered for his people, John 11: 42; Luke 22: 31, 32; and that he who has begun a good work in the hearts of God's people will perform it to the last day, Phil. 1: 6. On the other hand the passages of scripture, which are by some regarded as teaching the opposite doctrine are such as are entirely consistent with the doctrine of the final perseverance of all saints in holiness to the end. They are chiefly,

1. Such as call on good men to hold on their way, and not tire, nor faint, Matt. 10: 22; Rev. 2: 10; and the like.
2. Such as show that the proper means of perseverance must be used, and by good men are used, as Rom. 8: 13; 1 Cor. 9: 27; Col. 3: 5; 2 Tim. 2: 5, and many more.
3. Such as state supposititious cases, as these, "If we deny him, he also will deny us; if we believe not, yet he abideth faithful," 2 Tim. 2: 12, 13, etc.

19. Dreadful as is the thought, there is such a thing as perdition, v. 39. It is not right to deny this, nor mince it, nor keep it out of view. Destruction awaits the incorrigible sinner. Damnation will surely follow a death without hope, without repentance, without Christ. Tong: "Professors may go a great way, and after all draw back; and that drawing back from God is drawing on to perdition: the further we depart from God, the nearer we approach to ruin." Doddridge: "The divine abhorrence will be proportionable to our violated engagements, and dishonored profession."

20. There is salvation, the saving of the soul, v. 39. Glory be to God for the thing and for the certainty of it. True faith embraces, applies and holds fast the blood which atones, the righteousness which clothes, and the intercession which saves the soul of all who hate sin and love Christ Jesus.

21. Let us hope and speak as well of others as truth and charity will permit, v. 39. Let us put the best possible construction on all the actions, words and motives of our fellow-men and especially of our fellow-Christians. Gouge: "They who stand are not to be suspected to draw back."

# CHAPTER XI.

VERSES 1-16.

## THE NATURE AND POWER OF FAITH. EXAMPLES.

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

2 For by it the elders obtained a good report.

3 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.

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.

5 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 testimony, that he pleased God.

6 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.

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 heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

9 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:

10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.

11 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.

12 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.

13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having

seen them afar off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

14 For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.

15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that *country* from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.

16 But now they desire a better *country*, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

**I**N the preceding chapter the apostle had introduced faith as a great element in the salvation and triumph of the children of God, giving them the spirit of endurance. He now goes into the subject at considerable length, illustrating his views by numerous examples.

1. *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* Peshito: Now faith is the persuasion of things that are in hope, as if they were in act; and the manifestness of the things not seen. Wiclif: But feith is the substaunce of thingis that ben to be hoped, and an argument of thingis not aperynge. Tyndale and Cranmer: FAYTH is a sure confidence of thynges which are hoped for, and a certayntie of thynges which are not sene. Genevan: FAYTH is that, which causeth those things to appeare in deed which are hoped for, and sheweth evidently the thinges which are not sene. Rheims: And faith is the substance of things to be hoped for, the argument of things not appearing. Doway: Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the conviction of things that appear not. Stuart: Now faith is confidence in respect of things hoped for [and] convincing evidence of things not seen. Luther thinks the word rendered substance means certain confidence. It is elsewhere rendered confidence, 2 Cor. 11:17; Heb. 3:14. The margin reads ground or confidence. The word rendered evidence means convincing proof, conviction, or persuasion; that is, not evidence in the abstract, but evidence apprehended. It may be best here to state 1. that our verse does not contain a formal definition of faith, but only such an account of it as falls in with the main scope of the apostle. He is aiming to show his Hebrews that faith is a solid foundation for strong confidence in the darkest times. His account of it in this verse fairly gains that point and there he stops. Erasmus: "It is rather an encomium than a definition of faith." Calvin: "They are wide of the truth, who think a full definition of faith is here given." 2. Of course it is not a full definition of saving faith in the Redeemer. Nor ought any to be offended because Paul does not here distinctly state that faith is the gift of

God, the fruit of the Spirit, and that it has Christ's person for its object. He is not laboring to show what it is to come to Christ, but to explain what a mighty power real faith in God is, when it is brought into lively operation. 3. Yet as what is here said really belongs to all true faith in God, it may be well before going further to give the opinions of some good and able men on faith in general. Burkitt: "Faith is a confident and firm expectation of the good things which God hath promised, giving the good things hoped for a real subsistence in our minds and souls. It evidences the reality and certainty of future things, it realizes the invisible realities of another world unto our minds, and causes us to believe them as strongly as what we see with our bodily eyes." Hammond: "Faith is a confident dependence on God for the performance of his promise, a being convinced of the truth of those things of which we have no ocular or sensible demonstration." Pyle thinks that the word rendered substance in this case is equivalent to firm assurance or expectation. Calvin: "Faith is the substance, that is, the support or ground wherein we plant our foot: but of what things does that substance consist? things absent; which are so far from our feet, that they far transcend the reach of our wit." Duncan: "The life of faith is properly such a view of the faithfulness of God in his promises as the soul builds its all on, and acts and lives from the belief of." When a certain class of good writers speak of faith as the foundation of promised blessings, they doubtless mean that it is the ground of the hope, which we have of them; for God's word is the ground on which faith rests. The believing "soul feels the certainty of these things and enjoys them. They are not dreams, but realities. They are not phantasms, but substance." So that the description of faith here given includes, so far as it goes, that which is justifying. But it is not a definition of justifying faith, which always must embrace a chief reference to the person and work of the Redeemer. 4. The apostle is throughout this chapter speaking of truly godly men, of the exercises of genuine piety, and not of the vain confidence of carnal hearts. That this is a correct statement in regard to most of the persons named in the chapter is certain from other scriptures. Who doubts that Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and Moses were all dear children of God by faith? Then the apostle says of all whom he names that they obtained a good report. This means not merely a good report in the church but a good report from God himself. It is neither wise nor modest in modern pretenders to attempt to purge this roll. "The Lord knoweth them that are his." Nor would he have given us a list of saints and godly heroes in which were mingled those who

were reprobate, Indeed the apostle says that the world was not worthy of the men whom he names, v. 38. What stronger evidence could we ask?

*Now*, merely a connective particle showing a continuation of the discourse. *Things hoped for* are all the blessings God has promised to his people, individually or collectively, in any age of the world, now or formerly. *Things not seen* are things wholly beyond the reach of our natural faculties, yet declared to us upon the authority of God. Elsewhere the apostle describes faith as "looking at the things, which are not seen," 2 Cor. 4: 18. That is its great office. The things, which the believer most dreads and most hopes for, are alike beyond the reach of human senses. Heaven and hell, eternal glory and everlasting shame, with all that belongs to both, are purely matters of revelation. Without reliance on the testimony of God we cannot at all apprehend them, or be duly affected by them. The confidence and settled conviction of men can have no firmer basis than the nature and veracity of Jehovah. Nothing is more reasonable than to believe every word God has spoken, whether it respects good men or bad men, past events or future events.

2. *For by it the elders obtained a good report.* Peshito: And for it the ancients are well testified of. Tholuck: Of this kind was the faith for which the elders were praised. Beyond a doubt elders here means the ancient worthies, some of whom are enrolled in this chapter, not the old men of Paul's day, nor the officers in the primitive church. The word is used for ancients in Matt. 15: 2; Mark 9: 3. *Obtained a good report*, in the Greek one word, meaning as explained in vs. 4, 5, that God gave witness or bore testimony to their high worth and exalted character. (The same word is similarly rendered in Acts 6: 3; 10: 22; 22: 12.) This he did in various ways, some of which will be noticed hereafter. The pertinency of introducing this verse in this part of the argument is to remind the Hebrews that the ancients so celebrated in their canonical books made all their attainments by faith, that they were just by faith, and that by faith they lived; and that if any man desired to obtain God's favor and benediction, he must do it by accepting the truth proposed to his belief. If a man had not 'like precious faith' with the fathers, he could not be joined to their assembly, but was a voluntary exile from the church of God, to which they belonged.

3. *Through faith we understood that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.* No better rendering of this verse has ever been made. It gives the exact sense. The truth here asserted as re-

ceived by faith is the same taught in Gen. 1:1; John 1:3; Heb. 1:2; Col. 1:16. Jehovah both originated and organized *the worlds*, a word to be taken (as in Heb. 1:2, on which see above) for the existences found in the different parts and ages of the world. It may include heaven as well as earth. Many of the ancients held that the world was eternal. The scriptures correct this error. This verse also asserts that all things were made out of nothing, that is, were not made out of things which do appear. In other words the world was not made out of pre-existent materials. All this we learn not by processes of reasoning, nor by vision, but by faith. We therefore worship God as Creator, and regard the world as a temple, where God is to be praised and glorified. Beza: "This world, which we see, was not made of any appearing or existing matter, but from nothing; contrary to the maxim of all philosophers, 'From nothing, nothing is made.' This indeed never would enter into the mind of any philosophers, not even of those who wrote that God created the world. Therefore the whole of this is *of faith*." The false gods are often by their worshippers represented as toiling, using great exertions; but Jehovah made the worlds by a command. He said: "Let there be light, and light was," "He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast," Gen. 1:3; Ps. 33:6, 9. McLean: That the worlds *exist* we know by our senses: That they were originally *made* is obvious to our reason; but that they were made by the *word* of God, and that out of nothing, could be known only by revelation, and understood by faith."

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 record of the first offerings we certainly know to have been made is in Gen. 4:3-16—a wonderful piece of history full of instruction to all, of warning to the self-willed and self-righteous, and of encouragement to the humble and penitent. Let the reader turn to it, and see the full story. The great difference between the two brothers was that the elder was unbelieving, and so was self-willed, self-righteous, impenitent and unwilling to be guided by the law under which he worshipped; while the younger had faith, and so was sensible of his sins and penitent for them, cried for mercy, not justice, confessed his need of an atonement, and obeyed the known will of God, which directed him to make an offering. Our verse says Abel offered a more excellent, that is, a more ample or complete sacrifice than Cain. The common impression is that Abel as well as Cain offered the fruits of the ground. The foundation of this opinion is very slight, depending on the force of a single

particle. But all are agreed that Abel brought a sin-offering, and so confessed himself a sinner and in need of a Saviour. While Cain was unwilling to approach God as a sinner, or confess that he needed any atoning blood shed for him. The difference was all in favor of Abel. He obtained witness that he was righteous, just or justified, God testifying of his gifts. Compare Matt. 23 : 35; 1 John 3 : 12. Exactly how God bore witness to the excellence and acceptableness of Abel's offering, we know not; but it is very probable that it was by fire from heaven consuming his sacrifice. Compare Gen. 15 : 17; Lev. 9 : 24; Judg. 6 : 21; 1 Ki. 18 : 38; 1 Chron. 21 : 26; 2 Chron. 7 : 1. Moses says God had respect to it, or looked to it, or gave his countenance to it. The proof of the divine approbation of Abel's offering was as obvious to Cain as to his brother. It greatly enraged him, and from that day he hated his brother, and soon after slew him. *By it*, that is by his faith or by his sacrifice thus offered and accepted Abel though *dead yet speaketh*. That is, his history warns all mere men to approach God humbly, penitently confessing their sins, and worshipping the Most High according to the law of the dispensation, under which they live. Salvation is for the lost. Those who think they need neither pardon nor renewal, will not welcome the offers of mercy and of grace.

5. *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 testimony, that he pleased God.* The whole history of Enoch as given in the Old Testament is very brief. His father was Jared. His most distinguished son was Methuselah. He lived to be three hundred and sixty-five years old. "And he walked with God, and he was not, for God took him," Gen. 5 : 18-24. Whatever else we know of him we learn from our verse and from Jude, verses 14, 15. These last verses settle it that he was a prophet and a most faithful and intrepid preacher. The chief theme of our verse is Enoch's translation. This event has but one parallel in the history of the world, viz.: in the case of Elijah. Of Enoch's translation we learn these things: 1. It was by faith. 2. It was a literal translation. He never saw death. His nature was not dissolved. His soul and body were not separated. 3. The circumstances of his translation are not given us, as they are in the case of Elijah. It seems to have been done privately. It is said in Genesis "he was not," and here, "he was not found;" as if search possibly both by friends and persecutors had been made for him, but God had taken him. 4. His faith was a mighty principle. Not only did it lead to his translation; but before his translation he had this testimony

that he pleased God. Exactly how this testimony was given we are not informed. It may have been in all of these ways:—God accepting his sacrifice by sending fire to consume them; his conscience being pure and fully at peace with God; and the Holy Ghost bearing witness with his Spirit that he was born of God. 5. It is not a wild conjecture that the translation of Enoch and Elijah was designed to assure the ancient church that our entire natures—souls and bodies—should live in a future blessed state. 6. Enoch's faith was the more illustrious as it shined brightly in a very dark and degenerate age, when all flesh had corrupted itself, and the world was by iniquity preparing itself for the greatest catastrophe that has ever befallen it—the deluge. 7. Enoch's faith caused him to lead a holy and happy life on earth. He walked with God, and two cannot walk together except they be agreed; nor was ever man miserable when the light of God's countenance shined upon him and the peace of God filled his mind and heart. His walk was sublime—it was with God.

6. *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.* This verse has special reference to Enoch. Paul proves that he must have pleased God by faith, for no one without it can please him. How both Testaments give witness to the sin and hatefulness of unbelief need not be here stated at length. The proofs are abundant. Unbelief is one of the greatest offences against God. There are two things here stated as truths essential to our faith—viz., the divine existence and the divine righteousness in the government of the world. To question either of these is to sap the foundations of all true and vital piety. If there is no God, all religious worship is a farce, all religious sentiment superstition, all religious fears idle, and all religious hopes a delusion. If there is a God, who neither sees nor cares whether men love or hate him, and who treats saints and sinners all alike, holding in contempt the piety of the righteous, and finding no fault with wickedness, then where is there any solid foundation for real piety any more than if men were stark atheists? *To come unto God* in this place means to approach him in worship, in obedience, in any service. *To seek God* is a phrase often found in both Testaments. It is often used to comprehend all the exercises and duties of piety. It always takes for granted that by nature we know not God, and so should feel after him, if haply we might find him. *To seek him diligently* is to be in dead earnest in securing his favor, and condemns fitful efforts in religion. Enoch believed God's promise to reward the righteous,

and he was rewarded. By faith he entered heaven itself without tasting of death.

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 heir of the righteousness which is by faith.* The history of Noah has no parallel. But two men ever lived longer. Like Adam he was the ancestor of all men now on earth. He saw the world before the flood, during the flood and after the flood. Up to his time there had never been a universal deluge. It is not improbable that some of the ungodly wits of his time proved (what some modern infidels have claimed to prove) that there was not water enough in the world to submerge the entire globe. The great difference between Noah and the mass of his generation was that he believed God when he said he would bring a deluge on the earth, and they did not. Before the flood Noah as firmly believed it was coming, as after the flood he believed it had come. His faith was a demonstration, a clear conviction. A man never acts more wisely than when he takes God at his word. Noah's faith rested on the veracity of the Most High. He knew that infinite power could do what infinite truth had threatened. The things had yet in no sense been seen, except by the eye of omniscience and by the eye of faith. Noah's faith was practical and powerful. It moved him with fear. That is, it awakened a reasonable and salutary care. It gave rise to wise forethought, and good purposes. It does not mean a mere fear of the deluge, such as a wicked man might have. The verb used is cognate to the noun rendered *godly fear*, Heb. 12:28. So at the bidding of God he prepared an ark. The size, shape and capacity of this vessel are sufficiently declared in the historic narrative in Genesis 6:14-22. There is some doubt as to the length of time Noah was actually engaged in building this huge vessel; but it seems to be conceded that it was a full half century—some think that it was a still longer time, a few extending it as far as a hundred and twenty years. These last rely on Gen. 6:3. Even if this asserts that God would yet spare the world a century and a fifth longer, it does not prove that Noah was all that time building the ark. The great design of the ark was to perpetuate the race through the family of Noah. He *saved his house*. And his conduct *condemned the world*. That is, his faith, his preaching and his example during the long time the ark was building left without excuse all who persisted in wicked courses, and made their sin the more aggravated. Thus living and walking with God, *he became heir of the righteousness, which is by faith*. That is, he was fully, gratuitously and eternally justified. There was to him

no condemnation. He was not saved by or for his works. But he was saved wholly by faith in the merits of the Redeemer—his works testifying the reality and sincerity of his faith. That his faith placed him among the most eminent believers is evident from Ezck, 14: 14, where he is classed with Daniel and Job.

8. *By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.*

9. *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:*

10. *For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.* Abraham was one of the most illustrious men of the world, and the father and founder of a nation more prominent in history than any other. Any thing giving us an insight into the secret of his great character must be both useful and interesting. This the apostle gives us here. It was his faith. The calling of Abraham, perhaps little noticed by his contemporaries except in scorn, was one of the great events of the world. In its results it has produced a revolution in the destiny of our race. The account of it is found in the 12th chapter of Genesis. At that time God gave him great promises and grace to believe them, so that he did not even stagger at them. His faith was practical. He promptly obeyed the call. He and his family 'went forth to go into the land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan they came.' There was no halting, no hesitation. When he left Haran in Mesopotamia, it was to go into a land which God had promised to shew him, but he knew not where it was, nor the dangers attending his journey thither and his sojourn there. His removal from Mesopotamia took place when he was seventy-five years old. Up to that time the direct and powerful tendency of all nations was to abominable idolatry. Abraham's ancestors certainly (and some think Abraham himself in early life) were steeped in the abominations of heathenism, Josh. 24: 2, 3. The call of Abraham and his separation from his people and country raised up a standard against the floods of impiety, which seemed ready to deluge the earth. The land of Canaan was given by promise to Abraham for an inheritance, but neither he nor his posterity were the acknowledged proprietors of it till the days of Joshua. Abraham himself bought a burial place for his family as any other stranger would have done. For he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, as did likewise Isaac and Jacob, his son and grandson, though they knew that Canaan was by promise theirs. He was not driven from his native land by

asceticism, but he was led by piety. In his old age he still calls Mesopotamia "my country," Gen. 24:4. They all dwelt in tabernacles or tents, building no permanent abodes nor walled cities there. The fact was that Abraham had such a sense of the vanity of this world and of the perishing nature of all earthly good, and such an apprehension of the value of the spiritual blessings connected with the covenant God had made with him, and especially of the glory of Messiah's person and kingdom, that he cared but little for earthly comforts or discomforts. For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Compare Gen. 26:3-5; John 8:56; Heb. 11:14. The heavenly inheritance is often in scripture represented as a city, particularly in the last book of scripture. See any good Concordance. This city excels in dimensions, riches, gladness and glory all the cities of earth, because its builder and maker is God.

11. *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.* It is pleasing to see how the Holy Ghost guided the apostle to pass by the unbelief of Sarah, when it was first announced to her at an advanced age that she should become a mother, Gen. 18:12-15. But God gave her a better mind, and she counted him faithful (Peshito, she firmly believed; Wiclif, she beleued hym trewe). The son, who at first said, I will not go, but afterwards repented and went, did his father's will, Matt. 21:31. Even the blessed virgin-mother of our Lord seems to have doubted about her being the mother of a child, Luke 1:34; but faith soon triumphed, Luke 1:38. Sarah quietly received reproof for her unbelief, and thenceforward judged God faithful and actually became the mother of Isaac, when she was ninety years old, and her husband about a hundred. Both she and Abraham were *past age*, as *good as dead*, see next verse, also Gen. 17:17, and Rom 6:19.

12. *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.* When it is said that Abraham was as good as dead, the meaning is that in the ordinary course of nature, his becoming a father was impossible. Peshito has, One man failing through age; Doway, And him utterly decayed; Hallet, dead in this respect; Stuart, who was dead as to these things. The authorized version gives the sense. If taken literally the statement of this verse seems to be confined to the descendants of Abraham by Sarah, that is, Isaac and his posterity both by Esau and Jacob, with a special reference to the Israelites. All must admit that it is as impossible to count the posterity of Abra-

ham even up to this time, as to count the stars or the sand. The comparison is exhausted in the word *innumerable*. The phrases are proverbial, Gen. 15 : 5 ; 22 : 17 ; Deut. 1 : 10, 11. If applied to the children of Abraham by faith, they are even more true, and will be increasingly so to the end of time, Rom. 4 : 11, 12 ; Gal. 3 : 29. They are not designed to teach us the relative numbers of the stars and of the grains of sand. God, and none else, can number the stars, Ps. 147 : 4.

13. *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.* *These all*, viz., Abraham, Sarah, Isaac and Jacob, who had just been mentioned, *died in faith*, that is, in the belief that God would give to their posterity the land of Canaan, and raise up from their posterity a horn of salvation, Messiah himself, and give them eternal rest in him. *Not having received the promises*, that is, not having received the fulfilment of them, as the phrase evidently signifies here and often elsewhere. See Heb. 9 : 15 ; 10 : 36 ; 11 : 39. *But having seen them afar off*, that is having by faith seen the day when the promises would be fulfilled. *And were persuaded of them*. No doubt what is here said is true, but it is not to be found in the best manuscripts, nor in any of the old versions. It is omitted by Peshito, Arabic, Ethiopic, Vulgate, Wiclif, Tyndale, Coverdale, Cranmer, Genevan, Rheims, Doway, Craik and Stuart. Our translators must have had before them some popular but in this case probably incorrect edition of the Greek testament. Yet these words are retained in the Textus Receptus, and by Calvin, Owen and others. Owen says the clause "is in most Greek copies and is necessary to the sense." Their insertion teaches no error. *And embraced them* ; Wiclif : And gretynge hem wel ; Cranmer, Tyndale, and many others : saluted them ; Genevan : received them with thankses ; Peshito : And rejoiced in it. *Embraced* is the best English word to be here used, nearest to the original, and including the ideas of greeting and being glad, as when friends meet. These persons *confessed*, or acknowledged, *that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth*, as they were in the land of Canaan. See Gen. 23 : 4 ; also Jacob's confession before Pharaoh, 47 : 9. Compare 1 Chron. 29 : 15 ; Ps. 39 : 12. Their very mode of life was no mean similitude of their spiritual character and hopes.

14. *For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.* Men say some things by words ; they say other things no less distinctly by their actions. This verse seems chiefly to refer to the latter mode of expressing one's mind. But their confession was doubtless by words quite consistent with their habits

of thought, feeling and action. That the country they were seeking was not Mesopotamia, whence came Abraham and Sarah and Isaac's wife, but a heavenly home is next stated by the apostle:

15. *And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. If they had been mindful, if they had remembered with desire to return to it, they could have done so; there was nothing to hinder them, but the moral force of the call of Abraham and the promises made to him and his seed. The road to Haran and Ur was well known, nor was Chaldea beyond seas. They had opportunity (Wiclif, Rheims and Doway: time; Tyndale, Cranmer and Genevan: leasure; Peshito: opportunity) to have returned. But to have done so would have been a renunciation of the promises, made at the call of Abraham. In his old age Abraham solemnly charged his eldest servant that in no case should he take Isaac into Mesopotamia, Gen. 24: 5, 6. And when Rebekah sent Jacob back to her native land, she says it was for "a few days," Gen. 27: 43. And when with Laban, Jacob spoke of Canaan as "mine own place and my country," Gen. 30: 25.*

16. *But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.* In this connection *now* is not so much an adverb of time as a particle of contrast and transition. It is not at the time of Paul's writing that the patriarchs desire heaven, for they had already gone thither. But in contrast with such low desires as a home and friends in Chaldea, they did by word and deed proclaim their desire for a better country than earth ever was, even a heavenly country. When it is said *God is not ashamed to be called their God*, the reference is to such passages of scripture as Ex. 3: 6, 16. These are cited by our Saviour, Matt. 22: 32; Mark 12: 26; Luke 20: 37. Stephen quoted the same words in his great address, Acts 7: 32. When it is said *God is not ashamed*, a form of speech common to many languages is used, the writer saying less than he intended to be understood. Now if God was willing to be called their God, he would not leave them in poverty, and desolation for ever. O no! For he hath prepared for them a city. This can be no other than the city mentioned in v. 10, the New Jerusalem, the heavenly Jerusalem, described so well in the Revelation of John. It is a city befitting the weary pilgrims, who by faith have performed their whole journey and reached the rest that remaineth to the people of God. It is a city worthy of its great architect.

## DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL REMARKS.

1. It is absolutely necessary that religious teachers, who would guide God's professed people aright, should use all proper exhortations and instructions to secure stability and perseverance, according to the example of the apostle in this and the preceding chapters. If we would raise men above this world and fix their thoughts upon a better, we must spare no pains in explaining the true gospel system; and especially the true doctrine of faith.

2. If it is of the highest importance that every professed disciple learn for himself whether his faith is that which is demanded by the gospel. So teaches the whole chapter. If man had never sinned, he would have had that entire confidence in God which is a moral virtue, and is required by the first table of the law. But saving faith is something quite beyond this; as it is also more than a mere assent to the revealed will of God, more than a historical faith, more than the faith of devils, more than the faith of miracles; all of which may be possessed without any renewal of nature. Owen: "It is of the highest importance to examine well into the sincerity of our faith, whether it be of the true kind or not." It must also have stability, and not perish as did that of the stony ground hearers, Luke 8:13. As human faith is confidence in human testimony, so divine faith rests upon the veracity of God. When genuine, it looks backward, and receives the divine witness concerning things the most ancient, such as the creation of the world; at things present, as Christ's session at the right hand of God; at things future, as Christ's coming to judgment; and all this, by the power of the same principle. The author of this faith is the Holy Ghost; the means of it, the word of God. It respects all that God has spoken, history, precept, promise, threatening, warning and encouragement. Many scriptures teach us that it especially relates to Christ, the Son of God and the Saviour of men. See all the gospels and epistles. It is not always of equal strength. Some have little faith and some have much. Every age has furnished examples of its power. One thing very remarkable in it is that it goes out of itself to seek supplies and bestow its honors. A wise faith towards man is explicit, and demands reason. A genuine faith towards God is implicit, and asks for nothing above the divine testimony. Nor is this irrational. God cannot lie. It always confides. If there is no reliance, there is no faith. It must trust. It is a persuasion of the truth—the truth received in love. Without it, we secure none of the benefits of the gospel, neither justification, nor adoption, nor renewal, nor the indwelling of the

Spirit, nor the purifying of the heart, nor victory over the world, nor contentment, nor the spirit of obedience. Never was a better prayer offered than this: "Lord, increase our faith." Owen: "The peculiar, specific nature of faith, whereby it is different from all other powers, acts and graces in the mind, lies in this, that it makes a life on things invisible." Truly God is good and kind and wise, when he makes our salvation at every step to turn on faith. This blessed principle can do all things and suffer all things, and that without failure. The objects of faith are commonly, though not always, invisible, v. 1; John 20: 29. Ebrard, too, is mistaken when he says all faith refers to the future. For by faith we believe the worlds were made. One difference between faith and hope is, that faith embraces past, present and future, while hope regards only the future. Both seize on objects afar off in the future and make them present realities. All the objects of hope are also the objects of faith, but all the objects of faith are not the objects of hope. Men do not hope for what is past, or present, or terrible, but only for that which is future and good. And so the Bible says, We believe in hope, Rom. 4: 18. "Two things are requisite to faith; the promise of God, for we cannot believe him until he speak; and then a firm belief of the faithfulness of God to make good that promise." "Faith produces the same effect that would be produced, if the thing itself were actually experienced. It is as impossible to separate faith from its practical consequences as to have fire without heat, or the sun without light." Owen: "It is faith alone that takes believers out of this world while they are in it, that exalts them above it while they are under its rage, and enables them to live upon things future and invisible. The faith of true believers, from the beginning of the world, was fixed on things future, hoped for, and invisible." It is an exercise of the heart, as Paul asserts, Rom. 10: 10. Therefore that is a meagre and imperfect definition of faith, which declares that it is 'an intellectual habit by which we assent to certain propositions for the authority of him who declares them.' So firmly does faith grasp the word of God that it has no more doubt of the existence of eternal and spiritual things, of which it has the divine testimony, than it doubts what it has actually experienced. Huebner: "An age without faith is despicable, valueless. Just as much as a man has of faith, so much is there in him of goodness." Without faith there is no firmness, and no possibility of pleasing God, and of course no piety. We should not forget that faith is far removed from presumption. While it believes every word of God, it refuses to believe dreams and fancies. It rests its weight on God himself.

3. Without such faith it is impossible ever to obtain a good report from God, v. 2. Calvin: "If access to God is not given except by faith, it follows, that without it, all are hateful to God." Nothing was more vain than the puffing up of the darkened Hebrew mind with boasting of descent from Abraham, when Abraham's faith was not followed. And nothing is more sure than the final triumph and victory, public acquittal and everlasting enfeoffment in bliss of all who truly believe, however hated, reproached and persecuted they may be in this life. Such shall infallibly have a good report from God.

4. This world had a beginning and a Maker, and that Maker is God and none else. McLean: "That the worlds *exist* we know by our senses: That they were originally *made* is obvious to our reason; but that they were made by the *word* of God, and that out of nothing, could be known only by revelation, and understood by faith." Strangely men have perplexed themselves with dreams and fancies and follies about the eternal existence of matter, about an eternal succession of existences, and about developments of that which had no author and no first cause. "Now we see trees arise from trees, animals generated from animals, and men from men. But the first trees, animals and men had not their origin from such as now exist, and are seen." There is much pertinency in the introduction of this matter here, because if God brought all things out of nothing, it proves that he can do whatever else the good of his people can possibly require. He, who without effort or labor made the worlds, can by his word subvert all the schemes and counsels of ungodly men and fallen angels. Jehovah's will is irresistible in all the realms of nature, in all the work of salvation. Calvin: "We differ nothing from the brutes, if we understand not that the world was framed by God. For to what end were men endued with reason and understanding, if not to acknowledge their Creator?" He, who heartily believes the word of God respecting creation, knows more of the time, cause, manner and end of all things, than all the philosophy of the world can teach him.

5. If the foregoing statements respecting faith are correct, then unbelief in our day shows a great want of right views and feelings, and is very offensive to God. The same is taught us by this whole chapter. For if the ancient worthies, who had but a few revelations, yet believed God, embraced all the promises they had, and acted accordingly, how criminal must we be, who live in the full blaze of gospel light, and yet faithlessly turn away from the holy commandment, and by unbelief show that we have no confidence in God. There are many cases, in which we receive

and act upon the testimony of men as true. We are often bound to do so, even where we have made no promise to do so. But in many cases we voluntarily bind ourselves by an oath to do so, as when acting as jurymen. Nor can we offer a grosser insult to a fellow mortal than to declare in any way our want of confidence in his veracity. Now, "if we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater," and "he, that believeth not God, hath made him a liar," 1 John 5:9, 10. Lindsay: "If we may receive with credit the testimony of our fellow-men in regard to points which fall within their knowledge, much more dependence may we place upon God in all matters about which he is pleased to make any communication to us."

6. Some have asked the question, Why are not Adam and Eve mentioned in this list of worthies? In reply it may be stated that the scriptures nowhere certainly reveal that they believed God, or heartily received the promise of a Deliverer. There is an impression, almost universal, that they were saved. Whether it was made by tradition correctly transmitted, or how, cannot be now ascertained. Bishop Beveridge cites one of the early Fathers as declaring that Adam was one of those *saints* who arose from the dead and appeared to many after Christ's resurrection. Speaking of our first parents, Clarke says: "There was no *good report* concerning *them*; not a word of their repentance, faith, or holiness! Alas! alas! Did ever such bright suns set in so thick a cloud! Had there been any thing praiseworthy in their life after their fall, any act of faith by which they could have been distinguished, it had surely come out here; the mention of their second son Abel would have suggested it. But God has covered the whole of their spiritual and eternal state with a *thick* and *impenetrable vail*. Conjectures relative to their state would be very precarious; little else than *hope* can be exercised in their favor." Tong: "It is observable that the Spirit of God has not thought fit to say any thing here of the faith of our first parents; and yet the church of God has generally, by a pious charity, taken it for granted that God gave them repentance and faith in the promised seed; that he instructed them in the mystery of sacrificing, that they instructed their children in it, and that they found mercy with God after they had ruined themselves and all their posterity. But God has left the matter still under some doubt, as a warning to all who have great talents given to them, and a great trust reposed in them, that they do not prove unfaithful, since God would not enrol our first parents among the number of believers in this blessed calendar."

7. We cannot be too careful to worship God in the manner made known by his revealed will; and we cannot be too careful to avoid

in our worship all departures from his known will, v. 4. Woe unto you when the fear of the Lord is taught you by the precepts of men, Isa. 29: 13.

8. The first bloody sacrifices of which we have any certain account are those offered by Abel, v. 4. Prayer seems to be taught us by natural religion. But how could natural reason give us any intimation that God would be pleased by our slaying an innocent lamb or kid under a consciousness of our personal sinfulness? It seems to be impossible that God should be pleased with such offerings, except as he himself should ordain them as types of the great sacrifice for the sins of the world. Shuckford has attempted to show that the bodies of those beasts, whose skins were worn for a covering by our first parents, had been offered in sacrifice. It may be true, but we cannot be assured of its truth from any thing in scripture. Even if it were true, the burning would not have been pleasing to God, except at his command.

9. Bad men may offer up formal, religious worship, as Cain proved, v. 4.

10. No man can tell what plots and devices are formed or forming against his good name, his liberty or his life. Abel's own brother meditated and then compassed his death, v. 4. No man knows at what time or by what means, his life will be terminated.

11. Great honor it was to Abel to be the first martyr, whose blood was ever shed in the cause of truth and righteousness, v. 4. Even as it was a great honor to blessed Stephen to be the proto-martyr of a fully revealed Christianity.

12. If men would have God's testimony that they please him, let them do and suffer all his known will, v. 4. Let them do their utmost to serve him. Let them not offer him the refuse of their life, of their time, or of their earthly possessions. Abel brought the firstlings.

13. Posthumous usefulness is possible. Many like Abel have attained it, v. 4. Patterson: "Abel's living voice is silent; but, though dead and in his grave, he speaks by the record of his faith and of his sacrifice. What faith is, what faith can do, and what faith secures are among the lessons, which the mute sleeper in the dust discourses, with arresting and expressive eloquence, to living men." To this day his example points us to God's only way of propitiation. Parry: "He fell a martyr to his faith, the victim of unbelieving malice; but, though dead, he is not forgotten. His history ends not with his life on earth. 'Right dear in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.' The righteous, however persecuted and cut off, shall be had in everlasting remembrance." Pool: "Faith hath a force to eternize the persons of believers in

acceptance with God through Christ, their wrongs, injuries, and blood on God's remembrance, and their names in heaven and the church below."

14. It is possible to please God. By divine grace even sinful men have done it. Enoch did it, v. 5. Lindsay: "He led a holy and religious life. His whole conduct was influenced by a regard to the divine will. He acknowledged God in all his ways. He chose God for his companion, for the guide of his life, for the end and aim of all his actions. Whether he went in or out, he realized the fact that God was near." He did all this openly, professedly, sincerely, perseveringly. He was no changeling.

15. Yet this good man, so much needed as a preacher to his wicked cotemporaries, was not allowed to remain on earth near so long as many others. "The best livers are not the longest livers." Often

"God takes them soonest whom he loveth best."

Nor ought we to find fault with such a proceeding.

16. The design of Enoch's translation seems to have been to teach the ancient people of God the doctrine of a future existence of both soul and body, until he should come, who by his own resurrection should assure the church of the future blessed life of all his people. Fuller: "It is possible also that the translation of this holy man might be conferred in order to show what should have been common to all, had man persisted in his obedience: a translation from the earthly to the heavenly Paradise." Patterson: "So, perhaps, goodly successive generations of mankind, had unbroken and unsullied innocence remained, have soared to a sublimer region of the universe of God."

17. Wondrous is the power of faith in the case of every true believer. Wondrous was it in the case of Enoch. It bore him above the stars of God, v. 5. Owen: "That faith which can translate a man out of this world can carry him through the difficulties which he may meet withal, in the profession of faith and obedience in this world."

18. In our day no reason exists for translations. It is absurd to expect them. It is wicked to pray for them, for they are contrary to the known will of God. "It is appointed unto men once to die," Heb. 9: 27. This rule of the divine procedure will be enforced to the end of the world, when righteous men who may then be alive will be changed in a manner perhaps not dissimilar to that of Enoch and Elijah, and so be caught up to meet the Lord.

19. If we would be saved, we must *seek God*, v. 6. When we

do this duty aright, we seek to know him, to secure his favor, to be like him, to serve and obey him, to commune with him and to attain unto eternal life in his presence. Men must seek God intelligently, not superstitiously; diligently, not carelessly; humbly, not with self-sufficiency; heartily, not hypocritically; relying solely on the merits of the Redeemer. Owen: "That faith is vain, which doth not put men on a diligent inquiry after God."

20. True faith in God requires an undoubted confidence in his existence, v. 6. The Bible never formally and dogmatically teaches the existence of God. Even here that which is declared necessary is faith in that existence. True, the Bible ascribes atheism to the fool, Ps. 14: 1; 54: 1. All nature says, I have an Author. The heavens *declare* his glory, and, of course, his existence. There is nothing more absurd than to offer worship to one in whose existence we do not confide. Lord Bacon says, "God did never work a miracle to convince an atheist." The reason is obvious. He, who can believe that the universe has no author, will naturally believe that the miracle had no cause.

21. It is no less absurd nor wicked not to believe that God has a government over the world, that he will surely send condign retribution, particularly in rewarding him that doeth well. Bloomfield: "Who would worship a Being who remained an unconcerned spectator of what passes on the earth, and with whom is no retribution?" To regard God as having made a world and then left it without care or interest in it is to conceive of him so unworthily as to receive the disapproval of even blind mortals.

22. The prudent man foreseeth the evil and hideth himself. So did Noah, v. 7. It is madness not to take warnings duly given. It is ingratitude not to take warnings kindly given. There is no greater folly than to cry Peace and Safety, when sudden destruction is coming. Noah was terribly outvoted by his generation, but God was on his side. Faith as readily believes a threatening as a promise. Good men have always feared God, not with a tormenting dread, but with a holy reverence. David says, "My flesh trembleth for fear of thee; and I am afraid of thy judgments," Ps. 119: 120. Habakkuk said, "I trembled in myself and rottenness entered into my bones," Hab. 3: 16. In the dark days of the last prophet good men are described as "those that feared the Lord," Mal. 2: 5; 3: 16. Why should men madly rush on and perish? Men who would do the will of God must not be driven with chagrin from their post of duty, whatever sport the wicked may make of their pious labors. Owen: "Then is fear a fruit of faith when it engageth us unto diligence in our duty." Lindsay: "The faith of the flood implied a prior and more funda-

mental faith in Noah, and could not otherwise have existed." The reason why all did not believe that a deluge was coming was because they did not believe God's testimony respecting the coming Redeemer.

23. Great must be the divine abhorrence of sin when God, the good, the wise and the merciful was so displeased with the creatures he had formed that he resolved on sweeping the earth with the besom of destruction. Bp. Hall: "The world was grown so foul with sin, that God saw it was time to wash it with a flood." From that day to this a deluge has been a chosen emblem of the overwhelming wrath of God against wickedness.

24. Neither good nor evil come on the world according to men's ideas of what is wise and best. As we must often hope against hope, so we must often fear against fear, v. 7. If God has said a thing, we may rest assured he will do it. Owen: "No obstacle can stand in the way of faith when it fixeth itself on the almighty power of God, and his infinite veracity." The faith which receives one statement of God will believe all that he speaks. There were no natural indications of a coming flood until Noah entered into the ark; nor was there any general apprehension in the public mind. Men went on as usual. "They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all," Luke 17:27. Doubtless their gibes and flouts at the old man Noah and his ark filled many a hall of ungodly feasting with the merriment of fools. Bp. Hall: "Methinks I see those monstrous sons of Lamech coming to Noah, and asking him what he means by that strange work? whether he means to sail upon the dry land? To whom when he reports God's purpose and his, they go laughing at his idleness, and tell one another in sport that too much piety hath made him mad:—yet cannot they all flout Noah out of his faith—he preaches, and builds, and finishes." Owen: "They whom God approves must expect that the world will disapprove them, and ruin them if it can."

25. No wonder faith justifies, for it receives Jesus as the Lord our Righteousness. Thus it gains access to the Most High through that new and living way consecrated by the blood of Jesus. It is by faith we know that God is, that God is the true God, that he reigns over all, that he is the living God, the rewarder of all who rightly seek him. No wonder that an apostle calls it "Precious faith."

26. Men may make very merry concerning the word of God, but they will find sooner or later that his word is like a nail in a

sure place. God said there should be a flood, and a flood there was. When it was too late, the scoffers climbed the trees and clambered up the mountains, but "the surging waters climbed those trees, ascended to these mountain-tops, along with them. But the ark—found not the scoffers refuge there? Too late! Alas! Too late! The door was shut—and hope was lost."

27. In like manner men now often make light of Christ, whom the ark typified. As there was no refuge from the waters of desolation except in the ark, so there is no refuge from the coming storm but in the Son of God. Let us flee to him. "Let us believe in Messiah's name. Let us stand in awe of God. Let us anticipate the judgment that awaits the world." He who escapes not to Christ is undone forever.

28. When faith knows God's will, it regards not consequences, but promptly obeys. So did Abraham when he was called to go out into a place which he knew not of, v. 8. He let go what his cotemporaries regarded as a certainty for what he knew they regarded as an uncertainty. Scott: "That is not justifying faith, which does not obey the command, as well as rely on the promise of God. We too are called to leave many of our worldly connections, interests, and comforts, to go in quest of a future inheritance." Let us not hesitate, but gladly leave all at God's command. At such a time we must have faith in that which is unseen, and resolutely say to all tempters, "Depart from me, ye evil-doers: for I will keep the commandments of my God," Ps. 119: 115. Let us never forget that God hath called us not unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. Let us cheerfully go where duty calls and stay where God commands. The Christian now knows as little of the heavenly land as Abram in Chaldea knew of Canaan. But he went right on, and so let us follow his example. "Cheerful acquiescence in God's appointment is the exercise of faith which Abraham's example enforces upon us, as alike the course of duty, and safety, and comfort."

29. It belongs not to a wise man to make much ado about worldly troubles, even as the Patriarchs complained not, because they were compelled to live in tents, v. 9. It was indeed a hard life they led, but it is long since past. So let the church of God count it all joy when she falls into divers trials. It is better to be a son with the severest chastisements than an enemy under a curse, with all fair earthly prospects. God is as kind as he is wise in saying, "Hearken, O daughter, and consider and incline thine ear: forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him," Ps. 45: 10, 11. Again, "Come out from among

them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you; and will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty," 2 Cor. 6: 17, 18.

30. It is impossible to consider the calling of Abraham in its length and breadth, without admitting that God is sovereign, vs. 8-10. Owen: "There is no right, title or possession that can prescribe against the righteousness of God, in the disposal of all inheritances here below at his pleasure."

31. When great enterprises are on hand, when great expectations are awakened by God's promises, or by his providences, when seeming impossibilities lie between us and the attainment of our hopes, then let us look to the source of all power, and at his bidding ask, Is anything too hard for the Lord? Gen. 18: 14. This was the truth that recovered that holy woman, Sarah, from the staggering of her faith, v. 11. God will not deny himself.

32. Blessed be God who has given us so many bright examples of faith and excellence in women—honorable women. There are other notices of such characters in this very chapter, vs. 31, 35, as in many other parts of the divine oracles. "Women may prove worthies," and "A weak faith may become strong." The Apostle of the circumcision honorably mentions Sarah's piety, 1 Pet. 3: 5, 6. 'Woman was last at the cross and first at the sepulchre.'

33. What an innumerable company will be assembled at the final judgment. The descendants of Abraham and Sarah alone will be like the stars and the sand for multitude, v. 12. Then there will be all the other families, tribes, nations and kingdoms of the world. Some have regarded the language of this verse as hyperbolic. Whether it is truly so or not, hyperbole is a figure of speech employed in the Scriptures, John 21: 25.

34. Let us learn, like the Patriarchs, to wait patiently for the fulfilment of all God's promises, v. 13. Owen: "Where faith is once duly fixed on the promises, it will wait patiently under trials, afflictions and temptations, for their full accomplishment. Quiet waiting for the accomplishment of promises at a great distance, and which most probably will not be in our days, is an eminent fruit of faith."

35. Are you a stranger, and a pilgrim and a sojourner? So were your betters, v. 13. Thank God that you have here no continuing city. Thank him yet more, if he has given you grace not to desire earth as a home. Duncan: "Unless we renounce the world, we can never expect a heavenly inheritance. If we are not strangers on the earth, God will not own us as his children."

36. We certainly must all die; but it is not certain that we shall

all die in faith. Yet that is an exceeding great privilege, v. 10. If we walk by faith, then we may be sure that we shall die in faith. Joshua never leads the chosen to Jordan with its swollen and turbulent waters, and then deserts them, telling them they may cross as best they can. The hope of the hypocrite will perish. But no disease, no pain can extinguish the faith of the true child of God. If we would more frequent the dying bed of believers, we should oftener witness the marvellous power of divine grace. Owen: "The life of faith doth eminently manifest itself in death, when all other reliefs and supports do fail. Many of the saints, both of old and of late, have evidenced the most triumphant actings of faith in the approach of death." If we but have grace to live to God's glory, we need not doubt that we shall die in his favor.

37. We can neither live well nor die well without hope—the hope of heaven, v. 10. "We are saved by hope." "It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord." It is only thus that "as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ," and we do know that "if we are partakers of the sufferings, so shall we be also of the consolation," 2 Cor. 1 : 5, 7.

38. Heaven must be transcendently glorious and excellent. Inspired writers seem at a loss to know how to speak of it. They tell us it is a house, a place, a city, a country, vs. 10, 14, 15, 16. They tell us its streets are pure gold, as it were transparent glass, Rev. 21 : 21. Blessed Paul had often been within its gates, and yet he could say nothing beyond this: "I heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter," 2 Cor. 12 : 4. Our Saviour discerned our great want of the true knowledge of heavenly bliss, and said: "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things," John 3 : 12. And yet heaven is the home of every saint. Already his conversation or citizenship is in heaven, Phil. 3 : 20. And the affection of true believers is set on things above, not on things on the earth, Col. 3 : 2. Genuine faith never rests satisfied till it has pierced the heavens, and taken a view of the great Throne and of him that sitteth thereon, and of the great throng that there worship. When our Apostle says, that the city hath foundations, he means to teach that it wholly differs from the transitory and perishable things of earth. It is not built upon the sand. It will stand forever. How could it be otherwise? Its Maker and Builder is God. Human art and human hands had no share in building the only city which we may call eternal. And what a blessed society will be there! This matter is often mentioned in the Scriptures. "Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham,

and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven," Matt. 8:11; Luke 13:28. In his apocalyptic vision, John saw a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues, stand before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, Rev. 7:9. 'Heaven is a quiet, settled habitation.' Then, the whole church shall be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of her God, Isa. 62:3. Did we but know, did we but conceive half the sweetness and glory of that world, nothing but a strong love for the church below could reconcile us to a longer residence on earth, Phil. 1:24. It is indeed a heavenly country. Philo: "The soul of every wise man has heaven for his country, and the earth as a strange place." Ruth acted both lovingly and wisely in her adherence to Naomi; but it is much more wise for each of us to say to the church in her triumphant march to glory: "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God," Ruth 1:16.

39. Actions speak as well as words; but when actions and words agree, their declaration is very plain, v. 14. It is a blessed thing when the Lord gives us grace to renounce all good things for his favor, all merit for the righteousness of Christ, all portion here below for an inheritance above, all confidence in man, if it contravenes trust in the Most High.

40. Having put our hands to the plough, let us never look back. Having forsaken Mesopotamia, let us be steadfast in adhering to Canaan, v. 15.

41. If God is ours, we are safe. There is more to sustain an immortal spirit in the promise, I will be thy God, than in all the philosophy of the world. Gouge: "Believers' recompense is answerable to their damage. Believers' recompense far exceeds their damage." This will be the exclamation of all the redeemed on the day they enter Paradise, Glory be to God.

## CHAPTER XI.

VERSES 17-31.

### ADDITIONAL AND BRIGHT EXAMPLES OF FAITH.

17 **By** faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac : and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,

18 **Of** whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called :

19 **Accounting** that God *was* able to raise *him* up, even from the dead ; from **whence** also he received him in a figure.

20 **By** faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

21 **By** faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph ; and worshipped, *leaning* upon the top of his staff.

22 **By** faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel ; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

23 **By** faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw *he was* a proper child ; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

24 **By** faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter ;

25 **Choosing** rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season ;

26 **Esteeming** the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt : for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.

27 **By** faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king : for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

28 **Through** faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them.

29 **By** faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land : which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.

30 **By** faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.

31 **By** faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.

**H**AVING undertaken to show the nature and power of faith, our apostle was not the man to stop short in his elucidation of the subject. So he proceeds :

17. *By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac :*

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and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,

18. *Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called :*

19. *Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead ; from whence also he received him in a figure.* To the end of the world the trial of the faith of Abraham in offering Isaac will be regarded as one of the most severe ever endured. Nor was the patriarch unequal to the test. He triumphed mightily. The narrative of the whole affair is given in Gen. 22 : 1-19. The trial came after waiting a long time for Isaac's birth, after frequent renewals of the promise, after Isaac had been born and had attained such an age as to enable him to evince his amiable and pious dispositions. Josephus says he was twenty-six years of age ; others, as much as thirty-seven. The point is not clearly settled. Abraham was *tried*, or, as Cranmer has it, proved. God put him in circumstances to test his real spirit of obedience and trust. In the command given to Abraham there was everything to increase the trial. He is called on to sacrifice his son, his only son Isaac, whom he loved ; he was to do it with his own hand, deliberately after three days' journey. If Isaac left the world without offspring, Messiah would not be born ; and if he was immolated by his father, it might look like countenancing human sacrifices. But none of these things moved Abraham. He went right on, as he was bidden. Isaac is here called Abraham's *only and only begotten* son. Now Abraham had many other sons. But they were not by promise. "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." He was the only child, to whom pertained the covenant. "The children of the promise are counted for the seed," Rom. 9 : 8. When it is twice said Abraham *offered up* his son, the meaning is, not that he actually slew him, but that he was intent on obeying God, and had an unflinching purpose to do all that God had commanded him. So earnest and intent was he that Jehovah saw no wavering in his mind, took the will for the deed, and said it was enough. Abraham's faith carried him through the dreadful trial. He *accounted*, deemed, thought, considered that omnipotence could be at no loss for resources, but could and would raise Isaac from the dead, rather than the promise should fail. This solution of the difficulty was the more remarkable as up to Abraham's time no one had ever been raised from the dead. The last clause of v. 19 has received two explanations. One is that Isaac was born of parents as good as dead, and so figuratively he came out of the grave. This is the view of Hammond, Stuart and others. But a better explanation is approved by most sound commentators, viz. that by God's command and in Abraham's mind Isaac for three days

had been as a dead man, and when the actual offering was arrested it was a figurative reception of his son from the dead. *He that received the promises* means he to whom the promises had been made, and by whom they had been embraced and relied upon.

20. *By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.* The narrative here referred to is in Gen. 27 : 28; 29, 39, 40. Many are so impressed with the words of the last of the Old Testament prophets—"I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau," Mal. 1 : 2, 3, and so misunderstand their true import, that they entirely overlook the fact that Isaac gave a great blessing to the founder of the Idumean family, and that even after he was a profane person, as Paul justly calls him, Heb. 12 : 16. True, his brother was preferred before him, and got a yet richer blessing. These blessings were both pronounced by *faith*—faith in God, who certainly fulfils all he warrants those under the prophetic Spirit to declare. Isaac pronounced efficacious blessings, blessings, which could not fail to be fulfilled.

21. *By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.* The history here referred to is in Gen. 47 and 48. The church of Rome is so anxious to have some show of scripture authority for the worship of images, relics, etc., that Rheims reads the last clause thus, And adored the topps of his rodde. And Doway has, And worshipped the top of his rod. This is felt by the authors of the Doway to be a fit occasion for a note, and so we have it thus:

"The apostle here follows the ancient Greek Bible of the seventy interpreters (which translates in this manner, Gen. XLVII., v. 31) and alleges this fact of Jacob, in paying a relative honor and veneration to the top of the rod or sceptre of Joseph, as to a figure of Christ's sceptre and kingdom, as an instance and argument of his faith. But some translators who are no friends to this relative honour, have corrupted the text, by translating it, *he worshipped leaning on the top of his staff*; as if this circumstance of leaning upon his staff were any argument of Jacob's, faith, or worthy the being thus particularly taken notice of by the Holy Ghost." Now on turning to the Doway translation of Gen. 47 : 31 we find it reads thus : "Israel adored God, turning to his bed's head." So that all this folly is manifest by their own rendering. It was God that was adored, not the top of any rod or the head of any bed. It is true the word *leaning* is not in the original. Our translation admits this by putting it in *Italics*. But then we have the preposition of recumbency, rendered *upon*, and so to make the translation idiomatic, the word *leaning* is fitly supplied. But enough of this,

Jacob's worship and blessing were both by *faith*. He knew what God had revealed of himself to the fathers, and so worshipped him. He was inspired to pronounce a blessing on Joseph's sons, and "refused" to give the richer blessing to the first-born, but "wittingly" put his right hand on the head of the younger. Nothing could divert him from his purpose to pronounce the richer blessing on him, for whom the Holy Ghost designed it. Jacob blessed all his sons, but it was enough for the apostle's purpose to notice only the blessing on Ephraim and Manasseh. It was Jacob's and not Joseph's rod or bed's head, on which Jacob leaned. And Jacob's faith held out till he was very old and infirm, so that he could not sit upright but leaned on the top of his staff.

22. *By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.* The history here referred to is in Gen 50: 24-26. What Joseph there said concerning the exodus of Israel from Egypt and the removal of his bones to the promised land was by faith in the predictions made to himself and his father for three generations preceding. He spoke by the Holy Ghost. His confidence was undoubting. Compare Acts 7: 15, 16. Bad men have sometimes been inspired, as Balaam and Saul. Such did not in true faith believe their own utterances. Some good men have uttered prophecies, which they did not understand. So far as they knew their import, they believed them and were glad, 1 Pet. 1: 10, 11. Others knew the meaning of their utterances and by a true faith relied on them and rejoiced in them. Such was the case with Joseph and his pious fathers to the third generation.

23. *By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.* The record of the story here alluded to is found in full in the first and second chapters of Exodus. Amram was the father, Jochebed was the mother, Aaron was the brother, and Miriam was the sister of Moses. They were all of the tribe of Levi. The bondage of Egypt was never more hard than about the time of Moses' birth. The Pharaoh then on the throne was a monster hardly surpassed in the annals of wanton cruelty. What plans were adopted in concealing the infant Moses, we are not informed; but at last they were found inadequate, and he was exposed so as to arrest the attention and awaken the sympathy of the king's daughter. Thus his life was preserved. The parents of Moses were led on by faith in God. Every step was piously taken. There was something in their child so unusual as to make them willing to risk every thing to save him. Our

verse says he was a *proper child*. Peshito reads. goodly child, agreeing with Exodus 2:2; Stuart follows Peshtio; Wiclif, yong child fair; Doway, comely infant; Craik, comely child; but Tyndale, Cranmer, Genevan and Rheims all have proper child or infant. In Acts 7:20 the same word is rendered *fair*. It may be that they had by some means an intimation from God by prophet, dream or vision that their child should live and do great things for his people. Josephus says they had a revelation that Moses should deliver Israel from the bondage of Egypt. Of this however we have no account in scripture. That they piously rested on the divine protection and were not disappointed is all we know or need to know.

24. *By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;*

25. *Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;*

26. *Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.* What Moses is here said to have done was *when he was come to years*, literally when he had become great; Peshito, when he became a man; Genevan, when he was come to age; Exodus 2:11, when he was grown; Doway, when he was grown up; Craik, when he was arrived at manhood; Stuart, when arrived at mature age. If we rightly understand the chronology, he was about forty years old, when by words or deeds, or by both, he *refused* to be regarded as the son of Thermutis. She had no son of her own. Had Moses done as she wished, he would have inherited the most dazzling throne of antiquity. But he *refused*, denied, rejected the tempting prize; and *chose*, elected to make common lot with his down-trodden countrymen. What he rejected was the highest honors, the greatest wealth and the gayest pleasures of earth. What he embraced was sorrow, affliction and reproach. The affliction incident to Egyptian bondage at this time and for years after can hardly be conceived or described. *The reproach of Christ* was the reproach of expecting Messiah, a great deliverer, to arise from among this enslaved people. Yet Moses chose this rather than the pleasures of sin for a season. Peshito, than to live luxuriously in sin for a short season; Wiclif: than to haue myrthe of temporal synne. His faith led him along by showing him something better than Egypt could give. He had respect, literally he looked away, to the recompense of the reward. The recompense of the reward may be condign punishment, as in Heb. 2:2; or a blessed reward, as in Heb. 10:35. See above on those places.

27. *By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king;*

for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. Some have made difficulties in reconciling this with the narrative in Ex. 2:14, 15. Stephen says that at his flight from Egypt he was full forty years old, Acts. 7:23. He further declares that Moses was then aware of his divine mission and supposed his countrymen understood how that God by his hand would deliver them; but they understood not, Acts, 7:25. Yet the verse refers not to his flight at this time, but to a period forty years later, when by signs and wonders, miracles and plagues, he effected the deliverance of his people and led them forth with a majesty and fearlessness never surpassed by the leader of a host. Even when the Israelites were terrified, Moses was calm, and said, "Fear not, stand still, and see the salvation of God. . . The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace," Ex. 14:13, 14. Perhaps the apostle, however, intends to include the whole course of Moses' mission to Egypt when he was eighty years old, and refers to his fearless and even majestic behaviour at the court of Egypt. Read the several accounts in the early part of the book of Exodus. Moses treated Pharaoh as a doomed man, as Daniel did Belshazzar on the last night of his earthly existence. See especially Ex. 10:28, 29. The secret of Moses' intrepidity and tenacity of purpose was his faith in God's promises, purposes and perfections. He *endured*, was strong and firm, because by faith he saw the hand of Jehovah leading him, and the presence of God as a wall of fire round about him and his people, though all this was unseen by his foes, and, indeed, *invisible* to his natural eyes. His faith bore him up and carried him along. He needed no more strength than he thus secured.

28. *Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them.* What the passover signified and how it was instituted can be learned from Exodus 12:11-27. There is no significancy in here reading *through faith* instead of *by faith*, as in previous verses. In the original the form of the noun is not here changed. In this case faith was chiefly manifest in promptly and carefully conforming to an institution of God, recently ordained, and without inquiring into the reason or fitness of the observance. He believed as did Israel generally at this time that a neglect of the passover would be followed by dire punishment. But by its observance the destroying angel did not touch the Israelites—did not do them the least harm.

29. *By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.* The narrative of these events is found in Exodus 14:5-31. Perhaps no portion of history

affords a better subject for painting or for song than the passage of the Red sea. I have never seen a poor picture of it. The song of Moses, composed on the occasion, is of exquisite beauty, both in the original and in every version of it now at hand. It is the oldest song, the words of which are extant. See Exodus 15 : 1-18. The sight of Egyptians drowned, swollen, floating ashore and becoming food for jackals, must have been appalling to all, who felt that God was their enemy. It was by faith in God's power and care that Moses went boldly into and safely through the sea, and persuaded his people to follow him.

30. *By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.* The apostle now passes to persons and events after the death of Moses. The historic event here mentioned is recorded in Joshua 6 : 1-21. The mode of taking this city was well suited to make all Israel believe that God was with them and would fight for them. A procession marched round it seven days, sounding trumpets. On the seventh day they marched round seven times, and at the seventh time all the people shouted, and without sapping or mining, without any human instrumentality, commonly resorted to, the walls fell, and the city was taken. Read the instructive story.

31. *By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.* The full account is given in Joshua 2 : 1-24 ; 6 : 22-25. The spies here noticed are not the twelve sent out by Moses, of whom Caleb and Joshua were two. See Num. 13th and 14th chapters. These twelve seem to have passed over the land generally without suspicion or molestation. Their names are all given. But the spies sent by Joshua were two young men, whose names are not given, and who had hardly entered Jericho till hostile search was made for them. Of Rahab we know but little. She is called a *harlot*. Some have thought that the word rendered harlot, where she is spoken of in Joshua, means an inn-keeper. But surely this cannot be the meaning of the word rendered harlot in our verse and by another apostle, Jas. 2 : 25. It may be that at the time the spies came to Jericho, she did keep a house of entertainment. In fact some think it is intimated by the narrative. But the best mode of explaining the whole is to admit that at one time she had been an immoral person, but hearing of the mighty deeds of the God of Jacob, and having learned some of the doctrines of the people of Israel, especially respecting Messiah, she had repented and reformed, and was preparing to endeavor to escape the woe and destruction which she knew were about to fall on her people and the surrounding tribes. She had learned enough of the Jews to know

that God was with them, and that they could not be long or successfully resisted. She "renounced her connexion with the enemies of God, and sought admission among his people. At the hazard of her life she entertained the spies of Israel." At the same time she knew that her country was to be overrun and her city captured; and she desired to save herself and her family from the general ruin, and attached herself to the church of God. This she did through the spies, and afterwards in a public manner. One apostle says she was "justified," Jas. 2:25; and our apostle puts her down among those, of whom the world was not worthy. Patrick: "She was not only admitted into the society of God's people, but married into a noble family of the tribe of Judah from whom Christ sprang." Her husband's name was Salmon, the father of Boaz, the father of Obed, the father of Jesse, the father of David, Matt. 1:5. Her faith, not being dead, produced works, and thus saved her and her family from impending ruin, and enrolled her in a scriptural calendar of saints.

#### DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL REMARKS.

[NOTE.—In understanding the right practical use of this section, as well as in getting at the right interpretation of the several clauses, we must not forget that throughout this chapter the apostle is dwelling on the theme introduced near the close of the tenth chapter, viz., that faith is the great support and defence against apostasy. All the cases mentioned suit the condition of the Hebrews to whom he was writing, and the case of believers in every age. Every thing points to Christ, and encourages to an exercise of strong confidence in God.]

1. We may, we must expect trials, if we are in covenant with God, v. 17. His incorrigible enemies may escape trying events here, but not his friends. What mere man was dearer to God than Abraham; yet what mere man was ever more tried? God proves, but he does not seduce. He subjects to tests, but they are fair tests. "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 1:13. Yet the Lord tries men, and often in proportion to their faith, even when the intent of the trial is not understood. Well may a professed believer suspect that all is not right when he lives without trial. One way in which faith so mightily sustains us in trials is that it lifts us up above the world, and enables us to see invisible things.

2. Genuine faith embraces all God says, and because he says it, v. 17. Lindsay: "If we had no revelation, then there would be no

help for it, but that we should follow what appeared reasonable to ourselves. But if we have a revelation, if we are not prepared to deny that the Bible is the word of God, then it is the dictate of sound reason that we must believe every thing propounded in that book, even though it should appear to us difficult and strange, and what, left to ourselves, we should never have thought of admitting. Cast away the book, and then believe what you please. In this there is consistency." If men believe God has spoken in the Bible, let them not sit in judgment on his decisions.

3. It is always safe to obey God as soon as we know his will, v. 17. This obedience should be prompt, hearty, unflinching. Abraham obeyed God throughout. The voice of God arrested him and would allow him to go no further. His prompt obedience has earned for him a name above most names in the history of our world, Gen. 22 : 15-18 ; James 2 : 21.

4. God does often take the real intention for the deed, vs. 17-19. Lindsay : " Where it has been our purpose to perform some duty and we have been prevented by causes which we could not possibly control, God will assuredly accept the will for the deed, and we shall receive the same reward as if we had carried out our purpose into action. So equally on the other hand, where a wicked man has planned some crime, and laid all his measures for its perpetration, he has incurred all the guilt of it, even although unexpected detection should prevent its final accomplishment." The true intent of the heart does, in God's esteem, stamp the real character on all men's words and deeds.

5. It is a part of wisdom and of the true spirit of obedience, not only to seem to obey, but to avoid all that could hinder our success, vs. 17-19. When Abraham received the command, he did not doubt that it was from God, and so the painful secret he locked up in his own bosom. He did not tell his wife ; it would have done no good to do so. Her faith may not have been as strong as his, and her distress and entreaties might have proved a snare to him. And neither did he tell the young men who went with him, but left them at the foot of the mountain. Their presence might have interposed difficulties. Nor did he tell the secret to Isaac until it was necessary for him to do so. Silence is often a duty.

6. What a mighty resource Christians have in the divine perfections, particularly in God's omnipotence. This was Abraham's last resort, v. 19. Pool : " God's almighty power to raise from the dead answered all the difficulties in the trial. Promises should not fail, though Isaac was sacrificed ; for God would raise him up and accomplish them. As to arguments from natural affection :

Shall a child be dearer to me than a God, who quickens me and can raise him from the dead?" Nothing reasons better than true faith.

7. Men have no more grace than is evinced by them on fair trial. Heavenly things have not made a right impression upon us if they do not enable us to bear a great deal.

8. God is a Sovereign, perfectly free, wholly independent and entirely unerring, v. 18. He has never asked for more than he had a right to. He has never commanded but what we were bound to obey.

9. The doctrine of the resurrection of the dead is so essential to the comfort of Christians and a fulfilment of the promises, that in all ages it has been regarded as possible, perhaps as certain, v. 18. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with men that God should raise the dead? Acts 26 : 8. If this doctrine is not true, preaching is vain and faith is vain, and all men are yet in their sins, 1 Cor. 15 : 14, 17. It is only when we heartily believe this doctrine that we can give up such distressing inquiries as those of the Psalmist: "Wilt thou show wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise and praise thee? Shall thy loving-kindness be declared in the grave? or thy faithfulness in destruction? Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?" Ps. 88 : 10-12. Clarke: "The resurrection of the dead must have been the doctrine of the patriarchs; they expected a heavenly inheritance; they saw they died as did other men; and they must have known that they could not enjoy it but in consequence of a resurrection from the dead." Some have said that the doctrine of the resurrection was at this time unknown, and it is true that we cannot prove it to have been known but by the nature of the case, and by the declaration of the apostle in this place. Blessed be God no uncertainty rests on our minds concerning the resurrection. Lindsay: "The sepulchres of believers are the resting-places where they wait for a blessed and glorious resurrection. Conceive the grave to be an abyss of eternal annihilation, and the holy, solemnizing and elevating feelings which now cluster round it would be forever dispelled."

10. God can and will do all he says, however unlikely it may seem to carnal reason, v. 19. He said Isaac should be the progenitor of a great nation and of the Redeemer of lost men; and he made him so, though he was not born till both his parents were past age, and though God himself commanded him to be offered on Mount Moriah.

11. It is exceedingly important that we have our minds firmly settled on the great principles, both of natural and revealed relig-

ion, v. 19. Had Abraham wavered concerning the divine existence, the divine providence, the divine power, or the divine veracity, he never could have gone through his great trial. Owen: "It is good for us to have our faith firmly built on the fundamental articles of religion."

12. If with such examples of faith as that we are now considering, we shall be unbelieving and disobedient, great will be our guilt. Owen: "The example of Abraham was peculiarly cogent unto the Hebrews, who gloried in being the children of Abraham, from whom they derived all their privileges and advantages." But believers are the spiritual seed of Abraham. Let them remember that true faith can stand trials, and that by trials only can its genuine nature be evinced. Owen: "If we are children of Abraham, we have no reason to expect exemption from the greatest trials."

13. Was the offering of Isaac typical of the offering of Jesus? Many think it was. Isaac was the only-begotten. His father gave him up to death. He bore the wood on which he was to be offered. For three days he was, in the mind of his father, dead. It was, as by a resurrection, that he was raised from the dead. He was offered on one of the hills hard by Jerusalem. Townsend: "The sacrifice of Isaac by his father was so evidently typical of the sacrifice of Christ, that there can be no doubt of the design to be answered by this otherwise mysterious event." Not a few respectable writers have supposed that pre-eminently at the time of offering Isaac, Abraham "rejoiced to see Christ's day; and he saw it, and was glad," John 8: 56. Compare Rom. 4: 23-25.

14. Prophecy is from God, vs. 20-22. Because God sees future and contingent events, because he alone sees them, and because he will not make known such events to establish a lie; therefore prophecy is a good ground of faith in the holy scriptures. And why should we not confide in the divine foresight whenever the Lord chooses to speak to us of things to come?

15. These verses also explain to us somewhat the nature of inspiration. Neither Isaac, nor Jacob, nor Joseph could go beyond what the Lord revealed to him by his Spirit. Balaam expressed the true doctrine when he said, "Must I not take heed to speak that which the Lord hath put in my mouth? If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the Lord, to do either good or bad of my own mind," Num. 23: 12; 24: 13.

16. It is very becoming and very beautiful for parents to be found piously blessing their children, vs. 20-22. And though they may not be able to do it with prophetic authority, yet they ought to

be able to do it with importunate supplication, and to warn them against living in sin or renouncing the God of their fathers. When this is done in the true spirit of piety, it may have as blessed an effect now as in patriarchal times.

17. It is a great thing to die in faith. It is peculiarly blessed to die in strong faith, vs. 20-22. "In the history of the patriarchs, we see what faith can do to smooth the dying pillow. With what composure and peace they fell asleep in the faith of God's promise! Although they spoke only of the earthly Canaan, yet doubtless that was regarded only as a type, or shadow, of the heavenly Canaan." Owen: "It is an eminent mercy, when faith not only holds out to the end, but waxeth strong towards the last conflict with death."

18. In all acts of religious worship we should use such language, and assume such postures as we regard most humble and reverential towards God, v. 21. Yet are we not bound to throw the body into painful attitudes, so as to divert attention from the main object of our devotion. In such case the rule is, God will have mercy and not sacrifice. Jacob leaned on the top of his staff, or of his bed, when he needed such support. Owen: "There is an allowance for the infirmities of age and sickness, in our outward deportment in divine worship, so as that there be no indulgence to sloth or custom. But that an evidence of a due reverence to God and holy things be preserved."

19. It is impossible for us to entertain in ourselves, or to inspire in others too great an abhorrence of every form of cruelty, personal or political, v. 23. Let those who practise such wickedness know that neither custom nor personal animosity, nor reasons of state can ever shield them from the awful accountability, under which they act. God abhors tyranny and cruelty by whomsoever practised. When brutal and bloody men are clothed with power to ransack houses from garret to cellar, to hunt over the mountains and search into caves for those, who are far better than those, who happen to have power over them, the case is sad indeed. But God will in due time bring to nought the counsels and the rage of wicked men.

20. There are no circumstances in which genuine faith cannot sustain the heart of the pious. Moses' parents were as calm as if all was right around them when they were utterly disregarding the king's wicked edict requiring all male children to be put to death, v. 23. Yet their faith was not presumption. They used all proper means, but they trusted in God to bless the means. He, who assures his people of final victory, tells them they must be faithful unto death, watch and pray, fight on and never give over

till they are safely lodged in heaven. He, who despises duty, despises promises and him that made them. God can preserve us in the darkest hour, and greatest peril; but he has not bound himself to protect the reckless.

21. It is an old saying that the lives of the best men and the lives of the worst men ought to be written, the former for the imitation, the latter for the warning of mankind. On this principle the Bible seems to have been composed. Especially do the well disposed need such bright examples as we have in Moses, vs. 24-29. He was a man of vast learning, was mighty in word and deed, was full of zeal for the divine glory, was amazingly meek in his own cause, and as courageous in God's cause, was very patient under trials, very pitiful and tender to his brethren, made no parley with the sin of idolatry, disobliged himself to serve others, was unflinchingly faithful in every charge, was far above envy and ambition, ardently loved good men, followed good advice by whomsoever given, and had a faith that could not be shaken by threats from the greatest earthly potentate, nor by the waves of the Red sea, nor by long delays, nor by the turbulence of men. His was indeed a noble character. If men were good and wise, how they would study, admire and imitate this great character.

22. If we have trials, Moses had still greater trials. He was hardly born till his life was sought. He had perils from his enemies the Egyptians and from his own brethren the Jews, he once saved his life only by flight, for forty years he dwelt in a strange land, his chief official dealings were first with a fierce and cruel monarch, and then with an unsteady, passionate and fickle people, who were once ready to stone him; his best deeds were misrepresented, and he was charged with ambition and arrogance; yet he bore it all well. He showed us by example what we ought to be and to do in the day of darkness and conflict. Once did he fail and that showed him to be a mere man. Only once did he fail, and that showed him to be an uncommonly good man.

23. Like Moses every man both chooses something and refuses something, vs. 24-26. Men are continually making their election of good things on earth, or good things beyond this life, of a portion with the wicked, or a portion with the saints. Like Moses some choose the good part and so prove their wisdom. But whether men act wisely or foolishly, they all choose. Moses chose deliberately, in the full vigor of his mind, and he never regretted his choice. It was unconditional and unreserved. He was led to make it by the grace of God. He welcomed poverty, reproach, toil, care and pain. So now all good men do the same if it is necessary to the maintenance of their integrity. But while

all men choose, how few choose wisely. The pleasures of sin allure, the honors of earth have charms, the wealth of the world has a fatal power, and men yield, and deliver themselves over to corruption. Nor can men now escape affliction with the people of God, if they would be Christians. Nor can they ever come off conquerors without a fixed and a determined choice to glorify God cost what it may.

24. Let no man renounce the church and forsake God's people, because they are poor, despised, forsaken, persecuted, vs. 24-26. It has commonly been the case that the poor of this world were the rich in faith, Jas. 2 : 5. Let us hold fast the covenant. Let us cleave to the Saviour, and bear his cross. Gouge: "Affliction may be chosen, or, it may be willingly undergone." It has been by thousands.

25. It is not true that there are no pleasures in sinning. The Bible says there are, v. 25. True, they are followed by awful pangs of remorse, and, if not repented of, by eternal wailings and curses. True, they are now sweet, but in the end they bite like the serpent. Then too they are short-lived. They last for a moment, a little moment. The fashion of this world passeth away. At best all merely earthly good lasts no longer than life; and commonly it leaves men before they leave this earth. It is sweeter to forego sinful sweets than to enjoy them, to renounce the pleasures of sin than to hold them fast.

26. It is in vain to attempt to lead a Christian life in any age or country, and yet escape the reproach of Christ, v. 26. All who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution, 2 Tim. 3 : 12. The offence of the cross has not ceased in our day. There is no getting on without Christ, and there is no getting on without the reproach of Christ. The reproaches of Christ are great riches, greater than all the treasures of Egypt. How great then must be the riches in glory!

27. It is right often to think of the everlasting consequences of our words and deeds, whether good or bad, v. 26. Moses was not blind to his own interests, but he preferred those that were most enduring, the glorious recompense of the blessed reward. If faith does not reason by the art of the logician, it still reaches wise conclusions by submitting to divine teaching and divine guidance.

28. When God is indubitably on our side, we are infallibly right, and need fear nothing, however great and terrible it may seem to be, v. 27. Owen: "Even the wrath of the greatest king is to be disregarded, if it lie against our duty towards God." If God calls us to go forward, timidity is rashness, and fear is both a sin and a shame.

29. Yet many a time nothing but faith can sustain. It was so with Moses, v. 27. He knew that God was both wiser and stronger than men. He knew all would be well for the righteous, if God ordered it. He knew that God had a hook in the nose of every obdurate enemy and could turn him whithersoever he would. But he knew all this by faith, by faith in the truths of natural religion and in all the revelations God had made to the fathers. To the eye of sense and carnal reason, all was just the opposite.

30. Genuine faith obeys in all things. It comes when it is called. It goes when it is sent. It carries out in all particulars the directions for the passover and the sprinkling of the blood, v. 28. "Obedience to God is man's highest reason." He never acts so wisely as when he promptly yields to the voice of Jehovah. Moses and all Israel proved it so in the whole matter of the paschal lamb. Not one of their first-born perished.

31. Was the passover typical of the sacrifice of Christ? The common opinion is in the affirmative. It seems to be supported by Paul: "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth," 1 Cor. 5:7, 8. In the passover the most prominent provision was an unblemished lamb. In the gospel we have the spotless Lamb of God, who was led as a Lamb to the slaughter. Compare Isa. 53:7; John 1:29. The blood of the passover lamb protected every family from the ruin brought on their Egyptian neighbors. It was their ransom from the destroying angel. So all believers "were redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot," 1 Pet. 1:18, 19. The blood of the paschal lamb was to be sprinkled on the posts and lintel of every door. So the blood of Jesus Christ must be sprinkled on every soul. The flesh of the paschal lamb must be eaten. So says Christ, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, ye have no life in you," John 6:53. Not a bone of the paschal lamb was to be broken, neither was a bone of our Saviour broken. It is on grounds like these that from the days of Cyril of Alexandria to this time, a large number of persons have regarded the passover as typical. Some indeed may have lightly esteemed this feast and thought it a small thing to sprinkle the blood of a lamb on the door, as a preservative from the vengeance of the Almighty, just as many now despise through unbelief the sacrifice of Christ. But this is folly and wickedness. Owen: "Whatever is not sprinkled with the blood of Christ, the Lamb of God, who was slain and sacrificed for us, is exposed unto de-

struction from the anger and displeasure of God, for it is the blood of Christ alone which gives us security from him that hath the power of death." We cannot therefore too carefully enquire whether, as Moses believingly observed the passover, we do in truth embrace Christ by a lively faith. Unbelief will ruin any man, any cause or any service. No sin is more provoking to God.

32. The history of the Egyptians furnishes several illustrations of that great principle of the divine government, punishment in kind. They had long practised horrid cruelties against little children. Now all their own first-born perish in a night, v. 28. They were particularly fond of drowning people. So the waters of the Red sea overwhelmed their king, their captains and all their host. Let the wanton and the cruel never forget that Jehovah is the sovereign Lord of all instruments and all causes, and can easily take vengeance in a way that shall terribly remind them of their own wickedness. "God ordereth punishment according to sin."

33. Let parents remember that in wantonly provoking God, they may be, and often are terribly exposing their dearest offspring to the awful vengeance of God. It was so with the Egyptians, v. 28. Gouge: "Children may be punished for their fathers' sins."

34. Things are safe or perilous, promote our good or bring on us ruin, according as God makes them to subserve his purposes of mercy or vengeance. Moses and his people were never more safe than when marching across the channel of the Red sea; but the attempt to do so was destruction to the Egyptians, v. 29. It was a bold, but not a rash thing for Moses and his people to pass through the sea. It was both rashness and madness for Pharaoh and his host to follow them. When we are sure that we have divine authority for any thing, we need have no further apprehension, but go calmly forward. God has provided for every result. Owen: "Faith will find a way through a sea of difficulties, under the call of God." On the other hand, when the wicked most loudly cry, Peace and safety, dire destruction is commonly nearest. There is something truly fearful in the rapidity with which the wicked at last go down to death. Owen: "When the oppressors of the church are nearest unto their ruin, they commonly rage most, and are most obstinate in their bloody persecutions."

35. God can work by, without, or contrary to means; he can work by feeble means; he can work by any means; then again, he can dispense with all means, v. 30. He used no means in creating the world, unless his word be so considered. He worked contrary to means, when the Saviour put clay upon the eyes of the blind

man, and yet healed him. He worked by means, when he saved Noah in the ark. God is not tied to the use of means or instruments, though he commonly employs them.

36. When the walls of Jericho fell down, and it was destroyed, Joshua adjured his people, saying, "Cursed be the man before the Lord, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his first-born, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it," Josh. 6: 26. Yet when the Saviour of sinners came into the world there were inhabitants, even in that accursed place, whom the Saviour in his love and pity visited. There he found Zaccheus, Luke 19: 1-10. Yes, salvation went even to the house of that unconscionably greedy wretch. There, too, Jesus healed two blind men, one of whom was Bartimeus. Blessed be God, that where sin and the curse did abound, grace and mercy have much more abounded.

37. There is mercy for the chief of sinners, v. 31. This is a truth taught in all the scriptures. By repentance and faith, Rahab the harlot saved herself and her family from temporal destruction. And in our Lord's time the publicans and the harlots entered into the kingdom of God. That Rahab's religious belief was right, we learn from the scripture: "I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the waters of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what he did unto the kings of the Amorites that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above and in earth beneath," Josh. 2: 9-11. It was on this faith consistently acted out that Joshua saved Rahab the harlot, and her father's household, and all that she had; and that she dwelt in Israel in honor and usefulness, and was one of the ancestors of our blessed Lord, Josh. 6: 25; Matt. 1: 5, 6. Thus we see how "that a woman, that was an alien, and in mean condition among her own people, was grafted into the body of the church by faith. Whence it follows that the most exalted are of no price in the sight of God, unless they be estimated according to faith: while on the contrary, such as were scarce allowed a place among the profane and reprobate, are adopted into fellowship with angels," Jas. 2: 25. Some seem offended at this proclamation of free grace to sinners, and claim that the cause of purity suffers by such teaching. But God's grace is thus glorified. Lindsay: "The honor of religion is not tarnished by the sins indi-

viduals may have committed before conversion. It is what they do afterwards that brings a stain upon the faith which they profess. The more worthless their previous conduct may have been, the more signal is the triumph achieved in their reformation." Gouge: "Notorious sinners may obtain much mercy." Blessed be God for that.

38. The token that saved Rahab and her house was unobserved by all the inhabitants of Jericho, or if noticed at all, was not by them either understood or rightly estimated. It was a scarlet thread hanging out of her window. So the fact of a soul believing in Christ and being sprinkled by his blood, is either unnoticed or lightly esteemed by the mass of men. Yet on that fact turns salvation. Reader hast thou the scarlet thread hung out? Is the blood of the Lamb on thy door posts and lintel? Hast thou fled to Jesus?

39. Let every man see to it that his relations to the people of God be all right. This was a part of Rahab's wisdom. He, who prefers not Jerusalem above his chief joy, is in a sad plight. Gouge: "There are cases wherein the church is to be preferred before one's own country." It is patriotic to say, I love my country, and when she is wronged I will help defend her to the last; but it is heathenish to say, I go with and for my country, right or wrong.

40. This section of our chapter, like the preceding, presents to our notice, in several aspects, the nature and power of faith. It shows us how faith puts a just but a very low estimate on worldly honors, riches and pleasures. It enables good men to despise all that is forbidding and threatening, that they may hold communion with God's people. It makes men look far forward to the day of retribution. It imparts the spirit of invincible endurance. It emboldens. It expels fear. It obeys. It trusts. It has a good memory treasuring up mercies. It finds deliverance in blood, the blood of an innocent victim. All the saints are believers. Its tendency is to grow. It has a tendency to make others bold.

41. And unbelief is as vile and as mischievous, as faith is precious and useful. It drowns men in destruction and perdition. Owen: "Although unbelief be not the only destroying sin (for the wages of every sin is death, and many are accompanied with peculiar provocation), yet it is the only sin which makes eternal destruction inevitable and remediless." There are no greater opposites than faith and unbelief, trust and distrust towards God.

42. It is very clear from the examples cited by the apostle, that genuine faith has always wrought with works, and by works has been made perfect, Jas. 2:22. It is indubitably true that faith

without works is dead. How could it be otherwise? Faith, that is unproductive of corresponding action, is dead, being alone. These ancient worthies believed, and therefore they spake, they toiled, they rejoiced, they triumphed mightily. Whatever God said was in their eyes as true as if they saw it all with sense or reason or both. Doddridge: "Let these glorious instances of faith be preserved in our memory, and have their due influence upon our hearts."

## CHAPTER XI.

VERSES 32-40.

### OTHER AND LATER EXAMPLES OF THE POWER OF FAITH.

32 And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthah; of David also and Samuel, and of the prophets:

33 Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

34 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.

35 Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:

36 And others had trial of *cruel* mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment:

37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;

38 Of whom the world was not worthy: they wandered in deserts, and *in* mountains, and *in* dens and caves of the earth.

39 And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

**I**N this section we find our apostle pouring out a cumulative argument, and giving us many illustrations, in an impetuous stream of eloquence. There are few passages of equal power in any language.

32. *And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthah; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets.* Here, as in other places, respect is not had to the chronological order of events, or of men's lives, where nothing depends upon a regard to time. Barak pre-

ceded Gideon, and Jephthah preceded Samson, and Samuel was older than David. But for the purpose of the apostle nothing depended on the chronological order. Each of these men was a bright example of faith, whensoever he lived. The apostle is not teaching history but the nature and power of faith. The rendering of the whole verse is good and is generally followed. Mac-knight paraphrases the question at the beginning, What need is there to produce more examples of the power and efficacy of faith? This is virtually the same as that of Guyse. Doddridge: And what shall I say further upon this copious, this inexhaustible subject? *The time would fail me*; Peshito: There is little time; Tyn-dale, Cranmer and Genevan: The time would be too short. The story of Gideon is given in the sixth, seventh and eighth chapters of Judges. It is written with great clearness and precision. It presents him as a modest, but courageous man, very anxious to know and determined to do the will of God, and deliver his country from the oppressor. He was exactly obedient to the divine will in all his methods of rescuing his country from the Midianites. Some have expressed doubts of his piety on account of the ephod mentioned in Judg. 8:27. This indeed led the people of his time into idolatry and was finally the means of impairing confidence in him and his house. But there is no more evidence that he made or encouraged an idolatrous use of it, than that Moses was responsible for the idolatry occasioned by the misuse of the brazen serpent, which Hezekiah destroyed\* because his people burned incense to it, 2 Kings 18:4. There is no evidence that Gideon designed the ephod as any thing but a memorial of the great deliverance which God wrought by him. Gideon lent his influence for life to the suppression of idolatrous practices, Judg. 8:33. The history of Barak is inseparably connected with that of Deborah, and is found in the fourth and fifth chapters of Judges. It is written with great force; and the song celebrating the victory granted him is of rare beauty. All Barak's movements were directed by the Spirit of God in the prophetess, Deborah, the wife of Lapidoth. Like Gideon Barak manifested his faith by promptly and minutely following divine directions in all his efforts to redeem his country and countrymen from oppression and oppressors. The same is true of Samson and of Jephthah. Samson's birth was announced by the angel of the Lord. He was the son of Manoah and a Nazarite to God from the womb. His education was divinely directed. His marriage to a woman of Timnath was of the Lord, though she was by no means a congenial spirit and behaved badly. His whole history is found in the thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of Judges. He was

a mighty man and had strong faith in God, and is justly numbered among the worthies of antiquity. In all his mighty acts he seemed to have a deep sense of dependence on the strength and favor of God, and he evidently acted in the main in obedience to the behests of God, though Delilah was a snare to him. Jephthah's history is found in the eleventh and twelfth chapters of Judges. He was a great deliverer. Like Samson he was obedient to the impulses of the Holy Spirit suggesting the will of God. Some have thought that they found sin in these godlike heroes. Perhaps they have succeeded. But that only proves that the best of men are men at the best. The things most seriously charged relate to Gideon's ephod, Samson's marriages, and Jephthah's vow. But God seems to have ordered the first marriage of Samson, as he did that of the son of Beer, to a bad woman, Hos. 2 : 2. Jephthah's vow was rash, and so involved him in deep affliction, leaving his daughter to bewail her perpetual virginity. But Joshua acted rashly in the matter of the Gibeonites and even Moses once spoke unadvisedly. It has been shown that Gideon was an enemy to idolatry, and the worst motive that can be imputed to him was perhaps some vanity in attempting to perpetuate the memory of his great victory. The history of David and the history of Samuel are long, full and well known, and are found at length chiefly in the first and second books of Samuel. Their lives were very eventful, and, although not faultless, are full of illustrations of the reality and efficacy of faith in God's word and promises. See 1 Sam. 7 : 3-13; 2 Sam. 8 : 1-15. The same may be said in general of all the *prophets*. Thus the apostle proceeds to speak of those :

33. *Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions.* Joshua and David and Barak and Gideon certainly *subdued kingdoms*. Abraham and Phinehas and a host of others *wrought righteousness*. The same phrase in Acts 10 : 35 designates a man that leads a truly pious life ; but here it may point to those, who executed justice in behalf of the oppressed. I have seen the interleaved Study Bible of President Davis, with a note explaining the phrase *obtained promises*, as do Chrysostom, Theodoret, Bengel, Bleek and others, viz., as obtaining pledges by promise from God that he would do some great thing for them. Abraham, Caleb, Phinehas and Solomon are wonderful instances of this kind of power with God. Gen. 22 : 16, 17, 18 ; Num. 14 : 24 ; Josh. 14 : 6-14 ; Num. 25 : 12, 13 ; 1 Kings 3 : 11-14. This sense is good. But the phrase also means to obtain promised blessings. This interpretation is preferred by Owen, Boehme, Lindsay and others. This also is a good sense

and is illustrated in the history of many. Some commentators decline to decide between these interpretations, as Duncan, Clarke and others. Samson and David had a good deal to do with wild beasts, and each of them slew a lion. But the reference is specially to Daniel, who spent a night in the den of these furious and ferocious creatures, and was not harmed by them, Dan. 6: 1-24. The mention of Daniel naturally suggests the first clause of verse

34. *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.* The first clause clearly points to such persons as Daniel's friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednegb, Dan. 3: 1-30. They believed God, and, if it were best, that he would not allow them to perish in the fiery furnace. But they resolved to die, rather than commit idolatry. There may have been other cases as striking, but they are not recorded. Moses escaped the sword of Pharaoh, Exod. 18: 3; and the history of Elijah shows how he escaped the sword of as cruel wretches as ever lived. David too was shielded against Saul. When men were brought back from the borders of the grave, to which they had been reduced by disease, it may be said that *out of weakness they were made strong.* Such a deliverance was that of Hezekiah, Isa. 38. The same is true when men were endowed with supernatural strength as when David leaped a high wall, or broke through the dense lines of an armed enemy, 2 Sam. 22: 30. All sacred history abounds in instances of men, who *waxed valiant in fight*, men too who were as weak as water, when not divinely sustained. Most of the worthies actually named in v. 32 afford illustrations. Think too of Jonathan, who in battle grew so faint that he tasted the honey, and yet with none but his armor-bearer captured the garrison of the Philistines, 1 Sam. 14: 4, 27. In verse 32 are also found the names of several, who *turned to flight the armies of the aliens.* Compare also 1 Sam. 17: 53; 2 Sam. 12: 11. Faith did more than all these things, for

35. *Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection.* The first clause receives its full illustration in the raising of the son of the widow of Sarepta, and of the son of the Shunamite, 1 Kings 17: 22; 2 Kings 4: 31-37. These *received their dead raised to life again.* The last clause of this verse is not so easily explained. The word rendered *were tortured* is not found elsewhere in the New Testament. Peshito: Some died under tortures; Wiclif: Other were holden forth; Tyndale, Coverdale, Cranmer, Genevan, Rheims and Doway: Others were

racked. Luther's old Bible, were stretched out; Calvin, stretched on the rack. Clarke thinks that the particular kind of torture is described by the Greek verb, and that we should read, others *were bastinadoed*. Bloomfield, *beaten to death*. Some think that the torture consisted in being beaten with rods; others that it consisted in being stretched and scourged upon the wheel. It is not possible (happily it is not necessary) for us to decide the exact kind of suffering here described. It may include many forms of torture. Some refer, perhaps rightly, to the tortures of Eleazer, 2 Mac. 6:30. Many interpreters suppose that the apostle here has specially in his mind the sufferings, constancy and hopes of the mother and her seven sons whose martyrdom is recorded in Maccabees, One can hardly read 2 Mac. 7:1-42, and doubt the correctness of this interpretation. But the tortures inflicted on that blessed family were various. They could have escaped suffering, if they had been willing to *accept deliverance* on terms dishonorable to a witness for God and his truth. And they constantly declared that they were sustained by the blessed hope of a *better resurrection*—a better resurrection than the wicked shall attain, or a resurrection to a better life than any man enjoys on earth, or a better resurrection than that of the son of the widow. Although the apocryphal books are never cited by inspired men, yet the apostle very properly refers to well known facts in history to illustrate his subject, even as Christ referred to the falling of the tower in Siloam, or to the mingling of human blood with some recent sacrifices, in order to show the necessity of repentance.

36. *And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment.* Some refer the mockings to Ishmael mocking Isaac, and to the children mocking Elisha; but probably the reference of both mockings and scourgings is still to the persecutions under Antiochus, of which we have an account in the sixth and seventh chapters of 2 Maccabees. Samson also was cruelly mocked when he was blind. The *bonds and imprisonment* include the cases of Joseph, Samson and Jeremiah. Doubtless there were many like them. There is nothing in the original corresponding to *cruel*, though these mockings were in their nature cruel.

37. *They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented.* Stoning was a Jewish mode of putting men to death. It may have been in use among the Egyptians, as we may infer from Exod. 8:26. The two most remarkable instances of thus putting good men to death were those of Naboth, who would not for money sell his portion in Israel to

gratify a vain and covetous tyrant, and of Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, who plainly told the people their sins, and who by order of a brutal and ungrateful tyrant was thus killed in the court of the temple, 1 Kings 21: 1-14; 2 Chron. 24: 20-22; Matt. 23: 35. We have not in the Old Testament any account of men being *sawn asunder*; but a general Jewish tradition, widely received in the Christian world from early ages, declares that Isaiah was thus cruelly put to death. Some suppose this kind of punishment is referred to in 2 Sam. 12: 31; 1 Chron. 20: 3; Amos 1: 3. But is this the same punishment? Still others *were tempted*, all sorts of seductions and enticements being placed before them. Antiochus actually offered great favor and preferment to one of the noble seven brethren, if he would but deny his religion. Such things have often been done. They are a terrible part of the horrid machinery of persecution. Some have proposed alterations in the Greek text so as to read *were branded, burnt alive, mutilated, or pierced through*. But there is neither necessity nor authority for any such change of the text. One of the most horrid things in persecutions is the constant endeavor of cunning men to defile the conscience of the martyr. Many, very many had been *slain with the sword*. Their sufferings were terrible even to the beholders; but they were short and soon over. That pink of persecutors, Doeg, slew eighty-five priests, who had done nothing but show a becoming humanity, and he butchered all the inhabitants of Nob, the city of the priests beside, 1 Sam. 22: 18, 19. He is rendered immortally infamous by the great Hebrew lyric poet, Ps. 52. There seems also to have been a great butchery of God's prophets by the sword in the days of Elijah, 1 Kings 19: 10. In all these cases we must remember that sacred history gives us but very brief hints and outlines. Others were driven from comfortable homes, from all domestic and neighborly charities, became exiles from the public worship of God, and *wandered* about in the skins of animals, glad to get an undressed *sheepskin* or *goatskin* to cover their nakedness. Such were *destitute* of means, of friends, of comforts, and often of necessaries. They were also *afflicted* for the state of their country and the state of the church, afflicted in their own minds; and *tormented* by frequent alarms, by merciless pursuits, and, when arrested, by refined tortures.

38. *Of whom the world was not worthy: they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.* The apostle

seems to continue here the account begun in v. 37. They were wanderers in *deserts, mountains, dens and caves*. See 1 Mac. 2: 24-39; 2 Mac. 6: 11. How many of them died of diseases contracted by exposure to inclement weather, or for want of suitable food, or

medicine, or nursing, or by robbers and wild beasts and venomous serpents will not be known till we can learn the contents of the book of remembrance. For one striking fact on this subject see 1 Kings 18: 4, 13. But the *world*, that so persecuted these men, *was not worthy* of them. And so, in his own good time, God took them out of the world, and received them up into glory; while the world was all the worse for their absence from it. This clause settles the question of the piety and salvation of all these persons. If they had been of the world, the world would have loved its own.

39. *And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:*

40. *God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.* On having obtained a good report through faith, see above on v. 2, where we have the same words. This confirms the truth that all these men had saving faith. When it is said they *received not the promise*, the meaning is that they received not the promised blessing of Messiah's reign—they saw not the Lord's Christ—they had no prophet who like John Baptist could point to a living man, and say, Behold the Lamb of God. When Paul says that God had *provided some better thing for us*, he doubtless refers to the full and complete revelation of the way of life made known in the gospel by the coming, teaching, suffering and exaltation of Christ. The ancient church, famous as she was for faith, did not know or teach the way of God *perfectly*, nor had she the glorious liberty enjoyed under the gospel, nor did her rites give ease to the conscience as the worship of the gospel church, enjoying the full doctrine of a gracious salvation by a known Redeemer, is well suited to do. There is probably a close reference to the conscience as in previous parts of this epistle. The atonement, righteousness, and intercession of Christ are essential to the fulness of a believer's joy. The belief that he would come sustained the ancient church. His actual manifestation, teaching, life, death and exaltation are the joy of New Testament saints. Beza: "To us is given the reality of Christ, so that they cannot be blessed without that which takes place in our day." Conybeare and Howson explain their not being made perfect thus: "They could not attain their consummation, including the attainment of the full maturity of their being, and the attainment of the full accomplishment of their faith." Lindsay: "The something better is the fulfilment of the great evangelical promise given to Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob—the actual appearance of Messiah." Compare Luke 10: 23.

## DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL REMARKS.

1. On many great matters arguments and illustrations are endless, and yet each of them may be fair, instructive and conclusive. This is true of the great themes of natural theology, and of the evidences of Christianity, as well as of the power of faith here dwelt upon, v. 32. In such cases one must exercise sound judgment, and not weary men's minds with an overplus. It is well, however, in such cases often to let it be known that our resources have not failed, and that if it were proper we could say much more.

2. The study of history is useful; and the most improving history is that of good men, v. 32. It shows us that God is sovereign in his allotments, that good men can bear a great deal and yet triumph, and that divine grace is all-sufficient. The history of modern saints, so far as correctly written, is often as edifying as that of God's ancient people. If we would be built up in faith and holiness, let us use all the means appropriate to so happy an end. It is often profitable to pay a visit to Daniel in the lion's den, to the three young Hebrews in the furnace, to the saints in all their sorrows.

3. When God is with any man, he is sure to prevail, v. 32. Before the Almighty, all obstacles vanish, all hostile arms are nerveless, all friendly hands are puissant, a pitcher is as good as a battery, and a lantern equal to a regiment. "The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong." Calvin: "It was certainly ridiculous for Gideon with three hundred men to attack a huge host: to brandish pitchers in their hands was a means of exciting alarm worse than idle. Barak was anything but a match for his enemy, and was guided only by the counsel of one woman. Samson, a rustic, and one who had used himself to no other arms than implements of husbandry—what could he do against such haughty conquerors, by whose might the whole people had been subdued? Who would not at first have condemned, as rash, the enterprize of Jephthah, who professes himself the avenger of a people so utterly past hope?" God can do all things. With him is all might. If God be for us, who can be against us?

4. When men would subdue kingdoms, let them first see to it that they have for it a divine warrant as had Joshua, David and others of old, v. 33. Wars of conquest for purposes of rapine, lust of domination and cruelty are greatly to be abhorred. And when those who would be conquerors are sure they have good warrant for their course in the main, let them see to it that they

do not their work cruelly, lest it happen to them as to the Assyrian, whom God sent to scourge a guilty people, and because he did it wantonly and brutally, Jehovah then dealt with him in awful severity. Men may be as criminal in the spirit, with which they do God's will, as in rebellion against his known purposes. God abhors tyranny and cruelty. They may long go unpunished, but vengeance is sure at last.

5. It is a great mercy that our Lord permits and enables his humblest and poorest friends to *work righteousness* in a way of holy living, v. 33. In scripture this is one of the characteristics of a good man, Ps. 15 : 2. "He that doeth righteousness is righteous," 1 John 3 : 7. But the holy life of a good man is not fitful. True piety is a gracious habit. He that wavereth is like a wave of the sea.

6. It is a great matter when from age to age God raises up men of public spirit and great intrepidity, who fearlessly do right and *work justice* for the community at large, delivering the oppressed and driving the minions and myrmidons of cruelty into deserved obscurity, or merited exile, or chastening haughty insolence. What a blessing to his generation was Abraham, when he chastised the four predatory kings, Gen. 14 : 13-16; or Moses, when he boldly confronted two hundred and fifty leading men in the camp of Israel and saved the people from an overthrow, Ex. 16 : 1-36; or Samuel, who so administered public affairs that not even a son of Belial was found hardened enough to impeach his integrity, 1 Sam. 12 : 1-5; or Solomon, who satisfactorily solved the question of the stolen child and many hard questions, so that the people saw that the wisdom of God was in him to do judgment, 1 Kings 3 : 16-28. Such a man is "as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain," 2 Sam. 23 : 4. Lindsay : "A righteous ruler stays the arm of the oppressor, and extends the shield of his protection over the weak and defenceless. What a blessing is it to a community, when those who are at the helm of affairs are regulated in all their procedure by a regard to the will of heaven!" And wo unto thee, O land, when thy prince is a child, of feeble understanding, of vacillating purpose, fond of gifts that blind the eyes, or of one heart with rogues and knaves.

7. It was a great thing in some of the "elders" to obtain from God promises that he would send great spiritual blessings on them and on our race. We have no need to endeavor to obtain such gracious engagements, for we already have in undoubted revelations from heaven covenant pledges the most ample and glorious,

securing to all the sons of God all good things for time and eternity, v. 33.

8. Or if we take the phrase in the sense of obtaining the fulfilment of promises, then no ancient worthy obtained from God any blessing greater than believers now obtain in fulfilment of what the Lord in his mercy has conferred and is conferring on his people in modern times, v. 33. Having a Saviour already come is a blessing greater than the promise of a Saviour to come. Above all previous dispensations, the present is the ministration of the Spirit. All the blessings of justification, adoption, sanctification, hope, joy, peace and consolation were never more richly conferred than they are under the gospel. We have no cause to say that the former times were better than these.

9. No doubt the world is most impressed and affected by things, which address the senses and carnal reason, such as stopping the mouths of lions, v. 33. But if men have spiritual discernment and a right view of things, successful resistance to the old lion, going about and seeking whom he may devour, is not a whit less admirable. One of the glorious victories of Immanuel was over the tempter.

10. If the wicked come and threaten us with fire and fagot, with torches and burning furnaces, we must fight their devices with fire—not the fire of sinful passion, nor with the fire of embittered rage; but with the fire of which our Lord has forewarned us, v. 34. The violence of all the fires that men can kindle may still be quenched. Blessed be God for that. Jesus said: “Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him,” Luke 12: 4, 5. If men will be influenced by terrible things, let them be most influenced by the most terrible things.

11. Wonderfully have good men of old often escaped death by the sword of persecution and of rage, v. 34. But if good men now knew all the hatred of the wicked, and the plots formed for their destruction, they would often see that their lives had been in as much peril as that of Moses from Pharaoh or that of David from Saul. Wonderful preservations have not ceased.

12. Nor was it merely in ancient times that God accomplished wonders by feeble means and *out of weakness made strong* his instruments for good, v. 34. He does the same now. He does it every day. Everything is wise or foolish, strong or weak, stable or transient, just as God makes it. The mountains now seem stable, but time shall be when they will melt like wax. “Promotion

cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the Judge; he putteth down one, and setteth up another," Ps. 75 : 6, 7.

13. Great is the fight of the Christian; great need has he of valor; and mighty are the foes he must put to flight or perish. All this must be done as of old by faith in the power and grace of God, v. 34. Divine supports are all that we can rely upon. It was always so. It is well that it should be so to the end. If the believer at his first trusting in Christ, or the faithful minister when he first began seriously to think of preaching, had foreseen the appalling troubles that were before them, they would, unless specially strengthened, have been utterly dismayed. But we live under a covenant, one of whose provisions is that "as thy days, so shall thy strength be."

14. There have been mighty *armies* gathered to root out and destroy the church, and these hosts were always composed of the *aliens*, foreigners, strangers from the covenants of promise, v. 34. The wicked have one great advantage in their war on the saints; that is, they all feel heart to heart. The Hittite, the Jebusite, the Hivite, the Girkashite, the Moabite, the Ammonite, the Amalekite, the Egyptian, the Arabian, the Assyrian, every Gentile had one mind towards the ancient church. So now the scornful atheist, the malignant infidel, the greedy worldling, the unconverted Presbyterian, the unregenerate Baptist, the carnal Methodist, the unhumiliated Episcopalian, the unbelieving Protestant and the wicked Roman Catholic are all of one mind in opposing and hating God's real people, when the lines are closely drawn, and the question is whether men will be for or against God and holiness. It has always been so. It will be so to the end of the world.

15. God is not done raising the dead children of pious mothers, v. 35. He will yet do millions of times more in this matter than he has ever done hitherto. That creature which God gave you, Christian mother, so wondrous in beauty, in loveliness, in promise, and which so soon faded from your view, shall not always be mouldered dust. No! it shall rise in tenfold beauty. It shall be fashioned like unto the glorious body of the Son of God. It and you shall yet sing and shout, Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory over death and the grave through our Lord Jesus Christ. The same song shall in the fulness of time be sung by all the redeemed.

16. Earth is sometimes very much like hell in the display of malice and cruelty and horrid rage. Think of men planning and devising and executing on the best and noblest people of their

times *tortures*, under the bare recital of which many have swooned away, v. 35. Yet this is earth and not the pit of woe. No doubt there will be awful taunts, and mockeries, and criminations, and recriminations in the world of misery. The scriptures settle that question, Isa. 14: 9-21. But at least some of the arts of persecution and torture as practised in this world seem to be unknown in that land of the shadow of death. There may be other practices there worse even than those of earth. But the extinction of hope, the gnaw of remorse, the direct infliction of the wrath of God and the withdrawal of all comforts will probably constitute the chief elements in the cup of trembling.

17. The world asks too much for its smiles and for exemption from its frowns, when we must *accept deliverance* from its rage and cruelties at the cost of a sacrifice of a good conscience, and of Christian principles clearly settled in the word of God, v. 35. If the three young Hebrews will but deny God and basely fall down before an idol, they shall escape; otherwise they must be cast into the fire.

18. There are two kinds of resurrection. One is a restoration to an animal and earthly life. Such was that of the son of the widow of Sarepta and that of Lazarus. This kind of resurrection is followed by a second temporal death. Then there is a resurrection that is not followed by any more death, v. 35. Then the resurrection, which shall be followed by no more temporal death, is of two kinds; one to everlasting life, and one to shame and everlasting contempt, Dan. 12: 2; one, the resurrection of life, or the better resurrection, and one, the resurrection of damnation, John 5: 29. So that if men die in their sins, the resurrection itself will bring no relief, but, on the contrary, increased anguish and sorrow for ever.

19. Let us never be found among the *mockers* of good men and good things. There is great *cruelty* in such practices, v. 36. And where there is cruelty, sin is not wanting. The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity.

20. For the same reason let us never countenance or participate in the scourgings, bonds and imprisonments of the godly or the innocent, v. 36. There is a sad amount of suffering in the world at all times. But when the people are harsh and vindictive to each other, existence in this world often becomes nearly intolerable, hardly desirable. There are scarcely any sadder expressions in the Bible than these; The sighing of the prisoner; The groaning of the prisoner; The oppression of the poor; Him that hath no helper. I could name a devout lady, whom I never saw, but who daily prays for prisoners.

21. Let us not be much moved by the vile slanders and mockings of men, v. 36. And yet we cannot forget that our Lord himself said in prophecy, "Reproach hath broken my heart," Ps. 69: 20. His tender, gentle, loving spirit was sunk in heaviness by the coarse unfeeling speeches of his contemporaries. There are arrows which go deeper than any that ever pierced the side of the panting hart. There is anguish far keener than is awakened by poverty and death staring a good man in the face. Owen: "There may be sufferings sufficient for the trial of the faith of the church, when the world is restrained from blood and death." And yet if we could by God's help rise above these things, and think of the "Well done" that shall come from the lips of the Redeemer, it would be better than to give way to grief. Calvin: "We shall never want patience, if faith be with us." Duncan: "Whoever puts his trust in God will find the assistance he wants in every circumstance in which he may be placed, in whatever way Satan and the world attack him." For instances of cruel reproach see 1 Kings 22: 24; 2 Kings 2: 23; Amos 7: 10-13. God is the avenger of the vilified, Ps. 37: 3-6.

22. When words will not answer the purposes of the wicked, their rage against God's people will break forth in *stoning*, and *sawing asunder*, and in every method that seems to promise an extinction of the truth and its friends, v. 37. Wise men are not much surprised at any amount of malice manifested by the wicked against God and his truth, nor at any exhibition of diabolical arts displayed by the malignant.

23. Let us never tempt any man, v. 37. To attempt to lead one to betray the cause of truth, or violate right and conscience, is peculiarly the work of fallen angels. Join not thyself to such an assembly.

24. Even if men do their worst, and *slay us with the sword*, or in any way take our lives, let us not forget that it is not wicked to die, v. 37. Yea, it is glorious to die for the truth. The crown of martyrdom is the brightest worn by any of the redeemed in glory, Rev. 14: 3.

25. All these verses, in particular vs. 37, 38, show that there is in the hearts of his people real love to Christ the Son of God. Nor is such an affection or principle fitful nor temporary. It carries men through fire and dungeons. It makes them take joyfully the spoiling of their goods. It enables them for a long time to absent themselves from pleasant homes, and to wander about in the skins of beasts, and to find a bed in the hole of the fox and the lair of the lion. It enables them cheerfully to bear every form of *destitution*, *affliction* and *torment*. Many waters cannot quench this

love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned. See Cant. 8 : 7.

26. In every age there have been, and there still are in this world real virtue and piety, and oftentimes of a high order. There have been and still are men, of whom *the world is not worthy*, v. 38. Calvin: "Since the holy prophets were driven from the face of men to wander among wild beasts, they might seem unworthy to cumber the earth. For how comes it that they find no reception among men? But the apostle retorts this charge, observing on the contrary, that the world was not worthy of them. For whithersoever the servants of God come, they bring with them his blessing, as it were the fragrance of a sweet smelling savor. Thus the house of Potiphar was blessed for Joseph's sake, and Sodom would not have been destroyed, had there been found in it ten righteous men," Gen. 18 : 32 ; 39 : 5. Were it not for the elect this earth would long since have been made desolate for ever, Matt. 24 : 22. "God's esteem of his people is never the less for their outward sufferings and calamities, whatever the world judgeth of them." There is the best reason in the world for mourning the death of good men, for then they cease by their examples and prayers and warnings to be the salt of the earth, Ps. 12 : 1 ; Isa. 57 : 1.

27. At the right time and in the right way, at the best time and in the best way, God will duly honor all his people, and give them *a good report*, v. 39. It was a great thing to be able to work miracles, but our Lord warned his disciples not to make much of that, "but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven," Luke 10 : 20.

28. All, who have good report from God, have it by faith, v. 39. Nor does the scripture suggest any other way for man to attain unto high excellence in the sight of God. "It is not the dignity of the person that gives efficacy unto faith, but it is faith that makes the person accepted."

29. Good men must learn to wait, often for a long time, that they may be fully and gloriously gladdened and rejoiced with the fulfilment of the blessed promises of God's covenant, vs. 39, 40. The best things hoped for by every good man are yet to come into possession. It has been God's plan that each succeeding dispensation of his grace should excel that, which preceded it. Thus the gospel far outshines all, that went before it, 2 Cor. 3 : 9. But heaven excels the gospel church on earth much farther than gospel times surpass all that went before. Owen: "All perfection, all consummation is in Christ alone."

30. The people of God of no one age or country form a complete church without those of other lands and ages, v. 40. Saints are all one in Christ. Those of ancient times exulted, and in heaven do now exult in the triumphs of those of the latter days; and those of the last days are strengthened and mightily encouraged by the faith and constancy of God's people of old, even back as far as Abel.

31. So great a grace is faith, and so essential to the success of the Christian conflict and cause that Paul dwells upon it long and earnestly. There is no power or energy in attempts at prayer, preaching, reformation, or edification but through faith. The whole bearing of this argument on faith is this: If the saints, who lived in dark days, had such faith and were such conquerors, much more should we, who have all the light of the gospel, abound in courage and constancy, even in the saddest ills that can befall us on earth. Duncan: "God grant, that as we have a clearer outward revelation, so there may be more of an inward, powerful revelation among us. Amen." Where much is given, much will be required.

32. This whole chapter, our section in particular, affords good tests for self-examination. Do we follow the faith and example of each of the worthies named, so far as God calls us to like trials and services? Do our deeds evince a living faith? Are we steadfast with God? Let every man compare his life and heart with the teaching of each verse, and see how his case stands. We may also well use this chapter in prayer, beseeching God to give us the faith noticed in each verse, according as we shall be called to trial and duty.

## CHAPTER XII.

### VERSES 1-13.

#### THE WHOLE DOCTRINE OF FAITH APPLIED TO THE CASE OF THE AFFLICTED. THE DUTY OF SUCH.

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.

2 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.

3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:

6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

9 Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected *us*, and we gave *them* reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

10 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.

11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;

13 And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

GOOD doctrine is often capable of application to very many cases of a widely different nature, and so our apostle proceeds.

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 run with patience the race that is set before us.* *Wherefore,* the strongest form of an illative, in the Greek compounded of three particles, equivalent to most surely then, or, by necessary consequence. It occurs no where else but in 1 Thess. 4:8. The Peshito is in some respects better than the authorized version: "Therefore let us also, who have all these witnesses surrounding us like clouds, cast from us all encumbrances, and sin, which is always prepared for us, and let us run with patience the race that is appointed for us." The *also* of this verse calls on us to do as did "the elders." Let us act like them. The whole imagery of this verse and the next is taken from the games, so celebrated in ancient times, that Cicero says to be crowned at them was little less honor than to enjoy a public triumph by decree of the Roman Senate. Paul's mind was so full of Christ and Christianity that he gladly seized on anything that aptly illustrated his ideas. And as the ancient games furnished good illustrations, he often referred to them elsewhere, Rom. 9:16; 1 Cor. 9:24; Gal. 5:7; Phil. 2:16; 2 Tim. 4:8. The Herods had introduced into Judea games in imitation of those of Greece. So that both Hebrews and Gentiles would easily understand any allusion to them. *Compassed about*, the same word rendered compassed with in Heb. 5:2, on which see above. *Cloud* here evidently used tropically for a multitude, a throng. *Witnesses*, some have made a difficulty about this word, contending that in the Greek it never means a spectator. Now it is true that in the New Testament the word never means a mere spectator. But it does mean a witness, who declares what he has seen or heard. This is Bretschneider's first explanation of it. Robinson's second definition is virtually the same. So that "the elders" of the preceding chapter in their day bore witness for God, and are eye-witnesses of the great race run by every Christian. The whole church of God is a spectacle to the world, to angels and to men, 1 Cor. 4:9. When the race was about to commence the racers laid aside every *weight* or impediment, that they might be as light as possible and not be checked in their swiftness. The apostle next states what the impediment was, viz.: *sin*, for the word rendered *and* is often rendered *even*. Some object to this explanation, and contend that weight and sin cannot mean the same thing. But Lindsay

well says: "The weight applies literally to a runner, and sin applies literally to a Christian. Were they homogeneous, there could be no room for doubt that they referred to different kinds of hindrance; but their mixed character, as literal and figurative, renders it probable that one is an explanation of the other." The word rendered *that doth so easily beset* means literally standing well around. It is found here only in the New Testament. Cranmer and Genevan have, that hangeth so fast on; Doway, that surroundeth us. Lindsay: "It surrounds us as ivy does trees." The common version gives the sense. *And let us run*, the figure is that of a race, in which all run with a swift pace. *With patience*, with constancy of endurance, without desponding, or flagging. *The race that is set before us*. We must not run wildly, in any direction we may fancy, but abide by the laws of the race and conform to them. The course was well marked out, and before the race began, the forerunner passed over it, his footsteps marking the way. So our course, in which we must run is prescribed in the gospel, and has been marked out by the example of our blessed Lord. His footsteps show us the way of so running that we may obtain. See Heb. 6:20. To him we are next specially directed:

2. *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.* The method here adopted of explaining the exercise of faith by *looking* is quite ancient. It may have been borrowed from the mode of cure by the brazen serpent, which was erected on a pole in the midst of the camp of Israel, and as many as were bitten of fiery serpents and desired to be cured, were told to direct their eyes towards that pole. But looking is an act often signifying expectation of succor. See Isa. 5:30; 8:17; 17:7, 8; and many other places. In Isa. 45:22 looking evidently describes the act of saving faith in the Redeemer—"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." In our verse the shade of idea specially connected with looking is that of the racer, who casts his eye forward to the goal, and thence draws stimulus to new exertion. But this does not exclude the other ideas suggested by the word. In fact the looking in this verse very clearly embraces the full conception of faith in the Redeemer. *Author*, in Acts 3:15; 5:31 the same word is rendered Prince; in Heb. 2:10 Captain. In the New Testament it is applied to none but Christ. It means a leader or founder. *Finisher*, here only in the New Testament. There is no better translation. It means one who perfects or completes any thing.

*Faith* may mean the grace of faith in our hearts. By his Spirit Christ is the author and finisher of that grace, Gal. 5:22; or *faith* may designate the doctrine of the gospel, the whole system of saving truth, which Christ revealed, of which he is the substance, and which he will finish, perfect, complete by crowning all who heartily accept it. Some suggest a third meaning, that Christ was the leader and perfect specimen of faith. This is true, but is hardly taught here. He is more than a pattern of faith. What was *the joy set before him*? It was the joy of honoring his Father, of seeing ransomed sinners returning to God by the power of his life, death and resurrection, and of seeing him rise to deserved and everlasting joy and glory, for ever, Ps. 16:9-11. He *endured the cross*, that is, bore it with constancy, never shrank from it, meekly saying, "The cup which my Father giveth me to drink, shall I not drink it?" "Having loved his own he loved them to the end." He knew that all his sufferings would soon be followed with unparalleled honor and immortal renown. *Despising the shame*. The shame was that of being denied, mocked, buffeted, scourged and crucified, all of which were designed to cover him and his cause with indelible ignominy. The word rendered despising has but one rendering in the New Testament and is very strong. It is used in both a good and bad sense. Here it expresses our Lord's just and holy contempt of all his sufferings in view of his entering into his glory. On Christ's *session at the right hand of the throne of God*, see above on Heb. 1:3; 8:1. The expression here varies from the others only in reading throne of God instead of majesty on high, or majesty in the heavens. The sense is the same.

3. *For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds*. Peshito: Behold, therefore, how much he suffered from sinners, from them who are adversaries to their own souls, that ye may not be discouraged, nor your souls become remiss. For *consider him*, Wiclif has, Bithenken ye on him; Rheims and Doway, Think diligently upon him. The meaning seems to be, Carefully compare his case with your own, reckon up the whole matter as does an accountant, let your mind dwell on his sufferings. *Endured*, that is, bore with constancy, never fled from duty even though cruelly opposed by gainsayers, or those who *contradicted*, though they were the worst kind of men, vile, shameless *sinners*, a word that occurs often and is uniformly rendered. Here it is certainly emphatic. *Lest ye be wearied*, or sick, or fainting; and *faint*, despond, become exhausted, or slack *in your minds*; Wiclif, in your souls. This is literal. In *considering* the Lord Jesus we must

have regard to the infinite glory of his person, the depth of the humiliation to which he sank both under the cruelty of man, and the wrath of God, and the perfection of the example of meekness, quietness and constancy with which he endured all. Such meditations, rightly conducted, are to the strengthening of our courage, the support of our faith, and the solace of our hearts.

4. *Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.* In Heb. 10: 33, 34 the apostle states how far the Hebrews, to whom he was writing, had gone in suffering for righteousness' sake; but they had not yet *resisted*, stood firm against sin to the extent of shedding their *blood*, laying down their lives, as many of the worthies named in the preceding chapter had done; yea, and as their Lord had done, suffering the shameful and terrible death of the cross. The verse presents another thought suited to make them constant under suffering viz.: that in all their Christian warfare they were *striving*, struggling (the word is drawn from the contests in the games) *against sin*; sin in themselves, which they must overcome and destroy, or it would overcome and destroy them; sin in their persecutors and in the world, to yield to which would be to put out the light of life. Christ had no sin, yet he uncomplainingly endured. We have much sin, and both deserve and need chastisement, and a faithful God will not let us live at ease, but will visit us, and prove us, and try us in many ways, especially by wicked men, which are his hand and his sword, Ps. 17: 3, 13, 14.

5. *And ye have forgotten the exhortation, which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:*

6. *For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.* From the words *My son* in v. 5, to the close of v. 6 is a quotation from Prov. 3: 11, 12, made by our apostle from the Septuagint version of those verses with the small addition of the pronoun *my*. The authorized version of Pr. 3: 11, 12 more closely follows the Hebrew; but the general sentiment is the same in both versions. Words of very similar import, though not so full, are found in the address of Eliphaz the Temanite to the great man of Uz, Job 5: 17. The various renderings of our two verses cast not much light upon them. *Have forgotten* is rather a feeble rendering of the Greek which Robinson explains as meaning have forgotten entirely, have been quite forgetful of. Some read, Have ye forgotten? This is allowable. *Exhortation*, often so rendered, as in Heb. 13: 22. To *despise* the chastening of the Lord is, says Doway, to neglect it. Most versions have *despise*. Peshito, however, has *disregard not*; Stuart, *do not slight*; McLean, *do not*

think lightly of. These last three renderings are very good. For *chastening* Wiclif reads teaching; Rheims and Doway, discipline. The context shows that chastening is the best rendering. To *despise* the rod of the Almighty is one of the errors, of which we are in danger. Nor is it a rare thing for men to fall into this sin. God often complains that men are made no better by his sore judgments. "Why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will revolt more and more," Isa. 1:5. "In that day did the Lord God of hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth: and behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine," Isa. 22:12, 13. Compare Isa. 9:13; Jer. 2:30; 5:3. The opposite error in regard to chastisements we are as carefully warned against: *Nor faint when thou art rebuked of him. Faint*, always so rendered in the New Testament; meaning to be relaxed, or exhausted. The patriarch fell not into this error, when he said: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him," Job 13:15. We do fall into this error when under affliction we indulge in despairing thoughts; when we refuse to stand in our lot, because it is hard; when we fail to resist unworthy thoughts of God, and look upon ourselves as hardly dealt with by Jehovah. The middle course between these two great errors is the safe one. It consists in un murmuring patience, hopeful constancy, refusing to charge God foolishly, justifying God, doing our duty, and leaving the issues of our whole case with the Almighty. To this course the apostle urges us by the consideration that we are sons, and that God is dealing with us, not in wrath as an angry judge, but for our good, as a wise and loving father, for *whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth*. These words have never been better rendered. See also Pr. 3:12, where they are first found. Compare Ps. 94:12; Jas. 1:12; Rev. 3:19. If God was dealing with his people as he will finally deal with his incorrigible foes, well might they pine away, and say all is lost; but as every stroke proceeds from love wisely directed, it is folly and wickedness to behave badly either by desponding, or by hardening our hearts. If there is no wrath in the cup our heavenly Father holds to our lips, we should at once drink it, however bitter its ingredients.

7. *If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?* There are three remarkable texts bearing on this subject, which the reader is requested to examine with care. They are Deut. 3:5; 2 Sam. 7:14; Pr. 13:24. Duncan: "As there is no prudent and wise man who allows his children to go on in a sinful and foolish course without

correcting them for their faults, and endeavoring by the rod to bring them into a right way; so it is not reasonable to think that God will deal otherwise with his children, or that they shall be exempted from correction." None is so wise, so good, so true, so loving as our heavenly Father. Hear him: "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten."

8. *But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.* When he says all are partakers of chastisement, he does not mean all persons, but all sons of God. *Bastards*, here only. The word means spurious. Peshito has strangers. But the authorized version is right.

9. *Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits and live?* Some prefer to put the whole verse in the interrogative form. But the sense is just the same as it stands in our version, which follows the best editions of the Greek text. Our fathers according to the flesh were the mere instruments of our existence; but God is the Creator of our whole natures, the former of our bodies and the Father of our spirits. Compare Num. 16: 22. Shall we, who have been taught filial piety, love, fear and obedience to parents by the rod of correction, not much more learn lessons of piety towards God, humility, love, fear and obedience, when in his care for our souls he sends afflictions upon us? Is not this fair, unanswerable argument? and does it not tenderly appeal to all the purest thoughts and best feelings of the regenerate heart? Some think there is reference to Deut. 21: 18-21. But this is not clear. The argument is of the strongest kind—the argument *a fortiori*, as the logicians call it. *And live*; that is, enjoy a blessed spiritual life under the smiles and favor of God, and wearing his likeness.

10. *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.* The phrase *after their own pleasure* hardly conveys the correct idea to the common reader, and might be better rendered, as it seemed good to them, or as it seemed right to them, literally, according to what seemed to them. The chastisement given by parents may have been sometimes harsh, sometimes too severe, sometimes uncalled for; but in the main it inspired a fear, which was salutary in promoting domestic order. But God never chastens his people excessively, unseasonably or out of passion, but only from love and for their profit—their profit in the most important particular too, viz. that they might partake of his holiness, a sanctity derived from him and assimilating them to him; for his children even here have something of his moral image, and

shall without spot or wrinkle or any such thing be presented before him at last. God is the glorious pattern of holiness: "As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy," 1 Pet. 1: 15, 16. Compare Matt. 5: 48. Anything is good for us, if it secures to us more grace and so assimilates us to God, 2 Cor. 12: 9, 10; and we should never forget that our trials are but for a few days. If we behave aright under them, we shall be happy forever.

11. *Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.* If chastening seemed to be joyous, it would quite fail of its proper effect. It is designed that by the sadness of the countenance the heart shall be made better. Grief, when blessed of God, is a medicine to the soul. As in diseases of the body, so in maladies of the soul the remedies are often far from being in themselves pleasant. It is not until they improve the health that we see their good effects and are glad that they were applied. Sanctified affliction brings forth fruit. That fruit is the fruit of righteousness. And that fruit of righteousness is peaceable. It is not tumultuous and turbulent. It is quiet and patient. It makes the soul behave and quiet itself, as a child that is weaned of his mother. It keeps silence and bears its sorrow, as the dove quietly lays her wing over the arrow that pierced her. The word rendered *them which are exercised* is such as to show that the apostle still has before his mind the games, or the discipline preceding the public contests in gymnastic exercises.

12. *Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees.* Peshito: Wherefore, strengthen ye your relaxed hands, and your tottering knees. The Doway agrees with the authorized version. Stuart: Wherefore, "strengthen the weak hands and the feeble knees." Macknight's paraphrase is, "Wherefore, bring into the posture of action your arms which hang down, and your weakened knees, that is, vigorously exert your whole faculties in the conflict with affliction." The text is a quotation from Isa. 35: 3: "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees." At least there is an evident allusion to that place. The prophet there gives us what we may take almost as an interpretation, for his next words are, "Say ye to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not," Isa. 35: 4: This is the meaning of our verse. Give not up to heartlessness, be not despondent, 'rally your languid spirits,' arouse all your energies, manfully contend to the last, and you shall yet win the prize.

13. *And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.* Peshito: And make straight paths for your feet, that the limb which is lame may not be wrenched, but may be healed. Some quite properly suggest that the words, 'make straight paths for your feet,' are a quotation from Prov. 4:26; as they doubtless are. The Greek is almost literal from the Septuagint. *Straight*, level, even, the opposite of rough and crooked. Compare Isa. 57:14. *Paths*, ways, meaning lines of conduct, modes of action. *Lame*, crippled, halt, evidently referring to an injured or defective joint or limb. *Turned out of the way*, or turned aside in the race and so cease to run for the prize. Robinson thinks there is no authority for rendering the word wrenched or dislocated. *But let it rather be healed*, or cured, so that you shall be able to run swiftly and certainly in the right ways of God. Some think the reference is also to the power of a bad example in misleading a *lame* or weak brother. If so, the exhortation is very pertinent and has increased power.

#### DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL REMARKS.

1. Let religious teachers, if possible, make plain to the apprehension of men the great truths of scripture, and employ example after example, and illustration after illustration, as Paul does in this and the preceding chapters. His last example is the best of all—Christ.

2. A proper religious profession is not secret, but ought to be open, in the eyes of men, v. 1. The racers did not win their crowns by seeking out some lonely dell, and there trying their strength and agility, but they ran in the presence of millions. Our conduct as professors of Christ's religion is known, and by divine appointment ought to be known to others. No man lighteth a candle and putteth it under a bushel, but setteth it on a candlestick, that it may give light to all that are in the room.

3. We ought to be greatly affected by the example, the faith and the testimony of the worthies of old, v. 1. Scott: "While prophets, apostles, martyrs and ancient believers sing the praises of our redeeming God; they unitedly testify to us his faithfulness to his promises, and the inestimable preciousness of his salvation; and they exhort us 'to lay aside every weight, and to run with patience the race set before us.'" All is well with them now. Very few things more mightily strengthen faith, encourage hope and inspire boldness than correct accounts of martyrs, confessors and sufferers for the truth. How happily all their sufferings have ended we learn from Scripture: "What are these which are arrayed in white

robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat." See Rev. 7: 10-17. Owen: "In all examples set before us in Scripture, we are diligently to consider our own concern in them, and what we are instructed by them."

4. He who expects to gain heaven by a leisurely sauntering gait will not win the prize, v. 1. The word of God never intimates that it is an easy thing to win the crown, but calls upon us to put forth our best exertions. 1 Cor. 9: 25-27; Eph. 4: 22-25; 1 Pet. 2: 1, 2. We are not called indeed to any voluntary humility, to uncommanded austerities, but we are called to abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, 1 Pet. 2: 11.

5. There is as much need of patience as of repentance, of perseverance as of starting in the Christian course, v. 1. Very few of those who flee to Christ are at once admitted into Paradise. Macknight: "The victors at the morning games did not receive their rewards till the evening, after they had witnessed the exertions of succeeding combatants." Parry: "A race implies continued, yea, increasing exertion. It is not enough to begin well, nor yet to go on well for a time, unless we endure to the end. Patient perseverance is indispensable." Rieger: "Faith does not sleep, but watches and runs; yet neither does it hasten; but it waits in patience, and thus the prescribed conflict is accomplished, extremes on both sides avoided, and the way of truth preserved." Hahn: "Presumption and timid unbelief are the two capital faults against which patience alone can aid by preserving us in true moderation, and in the middle path."

6. It is not self-invented ways that will save us, but we must run the race *set before us*, v. 1. Lindsay: "The runner was obliged to pursue a definite course. If he overleaped certain barriers, he excluded himself from all hope of the prize." The athletes were not crowned unless they strove lawfully; neither shall we be held for conquerors except we conform to the precepts and examples of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Forerunner.

7. Let the Christian ever keep the eye of his faith on Jesus, v. 2. "Our minds cannot be occupied with two things at the same time; therefore, if our thoughts are as continually occupied as they ought to be with Jesus Christ, we have at once a remedy against the burden of the world, and the prevalence of sin. Neither can

sin retain its power while we are looking unto him whom our sins have pierced and mourn . . . Nothing can be more necessary for the comfort of an anxious mind, than the habit of turning to Christ upon all occasions." Owen: "The foundation of our stability in the faith, and profession of the gospel in times of trial and suffering, is a constant looking unto Christ, with expectation of aid and assistance." Von Zetzschwitz: "Looking to Jesus is our comfort and victory in all conflicts and sufferings." Gouge: "Ability to run our Christian race is from Jesus." Clarke: "The exhortation implies—1. That they should place all their hope and confidence in Christ, as their sole Helper in this race of faith. 2. That they should consider him their leader in this contest, and imitate his example."

8. There is great significancy in the rich variety of names and titles given to our blessed Lord. Here he is called the Author, Prince or Captain, and Finisher of salvation, v. 2. Elsewhere he is called the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, the Son of God and the Son of Man, the everlasting Father and the Holy Child Jesus. Many a Bible student has found himself well-employed in collating the names and titles of our Lord. Each of them is significant, and a fit ground of consolation to the pious. He is a Prophet, Priest and Pattern to all the saints. There is none like him, there is none beside him. He alone is worthy to receive the confidence of our faith. Glorious Redeemer! When we see thee as thou art, we will praise thee as we ought. Especially in times of suffering must our eyes be steadfastly to him. "Behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. . . To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne," Rev. 2: 10; 3: 21.

9. It is for a thanksgiving that Christ's love to his people and his delight in them is very ancient, v. 2. Hanging on the cross he beheld them gathering from the four winds of heaven to crown him with their immortal songs, and the goodly vision sustained him in that awful moment. And no marvel, for from the ages of eternity his pleasure had been in them, Prov. 8: 24-31; Jer. 31: 3. Nothing has a higher antiquity than the love of Christ to his chosen.

10. As Christ has suffered and entered into his glory, in due time his people shall follow him, v. 2. After the cross came the crown, after shame, came honor, after the greatest humiliation, came the most eminent glory.

11. A right sense of heavenly glory would enable us easily to despise all sufferings and reproaches for Christ's sake. We cannot overestimate eternal glory. When our conceptions of it are the highest, our disregard of temporal sufferings will be the most perfect. Owen: "The reward that is proposed at the end of this race is every way worthy of all the pains, diligence and patience, that are to be taken and exercised in the attainment of it."

12. Would you rise? Sink yourself. Would you be exalted? Humble yourself. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name," etc., etc., Eph. 2: 5-11.

13. Let us dwell much on the person, nature, life, character, miracles, parables, example, teachings and sufferings of our blessed Lord Jesus, v. 3. In such studies there is always refreshment. He never murmured, he never repined, he withheld not his face from spitting, he died the most ignominious death. If he bore all the cruelty of man and the wrath of God, shall we pull away the shoulder, or withhold the cheek? Let it never be. Owen somewhere says, "Our sufferings deserve not to be named on the same day on which we speak of the sufferings of our Lord," and on our verse he says, "The constant consideration of Christ in his sufferings is the best means to keep up faith unto its due exercise in all times of trial." If we will but compare his trials with those to which we are called, we shall be ashamed to make much ado about the heaviest of them.

14. In the meantime, let us be duly thankful for exemption from the trials of a bloody persecution, v. 4. No man knows what he will do till he is tried. "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but 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. 10: 12, 13.

15. Owen: "Though the world cannot, or will not, yet Christians can distinguish between resisting the authority of men, whereof they are unjustly accused; and the resistance of sin, under a pretence of that authority, by refusing a compliance with it."

16. One of the sad effects of possessing a sinful nature is that

we are very apt to forget things of the greatest importance to our well-being, v. 5. In the Old Testament forgetfulness of God often seems to be the summing up of a wicked life. There the wicked are addressed as those "*that forget God.*" So also we often forget the most necessary exhortations, warnings and examples. "We must be guided by Satan, the father of lies, if we say that God is angry, and has ceased to love us, because he afflicts us; the very contrary being taught us in scripture; 'Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth.'" Let us never forget the encouragement given us in such truth.

17. If even Paul, inspired by God, and full of apostolic authority, quoted Solomon as we see in vs. 5, 6; surely it is proper for the strongest reasoners to support all their doctrines and teachings by apt citations from the word of God. In particular, does the Book of Proverbs, "give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion." It is a great thing "to understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise and their dark sayings." The first intellects in the history of man have found it well to make profound obeisance at the oracles of God.

18. Our section largely introduces to us the subject of affliction. To pious people this matter possesses special interest. They and all their friends are liable to suffer. For some kinds of grief custom allows us to hang out signals of distress, and to call on friends for lively sympathy. But many sorrows must be borne in silence and retirement. The dove lays her wing over the arrow that pierced her. The wounded hart seeks the silent dell there to die, and the child of sorrow often goes to his chamber to weep alone. The widow in her weeds may be truly sad, but her neighbor without a yard of black crape may be suffering ten times more. It is often a relief when we can say: "Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me," Job. 19: 21. But often we are compelled like the sad prophet to "weep in secret places," Jer. 13: 17.

Sometimes tears come to the relief of the sorrowing. Then again their moisture is turned into the drougth of summer. Dry sorrow drinks up their blood and spirits. Some afflictions are brief; others are lasting. Sadness sends some to their closets; others, to their graves. It covers some with wrinkles; others, with the clods of the valley. "Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all."

Very good men have had punishments sent on them for particular sins. What sufferings came on Jacob for supplanting his brother? Leah is deceitfully given him for Rachel. And all his

worldly goods are imperiled, yea and his life also by Esau. The rebellion of Absalom was a punishment on David for a particular sin, 2 Sam. 12:9-12. The father of John the Baptist, though he and his wife habitually walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless, was yet by the judgment of God made dumb for nearly a year as a punishment for his unbelief, Luke 1:20. So that all temporal punishments are not confined to the reprobate. Yet we should guard against censoriousness and uncharitableness, when we see others suffering. It is seldom proper for us to say that a given calamity befalling one of our neighbors is a punishment for a particular sin. This was the great error of Job's friends. Our Saviour warned us against this offence when he spoke of the fall of the tower in Siloam, etc., Luke 13:1-5.

We are less apt to err in regarding particular afflictions sent on ourselves as punishments for particular transgressions. Thus even a heathen said: "As I have done, so God hath requited me," Jud. 1:6. The pious Jews confessed that the Babylonish captivity was in punishment for their great sins, Ezra 9:13. To Israel God said: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities," Amos 3:2. Yet even pious men may misinterpret God's dealings with them, and without a cause write bitter things against themselves. We may reverently pray, "Shew me wherefore thou contendest with me;" but we may not always decide that our afflictions are judgments sent on us for particular sins.

Some afflictions are exemplary. God often makes his people a spectacle to angels and to men. He commonly keeps the path to heaven moist with tears, and often with the blood of his saints. To this end in part the worthies of old suffered. "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience." Jas. 5:10. Rich treasures have been laid up for the church in the illustrious heroism of her suffering members. In the days of legal persecution the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church. Moham- medanism triumphed by the blood of its foes; Christianity, by the blood of its friends. To this day the history of the martyrs ministers strength to the faith and fortitude of God's suffering people. The Lord's people are never sent a warfare at their own charges. Perhaps they are never more sustained than when outward things look dark. So thought Paul: "As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ." 2 Cor. 1:5. Nor could the people of God from age to age do well without such examples. They stir them up to do

and suffer all God's will. To the plain and obscure they often give vast opportunities for usefulness. To a heathen tyrant, who was posing her with hard questions, a poor woman said: "I cannot dispute for Christ, but I can burn for him." I have seen a whole community turn aside to admire the grace of God in one of his people, rustic in manners, poor in worldly goods, and weak in intellect, yet remarkable for severity of sufferings, and patience of spirit.

Some afflictions are designed to prevent worse evils. Sin is more to be dreaded than any earthly sorrow. God often makes men sick to teach them their weakness. Many things are permitted deeply to mortify us, that pride may not be our ruin. The cruel deceit of some gay worldling drives us from the giddy circle, which jeopard's our salvation. In this life good men are often sorely chastened that they may not be condemned with the world. 1 Cor. 2: 22. When God undertakes a man's salvation, he will not permit any of his sins to have dominion over him. To do this, he sees best to spoil their pleasant things, write "vanity of vanities" on the glories of earth, and bring down their hearts with labor and sorrow. Low as are the attainments of God's people, they would have been far less but for divine chastenings.

God's people are also afflicted in the way of discipline. "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law." It is well for the Lord to correct us, if we may thereby be made partakers of his holiness. In his last sickness Dr. Archibald Alexander said: "My pains are intended for my purification." The good husbandman prunes every fruitful vine that he may make it more productive. Christ often calls the languishing graces of his people into lively exercise by methods as strange as they are salutary. We wish to walk by sight, God would have us to walk by faith. Like Job in distress we cry out, "Oh that I knew where I might find him. Behold I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him; on the left hand where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him," Job 23: 8, 9. Yet one thus tried may soon be able to say: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him." All the graces of the Spirit, not excepting joy, thrive best when the waters of affliction somewhat moisten their roots. Let us not object to the treatment God gave to the prophets, martyrs and confessors, who reached the kingdom of heaven through great tribulation. Yea the Captain of our salvation himself was made perfect through sufferings.

In all our afflictions, whatever their design, let us in patience possess our souls. "He, who composes his own mind, is greater

than he, who composes a book." "He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city." "It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord. He sitteth alone, and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him. He putteth his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope." To be as a weaned child is a great attainment. To enable us to behave ourselves wisely and quietly under trials the Lord has told us many things.

*A.* For all our sorrows there is a necessity. "Now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trying of your faith, being more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honor, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." 1 Pet. 1 : 6. "God will not thrust his children into danger, except when necessary for his glory and their trial." For himself Paul desired that he might "know Christ, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." Phil. 3 : 10. When God judges a given course necessary for us, that is an end of controversy. Divine wisdom commits no mistakes. Divine love is never unkind. To divine power nothing is invincible. We ought greatly to desire salvation, cost what it may. If suffering is needful, let us glory in tribulation.

*B.* God will not permit afflictions to destroy his people. "He will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger forever. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust," Ps. 103 : 9, 14. Indeed God has graciously said: "I will not contend forever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made," Isa. 57 : 16. Again, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee: and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." Is not that enough? Is it any great thing to be confident in God, when he speaks thus?

*C.* Nor is this all. "Providence commonly so orders it that God's people shall not want a quiet retreat from the storm." Or if the blast of the terrible ones is felt, there shall be final deliverance. So God always arranges it. If Stephen is stoned, the Lord Jesus will receive his spirit. If the righteous are taken away, it is from the evil to come. Mordecai had a right to expect enlargement and deliverance. Often we cannot tell when or how God will rescue His chosen, but the thing is sure. They shall all yet sing the song of victory over every foe, the song of Miriam, "The Lord hath triumphed gloriously," "the song of Moses and the Lamb."

*D.* Moreover good shall come out of all evil, joy out of all sorrow, gain out of all losses, in the case of all the godly. This has been the hope of the saints of all ages. Absalom's rebellion has broken out. The great prime minister was in the rebellion. The rebels were exulting. Shimei with taunts pursued his retreating monarch. So insulting was his language that one of David's attendants proposes to turn aside and slay him. But David said, no. "Let him alone and let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him. It may be that the Lord will look on mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for this cursing this day," 2 Sam. 16: 11, 12. Look too at the man of Uz. "Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy," Jas. 5: 11. "God suffers a Christian to be wronged, that he may exercise his patience, and commands a Christian to forgive the wrong, that he may exercise his charity, so that a wrong done him may do him a double service." Long ago David said: "It is good for me that I have been afflicted." And Paul said: "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

*E.* It is the ordinary plan of God to set over one thing against another, and so to keep his people in the right way. To Paul he gives an abundance of revelations; but, lest he should be exalted above measure, he also gives him that thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him. He makes the mother of our Lord the most highly favored among women, yet her fame and life can be saved by miracle alone. He sends us the summer of prosperity, when ill weeds grow rank. He then sends us the winter of adversity, when these weeds are destroyed. "What! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?"

*F.* When the springs of earthly comfort go dry, then we may betake ourselves to the Lord alone. "Make use of affliction, as a great advantage for your purest and unmixed delight in God. The servants of Christ have usually never so much joy in the Holy Ghost as in their greatest sufferings, especially if they be for his sake. The soul never retires so readily and delightfully to God as when it has no one else that will receive it. God comforts us most when he has made us suffer so that none else can or will relieve us. When all friends have forsaken us save only one, that one is sweeter to us than ever." God takes away our idols, that there may be room for himself.

*G.* Affliction commonly winnows the church. It shows the

difference between chaff and wheat. It declares who is on the Lord's side. It makes plain the difference between true converts, and self-deceivers. The stony ground hearers may look well for a while, but when affliction or persecution cometh for the word's sake, immediately they are offended. Surely there is much vain profession of religion. "There is a religion too sincere for hypocrisy, but too transient to be profitable, too superficial to reach the heart, too unproductive to proceed from it. It has discernment enough to distinguish sin, but not firmness enough to oppose it; compunction sufficient to soften the heart, but not vigor enough to reform it. It laments sin, but does not forsake it. It has everything of devotion except the stability, and gives everything to religion except the heart." Such people commonly shew that affliction is of no use to them. It converts them into complainers or murmurers; but it makes no decided improvement on their tempers.

*H.* Christ is eminently with his afflicted ones. He was in the burning fiery furnace with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. He always goes with his saints into captivity and into dungeons. If he is with us we have a young heaven on earth. Whatever directs our eyes to Christ, and brings us into close fellowship with him is good for us. Faith in him is his own appointed cure for all heart troubles, John 14:1. "Consider him, who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." Look to him. Follow him. Rely on him. His presence can make any trial a blessing.

*I.* In the early ages of the church and ever since there have been sayings of the most animating nature respecting the sufferings of God's people. There is one, which some think was set to music and sung in the primitive church. "For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: if we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself;" 2 Tim. 2:11-13. God has promised all we need. If divine grace has sustained others, it can sustain us. Nothing is too hard for God.

*J.* If we are true Christians our afflictions will soon all be over, and then comes heaven. In his moral estimates Paul was infallibly led to correct results, and he says: "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us," Rom. 8:18. The rest above will be sweet to all the sorrowing children of God. After the war how blessed will be the peace. Into that blessed home above turmoil and disaster, temptation and sighing cannot come.

If these things are so, bare submission on our part is not enough. We should heartily acquiesce in all God does. If God takes one friend, let us acknowledge his right to remove all. If he deprive us of health, let us own his claim to life itself. That is a pleasing story told of a poor widow, who had just buried her only child, a dear daughter. Some one called to ask her mite to the cause of Christ. She received him kindly, heard his statement of the matter, and handed him a sum so large that he seemed unwilling to receive it. But she insisted that he must take it all, saying: "I laid it up as a portion for my little daughter, and I am determined that He, who has my daughter, shall have her portion also." Here is the right spirit. That woman gained by all her trials. Perhaps it was good old Philip Henry, who said: "When the flail of affliction is upon me, let me not be the chaff that flies in thy face, but let me be the corn that lies at thy feet."

And how blessed is the privilege of prayer. This is true at all times. In seasons of distress how could we live without access to God? It may be that the afflicted Christian "can pray but little, but that little will be fervent. He can articulate, perhaps, not at all, but his prayer is addressed to one who sees the heart; who can interpret its language; who requires not words but affections. A pang endured without a murmur, or only such an involuntary groan as nature extorts, and faith regrets, is itself a prayer." We have a striking instance of an answer to silent prayer, in the case of Moses. In a situation of extreme distress, when he had uttered not a word, "The LORD said unto him, I have heard thy crying." Both nature and scripture teach us to cry for help in distress. "Is any among you afflicted, let him pray," Jas. 5: 13. "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me," Ps. 50: 15.

If you would have a happy issue out of all your troubles, beware of wrong views and feelings from the first. If you are confounded, do not charge God foolishly. When David could not say any thing to God's glory, he was silent to his praise. "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it," Ps. 39: 9. If God lets loose the passions of evil men towards you, beware of malevolence. Remember that the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Remember who hath said: Vengeance is mine, I will repay. The frailties of others may teach you many a good lesson. "If all men were perfect, what should we have to suffer of our neighbor for God? If thou canst not make *thyself* such an one as thou wouldst, how canst thou expect to have another in all things to thy liking?"

However great your sufferings may be, aim to glorify God.

Yea, whether you eat or drink, are sick or well, in joy or in sorrow, strive to honor him, who deserves all praise and confidence and service. I once stood by the open grave of a lovely child, whose father, a minister of the gospel, was leaning on my arm. The coffin had been lowered, and was about to be covered. For a moment there was a pause. I asked him to say a word to the people. He seemed glad of the opportunity, though his words were few. "In my prosperity I have hitherto told you that God was good. Now I am sadly bereaved, but my testimony still is that God is good. Yes, he doeth all things well." Aristotle tells us of a bird that lives among thorns, yet its notes were exquisite. Let me be like that bird. The jail at Philippi was in the esteem of Paul and Silas a grand place to pray and sing praises to God. "I will bless the Lord at all times."

But our section calls our special attention to these truths: First, God is our Father; and we are his children in Christ Jesus, v. 5. He smites us in kindness. "Divine love and chastening are inseparable." "God had one Son in this world without sin, but never a son on earth without affliction." Secondly, The way of the Christian at all times, particularly in seasons of affliction, is strait and difficult, v. 5. It is like the way by which Jonathan and his armor-bearer ascended to the garrison of the Philistines. There is a sharp rock on one side, and there is a sharp rock on the other side. We must neither *despise* God's chastening, nor *faint* under it. If we either pine away or become hardened under chastisement, we not only lose the profit thereof, but the comfort also. We ought to regard it as needful, as a token of love, but we lose all this when we proudly refuse to humble ourselves, or repiningly sink down into despondency. We should be afraid to harden ourselves against God. None ever did it and prospered. And we should blush to melt away under trials that are common to good men. "If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? And if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?" Jer. 12:5. Thirdly, The scripture does not deny that *chastening* and *rebuke* and *scourging* are painful, even terrible to flesh and blood, vs. 5-11. The very terms employed indicate the severity of the trial. "When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth," Ps. 39:11. Well is it for us that God remembers that we are dust; else our spirits should fail before him. Compare Ps. 6:1; 38:1. "The chastening of the Lord must be felt to be painful in order to do us good. But when religious people fall into trouble,

their friends sometimes are so unreasonable as to expect to see them not only thankful, but happy. Now where there is really an anxious desire to glorify God in the time of trial, this is adding the bitterest grief, than can be imagined, to those who are already in distress." It is not wicked to be almost heart-broken. Jesus himself wept, and we are commanded to weep with those that weep. Fourthly, To believers all chastisement is the fruit of love, vs. 5, 6, 7, 10. All is sent by the Lord, Job 5 : 6, 7, 17 ; Jer. 31 : 18-20. Fifthly, It is a wonder that some men do not fear lest they should be getting all their good things in this life. Uninterrupted prosperity is proof of want of sonship with God, v. 8. Compare Luke 16 : 25. "The want of chastisement argues the absence of fatherly love." Sixthly, There is a *life* wondrously promoted by the rod of the Almighty, v. 9. Duncan : "There is nothing more pernicious to our souls than to refuse to be in subjection to God. His children are the only happy persons, they only have life, and a right to eternal life." Blessed be his name, who turns the bitter into sweet, and out of evil brings good. Seventhly, Let analogy and experience teach us, vs. 9, 10. Who has not felt the salutary influence of restraint and correction from a parent, a teacher or a guardian? And as none of our trials at the hand of God are the fruit of caprice, mistake or passion, surely we should rather seek to have them sanctified to us than to have them taken away from us. Eighthly, Where is the Christian who could afford to have stricken from the roll of his blessings those which have come to him in the form of affliction? vs. 10, 11. The old saints out of the spoils won in battles dedicated many things to maintain the house of the Lord. Compare Ps. 119 : 67, 71, 75. The Jews have a saying, Wo to the man that goeth out of the world without tribulations. Richard Cecil, when at college, was sorely tried with the scorn and reproach of some profane and profligate young men. Thus exercised, he was one day walking in the garden, when he observed a fine pomegranate tree, cut almost through the stem, near the root. On asking the gardener the reason of this, he said, "This tree used to shoot so strong that it bore nothing but leaves and flowers. I was therefore obliged to cut it in this manner; and when it was almost cut through then it began to bear plenty of fruit." Therefore, Ninthly, O Christian hero, be of good courage and God will strengthen your heart, v. 12. Owen : "When we begin to be heartless, desponding, and weary of our sufferings, it is a dangerous disposition of mind, tending towards a defection from the gospel. Usually God gives to believers the most evident pledges of their adoption, when they are in their sufferings, and under their afflictions."

19. Be very careful about your walk and conversation, all ye who profess to love Christ, v. 13. O let us cast away all slavish fear of the cross, and be careful for nothing, but a holy life. Hardy: "Take the straight road of piety and virtue, removing all impediments in its course." Owen: "Grace in afflictions will at length prevail, quietly to compose the mind under the storm raised by them. It is our duty not only to be found in the ways of God in general, but to take care that we walk carefully, circumspectly, uprightly and diligently in them."

20. We should know our own *lameness*, v. 13. Our wisdom is to cry, Not as I will, but as thou wilt. Our strength is weakness, our wisdom is folly, our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, we have nothing whereof to boast before God. The humblest man is the safest; yea, the weakest man is the strongest.

## CHAPTER XII.

VERSES 14-29.

A VARIETY OF EXHORTATIONS FOUNDED ON THE  
GENERAL DOCTRINE OF THE EPISTLE, AND  
SUGGESTED BY HEBREW HISTORY. GOD IS A  
CONSUMING FIRE.

14 Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord :

15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God ; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble *you*, and thereby many be defiled ;

16 Lest there *be* any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.

17 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.

18 For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest,

19 And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words ; which *voice* they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more :

20 (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart :

21 And so terrible was the sight, *that* Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake :)

22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

23 To the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than *that of* Abel.

25 See that ye refuse not him that speaketh : 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 :

26 Whose voice then shook the earth : but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.

27 And this *word*, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

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 :

29 For our God *is* a consuming fire.

**H**AVING applied the great doctrine of faith to the subject of afflictions, the apostle proceeds to call attention to a number of duties not before noticed, and to some weighty considerations drawn from the nature and privileges of the gospel.

14. *Follow peace with all men, and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.* The verb rendered follow is the same so rendered in 1 Cor. 14 : 1 ; 1 Thess. 5 : 15 ; 1 Tim. 6 : 11 ; 2 Tim. 2 : 22. In Phil. 3 : 14 it is rendered press toward. It occurs also in Rom. 14 : 19. Let us follow after the things which make for peace, etc. Also in 1 Pet. 3 : 11, Let him seek peace, and *ensue* [pursue] it. In a bad sense it is often rendered persecute. Wiclif reads, Sue ye pees with alle men ; Tyndale, Embrace peace with all men ; but the authorized version is better. *Peace with men.* The Bible says much of peace. The highest kind of peace is peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. The next best peace is peace of conscience obtained by living faith in the Son of God. The next best peace is peace with our neighbors. This is an inestimable blessing in all its parts. He, who seeks to promote it, is a happy man, Matt. 5 : 9. He, who possesses it, has one of the greatest temporal mercies, 1 Tim. 2 : 2, 3. The apostle probably has special reference to peace among Christians. We must also follow *holiness*. Peace and holiness are well united. They promote each other. True holiness in man is the rectitude of his moral nature. It is conformity to the will of God. It is likeness to God. It is real sanctity. The word here rendered holiness is found ten times in the New Testament, and is several times rendered sanctification. The general idea conveyed by it is that of inward moral purity, especially that which is produced by the Holy Spirit, 2 Thess. 2 : 13 ; 1 Pet. 1 : 2. The cognates of the word rendered holiness occur very often. Holiness is necessary to happiness. It is an essential part of salvation. Without it no man can be truly blessed, for without it no man *can see the Lord*. To see God is to enjoy God, to see the salvation of God is to enjoy that salvation, and to see life is to enjoy life. Compare Matt 5 : 8 ;

Luke 3:6; John 3:36. So to see the Lord is to behold his face in peace, receive his smile and enjoy his favor and his fellowship.

15. *Looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.* Peshito: And be careful, lest any be found among you destitute of the grace of God; or lest some root of bitterness shoot forth germs, and trouble you. The first word signifies *taking oversight*, seeing to it, watching carefully. The authorized version gives the general sense. *Fail of*; in the margin *fall from*; in Rom. 3:23; Heb. 4:1 the same word is rendered *come short of*. It is often rendered want, lack, come behind, be destitute. Any of these renderings give the sense here. By the *grace of God* some understand the gospel itself as in 2 Cor. 6:1; some the doctrine of gratuitous salvation, and some the reward of grace. Either of these views is weighty. But is it not best to understand the phrase in its largest sense, the favor of God? McLean: "It appears to me that the apostle has still the metaphor of a race in his view, and that the word here used signifies to *fall behind* in that race like those who are tired and faint; or to *come short* of the prize held out to the victor at the end of the race." The apostle seems to change his form of speech when he warns them also to be careful *lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you*. Bitterness, the word is uniformly rendered. It is found in three other places in the New Testament, Acts 8:23; Rom. 3:14; Eph. 4:31. From the days of Moses bitterness seems to have been an emblem of the nature and fruits of sin acted out by wicked men: "Their vine is the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter: their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps," Deut. 32:32, 33. Bitterness also refers very much to those emotions of men, which are of a malevolent character; and so we read of bitter envying and strife, Jas. 3:14. The meaning of the phrase here employed is that the Hebrews must take heed lest sin in general, or sin of a nature directly suited to disturb the peace of the churches, should spring up or shoot forth. Slade thinks that by root of bitterness we are to understand "any gross sin." Human nature is corrupt. Sin is indigenous to the human heart. The whole sense of the clause is well expressed in Deut. 29:18, from which the apostle seems to have borrowed his language: "Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away from the Lord our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be a root that beareth gall and wormwood." The *trouble* produced in persons, families and churches by sin is beyond computation. The reason is given in the last clause—sin is of a *defiling*

nature. The leprosy is not so bad. It but afflicts and kills the body. But sin corrupts and destroys both soul and body for time and eternity. Nor can its mischief be arrested but by all-sufficient grace. The sooner it is checked, rooted out or destroyed the better. They must also take heed.

16. *Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.* In this verse the apostle specifies two kinds of sin very *troublesome* and *defiling*. The first is the violation of the seventh commandment. No sin is more mischievous, and none more apt to break out and injure the cause of piety, where the spirit of vital godliness prevails not, and the duties of religion are dully performed. It is a sin utterly contrary to the Christian character and profession. 1 Cor. 6: 15. The sin, against which the apostle here gives warning, is not merely fornication technically so called, but also adultery, incest and all forms of sin leading to a violation of the seventh precept of the decalogue. Some spiritualize the word fornicator, and regard Paul as warning us against spiritual whoredom, which is a great sin. See Ezek. 16 and 23 chapters, Hos. 1, 2 and 3 chapters and Jas. 4: 4. The other kind of sin, against which we are here warned, is profaneness, or the treating of sacred things with contempt or irreverence. For *profane person* Peshito reads a heedless one; Wiclif, unholy; Tyndale, Cranmer, and Geneva, unclean person; but Rheims, Doway, Craik and Stuart agree with the common version, which uniformly and correctly renders the word as here. In the family of Abraham the birthright was guarded as something sacred, Ex. 22: 29. Now "Esau despised his birthright," Gen. 25: 34. In so acting he manifested profaneness. The inducement to do so was the temporary gratification of his appetite for food. He sold his birthright *for one morsel*; Peshito and Doway, one mess; Tyndale, one breakfast; Cranmer, one mease; Geneva, one portion; Rheims, one dish; Slade, one meal. The whole of the blessings of the birthright went for one meal of food, for such is the meaning of the word meat here and often. There is no form of sin, that more certainly hardens the heart than general irreverence for things sacred.

17. *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.* The historic narrative here referred to is found in Gen. 27: 30-40. Our verse has often perplexed and sometimes distressed anxious souls. They have understood it as asserting that Esau had a sincere desire to repent of his own wickedness, but could not. But this is not the apostle's meaning. He says that Esau found no place of repentance in Isaac, that is, no way of changing his father Isaac's mind,

touching the blessing he had given to Jacob, the chief blessing in the family of promise. The passage does indeed teach that his birthright was gone for ever; and so the apostle warns us not to trifle with opportunities and privileges, which, if we lightly esteem them, will soon be gone beyond the possibility of recovery. Esau despised God, and he was lightly esteemed.

18. *For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest.* The scenes at mount Sinai were the grandest and the most terrible ever witnessed by mortal vision. They will be surpassed only by the scenes of the last day. In this verse Sinai is spoken of as the mount that might be touched, whereas in v. 20 it is said that even a beast might not touch it. In v. 18 the meaning is that the mountain was material, and so that it was possible to touch it; but in v. 20 the meaning is that while Moses was receiving the law and God was displaying his terrors there, it was not lawful to touch the mountain, because it was forbidden. Now in the gospel state we are not come to an earthly mountain as did the ancient church. Christians are not under the Sinaitic covenant. Nor does the mountain where we worship burn with fire, as did that of old, for "mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly," Ex. 19: 18. "And the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds and thick darkness," Deut. 4: 11. There was also *a tempest*. "There were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount," Ex. 19: 16. "And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off," Ex. 20: 18.

19. *And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more.* "The voice of the trumpet was exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled," Ex. 19: 16. "The voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder," Ex. 19: 19. It was the trump of God, the same that shall call the nations to the bar of the final judgment, Matt. 24: 31; 1 Cor. 15: 52; 1 Thess. 4: 16. At Sinai the sound of the trumpet was the summons to all Israel to hear the law, Ex. 19: 13, 16, 17. The whole scene struck men's hearts with fear. The request of the people that God would not speak to them directly was not displeasing to Jehovah. He granted it, and spoke to them by Moses, Ex. 20: 19-22; Deut. 5: 23-28. Their terror was not sinful, though it proceeded in part from their being sinners.

20. (*For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart.* Some have supposed that the first clause relates to the ten commandments, the moral law, which they could not keep by reason of their sinful natures. But this is not the subject on which the apostle is speaking. Others have said that what they could not endure was the manner of giving the law, amid unwonted splendors. But they did bear that. They did not leave the plain. The verse itself tells us that the command which filled them with terror was that which forbade their approach to the mountain. The apostle does not quote it all. It reads thus: "Take heed to yourselves that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it; whosoever toucheth the mount shall surely be put to death: There shall not a hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live," Ex. 19: 12, 13. This was one of the commands showing under what strict and awful circumstances they heard the law. They were, unless very careful, in danger of death every moment.

21. (*And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake.*) In Ex. 19: 16 it is said that "all the people that was in the camp trembled," or quaked; but no where in the Old Testament do we find the very words here put into the mouth of Moses. How then did Paul learn that Moses used them. Plenary inspiration led him to tell us the names of the magicians that opposed Moses, 2 Tim. 3: 8; although they are never given us in the Old Testament. So plenary inspiration taught another apostle to tell us of the prophecy of Enoch, and of the contest of Michael and the devil, though they are never mentioned in the Old Testament, Jude 9, 14, 15. Whether Paul learned this saying of Moses from some book or part of a book now lost, or from tradition or from express revelation, it is idle to inquire, for we cannot learn the truth in this life. There is, however, a sentence in Deut. 9: 19, which some regard as that which Paul here cites: "I was afraid," but the words following show that this could hardly be the place cited. For first there is no quaking or trembling there mentioned. Then other words follow: "I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure wherewith the Lord was wroth against you to destroy you." So that in this case Moses was rather afraid for the sins of his people than for the *terrible sight*, which he saw, and which Paul seems to say awakened his fears. Now, says the apostle, in the gospel we are not summoned to such terrible scenes, sights and sounds as was the ancient church.

22. *But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living*

*God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels.* The covenant from mount Sinai gendereth to bondage, but Jerusalem, which is above, is free, and is the mother of all true believers, Gal. 4: 24, 26. The difference between Judaism and Christianity, comparing the darkness, burdensomeness and bondage of the former with the light, liberty and efficacy of the latter, ought at once and for ever to determine even a Hebrew to cleave to Christ and his salvation. There were angels at the giving of the law, Gal. 3: 19. Some Jewish writers say there were as many as seventy thousand. But even in this the new excels the old dispensation for we are come to an *innumerable company* of them, [Peshito: the assemblies of myriads of angels,] when we join the true invisible church of Christ; and these are all protectors and helpers of good men. We are also come

23. *To the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.* The word rendered *general assembly* means, says Robinson, "a convocation of the whole people in order to celebrate any public festival or solemnity, as the public games or sacrifices." The word is found here only in the New Testament. *Church*, the same as in Heb. 2: 12, on which see above. This church not only belongs to Christ who is the first-born among many brethren, but it is composed of those who are themselves *the first-born*, persons peculiarly consecrated to the Lord, Ex. 22: 29; having a right to the inheritance; being priests and kings unto God; and possessing all the privileges granted to the most favored and beloved children. The word rendered first-born is plural. Compare Jas. 1: 18. Some prefer by *first-born* to understand only the patriarchs, or the apostles, or at least the most eminent servants of Christ, who long since entered into rest. This cannot be proven erroneous; but it is certainly no improvement. Of these first-born it is said they *are written in heaven*; Peshito, Craik and Stuart, enrolled in heaven. Compare Luke 10: 20; Phil. 4: 3. On the enrolling of men see the author's "Studies in the Book of Psalms," on Ps. 69: 28. Christ will not blot out of the book of life the name of any one who overcometh, but will clothe him with white raiment, and will confess his name before his Father, and before his angels, Rev. 3: 5. True believers are also come *to God the Judge of all*. They sustain new relations to him. He is their Judge, in the sense of Protector and Avenger, as he is the Judge of the widow. He is the Judge of all. That is, there is no limit to his authority. He will put down the wicked as well as save his chosen. Some think that by *all* is meant both Jews and Gentiles. Doubtless all are included.

We are also come *to the spirits of just men made perfect*. There is but one family of God in heaven and in earth, Eph. 3:15. Those, who on earth believe in Jesus, are perfectly justified; but those who have finished their work on earth, are made perfect in holiness for ever. The church is one church, as much so as she will be after the last day, though many of her members are not yet without spot or wrinkle. We are come

24. *And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.* Jesus is the proper name of the mediator. Paul often uses it with very fine effect rather than any other name or title of our Lord. He is now showing how very inviting the gospel is, and so it is right to give prominence to the person of the most loving, tender and approachable being that ever walked this earth, especially as he is the sole Mediator between God and man. Finding him we also find *the blood of sprinkling*, that is, the blood of Christ, which atoned for sin, and gives peace of conscience. It gives no cry for vengeance, as did the blood of Abel. Christ's blood in one day brought mercy and conveyed life to as many as three thousand of his own murderers. If such and so great are the benefits of Christianity, then let men beware:

25. *See that ye refuse not him that speaketh: for if they escaped not who refused him that spoke on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven.* This passage is like those in Heb. 2:2-4; 10:28, 29. The contrast is between Moses, who spoke on earth, and Christ, who speaks from heaven. The *much more* points to the aggravated and more heinous guilt of rejecting the light of the gospel, which is so much greater than that of the law; and yet transgressions of the law did not escape the notice and displeasure of God. It is true that many give a different turn to the thought here, making God the *speaker* in both parts of the verse. But to this it may be stated, 1. That the very contrast supposed to be here made between Moses and Christ is, as we have seen, made elsewhere; and that to show the superiority of Christ to Moses and of the gospel to the Sinaitic covenant is very pertinent to the apostle's main design. 2. It gives a very feeble kind of argument to make the whole contrast consist, not in the persons but only in the places of speaking. 3. Besides, the law itself is expressly said to have been spoken from heaven, Exod. 20:22; Neh. 9:13. Moreover, 4. If it is God who is supposed to have spoken in both parts of the verse, yet in the first case he spoke chiefly by Moses, and in the second chiefly by Christ, so that even in this case we lose not the point and gist of the apostle's leading idea. Then the doctrine taught is, If

men were held guilty and were justly and terribly punished, who despised Moses' law, much more terribly will they be punished who reject the glorious gospel of the blessed God. If the Israelites were made to suffer so severely for contemning their law, much more severely will despisers of gospel grace and mercy suffer. Calvin: "The severest punishment awaits the despisers of the gospel, since those of old did not despise the law with impunity." To *refuse* is to excuse one's self from obeying. The word does not necessarily convey the idea of a *scornful* rejection. *Him that speaketh* is a form of a verb that commonly, but not invariably implies that one is speaking by divine authority. To *turn away*, this may be done with bitter scorn; but it includes all turning from the truth of the gospel. Whether we learn Jehovah's will by Moses or by Christ, we should hear the voice of the Most High.

26. *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 historic event recorded in the first clause is stated in Ex. 19: 18. See Jud. 5: 4, 5; also Ps. 68: 8. The second clause is a quotation from Haggai. The whole of it with some of the context reads thus: "I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts: according to the word that 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: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts," Hag, 2: 4-7. The context is here inserted, because it interprets the words cited. All the Jews counted Haggai as a prophet, therefore Paul pertinently cites him as authority. In these words Haggai clearly predicts the coming of Messiah, called "the desire of all nations." These words surely teach that the coming of Messiah should be accompanied or followed by great changes. Institutions as old as the Sinaitic covenant, and esteemed by some as stable as the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land, should be shaken, and give way to a new state of things. This was not threatened but *promised*. It tokened good, and the Hebrews ought to welcome the state of things brought about agreeably to the predictions of their own prophets.

27. *And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.* The explanation given of the preceding verse is here supported by the teaching of the apostle. To *remove the things that are shaken* is to set aside the institutions of Moses. The shaking spoken of by the prophets denotes agitations

and upturnings, as we see in Isa. 13 : 13 ; Joel 3 : 16. The coming of Messiah revealed the secrets of many hearts. Herod was troubled and all Jerusalem with him. But the change went on steadily till it was seen how grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. In about seventy years from the coming of Christ there was not an altar in Jerusalem, nor any sacrifice offered on earth according to the law of Moses. The Sinaitic covenant was temporary. It was shaken, but the gospel is everlasting. The heavens and earth, the sea and dry land shall be shaken no more in the sense here given to those words. Even Haggai limited it to *once more*, and he tells us what that one more occasion should be—viz: the coming of Messiah. The things which cannot be shaken but must remain are the covenant and kingdom of Jesus Christ.

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.* The kingdom we receive by the gospel is the kingdom of heaven, the covenant of peace, salvation. This cannot be shaken, cannot be moved. While the world shall stand the gospel economy shall never be changed or superseded. *Receiving*, it may mean receiving by tradition, as in Mark 7 : 4 ; or by revelation, as in 1 Cor. 11 : 23 ; or by faith and reliance, as in Col. 2 : 6. Here it evidently points to an acceptance and enjoyment of the blessings of the gospel in their fulness and permanence. *Let us have grace*, some would read let us give thanks or have gratitude. Though this gives a good sense, yet the authorized version is better. Peshito : Let us grasp the grace ; Duncan : Let us hold fast grace ; in 2 Tim. 1 : 13 the same verb is rendered *hold fast*. *Grace* here is God's favor, by which we are brought under the divine blessing and upheld in the way of holiness. By it and not by native strength we *serve*, worship, obey and honor God. *Acceptably*, or well pleasingly. *With reverence and godly fear*. *Reverence*, the same word is elsewhere rendered shamefacedness. It seems here rather to express humility than any kind of fear. *Godly fear*, in Heb. 11 : 7 rendered fear. It expresses a fear of a good quality. A mere dread of God is not pleasing to him. A servile terror drives one far from him. But a holy, filial fear is an ingredient of all true worship. "Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long," Pr. 22 : 17. If God is loving, he is also great. If he is merciful, he is also terrible in majesty. He is greatly to be feared.

29. *For our God is a consuming fire.* This is generally admitted to be a quotation from Deut. 4 : 24 : "For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God." This is not the only place, where fire is employed to give us some conception of God's wrath. See Ex. 24 : 17 ; Lev. 10 : 2 ; Num. 16 : 35. John Owen somewhere,

I think, refers Isa. 33 : 14 to the holy and awful nature of God ; which must consume his opponents.

DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL REMARKS.

1. Let all Christians seek and cultivate peace, v. 14. John Howe has an eloquent sermon entitled "Peace, God's Blessing." And truly it is a blessing from heaven. If we would have it, we must seek it, and study to promote it. God hath called us to peace. We have had every where enough of war, strife, hatred, variance, alarm, tumult, bickering, envy, jealousy, confusion and quarrelling. Oh for an era of peace in the world, in the state, in the church, and in families! Jehovah is the God of peace. In this matter God requires of us no impossible task. There is a class of men, who are anxious, not to get their dues, but to have a contest. Like salamanders they live in fire. In such cases the Bible says, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men," Rom. 12 : 18. Let good men well weigh the solemn lessons taught us in Matt. 5 : 9, 39, and not forget them. It is no easy thing at all times to pursue peace. Calvin : "Unless we diligently follow after peace we shall never preserve it; for many things will happen daily to give occasion for dissension . . . We must overlook many offences, and give and receive mutual indulgence in many things." The mass of men have but little knowledge of their own faults and foibles, and a very large estimate of the errors of others. Pride is arrogant and assumptive, dictatorial and minatory. Many men are fierce and insulting in their looks, words and gestures. Many will yield nothing to the humors and weaknesses of others, while they are blind to their own, and expect others to be blind to them also. It is impossible that one should be an example of kindness, pity and love, and at the same time stir up strife and contention. If we would cultivate peace, we must be just, kind, piteous, charitable, humble, mild, fair, forgiving, easy to be entreated. The great error is in men's tempers controlling their conduct. Rieger : "We think that we are in the right, and that we are seeking nothing but the right; but we seek it in such a way that love, peace, compassion are sacrificed in the pursuit, and we defile our spirits with many a stain, in which we also involve many others." Owen : "A frame and disposition of seeking peace with all men is eminently suited unto the doctrine and grace of the gospel."

2. We must as earnestly follow holiness, v. 14. It is as necessary as peace, yea, more so, for as Owen says. "We may follow peace with men, and not attain it; but if we follow holiness, we

shall assuredly see the Lord, as, without it we shall come short of this enjoyment." If any thing is settled, it is that the unholy will not be received into God's blissful presence, 1 Cor. 6 : 9, 10 ; Rev. 22 : 15. Pool: "A soul destitute of holiness is in no capacity, either of faith or sight, to see the Lord." We may not purchase even peace at the cost of a good conscience. That price is too great. "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable," Jas. 3 : 17. Lindsay: "The connection of thought is obvious. The pursuit of peace might, by leading to unwarrantable compliances with the evil dispositions and practices of others, endanger purity. This would be ruinous. We must not so prize peace as to sacrifice righteousness; we must cultivate both." Saving faith always purifies the heart, Acts 15 : 9. Calvin: "Should the whole world be in a blaze of war, we must not depart from holiness, which is the bond of our union with God."

3. To all the ends of a godly life we must ever be on the alert, v. 15. Often does the Master call on us to watch and pray. Often are we warned by inspired men to be sober, to be vigilant, to look diligently, etc. Every man's case demands all the holy care and caution which he can practice. We are naturally slothful, and love to slumber, but God calls us to awake to righteousness, and never to yield to the spirit of slumber. We cannot be too guarded against sin of every kind. "Spiritual evils in churches are progressive;" and they are progressive in men's hearts too. Lindsay: "Weeds sow themselves; they grow readily. So there are in the soil of humanity many circumstances favorable to the growth of evil." Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. Know every man the plague of his own heart.

4. In particular should we keep a strict guard over ourselves in respect to all the malevolent affections and their usual modes of manifesting themselves, v. 15. Lists of them, though not complete, are often given in scripture. They are such as these: Hatred, ill-will, envy, debate, deceit, murder, maliciousness, spitefulness, wrath, strife, variance, guile, evil speaking, and all that naturally flows from such things. See Rom. 1 : 29, 30; Gal. 5 : 20, 21; 1 Pet. 2 : 1.

5. Let us be exceedingly careful that we fall not into any profane; light, irreverent state of mind, v. 16. When men feel, think, speak or act triflingly or jestingly about sacred things, their peril is extreme. Esau seems to have been in a very vain state of mind when he sold his birthright. Even he afterwards wept bitterly over the consequences of his folly, though we have no assurance that he ever truly repented of his sin. "Sin may be the occasion of great sorrow, where there is no sorrow for sin." When men

have no just and solemn appreciation of spiritual blessings, and for a trifle let them slip, their case is very alarming. He that is sensual will soon be devilish, if God does not restrain him.

6. In a moment, when no danger is suspected, one may do an act that will lead to a life of sorrow, plant a thorn in a dying pillow, and be followed by fruitless regrets for ever. Some think such was the case with Esau, vs. 16, 17. They may be right. We *know* they are right at least in part. Owen: "No man knows whereunto a deliberate sin may lead him, nor what will be the event of it." Duncan: "Men may so despise the blessings of Christianity as that God may think them unworthy to enjoy them any more." Some may make a jest of apostasy, and in his amazing mercy God may grant them repentance; but nothing is more perillous than to renounce or reject Christ in the hope of a subsequent conversion. Calvin: "We often see that those who are continually saying in jest that repentance will come early enough when they are breathing their last, yet when it comes to that, cry out repeatedly amidst their dreadful torments that the season for obtaining grace is past; for they are doomed to destruction because they sought God too late." Parry: "How ardently, in the day of judgment, will the scoffer seek a revocation of his doom! but how vainly! There will then be 'no room for repentance' on the part of the Judge: no place for mercy when the final sentence shall have gone forth."

7. By how little a thing fair prospects may be blasted. Hahn: "A single act can work great ruin. Much is often lost in a brief space; for the sake of a small thing we often surrender that which is great." Rieger: "He who cannot be induced to carefulness in regard to apparently small matters, will never be in genuine earnest." "Whose despiseth the word (a thing that is done every day) shall be destroyed," Pr. 13: 13. "He that despiseth his way shall die," Pr. 19: 16.

8. Let us be duly and humbly thankful that believers are not under law but under grace, vs. 18-24. Our Mediator is not Moses but Jesus Christ. We are not come to mount Sinai, but to mount Sion. We are not come to blackness, and darkness, and tempest; but to light, and liberty, and peace. If we hear a trumpet, it is the clarion peal of the angel having the everlasting gospel to preach to the nations. We may not approach God carelessly, but we may come boldly to the throne of the heavenly grace. The city, where all are invited to dwell, is the city of the living God. The angels are our allies and helpers. The whole mystical body of Christ is in sympathy with all who believe. We have too the blood of sprinkling, the ransom, the atonement. O what mercies

are here! Owen: "It is a blessed thing to be removed from the summons of the law, to answer for the guilt of sin, unto the invitation of the gospel, to come and accept of mercy and pardon." Nothing but the mystery of iniquity can account for the stupidity with which men often hear the glad tidings of free grace and gratuitous salvation by Jesus Christ.

9. When God summoned Israel to Sinai merely to hear the law, they were struck not only with awe, but with extreme terror, vs. 20, 21. This may give us some conception of what will be the consternation of the wicked, when God shall call the nations together to expose the secrets of all hearts and to pass an irrevocable sentence upon every soul of man, and upon angels fallen and unfallen. At Sinai God merely gave the law. In the last day he will apply and execute its holy and just principles.

10. In the blessed gospel every provision, required by human wants and woes, is fully made and set forth, vs. 22-24. No sinner ever heartily accepted the grace and gifts of the gospel, and then felt that he needed any more. In Christ all fulness dwells. By him the lost are saved, the guilty pardoned, the vile cleansed, the troubled comforted, the blind see, the rebellious made obedient, the alarmed find peace, the despondent filled with hope, and God is every way glorified. God himself greatly delights in Sion, in the fulness of her provisions, in her amazing resources. He says of her, "This is my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it," Ps. 132: 14. The church is the greatest and the most blessed association ever formed. Its founder and God is Jehovah. Its Head is the Son of God. Its Comforter is the Holy Ghost. Its ministers are angels. Its charter is the new covenant. Nothing can separate a believer from it.

11. But if gospel privileges are so great, human responsibilities are in the same proportion, v. 25. Nothing is so perilous as to refuse to hear God, when he calls, warns, invites, entreats, reproves, persuades. "To whom much is given, of him shall much be required." This rule is just, universal, invariable. Men adopt it the world over, Luke 12: 48. God never departs from it.

12. While the Sinaitic covenant was not designed to be perpetual, and had in it elements of weakness, as well as many things burdensome and unsatisfactory, all of which pointed to change; the gospel has all the elements of strength and stability, vs. 26-28. We have God's word for it that the new covenant shall never be superseded, that he will no more overturn and subvert any ordinances he has established, and that the kingdom of Christ is everlasting. The reason for superseding the law cannot hold in the case of the gospel. It has provided a plan that is perfect, giving

the conscience perfect peace, and finally removing all imperfection from the soul.

13. The people of God have great cause of joy and exultation, for they are *receiving a kingdom that cannot be moved*, v. 28. Nor need they be apprehensive of failure in entering on the full possession of it. Their Lord said, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom," Luke 12:32. Inspired writers speak often and familiarly of the redeemed having a crown, a crown of life, a crown of righteousness, a crown that fadeth not away. They declare the saints to be kings. Blessed be God, his people are not following phantoms, when they obey his voice and hope in his mercy.

14. As we are called upon to have grace, v. 28, it becomes a matter of great importance to us to know how we may grow in grace. On this subject we are not left in the dark. The first thing is highly to prize the grace of God. The next is to know that all grace flows to us by the Spirit. The third is earnestly to pray for large measures of the Spirit's influence. The fourth is to abound in the knowledge of God, especially the knowledge of God in Christ Jesus. We must also put in practice what we learn, and not avoid needful lessons of self-denial and humiliation. And we must feel the need of constant supplies from above. "Without grace, we cannot serve God at all."

15. It is a great thing to serve God acceptably, v. 28. It is the chief end of man. It is his highest happiness here and hereafter. With it are connected life, joy and bliss for ever.

16. But God cannot be pleased with any offerings made him or services rendered him in the arrogance of pride. We must serve him with modesty, humility, reverence, v. 28. God resisteth the proud. He knoweth the proud afar off. He hates none more than the proud. Man's place is in the dust.

17. Nor is *godly fear* less essential, v. 28. An indictment charges nothing worse against felons than this that they had not the fear of God before their eyes. If any one doubts the prominence given to this grace in the word of God, let him turn to his Concordance, Hebrew, Greek or English, and his doubts will vanish.

18. Our God is a consuming fire, v. 29. All approaches to him, in forgetfulness of his adorable sovereignty and awful majesty are wicked. He is a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of them that hate him, Ex. 20:5. Calvin: "Assuredly it is expedient that the grace of God should never be held out to us, without his threatenings being added to them; for so exceeding prone are we to follow our own inclinations, that unless these incitements were ap-

plied, the milder doctrine would have no effect with us." Of some we must have compassion, making a difference; and others we must save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, Jude 22, 23. Our Lord, the best preacher and the most loving man earth ever saw, clearly warned men of *hell fire*, Matt. 5 : 22, 29; 10 : 28; 11 : 23; 18 : 9 and often. Lindsay : "Our God also, as well as the God of the ancient Israelites, is a consuming fire. And this was an idea not to be left out. The mercy and grace of the gospel might lead some to imagine that there was nothing like wrath now in the divine character, and they might in consequence encourage themselves in sin. This would be a fatal mistake. The attributes of God remain the same in all ages. Doubtless there are very signal manifestations of mercy in the gospel; but let that mercy be disregarded, and justice will not fail to assert her rights. Yea, her claim will be all the more terrible in consequence of the love which has been slighted." David spoke the same truth in words very clear : "Upon the wicked the Lord shall reign snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup," Ps. 11 : 6. Owen : "However God takes us near to himself in covenant, whereby he is our God, yet he requires that we always retain due apprehension of the holiness of his nature, the severity of his justice against sinners, and his ardent jealousy concerning his worship."

## CHAPTER XIII.

VERSES 1-13.

### MANY PRACTICAL USES OF THE TRUTHS ALREADY TAUGHT.

LET brotherly love continue.

2 Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

3 Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; *and* them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.

4 Marriage *is* honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

5 *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.

6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord *is* my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

7 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.

8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and forever.

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.

10 We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.

11 For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.

12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

13 Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

**A**WARE that this epistle is near its end our apostle crowds into it many weighty practical truths.

1. *Let brotherly love continue.* Peshito: Let love for the brethren dwell among you; Wiclif: The charite of brithered

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dwelle in you; Rheims: Let the charitie of the fraternitie abide in you; Doway: Let fraternal charity abide in you. Many agree with the authorized version, which is literal. The word rendered brotherly love occurs in five other places, and is always rendered as here, or love of the brethren, or brotherly kindness. At the first preaching of the gospel among the Jews after Christ's ascension, the spirit of love to the brethren was very remarkable. Men freely sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need, Acts. 2:45. They were not commanded to do this. Their conduct was wholly voluntary, Acts 5:4. As there were many poor saints at Jerusalem, and as the destruction of the holy city and of the Jewish State were near at hand, and must naturally bring much distress, Christians being able to save themselves only by rapid flight (Matt. 24:17, 18), therefore there was very urgent need that brotherly love should *continue*, abide, remain. Brotherly love is called for by the *new commandment*, which our Lord gave his disciples, John 13:34. God's people do love as brethren, even before they know each other's faces.

2. *Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.* In those early times there was an unusual demand on Christians to show hospitality. There were then no Christian countries. Judaism and Paganism, both persecuting and bitter, controlled public places of resort. A Christian was liable to insult, if not to something worse, if he went to any inn or tavern. So that unless brethren would open their doors to strangers, it was both annoying and dangerous to travel from home. There was then *special* need of love to strangers. But our apostle gives another reason for hospitality, *for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.* There seems here to be a clear reference to the conduct of Abraham and Lot as recorded in the eighteenth and nineteenth chapters of Genesis. By a reference to angels some think the Angel of the covenant is referred to. Tertullian: "Thou hast seen thy brother, thou hast seen thy Lord." The duties of hospitality are urged upon us by the very highest considerations, Matt. 25:35-40; Acts 20:35; 2 Cor. 8:9.

3. *Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.* The persons alluded to in the first clause of the verse were active and zealous Christians and ministers, who by their right conduct had provoked the wrath of persecutors and had been put in prison, or were bound with chains. Such were to be *remembered*, visited, encouraged, prayed for, ministered unto, and all this in a meek, loving, sympathizing spirit, *as bound with them.* You may soon be in their case. They now represent you and suffer for the cause you

love. They are members of the same body with you. And "whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it: or one member be honored all the members rejoice with it," 1 Cor, 12: 26. How the glorious head sympathizes with his suffering people may be learned from Acts. 9: 4, 5. Nor are our brotherly kindnesses to be confined to those who are the prisoners of Christ. We must also remember *those who suffer adversity* of any kind or degree for Christ's sake, or in his cause. In the world God's people always have tribulation. They that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. The word rendered *them who suffer adversity* is found in but one other place in the New Testament and is there rendered *tormented*, Heb. 11: 37. Here it means abused, Bloomfield, maltreated. Now "to him that is afflicted pity should be shown from his friends," Job 6: 14. One reason, why God allows our brethren to suffer, is that we may have an opportunity of showing a Christlike tenderness and a brotherly kindness. The reason given is that we ourselves are also in the body. Three ideas suggest themselves: 1. We are yet in the body, and so may serve our afflicted brethren, if we will. The pious, who are no longer in the body, cannot now do that. We may have been left here for this very end. 2. We are in the mystical body of Christ, and so must not deny our relation to God's suffering people as fellow-members. 3. We are ourselves in the body and know not how soon deep sorrow may overwhelm us. All these senses are good. The last is most probably that which was in the mind of the apostle; though Calvin and others strongly favor the second.

4. *Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.* The verb is wanting in the first clause, and some propose to read, Let marriage be honorable in all. The reason assigned for the change is that Paul is giving precepts in the verses preceding and succeeding, and why not here also? This is not without force. The change in the form does not materially change the general doctrine of the verse. If marriage is by apostolic precept to be held in honor and treated honorably in all respects or in all persons, then we may infer from the verse all we gather from the rendering of the common version, viz: that the denial of marriage to any class of persons is unwarranted. Other scriptures show that it is wicked, 1 Tim. 4: 3. Under all dispensations God has honored marriage. It is an institution of Eden itself. It is designed to preserve a godly seed upon the earth, and to prevent those lawless and vicious crimes which utterly corrupt society and destroy domestic love and peace, Mal. 2: 15; 1 Cor. 7: 2. The *bed defiled* always brings wretchedness to persons, families and communities. Upon no forms of wickedness

does God set marks of hotter displeasure than on the two forms of unchastity mentioned, in this verse, fornication and adultery. On no subject has he made more fearful utterances, 1 Cor. 6 : 9, 10 ; Rev. 21 : 8 ; 22 : 15. Such God will surely judge.

5. 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.*

6. *So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.* *Conversation*, that is way, life, manner of life. In the Greek are two words rendered covetous. One means loving silver. The other means greedy for more. It is a form of the first of these words that is used here. "The love of money is the root of all evil." Repress the love of money. Let it not control your life and conduct. *Be content with*, esteem as sufficient, regard as enough *such things as ye have.* Peshito: Let not your mind love money, but let what ye have satisfy you. The reason given is good and sufficient: God has spoken thus, *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.* Some have thought these words contained the sum and spirit of many scriptures, and were not a literal quotation from any one part of the Bible. Others have supposed that the germ of them is found in Gen. 28 : 15. Others have preferred to regard them as an abbreviated summary of Isa. 43 : 1, 2. Others make them to be Paul's version of Josh. 1 : 5. "I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee," or of Deut. 31 : 6 or 8, "He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." In Deut. 31 : 6 the words are spoken to Israel as a people ; in v. 8 to Joshua himself. They embody the leading idea of many a verse. These words well illustrate the force of Greek negatives accumulated. Here we have as many as five of them. These are not made to appear in any prose version which the author has seen. But they are well brought out in a favorite Hymn :

"The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,  
*I will not, I will not* desert to his foes ;  
 That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,  
*I'll never, no never, no never* forsake."

The italics are in the hymn as published, and clearly refer to our verse. The inference from this promise is fair and strong : *So that we may boldly* [or confidently] *say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man can do unto me.* The quotation is in the Greek made literally from the Septuagint version of Ps. 118 : 6. See also Ps. 56 : 4, 11. The English version of that place is : "The Lord is on my side ; I will not fear : what can man do unto me?"

The sense is the same in either version. These two verses, each containing a quotation of a promise or declaration of faith which had a special reference to one man or one people in covenant with God, clearly teach us that whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope, Rom. 15 : 4. It is not presumption for a believer in our day to lay hold on any truth spoken to or by any child of God in old time as a believer, and appropriate it to himself.

7. *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.* Some terminate this verse with a full period. This is right. The grammar requires it; end is not in the same case with Jesus Christ, and so is not in apposition with it. For *them that have the rule over you*, the margin and Peshito have guides. The same word is rendered governor and chief, Matt. 2 : 6; Acts 7 : 10; Acts 14 : 12; 15 : 22. It occurs below in v. 24, and is rendered as here. Rheims and Doway read *Prelates*. But prelacy has no countenance in scripture. It is positively forbidden by Christ himself, Matt. 20 : 20-28. The persons spoken of are the faithful ministers who had preached and borne rule among them, and set them a good example. Some think these guides were now dead. If so, the chief object of remembering them was to *follow*, or imitate their example. If they were still alive, the object of remembering them was to minister to their great necessities and to relieve them, as well as to be made bold by their faith and constancy. It is not certain whether the apostle refers to living or dead pastors, or to both. *Considering*, beholding attentively *the end*, result or issue of *their conversation*, life, walk or conduct. Their great support was the Saviour

8. *Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day and forever.* He was their life, and peace, and hope, and joy. To them he was all and in all. In him they lived. With him they suffered. In him they trusted. After him they longed. To him they were united. And when they died, in him their bodies slept, while their happy spirits entered into his joy and were forever with him. One reason why we ought to make so much of Christ is that he is *the same*. His state is very different from what it was on earth, but his character never varies. He is as gentle, as loving, as tender as when he wept at the grave of Lazarus; as mighty and as ready to save as when he rescued Peter from a watery grave, or said to the penitent thief, "This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise." He is both God and man, in two distinct natures and one person. He is the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever. If our Lord is

thus unchangeable in his natures, truth and doctrine, counsels and kingdom, we ought not to be fickle and given to change. So he adds:

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.* The dangers arising from new and false doctrines is always considerable; in the primitive church it was extreme. Often does our apostle call on ministers and churches to shun false doctrine, which eats like a cancer, and to hold fast sound doctrine. Error is often plausible; and errorists are never fair and candid. History gives no account of an honest heresiarch. The early church was much pestered with jüdaizing teachers, who wished to introduce Jewish notions about meats. From the first this matter gave trouble. It was one of the things on which God mercifully gave early instruction to the church. Paul says that those, who were most zealous on this matter, had not made the greatest progress in the divine life. Their improvement had been slow. Had their attention been turned to understand and seek the *grace* of God revealed in the gospel, it would have been a means of *establishing*, confirming them, and so preparing them for the trials that were imminent.

10. *We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.* The aim of this verse is to teach that if men cling to the law, they are not Christ's; that if they insist on pleasing God by observances, which had their fulfilment in Christ, and so look not to Christ himself, they have only the shell but have missed the kernel. The priests, who served at the altar, lived of the altar. Christians are priests, and the sacrifice of which they eat is Christ himself. As types the services of the tabernacle were just, striking and instructive. But when the antitype has come, it is dangerous to return to those elements which have become beggarly and jejune, because they have lost all their significance. The same doctrine is expressed in other words in Gal. 5:4, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." As the Pharisees made void the law of good morals by adding corrupt traditions to it; so we may nullify the gospel by trusting to something else than the obedience and sufferings of Christ.

11. *For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.* The usage here referred to was required by an exact law, Lev. 16:27. The whole body of the victim, whose blood was for a sin-offering, must be burnt. It might not be eaten. It was removed to a dis-

tance and consumed. Now note, says our apostle, how exactly the antitype fulfilled what was foreshadowed:

12. *Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.* Duncan: "The sin-offering of old was only for a ceremonial sanctification of the people, but Christ's death really and morally sanctifies his people. Christ's atonement was proper not figurative, true not ritual. His blood is the only real propitiation. He is made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. He saves, and he alone.

13. *Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.* No man ever gave in his public adhesion to Christ without incurring the scorn or hatred of some one. *Reproach*, uniformly rendered, as in Heb. 10:33; 11:26. The call of the apostle is to give up all other hopes for a good hope in Christ; to let all ceremonies and effete institutions go, and to follow Christ, who himself, loaded with reproaches, bore his cross out of the city away to Calvary. The scoffs and malice of men, the cross and the spear did not deter him. Our sufferings cannot be greater than his, and yet he has gloriously triumphed. Let us go firmly on, and we shall soon triumph also.

#### DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL REMARKS.

1. This whole section enforces the truth that we must adorn as well as hold fast our profession of the gospel. No good profession of Christ's name and gospel is in word only. Words are cheap.

2. Great is the difference between worldly and heavenly wisdom. The world generally regard justice, prudence, temperance and fortitude as the cardinal virtues. They are indeed of great value. But when apostles speak on such a subject they talk of faith, hope, charity, contentment, etc. These things make men just, prudent, temperate, courageous by giving them heavenly mindedness, by assimilating them to God; they do more, they make them wise unto salvation; they are a blessed part of salvation.

3. The Bible makes much, but not too much, of love, v. 1. There is love to God. There is love to Christ. There is love to our neighbor. And here we have love to the brethren. In all these relations love is the fulfilling of the law. The great difficulty in maintaining brotherly love arises from the weakness and waywardness of good men. Some are grum; some are awkward; some see everything from the point of objection; some have bad manners, and some have no manners at all; some are obstinate;

some have much party spirit; some are selfish and close; and some are morbidly sensitive. It was a wise thing in Joseph to say to his brethren: "See that ye fall not out by the way," Gen. 45: 24. Duncan: "What a shame it is for people to hate one another, who pretend to worship the same God, to follow the same Christ, to be going the same road! What an affront it is to religion to see those, who profess to be all the sons of God, having contentions, and broils among themselves!" The Hebrews had begun well, as is evident from Heb. 6: 10; 10: 33, 34. Paul's object is to persuade them to persevere. We are bound to love our brethren even as Christ has loved us, John 13: 34. Nothing tends more to spread the gospel than brotherly love. Nothing more effectually hinders the growth of the church than hatred and contention. Owen: "Brotherly love is very apt to be impaired and decay, if we do not endeavor continually to preserve and revive it."

4. Brotherly love, when genuine, manifests itself in ways suited to men's circumstances, and so it is pitiful and loving to strangers, v. 2. Good men must be "given to hospitality," Rom. 12: 13. Compare Gal. 6: 10. An inhospitable church is no church of Christ. Even the barbarous people, among whom Paul was cast by shipwreck, showed no little kindness, Acts 28: 2. Courteousness and hospitality do not prove one a Christian; for the very heathen practised these things, and acknowledged the obligation of them, Acts 28: 7. But the want of these things is a dark, dark sign in the character of any professed friend of God. Even the law of Sinai bound the ancient church to be kind to strangers: "The Lord your God doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment. Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt," Deut. 10: 18, 19. "Thou shalt not oppress a stranger: for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt," Ex. 23: 9. Our hospitality must be liberal, generous and hearty: "Use hospitality one to another without grudging," 1 Pet. 4: 9. That is great commendation which John bestows on the well beloved Gaius, 3 John 5-8. Let us follow so bright an example. The reason here given for showing kindness to strangers is worthy of notice. I have known one case, where hospitality saved the life of a whole family, the stranger dragging from his hiding place the lurking murderer, who had secreted himself before the stranger arrived. In this case the weary traveller was the *angel* or messenger sent to save life, and Gabriel could not have done his work more effectually. Then not only are such messengers still received, but as Calvin

says, "Christ himself is received, when we receive the poor in his name." Bloomfield quotes a remark from Julian that nothing so much tended to the growth of Christianity as the practice of hospitality among Christians one to another. When we feel disposed to turn away the stranger when he is poor and has no means of paying his charges at an inn, and compel him to lodge in the field or in the street, we may have been cruel to one of Christ's dear children. But often we merely design civility and hospitality, and God designs to bring us some great good thereby. Let us not forget that God is a rewarder of all right actions, and may send us a very rich blessing. This leads Owen to say that "when men, designing that which is good, do more good than they intended, they shall or may reap more benefit thereby than they expected." A man asked a minister to his house for lodging. This act in its results led to the conversion of both the host and hostess.

5. Nor may we innocently forget the prisoner, v. 3. Among bad men the worst are commonly going at large. Among good men the best are often in dungeons. This is specially true in times of political and religious persecution. Let us never forget that Jehovah is a God that hears the groaning and the sighing of the prisoner, Ps. 79:11; 102:20. Scott: "When we are exempted from imprisonment, or other grievous adversities, we should take care not to forget how many are thus oppressed and bowed down; that we may sympathize with them in their sorrows, and help and comfort them according to our ability; never forgetting to pray for them, in which the poorest and those far distant may give them valuable assistance: for it behooves us to be aware that we are liable to the same distresses as long as we are in the body." Owen: "It is better, more safe and honorable, to be in bonds with and for Christ, than to be at liberty with a brutish, raging, persecuting world."

6. In like manner our sympathies should always be with the wronged, the abused, the maltreated among good men, and not with the successful, the lordly, the proud and cruel, v. 3. We should always let good men know that we are with them, that they have our good wishes, our approval and our prayers. The greater the obloquy, under which men attempt to cover them, the more decided should be our expressions of regard. This requires faith, constancy and courage beyond the attainment of many. In such matters mankind are terribly cursed with cowardice.

7. Good men ought to unite with one another in doing all they can to make marriage honorable in all persons and in all respects. God has done much to exalt it, v. 4. It is a great pillar of morality. Dr. Johnson says: "Marriage is the best state for man in general.

and every man is a worse man, in proportion as he is unfit for the marriage state." History fully confirms the prophecy of Paul respecting the character of those, who avowedly set themselves against marriage, 1 Tim. 4:1-3. It is in vain that men pretend under divine sanction to enforce celibacy on any class, the clergy in particular. Paul says, "A bishop must be blameless, the husband of one wife," 1 Tim. 3:2. The Doway Bible renders it no less strong: "It behoveth, therefore, a bishop to be blameless, the husband of one wife." Of this passage there are three interpretations; 1. the Romish church insists that no minister of the gospel must marry at all; 2. the Greek church insists that all officiating clergymen shall be married men, so long as they have cure of souls; but that the first wife dying, they may not marry again; 3. the Protestant doctrine is that this passage makes lawful the marriage of ministers but excludes from the sacred office all polygamists. The first view is a flat denial of the teachings of the place. The second is in the teeth of the truth that there may be as good reasons for a second as for a first marriage. In proof of the lawfulness of all ministers marrying, if they choose to do so, we may also cite 1 Cor. 9:5. Many have called attention to the fact that even heathen nations have pronounced marriage a sacred institution. So Spanheim, Bp. Hall and others. Owen: "Divine institution is sufficient to render any state or condition of life honorable." And divine prohibition is enough to alarm any one, who is abusing so good an institution as that of wedlock, Pr. 22:14; 23:27, 28. Lindsay: "Violations of chastity are too often lightly regarded in the world. Human laws can do little to bring such sins to punishment. But let not transgressors, whether unmarried or married, whether chargeable with whoredom or adultery, flatter themselves with hopes of escape, for their doom is certain and terrible."

8. One of the most ensnaring sins is covetousness, v. 5. Clarke: "Covetousness is the vice of old age." This is so far true that ungodly men probably love money more and more. It seems to us strange that men should love money the more, the less need they have of it, and the less time they have to use it. "Covetousness is a longing desire after the good things of this world for selfish gratification. Every one is for himself, until the love of self is overcome by the stronger feeling of love to God, and love to man for God's sake. When this takes place, we find our chief happiness in doing good to those who suffer adversity." Owen: "All covetousness is inconsistent with a Christian conversation according to the gospel." That is most wholesome advice of the Apostle: "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be

not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us all things richly to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life," 1 Tim. 6: 17-19.

9. Contentment is not only a solemn duty, but a great comfort to those who practise it. Agur's prayer was very wise: "Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die: remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me; lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain," Pr. 30: 7-9. Blessed is he who is in such a frame as leads him thus to pray every day. The way to contentment is not so much by bringing our condition to our minds as by bringing our minds to our condition. Those, who are now devils might have still been happy glorious angels; but they were not content with their lot and sphere, and fell headlong into darkness. "A Dives may murmur at his lot while a Lazarus is content." One thing is very noticeable in scripture, that avarice is often mentioned in connection with the worst vices; while contentment is spoken of as a blessed attainment.

10. The promises of God to his people suit all their cases and conditions, vs. 5, 6. They abound in strong assurances. Some of them cover all possible cases. It has been a favorite practice of some of the best Christians to mark portions of God's word so that as the pages are opened, the eye is at once drawn to his covenant engagements. Some have copied into a book scores of the exceeding great and precious promises, and then often conned them over. This exercise was profitable.

11. It would rid us of a thousand idle fears, and would blunt the edge of many a temptation, if we would constantly remember, that man is powerless, except as God sustains him and permits him to act, v. 6. His breath is in his nostrils. His strength is weakness. His wisdom is folly. He is crushed before the moth. If we would not fear man, let us constantly cultivate the fear of God; lay fast hold of his perfections and promises, and remember how puny a creature is man. Lindsay: "The arm of man can do no real damage to those whom God helps and defends." Owen: "The most effectual means to encourage our souls in all our sufferings, is to compare the power of God who will assist us, and that of man who doth oppress us." One Almighty is more mighty than all the mighties of earth and hell.

12. It is a duty to think often and lovingly of good pastors and

teachers both living and dead, v. 7. So weighty does the apostle regard this matter, that he brings it up again, in another form, in v. 17. Godly pastors are a great and unspeakable blessing, and should be highly esteemed in love for their works' sake. The Bible speaks in strong and terrible terms of reprehension of all faithless pretenders to sacred functions. "His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark, sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs," etc., Isa. 56: 10, 11. But good and loving servants of the Lord, who edify his church and love his people, are dear to Christ and to his church. Nor can the people of God act more wisely than to be followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises, Heb. 6: 12.

13. The great *rule* of godly pastors in the churches arises from their being leaders in the church, from their teaching sound doctrine, from their exercise of that discipline, which God has ordained for edification and not for destruction, and from setting a godly example in all things; and not at all from inventing or propagating doctrines, which God has no where taught us in his word; not from teaching for doctrines the commandments of men, not from making laws for the regulation of the moral conduct of men, not from claiming or exercising any authority of their own. They must preach the preaching that God bids them; they must inculcate nothing, for which they have not divine warrant; they must not lord it over God's heritage; they must in meekness instruct those that oppose themselves. All their authority is from Christ.

14. It is a great thing for us to have good patterns, by which to frame our lives, v. 7. The advantages of example over mere precept are that the former clearly defines what the duty is, shows that it is practicable, and awakens the spirit of imitation. God himself is the great pattern for us all, Matt. 5: 44, 45; Eph. 5: 1. But in mercy he causes good men to walk in wisdom before us; and then we should follow them as they follow Christ. Had none but Jesus forgiven his enemies, we might say he did it because he was the Son of God; but when we see Stephen doing the very same thing, we learn that the spirit of forgiveness is of the very essence of true piety in a mere man.

15. We should all make much of Christ, v. 8. Calvin: "The one only way of persevering in the true faith is to hold to the foundation and not depart from it even in the least. For he, that knows not Christ, is wise unto nothing but sheer vanity, although he grasp heaven and earth; for in Christ are hid all the treasures of heavenly wisdom."

16. We must be very careful as to what doctrines we embrace,

v. 9. There are damnable heresies, which utterly subvert the gospel, 2 Pet. 2:1. Then there are *divers and strange doctrines*, which, although they do not directly deny fundamental truth, yet draw men's minds away from the living word of God. Many conceits, and fables, and whimseys, at first apparently harmless, lead to the worst consequences. Truth is one; error is multiform. Let every man be on his guard. There is no profit in errors or fables in religion. They make no man wise or holy. If for a while they please the flesh, they never make men permanently happy. It is fatal to cleave to the shadow when the substance is offered us.

17. We cannot have Christianity and its opposite, v. 10. Duncan: "If men will pertinaciously and obstinately keep to ceremonies, they must remember that they thus deprive themselves of the benefit of Christ's sacrifice." Lindsay: "To cleave to Judaism is to reject Christ."

18. How exactly and minutely the types are fulfilled in Christ, v. 11. The bodies of the great sin-offerings were burned without the camp; and Jesus died outside of the city. Not a bone of the paschal lamb was broken, not a bone of our Lord was broken. There are many such particulars.

19. In every sense of the word Jesus sanctifies his people, v. 12. Owen: "The Lord Jesus, out of his incomprehensible love to his people, would spare nothing, avoid nothing, deny nothing, that was needful to their sanctification, their reconciliation and dedication to God."

20. If we know that we are in the path of duty, let us not regard reproach, v. 13. It may be bitter, cruel, devilish; but let us never deny the truth, nor sneak away from duty. McLean: "We must not steal out of the camp, and hide our heads, as if we were ashamed of the cause in which we are embarked. Our Lord says he will be ashamed of all such." See Mark 8:38; Luke 9:29. There is a sinful bashfulness as well as a wicked impudence.

## CHAPTER XIII.

VERSES 14-25.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS AND REQUESTS. BENEDICTIONS.

14 For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

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.

16 But to do good and communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

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.

18 Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.

19 But I beseech *you* the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.

20 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,

21 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.

22 And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words.

23 Know ye that *our* brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.

24 Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you.

25 Grace *be* with you all. Amen.

**T**HE mind of the apostle is full of thought in these closing sentences. It is remarkable that he twice pronounces a benediction, and twice says, Amen.

14. *For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.* Peshito: For we have here no abiding city; but we expect one that is future. Christ went out of Jerusalem, which then was, and was

in bondage with her children, and which was soon to be destroyed, and thus taught us that salvation was not to be sought in the temple, nor in the holy city, but at Calvary; and that if we desired a city that had foundations and permanence we must look for it not on earth, but in heaven. The speedy and awful doom of Jerusalem was no secret in the church. Christ had foretold it. Paul had spoken of it. All betokened the utter and speedy ruin of the Jewish State and city. Hence the peculiar force of the words of this verse to pious Hebrews. They are of great weight to all Christians. The world itself will be destroyed, and we who are in it must soon leave it for ever. Every thing earthly is of short duration and will soon pass away. The spirit of the passage is the same as that of 1 Cor. 7: 29-31, with the addition of the impending doom of Jerusalem, which was just at hand.

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.* The days for offering birds, and lambs, and goats, and bullocks were indeed past. In a few years every Levitical sacrifice should cease for ever. The temple itself should be destroyed, and all its rites should perish with it; but the gospel called Christians to offer spiritual sacrifices, which even the Old Testament highly commended. The apostle first names the *sacrifice of praise*, which was to be offered continually. "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me," Ps. 50: 23. This is beautifully called *the fruit of our lips*. From our lips our words proceed. Hosea, probably in reference to the worship of the calves in Bethel, calls the same offering a "rendering of the calves of our lips," Hos. 14: 2. And that we may not possibly mistake the meaning of the apostle, he explains what he had said by the phrase *giving thanks to his name*. All this kind of service was typified by the thank-offerings required by the law. Praise must not go alone:

16. *But to do good and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.* *To do good* gives the precise meaning of the word employed in the Greek. It is general, and does not specify the kind of good to be done; except that it has special reference to good done to man—beneficence. *To communicate* is to make common cause with others especially in the distribution of worldly goods. It embraces all acts of good fellowship, such as relieving want, counselling, exhorting, encouraging and commending good men. Such services are an odour of a sweet smell, and very pleasing to God, Phil. 4: 18. They are necessary to the honor of religion and the growth of the church. Such offices of love ceasing, piety will certainly die out in any community, and selfishness will reign with tyrannical power

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.* Peshito: Confide in your guides and hearken to them; for they watch for your souls, as men who must give an account of you, that they may do this with joy and not with anguish; for that would not be profitable to you. The general teaching of the verse is very clear. In remarking on v. 7 the nature and extent of ministerial authority was explained. The obedience of the people to their pastors is of a corresponding kind. It is not a servile obedience. It is not due to them as men, nor as lords, but as guides, helpers, watchmen, who love the flock not the fleece. Honor is due to the Sacred office. When it ceases to be given, religion is much disesteemed. The *submission* due to pastors and teachers is in the exercise of their ministerial authority executed according to the law of Christ's house. If spiritual guides go beyond their office and attempt to bind men's consciences by their own *dicta* duty requires us to resist them and deny their pretensions. The reason given for such obedience is the awful responsibility under which ministers act, and the loss sustained by the refractory. 1. They watch for your souls as they that must give account. 2. It will be unprofitable for you that your pastors should be filled with anguish when they give an account of their ministry among you.

18. *Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.* When Paul says, Pray for us, he either means, pray for Christ's ministers generally, or those of whom he had just spoken, or more probably himself and his immediate companions. A like request is made in 1 Thess. 5: 25; 2 Thess. 3: 1. in both of which cases the reference is to Paul, Timothy and Silas, who were then his companions. We do not know who were with him when he wrote this epistle, but it is probable those to whom he was writing were on this point well informed. When Paul asks for their prayers, he adds, *we trust we have a good conscience*; that is, we are not the bad men we are slanderously reported to be; and you may hope for a gracious answer. We are *willing to live honestly*; Peshito, conduct ourselves well. Either version gives the sense. The Peshito is most literal.

19. *But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.* Prison life is a hard life. To one, who wishes to preach the gospel it is a peculiarly trying life. Though God has received much glory from the faith and constancy of his people in bonds, yet we read of but few converts made to Christ by men in jail. The writings of such have been of great service to the church, as we see in the case of Paul, John, Alleine and Bunyan;

but the preaching of prisoners seldom has free course. Their hearers are generally few and their attempts to preach are under many disadvantages. The foregoing remarks proceed on the supposition that Paul was restrained from visiting them by being a prisoner. But there is no decisive evidence that this was so. It is admitted that Paul was a prisoner when he wrote the Epistle to the Ephesians. It is probable that this epistle was the next of his productions. If so, it may have been written during or just after his imprisonment. If he was at liberty and not in durance, he may have been detained from visiting them by such circumstances as are alluded to in Rom. 15:20-32. Compare Rom. 1:13; also 1 Thess. 2:17-20. Whatever may have detained him, the only thing left to him and his friends was prayer to God. Compare Philemon 22.

20. *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,*

21. *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.* This is the longest benediction found in any of the epistles. Some Reformed churches always use it in closing the services at the Lord's Supper. It is very fit for such a time, but its fitness is not confined to such occasions. It closes with a doxology to Christ. It is very rich in its suggestions of truth. It contains an allusion to each of Christ's three offices of Mediator. *The God of peace* is a phrase that occurs in four other places in Paul's writings. No other inspired writer uses it. It is a very striking and a very beautiful form of words, conveying a cluster of precious thoughts to the devout mind. This God of peace brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, and thus declared that all the claims Jesus had set up were valid, that he should have no more humiliation for ever, and that his resurrection sealed the doctrine of the gratuitous justification of all believers. Christ is *that great Shepherd of the sheep*. As a Shepherd he had been revealed in the Old Testament, Ps. 23:1-4; Ps. 80:1. To his disciples he had at large claimed that office for himself, John 10:1-18. This claim was so well understood in the primitive church, that the apostle of the circumcision did not think it necessary to give the slightest explanation of the title, but took it for granted that all would understand him, when he spoke of the Shepherd and Bishop of souls, etc., 1 Pet. 2:25:5:4. Good writers are not agreed as to the precise force of the epithet *great* here applied to the Shepherd. Some think it looks back to his being raised from the dead, and that his greatness thence arose. Others

make it look forward to the next phrase, and think he is great through the blood of the everlasting covenant. Others make it equivalent to *chief* in 1 Pet. 5:4, and regard it as distinguishing him from all merely human pastors, Eph. 4:11. These views are not discrepant, but harmonize. Our Lord is a great Shepherd in many ways, and on many accounts. We have before met the phrase, blood of the covenant, Heb. 10:29, on which see above. This covenant is here said to be *everlasting*. This epithet is often bestowed on the covenant of grace in the old testament, 2 Sam. 23:5; Jer. 32:38-41; Ezek. 37:26, 27. *Make you perfect*, make you complete, set you in order, fully fit you for every *good work*, a term well understood in the early ages of the church. See above on Heb. 10:24. Only here the word rendered good is that used in Luke 18:18, 19; Heb. 9:11; 10:1 and often. But all our good works are from God. "From me is thy fruit found," Hos. 14:8. "Without me ye can do nothing," John 15:5. "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure," Phil. 2:13. And so our apostle says that it is the God of peace that *worketh in us that which is well pleasing in his sight*. And all this by the mediation of our Saviour, *through Jesus Christ*. To whom (Jesus Christ) be *glory for ever and ever*, to the ages of ages. It points to an absolutely eternal duration in the future. *Amen*, a word borrowed from the Hebrew and transferred into many languages. At the beginning of a sentence it is a very solemn mode of averring. At the close of a sentence or prayer, it is the expression of devout response or concurrence in what has been said. It is fit for communion in worship.

22. *And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter to you in few words.* *Beseech*, so rendered in Rom. 12:1; Heb. 13:19; often rendered exhort. It is a word expressive of kind and earnest entreaty. It is cognate to the word rendered exhortation in the same clause. The exhortation, to which he asks their close attention is the latter part of this epistle. The *few words* may relate to the exhortation alone, which is exceedingly condensed; or it may refer to the whole epistle, which, if we consider the greatness of the matters handled, is also very much condensed. Some, however, think the word of exhortation refers to the instructions of pastors applying, explaining and enforcing the teachings of the word of God. This may be so, but the former seems to be the more obvious explanation.

23. *Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.* Paul sometimes calls Timothy "my son," 1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 2:1; but here and in some other cases he calls him a brother, as in 2 Cor. 1:1; Col. 1:1; 1 Thess.

3:2. He uses the former when he is writing to him; the latter, when he is writing of him. Duncan: "Church history informs us, that Timothy was a prisoner at Rome the seventh year of Nero, and set at liberty the eighth; at which time the apostle Paul was a prisoner too, though at large" (that is with many privileges, see Acts 28:30, 31); "he therefore here gives them the good news of Timothy's deliverance, and promises to see them along with him." Of course this promise is conditioned on the will of God. McLean: "It is not certain that ever Paul or Timothy visited the Jewish believers in Judea as was intended; though Chrysostom says, that Paul being set at liberty went to Spain, from thence to Judea, and afterwards returned to Rome." From this verse it also appears that at the time of this writing Paul had a fair prospect of speedy release, or was already at liberty.

24. *Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you.* *Salute*, often rendered greet. It occurs very often in Paul's writings—in Rom. 16 as often as eighteen times. Brown: "Christianity taketh not away civility, humanity, and gentle courteousness, but rather helpeth it forward by making it run in a clear Christian channel: it is humanity and civility to be sending our respects unto our beloved friends and good willers, and Christianity putteth a noble and heavenly dye upon this." Three kinds of salutation seem to have been in use in the primitive church. One was by word only, as here, *They of Italy salute you*, that is, by sending their greetings in this epistle. So a man in person might salute another with words of kindness. Another mode of salutation was by embracing. The word is so rendered in Heb. 11:13, where the act of faith in the promises is compared to the act of affectionate greeting given by a man to his friend, whom he meets. In a third case the salutation was by the kiss, 1 Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:12; 2 Thess. 5:26; 1 Pet. 5:14. This was a mere custom, and never an ordinance. It was and at the time was esteemed a token of affectionate regard. Yet it was liable to abuse, and has fallen into general, though not universal disuse.

25. *Grace be with you all. Amen.* This is one of the shortest benedictions. The peculiar form of it seems to be borrowed from the Greeks. The Hebrews said, Mercy be with you; and the Romans, Peace be with you. The form of benediction found here is an authoritative pronouncement of the divine favor towards those addressed in the epistle. On *Amen* see above on verse 21.

The subscriptions of the epistles are altogether unreliable, being written by modern authors. Some of them are known to be

wholly erroneous. They are no part of scripture. That commonly attached to this epistle is not generally regarded with respect. We have no evidence of its correctness, even if it is true.

DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL REMARKS.

1. We have no permanent abode here, v. 14. Let us act accordingly. One said to another, "You build as if you were to live always." Many a man plans as if he should never die. It is both common and easy to fall into this sin. Calvin: "They, whose life is ever exempt from trouble, commonly imagine their rest is in this world." The world is vain and fleeting. Men themselves are still more so. But how few seem to have any sense of these things!

2. As we have no city or home here, let us seek one to come, v. 14. There is a better world than this is, or ever was, even that which Abraham sought, one whose maker and builder is God, Heb. 11:8. All kingdoms on earth are unstable, but there is a kingdom which cannot be moved, Heb. 12:28. Guyse: "Being convinced of the uncertain, transitory state of all things here, let us seek a city of everlasting rest and safety in the world to come." Owen: "Whereas the camp contained not only ecclesiastical, but also political privileges, we ought to be ready to forego all civil accommodations also in houses, lands, possessions, converse with men of the same nation, when we are called thereunto on account of Christ and the gospel."

3. While the gospel utterly denies that there now exists an order of men filling the priestly office, and rightly offering literal sacrifices, it admits that all Christians are kings and priests unto God, are a royal priesthood, 1 Pet. 2:5, 9; Rev. 1:5, 6. They become such by being washed, not in water but in blood, Rev. 1:5. They have all made a covenant with God by sacrifice, Ps. 50:5. They are all beautifully robed, being clothed with righteousness, Ps. 132:9. They are anointed with the most precious oil—an unction that abideth, and that teacheth them all things, 1 John 2:20, 27. Their duties are to take care of the temple. Each good man is a temple of God. They must take care of the vessels of the sanctuary, and possess their vessels in sanctification, 1 Thess. 4:4. They must bless mankind. Bless and curse not. They must intercede for men. This is a great duty, Gen. 18:32. It has great efficacy, Matt. 24:22. They must offer sacrifices, not propitiatory sacrifices, nor sin-offerings. To do that would be greatly to insult Christ, Isa. 66:3. But they must offer spiritual

sacrifices, 1 Pet. 2 : 5 ; such as are prescribed in the word of God.

*A. Prayer.* David so styled this act of worship : " Let my prayer be set before thee as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice," Ps. 141 : 2. In heaven itself are " golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints," Rev. 5 : 8. Just so sure as religion flourishes here below, prayer greatly abounds. This sacrifice must be offered without ceasing, 1 Thess. 5 : 17.

*B. Praise.* " Offer unto God thanksgiving ; and pay thy vows unto the Most High. Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me," Ps. 50 : 14 : 23. This sacrifice must be offered continually. The weeping prophet, foretelling brighter days, says, " Then shall be heard the voice of joy, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that shall say, Praise the Lord of hosts : for the Lord is good ; for his mercy endureth for ever : and of them that shall bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the Lord," Jer. 33 : 10, 11. O let our resolve be, " We will bless the Lord from this time forth and for evermore," Ps. 115 : 18. " I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord," Ps. 116 : 18. Compare Ps. 69 : 30, 31. The New Testament tells us how this praise is to be offered, Eph. 5 : 19, 20 ; Col. 3 : 16.

*C. Alms and labors of love,* Heb. 13 : 16. It was the Master who said, " It is more blessed to give than to receive," Acts 20 : 35. For benevolence and beneficence there is no substitute. Compare Phil. 4 : 18. The cross of Christ never makes men cruel, but on the contrary—kind and tender-hearted.

*D.* Another spiritual sacrifice is *true penitence of spirit.* With this God is always well pleased " The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit : a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise," Ps. 51 : 17.

*E. We must lay our whole selves on the altar of God,* and consent to be his, his only, and his forever. " I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service," Rom. 12 : 1. Paul said he would joy and rejoice to be offered upon the sacrifice and service of the faith of his beloved Philipians, Phil. 2 : 17. From each of these sacrifices sweet odors ascend to God, when they are kindled by fire, not the fire of human passion, but of love to God ; for " every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt," Mark 9 : 49. Such priests with such duties must be holy, and not like Eli's sons, causing the sacrifice to be abhorred. So spake the prophet : " Ye shall be named the priests of the Lord : men shall call you the ministers of our God," Isa. 61 : 6. All these spiritual sacrifices are to be offered to God, not to our own drag and net,

not to our vanity and pride, but to God alone. And they are all to be offered "by him," that is, by Christ. Owen: "The great, yea the only encouragement, which we have to bring our sacrifices to God with expectation of acceptance, lieth herein, that we are to offer them by him who can, and will make them acceptable in his sight." "God will no more accept the *praises* than he will accept the *prayers* of men except through Christ." The same is true of acts of beneficence and alms-giving. Many commentators quote the Rabbis as saying, "In the time of the Messiah, all sacrifices shall cease except the sacrifice of praise." By praise some understand the whole of gospel worship.

4. If men will not hear and obey good pastors, nor be warned and counselled by them, the consequences must be dreadful, v. 17. 'In this matter God's honor is concerned. The good of the church requires it. Equity and the reason of the case exact it.' The ministers for whom such demands are set up are painstaking men who '*watch for souls.*' When at a dead hour of the night, John Welsh was found praying and weeping in agony, and his wife asked, "What is the matter?" He replied, "Matter enough, woman. Three thousand souls to answer for, and many of them quite unprepared to leave the world." On the other hand every godly minister can say with the beloved disciple: "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth," 3 John 4; or with the Apostle to the Gentiles: "Dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved," Phil. 4: 1. Not that any good minister of Christ claims dominion over the faith, the morals, the purse or the liberties of his people, 2 Cor. 1: 24. Lindsay: "It is self-evident that the submission here enjoined is not an absolute, implicit, unthinking submission to whatever the caprice of rulers might dictate, irrespectively of all persuasion in the members of its being right or wrong. There is no such authority legitimately exercised in the church of Christ. Believers must be ruled as intelligent, moral, and responsible beings, who search the Scriptures like the Bereans, to see whether the instructions given them are well-grounded."

5. The office of gospel minister is awfully solemn and responsible, v. 17. Nothing is more so. Compare Ezek. 3: 17-21. *They must give account.* That account will be strict, solemn, awful. Yet when pastors and people have done their duty, the account shall be rendered with joy, and not with grief. "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?" 1 Thess. 2: 19. Scott: "Dreadful will be their condemnation, if they be slothful, selfish,

or unfaithful." Gouge: "Faithful ministers have an eye to their account." These things should make men quite willing that their pastors and teachers should be fearless and faithful.

6. A dreadful end awaits all unprofitable hearers of the blessed Gospel, v. 17.

7. Let us never be guilty of the folly and wickedness of condemning persons because they are reviled and cast out, neither let us be cast down with overmuch sorrow because the worst things are charged against us, v. 18. The applause of men is quite pleasing to our carnal nature. But it is a very small thing to be judged of man's judgment. Often that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God. Of himself and Timothy Paul says: "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world," 2 Cor. 1:12. Heubner: "If the world were an eternal dwelling-place, and to remain among the people of the world were our everlasting destiny, it would be hard to bear reproach; but we have here but a brief sojourn."

8. There is nothing like a good conscience; there is no substitute for it. Its value is known to all the righteous, v. 18. Jehovah himself never despises it. Starke: "A good conscience is a great comfort, and gives us a good confidence before God and men: before God, to whom we are permitted filially to turn in all need and anxiety; before men, that we need not be shamefaced, but may be able to encounter with joyfulness the eyes of every man." This was the great means of supporting Paul in all his trials, Acts 23:1; 24:16; 2 Tim. 1:3.

9. The best men need the prayers of others, v. 18. Their conflict is dreadful and if God leaves them, it is wholly unequal. It is not only against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places, Eph. 6:12. In view of such a case, Paul calls on his Ephesians continually to pray for him, Eph. 6:18-20. "Intercessory prayer is one of the most sacred bonds of the Christian Commonwealth." Clarke: "Few Christian congregations feel as they ought, that it is their bounden duty to pray for the success of the gospel, both among themselves and in the world. The church is weak, dark, poor and imperfect, because it prays little." Scott: "Christians should pray fervently and constantly for their ministers, and for all who sustain that sacred character: for these would generally walk more honorably, and labor more successfully, if the people were more earnest in praying for them."

10. Believing prayer is efficacious, v. 19. Many promises, many commands and many examples given in the word of God settle the point.

11. Let us desire the benedictions of Christ and of his servants speaking in his name, vs. 20, 21, 25. That contained in vs. 20, 21, is so wonderfully constructed that it seems impossible to improve it. Many attempts have been made to paraphrase it, but all of them have been marked failures. It is itself full, clear, rich, heavenly.

12. Never lose sight of the blood of the covenant, nor of Jesus Christ who shed that blood, and administers that covenant, vs. 20, 21. McCheyne: "If you would live in sight of heaven, live in sight of Calvary."

13. We have need of divine aid and efficiency in every step of our progress heavenward. Lindsay: "Not only is it God's will we are to do, but it is God's power that is to fit us for doing it."

14. Nor can we ever too much delight in the God of peace, or in the peace of God, v. 20. Whoever has them is truly and eternally enriched. Owen: "If this be his glory that he is the God of peace, how excellent and glorious is that peace from whence he is so denominated, which is principally the peace which we have in himself by Jesus Christ."

15. We may please ourselves; and that satisfies some. We may please our fellow-men, and that satisfies more. But there is really nothing done to purpose till we please God himself, v. 21.

16. There is no higher kind of worship on earth than Doxology; yet that kind of worship is here offered to Christ. The same is seen in Rom. 9: 5; 2 Tim. 4: 18; 2 Pet. 3: 18; Rev. 1: 6; 5: 12,

13. There is no fair way of eluding the force of arguments from such scriptures in favor of the supreme divinity of Jesus Christ.

17. Though ministers are not responsible for their success, but only for their faithfulness; yet they ought greatly to desire large usefulness, and use every fair means to secure it, v. 22.

18. All our best conceptions of spiritual and heavenly things are poor and meager, compared with the glory of the things themselves, v. 20.

19. It is a great joy to the godly to see good and useful men at liberty to proclaim the truth wherever they please, v. 23. And it is a sad and dark day when bonds and imprisonments befall the faithful heralds of the cross.

20. No man knows the future. Paul hoped shortly in company with Timothy to see the Hebrew Christians, to whom he wrote,

v. 23. He may have done so, but it is not certain nor probable that he did.

21. Cultivate kindness and express courtesy to all good men, especially to all good ministers.

22. Grace, 'tis a charming sound, v. 25. To us sinners, there is hardly a sweeter word. Grace suits our case exactly. When the blessed Master says, "My grace is sufficient for thee," the feeblest may exult, the most timid may triumph. Heubner: "The grace of God is the highest wish for ourselves and others," Ps. 106:4. We need grace to pardon, to renew, to enlighten, to sanctify, to restrain, to sustain, to strengthen, to comfort, to guide and to glorify. We need all that is promised; and all is promised that we need. It saves, it makes glad, it enables the feeble to be as David, and the house of David to be as the angel of God. It is a joyous truth that we can sing and boast of the riches of his grace.

TO ALL, WHOSE HOPE OF LIFE SPRINGS FROM A RELIANCE ON  
THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST JESUS THE LORD; GRACE BE  
UNTO YOU, AND PEACE, FROM HIM WHICH IS, AND WHICH  
WAS, AND WHICH IS TO COME, AND FROM THE SEVEN  
SPIRITS WHICH ARE BEFORE HIS THRONE; AND  
FROM JESUS CHRIST, WHO IS THE FAITH-  
FUL WITNESS, AND THE FIRST-BEGOT-  
TEN OF THE DEAD, AND THE PRINCE  
OF THE KINGS OF THE EARTH.

AMEN.





