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COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY ON  
HEBREWS

*by Adam Clarke.*

*“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without  
which no man shall see the Lord” Heb 12:14*

Spreading Scriptural Holiness to the World

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# A COMMENTARY AND CRITICAL NOTES

ON THE

# HOLY BIBLE

## OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

DESIGNED AS A HELP TO A BETTER UNDERSTANDING  
OF THE SACRED WRITINGS

**BY ADAM CLARKE, LL.D., F.S.A., &c.**

A NEW EDITION, WITH THE  
AUTHOR'S FINAL CORRECTIONS

**For 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.**

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# HEBREWS

## INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

THE chief points in controversy, relative to the Epistle to the Hebrews, though discussed by many, have not in my opinion been treated so successfully by any writer as by Dr. Lardner; he has entered into the whole controversy, and brought his knowledge from far. I shall avail myself of his labours as the best on the subject, and generally use his own words.

“I shall,” says he,” inquire, 1. To *whom* it was written. 2. In what *language*. 3. By *whom*. 4. The *time* and *place* of writing it.

“I. In the first place, let us consider to whom this epistle was written.

“Dr. *Lightfoot* thought that this epistle was sent by Paul to the believing Jews of Judea; ‘a people,’ says he, ‘that had been much engaged to him, for his care of their poor, getting collections for them all along in his travels.’ He adds, ‘It is not to be doubted, indeed, that he intends the discourse and matter of this epistle to the Jews throughout their dispersion. Yet does he endorse it and send it chiefly to the Hebrews, or the Jews of Judea, the principal part of the circumcision, as the properest centre to which to direct it, and from whence it might be best diffused in time to the whole circumference of the dispersion.’ *Whitby*, in his preface to the Epistle to the Hebrews, is of the same opinion, and argues much after the same manner as *Lightfoot*.

“So likewise *Mill*, *Pearson*, *Lewis Capellus*, and *Beza*, in his preface to this epistle, and *Beausobre* and *L’Enfant*, the editors of the French New Testament at Berlin, in their general preface to St. Paul’s epistles, and in their preface to this epistle in particular.

“Of this Mr. Hallet had no doubt, who in his synopsis of the epistle, says, that this epistle was particularly designed for the Hebrew Christians, who dwelt in one certain place, and was sent thither, as appears from the apostle’s saying, <sup><S139></sup>**Hebrews 13:19, 23**: ‘I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner: I will see you.’ And what

particular place can this be supposed to be but Judea? There, the Christians were continually persecuted by the unbelieving Jews, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles; and as St. Paul takes notice, <sup><sup>1</sup>**1 Thessalonians 2:14**; <sup><sup>2</sup>**Hebrews 10:32-36; 12:4, 5**. By these persecutions the Hebrew Christians were tempted to *apostatize* from Christianity, and to think there was strength in the arguments used by the persecutors in favour of Judaism. The apostle, therefore, sets himself to guard against both these dangers.</sup></sup>

“This appears to me to be the most probable opinion: for, 1. It is the opinion of the ancient Christian writers who received this epistle. It may be taken for granted, that this was the opinion of *Clement of Alexandria*, and *Jerome*, and *Euthalius*, who supposed this epistle to have been first written in Hebrew, and afterwards translated into Greek. It may be allowed to have been also the opinion of many others who quote this epistle, to have been written to Hebrews, when they say nothing to the contrary. Nor do I recollect any of the ancients, who say it was written to Jews living *out of* Judea.

“*Chrysostom* says that the epistle was sent to the believing Jews of Palestine, and supposes that the apostle afterwards made them a visit. *Theodoret*, in his preface to the epistle, allows it to have been sent to the same Jews; and *Theophylact*, in his argument of the epistle, expressly says, as *Chrysostom*, that it was sent to the Jews of Palestine. So that this was the general opinion of the ancients.

“There are in this epistle many things especially suitable to the believers in Judea; which must lead us to think it was written to *them*. I shall select such passages.

“1. <sup><sup>3002</sup>**Hebrews 1:2**: ‘Has in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.’</sup>

“2. <sup><sup>304D</sup>**Hebrews 4:2**: ‘For unto us was the Gospel preached, as well as unto them.’</sup>

“3. <sup><sup>3001</sup>**Hebrews 2:1-4**: ‘Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have Heard: How then 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; God also bearing them witness with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost.’</sup>

“Does not this exhortation, and the reason with which it is supported, peculiarly suit the believers of Judea, where Christ himself first taught, and then his disciples after him; confirming their testimony with very numerous and conspicuous miracles?”

“4. The people to whom this epistle is sent were well acquainted with our Saviour’s sufferings, as they of Judea must have been. This appears in <sup><S010></sup>**Hebrews 1:3; 2:9,18; 5:7, 8; 9:14, 28; 10:11;** <sup><S122></sup>**Hebrews 12:2,3; 13:12.**

“5. <sup><S612></sup>**Hebrews 5:12:** ‘For when ye ought to be teachers of others,’ and what follows, is most properly understood of Christians in Jerusalem and Judea, to whom the Gospel was first preached.

“6. What is said, <sup><S004></sup>**Hebrews 6:4-6,** and <sup><S1025></sup>**Hebrews 10:26, 29,** is most probably applicable to *apostates* in Judea.

“7. <sup><S102></sup>**Hebrews 10:32-34:** ‘But to call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions;’ to the end of <sup><S1034></sup>**Hebrews 10:34.** This leads us to the Church of Jerusalem, which had suffered much, long before the writing of this epistle, even very soon after they had received the knowledge of the truth. Compare <sup><A081></sup>**Acts 8:1; 9:1, 2; 11:19,** and <sup><S1214></sup>**1 Thessalonians 2:14.** *Grotius* supposes as much.

“8. Those exhortations, <sup><S1313></sup>**Hebrews 13:13, 14,** must have been very suitable to the case of the Jews at Jerusalem, at the supposed time of writing this epistle; a few years before the war in that country broke out.

“9. The regard shown in this epistle to the rulers of the Church or Churches to which it is sent, is very remarkable. They are mentioned twice or thrice, first in <sup><S1337></sup>**Hebrews 13:7:** ‘Remember your rulers, who have spoken unto you the word of God; whose faith imitate, considering the end of their conversation.’ These were dead, as *Grotius* observes. And *Theodoret’s* note is to this purpose. He intends the saints that were dead—Stephen the proto-martyr, James the brother of John, and James called the Just. And there were many others who were taken off by the Jewish rage. Consider these, says he, and, observing their example, imitate their faith. Then again, at <sup><S1317></sup>**Hebrews 13:17:** ‘Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves. For they watch for your souls.’ And once more, <sup><S1334></sup>**Hebrews 13:24:** ‘Salute all them that have the rule over

you, and all the saints.’ Upon which Theodoret says: This way of speaking intimates, that their rulers did not need such instruction; for which reason he did not write to them, but to their disciples. That is a fine observation. And Whitby upon that verse says: Hence it seems evident that this epistle was not sent to the bishops or rulers of the Church, but to the whole Church, or the laity; and it may deserve to be considered whether this repeated notice of the rulers among them does not afford ground to believe that some of the *apostles* were still in Judea. Whether there be sufficient reason to believe that or not, I think these notices very proper and suitable to the state of the Jewish believers in Judea; for I am persuaded, that not only James, and all the other apostles, had exactly the same doctrine with Paul, but that all the elders likewise, and all the understanding men among the Jewish believers, embraced the same doctrine. They were, as I understand, the multitude only, *πληθος*, *plebs*, or the men of lower rank among them, who were attached to the peculiarities of the Mosaic law and the customs of their ancestors. This may be argued from what James and the elders of Jerusalem say to Paul, <sup><4213></sup>**Acts 21:20-22**: ‘Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are that believe; and they are all zealous of the law. What is it, therefore? The multitude must needs come together.’ It is hence evident that the zeal for the law, which prevailed in the minds of many, was not approved by James or the elders. That being the case, these recommendations of a regard for their rulers, whether apostles or elders, were very proper in an epistle sent to the believers in Judea.

“For these reasons, I think that this epistle was sent to the Jewish believers at Jerusalem and in Judea. But there are objections which must be considered.

“*Obj.* 1. <sup><8161></sup>**Hebrews 6:10**: ‘God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love-in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.’ Upon which Dr. *Wall* remarks: Here again we are put upon thinking to what Church or what Christians this is said; for as to those of Jerusalem, we read much in Paul’s former letters of their poverty, and of their being ministered to by the Gentile Christians of Galatia, Macedonia, and Corinth; and in the Acts, by the Antiochians; but nowhere of their ministering to other saints. This objection, perhaps, might be strengthened from <sup><8131></sup>**Hebrews 13:2**: ‘Be not forgetful to entertain strangers.’ And from <sup><81316></sup>**Hebrews 13:16**: ‘To do good, and to communicate, forget not.’

“*Ans.* But the poverty of the Jews in Judea, and the contributions of the Gentile Churches for their relief, are no reasons why such admonitions as these should not be sent to them. They are properly directed to all Christians, that they may be induced to exert themselves to the utmost. The Gentile Churches, among whom St. Paul made collections for the saints in Judea, were not rich. As he says, <sup><40126></sup>**1 Corinthians 1:26**: ‘For ye know your calling, brethren—not many mighty, not many noble, are called.’ And of the Churches in Macedonia, he says, <sup><4782></sup>**2 Corinthians 8:2**: ‘How that, in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy, and their deep poverty, had abounded unto the riches of their liberality.’ In like manner, there might be instances of liberality to the distressed among the believers in Judea. There is a very fine example recorded, <sup><44236></sup>**Acts 9:36, 39**; nor was there ever any city or country in the world to whom that exhortation, ‘Be not forgetful to entertain strangers,’ or, Be not unmindful of hospitality, **της φιλοχενιας μη επιλανθανεσθε**, could be more properly given, than Jerusalem and Judea. For the people there must have been much accustomed to it at their festivals, when there was a great resort thither from all countries; and the writer of an epistle to the Christian inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judea would naturally think of such an admonition; being desirous that they should not fall short of others in that respect. And we may here, not unfitly, recollect the history of St. Paul’s going to Jerusalem; and how he and his fellow travellers were entertained at Cæsarea, in the house of Philip the evangelist and at Jerusalem, in the house of Mnason, an old disciple, as related <sup><42108></sup>**Acts 21:8-16**.

“*Obj.* 2. Upon <sup><81318></sup>**Hebrews 13:18,19**, the same Dr. Wall says: One would think that Paul should have prayed and purposed to go anywhere rather than to Jerusalem, where he had been so used, and where he fell into that five years’ imprisonment, from which he was but just now delivered.

“*Ans.* But there is not any improbability that Paul might now desire to see his countrymen in Judea, if he might go thither with safety, as I think he might. Almost three years had now passed since he left Judea; and his trial, or apology, had been over two years; and he was now set at liberty by the emperor himself. No man, not very presumptuous would admit a thought of disturbing him.

“*Obj.* 3. St. Peter’s epistles were written to the Hebrew Christians, scattered in Asia and Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, and Bithynia. St. Paul must have written an epistle to those Hebrew Christians to whom St. Peter

writes his two epistles. For St. Peter, ~~610B15~~ **2 Peter 3:15**, cites to them what *Paul had written unto them*. No epistle of Paul was written to the Hebrews particularly but this; so that these must be the Hebrews of the above named countries. To which I answer: That St. Peter's epistles were not sent to Jews, but to Gentiles, or to all Christians in general, in the places above mentioned, as will be clearly shown hereafter. When St. Peter says, *As Paul has written unto you*, he may intend Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, and some other epistles written to Gentiles. If he refers at all to this Epistle to the Hebrews, it is comprehended under that expression, ~~610B16~~ **2 Peter 3:16**. *As also in all his epistles*.

“*Obj.* 4. This Epistle to the Hebrews seems to have been written in *Greek*. But if it had been sent to the Jewish believers in Judea, it would have been written in *Hebrew*. To which I answer: That, allowing the epistle to have been written in Greek, it might be sent to the believers in Judea. If St. Paul wrote to the Jewish believers in Palestine he intended the epistle for general use—for all Christians, whether of Jewish or Gentile original. Many of the Jews in Judea understood Greek; few of the Jews out of Judea understood Hebrew. The Greek language was almost universal, and therefore generally used. *All* St Paul's epistles are in *Greek*, even that to the *Romans*. And are not both St. Peter's epistles in Greek. And St. John's, and St. Jude's? Did not St. James likewise write in Greek, who is supposed to have resided in Jerusalem from the time of our Lord's ascension to the time of his own death? His epistle is inscribed *to the twelve tribes scattered abroad*. But I presume that they of the twelve tribes who dwelt in Judea are not excluded by him, but intended. Nor could he be unwilling that this epistle should be read and understood by those who were his especial charge. The epistle written by Barnabas, a Levite, or ascribed to him, was written in Greek; not now to mention any other Jewish writers who have used the Greek language.

“II. Thus we are unawares brought to the inquiry, in what *language* was this epistle written? For there have been doubts about it, among both ancients and moderns. Yet many learned and judicious moderns have been of opinion that *Greek*, and not *Hebrew*, was the original language of this epistle; *Beausobre*, *James Capellus*, *S. Basnage*, *Mill*, in his Prolegomena to the New Testament, and the late *Mr. Wetstein*, and also *Spanheim*, in his Dissertation concerning the author of this epistle, which well deserves to be consulted. One argument for this, both of *Spanheim* and *Wetstein*, is taken from the Greek paronomasias in the epistle, or the frequent



concurrence of Greek words of like sound; which seem to be an argument not easy to be answered.

“Some ancient Christian writers were of opinion that the Epistle to the Hebrews was written in the *Hebrew* language, and translated into Greek by *Luke* or *Clement* of Rome. *Jerome*, in particular, seems to have supposed that this epistle was written in Hebrew; and *Origen* is also sometimes reckoned among those who were of this opinion. But I think I have shown it to be probable that he thought it was written in Greek. It seems likewise that they must have been of the same opinion who considered the elegance of the Greek language of this epistle as an objection against its having been written by St. Paul; for if the Greek epistle had been supposed to be a *translation*, the superior elegance of the style of this epistle above that of the other epistles of Paul, could have afforded no objection against his being the author of it. Indeed the ancients, as *Beausobre* said, formerly had no other reason to believe that St. Paul wrote in Hebrew, but that he wrote to the *Hebrews*. So, likewise, says *Capellus*. The title deceived them. And because it was written to *Hebrews*, they concluded it was written IN *Hebrew*; for none of the ancients appear to have seen a copy of this epistle in that language.

“III. I now proceed to the third inquiry, Who is the writer of this epistle? And many things offer in favour of the Apostle PAUL.

“1. It is ascribed to him by many of the ancients. Here I think myself obliged briefly to recollect the testimonies of ancient authors; and I shall rank them under two heads: First, the testimonies of writers who used the *Greek tongue*; then the testimonies of those who lived in that part of the Roman empire where the *Latin* was the vulgar language.

“There are some passages in the epistles of *Ignatius*, about the year 107, which may be thought, by some to contain allusions to the Epistle to the Hebrews. This epistle seems to be referred to by *Polycarp*, bishop of Smyrna, in his epistle written to the Philippians, in the year 108, and in the relation of his martyrdom, written about the middle of the second century. This epistle is often quoted as Paul’s by *Clement* of *Alexandria*, about the year 194. It is received and quoted as Paul’s by *Origen*, about 230. It was also received as the apostle’s by *Dionysius*, bishop of *Alexandria*, in 247. It is plainly referred to by *Theognostus*, of *Alexandria*, about 282. It appears to have been received by *Methodius* about 292; by *Pamphilius*, about 294; and by *Archelaus*, bishop in Mesopotamia, at the beginning of

the *fourth* century; by the *Manichees* in the *fourth*; and by the *Paulicians*, in the *seventh* century. It was received and ascribed to Paul by *Alexander*, bishop of Alexandria, in the year 313; and by the *Arians*, in the *fourth* century. *Eusebius*, bishop of Cæsarea, about 315, says: ‘There are fourteen epistles of Paul manifest and well known; but yet there are some who reject that to the Hebrews, alleging in behalf of their opinion, that it was not received by the Church of Rome as a writing of Paul.’ It is often quoted by *Eusebius* himself as Paul’s, and sacred Scripture. This epistle was received by *Athanasius*, without any hesitation. In his enumeration of St. Paul’s fourteen epistles, this is placed next after the two to the Thessalonians, and before the Epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon. The same order is observed in the *Synopsis of Scripture*, ascribed to him. This epistle is received as Paul’s by *Adamantius*, author of a dialogue against the Marcionites, in 380; and by *Cyril of Jerusalem*, in 347; by the *council of Laodicea*, in 363; where St. Paul’s epistles are enumerated in the same order as in *Athanasius* just noticed. This epistle is also received as Paul’s by *Epiphanius*, about 368 by the *apostolical constitutions*, about the end of the *fourth* century; by *Basil*, about 370; by *Gregory Nazianzen*, in 370; by *Amphilochius* also. But he says it was not received by all as Paul’s. It was received by *Gregory Nyssen*, about 370; by *Didymus*, of Alexandria, about the same time; by *Ephrem*, the Syrian, in 370, and by the *Churches of Syria*; by *Diodorus*, of Tarsus, in 378; by *Hierax*, a learned *Egyptian*, about the year 302; by *Serapion*, bishop of Thumis, in Egypt, about 347; by *Titus*, bishop of Bostria, in Arabia, about 362; by *Theodore*, bishop of Mopsuestia, in Cilicia, about the year 394; by *Chrysostom*, about the year 398; by *Severian*, bishop of Gabala, in Syria, in 401; by *Victor*, of Antioch, about 401; by *Palladius*, author of a Life of Chrysostom, about 408; by *Isidore*, of Pelusium, about 412; by *Cyril*, bishop of Alexandria, in 412; by *Theodoret*, in 423; by *Eutherius*, bishop of Tiana, in Cappadocia, in 431; by *Socrates*, the ecclesiastical historian, about 440; by *Euthalius*, in Egypt, about 458; and probably by *Dionysius*, falsely called the *Areopagite*, by the author of the *Questiones et Responsiones*, commonly ascribed to *Justin Martyr*, but rather written in the *fifth* century. It is in the *Alexandrian manuscript*, about the year 500; and in the *Stichometry of Nicephorus*, about 806; is received as Paul’s by *Cosmas*, of Alexandria, about 535; by *Leontius*, of Constantinople, about 610; by *John Damascen*, in 730; by *Photius*, about 858; by *Æcumenius*, about the year 950; and by *Theophylact*, in 1070. I shall not go any lower.

“I shall now rehearse such authors as lived in that part of the Roman empire where the *Latin* was the vulgar tongue.

“Here, in the first place, offers *Clement*, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, written about the year 96, or as some others say, about the year 70. For though he wrote in *Greek*, we rank him among Latin authors, because he was *bishop of Rome*. In his epistle are many passages, generally supposed to contain allusions or references to the Epistle to the Hebrews. *Irenæus*, bishop of Lyons, about 178, as we are assured by *Eusebius*, alleged some passages out of this epistle, in a work now lost; nevertheless it does not appear that he received it as St. Paul’s. By *Tertullian*, presbyter of Carthage, about the year 200, this epistle is ascribed to *Barnabas*. *Caius*, about 212, supposed to have been presbyter in the Church of Rome, reckoning up the epistles of St. Paul, mentions *thirteen* only, omitting that to the Hebrews. Here I place *Hippolytus*, who flourished about 220; but it is not certainly known where he was bishop, whether of *Porto*, in Italy, or of some place in the east: we have seen evidences that he did not receive the Epistle to the Hebrews as St. Paul’s, and perhaps that may afford an argument that, though he wrote in Greek, he lived where the *Latin* tongue prevailed. This epistle is not quoted by *Cyprian*, bishop of Carthage about 248, and afterwards; nor does it appear to have been received by *Novatus*, otherwise called *Novation*, presbyter of Rome about 251. Nevertheless it was in after times received by his followers. It may be thought by some that this epistle is referred to by *Arnobius*, about 306, and by *Lactantius* about the same time. It is plainly quoted by another *Arnobius*, in the *fifth* century. It was received as Paul’s by *Hilary*, of Poitiers, about 354, and by *Lucifer*, bishop of Cagliari, in Sardinia, about the same time, and by his followers: it was also received as Paul’s by *C. M. Victorianus*. Whether it was received by *Optatus*, of Milevi, in Africa, about 370, is doubtful. It was received as Paul’s by *Ambrose*, bishop of Milan, about 374; by the *Priscillianists*, about 378. About the year 380 was published a Commentary upon thirteen epistles of Paul only, ascribed to *Hilary*, deacon of Rome. It was received as Paul’s by *Philaster*, bishop of Brescia, in Italy, about 380; but he takes notice that it was not then received by all. His successor, *Gaudentius*, about 387, quotes this epistle as Paul’s; it is also readily received as Paul’s by *Jerome*, about 392, and he says it was *generally received by the Greeks, and the Christians in the east*, but not by *all the Latins*. It was received as Paul’s by *Rufinus*, in 397; it is also in the *Catalogue* of the *third council of Carthage*, in 397. It is frequently quoted

by *Augustine* as St. Paul's. In one place he says: 'It is of doubtful authority with some; but he was inclined to follow the opinion of the Churches in the east, who received it among the canonical Scriptures. It was received as Paul's by *Chromatius*, bishop of Aquileia, in Italy, about 401; by *Innocent*, bishop of Rome, about 402; by *Paulinus*, bishop of Nola, in Italy, about 403. *Pelagias*, about 405, wrote a commentary upon thirteen epistles of Paul, omitting that to the Hebrews; nevertheless it was received by his followers. It was received by *Cassian*, about 424; by *Prosper*, of Aquitain, about 434, and by the authors of the works ascribed to him; by *Eucherius*, bishop of Lyons, in 434; by *Sedulius*, about 818; by *Leo*, bishop of Rome, in 440; by *Salvian*, presbyter of Marseilles, about 440; by *Geladius*, bishop of Rome, about 496; by *Facundus*, an African bishop, about 540; by *Junilius*, an African bishop, about 556; by *Cassiodorus*, in 556, by the author of the imperfect work upon St. Matthew, about 560; by *Gregory*, bishop of Rome, about 590; by *Isidore*, of Seville, about 596; and by *Bede*, about 701, or the beginning of the eighth century.

"Concerning the *Latin writers*, it is obvious to remark, that this epistle is not expressly quoted as Paul's by any of them in the three first centuries; however, it was known by *Iranæus* and *Tertullian* as we have seen, and possibly to others also. But it is manifest that it was received as an epistle of St. Paul by many Latin writers, in the fourth, fifth, and following centuries.

"The reasons of doubting about the genuineness of this epistle probably were the want of a name at the beginning, and the difference of argument or subject matter, and of the style, from the commonly received epistles of the apostle, as is intimated by *Jerome*. Whether they are sufficient reasons for rejecting this epistle will be considered in the course of our argument.

"2. There is nothing in the epistle itself that renders it impossible or unlikely to be his; for the epistle appears to have been written before the destruction of Jerusalem, as was of old observed by *Chrysostom* and *Theodoret*, and has been argued also by many moderns. That the temple was still standing, and sacrifices there offered, may be inferred from ~~80804~~ **Hebrews 8:4**: 'For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer according to the law;' and from ~~81310~~ **Hebrews 13:10**: 'We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat, which serve the tabernacle.' If the temple had been destroyed, and the worship there abolished, the writer would not have failed to take some

notice of it in support of his argument, and for abating the too great attachment of many to the rites of the Mosaic institution. To this purpose speaks *Spanheim*. It is also probable that those words, <sup><81B13></sup> **Hebrews 3:13**, ‘While it is called to-day,’ refer to the patience which God yet continued to exercise toward the Jewish nation; he seems to have had in view the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, which would put an end to that *to-day*, and finish the time which God gave to the Jews, as a nation, to *hear his voice*. And Lightfoot argues, from <sup><81204></sup> **Hebrews 12:4**, ‘Ye have not yet resisted unto blood,’ that the epistle was written *before* the war in Judea was begun.

“Indeed, those words have been the ground of an objection against this epistle having been sent to the believing Jews in Judea, because there had been already several martyrdoms in that country. That difficulty I would now remove; and I have received from a learned friend the following observation, which may be of use: ‘It seems to me,’ says he, ‘that the apostle here, as well as in the preceding context, alludes to the Grecian games or exercises; and he signifies that they to whom he writes had not been called out to the most dangerous combats, and had not run the immediate hazard of their lives; which, I suppose, might be said of them as a body or Church.’ And I shall transfer hither M. *Beausobre*’s note upon this place: ‘There had been martyrs in Judea, as Stephen and the two James; but, for the most part, the Jews did not put the Christians to death for want of power; they were imprisoned and scourged; see <sup><4054></sup> **Acts 5:40**, and here, <sup><81B13></sup> **Hebrews 13:3**. And they endured reproaches, and the loss of their substance, <sup><8102></sup> **Hebrews 10:32, 34**. These were the sufferings which they had met with. The apostle, therefore, here indirectly reproves the Hebrews, that though God treated them with more indulgence than he had done his people in former times, and even than his own Son, they nevertheless wavered in their profession of the Gospel. See <sup><81212></sup> **Hebrews 12:12**.

“3. There are many exhortations in this epistle much resembling some in the epistles of St. Paul. 1. <sup><81213></sup> **Hebrews 12:3**: ‘Lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.’ <sup><8109></sup> **Galatians 6:9**: ‘And let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.’ And see <sup><81B13></sup> **2 Thessalonians 3:13**, and <sup><81B13></sup> **Ephesians 3:13**. 2. <sup><81214></sup> **Hebrews 12:14**: ‘Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.’ An exhortation very suitable to Paul, and to the Jewish believers in Judea; admonishing them not to impose the rituals of the law upon

others, that is, the Gentile believers; and to maintain friendship with them, though they did not embrace the law. It has also a resemblance to <sup><51218></sup>**Romans 12:18**, but the words of the original are different. 3.

<sup><51301></sup>**Hebrews 13:1**: ‘Let brotherly love continue,’ and what follows to the end of <sup><51313></sup>**Hebrews 13:3**. Then, in <sup><51314></sup>**Hebrews 13:4**: ‘Marriage is honourable; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.’ Here is an agreement with <sup><4082></sup>**Ephesians 5:2, 3, 4**: ‘And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us-but fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not once be named among you. For this ye know, that no fornicator, nor unclean person, nor covetous man-has any inheritance in the kingdom of God.’ 4. <sup><51316></sup>**Hebrews 13:16**: ‘But to do good, and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.’ That exhortation is very suitable to Paul’s doctrine, and has an agreement with what he says elsewhere, as <sup><5048></sup>**Philippians 4:18**: ‘An odour of a sweet smell; a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God.’ Moreover, as is observed by Grotius upon this text, the word *communicate* or *communion* is found in a like sense in the Acts, and in other epistles of St. Paul. See <sup><4424></sup>**Acts 2:42**; <sup><51536></sup>**Romans 15:26**; <sup><4704></sup>**2 Corinthians 8:4; 9:13**.

“4. In the next place, I observe some instances of agreement in the *style* or *phrases*, of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the acknowledged epistles of St. Paul. 1. <sup><5104></sup>**Hebrews 2:4**: ‘God also bearing them witness with signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost:’-*signs and wonders*, together, seldom occur in other books of the New Testament; but they are found several times in the Acts, and in St. Paul’s epistles. The phrase is in <sup><4024></sup>**Matthew 24:24**, and <sup><4132></sup>**Mark 13:22**, and once likewise in St. John’s Gospel, <sup><5048></sup>**John 4:48**; but it is several times in the Acts, <sup><44219></sup>**Acts 2:19**; <sup><4043></sup>**Acts 4:30; 5:12; 6:8; 8:13; 14:3; 15:12**. The most remarkable are these where there are three different words, <sup><4422></sup>**Acts 2:22**: ‘A man approved of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs.’ <sup><51519></sup>**Romans 15:19**: ‘Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God.’ <sup><47122></sup>**2 Corinthians 12:12**: ‘In signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.’ <sup><51019></sup>**2 Thessalonians 2:9**: ‘With all power, and signs, and lying wonders.’ 2. <sup><51214></sup>**Hebrews 2:14**: ‘That, through death, he might destroy him who had the power of death.’ The word **καταργεω** or **καταργεομαι** is, I think, nowhere used in the New Testament, except in <sup><2137></sup>**Luke 13:7**, and St. Paul’s epistles, where it is several times; and is sometimes used in a sense resembling this place, particularly <sup><50110></sup>**2 Timothy 1:10**: ‘Who has abolished death;’ **καταργησαντος μεν τον**

θανατον, and <sup><61526></sup>1 Corinthians 15:26. Compare Dr. *Doddridge's* Family Expositor, vol. iv., upon <sup><61524></sup>1 Corinthians 15:24. 3. <sup><8001></sup>Hebrews 3:1: 'Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling.' <sup><01814></sup>Philippians 3:14: 'The prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.' <sup><50109></sup>2 Timothy 1:9: 'Who has called us with a holy calling.' 4. <sup><81512></sup>Hebrews 5:12: 'And are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.' <sup><40102></sup>1 Corinthians 3:2: 'I have fed you with milk, and not with meat.' However, in the original, there is no great agreement in the words, except that in both places *milk* is used for the first rudiments of the Christian doctrine. 5. <sup><8001></sup>Hebrews 8:1: 'Who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty on high.' <sup><40120></sup>Ephesians 1:20: 'And set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.' 6. <sup><80816></sup>Hebrews 8:6; 9:15; and <sup><81224></sup>Hebrews 12:24, Jesus Christ is styled *Mediator*. So likewise in <sup><40319></sup>Galatians 3:19,20; <sup><54016></sup>1 Timothy 2:5; and in no other books of the New Testament. 7. <sup><80816></sup>Hebrews 8:5: 'Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things; και σκια των επουρανιων. <sup><81001></sup>Hebrews 10:1: 'For the law, having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things;' σκιαν εχων των μελλοντων αγαθων, ουκ αυτην την εικονα των πραγματων. <sup><10217></sup>Colossians 2:17. 'Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ;' α εστι σκια των μελλοντων το δε σωμα του χριστου. 8. <sup><81033></sup>Hebrews 10:33: 'Whilst ye were made a gazing-stock, or spectacle, both by reproaches and afflictions;' ονειδισμοις τε και θλιψεσι θεατριζομενοι. <sup><40400></sup>1 Corinthians 4:9: 'For we are made a spectacle unto the world;' οτι θεατρον εγενηθημεν τω κοσμω. 9. St. Paul, in his acknowledged epistles, often alludes to the exercises and games which were then very reputable and frequent in Greece and other parts of the Roman empire. There are many such allusions in this epistle, which have also great elegance. So <sup><80618></sup>Hebrews 6:18: 'Who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us;' or the reward of eternal life, proposed to animate and encourage us. And, <sup><81201></sup>Hebrews 12:1, 2, 3: 'Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. Looking unto Jesus-who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross. Lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.' And, <sup><81212></sup>Hebrews 12:12: 'Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees.' All these texts seem to contain allusions to the celebrated *exercises* and *games* of those times. And to these may be added, if I

mistake not, the place before noticed, <sup><8120></sup>**Hebrews 12:4**: ‘Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.’ 10. <sup><8133></sup>**Hebrews 13:9**: ‘Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines;’ **διδασχαις ποικιλαις και χεναις μη περιφερεσθε.** <sup><4044></sup>**Ephesians 4:14**: ‘That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine;’ **κλυδωνιζομενοι και περιφερομενοι παντι ανεμω της διδασκαλιας.** 11. <sup><8130></sup>**Hebrews 13:10**: ‘We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat.’ <sup><4013></sup>**1 Corinthians 9:13**: ‘And they that wait at the altar are partakers with the altar.’ And, <sup><4018></sup>**1 Corinthians 10:18**: ‘Are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?’ 12. <sup><8133></sup>**Hebrews 13:20, 21**: ‘Now the God of peace make you perfect;’ which is a title of the Deity nowhere found in the New Testament but in St. Paul’s epistles, and in them it is several times, and near the conclusion, as here: so <sup><5153></sup>**Romans 15:33**: ‘Now the God of peace be with you all.’ See likewise <sup><5153></sup>**Romans 16:20**; <sup><5040></sup>**Philippians 4:9** and <sup><5153></sup>**1 Thessalonians 5:23**: ‘And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly;’ and <sup><7131></sup>**2 Corinthians 13:11**: ‘And the God of love and peace shall be with you.’

“5. The *conclusion* of this epistle has a remarkable agreement with the *conclusions* of St. Paul’s epistles in several respects. 1. He here desires the Christians to whom he is writing to pray for him, <sup><8138></sup>**Hebrews 13:18**: ‘Pray for us.’ So <sup><5153></sup>**Romans 15:30**; <sup><4018></sup>**Ephesians 6:18, 19**; <sup><5040></sup>**Colossians 4:3**; <sup><5153></sup>**1 Thessalonians 5:25**; <sup><5101></sup>**2 Thessalonians 3:1**. 2. It is added in the same <sup><8138></sup>**Hebrews 13:18**: ‘For we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly;’ which may well come from Paul, some of the Jewish believers not being well affected to him, or being even offended with him. So says *Theodoret* upon this place, and *Chrysostom* to the like purpose, very largely. To which might be added, <sup><8132></sup>**Hebrews 13:22**: ‘And I beseech you, brethren, to suffer the word of exhortation.’ It is also observable that St. Paul makes a like profession of his sincerity in pleading against the Jews before Felix, <sup><4246></sup>**Acts 24:16**. 3. Having desired the prayers of these Christians for himself, he prays for them, <sup><8130></sup>**Hebrews 13:20, 21**: ‘Now the God of peace make you perfect, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.’ So <sup><5153></sup>**Romans 15:30, 32**, having asked their prayers for him, he adds, <sup><5153></sup>**Romans 15:33**: ‘Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.’ Compare <sup><4019></sup>**Ephesians 6:19, 23**, and <sup><5153></sup>**1 Thessalonians 5:23**; <sup><5116></sup>**2 Thessalonians 3:16**. 4. <sup><8134></sup>**Hebrews 13:24**: ‘Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you.’ The



like salutations are in many of St. Paul's epistles, Rom. 16;; <sup><46169></sup>**1 Corinthians 16:19-21**; <sup><471313></sup>**2 Corinthians 13:13**; <sup><50421></sup>**Philippians 4:21, 22**; not to refer to any more. 5. The *valedictory benediction* at the end is that which Paul had made the token of the *genuineness* of his epistles; <sup><5018></sup>**2 Thessalonians 3:18**. So here, <sup><58135></sup>**Hebrews 13:25**: 'Grace be with you all. Amen.' Indeed, sometimes it is 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.' But at other times it is more contracted. So <sup><51048></sup>**Colossians 4:18**: 'Grace be with you.' <sup><54021></sup>**1 Timothy 6:21**: 'Grace be with thee.' See likewise, <sup><49164></sup>**Ephesians 6:24**; <sup><50122></sup>**2 Timothy 4:22**; <sup><541515></sup>**Titus 3:15**. The same observation is in *Theodoret*.

"6. The circumstances of this epistle lead us to the Apostle Paul. 1. <sup><58134></sup>**Hebrews 13:24**: 'They of Italy salute you.' The writer, therefore, was then in *Italy*, whither we know Paul was sent a prisoner, and where he resided two years, <sup><44283></sup>**Acts 28:30**; where also he wrote several epistles still remaining. 2. <sup><58139></sup>**Hebrews 13:19**: He desires them *the rather to pray for him, that he might be restored to them the sooner*. Paul had been brought from Judea to Rome. And he was willing to go thither again, where he had been several times. And though the original words are not the name, there is an agreement between this and <sup><50122></sup>**Philemon 1:22**: 'I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you.' This particular is one of the arguments of *Euthalius*, that this epistle is Paul's, and written to the Jews of Palestine. 3. <sup><58133></sup>**Hebrews 13:23**: 'Know ye, that our brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.' Timothy was with Paul during his imprisonment at Rome, as is allowed by all: for he is expressly mentioned at the beginning of the Epistles to the *Philippians*, *Colossians*, and *Philemon*, written when he was in *bonds*. He is mentioned again, <sup><51619></sup>**Philippians 2:19**. When the apostle writes to Timothy, he calls him his *son*, or *dearly beloved son*, <sup><54012></sup>**1 Timothy 1:2**; <sup><55012></sup>**2 Timothy 1:2**. But when he mentions him to others, he calls him *brother*; <sup><47010></sup>**2 Corinthians 1:1**; <sup><51010></sup>**Colossians 1:1**; <sup><53102></sup>**1 Thessalonians 3:2**. In like manner Titus. Compare <sup><50104></sup>**Titus 1:4** and <sup><47023></sup>**2 Corinthians 2:13**.

This mention of *Timothy* has, led many, not only *moderns*, but *ancients* likewise, to think of Paul as writer of the epistle, particularly *Euthalius*; and, undoubtedly, many others have been confirmed in that supposition by this circumstance.

"The original word **απολελυμενον** is ambiguous, being capable of two senses: one of which is, that of our translation, *set at liberty*, that is, from

*imprisonment*; the other is *dismissed, sent abroad on an errand*. In this last sense it was understood by *Euthalius*, who, in the place just cited, says: ‘That scarcely any one can be thought of, besides Paul, who would send Timothy abroad upon any service of the Gospel.’ And indeed this passage does put us in mind of what Paul says to the Philippians, <sup><1619></sup>**Philippians 2:19**: ‘But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. Him, therefore, I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me; but I trust in the Lord, that I also myself shall come shortly,’ <sup><1623></sup>**Philippians 2:23, 24**, which induced *Beausobre* to say in the preface to this epistle: ‘The sacred author concludes with asking the prayers of the Hebrews, <sup><1319></sup>**Hebrews 13:19**, that he may be restored to them. These words intimate that he was still *prisoner*, but that he hoped to be set at liberty: therefore, he adds, in <sup><1323></sup>**Hebrews 13:23**, that he intended to come and see them, with Timothy, as soon as he should be returned. If this explication be right, this epistle was written at Rome, some time after the Epistle to the Philippians, and since the departure of Timothy for Macedonia.’

“All these considerations just mentioned, added to the testimony of many ancient writers, make out an argument of great weight, (though not decisive and demonstrative,) that the Apostle Paul is the writer of this epistle. An objection against this epistle being St. Paul’s is, that it is supposed to have in it *an elegance superior to that of his other writings*. This has been judged, by *Grotius* and *Le Clerc*, sufficient to show that this was not written by Paul.

“The opinion of *Origen*, in his homilies upon this epistle, as cited by *Eusebius*, and by us from him, is, ‘that the style of the Epistle to the Hebrews has not the apostle’s rudeness of speech, but, as to the texture of it, is elegant Greek, as every one will allow who is able to judge of the differences of style.’ Again, he says: ‘The sentiments of the epistle are admirable, and not inferior to the acknowledged writings of the apostle. This will be assented to by every one who reads the writings of the apostle with attention.’ Afterwards he adds: ‘If I were to speak my opinion, I should say, that the sentiments are the apostle’s, but the language and composition another’s, who committed to writing the apostle’s sense, and, as it were, reduced into commentaries the things spoken by his master,’ &c.

“*Eusebius* himself, speaking of *Clement’s* Epistle to the Corinthians, says: ‘Paul having written to the Hebrews in their own language, some think that the Evangelist *Luke*, others, that this very *Clement* himself, translated it into Greek: which last is most likely, there being a great resemblance between the style of the epistle of *Clement* and the Epistle to the Hebrews: nor are the sentiments of those two writings very different. This passage has been already twice quoted by us; once in the chapter of *Clement*, bishop of Rome, and again in that of *Eusebius*.’

“*Philaster*, bishop of Brescia, about 380, says: ‘There are some who do not allow the Epistle to the Hebrews to be Paul’s, but say it is either an epistle of the Apostle *Barnabas*, or of *Clement*, bishop of Rome; but some say it is an epistle of *Luke* the evangelist: moreover, some reject it, as more eloquent than the apostle’s other writings.

“*Jerome*, about 392, in his article of St. Paul, in the book of *Illustrious Men*, says: ‘The Epistle called to the Hebrews is not thought to be his, because of the difference of the argument and style; but either *Barnabas’s*, as *Tertullian* thought; or the Evangelist *Luke’s*, according to some others; or *Clement’s*, bishop of Rome; who, as some think, being much with him, clothed and adorned Paul’s sense in his own language. Moreover, he wrote as a Hebrew to the Hebrews, in pure Hebrew, it being his own language; whence it came to pass that, being translated, it has more elegance in the Greek than his other epistles.’

“Some learned men of late times, as *Grotius* and *Le Clerc*, have thought this to be an insuperable objection. Of this opinion also was *Jacob Tollius*; who, in his notes upon *Longinus*, of the sublime, has celebrated the sublimity of this epistle, and particularly the elegance of the beginning of it; which alone he thinks sufficient to show that it was not Paul’s.

“It remains, therefore, it seems to me, that if the epistle be Paul’s, and was originally written in Greek, as we suppose, the apostle must have had some assistance in composing it; so that we are led to the judgment of *Origen*, which appears to be as ingenious and probable as any. ‘The sentiments are the apostle’s, but the language and composition of some one else, who committed to writing the apostle’s sense; and, as it were, rendered into commentaries the things spoken by his master.’ According to this account the epistle is St. Paul’s, as to the *thoughts* and *matter*; but the *words* are *another’s*.

“*Jerome*, as may be remembered, says: ‘He wrote as a Hebrew to the Hebrews, pure Hebrew; it being his own language; whence it came to pass that, being *translated*, it has more elegance in the Greek than his other epistles.’ My conjecture, which is not very different, if I may be allowed to mention it, is, that St. Paul dictated the epistle in Hebrew, and another, who was a great master of the Greek language, immediately wrote down the apostle’s sentiments in his own elegant Greek. But who this assistant of the apostle was is altogether unknown.

“The ancients, besides Paul, have mentioned *Barnabas*, *Luke*, and *Clement*, as *writers* or *translators* of this epistle; but I do not know that there is any remarkable agreement between the style of the Epistle to the Hebrews and the style of the epistle commonly ascribed to *Barnabas*. The style of *Clement*, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, is verbose and prolix. St. *Luke* may have some words which are in the Epistle to the Hebrews; but that does not make out the same style. This epistle, as *Origen* said, as to the texture of the style, is *elegant Greek*; but that kind of texture appears not in *Luke*, so far as I can perceive; there may be more art and labour in the writings of Luke than in those of the other evangelists, but not much more elegance that I can discern. This 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; somewhat different in both respects from all the other writings of the New Testament; and whose is the language seems to me altogether unknown; whether that of *Zenas*, or *Apollos*, or some other of the Apostle Paul’s assistants and fellow labourers.

“There still remains one objection more against this epistle being written by St. Paul, which is, *the want of his name*; for to all the thirteen epistles, received as his, he prefixes his name, and generally calls himself apostle. This objection has been obvious in all ages; and the omission has been differently accounted for by the ancients who received this epistle as a genuine writing of St. Paul.

“*Clement* of Alexandria, in his Institutions, speaks to this purpose: ‘The Epistle to the Hebrews,’ he says, ‘is Paul’s, but he did not make use of that inscription *Paul the Apostle*; for which he assigns this reason: writing to the Hebrews, who had conceived a prejudice against him, and were suspicious of him, he wisely declined setting his name at the beginning lest

he should offend them. He also mentions this tradition: ‘forasmuch as the Lord was sent, as the apostle of almighty God, to the Hebrews, Paul, out of modesty, does not style himself the apostle to the Hebrews, both out of respect to the Lord, and that, being preacher and apostle of the Gentiles, he over and above wrote to the Hebrews.’

“*Jerome* also speaks to this purpose: ‘That Paul might decline putting his name in the inscription on account of the Hebrews being offended with him;’ so in the article of St. Paul, in his book of *Illustrious Men*. In his *Commentary* in the beginning of his Epistle to the Galatians, he assigns another reason: ‘That Paul declined to style himself apostle at the beginning of the Epistle to the Hebrews, because he should afterwards call Christ the High Priest and Apostle of our profession,’ <sup><810></sup>**Hebrews 3:1**.

“*Theodoret* says, that Paul was especially the apostle of the Gentiles; for which he alleges <sup><811></sup>**Galatians 2:9**, and <sup><5113></sup>**Romans 11:13**. ‘Therefore writing to the Hebrews, who were not intrusted to his care, he barely delivered the doctrine of the Gospel without assuming any character of authority, for they were the charge of the other apostles.’

“*Lightfoot* 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 John’s on that account.’

“*Tillemont* says, ‘Possibly Paul considered it to be a book rather than a letter, since he makes an excuse for its brevity, (<sup><812></sup>**Hebrews 13:22**,) for indeed it is short for a *book*, but long for a *letter*.’

“It is, I think, observable, that there is not at the beginning of this epistle any salutation. As there is no name of the writer, so neither is there any description of the people to whom it is sent. It appears, from the conclusion, that it was sent to some people at a certain place; and undoubtedly they to whom it was sent, and by whom it was received, knew very well from whom it came, nevertheless there might be reasons for omitting an inscription and a salutation at the beginning. This might arise from the circumstances of things; there might be danger of offence at sending at that time a long letter to Jews in Judea; and this omission might be in part owing to a regard for the bearer, who too is not named. The only person named throughout the epistle is *Timothy*; nor was he then present with the writer. Indeed I imagine that the two great objections against this being an epistle of St. Paul—the *elegance of the style*, and the *want of a*

*name* and *inscription*, are both owing to some particular circumstance of the writer, and the people to whom it was sent. The people to whom it was sent are plainly Jews in Judea; and the writer very probably is St. Paul, whose circumstances at the breaking up of his confinement at Rome, and his setting out upon a new journey, might be attended with some peculiar embarrassments, which obliged him to act differently from his usual method,

“IV. Thus we are brought to the *fourth* and *last* part of our inquiry concerning this epistle—the *time* and *place* of writing it. *Mill* was of opinion that this epistle was written by Paul, in the year 63, in some part of Italy, soon after he had been released from his imprisonment at Rome. Mr. *Wetstein* appears to have been of the same opinion. *Tillemont* likewise places this epistle in 63, immediately after the apostle’s being set at liberty, who, as he says, was still at Rome, or at least in Italy. *Basnage* speaks of this epistle at the year 61, and supposes it to be written during the apostle’s imprisonment, for he afterward speaks of the Epistle to the Ephesians, and says it was the last letter the apostle wrote during the time of his *bonds*. *L’Enfant* and *Beausobre*, in their general preface to St. Paul’s epistles, observe, ‘That in the subscription at the end of the epistle it is said to have been written *from Italy*; the only ground of which, as they add, is what is said <sup><8133></sup>**Hebrews 13:24**: *They of Italy salute you*. This has made some think that the apostle wrote to the Hebrews after he had been set at liberty, and when he had got into that part of Italy which borders upon Sicily, and in ancient times was called *Italy*. Nevertheless there is reason to doubt this. When he requests the prayers of the Hebrews, that *he might be restored to them the sooner*, he intimates that he was not yet set at liberty.’ Accordingly *they* place this epistle in the year 62.

“There is not any great difference in any of these opinions concerning the *time* or *place* of this epistle, all supposing that it was written by the apostle either at *Rome* or *Italy*, near the end of his imprisonment at Rome, or soon after it was over, before he removed to any other country.

“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, <sup><6169></sup>**1 Corinthians 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. The argument of *L’Enfant* and *Beausobre*, that

Paul was not yet set at liberty, because he requested the prayers of the *Hebrews that he might be restored to them the sooner*, appears to me not of any weight. Though Paul was no longer a prisoner, he might request the prayers of those to whom he was writing, that he might have a prosperous journey to them whom he was desirous to visit, and that all impediments of his intended journey might be removed; and many such there might be, though he was no longer under confinement. Paul was not a prisoner when he wrote his Epistle to the Romans; yet he was very fervent in his prayers to God, that he might have a prosperous journey, and come to them,  
 <E0110>**Romans 1:10.**

“For determining the *time* of this epistle, it may be observed that, when the apostle wrote the Epistle to the Philippians, the Colossians, and Philemon, he had hopes of deliverance. At the writing of all these epistles Timothy was present with him; but now he was absent, as plainly appears from  
 <S1323>**Hebrews 13:23.** This leads us to think that this epistle was written *after them*. And it is not unlikely that the apostle had now obtained that liberty which he expected when they were written.

“Moreover, in the Epistle to the Philippians, he speaks of sending Timothy to them, <T619>**Philippians 2:19-23:** ‘But I trust in the Lord Jesus, to send Timothy shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state.’ Timothy, therefore, if sent, was to come back to the apostle. ‘Him, therefore, I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me.’

“It is probable that Timothy did go to the Philippians, soon after writing the above mentioned epistles, the apostle having gained good assurance of being quite released from his confinement. And this Epistle to the Hebrews was written during the time of that absence; for it is said, <S1323>**Hebrews 13:23:** ‘Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty, *or* has been sent abroad.’ The word is capable of that meaning, and it is a better and more likely meaning, because it suits the coherence. And I suppose that Timothy did soon come to the apostle, and that they both sailed to Judea, and after that went to Ephesus, where Timothy was left to reside with his peculiar charge.

“Thus this epistle was written at Rome, or in Italy, soon after that Paul had been released from his confinement at Rome, in the beginning of the year 63. And I suppose it to be the last written of all St. Paul’s epistles which

have come down to us, or of which we have any knowledge.”-*Dr. Lardner’s WORKS*, vol. vi., p. 381.

After this able and most circumstantial investigation I think it would be a mere *actum agere* to enter farther into this discussion; all that the *ancients*, both Grecian and Roman, and all that the most intelligent of the *moderns*, have produced, both for and against the argument stated above, has been both judiciously and candidly stated by Dr. Lardner; and it is not going too far to say that few readers will be found who will draw conclusions different from those of Dr. Lardner, from the same premises.

As all the epistles of St. Paul have an evident *object* and *occasion*, it is natural to look for these in the Epistle to the Hebrews as well as in those to other Churches. We have already seen that it was most probably written to the *converted Jews in Judea*, who were then in a state of *poverty*, *affliction*, and *persecution*; and who, it appears, had been assailed by the strongest arguments to apostatize from the faith, and turn back to the poor elementary teaching furnished by Mosaic rites and ceremonies. That in such circumstances they might begin to *halt* and *waver*, will not appear strange to any considerate person; and that the apostle should write to guard them against *apostasy*, by showing them that the religious system which they had embraced was the *completion* and *perfection* of all those which had preceded it, and particularly of the Mosaic, is what might be naturally expected. This he has done in the most effectual and masterly manner, and has furnished them with arguments against their opponents which must have given them a complete triumph.

His arguments against *backsliding* or *apostasy* are the most awful and powerful that can well be conceived, and are as *applicable now* to guard Christian believers against *falling from grace* as they were in the apostolic times, and, from the general *laxity* in which most professors of religion indulge themselves, not less *necessary*.

A late sensible writer, Mr. *Thomas Olivers*, in a discourse on ~~SCRIPTS~~ **Hebrews 2:3** of this epistle has considered this subject at large, and treated it with great cogency of reasoning. I shall borrow his *Analysis* of the different chapters, and a few of his concluding remarks, a perusal of the whole work will amply repay the serious reader. After one hundred and thirty-two pages of previous discussion he goes on thus:—



“I shall,” says he, “sum up all that has been said upon this head by giving a brief account of the OCCASION and DESIGN of this epistle, and of the apostle’s *manner* of reasoning therein.

“The Christian religion being so contrary to the corrupt principles and practices of the world, those who embraced and propagated it were, on those accounts, rendered very odious wherever they came. The consequence of this was, that heavy persecutions were raised against them in most places. The converted Hebrews, because they had turned their backs on the law of Moses, and embraced the religion of Jesus whom their rulers had crucified, were exceedingly persecuted by their countrymen. Sometimes the unconverted Hebrews persecuted their converted brethren *themselves*; at other times they stirred up the *heathen* who were round about to do it. By these means the believing Hebrews had a *great fight of afflictions*, <sup><S102></sup>**Hebrews 10:32**; and were *made gazing-stocks, both by reproaches and afflictions*, <sup><S103></sup>**Hebrews 10:33**; and experienced *the spoiling of their goods*, which for a while they took joyfully, <sup><S104></sup>**Hebrews 10:34**. But this was not all; for, as the Christian religion was then a new thing in the world, it is natural to suppose that the new converts had a great many scruples and reasonings in themselves concerning the lawfulness of what they had done in embracing it: and what added to these scruples was, the constant endeavour of the Judaizing teachers to lay stumbling blocks in the way of these Hebrews, which they too often effected by means of their divers and strange doctrines, mentioned <sup><S105></sup>**Hebrews 13:9**. The consequence of this opposition, both from within and without, was, that great numbers of the Hebrews *apostatized* from Christ and his Gospel, and went back to the law of Moses; while the fluctuating state of the rest gave the apostles too much reason to fear a general, if not *universal apostasy*. Now this apparent danger was the OCCASION of this epistle, and the DESIGN of it was to prevent the threatened evil if possible.

“That this account is true will fully appear from a more particular survey of the contents of the whole epistle.

“Chap. 1. The apostle shows that all former dispensations were delivered to the world by *men* and *angels*, who were only *servants* in what they did; but that the Gospel salvation was delivered by *Christ*, who is the *Son of God*, and the *Heir* of all things. How naturally does he then infer the

*superiority of the Gospel over the law*; and, of consequence, the great absurdity of leaving the former for the sake of the latter!

“Chap. 2. He obviates an objection which might be made to the superior excellency of Christ on account of his humiliation. To this end he shows that this humiliation was voluntary; that it was intended for many important purposes, *viz.* that we might be sanctified, <sup><S0211></sup>**Hebrews 2:11**; that through his death we might be delivered from death, <sup><S0214></sup>**Hebrews 2:14, 15**; and that Christ, by experiencing our infirmities in his own person, might become a *faithful and merciful High Priest*, <sup><S0217></sup>**Hebrews 2:17, 18**. The inference then is, that his taking our nature upon him, and dying therein, is no argument of his inferiority either to the *prophets* or to the *angels*; and therefore it is no excuse for those who *apostatize* from the *Gospel* for the sake of the *law*.

“Chap. 3. Here *Christ* is particularly compared with *Moses*, and shown to be superior to him in many respects. As, 1. *Christ* is shown to be the *great Builder* of that house of which *Moses* is only a *small part*, <sup><S0303></sup>**Hebrews 3:3, 4**. 2. *Christ* is as a *son* in his *own* house; but *Moses* was only as a *servant* in his *master's* house, <sup><S0305></sup>**Hebrews 3:5**. Therefore *Christ* and his salvation are superior to *Moses* and his law, and ought not to be neglected on account of any thing inferior. From <sup><S0307></sup>**Hebrews 3:7** of this chapter to <sup><S0414></sup>**Hebrews 4:14**, the apostle shows the great danger of *apostatizing* from *Christ*, by the severe sentence which was passed on those who rebelled against *Moses*, and *apostatized* from his law.

“Chap. 5. *Christ* is compared to *Aaron*, and preferred to him on several accounts. As, 1. *Aaron* offered for his *own*, as well as for the *sins* of the *people*; but *Christ* offered only for the *sins of others*, having none of his own to offer for, <sup><S0503></sup>**Hebrews 5:3**. 2. *Christ* was not a *priest* after the order of *Aaron*, but after the order of *Melchisedec*, which was a *superior order*, <sup><S0510></sup>**Hebrews 5:10**. Concerning *Melchisedec* and *Christ*, the apostle observed that, through the dulness of the *Hebrews*, there were some things which they could not easily understand, <sup><S0511></sup>**Hebrews 5:11-14**.

“He therefore calls on them, chap. vi., to labour for a more perfect acquaintance therewith; withal promising them his farther assistance, <sup><S0601></sup>**Hebrews 6:1-3**. The necessity of their doing this, of their thus *going on unto perfection*, he enforced by the following consideration, that, if they did not go forward, they would be in danger of *apostatizing* in such

manner as would be irrecoverable, <sup><8007></sup>**Hebrews 6:7, 8**. From thence to the end of the chapter he encourages them to patience and *perseverance*, by the consideration of the *love, oath, and faithfulness* of GOD; and also by the *example* of their father *Abraham*.

“Chap. 7. The apostle resumes the parallel between *Melchisedec* and *Christ*, and shows that they agree in title and descent, <sup><8007></sup>**Hebrews 7:1-3**; and then, from instances wherein the priesthood of *Melchisedec* was preferable to the priesthood of *Aaron*, he infers the superiority of *Christ*’s priesthood over that of *Aaron*, <sup><8004></sup>**Hebrews 7:4-17**. From thence to the end of the chapter, he shows that the priesthood of *Aaron* was only subservient to the priesthood of *Christ*, in which it was consummated and abolished; and of consequence, that all those legal obligations were thereby abolished. How naturally then did the apostle infer the absurdity of *apostatizing* from the Gospel to the law, seeing they who did this, not only left the *greater* for the *lesser*, but also left that which remained in *full force*, for the sake of that which was *disannulled*.

“Chap. 8. is employed partly in recapitulating what had been demonstrated before concerning the superior dignity of our great High Priest, <sup><8001></sup>**Hebrews 8:1-5**; and partly in showing the Superior excellency of the new covenant, as established in *Christ*, and as containing better promises; <sup><8006></sup>**Hebrews 8:6** to the end of the chapter. From this last consideration, the impropriety of going from the new covenant to the old is as naturally inferred as from any other of the afore-mentioned considerations.

“With the same view the apostle, chap. ix., compares *Christ* and his priesthood to the *tabernacle* of old, and to what the high priest did therein on the *great day of atonement*, in all things giving *Christ* the preference; from <sup><8001></sup>**Hebrews 9:1** to the end.

“Chap. 10. The apostle sets down the difference between the legal sacrifices and the sacrifice of *Christ*: the legal sacrifices were *weak*, and could not *put away sin*, <sup><8101></sup>**Hebrews 10:1-4**; but the sacrifice of *Christ* was *powerful*, doing that which the other *could not do*, <sup><8105></sup>**Hebrews 10:5-10**.

“The next point of difference was between the legal priests who offered these sacrifices, and the High Priest of our profession. And *first*, the legal priests were *many*; ours is *one*. *Secondly*, they *stood* when they presented their offerings to God; *CHRIST sits* at the right hand of his Father. *Thirdly*,

they offered *often*; but CHRIST, *once for all*. *Fourthly*, they, with all their offerings, could not put away the smallest sin; but *Christ*, by his one offering, put away all sin, <sup><S1011></sup> **Hebrews 10:11-18**. Now, from all these considerations, the apostle infers the great superiority of the Gospel over the law; and, consequently, the impropriety of leaving the former for the latter.

“The next thing that the apostle does is to improve his doctrine; this he does by showing that, for the reasons above given, the Hebrews ought to cleave to *Christ*, to hold fast their profession, and *not to forsake the assembling themselves together*, <sup><S1019></sup> **Hebrews 10:19-25**. And, as a farther inducement to cleave to *Christ*, and to *persevere unto the end*, he urges the consideration of the difficulties which they had already overcome, and also of the love which they had formerly shown towards *Christ* and his Gospel, <sup><S102></sup> **Hebrews 10:32-34**. He also encouraged them not to *cast away their confidence, seeing it had a great recompense of reward*, which they should enjoy if they *persevered* unto the end, <sup><S1035></sup> **Hebrews 10:35-37**. Another consideration which he urged was, that they ought not to depart from *faith* to the *works* of the law, because it is by *faith* that a *just man liveth*, and not by the *works of the law*; because God has no pleasure in those who draw back from faith in him; and because every one who does this exposes himself to eternal perdition, <sup><S1036></sup> **Hebrews 10:36-39**.

“Another inducement which he laid before them, to *continue* to expect salvation by *faith* and *patience*, was the consideration of the powerful effects of these graces as exemplified in the patriarchs of old, and the rest of the ancient worthies; chap. xi. throughout. ‘This chapter,’ according to Mr. *Perkins*, ‘depends on the former; thus we may read in the former chapter that many Jews, having received the faith and given their names to *Christ*, did afterwards *fall away*; therefore, towards the end of the chapter, there is a notable exhortation, tending to persuade the Hebrews to *persevere* in faith unto the end. Now in this chapter he continues the same exhortation; and the whole chapter (*as I take it*) is *nothing else*, in substance, but one reason to urge the former exhortation to *perseverance* in faith, and the reason is drawn from the excellency of it; for this chapter, in divers ways, sets down what an excellent *gift* of GOD *faith* is; his *whole scope*, therefore, is manifest to be *nothing else* but to urge them to *persevere* and *continue* in *that faith*, proved at large to be so excellent a thing.’

“As a farther encouragement to patience and *perseverance* he adds the example of *Christ*, <sup><8121></sup>**Hebrews 12:1-3**: and as to the afflictions they met with on the Gospel’s account, he tells them they ought not to be discouraged and driven away from *Christ* on their account, seeing they were signs of the Divine favour, and permitted to come upon them merely for their good, <sup><8124></sup>**Hebrews 12:4-11**. He then exhorts them to encourage one another to *persevere* in *well doing*, <sup><8122></sup>**Hebrews 12:12-14**. To watch over one another lest any of them *fall from the grace of God*, <sup><8125></sup>**Hebrews 12:15-18**. And, seeing they were then in possession of privileges, Gospel privileges, such as the law of *Moses* could not give, he exhorts them to *hold fast the grace* they had, that thereby they might serve God in such a manner as the great obligation they were under required, which alone would be acceptable to him; and this they ought to do, the rather because, if they did not, they would find God to be as much more severe to *them* as his *Gospel* is superior to the *law*; <sup><8129></sup>**Hebrews 12:19** to the end of the chapter.

Chap. 13. He exhorts them, instead of *apostatizing*, to *continue* their brotherly affection one for another, <sup><8130></sup>**Hebrews 13:1-3**. To *continue* their purity of behaviour, their dependence on God, and their regard for their teachers, <sup><8134></sup>**Hebrews 13:4-8**. He exhorts them not to suffer themselves to be *carried about* (from Christ and his Gospel) by *diver’s and strange doctrines*, but rather to strive to be established in grace, which they would find to be of more service to them than running about after Jewish ceremonies, <sup><8139></sup>**Hebrews 13:9**. Again he exhorts them to *cleave to* and to follow *JESUS without the camp*, and continually to give praise to God through him, <sup><8139></sup>**Hebrews 13:9-16**. And instead of *turning away* after seducers, that they might avoid persecution and the scandal of the cross, he exhorts them to submit to and obey their own Christian teachers, and to pray for their success and welfare, <sup><8137></sup>**Hebrews 13:17-19**, concluding the whole with some salutations and a solemn benediction from <sup><8130></sup>**Hebrews 13:20** to the end.

“Now, if we closely attend to these general contents of the epistle, we shall find that *every argument* and *mode of reasoning*, which would be *proper* in a treatise written professedly on the *sin* and *danger* of *apostasy*, is made use of in this epistle.

For, 1. As great temptations to prefer the law of *Moses* to the Gospel of *Christ* was one circumstance which exposed them to the danger of

apostasy, nothing could be more to the purpose than to show them that the Gospel is *superior to the law*. Now we have seen how largely this argument is prosecuted in chap. i., ii., iii., v., vii., viii., ix., x. If we reduce it to form, it runs as follows: No one ought to prefer that which is less excellent to that which is more so: but the law is less excellent than the Gospel; therefore none ought to prefer the law to the Gospel, by apostatizing from the latter to the former.

“2. Another argument, equally proper on such an occasion, is that taken from the consideration of the *punishment* which all apostates are exposed to. This argument is urged <sup><800E></sup>**Hebrews 2:2, 3;** <sup><800F></sup>**Hebrews 3:7-19;** **4:1-14; 6:4, 8; 10:26-31; 12:25, 28, 29.** In most of these places the apostle compares the punishment which will be inflicted on apostates from *Christ* and his Gospel to that which was inflicted on the apostate Israelites of old, and he frequently shows that the former will be far greater than the latter. This argument is as follows: You ought not to do that which will expose you to as great and greater punishment than that which God inflicted on the rebellious Israelites of old: but total and final apostasy from Christ will expose you to this; therefore you ought not to apostatize from Christ.

“3. Another argument proper on such an occasion is that taken from the consideration of the *great reward* which God has promised to perseverance. This the apostle urges, <sup><8006></sup>**Hebrews 3:6-14; 4:1-9;** <sup><800B></sup>**Hebrews 5:9; 6:9, 11; 9:28; 10:35-39.** This argument runs thus: You ought to be careful to do that which God has promised greatly to reward: but he has promised you this on condition of your perseverance in the Gospel of his Son; therefore you ought to be careful to persevere therein.

“4. A fourth argument, which must operate powerfully on such an occasion, is taken from the consideration of losing their present privileges by apostatizing. This argument is insisted on, <sup><8021></sup>**Hebrews 2:11-18; 3:1; 4:3-16; 6:18-20; 7:19; 8:10, 12; 9:14, 15;** <sup><8004></sup>**Hebrews 10:14, 22; 12:22, 24, 28; 13:10, 14.** This argument runs thus: You ought not to do that for which you will lose the Gospel privileges you now enjoy: but if you apostatize from Christ and his Gospel you will lose them; therefore you ought not to apostatize from *Christ* and his Gospel.

“5. A fifth argument, very proper in such a work, is taken from the consideration of their former zeal and diligence in cleaving to *Christ*, and in professing his religion. This argument is handled <sup><8060></sup>**Hebrews 6:10;**

**10:32-34.** The argument here is: Those who have formerly been zealous in well-doing ought not to grow weary, but rather to be steadfast therein unto the end; but you have formerly been zealous in your adherence to *Christ*, and in professing his religion; therefore you ought not to grow weary of adhering to *Christ*, or of professing his religion.

“6. Another argument, proper on such an occasion, is taken from the example of such persons as are held in very high esteem. Now this argument is urged, <sup><81612></sup>**Hebrews 6:12-15**; 9: throughout; <sup><81201></sup>**Hebrews 12:1-3**. Here the argument is: Whatever you esteem as an excellency in the example of holy men of old you ought to imitate: but you esteem it as an excellency in their example that they were *steadfast*, and did not *apostatize* from God and his ways; therefore you ought to imitate their example in being steadfast, and in not apostatizing from *Christ* and his Gospel.

“From all that has been said in these several surveys of this epistle, it undeniably appears, 1. That the apostle apprehended these Hebrews to be in danger of total and final apostasy; 2. That he wrote this epistle to them on purpose to prevent it if possible; and 3. That it was total and final apostasy from Christ and his Gospel, of which the believing Hebrews were in danger, and which the apostle endeavours to prevent.”

For other matters relative to this subject see the preface, and the notes on all the passages referred to.

## PREFACE TO THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

THE Epistle to the Hebrews, on which the reader is about to enter, is by far the most important and useful of all the apostolic writings; all the doctrines of the Gospel are in it embodied, illustrated, and enforced in a manner the most lucid, by references and examples the most striking and illustrious, and by arguments the most cogent and convincing. It is an *epitome* of the dispensations of God to man, from the foundation of the world to the advent of Christ. It is not only the sum of the GOSPEL, but the sum and completion of the LAW, on which it is also a most beautiful and luminous comment. *Without* this, the law of Moses had never been fully understood, nor God's design in giving it. *With* this, all is clear and plain, and the ways of God with man rendered consistent and harmonious. The apostle appears to have taken a portion of one of his own epistles for his text—CHRIST *is the* END *of the* LAW *for* RIGHTEOUSNESS *to them that* BELIEVE, and has most amply and impressively demonstrated his proposition. All the rites, ceremonies, and sacrifices of the Mosaic institution are shown to have had *Christ* for their *object* and *end*, and to have had neither *intention* nor *meaning* but in reference to *him*; yea, as a *system* to be without *substance*, as a *law* to be without *reason*, and its *enactments* to be both *impossible* and *absurd*, if taken out of this reference and connection. Never were *premises* more clearly stated; never was an *argument* handled in a more masterly manner; and never was a *conclusion* more legitimately and satisfactorily brought forth. The *matter* is everywhere the most interesting; the *manner* is throughout the most engaging; and the *language* is most beautifully adapted to the whole, everywhere appropriate, always nervous and energetic, dignified as is the subject, pure and elegant as that of the most accomplished Grecian orators, and harmonious and diversified as the music of the spheres.

So many are the *beauties*, so great the *excellency*, so instructive the *matter*, so pleasing the *manner*, and so exceedingly interesting the *whole*, that the work may be read a hundred times over without perceiving any thing of *sameness*, and with new and increased information at each reading. This latter is an excellency which belongs to the whole revelation of God; but to no part of it in such a peculiar and supereminent manner as to the Epistle to the Hebrews.



To explain and illustrate this epistle multitudes have toiled hard; and exhibited much industry, much learning, and much piety. I also will show my opinion; and ten thousand may succeed me, and still bring out something that is new. That it was written to *Jews*, naturally such, the whole structure of the epistle proves. Had it been written to the *Gentiles*, not one in ten thousand of them could have comprehended the argument, because unacquainted with the Jewish system; the knowledge of which the writer of this epistle everywhere supposes. He who is well acquainted with the Mosaic law sits down to the study of this epistle with double advantages; and he who knows the *traditions of the elders*, and the *Mishnaic illustrations* of the written, and pretended *oral law* of the Jews, is still more likely to enter into and comprehend the apostle's meaning. No man has adopted a more likely way of explaining its phraseology than *Schoettgen*, who has traced its peculiar diction to Jewish sources; and, according to him, the proposition of the whole epistle is this:—

### **JESUS OF NAZARETH IS THE TRUE GOD.**

And in order to convince the Jews of the truth of this proposition, the apostle uses but *three arguments*: 1. Christ is superior to the *angels*. 2. He is superior to *Moses*. 3. He is superior to *Aaron*.

These arguments would appear more distinctly were it not for the improper division of the chapters; as he who divided them in the middle ages (a division to which we are still unreasonably attached) had but a superficial knowledge of the word of God. In consequence of this it is that one peculiar excellency of the apostle is not noticed, viz. his *application* of every argument, and the strong exhortation founded on it. *Schoettgen* has very properly remarked, that commentators in general have greatly misunderstood the apostle's meaning through their unacquaintance with the Jewish writings and their peculiar phraseology, to which the apostle is continually referring, and of which he makes incessant use. He also supposes, allowing for the immediate and direct inspiration of the apostle, that he had in view this remarkable saying of the rabbins, on <sup>23013</sup> **Isaiah 52:13**: “Behold, my servant will deal prudently.” *Rab. Tanchum*, quoting *Yalcut Simeoni*, part ii., fol. 53, says: **hycmh Ēl m hz**, “*This is the King Messiah*, who shall be greatly extolled, and elevated: he shall be elevated beyond *Abraham*; shall be more eminent than *Moses*; and more exalted than **hrvh ykal mm** *the ministering angels*.” Or, as it is expressed in *Yalcut Kadosh*, fol. 144: **hrvh ykl m ^mw hvm ^mw twbah ^m l wdg**

hyvm *Mashiach gadol min ha-aboth; umin Mosheh; umin Malakey hashshareth.* “The Messiah is greater than the patriarchs; than Moses; and than the ministering angels.” These sayings he shows to have been fulfilled in *our Messiah*; and as he dwells on the superiority of our Lord to all these illustrious persons because they were at the very *top* of all *comparisons* among the Jews; he, according to their opinion, who was greater than all these, must be greater than all created beings.

This is the point which the apostle undertakes to prove, in order that he may show the Godhead of Christ; therefore, if we find him proving that Jesus was *greater* than the *patriarchs*, *greater* than *Aaron*, *greater* than *Moses*, and *greater* than the *angels*, he must be understood to mean, according to the Jewish phraseology, that Jesus is an uncreated Being, infinitely greater than all others, whether *earthly* or *heavenly*. For, as they allowed the greatest eminence (next to God) to *angelic beings*, the apostle concludes “that he who is greater than the angels is truly God: but Christ is greater than the angels; therefore Christ is truly God.” Nothing can be clearer than that this is the apostle’s grand argument; and the proofs and illustrations of it meet the reader in almost every verse.

That the apostle had a *plan* on which he drew up this epistle is very clear, from the close connection of every part. The grand divisions seem to be *three*:—

I. The *proposition*, which is very short, and is contained in <sup><80101></sup>**Hebrews 1:1-3**. The majesty and pre-eminence of Christ.

II. The *proof* or *arguments* which support the proposition, viz.:—

*Christ is greater than the ANGELS.*

1. Because he has a more excellent name than they, <sup><80104></sup>**Hebrews 1:4, 5**.
2. Because the *angels* of God *adore him*, <sup><80106></sup>**Hebrews 1:6**.
3. Because the *angels* were *created by him*, <sup><80107></sup>**Hebrews 1:7**.
4. Because, in his human nature, he was endowed with *greater gifts* than they, <sup><80108></sup>**Hebrews 1:8, 9**.
5. Because he is *eternal*, <sup><80110></sup>**Hebrews 1:10-12**.
6. Because he is more *highly exalted*, <sup><80113></sup>**Hebrews 1:13**.

7. Because the *angels* are only the *servants* of God; *he, the Son*,  
 <8014>**Hebrews 1:14.**

In the *application* of this argument he exhorts the Hebrews not to *neglect Christ*, <8015>**Hebrews 2:1**, by arguments drawn:—

1. From the minor to the major, <8016>**Hebrews 2:2, 3.**

2. Because the preaching of Christ was confirmed by *miracles*,  
 <8014>**Hebrews 2:4.**

3. Because, in the *economy* of the New Testament, angels are not the *administrators*; but the *Messiah* himself, to whom all things are subject,  
 <8016>**Hebrews 2:5.**

Here the apostle inserts a twofold *objection*, professedly drawn from Divine revelation:—

1. Christ is man, and is less than the angels. *What is man-thou madest him a little lower than the angels*, <8016>**Hebrews 2:6, 7.** Therefore he cannot be *superior* to them.

To this it is answered: 1. Christ as a mortal man, by his death and resurrection, overcame all enemies, and subdued all things to himself; therefore he must be greater than the angels, <8016>**Hebrews 2:9.**

2. Though Christ died, and was in this respect inferior to the angels, yet it was necessary that he should take on him this mortal state, that he might be of the same nature with those whom he was to redeem; and this he did without any prejudice to his Divinity, <8016>**Hebrews 2:10-18.**

*Christ is greater than MOSES.*

1. Because Moses was only a *servant*; Christ, the *Lord*, <8016>**Hebrews 3:2-6.**

The *application* of this argument he makes from <1987>**Psalms 95:7-11**, which he draws out at length, <8017>**Hebrews 3:7-18; 4:1-13.**

*Christ is greater than AARON, and all the other high priests.*

1. Because he has not gone through the *veil* of the tabernacle to make an atonement for sin, but has entered for this purpose into *heaven* itself,  
 <8014>**Hebrews 4:14.**

2. Because he is the *Son of God*, <sup><8044></sup>**Hebrews 4:14**.
3. Because it is from him we are to implore grace and mercy, <sup><8045></sup>**Hebrews 4:15, 16**, and <sup><8001></sup>**Hebrews 4:1-3**.
4. Because he was consecrated High Priest by God himself, <sup><8004></sup>**Hebrews 5:4-10**.
5. Because he is not a priest according to the *order* of Aaron, but according to the *order* of Melchisedec, which was much more ancient, and much more noble, chap. vii. For the excellence and prerogatives of this order, see the notes.
6. Because he is not a *typical* priest, prefiguring good things to come, but the *real* Priest, of whom the others were but *types* and *shadows*, <sup><8001></sup>**Hebrews 8:1-9:11**. For the various reasons by which this argument is supported, see also the notes.

In this part of the epistle the apostle inserts a *digression*, in which he reproves the ignorance and negligence of the Hebrews in their mode of treating the sacred Scriptures. See <sup><8051></sup>**Hebrews 5:11**, and chap. vi.

The *application* of this part contains the following exhortations:—

1. That they should carefully retain their faith in Christ as the true Messiah, <sup><8109></sup>**Hebrews 10:19-23**.
2. That they should be careful to live a godly life, <sup><8104></sup>**Hebrews 10:24, 25**.
3. That they should take care not to incur the punishment of disobedience, <sup><8102></sup>**Hebrews 10:32-37**, and <sup><8113></sup>**Hebrews 12:3-12**.
4. That they should place their whole confidence in God, live by faith, and not turn back to perdition <sup><8108></sup>**Hebrews 10:38; 12:2**.
5. That they should consider and imitate the faith and obedience of their eminent ancestors, chap. xi.
6. That they should take courage, and not be remiss in the practice of the true religion, <sup><8122></sup>**Hebrews 12:12-24**.
7. That they should take heed not to despise the Messiah, now speaking to them from heaven, <sup><8125></sup>**Hebrews 12:25-29**.

III. *Practical and miscellaneous exhortations* relative to sundry duties, chap. xiii.

All these subjects, (whether immediately designed by the apostle himself, in this particular order, or not,) are pointedly considered in this most excellent epistle; in the whole of which the *superiority* of CHRIST, his *Gospel*, his *priesthood*, and his *sacrifice*, over *Moses*, the *law*, the *Aaronic priesthood*, and the various *sacrifices* prescribed by the law, is most clearly and convincingly shown.

Different writers have taken different views of the order in which these subjects are proposed, but most commentators have produced the same results.

For other matters relative to the *author* of the epistle, the *persons* to whom it was sent, the *language* in which it was composed, and the *time* and *place* in which it was written, the reader is referred to the *introduction*, where these matters are treated in sufficient detail.

## **THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS.**

### *Chronological Notes relative to this Epistle.*

- Year of the Constantinopolitan era of the world, or that used by the Byzantine historians, and other eastern writers, 5571.
- Year of the Alexandrian era of the world, 5565.
- Year of the Antiochian era of the world, 5555.
- Year of the world, according to Archbishop Usher, 4067.
- Year of the world, according to Eusebius, in his Chronicon, 4291.
- Year of the minor Jewish era of the world, or that in common use, 3823.
- Year of the Greater Rabbinical era of the world, 4422
- Year from the Flood, according to Archbishop Usher, and the English Bible, 2411.
- Year of the Cali yuga, or Indian era of the Deluge, 3165.
- Year of the era of Iphitus, or since the first commencement of the Olympic games, 1003.
- Year of the era of Nabonassar, king of Babylon, 810.
- Year of the CCXth Olympiad, 3.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Fabius Pictor, 810.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Frontinus, 814.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to the Fasti Capitolini, 815.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Varro, which was that most generally used, 816.
- Year of the era of the Seleucidæ, 375.
- Year of the Cæsarean era of Antioch, 111.
- Year of the Julian era, 108.
- Year of the Spanish era, 101.
- Year from the birth of Jesus Christ according to Archbishop Usher, 67.
- Year of the vulgar era of Christ's nativity, 63.
- Year of Albinus, governor of the Jews, 2.
- Year of Vologesus, king of the Parthians, 14.
- Year of Domitius Corbulo, governor of Syria, 4.

- Year of Matthias, high priest of the Jews, 1.
- Year of the Dionysian period, or Easter Cycle, 64.
- Year of the Grecian Cycle of nineteen years, or Common Golden Number, 7; or the second after the second embolismic.
- Year of the Jewish Cycle of nineteen years, 4, or the first after the first embolismic.
- Year of the Solar Cycle, 16.
- Dominical Letter, it being the third after the Bissextile, or Leap Year, B.
- Day of the Jewish Passover, according to the Roman computation of time, the IIIId of the calends of April, or, in our common mode of reckoning, the thirtieth of March, which happened in this year on the fourth day after the Jewish Sabbath.
- Easter Sunday, the IIIId of the nones of April, named by the Jews the 19th of Nisan or Abib; and by Europeans in general, the 3d of April.
- Epact, or age of the moon on the 22d of March, (the day of the earliest Easter Sunday possible,) 6.
- Epact, according to the present mode of computation, or the moon's age on New Year's day, or the Calends of January, 13.
- Monthly Epacts, or age of the moon on the Calends of each month respectively, (beginning with January,) 13,15,14,15,16,17,18, 19,20,20,22,22.
- Number of Direction, or the number of days from the twenty-first of March to the Jewish Passover, 9.
- Year of the reign of Caius Tiberius Claudius Nero Cæsar, the fifth Roman monarch, computing from Octavianus, or Augustus Cæsar, properly the first Roman emperor, 10.
- Roman Consuls, C. Memmius Regulus and L. Verginius Rufus.

## CHAPTER 1.

*Different discoveries made of the Divine will to the ancient Israelites by the prophets, 1. The discovery now perfected by the revelation of Jesus Christ, of whose excellences and glories a large description is given, 2-13. Angels are ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation, 14.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 1.

**Verse 1. God, who at sundry times and in divers manners]** We can scarcely conceive any thing more dignified than the opening of this epistle; the sentiments are exceedingly elevated, and the language, harmony itself! The infinite God is at once produced to view, not in any of those attributes which are essential to the Divine nature, but in the manifestations of his love to the world, by giving a revelation of his will relative to the salvation of mankind, and thus preparing the way, through a long train of years, for the introduction of that most glorious Being, his own Son. This Son, in the fulness of time, was manifested in the flesh that he might complete all vision and prophecy, supply all that was wanting to perfect the great scheme of revelation for the instruction of the world, and then die to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. The description which he gives of this glorious personage is elevated beyond all comparison. Even in his *humiliation*, his suffering of death excepted, he is infinitely exalted above all the angelic host, is the object of their unceasing adoration, is permanent on his eternal throne at the right hand of the Father, and from him they all receive their commands to minister to those whom he has redeemed by his blood. in short, this first chapter, which may be considered the introduction to the whole epistle is, for importance of subject, dignity of expression, harmony and energy of language, compression and yet distinctness of ideas, equal, if not superior, to any other part of the New Testament.

**Sundry times]** *πολυμερως*, from *πολυς*, *many*, and *περος*, *a part*; giving portions of revelation at different times.

**Divers manners]** *πολυτροπως*, from *πολυς*, *many*, and *τροπος*, *a manner, turn, or form of speech*; hence *trope*, a figure in rhetoric. *Lambert Bos* supposes these words to refer to that part of music which is denominated *harmony*, viz. that general consent or union of musical sounds which is made up of different parts; and, understood in this way, it may signify the *agreement* or *harmony* of all the Old Testament writers, who with one consent gave testimony to Jesus Christ, and the work of redemption by him. *To him gave all the prophets witness, that, through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins;* <sup><410B></sup> **Acts 10:43.**

But it is better to consider, with *Kypke*, that the words are rather intended to point out the *imperfect* state of Divine revelation under the Old



Testament; it was not *complete*, nor can it without the New be considered a sufficiently ample discovery of the Divine will. Under the Old Testament, revelations were made **πολυμερως και πολυτροπως**, at *various* times, by *various* persons, in *various* laws and forms of teaching, with *various* degrees of clearness, under *various* shadows, types, and figures, and with *various* modes of revelation, such as by angels, visions, dreams, mental impressions, &c. See <sup><04126></sup>**Numbers 12:6, 8**. But under the New Testament all is done **απλως**, *simply*, by *one person*, i.e. JESUS, who has fulfilled the prophets, and completed prophecy; who is the way, the truth, and the life; and the founder, mediator, and governor of his own kingdom.

One great object of the apostle is, to put the *simplicity* of the Christian system in opposition to the *complex* nature of the Mosaic economy; and also to show that what the law could not do because it was weak through the flesh, Jesus has accomplished by the merit of his death, and the energy of his Spirit.

*Maximus Tyrius*, Diss. 1, page 7, has a passage where the very words employed by the apostle are found, and evidently used nearly in the same sense: **τη ρος ανθρωπου ψυχη δυο οργανων οντων προς συνεσιν, του μεν απλου, ον καλουμεν νουν, του δε ποικιλου και πολυμερους και πολυτροπου, ας αισθησεις καλουμεν**. “The soul of man has two organs of intelligence: one *simple*, which we call *mind*; the other *diversified*, and acting in *various modes* and *various ways*, which we term *sense*.”

A similar form of expression the same writer employs in Diss. 15, page 171: “The city which is governed by the mob, **πολυφωνον τε ειναι και πολυμερη και πολυπαθη**, is full of noise, and is divided by various factions and various passions.”

The excellence of the *Gospel* above the *law* is here set down in three points: 1. God spake unto the faithful under the Old Testament by Moses and the prophets, worthy *servants*, yet servants; now the *Son* is much better than a servant, <sup><80104></sup>**Hebrews 1:4**. 2. Whereas the body of the Old Testament was long in compiling, being about a thousand years from Moses to Malachi; and God spake unto the fathers by piecemeal, one while raising up one prophet, another while another, now sending them one parcel of prophecy or history, then another; but when Christ came, all was brought to perfection in one age; the apostles and evangelists were alive, some of them, when every part of the New Testament was completely

finished. 3. The *Old Testament* was delivered by God in divers manners, both in utterance and manifestation; but the delivery of the *Gospel* was in a more simple manner; for, although there are various penmen, yet the subject is the same, and treated with nearly the same phraseology throughout; James, Jude, and the Apocalypse excepted. See *Leigh*.

**Verse 2. Last days]** The Gospel dispensation, called the *last days* and the *last time*, because not to be followed by any other dispensation; or the conclusion of the Jewish Church and state now at their termination.

**By his Son]** It is very remarkable that the pronoun *αυτου*, *his*, is not found in the text; nor is it found in any MS. or version. We should not therefore supply the pronoun as our translators have done; but simply read *εν Υιω*, BY A SON, or IN A SON, *whom he hath appointed heir of all things*. God has many *sons* and daughters, for he is *the Father of the spirits of all flesh*; and he has many *heirs*, for *if sons, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ*; but he has no Son who is *heir of all things*, none by whom he made the worlds, none in whom he speaks, and by whom he has delivered a complete revelation to mankind, but Jesus the Christ.

The apostle begins with the lowest state in which Christ has appeared: 1. His being a SON, born of a woman, and made under the law. He then ascends, 2. So his being an *Heir*, and an Heir of *all things*. 3. He then describes him as the *Creator* of all worlds. 4. As the *Brightness of the Divine glory*. 5. As the *express Image of his person, or character of the Divine substance*. 6. As sustaining the immense fabric of the universe; and this by the word of his power. 7. As having made an *atonement* for the sin of the world, which was the most stupendous of all his works.

*“Twas great to speak a world from nought;  
Twas greater to redeem.”*

8. As being on the *right hand* of God, infinitely exalted above all created beings; and the object of *adoration* to all the angelic host. 9. As having an *eternal throne*, neither his *person* nor his *dignity* ever *changing* or *decaying*. 10. As continuing to *exercise dominion*, when the earth and the heavens are no more! It is only in God manifested in the flesh that all these excellences can possibly appear, therefore the apostle begins this astonishing *climax* with the simple *Sonship* of Christ, or his *incarnation*; for, on *this*, all that he is to man, and all that he has done for man, is built.

**Verse 3. The brightness of his glory]** *απαυγασμα της δοξης* The resplendent outbeaming of the essential glory of God. *Hesychius* interprets *απαυγασμα* by *ηλιου φεγγος*, the *splendour of the sun*. The same form of expression is used by an apocryphal writer, *Wisdom Wisdom 7:26*, where, speaking of the uncreated wisdom of God, he says: “For she is the *splendour of eternal light*, *απαυγασμα γαρ εστι φωτος αιδιου*, and the unsullied mirror of the energy of God, and the image of his goodness.” The word *αυγασμα* is that which has splendour *in itself* *απαυγασμα* is the splendour *emitted from it*; but the *inherent* splendour and the *exhibited* splendour are radically and essentially the same.

**The express image of his person]** *χαρακτηρ της υποστασεως αυτου*. *The character or impression of his hypostasis or substance*. It is supposed that these words expound the former; *image* expounding *brightness*, and *person or substance*, *glory*. The *hypostasis* of God is that which is essential to him as God; and the *character or image* is that by which all the likeness of the original becomes manifest, and is a perfect *fac-simile* of the whole. It is a metaphor taken from sealing; the *die* or *seal* leaving the full impression of its every part on the wax to which it is applied.

From these words it is evident, 1. That the apostle states Jesus Christ to be of the *same essence* with the Father, as the *απαυγασμα*, or *proceeding splendour*, must be the same with the *αυγασμα*, or *inherent splendour*.

2. That Christ, though proceeding from the Father, is of the same essence; for if one *αυγη*, or *splendour*, produce another *αυγη*, or splendour, the produced splendour must be of the same essence with that which produces it.

3. That although Christ is thus of the same essence with the Father, yet he is a *distinct person* from the Father; as the splendour of the sun, though of the same essence, is distinct from the sun itself, though each is essential to the other; as the *αυγασμα*, or *inherent splendour*, cannot subsist without its *απαυγασμα*, or *proceeding splendour*, nor the *proceeding splendour* subsist without the *inherent splendour* from which it proceeds.

4. That Christ is *eternal* with the Father, as the proceeding splendour must necessarily be coexistent with the inherent splendour. If the one, therefore, be *uncreated*, the other is *uncreated*; if the one be *eternal*, the other is *eternal*.

**Upholding all things by the word of his power]** This is an astonishing description of the infinitely energetic and all pervading power of God. He *spoke*, and all things were created; he *speaks*, and all things are sustained. The Jewish writers frequently express the perfection of the Divine nature by the phrases, *He bears all things, both above and below; He carries all his creatures; He bears his world; He bears all worlds by his power.* The Hebrews, to whom this epistle was written, would, from this and other circumstances, fully understand that the apostle believed Jesus Christ to be truly and properly God.

**Purged our sins]** There may be here some reference to the great transactions in the wilderness.

1. Moses, while in communion with God on the mount, was so impressed with the Divine glories that his face shone, so that the Israelites could not behold it. But Jesus is infinitely greater than Moses, for he is the splendour of God's glory; and,
2. Moses found the government of the Israelites such a burden that he altogether sank under it. His words, <sup><04112></sup>**Numbers 11:12**, are very remarkable: *Have I conceived all this people? Have I begotten them, that thou shouldst say unto me, CARRY them in thy BOSOM-unto the land which thou swearest unto their fathers?* But Christ not only *carried* all the Israelites, and all mankind; but *he upholds ALL THINGS by the word of his power.*
3. The Israelites murmured against Moses and against God, and provoked the heavy displeasure of the Most High; and would have been consumed had not Aaron made an *atonement* for them, by offering *victims* and *incense*. But Jesus not only makes an atonement for Israel, but for the whole world; not with the blood of bulls and goats, but with his own blood: hence it is said that *he purged our sins* **δι αὐτου**, by himself his own body and life being the victim. It is very likely that the apostle had all these things in his eye when he wrote this verse; and takes occasion from them to show the infinite excellence of Jesus Christ when compared with Moses; and of his *Gospel* when compared with the *law*. And it is very likely that the Spirit of God, by whom he spoke, kept in view those maxims of the ancient Jews, concerning the Messiah, whom they represent as being infinitely greater than Abraham, the patriarchs, Moses, and the ministering angels. So Rabbi Tanchum, on <sup><28213></sup>**Isaiah 52:13**, *Behold my servant shall*

*deal prudently*, says, **j yvmh Ēl m hz** *Zeh melek hammashiach*, this is the King Messiah; *and shall be exalted, and be extolled, and be very high*. “He shall be *exalted* above Abraham, and shall be *extolled* beyond Moses, and shall be more *sublime* than the ministering angels-.” See the preface.

**The right hand of the Majesty on high]** As it were associated with the supreme Majesty, in glory everlasting, and in the government of all things in time and in eternity; for the *right hand* is the place of the greatest eminence, <sup><1029></sup>**1 Kings 2:19**. The king himself, in eastern countries, sits on the throne; the *next* to him in the kingdom, and the highest *favourite*, sits on his *right hand*; and the third greatest personage, on his *left*.

**Verse 4. So much better than the angels]** Another argument in favour of the Divinity of our Lord. The Jews had the highest opinion of the transcendent excellence of angels, they even associate them with God in the creation of the world, and suppose them to be of the privy council of the Most High; and thus they understand <sup><0126></sup>**Genesis 1:26**: *Let us make man in our own image, in our own likeness*; “And the Lord said to the ministering angels that stood before him, and who were created the second day, Let us make man,” &c. See the Targum of *Jonathan ben Uzziel*. And they even allow them to be worshipped for the sake of their Creator, and as his representatives; though they will not allow them to be worshipped for their own sake. As, therefore, the Jews considered them next to God, and none entitled to their adoration but God; on their own ground the apostle proves Jesus Christ to be God, because God commanded all the angels of heaven to worship him. He, therefore, who is greater than the angels, and is the object of their adoration, is God. But Jesus Christ is greater than the angels, and the object of their adoration; therefore Jesus Christ must be God.

**By inheritance obtained]** **κεκληρονομηκεν ονομα**. The verb **κληρονομειν** signifies generally to *participate, possess, obtain, or acquire*; and is so used by the purest Greek writers: Kypke has produced several examples of it from *Demosthenes*. It is not by *inheritance* that Christ possesses a more excellent name than angels, but as God: he has it *naturally and essentially*; and, as *God manifested in the flesh*, he has it in consequence of his humiliation, sufferings, and meritorious death. See <sup><029></sup>**Philippians 2:9**.

**Verse 5. Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee]** These words are quoted from <sup><49007></sup>**Psalm 2:7**, a psalm that seems to refer only to the Messiah; and they are quoted by St. Paul, <sup><44133></sup>**Acts 13:33**, as referring to the *resurrection of Christ*. And this application of them is confirmed by the same apostle, <sup><60104></sup>**Romans 1:4**, as by his resurrection from the dead he *was declared-manifestly proved, to be the Son of God with power*; God having put forth his miraculous energy in raising that body from the grave which had truly died, and died a violent death, for Christ was put to death as a malefactor, but by his *resurrection* his innocence was demonstrated, as God could not work a miracle to raise a wicked man from the dead. As Adam was *created* by God, and because no natural generation could have any operation in this case, therefore he was called the *son of God*, <sup><40138></sup>**Luke 3:38**, and could never have seen *corruption* if he had not sinned, so the human nature of Jesus Christ, formed by the energy of the eternal Spirit in the womb of the virgin, without any human intervention, was for this very reason called the Son of God, <sup><40135></sup>**Luke 1:35**; and because it had not *sinned*, therefore it could not see corruption, nor was it even *mortal*, but through a miraculous display of God's infinite love, for the purpose of making a sacrificial atonement for the sin of the world and God, having raised this sacrificed human nature from the dead, declared that same Jesus (who was, as above stated, *the Son of God*) to be his Son, the promised Messiah; and as coming by the Virgin Mary, the right heir to the throne of David, according to the uniform declaration of all the prophets.

The words, *This day have I begotten thee*, must refer either to his *incarnation*, when he was miraculously conceived in the womb of the virgin by the power of the Holy Spirit; or to his *resurrection* from the dead, when God, by this sovereign display of his almighty energy, declared him to be his Son, vindicated his innocence, and also the purity and innocence of the blessed virgin, who was the mother of this son, and who declared him to be produced in her womb by the power of God. The *resurrection* of Christ, therefore, to which the words most properly refer, not only gave the fullest proof that he was an *innocent* and *righteous* man, but also that he had accomplished the purpose for which he died, and that his *conception* was miraculous, and his mother a pure and unspotted virgin.

This is a subject of infinite importance to the Christian system, and of the last consequence in reference to the conviction and conversion of the Jews, for whose use this epistle was sent by God. Here is the rock on which they split; they deny this *Divine Sonship* of Jesus Christ, and their blasphemies

against *him* and his *virgin mother* are too shocking to be transcribed. The *certainty of the resurrection* of Jesus refutes their every calumny; proves his miraculous conception; vindicates the blessed virgin; and, in a word, *declares him to be the Son of God with power.*

This most important use of this saying has passed unnoticed by almost every Christian writer which I have seen; and yet it lies here at the foundation of all the apostle's proofs. If Jesus was not thus the Son of God, the whole Christian system is vain and baseless: but his *resurrection* demonstrates him to have been the Son of God; therefore every thing built on this foundation is more durable than the foundations of heaven, and as inexpugnable as the throne of the eternal King.

**He shall be to me a Son?]** As the Jews have ever blasphemed against the *Sonship* of Christ, it was necessary that the apostle should adduce and make strong all his proofs, and show that this was not a new revelation; that it was that which was chiefly intended in several scriptures of the Old Testament, which, without farther mentioning the places where found, he immediately produces. This place, which is quoted from ~~10714~~ **2 Samuel 7:14**, shows us that the *seed* which God promised to David, and who was to *sit upon his throne*, and whose *throne should be established for ever*, was not Solomon, but Jesus Christ; and indeed he quotes the words so as to intimate that they were so understood by the Jews. See among the observations at the end of the chapter.

**Verse 6. And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten]** This is not a correct translation of the Greek, **ὅταν δε παλιν εισαγαγη τον πρωτοτοκον εις την οικουμενην.** *But when he bringeth again, or the second time, the first-born into the habitable world.* This most manifestly refers to his *resurrection*, which might be properly considered a *second incarnation*; for as the human soul, as well as the fulness of the Godhead bodily, dwelt in the man, Christ Jesus on and during his incarnation, so when he expired upon the cross, both the *Godhead* and the *human spirit* left his dead body; and as on his resurrection these were reunited to his revived manhood, therefore, with the strictest propriety, does the apostle say that the resurrection was a *second bringing of him into the world.*

I have translated **οικουμενη** the *habitable world*, and this is its proper meaning; and thus it is distinguished from **κοσμος**, which signifies the *terrestrial globe*, independently of its inhabitants; though it often expresses both the inhabited and uninhabited parts. Our Lord's *first*

coming into the world is expressed by this latter word, <sup><8105></sup> **Hebrews 10:5**: *Wherefore when he cometh into the world, διο εισερχομενος εις τον κοσμος*, and this simply refers to his being *incarnated*, that he might be capable of *suffering* and *dying* for man. But the word is changed on this *second coming*, I mean his *resurrection*, and then *οικουμενη* is used; and why? (fancy apart) because he was now *to dwell with man*; to send his gospel everywhere to all the inhabitants of the earth, and to *accompany* that Gospel wherever he sent it, and to *be* wherever two or three should be gathered together in his name. Wherever the messengers of Jesus Christ go, preaching the kingdom of God, even to the farthest and most desolate parts of the earth where human beings exist, there they ever find Christ; he is not only in *them*, and with *them*, but he is in and among all who believe on him through their word.

**Let all the angels of God worship him.**] The apostle recurs here to his former assertion, that Jesus is higher than the angels, <sup><8004></sup> **Hebrews 1:4**, that he is none of those who can be called ordinary angels or messengers, but one of the most extraordinary kind, and the object of worship to all the angels of God. To worship any *creature* is idolatry, and God resents idolatry more than any other evil. Jesus Christ can be no creature, else the angels who worship him must be guilty of idolatry, and God the author of that idolatry, who commanded those angels to worship Christ.

There has been some difficulty in ascertaining the place from which the apostle quotes these words; some suppose <sup><19707></sup> **Psalms 97:7**: *Worship him, all ye gods*; which the Septuagint translate thus: *προσκυνησατε αυτω, παντες αγγελοι αυτου*. *Worship him, all ye his angels*; but it is not clear that the Messiah is intended in this psalm, nor are the words precisely those used here by the apostle. Our marginal references send us with great propriety to the *Septuagint* version of <sup><153243></sup> **Deuteronomy 32:43**, where the passage is found *verbatim et literatim*; but there is nothing answering to the words in the present Hebrew text. The apostle undoubtedly quoted the *Septuagint*, which had then been for more than 300 years a version of the highest repute among the Jews; and it is very probable that the copy from which the Seventy translated had the corresponding words. However this may be, they are now sanctioned by Divine authority; and as the verse contains some singular *additions*, I will set it down in a parallel column with that of our own version, which was taken immediately from the Hebrew text, premising simply this, that it is the last verse of the famous prophetic song of Moses, which seems to point out the *advent of the*



*Messiah* to discomfit his enemies, purify the land, and redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

<1524> Deuteronomy 32:43,  
from the Hebrew.

.....  
..... Rejoice, O  
ye nations, *with his people*; .  
.....  
.....for he will  
avenge the blood of his  
servants; . . . and will render  
vengeance to his  
adversaries: . and . . will be  
merciful to his land and to  
his people.

<1524> Deuteronomy 32:43, from the  
Septuagint.

*Rejoice, ye heaven, together with  
him; and let all the angels of God  
worship him. Rejoice, ye Gentiles,  
with his people; and let the children  
of God be strengthened in him; for  
he will avenge the blood of his  
children; he will avenge, and will  
repay judgment to his adversaries;  
and those who hate him will he  
recompense: and the Lord will purge  
the land of his people.*

This is a very important verse; and to it, as it stands in the Septuagint, St. Paul has referred once before; see <51510> **Romans 15:10**. This very verse, as it stands now in the Septuagint, thus referred to by an inspired writer, shows the great importance of this ancient version; and proves the necessity of its being studied and well understood by every minister of Christ. In Rom. 3: there is a large quotation—from Psalm 14:; where there are six whole verses in the apostle's quotation which are not found in the present Hebrew text, but are preserved in the Septuagint! How strange it is that this venerable and important version, so often quoted by our Lord and all his apostles, should be so generally neglected, and so little known! That the common people should be ignorant of it, is not to be wondered at, as it has never been put in an English dress; but that the ministers of the Gospel should be unacquainted with it may be spoken to their shame.

**Verse 7. Who maketh his angels spirits]** They are so far from being superior to Christ, that they are not called God's sons in any *peculiar* sense, but his *servants*, as *tempests* and *lightnings* are. In many respects they may have been made inferior even to *man* as he came out of the hands of his Maker, for *he* was made in the *image* and *likeness* of *God*; but of the angels, even the highest order of them, this is never spoken. It is very likely that the apostle refers here to the opinions of the Jews relative to the

angels. In *Pirkey R. Elieser*, c. 4, it is said: “The angels which were created the second day, when they minister before God, *va l v ^yv[<sup>n</sup> become fire.*” In *Shemoth Rabba*, s. 25, fol. 123, it is said: “God is named *the Lord of hosts*, because with his angels he doth whatsoever he wills: when he pleases, he makes them *sit down*; <sup><0761></sup>**Judges 6:11**: *And the angel of the Lord came, and sat under a tree.* When he pleases, he causes them to stand; <sup><236E></sup>**Isaiah 6:2**: *The seraphim stood.* Sometimes he makes them like women; **Zecariah 5:9**: *Behold there came two women, and the wind was in their wings.* Sometimes he makes them like men; <sup><018E></sup>**Genesis 18:2**: *And, lo, three men stood by him.* Sometimes he makes them spirits; <sup><19A04></sup>**Psalm 104:4**: *Who maketh his angels spirits.* Sometimes he makes them *fire*; *ibid.* *His ministers a flame of fire.*”

In *Yalcut Simeoni*, par. 2, fol. 11, it is said: “The angel answered Manoah, I know not in whose image I am made, for God changeth us every hour: sometimes he makes us *fire*, sometimes *spirit*, sometimes *men*, and at other times *angels*.” It is very probable that those who are termed *angels* are not confined to any specific form or shape, but assume various forms and appearances according to the nature of the work on which they are employed and the will of their sovereign employer. This seems to have been the ancient Jewish doctrine on this subject.

**Verse 8. Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever]** If this be said of the Son of God, i.e. Jesus Christ, then Jesus Christ must be God; and indeed the design of the apostle is to prove this. The words here quoted are taken from <sup><19516></sup>**Psalm 45:6, 7**, which the ancient Chaldee paraphrast, and the most intelligent rabbins, refer to the Messiah. On the third verse of this Psalm, *Thou art fairer than the children of men*, the *Targum* says: “Thy beauty, *aj yvm akl m malca Meshicha*, O King Messiah, is greater than the children of men.” *Aben Ezra* says: “This Psalm speaks of David, or rather of his son, the *Messiah*, for this is his name,” <sup><3524></sup>**Ezekiel 34:24**: *And David my servant shall be a Prince over them for ever.* Other rabbins confirm this opinion.

This verse is very properly considered a proof, and indeed a strong one, of the Divinity of Christ; but some late versions of the New Testament have endeavoured to avoid the evidence of this proof by translating the words thus: *God is thy throne for ever and ever*; and if this version be correct, it is certain the text can be no proof of the doctrine. Mr. Wakefield vindicates this translation at large in his *History of Opinions*; and ο θεος, being the

*nominative* case, is supposed to be a sufficient justification of this version. In answer to this it may be stated that the *nominative* case is often used for the *vocative*, particularly by the Attics; and the whole scope of the place requires it should be so used here; and, with due deference to all of a contrary opinion, the original Hebrew cannot be consistently translated any other way,  $\text{d[w } \mu\text{l w[ } \mu\text{yhl a } \ddot{\text{E}}\text{ask}$  *kisaca Elohim olam vaed, Thy throne, O God, is for ever, and to eternity.* It is in both worlds; and extends over all time; and will exist through all endless duration. To this our Lord seems to refer, <sup><AD218></sup>**Matthew 28:18:** *All power is given unto me, both in HEAVEN and EARTH. My throne, i.e. my dominion, extends from the creation to the consummation of all things. These I have made, and these I uphold; and from the end of the world, throughout eternity, I shall have the same glory-sovereign, unlimited power and authority, which I had with the Father before the world began;* <sup><B175></sup>**John 17:5.** I may add that none of the ancient versions has understood it in the way contended for by those who deny the Godhead of Christ, either in the Psalm from which it is taken, or in this place where it is quoted. Aquila translates  $\mu\text{yhl a}$  *Elohim*, by  $\theta\epsilon\epsilon$ , *O God*, in the *vocative* case; and the Arabic adds the sign of the *vocative* [Arabic] *ya*, reading the place thus: [Arabic] *korsee yallahu ila abadilabada*, the same as in our version. And even allowing that  $\omicron \theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$  here is to be used as the *nominative* case, it will not make the sense contended for, without adding  $\epsilon\sigma\tau\iota$  to it, a reading which is not countenanced by any *version*, nor by any MS. yet discovered. Wiclif, Coverdale, and others, understood it as the *nominative*, and translated it so; and yet it is evident that this *nominative* has the power of the *vocative*: *forsothe to the sone God thi troone into the world of world: a gerde of equite the gerde of thi reume.* I give this, pointing and all, as it stands in my old MS. Bible. Wiclif is nearly the same, but is evidently of a more modern cast: *but to the sone he seith, God thy trone is into the world of world, a gherd of equyte is the gherd of thi rewme.* Coverdale translates it thus: *But unto the sonne he sayeth, God, thi seate endureth for ever and ever: the cepter of thi kyngdome is a right cepter.* Tindal and others follow in the same way, all reading it in the *nominative* case, with the force of the *vocative*; for none of them has inserted the word  $\epsilon\sigma\tau\iota$ , *is*, because not authorized by the original: a word which the opposers of the Divinity of our Lord are obliged to *beg*, in order to support their interpretation. See some farther criticisms on this at the end of this chapter.

**A sceptre of righteousness]** The sceptre, which was a sort of staff or instrument of various forms, was the ensign of government, and is here used for government itself. This the ancient Jewish writers understand also of the Messiah.

**Verse 9. Thou hast loved righteousness]** This is the characteristic of a just governor: he abhors and suppresses iniquity; he countenances and supports righteousness and truth.

**Therefore God, even thy God]** The original, **δια τουτο εχρισε σε ο θεος, ο θεος σου**, may be thus translated: *Therefore, O God, thy God hath anointed thee*. The form of speech is nearly the same with that in the preceding verse; but the sense is sufficiently clear if we read, *Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee, &c.*

**With the oil of gladness]** We have often had occasion to remark that, anciently, *kings, priests, and prophets* were consecrated to their several offices by anointing; and that this signified the gifts and influences of the Divine Spirit. Christ, **ο χριστος**, signifies *The Anointed One*, the same as the Hebrew Messiah; and he is here said to be *anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows*. 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 had ever the *three offices* in his own person but Jesus Christ, and none but himself can be a King over the universe, a Prophet to all intelligent beings, and a Priest to the whole human race. Thus he is infinitely exalted *beyond his fellows*-all that had ever borne the regal, prophetic, or sacerdotal offices.

Some think that the word **μετοχους**, *fellows*, refers to *believers* who are made partakers of the same Spirit, but cannot have its infinite plenitude. The first sense seems the best. *Gladness* is used to express the *festivities* which took place on the inauguration of kings, &c.

**Verse 10. And, Thou, Lord]** This is an address to the *Son* as the *Creator*, see <sup><800></sup>**Hebrews 1:2**; for this is implied in *laying the foundation* of the earth. The heavens, which are the work of his hands, point out his infinite wisdom and skill.

**Verse 11. They shall perish]** Permanently fixed as they seem to be, a time shall come when they shall be *dissolved*, and afterward *new heavens* and a

*new earth* be formed, in which righteousness alone shall dwell. See <sup>610B10</sup>2 Peter 3:10-13.

**Shall wax old as doth a garment]** As a garment by long using becomes unfit to be longer used, so shall all visible things; they shall *wear old*, and *wear out*; and hence the necessity of their being *renewed*. It is remarkable that our word *world* is a contraction of *wear old*; a term by which our ancestors expressed the sentiment contained in this verse. That the word was thus compounded, and that it had this sense in our language, may be proved from the most competent and indisputable witnesses. It was formerly written [Anglo-Saxon] *weorold*, and [Anglo-Saxon] *wereld*. This *etymology* is finely alluded to by our excellent poet, *Spencer*, when describing the primitive age of innocence, succeeded by the age of depravity:—

*“The lion there did with the lambe consort,  
And eke the dove sat by the faulcon’s side;  
Ne each of other feared fraude or tort,  
But did in safe security abide,  
Withouten perill of the stronger pride:  
But when the WORLD woxe old, it woxe warre old,  
Whereof it hight, and having shortly tride  
The trains of wit, in wickednesse woxe bold,  
And dared of all sinnes, the secrets to unfold.”*

Even the heathen poets are full of such allusions. See *Horace*, Carm. lib. iii., od. 6; *Virgil*, Æn. viii., ver. 324.

**Thou remainest]** Instead of *διαμενεις*, some good MSS. read *διαμενεις*, the first, without the circumflex, being the present tense of the indicative mood; the latter, with the circumflex, being the *future-thou shalt remain*. The difference between these two readings is of little importance.

**Verse 12. And they shall be changed]** Not *destroyed* ultimately, or *annihilated*. They shall be *changed* and *renewed*.

**But thou art the same]** These words can be said of no being but God; all others are *changeable* or *perishable*, because temporal; only that which is *eternal* can continue *essentially*, and, speaking after the manner of men, *formally* the same.

**Thy years shall not fail.]** There is in the Divine duration no circle to be run, no space to be measured, no time to be reckoned. All is eternity-infinite and onward.

**Verse 13. But to which of the angels]** We have already seen, from the opinions and concessions of the Jews, that, if Jesus Christ could be proved to be *greater than the angels*, it would necessarily follow that he was God: and this the apostle does most amply prove by these various quotations from their own Scriptures; for he shows that while he is the supreme and absolute Sovereign, they are no more than his *messengers* and *servants*, and *servants* even to his *servants*, i.e. to mankind.

**Verse 14. Are they not all ministering spirits]** That is, *They are all ministering spirits*; for the Hebrews often express the strongest *affirmative* by an interrogation.

All the angels, even those of the highest order, are employed by their Creator to serve those who believe in Christ Jesus. What these services are, and how performed, it would be impossible to state. Much has been written on the subject, partly founded on Scripture, and partly on conjecture. They 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*. We know that he needs none of those helps, for he can do all things himself; yet it seems agreeable to his infinite wisdom and goodness to use them. This is part of the economy of God in the government of the world and of the Church; and a part, no doubt, essential to the harmony and perfection of the whole. The reader may see a very sensible discourse on this text in vol. ii., page 133, of the Rev. John Wesley's works, American edition. Dr. Owen treats the subject at large in his comment on this verse, vol. iii., page 141, edit. 8vo., which is just now brought to my hand, and which appears to be a very learned, judicious, and important work, but by far too diffuse. In it the words of God are drowned in the sayings of man.

THE Godhead of Christ is a subject of such great importance, both to the faith and hope of a Christian, that I feel it necessary to bring it full into view, wherever it is referred to in the sacred writings. It is a prominent article in the apostle's creed, and should be so in ours. That this doctrine cannot be established on ~~SOLUS~~ **Hebrews 1:8** has been the assertion of many. To what I have already said on this verse, I beg leave to subjoin the following criticisms of a learned friend, who has made this subject his particular study.

## BRIEF REMARKS ON HEBREWS, chap. i., ver. 8.

Ὁ θρονος σου, ο Θεος, εις τουςε αιωνας.

It hath ever been the opinion of the most sound divines, that these words, which are extracted from the 45th Psalm, are addressed by God the Father unto God the Son. Our translators have accordingly rendered the passage thus: “Thy throne, O God, is for ever.” Those who deny the Divinity of Christ, being eager to get rid of such a testimony against themselves, contend that ο Θεος is here the nominative, and that the meaning is: “God is thy throne for ever.” Now it is somewhat strange, that none of them have had critical acumen enough to discover that the words cannot possibly admit of this signification. It is a rule in the Greek language, that when a substantive noun is the subject of a sentence, and something is predicated of it, the article, if used at all, is prefixed to the subject, but omitted before the predicate. The Greek translators of the Old, and the authors of the New Testament, write agreeably to this rule. I shall first give some examples from the latter:—

θεος ην ο λογος.-“The Word was God.” <sup><30101></sup> **John 1:1.**

ὁ λογος σαρξ εγενετο.-“The Word became flesh.” <sup><30114></sup> **John 1:14.**

πνευμα ο θεος.-“God is a Spirit.” <sup><30024></sup> **John 4:24.**

ο θεος αγαπη εστι.-“God is love.” <sup><30008></sup> **1 John 4:8.**

ὁ θεος φως εστι.-“God is light.” <sup><30005></sup> **1 John 1:5.**

If we examine the Septuagint version of the Psalms, we shall find, that in such instances the author sometimes places the article before the subject, but that his usual mode is to omit it altogether. A few examples will suffice:—

ὁ θεος κριτης δικαιος.-“God is a righteous judge.” <sup><30711></sup> **Psalm 7:11.**

ὁ θεος ημων καταφυγη και δυναμις,-“God is our refuge and strength.” <sup><19401></sup> **Psalm 46:1.**

κυριος βοηθος μου.-“The Lord is my helper.” <sup><19207></sup> **Psalm 28:7.**

κυριος στερεωμα μου και καταφυγη μου.-“The Lord is my firm support and my refuge.” <sup><191812></sup> **Psalm 18:2.**

θεος μεγας κυριος.-“The Lord is a great God.” <sup><19503></sup> **Psalm 95:3.**

We see what is the established phraseology of the Septuagint, when a substantive noun has something predicated of it in the same sentence.

Surely, then, we may be convinced that if in <sup><19416></sup>**Psalm 45:6**, the meaning which they who deny our Lord's Divinity affix, had been intended, it would rather have been written **θρονος σου, ο θεος**, or **θρονος σου, θεος**. This our conviction will, if possible, be increased, when we examine the very next clause of this sentence, where we shall find that the article is prefixed to the subject, but omitted before the predicate.

**ραβδος ευθυτηρος η ραβδος της βασιλειας σου**.-“The sceptre of thy kingdom is a sceptre of rectitude.”

“But it may be doubted whether **θεος** with the article affixed be ever used in the vocative case.” Your doubt will be solved by reading the following examples, which are taken not promiscuously from the Septuagint, but all of them from the Psalms.

**κρινον αυτους, ο θεος**.-“Judge them, O God.” <sup><190510></sup>**Psalm 5:10**.

**ὁ θεος, ο θεος μου**.-“O God, my God.” <sup><192201></sup>**Psalm 22:1**.

**σοι ψαλω, ο θεος μου**.-“Unto thee will I sing, O my God.”

<sup><195917></sup>**Psalm 59:17**.

**υψωσω σε, ο θεος μου**.-“I will exalt thee, O my God.” <sup><194501></sup>**Psalm 145:1**.

**κυριε, ο θεος μου**.-“O Lord my God.” <sup><194401></sup>**Psalm 104:1**.

I have now removed the only objection which can, I think, be started. It remains, that the son of Mary is here addressed as the God whose throne endures for ever.

I know that a *pronoun* sometimes occurs with the article prefixed to its predicate; but I speak only of *nouns substantive*.

I must not fail to observe, that the rule about the subject and predicate, like that of the Greek prepositive article, pervades all classes of writers. It will be sufficient, if I give three or four examples. The learned reader may easily collect more.

**προσκηνιον μεν ο ουρανος απας, θεατρον δη οικουμενη**. “The whole heaven is his stage, and the world his theatre.” Chrysostom. We have here two instances in one sentence. The same is the case in the following examples:-

**βραχυς μεν ο ξυλλογος, μεγας δ ο ποθος**.-“Small indeed is the assembly, but great is the desire.” Chrysostom.



καλον γαρ το αθλον, και η ελπις μεγαλη.-“For the prize is noble, and the hope is great.” Plato.

το ταΐσχρον εχθρον, και το χρηστον ευκλεες.-“That which is base is hateful; and that which is honest, glorious.” Sophocles.

Having spoken of nouns substantive only, I ought to state that the rule applies equally to adjectives and to participles. Near the opening of the fifth of Matthew, we find eight consecutive examples of the rule. In five of these the subject is an adjective, and in the other three, a participle. Indeed one of them has two participles, affording an instance of the rule respecting the prepositive article, as well as of that which we are now considering.

μακαριοι οι πεινωντες και διψωντες. “Blessed are they who hunger and thirst.” In the Apocalypse there are four examples of the rule with participles, and in all these twelve cases the predicate is placed first. See the supplement to my Essay on the Greek Article, at the end of Dr. A. Clarke’s commentary on Ephesians.

I am aware that an exception now and then occurs in the sacred writings; but I think I may assert that there are no exceptions in the Septuagint version of the book of Psalms. As the words ο θρονος σου, ο θεος, occur in the book of Psalms, the most important question is this: Does that book always support the orthodox interpretation? With regard to the deviations which are elsewhere occasionally found, I think there can be little doubt that they are owing to the ignorance or carelessness of transcribers, for the rule is unquestionably genuine.-H. S. BOYD.

The preceding remarks are original, and will be duly respected by every scholar.

I have shown my reasons in the note on “~~4015~~ Luke 1:35”, why I cannot close in with the common view of what is called the *eternal Sonship* of Christ. I am inclined to think that from this tenet *Arianism* had its origin. I shall here produce my authority for this opinion. Arius, the father of what is called *Arianism*, and who flourished in A. D. 300, was a presbyter of the Church of Alexandria, a man of great learning and eloquence, and of deeply mortified manners; and he continued to edify the Church by his teaching and example till the circumstance took place which produced that unhappy change in his religious sentiments, which afterwards gave rise to so much distraction and division in the Christian Church. The circumstance to which I refer is related by *Socrates Scholasticus*, in his supplement to

the History of Eusebius, lib. i., c. 5; and is in substance as follows: Alexander, having succeeded Achillas in the bishopric of Alexandria, self-confidently philosophizing one day in the presence of his presbyters and the rest of his clergy concerning the holy Trinity, among other things asserted that there was a Monad in the Triad, φιλοτιμότερον περι της αγιας τριαδος, ες τριαδι Μοναδα ειναι φιλοσοφων εθεολογει. What he said on the derived nature or *eternal Sonship* of Christ is not related. Arius, one of his presbyters, a man of considerable skill in the science of logic, ανηρ ουκ αμοιρος της διαλεκτικης λεσχης, supposing that the bishop designed to introduce the dogmas of Sabellius, the Libyan, who denied the personality of the Godhead, and consequently the Trinity, sharply opposed the bishop, arguing thus: “If the Father begot the Son, *he* who was thus begotten had a beginning of his existence; and from this it is manifest, that there was a time in which the Son was not. Whence it necessarily follows, that he has his subsistence from what exists not.” The words which Socrates quotes are the following, of which the above is as close a translation as the different idioms will allow: ει ο πατηρ εγεννησε τον υιον, αρχην υπαρξεως εχει ο γεννηθεις και εκ τουτου δηλον, οτι ην οτε ουκ ην ο υιος. ακολουθει τε εξ αναγκης, εξ ουκ οντων εχειν αυτον την υποστασιν. Now, it does not appear that this had been previously the doctrine of Arius, but that it was the *consequence* which he logically drew from the doctrine laid down by the bishop; and, although Socrates does not tell us what the bishop stated, yet, from the *conclusions* drawn, we may at once see what the *premises* were; and these must have been some incautious assertions concerning the *Sonship* of the *Divine nature* of Christ: and I have shown elsewhere that these are fair deductions from such premises. “But is not God called Father; and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? “Most certainly. That God graciously assumes the name of *Father*, and acts in that character towards mankind, the whole Scripture proves; and that the title is given to him as signifying *Author, Cause, Fountain, and Creator*, is also sufficiently manifest from the same Scriptures. In this sense he is said to be the *Father of the rain*, <sup><1832></sup>**Job 38:28**; and hence also it is said, *He is the Father of spirits*, <sup><812></sup>**Hebrews 12:9**; and he is the Father of men because he created them; and Adam, the first man, is particularly called *his son*, <sup><1838></sup>**Luke 3:38**. But he is the Father of the *human nature* of our blessed Lord in a peculiar sense, because by his energy this was produced in the womb of the virgin. <sup><1835></sup>**Luke 1:35**, *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee*; THEREFORE also that HOLY

THING WHICH SHALL BE BORN OF THEE *shall be called* THE SON OF GOD. It is in consequence of this that our blessed Lord is so frequently termed the *Son of God*, and that *God* is called *his Father*. But I know not any scripture, fairly interpreted, that states the *Divine nature* of our Lord to be *begotten* of God, or to be the *Son of God*. Nor can I see it possible that he could be *begotten* of the Father, in *this sense*, and be *eternal*; and if not *eternal*, he is not God. But numberless scriptures give him every attribute of Godhead; his own works demonstrate it; and the whole scheme of salvation requires this. I hope I may say that I have demonstrated his supreme, absolute, and unoriginated Godhead, both in my note on <sup><1016></sup>**Colossians 1:16, 17**, and in my *Discourse on Salvation by Faith*. And having seen that the doctrine of the *eternal Sonship* produced *Arianism*, and *Arianism* produced *Socinianism*, and *Socinianism* produces a kind of *general infidelity*, or disrespect to the sacred writings, so that several parts of them are rejected as being uncanonical, and the inspirations of a major part of the New Testament strongly suspected; I find it necessary to be doubly on my watch to avoid every thing that may, even in the remotest way, tend to so deplorable a catastrophe.

It may be said: “Is not God called the *eternal Father*? And if so, there can be no eternal Father if there be no eternal Son.” I answer: God is not called in any part of Scripture, as far as I can recollect, either the *eternal* or *everlasting Father* in reference to our blessed Lord, nor indeed in reference to any thing else; but this very title, strange to tell, is given to Jesus Christ himself: *His name shall be called the EVERLASTING FATHER*, <sup><2306></sup>**Isaiah 9:6**; and we may on this account, with more propriety, look for an *eternal filiation* proceeding from *him*, than from any other person of the most holy Trinity.

Should it be asked: “Was there no *trinity* of persons in the Godhead before the incarnation!” I answer: That a *trinity of persons* appears to me to belong *essentially* to the eternal Godhead, neither of which was *before*, *after*, or *produced* from another; and of this the Old Testament is full: but the distinction was not fully evident till the incarnation; and particularly till the baptism in Jordan, when on *him*, in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead, the *Holy Ghost* descended in a *bodily shape*, like a dove; and a *voice from heaven* proclaimed that *baptized person* God’s beloved Son: in which transaction there were *three persons* occupying *distinct places*; as the *person of Christ* in the *water*, the *Holy Spirit* in a *bodily shape*, and the

voice from heaven, sufficiently prove; and to each of these persons various scriptures give all the essential attributes of God.

On the doctrine of the *eternal Sonship* of the Divine nature of Christ I once had the privilege of conversing with the late reverend John Wesley, about three years before his death; he read from a book in which I had written it, the argument against this doctrine, which now stands in the note on “~~4013~~ **Luke 1:35**”. He did not attempt to reply to it; but allowed that, on the ground on which I had taken it, the argument was conclusive. I observed, that the proper, essential Divinity of Jesus Christ appeared to me to be so absolutely necessary to the whole Christian scheme, and to the faith both of penitent sinners and saints, that it was of the utmost importance to set it in the clearest and strongest point of view; and that, with my present light, I could not credit it, if I must receive the common doctrine of the *Sonship of the Divine nature* of our Lord. He mentioned two eminent divines who were of the same opinion; and added, that the eternal Sonship of Christ had been a doctrine very generally received in the Christian Church; and he believed no one had ever expressed it better than his brother Samuel had done in the following lines:—

*“From whom, in one eternal now,  
The Son, thy offspring, flow’d;  
An everlasting Father thou,  
An everlasting God.”*

He added not one word more on the subject, nor ever after mentioned it to me, though after that we *had* many interviews. But it is necessary to mention his own note on the text, that has given rise to these observations; which shows that he held the doctrine as commonly received, when he wrote that note; it is as follows:-

**“Thou art my Son]** God of God, Light of Light. *This day have I begotten Thee*-I have begotten Thee from eternity, which, by its unalterable permanency of duration, is one continued unsuccessive day.” Leaving the point in dispute out of the question, this is most beautifully expressed; and I know not that this great man ever altered his views on this subject, though I am certain that he never professed the opinion as many who quote his authority do; nor would he at any time have defended what he did hold in *their way*. I beg leave to quote a fact. In 1781, he published in the fourth volume of the Arminian Magazine, p. 384, an article, entitled “An Arian Antidote;” in this are the following words: “Greater or lesser in infinity, is

not; inferior Godhead shocks our sense; Jesus was inferior to the Father as touching his manhood, <sup><51428></sup>**John 14:28**; he was a son given, and slain intentionally from the foundation of the world, <sup><61308></sup>**Revelation 13:8**, and the first-born from the dead of every creature, <sup><510115></sup>**Colossians 1:15, 18**. But, our *Redeemer*, from everlasting (<sup><29616></sup>**Isaiah 63:16**) *had not the inferior name of Son*; in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God from eternity, and the Word, made flesh, was God,” &c. This is pointedly against the *eternal Sonship* of the *Divine nature*. But why did Mr. W. insert this? and if by haste, &c., why did he not correct this when he published in 1790, in the 13th vol. of the Magazine, eight tables of errata to the eight first volumes of that work? Now, although he had carefully noticed the slightest errors that might affect the sense in those preceding volumes, yet no fault is found with the *reasoning* in the *Arian Antidote*, and the sentence, “But, our Redeemer, from everlasting, had not the inferior name of Son,” &c., is passed by without the slightest notice! However necessary this view of the subject may appear to me, I do not presume to say that others, in order to be saved, must view it in the same light: I leave both opinions to the judgment of the reader; for on such a point it is necessary that every man should be clear in his own mind, and satisfied in his own conscience. Any opinion of mine my readers are at perfect liberty to receive or reject. I never claimed infallibility; I say, with St. Augustine, *Errare possum; hæreticus esse nolo*. Refined Arians, with some of whom I am personally acquainted, are quite willing to receive all that can be said of the dignity and glory of Christ’s nature, provided we admit the doctrine of the eternal Sonship, and omit the word *unoriginated*, which I have used in my demonstration of the Godhead of the Saviour of men; but, as far as it respects myself, I can neither *admit* the one, nor *omit* the other. The proper essential Godhead of Christ lies deep at the foundation of my Christian creed; and I must sacrifice ten thousand *forms of speech* rather than sacrifice the *thing*. My opinion has not been formed on slight examination.

## HEBREWS

### CHAPTER 2.

*The use we should make of the preceding doctrine, and the danger of neglecting this great salvation, 1-4. The future world is not put in subjection to the angels, but all is under the authority of Christ, 5-8. Jesus has tasted death for every man, 9. Nor could he accomplish man's redemption without being incarnated and without dying; by which he destroys the devil, and delivers all that believe on him from the fear of death and spiritual bondage, 10-15. Christ took not upon him the nature of angels, but the nature of Abraham, that he might die, and make reconciliation for the sins of the people, 16-18.*

#### NOTES ON CHAP. 2.

**Verse 1. Therefore]** Because God has spoken to us by his Son; and because that Son is so great and glorious a personage; and because the subject which is addressed to us is of such infinite importance to our welfare.

**We ought to give the more earnest heed]** We should hear the doctrine of Christ with care, candour, and deep concern.

**Lest at any time we should let them slip.]** μη ποτε παραρρωμεν. "Lest at any time we should leak out." This is a metaphor taken from unstanched vessels; the staves not being close together, the fluid put into them leaks through the chinks and crevices. Superficial hearers lose the benefit of the word preached, as the unseasoned vessel does its fluid; nor can any one hear to the saving of his soul, unless he give *most earnest heed*, which he will not do unless he consider the dignity of the speaker, the importance of the subject, and the absolute necessity of the salvation of his soul. St. Chrysostom renders it μη ποτε απολωμεθα, εκπεσωμεν, lest we perish, lest we fall away.

**Verse 2. If the word spoken by angels]** The *law*, (according to some,) which was delivered by the *mediation of angels*, God frequently employing these to communicate his will to men. See ~~4073~~ Acts 7:53; and

<80819>**Galatians 3:19.** But the apostle probably means those particular messages which God sent by angels, as in the case of *Lot*, “<01912>**Genesis 19:12**” &c., and such like.

**Was steadfast]** Was so confirmed by the Divine authority, and so strict, that it would not tolerate any offence, but inflicted punishment on every act of *transgression*, every case in which the *bounds* laid down by the law, were *passed over*; and every act of *disobedience* in respect to the *duties* enjoined.

**Received a just recompense]** That kind and degree of punishment which the law prescribed for those who broke it.

**Verse 3. How shall we escape]** If they who had fewer privileges than we have, to whom God spoke in divers manners by angels and prophets, fell under the displeasure of their Maker, and were often punished with a sore destruction; how shall we escape wrath to the uttermost if we neglect the salvation provided for us, and proclaimed to us by the Son of God? Their offence was *high*; ours, indescribably *higher*. The *salvation* mentioned here is the whole system of Christianity, with all the privileges it confers; properly called a *salvation*, because, by bringing such an abundance of heavenly *light* into the world, it *saves* or *delivers* men from the kingdom of *darkness, ignorance, error, superstition, and idolatry*; and provides all the requisite means to *free* them from the *power, guilt, and contamination* of sin. This salvation is great when compared with that granted to the Jews: 1. The Jewish dispensation was provided for the *Jews* alone; the Christian dispensation for all mankind. 2. The Jewish dispensation was full of significant types and ceremonies; the Christian dispensation is the substance of all those types. 3. The Jewish dispensation referred chiefly to the *body* and *outward* state of man—washings and external cleansings of the flesh; the Christian, to the inward state—purifying the heart and soul, and purging the conscience from dead works. 4. The Jewish dispensation promised *temporal happiness*; the Christian, *spiritual*. 5. The Jewish dispensation belonged chiefly to *time*; the Christian, to *eternity*. 6. The Jewish dispensation had its glory; but that was nothing when compared to the exceeding glory of the Gospel. 7. Moses administered the former; Jesus Christ, the Creator, Governor, and Saviour of the world, the latter. 8. This is a great salvation, infinitely beyond the Jewish; but how great no tongue or pen can describe.

Those who neglect it, **αμελησαντες**, are not only they who oppose or *persecute* it, but they who *pay no regard* to it; who do not *meddle with* it, do not *concern themselves* about it, do not lay it to heart, and consequently do not get their hearts changed by it. Now these cannot *escape* the coming judgments of God; not merely because they oppose his will and commandment, but because they sin against the very *cause* and *means* of their deliverance. As there is but *one* remedy by which their diseased souls can be saved, so by refusing to apply that one remedy they must necessarily perish.

**Which at the first began to be spoken]** Though John the Baptist went before our Lord to prepare his way, yet he could not be properly said to preach the Gospel; and even Christ's preaching was only a *beginning* of the great proclamation: it was his own Spirit in the apostles and evangelists, the men who heard him preach, that opened the whole mystery of the kingdom of heaven. And all this testimony had been so confirmed in the land of Judea as to render it indubitable; and consequently there was no excuse for their unbelief, and no prospect of their *escape* if they should continue to *neglect* it.

**Verse 4. God also bearing them witness]** He did not leave the confirmation of these great truths to the testimony of *men*; he bore his *own* testimony to them by *signs, wonders, various miracles, and distributions of the Holy Ghost*, **πνευματος ἁγίου μερισμοις**. And all these were proved to come from *himself*; for no *man* could do those miracles at *his own pleasure*, but the power to work them was given according to God's *own will*; or rather, God himself wrought them, in order to accredit the ministry of his servants.

For the meaning of *signs, wonders, &c.*, **See the note on**  
 “~~6034~~ **Deuteronomy 4:34**”.

**Verse 5. The world to come]** That **abh μl w[** *olam habba, the world to come*, meant the *days of the Messiah* among the Jews, is most evident, and has been often pointed out in the course of these notes; and that the administration of this kingdom has not been intrusted to *angels*, who were frequently employed under the law, is also evident, for the government is on the shoulder of Jesus Christ; he alone has the keys of death and 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, the Spirit,



Soul, Heart, and Head of the Church: all is in his authority, and under subjection to him.

But some think that the *world to come* means *future glory*, and suppose the words are spoken in reference to the *Angel of God's presence*, <sup><1908></sup>**Exodus 23:20**, who introduced the Israelites into the *promised land*, which land is here put in opposition to the *heavenly inheritance*. And it is certain that in this sense also we have an entrance into the holiest *only* by the blood of Jesus. Dr. *Macknight* contends for this latter meaning, but the former appears more consistent with the Jewish phraseology.

**Verse 6. But one in a certain place]** This *one* is *David*; and the *certain place*, <sup><1908></sup>**Psalm 8:4-6**. But why does the apostle use this indeterminate mode of quotation? Because it was common thus to express the testimony of any of the inspired writers; **בtk awhh rma amar hahu kethab**, thus saith a certain scripture. So *Philo*, Deuteronomy Plant. Noe: **ειπε γαρ που**, *he saith somewhere*; **ειπε θαπ τις**, *a certain person saith*. Thus even the heathens were accustomed to quote *high authorities*; so *Plato*, *Tim.*: **ὤς εφη τις**, *as a certain person saith*, meaning *Heraclitus*. See in *Rosenmuller*. It is such a mode of quotation as we sometimes use when we speak of a very eminent person who is well known; as *that very eminent person*, *that great philosopher*, *that celebrated divine*, *that inspired teacher of the Gentiles*, *the royal psalmist*, *the evangelical prophet*, hath said. The mode of quotation therefore implies, not *ignorance*, but *reverence*.

**What is man]** This quotation is verbatim from the *Septuagint*; and, as the Greek is not as emphatic as the Hebrew, I will quote the original: **yk mda ^bw wnrkzt yk vwna hm wndqpt** *mah enosh ki thizkerenu, uben Adam ki thiphkedenu*; *What is miserable man, that thou rememberest him? and the son of Adam, that thou visitest him?* The variation of the terms in the original is very emphatic. *Adam*, **mda**, is the name given to man at his creation, and expresses his origin, and generic distinction from all other animals. *Enosh*, **vwna**, which signifies *sick, weak, wretched*, was never given to him till after his fall. The *son of Adam* means here, any one or all of the fallen posterity of the first man. That God should *remember* in the way of mercy these *wretched* beings, is great condescension; that he should *visit* them, *manifest* himself to them, yea, even  *dwell among them*, and at

last *assume their nature*, and give up his *life* to ransom them from the bitter pains of eternal death, is mercy and love indescribable and eternal.

**Verse 7. Thou madest him a little lower than the angels]** We must again have recourse to the original from which this quotation is made: **μυηλ αμ σ[μ ωhrs] τω** *vattechasserehu meat meelohim*. If this be spoken of *man* as he came out of the hands of his Maker, it places him at the *head* of all God's works; for literally translated it is: *Thou hast made him less than God*. And this is proved by his being made in the *image and likeness of God*, which is spoken of no other creature either in heaven or earth; and it is very likely that in his original creation he stood at the head of all the works of God, and the next to his Maker. This sentiment is well expressed in the following lines, part of a paraphrase on this psalm, by the Rev. C. Wesley:—

*“Him with glorious majesty  
Thy grace vouchsafed to crown:  
Transcript of the One in Three,  
He in thine image shone.*

*Foremost of created things,  
Head of all thy works he stood;  
Nearest the great King of kings,  
And little less than God.”*

If we take the words as referring to *Jesus Christ*, then they must be understood as pointing out the time of his humiliation, as in <sup><SM></sup>**Hebrews 2:9**; and the *little lower*, **βραχυ τι**, in both verses, must mean *for a short time*, or *a little while*, as is very properly inserted among our *marginal readings*. Adam was originally made higher than the angels, but by sin he is now brought *low*, and subjected to death; for the angelic nature is not *mortal*. Thus, taking the words in their common acceptance, man in his present state may be said to be *lessened below the angels*. Jesus Christ, as the eternal Logos, or God with God, could not *die*, therefore a *body* was prepared for him; and thus **βραχυ τι**, for *a short while*, he was *made lower than the angels*, that he might be capable of *suffering death*. And indeed the whole of the passage suits *him* better than it does any of the children of men, or than even Adam himself in a state of innocence; for it is only *under the feet of Jesus that all things are put in subjection*, and it was in consequence of his humiliation that he had *a name 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,* ~~<1010>~~ **Philippians 2:9-11.**

Therefore he must be infinitely *higher than the angels*, for they, as well as all the *things in heaven*, bow in subjection to him.

**Thou crownedst him with glory and honour]** This was strictly true of *Adam* in his state of innocence, for he was set over all things in this *lower world; all sheep and oxen, the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth over the paths of the seas,* ~~<1007>~~ **Psalm 8:7, 8.** So far all this perfectly applies to *Adam*; but it is evident the apostle takes *all* in a much higher sense, that of *universal dominion*; and hence he says, *he left nothing that is not put under him*. These verses, collated with the above passage from the Epistle to the Philippians, mutually illustrate each other. And the *crowning Christ with glory and honour* must refer to his *exaltation* after his resurrection, in which, as the victorious Messiah, he had all power given to him in heaven and earth. And although *we do not yet see all things put under him*, for evil men, and evil spirits, are only under the *subjection of control*, yet we look forward to that time when the whole world shall be bowed to his sway, and when the stone cut out of the mountain without hands shall become great, and fill the whole earth. What was never true of the first *Adam*, even in his most exalted state, is true of the second *Adam*, the Lord Jesus Christ; and to him, and to him alone, it is most evident that the apostle applies these things; and thus he is higher than the *angels*, who never had nor can have such dominion and consequent glory.

**Verse 9. Should taste death for every man.]** In consequence of the fall of *Adam*, the whole human race became sinful in their *nature*, and in their *practice* added *transgression* to *sinfulness* of disposition, and thus became exposed to endless perdition. To redeem them Jesus Christ took on him the nature of man, and suffered the penalty due to their sins.

It was a custom in ancient times to take off criminals by making them *drink a cup of poison*. Socrates was adjudged to drink a cup of the juice of hemlock, by order of the Athenian magistrates: **πινειν το φαρμακον, αναγκαζοντων των αρχοντων**. The sentence was one of the most unjust ever pronounced on man. Socrates was not only innocent of every crime laid to his charge, but was the greatest benefactor to his country. He was duly conscious of the iniquity of his sentence, yet cheerfully submitted to his appointed fate; for when the officer brought in the poison, though his friends endeavoured to persuade him that he had yet a considerable time in

which he might continue to live, yet, knowing that every purpose of life was now accomplished, he refused to avail himself of a few remaining moments, seized the cup, and drank off the poison with the utmost cheerfulness and alacrity; **επισχομενος και μαλα ευχερωσ και ευκολωσ εξεπειε**. *Plato*, Phæd. sub. fin. The reference in the text seems to point out the whole human race as being accused, tried, found guilty, and condemned, each having his own *poisoned cup* to drink; and Jesus, the wonderful Jesus, takes the cup out of the hand of each, and cheerfully and with alacrity drinks off the dregs! Thus having drunk every man's *poisoned cup*, he *tasted* that *death* which they must have endured, had not their *cup* been drunk by *another*. Is not this the *cup* to which he refers, ~~103~~ **Matthew 26:39**: *O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me?* But without his drinking it, the salvation of the world would have been *impossible*; and therefore he cheerfully drank it in the place of every human soul, and thus made atonement for the sin of the whole world: and this he did, **χαριτι θεου**, by the grace, mercy, or infinite goodness of God. Jesus Christ, incarnated, crucified, dying, rising, ascending to heaven, and becoming our Mediator at God's right hand, is the full proof of God's infinite love to the human race.

Instead of **χαριτι θεου**, by the grace of God, some MSS. and the Syriac have **χωρις θεου**, *without God*, or *God excepted*; i.e. the *manhood died*, not the *Deity*. This was probably a marginal gloss, which has crept into the text of many MSS., and is quoted by some of the chief of the Greek and Latin fathers. Several critics contend that the verse should be read thus: "But we see Jesus, who for a little while was made less than angels, that by the grace of God he might taste death for every man, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour." Howsoever it be taken, the sense is nearly the same: 1. Jesus Christ was incarnated. 2. He suffered death as an expiatory victim. 3. The persons in whose behalf he suffered were the whole human race; *every man*-all human creatures. 4. This Jesus is now in a state of the highest glory and honour.

**Verse 10. For it became him]** It was suitable to the Divine wisdom, the requisitions of justice, and the economy of grace, to offer Jesus as a sacrifice, in order to bring many sons and daughters to glory.

**For whom-and by whom]** God is the *cause* of all things, and he is the *object* or *end* of them.

**Perfect through sufferings.]** Without *suffering* he could not have *died*, and without *dying* he could not have made an *atonement for sin*. The sacrifice must be *consummated*, in order that he might be qualified to be the *Captain* or *Author* of the *salvation* of men, and lead all those who become children of God, through faith in him, into eternal glory. I believe this to be the sense of the passage; and it appears to be an answer to the grand objection of the Jews: “The Messiah is never to be conquered, or die; but will be victorious, and endure for ever.” Now the apostle shows that this is not the counsel of God; on the contrary, that it was entirely *congruous* to the will and nature of God, *by whom*, and *for whom are all things*, to bring men to eternal glory through the suffering and death of the Messiah. This is the decision of the Spirit of God against their prejudices; and on the Divine authority this must be our *conclusion*. Without the passion and death of Christ, the salvation of man would have been impossible.

As there are many different views of this and some of the following verses, I shall introduce a paraphrase of the whole from

Dr. Dodd, who gives the substance of what Doddridge, Pearce, and Owen, have said on this subject.

**Verse 10. For it became him, &c.**—”Such has been the conduct of God in the great affair of our redemption; and the beauty and harmony of it will be apparent in proportion to the degree in which it is examined; *for*, though the Jews dream of a temporal Messiah as a scheme conducive to the Divine glory, *it well became him*-it was expedient, that, in order to act worthy of himself, he should take this method; *Him, for whom are all things*, and *by whom are all things*-that glorious Being who is the first cause and last end of all, in pursuit of the great and important design he had formed, of *conducting many*, whom he is pleased to adopt as his *sons*, to the possession of that inheritance of *glory* intended for them, *to make* and constitute Jesus, his first-begotten and well beloved Son, the *Leader* and *Prince* of their salvation, and to make him *perfect*, or *completely fit* for the full execution of his office, *by* a long train of various and extreme *sufferings*, whereby he was, as it were, solemnly *consecrated* to it. Verse 11. *Now*, in consequence of this appointment, Jesus, *the great Sanctifier*, who engages and *consecrates* men to the service of God, and *they who are sanctified*, (i.e. consecrated and introduced to God with such acceptance,) *are all of one family*-all the descendants of Adam, and in a sense the seed

of Abraham; *for which cause he is not ashamed to call them*, whom he thus redeems, and presents to the Divine favour, his *brethren*. Verse 12. *Saying*, in the person of David, who represented the Messiah in his sufferings and exaltation, *I will declare thy name to my brethren; in the midst of the Church will I praise thee*. Verse 13. *And again*, speaking as a mortal man, exposed to such exercises of faith in trials and difficulties as others were, he says, in a psalm which sets forth his triumph over his enemies: *I will trust in him*, as other good men have done in all ages; *and again*, elsewhere in the person of Isaiah: *Behold I, and the children which my God hath given me*, are for signs and for wonders. Verse 14. *Seeing then* those whom he represents in one place and another, as *the children* of the same family with himself, *were partakers of flesh and blood*, *he himself in like manner participated in them*, that thereby becoming capable of those sufferings to which, without such a union with flesh, this Divine Sanctifier could not have been obnoxious, *he might*, by his own voluntary and meritorious *death*, *abolish and depose him who*, by Divine permission, *had the empire of death*, and led it in his train when he made the first invasion on mankind; *that is, the devil*, the great artificer of mischief and destruction; at the beginning the murderer of the human race; who still seems to triumph in the spread of mortality, which is his work, and who may often, by God's permission, be the executioner of it. Verse 15. But Christ, the great Prince of mercy and life, graciously interposed, that he *might deliver those* miserable captives of Satan-mankind in general, and the dark and idolatrous Gentiles in particular, *who, through fear of death, were*, or justly might have been, *all their lifetime, obnoxious to bondage*; having nothing to expect in consequence of it, if they rightly understood their state, but future misery; whereas now, changing their lord, they have happily changed their condition, and are, as many as have believed in him, the heirs of eternal life."

**Verse 11. For both he that sanctifieth]** The word ο αγιαζων does not merely signify one who sanctifies or makes holy, but one who makes atonement or reconciliation to God; and answers to the Hebrew רִפָּק *caphar*, to expiate. See <sup><1233></sup>**Exodus 29:33-36**. He that sanctifies is he that makes atonement; and they who are sanctified are they who receive that atonement, and, being reconciled unto God, become his children by adoption, through grace.

In this sense our Lord uses the word, <sup><81719></sup>**John 17:19**: *For their sakes I sanctify myself*; υπερ αυτων εγω αγιαζω εμαυτον, on their account I

consecrate myself to be a sacrifice. This is the sense in which this word is used generally through this epistle.

Are **all of one**] *εξ ενος παντες*. What this *one* means has given rise to various conjectures; *father, family, blood, seed, race, nature*, have all been substituted; *nature* seems to be that intended, see <sup><58124></sup>**Hebrews 2:14**; and the conclusion of this verse confirms it. Both the *Sanctifier* and the *sanctified*-both Christ and his followers, are all of the same nature; for as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, i.e. of *human nature*, he partook of the same, and thus he was qualified to become a sacrifice for man.

**He is not ashamed to call them brethren**] Though, as to his Godhead, he is infinitely raised above men and angels; yet as he has become incarnate, notwithstanding his dignity, he blushes not to acknowledge all his true followers as his *brethren*.

**Verse 12. I will declare thy name**] See <sup><19222></sup>**Psalm 22:22**. The apostle certainly quotes this psalm as referring to Jesus Christ, and these words as spoken by Christ unto the Father, in reference to his incarnation; as if he had said: “When I shall be incarnated, I will declare thy perfections to mankind; and among my disciples I will give glory to thee for thy mercy to the children of men.” See the fulfilment of this, <sup><40118></sup>**John 1:18**: *No man hath seen God at any time; the ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON, which is in the bosom of the Father, HE HATH DECLARED HIM*. Nor were the perfections of God ever properly *known* or *declared*, till the manifestation of Christ. Hear another scripture, <sup><41021></sup>**Luke 10:21, 22**: *In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes, &c.* Thus he gave praise to God.

**Verse 13. I will put my trust in him.**] It is not clear to what express place of Scripture the apostle refers: words to this effect frequently occur; but the place most probably is <sup><19182></sup>**Psalm 18:2**, several parts of which psalm seem to belong to the Messiah.

**Behold I and the children which God hath given me.**] This is taken from <sup><23818></sup>**Isaiah 8:18**. The apostle does not intend to say that the *portions* which he has quoted have any particular reference, taken by themselves, to the subject in question; they are only *catch-words* of *whole paragraphs*, which, taken together, are full to the point; because they are prophecies of

the Messiah, and are fulfilled in him. This is evident from the last quotation: *Behold I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel.* Jesus and his *disciples* wrought a multitude of the most stupendous *signs and wonders* in Israel. The expression also may include all genuine Christians; they are for signs and wonders throughout the earth. And as to the 18th Psalm, the principal part of it seems to refer to *Christ's sufferings*; but the miracles which were wrought at his crucifixion, the destruction of the Jewish state and polity, the *calling of the Gentiles*, and the establishment of the *Christian Church*, appear also to be intended. See among others the following passages: SUFFERINGS-*The sorrows of death compassed me-in my distress I called upon the Lord.* MIRACLES at the crucifixion-*The earth shook and trembled-and darkness was under his feet.* DESTRUCTION of the Jewish state-*I have pursued mine enemies and overtaken them; they are fallen under my feet.* CALLING of the GENTILES-*Thou hast made me head of the heathen; a people whom I have never known shall serve me; as soon as they hear of me-they shall obey me, &c., &c.* A principal design of the apostle is to show that such scriptures are prophecies of the Messiah; that they plainly refer to his appearing in the flesh in Israel; and that they have all been fulfilled in Jesus Christ, and the calling of the Gentiles to the privileges of the Gospel. To establish these points was of great importance.

**Verse 14. The children are partakers of flesh and blood]** Since those children of God, who have fallen and are to be redeemed, are *human beings*; in order to be qualified to redeem them by suffering and dying in their stead, *He himself likewise took part of the same*-he became *incarnate*; and thus he who was *God with God*, became *man with men*. By the *children* here we are to understand, not only the *disciples* and all *genuine Christians*, as in <sup><8213></sup>**Hebrews 2:13**, but also the *whole human race*; all Jews and all Gentiles; so <sup><8151></sup>**John 11:51, 52**: *He prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but also that he should gather together in one the CHILDREN of GOD that were scattered abroad*; meaning, probably, all the *Jews* in every part of the earth. But collate this with <sup><8112></sup>**1 John 2:2**, where: the evangelist explains the former words: *He is the propitiation for our sins, (the Jews,) and not for ours only, but for the sins of the WHOLE WORLD.* As the apostle was writing to the *Hebrews* only, he in general uses a Jewish phraseology, pointing out to them *their own* privileges; and rarely introduces the *Gentiles*, or what the Messiah has done for the other nations of the earth.



**That through death]** That by the merit of his own death, making atonement for sin, and procuring the almighty energy of the Holy Spirit, he might *counterwork* καταργηση, or *render useless and ineffectual*, all the operations of him who *had* the power, κρατος, or *influence*, to bring death into the world; so that *death*, which was intended by him who was a murderer from the beginning to be the final ruin of mankind, becomes the instrument of their exaltation and endless glory; and thus the death brought in by Satan is *counterworked* and rendered *ineffectual* by the death of Christ.

**Him that had the power of death]** This is spoken in conformity to an opinion prevalent among the Jews, that there was a certain fallen angel who was called *twmh Ēal m malak hammaveth*, the *angel of death*; i.e. one who had the *power* of separating the soul from the body, when God decreed that the person should die. There were two of these, according to some of the Jewish writers: one was the angel of death to the *Gentiles*; the other, to the Jews. Thus *Tob haarets*, fol. 31: “There are two angels which preside over death: one is over those who die out of the land of Israel, and his name is *Sammael*; the other is he who presides over those who die in the land of Israel, and this is *Gabriel*.” *Sammael* is a common name for the devil among the Jews; and there is a tradition among them, delivered by the author of *Pesikta rabbetha* in *Yalcut Simeoni*, par. 2, f. 56, that the angel of death should be destroyed by the Messiah! “Satan said to the holy blessed God: *Lord of the world, show me the Messiah*. The Lord answered: *Come and see him*. And when he had seen him he was terrified, and his countenance fell, and he said: *Most certainly this is the Messiah who shall cast me and all the nations into hell, as it is written* <sup>צבא</sup> **Isaiah 25:8**, *The Lord shall swallow up death for ever*.” This is a very remarkable saying, and the apostle shows that it is true, for the Messiah came to *destroy him who had the power of death*. Dr. Owen has made some collections on this head from other Jewish writers which tend to illustrate this verse; they may be seen in his comment, vol. i., p. 456, 8vo. edition.

**Verse 15. And deliver them who through fear of death]** It is very likely that the apostle has the Gentiles here principally in view. As *they* had no *revelation*, and no certainty of *immortality*, they were continually in bondage to the fear of death. They preferred *life* in any state, with the most grievous evils, to *death*, because they had no hope beyond the grave. But it is also true that all men naturally fear death; even those that have the fullest persuasion and certainty of a future state dread it: genuine Christians, who

know that, if the earthly house of their tabernacle were dissolved, they have a house not made with hands, a building framed of God, eternal in the heavens, only *they* fear it not. In the assurance they have of God's love, the fear of death is removed; and by the purification of their hearts through faith, the sting of death is extracted. The people who know not God are in continual torment through the fear of death, and they fear death because they fear something beyond death. They are conscious to themselves that they are wicked, and they are afraid of God, and terrified at the thought of *eternity*. By these fears thousands of sinful, miserable creatures are prevented from hurrying themselves into the unknown world. This is finely expressed by the poet:—

*“To die,—to sleep,—*

*No more:—and, by a sleep, to say we end  
The heartache, and the thousand natural shocks  
That flesh is heir to,—’tis a consummation*

*Devoutly to be wished. To die,—to sleep,—  
To sleep!—perchance to dream;—ay, there’s the rub;  
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,*

*Must give us pause:--There’s the respect  
That makes calamity of so long life:  
For who could bear the whips and scorns of time,  
The oppressor’s wrong, the proud man’s contumely,*

*The pangs of despised love, the law’s delay,  
The insolence of office, and the spurns  
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,  
When he himself might his quietus make  
With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear*

*To grunt and sweat under a weary life;  
But that the dread of something after death,—  
The undiscovered country from whose bourn  
No traveller returns,—puzzles the will;*

*And makes us rather bear those ills we have,  
Than fly to others that we know not of?  
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;  
And thus the native hue of resolution*

*Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought;  
And enterprises of great pith and moment,  
With this regard, their currents turn awry  
And lose the name of action."*

I give this long quotation from a poet who was well acquainted with all the workings of the human heart; and one who could not have described scenes of distress and anguish of mind so well, had he not passed through them.

**Verse 16. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels]** ου γαρ δηπου αγγελων επιλαμβανεται, αλλα σπερματος αβρααμ επιλαμβανεται. *Moreover, he doth not at all take hold of angels; but of the seed of Abraham he taketh hold.* This is the *marginal* reading, and is greatly to be preferred to that in the text Jesus Christ, intending not to redeem angels, but to redeem man, did not assume the angelic nature, but was made man, coming directly by the *seed* or *posterity of Abraham*, with whom the *original covenant* was made, that *in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed*; and it is on this account that the apostle mentioned the *seed of Abraham*, and not the *seed of Adam*; and it is strange that to many commentators should have missed so obvious a sense. The word itself signifies not only to *take hold of*, but to *help, succour, save from sinking, &c.* The rebel *angels*, who sinned and fell from God, were permitted to *fall downe, alle downe*, as one of our old writers expresses it, till they fell into perdition: *man* sinned and fell, and was falling *downe, alle downe*, but Jesus laid hold on him and prevented him from falling into endless perdition. Thus he *seized on the falling human creature*, and prevented him from falling into the bottomless *pit*; but he did not *seize* on the falling angels, and they fell down into outer darkness. By assuming the nature of man, he prevented this final and irrecoverable fall of man; and by making an atonement in human nature, he made a provision for its restoration to its forfeited blessedness. This is a fine thought of the apostle, and is beautifully expressed. Man was falling from heaven, and Jesus caught hold of the falling creature, and prevented its endless ruin. In this respect he prefers men to angels, and probably for this simple reason, that the *human nature* was *more excellent* than the *angelic*; and it is suitable to the wisdom of the Divine Being to regard all the works of his hands in proportion to the dignity or excellence with which he has endowed them.

**Verse 17. Wherefore in all things]** Because he thus *laid hold* on man in order to redeem him, it was necessary that he should in all things become

like to man, that he might suffer in his stead, and make an atonement in his nature.

**That he might be a merciful and faithful high priest]** ἵνα ελεημων γενηται. *That he might be merciful*—that he might be affected with a feeling of our infirmities, that, partaking of our nature with all its innocent infirmities and afflictions, he might know how to *compassionate* poor, afflicted, suffering man. And that he might be a *faithful high priest in those things which relate to God*, whose justice requires the punishment of the transgressors, or a suitable expiation to be made for the sins of the people. The proper meaning of ἱλασκεσθαι τας αμαρτιας is *to make propitiation or atonement for sins by sacrifice*. **See the note on this word, “<sup>421813</sup>Luke 18:13”**, where it is particularly explained. Christ is the *great High Priest* of mankind; 1. He exercises himself in the *things pertaining to GOD*, taking heed that God’s honour be properly secured, his worship properly regulated, his laws properly enforced, and both his justice and mercy magnified. Again, 2. He exercises himself in *things pertaining to MEN*, that he may make an *atonement* for them, apply this atonement to them, and liberate them thereby from the curse of a broken law, from the guilt and power of sin, from its inbeing and nature, and from all the evils to which they were exposed through it, and lastly that he might open their way into the holiest by his own blood; and he has *mercifully* and *faithfully* accomplished all that he has undertaken.

**Verse 18. For in that he himself hath suffered]** The maxim on which this verse is founded is the following: A state of suffering disposes persons to be compassionate, and those who endure most afflictions are they who feel most for others. The apostle argues that, among other causes, it was necessary that Jesus Christ should partake of human nature, exposed to trials, persecutions, and various sufferings, that he might the better feel for and be led to succour those who are afflicted and sorely tried. This sentiment is well expressed by a Roman poet:—

*Me quoque per multas similis fortuna labores  
Jactatam hac demum voluit consistere terra:  
Non ignara mali, miseris succurere disco.  
VIRG. Æn. i., v. 632.*

**“For I myself like you, have been distress’d,  
 Till heaven afforded me this place of rest;  
 Like you, an alien in a land unknown,  
 I learn to pity woes so like my own.”**

**DRYDEN.**

“There are three things,” says Dr. Owen, “of which tempted believers do stand in need: 1. Strength to withstand their temptations; 2. Consolations to support their spirits under them; 3. Seasonable deliverance from them. Unto these is the succour afforded by our High Priest suited; and it is variously administered to them: 1. By his *word* or *promises*; 2. By his *Spirit*; (and, that, 1. By communicating to them *supplies of grace* or spiritual strength; 2. Strong *consolation*; 3. By *rebuking* their *tempters* and *temptations*;) and 3. By his *providence* disposing of all things to their good and advantage in the issue.” Those who are peculiarly tempted and severely tried, have an especial interest in, and claim upon Christ. They, particularly, may go with boldness to the throne of grace, where they shall assuredly obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. Were the rest of the Scripture silent on this subject, this verse might be an ample support for every tempted soul.

## HEBREWS

### CHAPTER 3.

*Jesus is the High Priest of our profession, 1. And is counted worthy of more honour than Moses, as the Son Israelites did, and were excluded from the earthly rest in Canaan, 7-11. We should be on our guard against unbelief, 12. And exhort each other, lest we be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin; and we should hold fast the beginning of our confidence to the end, and not provoke God as the Israelites did, and who were destroyed in the wilderness, 13-17. They were promised the earthly rest, but did not enter because of unbelief, 18,19.*

#### NOTES ON CHAP. 3.

**Verse 1. Holy brethren]** Persons *consecrated to God*, as the word literally implies, and called, in consequence, to be *holy in heart, holy in life, and useful in the world*. The Israelites are often called a *holy people, saints, &c.*, because *consecrated to God*, and because they were bound by their profession to be holy; and yet these appellations are given to them in numberless instances where they were very *unholy*. The not attending to this circumstance, and the not discerning between actual positive *holiness*, and the *call* to it, as the *consecration* of the persons, has led many commentators and preachers into destructive mistakes. Antinomianism has had its origin here: and as it was found that many persons were called *saints*, who, in many respects, were miserable sinners, hence it has been inferred that they were called *saints* in reference to a holiness which they had in *another*; and hence the Antinomian imputation of Christ's righteousness to unholy believers, whose hearts were abominable before God, and whose lives were a scandal to the Gospel. Let, therefore, a due distinction be made between persons by their *profession holy*, i.e. *consecrated to God*; and persons who are *faithful* to that profession, and are both *inwardly* and *outwardly holy*. They are not all Israel who are of Israel: a man, by a literal circumcision, may be a Jew outwardly; but the circumcision of the heart by the Spirit makes a man a Jew inwardly. A man may be a Christian in profession, and not such in heart; and those who pretend that, although they are *unholy in themselves*, they are reputed *holy*

*in Christ*, because his righteousness is imputed to them, most awfully deceive their own souls.

Dr. *Owen* has spoken well on the necessity of personal holiness against the Antinomians of his day. "If a man be not made holy he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. It is this that makes them meet for the inheritance of the saints in light; as without it they are not meet for their duty, so are they not capable of their reward. Yea, heaven itself, in the true light and notion of it, is undesirable to an unsanctified person. Such a one neither can nor would enjoy God if he might. In a word, there is no one thing required of the sons of God that an unsanctified person can do, and no one thing promised unto them that he can enjoy.

"There is surely then a woful mistake in the world. If Christ sanctify all whom he saves, many will appear to have been mistaken in their expectations at another day. It is grown amongst us almost an abhorrency to all flesh to say, *the Church of God is to be holy*. What! though God has promised that it should be so; that Christ has undertaken to make it so? What! if it be required to be so? What! if all the duties of it be rejected of God, if it be not so? It is all one, if men be baptized, whether they will or not, and outwardly profess the name of Christ, though not one of them be truly sanctified, yet they are, it is said, the Church of Christ. Why then let them be so; but what are they the better for it? Are their persons or their services therefore accepted with God? Are they related or united to Christ? Are they under his conduct unto glory? Are they meet for the inheritance of the saints in light? Not at all: not all nor any of these things do they obtain thereby. What is it then that they get by the furious contest which they make for the reputation of this privilege? Only this: that, satisfying their minds by it, resting if not priding themselves in it, they obtain many advantages to stifle all convictions of their condition, and so perish unavoidably. A sad success, and for ever to be bewailed! Yet is there nothing at all at this day more contended for in this world than that Christ might be thought to be a *captain of salvation* to them, unto whom he is not a *sanctifier*; that he may have an *unholy Church*, a *dead body*. These things tend neither to the glory of Christ, nor to the good of the souls of men. Let none then deceive themselves; sanctification is a qualification indispensably necessary to them who will be under the conduct of the Lord Christ unto salvation; he leads none to heaven but whom he *sanctifies* on earth. The holy God will not receive unholy persons. This *living head* will

not admit of *dead members*, nor bring men into possession of a glory which they neither love nor like.”

**Heavenly calling]** The Israelites had an earthly calling; they were called out of Egypt to go into the promised land: Christians have a heavenly calling; they are invited to leave the bondage of sin, and go to the kingdom of God. These were made partakers of this calling; they had already embraced the Gospel, and were brought into a state of salvation.

**Apostle and High Priest of our profession]** Among the Jews the *high priest* was considered to be also *the apostle of God*; and it is in conformity to this notion that the apostle speaks. And he exhorts the Hebrews to *consider* Jesus Christ to be both their *High Priest* and *Apostle*; and to expect these offices to be henceforth fulfilled by him, and by him alone. This was the fullest intimation that the Mosaic economy was at an end, and the priesthood changed. By *της ομολογιας ημων*, *our profession*, or *that confession of ours*, the apostle undoubtedly means the *Christian religion*. Jesus was the *Apostle of the Father*, and has given to mankind the *new covenant*; and we are to consider the whole system of Christianity as coming immediately from him. Every system of religion must have a *priest* and a *prophet*; the one to *declare* the will of God, the other to *minister* in holy things. Moses was the *apostle* under the old testament, and Aaron the *priest*. When Moses was removed, the prophets succeeded him; and the sons of Aaron were the priests after the death of their father. This system is now annulled; and Jesus is the *Prophet* who declares the Father’s will, and he is the *Priest* who ministers in the things pertaining to God, see **Hebrews 2:17**; as he makes atonement for the sins of the people, and is the Mediator between God and man.

**Verse 2. Who was faithful to him]** In **Numbers 12:7**, God gives this testimony to Moses: *My servant Moses-is faithful in all my house*; and to this testimony the apostle alludes. *House* not only means the *place* where a *family dwells*, but also the *family* itself. The whole congregation of Israel was the *house* or *family of God*, and God is represented as *dwelling among them*; and Moses was his *steward*, and was faithful in the discharge of his office; strictly enforcing the Divine rights; zealously maintaining God’s honour; carefully delivering the mind and will of God to the people; proclaiming his promises, and denouncing his judgments, with the most inflexible integrity, though often at the risk of his life. Jesus Christ has his *house*-the whole great *family of mankind*, for all of whom he offered his



sacrificial blood to God; and the *Christian Church*, which is especially his *own household*, is composed of his own *children* and *servants*, among and in whom he lives and constantly resides. He has been *faithful* to the trust reposed in him as the apostle of God; he has faithfully proclaimed the will of the Most High; vindicated the Divine honour against the corrupters of God's worship; testified against them at the continual hazard of his life; and, at last, not only died as a *victim* to cancel sin, but also as a *martyr* to his faithfulness. Christ's faithfulness, says *Leigh*, consists in this: "That he has as fully revealed unto us the doctrine of the Gospel, as Moses did that of the law; and that he hath faithfully performed and fulfilled all the types of himself and all the things signified by Moses' ceremonies, as Moses hath faithfully and distinctly set them down."

But there is a sense given to the word *man neeman*, <sup><04127></sup> **Numbers 12:7**, which we translate *faithful*, by several of the Jewish writers, which is well worthy of note: it signifies, say they, "*one to whom secrets are confided, with the utmost confidence of their being safely and conscientiously kept.*" The secret of God was with Moses, but all the treasures of *wisdom* and *knowledge* were in Christ. Life and immortality were comparatively *secrets* till Christ revealed and illustrated them, and even the *Divine nature* was but little known, and especially the *Divine philanthropy*, till Jesus Christ came; and it was Jesus alone who *declared* that *GOD whom no man had ever seen*. Moses received the secrets of God, and faithfully taught them to the people; Jesus revealed the *whole will of God to mankind*. Moses was thus *faithful* to a small part of mankind, viz. the Jewish people; but in this sense Jesus was *faithful* to all mankind: for he was the light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel.

**Verse 3. For this man was counted]** As Jesus Christ, in the character of *apostle* and *high priest*, is here intended, the word *apostle*, or this *person* or *personage*, should have been supplied, if any, instead of *man*. Indeed, the pronoun *ουτος* should have been translated *this person*, and this would have referred immediately to Jesus Christ, <sup><3801></sup> **Hebrews 3:1**.

**More glory than Moses]** We have already seen that the apostle's design is to prove that Jesus Christ is *higher than the angels*, *higher than Moses*, and *higher than Aaron*. That he is higher than the *angels* has been already proved; that he is *higher than Moses* he is now proving.

**He who hath builded the house]** There can be no doubt that a man who builds a house for his own accommodation is more honourable than the house itself; but the *house* here intended is the *Church* of God. This Church, here called a *house* or *family*, is built by Christ; he is the Head, Governor, Soul and Life of it; he must therefore be *greater than Moses*, who was only a *member* and *officer* in that Church, who never put a stone in this spiritual building but was even himself put in it by the great Architect. Moses was in this house, and faithful in this house; but the house was the house of God, and builded and governed by Christ.

**Verse 4. For every house is builded by some man]** The literal sense is plain enough: “Every structure plainly implies an, *architect*, and an *end* for which it was formed. The architect may be employed by him for whose use the house is intended; but the *efficient* cause of the erection is that which is here to be regarded.” The word *house*, here, is still taken in a *metaphorical* sense as above, it signifies *family* or *Church*. Now the general meaning of the words, taken in this sense, is: “Every family has an author, and a head or governor. Man may found families, civil and religious communities, and be the head of these; but God alone is the Head, Author, and Governor, of all the families of the earth; he is the Governor of the universe. But the apostle has a more restricted meaning in the words *τα πάντα*, *all these things*; and as he has been treating of the Jewish and Christian Churches, so he appears to have them in view here. 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. But as Jesus is the Founder of the Church, and the Head of it, the word GOD seems here to be applied to *him*; and several eminent scholars and critics bring this very text as a proof of the supreme Deity of Christ: and the apostle’s argument seems to require this; for, as he is proving that Christ is *preferred before Moses* because *he built this house*, which Moses could not do, where he to be understood as intimating that this house was built by *another*, viz. the *Father*, his whole argument would fall to the ground; and for *all this*, Moses might be equal, yea, superior to Christ. On this ground Dr. Owen properly concludes: “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.”

**Verse 5. As a servant]** The *fidelity* of Moses was the fidelity of a *servant*; he was not the framer of that Church or house; he was employed, under God, to arrange and order it: he was *steward* to the Builder and Owner.

**For a testimony of those things]** Every ordinance under the law was *typical*; every thing bore a *testimony* to the things which were to be spoken after; i.e. to Jesus Christ, his suffering, death, and the glory which should follow; and to his Gospel in all its parts. The *faithfulness* of Moses consisted in his scrupulous attention to every ordinance of God; his framing every thing according to the pattern showed him by the Lord; and his referring all to that Christ of whom he spoke as the prophet who should come after him, and should be raised up from among themselves; whom they should attentively hear and obey, on pain of being cut off from being the people of the Lord. Hence our Lord told the Jews, <sup><B546></sup>**John 5:46:** *If ye had believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me;* “namely;” says Dr. Macknight, “in the figures, but especially in the prophecies, of the law, where the Gospel dispensation, the coming of its Author, and his character as Messiah, are all described with a precision which adds the greatest lustre of evidence to Jesus and to his Gospel.”

**Verse 6. But Christ as a Son over his own house]** Moses was faithful as a *servant* IN the house; Jesus was faithful, as the *first-born Son*, OVER the house of which he is the Heir and Governor. Here, then, is the conclusion of the argument in reference to Christ’s superiority over Moses. Moses did not found the house or family, Christ did; Moses was but *in* the house, or one of the family, Christ was *over* the house as its Ruler; Moses was but *servant* in the house, Christ was the *Son* and *Heir*; Moses was in the house of *another*, Christ in his *own house*.

It is well known to every learned reader that the pronoun **αυτου**, without an *aspirate*, signifies *his* simply; and that with the *aspirate*, **αυτου**, it signifies *his own*: the word being in this form a contraction, not uncommon, of **εαυτου**. If we read **αυτου** without the *aspirate*, then *his* must refer to *God*, <sup><B304></sup>**Hebrews 3:4**.

*But Christ as a Son over his* (that is, God’s) *house*: if we read **αυτου**, with the *aspirate*, as some editions do, then what is spoken refers to *Christ*; and the words above convey the same sense as those words, <sup><B108></sup>**Acts 20:28**:

*Feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.* Some editions read the word thus; and it is evident that the edition which our translators used had the word **αυτου**, *his own*, and not **αυτου**, *his*. The Spanish and London Polyglots have the same reading. From the most ancient MSS. we can get no help to determine which is to be preferred, as they are generally written without accents. The two first editions of the Greek Testament, that of *Complutum*, 1514, and that of *Erasmus*, 1516, have **αυτου**, *his*; and they are followed by most other editions: but the celebrated edition of Robert *Stephens*, 1550, has **αυτου**, *his own*. The reading is certainly important; but it belongs to one of those difficulties in criticism which, if the context or collateral evidence do not satisfactorily solve it, must remain in doubt; and every reader is at liberty to adopt which reading he thinks best.

**Whose house are we]** We Christians are his *Church* and *family*; he is our Father, Governor, and Head.

**If we hold fast the confidence]** We are now his Church, and shall *continue* to be such, and be acknowledged by him IF we maintain our Christian profession, **την παρρησιαν**, *that liberty of access to God*, which we now have, and the *rejoicing of the hope*, i.e. of eternal life, which we shall receive at the resurrection of the dead. The word **παρρησια**, which is here translated *confidence*, and which signifies *freedom of speech, liberty of access, &c.*, seems to be used here to distinguish an important Christian privilege. Under the old testament no man was permitted to *approach to God*: even the very mountain on which God published his laws must not be touched by man nor beast; and only the high priest was permitted to enter the holy of holies, and that only once a year, on the great day of atonement; and even then he must have the blood of the victim to propitiate the Divine justice. Under the Christian dispensation the way to the holiest is now laid open; and we have **παρρησιαν**, *liberty of access*, even to the holiest, by the blood of Jesus. Having such access unto God, by such a Mediator, we may obtain all that grace which is necessary to fit us for eternal glory; and, having the witness of his Spirit in our heart, we have a well grounded hope of endless felicity, and exult in the enjoyment of that hope. But IF we *retain not* the *grace*, we shall not inherit the *glory*.

**Verse 7. Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, Today]** These words are quoted from <sup><4980></sup>**Psalm 95:7**; and as they were written by David, and attributed here to the Holy Ghost, it proves that David wrote, by the

inspiration of God's Holy Spirit. As these words were originally a warning to the Israelites not to provoke God, lest they should be excluded from that *rest* which he had promised them, the apostle uses them here to persuade the Christians in Palestine to hold fast their religious privileges, and, the grace they had received, lest they should come short of that state of future glory which Christ had prepared for them. The words strongly imply, as indeed does the whole *epistle*, the *possibility of falling from the grace of God*, and *perishing everlastingly*; and without this supposition these words, and all such like, which make more than *two-thirds* of the whole of Divine revelation, would have neither sense nor meaning. Why should God entreat man to receive his mercy, if he have rendered this impossible? Why should he exhort a believer to persevere, if it be impossible for him to fall away? What contemptible quibbling have men used to maintain a false and dangerous tenet against the whole tenor of the word of God! Angels fell-Adam fell-Solomon fell-and multitudes of believers have fallen, and, for aught we know, rose no more; and yet we are told that *we* cannot finally lose the benefits of our conversion! Satan preached this doctrine to our first parents; they believed him, sinned, and fell; and brought a whole world to ruin!

**Verse 8. Harden not your hearts]** Which ye will infallibly do, if ye *will not* hear his voice.

**Provocation]** *παραπικρασμος*. From *παρα*, signifying *intensity*, and *πικρανω*, to *make bitter*; the *exasperation*, or *bitter provocation*. "The Israelites provoked God *first* in the wilderness of Sin, (Pelusium,) when they murmured for want of bread, and had the manna given them, <sup><12164></sup>**Exodus 16:4**. From the wilderness of Sin they journeyed to Rephidim, where they provoked God a second time for want of water, and insolently saying, *Is the Lord God among us or not?* <sup><12172></sup>**Exodus 17:2-9**, on which account the place was called *Massah* and *Meribah*. See "<sup><46104></sup>**1 Corinthians 10:4?**", note 1. From Rephidim they went into the wilderness of Sinai, where they received the law, in the beginning of the third year from their coming out of Egypt. Here they provoked God again, by making the golden calf, <sup><12210></sup>**Exodus 32:10**. After the law was given they were commanded to go directly to Canaan, and take possession of the promised land, <sup><15106></sup>**Deuteronomy 1:6, 7**: *God spake unto us in Horeb, saying, Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount: turn you, and take your journey, and go to the mount of the Amorites, and unto all the places nigh thereunto, in the plain, in the hills, and in the vales, and in the south, and*

by the seaside, to the land of the Canaanites, and unto Lebanon, and unto the great river, the river Euphrates. The Israelites, having received this order, departed from Horeb, and went forward three days' journey, <sup><04103></sup>**Numbers 10:33**, till they came to Taberah, <sup><041103></sup>**Numbers 11:3**, where they provoked God the fourth time, by murmuring for want of flesh to eat; and for that sin were smitten with a very great plague, <sup><041133></sup>**Numbers 11:33**; this place was called *Kibroth-hattaavah*, because there they buried the people who lusted. From Kibroth-hattaavah they went to Hazeroth, <sup><041135></sup>**Numbers 11:35**, and from thence into the wilderness of Paran, <sup><041216></sup>**Numbers 12:16**, to a place called *Kadesh*, <sup><041336></sup>**Numbers 13:26**. Their journey from Horeb to Kadesh is thus described by Moses, <sup><041019></sup>**Deuteronomy 1:19-21**: *And when we departed from Horeb, we went through all that great and terrible wilderness, which you saw by the way of the mountain of the Amorites, as the Lord our God commanded us; and, we came to Kadesh-barnea. And I said unto you, Ye are come unto the mountain of the Amorites, which the Lord our God doth give unto us. Behold, the Lord thy God hath set the land before thee; go up and possess it.* But the people proposed to Moses to send spies, to bring them an account of the land, and of its inhabitants, <sup><041022></sup>**Deuteronomy 1:22**. These after forty days returned to Kadesh; and, except Caleb and Joshua, they all agreed in bringing an evil report of the land, <sup><041325></sup>**Numbers 13:25-32**; whereby the people were so discouraged that they refused to go up, and proposed to make a captain, and return into Egypt, <sup><041404></sup>**Numbers 14:4**. Wherefore, having thus shown an absolute disbelief of God's promises, and an utter distrust of his power, he swore that not one of that generation should enter Canaan, except Caleb and Joshua, but should all die in the wilderness, <sup><041420></sup>**Numbers 14:20**; <sup><041034></sup>**Deuteronomy 1:34, 35**; and ordered them to *turn, and get into the wilderness, by the way of the Red Sea*. In that wilderness the Israelites, as Moses informs us, sojourned thirty-eight years, <sup><041214></sup>**Deuteronomy 2:14**: *And the space in which we came from Kadesh-barnea, until we were come over the brook Zereb, was thirty and eight years; until all the generation of the men of war were wasted out from among the host, as the Lord swore unto them.* Wherefore, although the Israelites provoked God to wrath in the wilderness, from the day they came out of the land of Egypt until their arrival in Canaan, as Moses told them, <sup><041007></sup>**Deuteronomy 9:7**, their greatest provocation, the provocation in which they showed the greatest degree of evil disposition, undoubtedly was their refusing to go into Canaan from Kadesh. It was therefore very properly termed *the bitter provocation* and *the day of temptation*, by way

of eminence; and justly brought on them the oath of God, excluding them from his rest in Canaan. To distinguish this from the provocation at Rephidim, it is called *Meribah-Kadesh*,” <sup><RSB></sup> **Deuteronomy 32:51**. See Dr. Macknight.

**Verse 9. When your fathers tempted me]** It would be better to translate *ou* *where* than *when*, as the Vulgate has done in its *ubi*; and this translation has been followed by *Wiclif*, *Coverdale*, *Tindal*, and our first translators in general. In my old MS. Bible the 7th, 8th, and 9th verses stand thus:-  
{ <sup><SRP></sup> **Hebrews 3:7-9**}

*Wherefore as the Holy Gost seith, to-day gif yhe han herde his voyce: nye yhe herden ghour hertis as in wrath-thinge, after the day of temptacioun in desert. Where ghoure fadris temptiden me: provyden and saiden my werkis. Wherefore fourtye yeere I was offendid or wrothe to this generatoun.*

In behalf of this translation, Dr. Macknight very properly argues: “The word *WHEN* implies that, at the time of the *bitter provocation*, the Israelites had seen God’s works *forty* years; contrary to the *history*, which shows that the *bitter provocation* happened, in the beginning of the *third* year after the Exodus: whereas the translation *where*, as well as the matter of fact, represents God as saying, by David, that the Israelites tempted God in the wilderness during forty years, notwithstanding all that time they had seen God’s miracles.”

**Verse 10. Wherefore I was grieved]** God represents himself as the *Father* of this great Jewish *family*, for whose comfort and support he had made every necessary provision, and to whom he had given every proof of *tenderness* and *fatherly affection*; and because, they disobeyed him, and walked in that way in which they could not but be miserable, therefore he represents himself as grieved and exceedingly displeased with them.

**They do alway err in their hearts]** Their affections are set on earthly things, and they do not acknowledge my ways to be *right-holy*, just, and good. They are radically evil; and they are evil, *continually*. They have every proof, of my power and goodness, and lay nothing to heart. They might have been saved, but they would not. God was grieved on this account. Now, can we suppose that it would have grieved him if, by a decree of his own, he had rendered their salvation impossible?

**Verse 11. So I swear in my wrath]** God's *grief* at their continued disobedience became *wrath* at their final impenitence, and therefore he excluded them from the promised rest.

**Verse 12. Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you]** Take warning by those disobedient Israelites; they were brought out of the house of bondage, and had the fullest promise of a land of prosperity and rest. By their disobedience they came short of it, and fell in the wilderness. Ye have been brought from the bondage of sin, and have a most gracious promise of an everlasting inheritance among the saints in light; through unbelief and disobedience they lost their rest, through the same ye may lose yours. An evil heart of unbelief will head away from the living God. What was possible in *their* case, is possible in *yours*. The apostle shows here *five* degrees of apostasy: 1. Consenting to sin, being deceived by its solicitations. 2. Hardness of heart, through giving way to sin. 3. Unbelief in consequence of this hardness which leads them to call even the truth of the Gospel in question. 4. This unbelief causing them to speak evil of the Gospel, and the provision God has made for the salvation of their souls. 5. Apostasy itself, or falling off from the living God; and thus extinguishing all the light that was in them, and finally grieving the Spirit of God, so that he takes his flight, and leaves them to a seared conscience and reprobate mind. See *Leigh*. He who begins to give the least way to sin is in danger of final apostasy; the best remedy against this is to get the evil heart *removed*, as *one* murderer in the house is more to be dreaded than *ten* without.

**Verse 13. But exhort one another daily]** This supposes a state of chose Church fellowship, without which they could not have had access to each other.

**While it is called to-day]** Use time while you have: it, for by and by there will be no more present time; all will be future; all will be eternity. *Daily* signifies time continued. *To-day*, all present time. Your fathers said: Let us make ourselves a captain, and return back unto Egypt, <sup><0440></sup>**Numbers 14:4**. Thus *they* exhorted each other *to depart from the living God*. Be ye warned by their example; let not that unbelieving heart be in *you* that was in *them*; exhort each other daily to cleave to the living God; lest, if ye, do not, *ye*, like *them*, may be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

**Verse 14. For we are made partakers of Christ]** Having believed in Christ as the promised Messiah, and embraced the whole Christian system, they were consequently made partakers of all its *benefits* in this life, and



entitled to the fulfilment of all its exceeding great and precious promises relative to the glories of the eternal world. The former they actually possessed, the latter they could have only in case of their perseverance; therefore the apostle says, *If we hold fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end*, i.e. of our life. For our participation of glory depends on our continuing steadfast in the faith, to the end of our Christian race.

The word **υποστασις**, which we here translate *confidence*, from **υπο**, *under*, and **ιστημι**, *to place or stand*, signifies properly a *basis* or *foundation*; that on which something else is builded, and by which it is supported. Their *faith* in Christ Jesus was this *hypostasis* or *foundation*; on that all their peace, comfort, and salvation were builded. If this were not held fast to the end, Christ, in his saving influences, could not be held fast; and no Christ, no heaven. He who has Christ in him, has the well-founded hope of glory; and he who is found in the great day with Christ in his heart, will have an abundant entrance into eternal glory.

**Verse 15. While it is said, To-day]** You may see the necessity of perseverance from the saying, “*Today, if ye will hear his voice,*” therefore *harden not your hearts*-do not neglect so great a salvation; hold fast what ye have obtained, and let no man take your crown. See on <sup><S817></sup>**Hebrews 3:7-9**, and <sup><S812></sup>**Hebrews 3:12**.

**Verse 16. For some, when they had heard, did provoke]** There is a various reading here, which consists merely in the different placing of an *accent*, and yet gives the whole passage a different turn:-**τινες**, from **τις**, *who*, if read with the accent on the *epsilon*, **τινες**, is the plural indefinite, and signifies *some*, as in our translation; if read with the accent on the *iota*, **τινες**, it has an *interrogative* meaning; and, according to this, the whole clause, **τινες γαρ ακουσαντες παρεπικραναν**: *But who were those hearers who did bitterly provoke?* **αλλός παντες οι εξελθοντες εξ αιγυπτου δια μωσεως**; *Were they not all they who came out of the land of Egypt by Moses?* Or, the whole clause may be read with one interrogation: *But who were those hearers that did bitterly provoke, but all those who came out of Egypt by Moses?* This mode of reading is followed by some *editions*, and by *Chrysostom* and *Theodoret*, and by several learned *moderns*. It is more *likely* that this is the true reading, as all that follows to the end of the 18th verse is a series of interrogations.

Should it be said that *all* did not provoke, for Joshua and Caleb are expressly excepted; I answer, that the term *all* may be with great propriety used, when out of many *hundreds of thousands* only two persons were found who continued faithful. To these also we may add the *priests* and the whole tribe of *Levi*, who, it is very likely, did not provoke; for, as Dr. Macknight very properly remarks, they were not of the number of those who were to fight their way into Canaan, being entirely devoted to the service of the sanctuary. See <sup><040103></sup>**Numbers 1:3, 45**, and <sup><040149></sup>**Numbers 1:49**. And therefore what remained of them after forty years, no doubt, entered Canaan; for it appears from <sup><040317></sup>**Numbers 34:17**, and <sup><040333></sup>**Joshua 24:33**, that *Eleazar*, the son of Aaron, was one of those who did take possession of Canaan. Should it be still said our version appears to be most proper, because *all* did not provoke; it may be answered, that the common reading, **τινες**, *some*, is too *contracted* in its meaning to comprehend the hundreds of thousands who did rebel.

**Verse 17. But with whom was he grieved forty years?**] I believe it was *Surenhusius* who first observed that “the apostle, in using the term forty years, elegantly alludes to the space of time which had elapsed since the ascension of our Lord till the time in which this epistle was written, which was about forty years.” But this does not exactly agree with what appears to be the exact date of this epistle. However, God had now been a long time provoked by that race rejecting the manifested Messiah, as he was by the conduct of their forefathers in the wilderness; and as that provocation was punished by a very signal judgment, so they might expect this to be punished also. The analogy was perfect in the crimes, and it might reasonably be expected to be so in the punishment. And was not the destruction of Jerusalem a proof of the heinous nature of their crimes, and of the justice of God’s outpoured wrath?

**Whose carcasses fell]** **ων τα κωλα επεσεν.** *Whose members fell*; for **τα κωλα** properly signifies the members of the body, and here may be an allusion to the scattered, bleached bones of this people, that were a long time apparent in the wilderness, continuing there as a proof of their crimes, and of the judgments of God.

**Verse 18. To whom swear he]** God never acts by any kind of caprice; whenever he pours out his judgments, there are the most positive reasons to vindicate his conduct.

Those whose carcasses fell in the wilderness were they who had sinned. And those who did not enter into his rest were those who *believed not*. God is represented here as *swearing* that *they should not enter in*, in order to show the *determinate nature* of his purpose, the reason on which it was founded, and the height of the *aggravation* which occasioned it.

**Verse 19. So we see that they could not enter in]** It was no *decree* of God that prevented them, it was no want of necessary *strength* to enable them, it was through no deficiency of *Divine counsel* to instruct them; all these they had in abundance: but they chose to sin, and would not believe. *Unbelief* produced *disobedience*, and disobedience produced *hardness of heart* and blindness of mind; and all these drew down the judgments of God, and wrath came upon them to the uttermost.

1. THIS whole chapter, as the epistle in general, reads a most awful lesson against *backsliders*, *triflers*, and *loiterers* in the way of salvation. Every believer in Christ is in danger of *apostasy*, while any remains of the *evil heart of unbelief* are found in him. God has promised to purify the heart; and the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin. It is therefore the highest wisdom of genuine Christians to look to God for the complete purification of their souls; this they cannot have too soon, and for this they cannot be too much in earnest.

2. 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 sensual 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? Can we suppose that it can at all consistent with his *mercy* to extend forgiveness to such abominable provocation? What a man sows that shall he reap. If he sows to the flesh, he shall of the flesh reap corruption. Reader, it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

3. *Unbelief* has generally been considered the *most damning of all sins*. I wish those who make this assertion would condescend to explain themselves. What is this *unbelief* that *damns* and *ruins mankind*? Their not *permitting their minds to be persuaded of the truths which God speaks*. **ἄπιστία**, from **ἀ**, negative, and **πίστις**, *faith*, signifies *faithless* or to be

*without faith*. And this is an effect from another cause. In <sup><SO41></sup>**Hebrews 4:11**, these very people are said to have *fallen through unbelief*; but there the word is **απειθεια**, from **α**, negative, and **πειθω**, to *persuade*. They heard the Divine instructions, they saw God's stupendous miracles; but they would not suffer themselves to be persuaded, that he who said and did such things would perform those other things which he had either threatened or promised: hence they had *no faith*, because they were *unpersuaded*; and their *unbelief* was the *effect* of their *unpersuaded* or *unpersuadable* mind. And their minds were not persuaded of God's truth, because they had ears open only to the dictates of the flesh; see on <sup><SO42></sup>**Hebrews 4:2**. Here then is the damning sin, the not inferring, from what God has said and done, that he will do those other things which he has either threatened or promised. And how few are there who are not committing this sin daily! Reader, dost *thou* in this state dream of heaven? Awake out of sleep!

4. 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 entirely 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. As a preventive of backsliding and apostasy, the apostle recommends *mutual exhortation*. No Christian should live for himself alone; he should consider his fellow Christian as a member of the same body, and feel for him accordingly, and have, succour, and protect him. When this is carefully attended to in religious society, Satan finds it very difficult to make an inroad on the Church; but when coldness, distance, and a want of brotherly love take place, Satan can attack each *singly*, and, by successive victories over *individuals*, soon make an easy conquest of the whole.

## HEBREWS

### CHAPTER 4.

*As the Christian rest is to be obtained by faith, we should beware of unbelief lest we lose it, as the Hebrews did theirs, 1. The reason why they were not brought into the rest promised to them, 2. The rest promised to the Hebrews was a type of that promised to Christians, 3-10. Into this rest we should earnestly labour to enter, 11. A description of the word of God, 12, 13. Jesus is our sympathetic High Priest, 15. Through him we have confidence to come to God, 16.*

#### NOTES ON CHAP. 4.

**Verse 1. Let us therefore fear]** Seeing the Israelites lost the rest of Canaan, through obstinacy and unbelief, let us be afraid lest we come short of the heavenly rest, through the same cause.

**Should seem to come short of it.]** *Lest any of us should actually come short of it; i.e. miss it. See the note on the verb δοκειν, to seem, <LXX> Luke 8:18.* What the apostle had said before, relative to the *rest*, might be considered as an allegory; here he explains and applies that allegory, showing that Canaan was a type of the grand privileges of the Gospel of Christ, and of the glorious eternity to which they lead.

**Come short]** The verb υστερειν is applied here metaphorically; it is an allusion, of which there are many in this epistle, to the *races* in the Grecian games: he that *came short* was he who was any distance, no matter how small, *behind* the winner. Will it avail any of us how near we get to heaven, if the door be shut before we arrive? How dreadful the thought, to have only *missed* being eternally saved! To *run* well, and yet to permit the devil, the world, or the flesh, to hinder in the few last steps! Reader, watch and be sober.

**Verse 2. For unto us was the Gospel preached]** και γαρ εσμεν ευηγγελισμενοι. *For we also have received good tidings as well as they.* They had a gracious promise of entering into an earthly rest; we have a gracious promise of entering into a heavenly rest. God gave them every

requisite advantage; he has done the same to us. Moses and the elders spoke the word of God plainly and forcibly to them: Christ and his apostles have done the same to us. They might have persevered; so may we: they disbelieved, disobeyed, and fell: and so may we.

**But the word preached did not profit them]** *αλλ ουκ ωφελησεν ο λογος της ακοης εκεινους.* But the word of hearing did not profit them. The word and promise to which the apostle most probably refers is that in <sup><6012></sup>**Deuteronomy 1:20, 21:** *Ye are come unto to the mountain of the Amorites, which the Lord our God doth give unto to us. Behold, the Lord thy God hath set the land before thee; go up and possess it, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath said unto thee: fear not. Many exhortations they had to the following effect: Arise, that we may go up against them; for we have seen the land, and, behold, it is very good: and are ye still? Be not slothful to go, and to enter to possess the land; for God hath given it into your hands; a place where there is no want of any thing that is in the earth;* <sup><0718></sup>**Judges 18:9, 10.** But instead of attending to the word of the Lord by Moses, the whole congregation murmured against him and Aaron, *and said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt;* <sup><0414></sup>**Numbers 14:2, 4.** But they were dastardly through all their generations. They spoke evil of the pleasant land, and did not give credence to his word. Their minds had been debased by their Egyptian bondage, and they scarcely ever arose to a state of mental nobility.

**Not being mixed with faith in them that heard]** There are several various readings in this verse, and some of them important. The principal are on the word *συγκεκραμενος*, *mixed*; which in the common text refers to *ο λογος*, *the word mixed*; but, in ABCD and several others, it is *συγκεκραμενους*, referring to, and agreeing with, *εκεινους*, and may be thus translated: *The word of hearing did not profit them, they not being mixed with those who heard it by faith.* That is, they were not of the same spirit with Joshua and Caleb. There are other variations, but of less importance; but the common text seems best.

The word *συγκεκραμενος*, *mixed*, is peculiarly expressive; it is a metaphor taken from the nutrition of the human body by mixing the aliment taken into the stomach with the saliva and gastric juice, in consequence of which it is concocted, digested, reduced into chyle, which, absorbed by the lacteal vessels, and thrown into the blood, becomes the means of increasing and supporting the body, all the solids and fluids being thus generated; so

that on this process, properly performed, depend (under God) strength, health, and life itself. Should the most nutritive aliment be received into the stomach, if not *mixed* with the above juices, it would be rather the means of *death* than of life; or, in the words of the apostle, it would *not profit*, because not thus *mixed*. *Faith* in the word preached, in reference to that God who sent it, is the grand means of its becoming the power of God to the salvation of the soul. It is not likely that he who does not credit a *threatening*, when he comes to hear it, will be deterred by it from repeating the sin against which it is levelled; nor can he derive comfort from a *promise* who does not believe it as a pledge of God's veracity and goodness. Faith, therefore, must be *mixed* with all that we hear, in order to make the word of God effectual to our salvation.

This very use of the word, and its explanation, we may find in *Maximus Tyrius*, in his description of health, Dissert. x., page 101. "Health," says he, it is a certain disposition *υγρων και ξηρων και ψυχρων και θερμων δυναμεων, η υπο τεχνης συγκραθεισων καλωσ, η υπο φυσεως αμμοσθεισων τεξνικως*, which consists in a *proper mixture* together of the wet and the dry, the cold and the hot, either by an artificial process, or by the skilful economy of nature."

**Verse 3. For we which have believed do enter into rest]** The great spiritual blessings, the forerunners of eternal glory, which were all typified by that earthly rest or felicity promised to the ancient Israelites, we Christians do, by believing in Christ Jesus, actually possess. We have peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost; are saved from the guilt and power of sin; and thus enjoy an inward rest.

But *this* is a rest differing from the *seventh day's* rest, or *Sabbath*, which was the original type of Canaan, the blessings of the Gospel, and eternal glory; seeing God said, concerning the unbelieving Israelites in the wilderness, I have sworn in my wrath that they shall not enter into my rest, notwithstanding the *works* of creation *were finished*, and the seventh day's rest was instituted *from the foundation of the world*; consequently the Israelites *had entered* into that rest before the oath was sworn. See *Macknight*.

*We who believe*, *οι πιστευσαντες*, is omitted by Chrysostom, and some few MSS. And instead of *εισερχομεθα γαρ*, *for we do enter*, AC, several others, with the Vulgate and Coptic, read *εισερχομεθα ουν*, *therefore let us enter*; and thus it answers to *φωβηθωμεν ουν*, *therefore let us fear*,

<800E>**Hebrews 4:1**; but this reading cannot well stand unless οἱ πιστευσαντες be omitted, which is acknowledged to be genuine by every MS. and version of note and importance. The meaning appears to be this: We Jews, who have believed in Christ, do actually possess that rest-state of happiness in God, produced by peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost—which was typified by the happiness and comfort to be enjoyed by the believing Hebrews, in the possession of the promised land. See before.

**From the foundation of the world.]** The foundation of the world, καταβολη κοσμου, means the *completion* of the work of creation in six days. In those days was the world, i.e. the whole system of mundane things, begun and perfected; and this appears to be the sense of the expression in this place.

**Verse 4. For he spake in a certain place]** This *certain place* or *somewhere*, που, is probably <010E>**Genesis 2:2**; and refers to the completion of the work of creation, and the setting apart the *seventh day* as a day of *rest* for man, and a *type* of everlasting felicity. **See the notes on “<010E>Genesis 2:1”, &c., and see here “<800E>Hebrews 2:6”.**

**Verse 5. And in this place again]** In the ninety-fifth Psalm, already quoted, <190E>**Psalm 95:3, 4**. This was a second rest which the Lord promised to the believing, obedient seed of Abraham; and as it was spoken of in the days of David, when the Jews actually possessed this long promised *Canaan*, therefore it is evident that *that* was not the rest which God intended, as the next verse shows.

**Verse 6. It remaineth that some must enter therein]** Why our translators put in the word *must* here I cannot even conjecture. I hope it was not to serve a system, as some have since used it: “Some *must* go to heaven, for so is the doctrine of the decree; and there *must* be certain persons *infallibly* brought thither as a reward to Christ for his sufferings; and in this the will of man and free agency can have no part,” &c, &c. Now, supposing that even all this was true, yet it does not exist either positively or by implication in the text. The words επει ουν απολειπεται τινας εισελθειν εις αυτην, literally translated, are as follows: *Seeing then it remaineth for some to enter into it; or, Whereas therefore it remaineth that some enter into it*, which is Dr. Owen’s translation, and they to whom it was *first preached* (οι προτερον ευαγγελισθεντες, *they to whom the promise was given; they who first received the good tidings;*



i.e., the Israelites, to whom was given the promise of entering into the rest of Canaan) *did not enter in because of their unbelief*; and the promise still continued to be repeated even in the days of David; therefore, some *other rest* must be intended.

**Verse 7. He limiteth a certain day]** The term *day* signifies not only *time* in general, but also *present time*, and a particular *space*. Day here seems to have the same meaning as *rest* in some other parts of this verse. The day or time of rest relative to the ancient Jews being over and past, and a *long time* having elapsed between God's displeasure shown to the disobedient Jews in the wilderness and the days of David, and the true rest not having been enjoyed, God in his mercy has *instituted another day*-has given *another dispensation* of mercy and goodness by Christ Jesus; and now it may be said, as formerly, *To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts*. God *speaks* now as he spoke *before*; his *voice* is in the *Gospel* as it was in the *law*. Believe, love, obey, and ye shall enter into this rest.

**Verse 8. For if Jesus had given them rest]** It is truly surprising that our translators should have rendered the **Ἰησοῦς** of the text *Jesus*, and not *Joshua*, who is most clearly intended. They must have known that the [**vw**hy *Yehoshua* of the Hebrew, which we write *Joshua*, is everywhere rendered **Ἰησοῦς**, *Jesus*, by the Septuagint; and it is their reading which the apostle follows. It is true the Septuagint generally write **Ἰησοῦς νᾶν**, or **Ἰησοῦς νᾶν**, *Jesus Nave*, or *Jesus, son of Nave*, for it is thus they translate **יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן נֹון** [**vw**hy *Yehoshua ben Nun*, Joshua the son of Nun; and this is sufficient to distinguish it from *Jesus, son of David*. But as Joshua, the captain general of Israel, is above intended, the word should have been written *Joshua*, and not *Jesus*. One MS., merely to prevent the wrong application of the name, has **Ἰησοῦς ο τοῦ νᾶν**, *Jesus the son of Nave*. *Theodoret* has the same in his comment, and one *Syriac* version has it in the text. It is *Joshua* in Coverdale's Testament, 1535; in Tindal's 1548; in that edited by Edmund Becke, 1549; in Richard Cardmarden's, Rouen, 1565; several modern translators, Wesley, Macknight, Wakefield, &c., read *Joshua*, as does our own in the *margin*. What a pity it had not been in the text, as all the smaller Bibles have no marginal readings, and many simple people are bewildered with the expression.

The apostle shows that, although Joshua did bring the children of Israel into the promised land, yet this could not be the intended rest, because

long after this time the Holy Spirit, by David, speaks of this rest; the apostle, therefore, concludes,

**Verse 9. There, remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.]** It was not, 1. The rest of the *Sabbath*; it was not, 2. The *rest* in the *promised land*, for the psalmist wrote long after the days of Joshua; therefore there is *another rest*, a state of *blessedness*, for the people of God; and this is the *Gospel*, the blessings it procures and communicates, and the *eternal glory* which it prepares for, and has promised to, genuine believers.

There are two words in this chapter which we indifferently translate *rest*, **καταπαυσις** and **σαββατισμος**. the *first* signifying a *cessation from labour*, so that the weary body is *rested* and *refreshed*; the *second* meaning, not only a rest from labour, but a *religious rest; sabbatismus*, a rest of a sacred kind, of which both soul and body partake. This is true, whether we understand the rest as referring to *Gospel blessings*, or to *eternal felicity*, or to *both*.

**Verse 10. For he that is entered into his rest]** The man who has believed in Christ Jesus has entered into his rest; the state of happiness which he has provided, and which is the forerunner of *eternal glory*.

**Hath ceased from his own works]** No longer depends on the observance of Mosaic rites and ceremonies for his justification and final happiness. He rests from all these *works of the law* as fully as God has rested from his works of *creation*.

Those who restrain the word *rest* to the signification of *eternal glory*, say, that *ceasing from our own works* relates to the *sufferings, tribulations, afflictions, &c.*, of this life; as in <sup><61413></sup>**Revelation 14:13**. I understand it as including *both*.

In speaking of the *Sabbath*, as typifying a state of blessedness in the other world, the apostle follows the opinions of the Jews of his own and after times. The phrase **tbvw hal [ tbv hath shabbath illaah, veshabbath tethaah**, the *sabbath above*, and the *sabbath below*, is common among the Jewish writers; and they think that where the plural number is used, as in <sup><61930></sup>**Leviticus 19:30**: *Ye shall keep my Sabbaths*, that the *lower* and *higher sabbaths* are intended, and that the one is prefigured by the other. See many examples in *Schoettgen*.

**Verse 11. Let us labour therefore]** The word **σπουδασωμεν** implies every *exertion* of *body* and *mind* which can be made in reference to the subject. *Rebus aliis omissis, hoc agamus*; All things else omitted, this one thing let us do. We receive grace, improve grace, retain grace, that we may obtain eternal glory.

**Lest any man fall]** Lest he fall off from the grace of God, from the Gospel and its blessings, and perish everlastingly. This is the meaning of the apostle, who never supposed that a man might not make final shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience, as long as he was in a state of *probation*.

**Verse 12. For the word of God is quick, and powerful]** Commentators are greatly divided concerning the meaning of the phrase **ὁ λογος τος θεου**, *the word of God*; some supposing the whole of *Divine revelation* to be intended; others, *the doctrine of the Gospel faithfully preached*; others, the *mind of God* or the *Divine intellect*; and others, the *Lord Jesus Christ*, who is thus denominated in **John 1:1**, &c., and **Revelation 19:13**; the only places in which he is thus *incontestably* characterized in the New Testament. The disputed text, **1 John 5:7**, I leave at present out of the question. In the introduction to this epistle I have produced sufficient evidence to make it very probable that St. Paul was the author of this epistle. In this sentiment the most eminent scholars and critics are now agreed. That Jesus Christ, the *eternal, uncreated WORD*, is not meant here, is more than probable from this consideration, that St. Paul, in no part of his thirteen acknowledged epistles, ever thus denominates our blessed Lord; nor is he thus denominated by any other of the New Testament writers except St. John. Dr. Owen has endeavoured to prove the contrary, but I believe to no man's conviction who was able to examine and judge of the subject. He has not been able to find more than two texts which even appeared to look *his way*. The first is, **Luke 1:2**: *Us, which-were eye witnesses, and ministers του λογου*, of the word; where it is evident the whole of our Lord's ministry is intended. The *second* is, **Acts 20:32**: *I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace*; where nothing but the *gracious doctrine* of salvation by faith, the influence of the Divine Spirit, &c., &c., can be meant: nor is there any legitimate mode of construction with which I am acquainted, by which the words in either place can be personally applied to our Lord. That the phrase was applied to denominate the second subsistence in the glorious Trinity, by Philo and the rabbinical writers, I have already proved in my notes on John i., where such observations are alone applicable.

*Calmet*, who had read all that either the ancients or moderns have said on this subject, and who does not think that Jesus Christ is here intended, speaks thus: “None of the properties mentioned here can be denied to the Son of God, the eternal Word; he sees all things, knows all things, penetrates all things, and can do all things. He is the ruler of the heart, and can turn it where he pleases. He enlightens the soul, and calls it gently and efficaciously, *when* and *how* he wills. Finally, he punishes in the most exemplary manner the insults offered to his Father and himself by infidels, unbelievers, and the wicked in general. But it does not appear that the Divine Logos is here intended, 1. Because St. Paul does not use that term to express the Son of God. 2. Because the conjunction  $\gamma\alpha\rho$ , *for*, shows that this verse is an inference drawn from the preceding, where the subject in question is concerning the eternal rest, and the *means* by which it is to be obtained. It is therefore more natural to explain the term of the *word*, *order*, and *will* of God, for the Hebrews represent the revelation of God as an *active* being, *living*, *all-powerful*, *illumined*, *executing vengeance*, *discerning* and *penetrating all things*. Thus **Wisd. 16:26**: ‘Thy children, O Lord, know that it is not the growing of fruits that nourisheth man, but that it is *thy word* that preserveth them that put their trust in thee.’ See <sup><688B></sup>**Deuteronomy 8:3**. That is, the sacred Scriptures point out and appoint all the *means of life*. Again, speaking of the Hebrews who were bitten with the fiery serpents, the same writer says, **Wisd. 16:12**: ‘For it was neither herb nor mollifying plaster that restored them to health, but *thy word*, O Lord, which healeth all things;’ i.e. which describes and prescribes the means of healing. And it is very likely that the *purpose* of God, sending the destroying angel to slay the firstborn in Egypt is intended by the same expression, **Wisd. 18:15, 16**: ‘*Thine almighty word* leaped down from heaven out of thy royal throne, *as a fierce man of war* into a land of destruction, and brought thine unfeigned commandment as a *sharp sword*, and, standing up, filled all things with death.’ This however may be applied to the eternal Logos, or uncreated Word.

“And this mode of speech is exactly conformable to that of the Prophet Isaiah, <sup><25510></sup>**Isaiah 55:10, 11**, where to the word of God, spoken by his prophets, the same kind of powers are attributed as those mentioned here by the apostle: *For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my WORD BE that*

GOETH FORTH OUT OF MY MOUTH: *it shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.* The centurion seems to speak a similar language, <sup><3307></sup>**Luke 7:7:** *But say in a word, (αλλα ειπε λογω, speak to thy word,) and my servant shall be healed.”*

This is the sum of what this very able commentator says on the subject.

In Dr. Dodd’s collections we find the following:—

“*The word of God, which promises to the faithful, an entrance into God’s rest in David’s time, and now to us, is not a thing which died or was forgotten as soon as it was uttered, but it continues one and the same to all generations; it is ζων, quick or living. So Isaiah says: The word of our God shall stand for ever; <2408> Isaiah 40:8. Compare <2510> Isaiah 51:6; 55:11; 1Esdras 4:38; <3333> John 3:34; <3023> 1 Peter 1:23. And powerful, ενργης, efficacious, active; sufficient, if it be not actually hindered, to produce its effects; effectual, <5706> Philemon 1:6. See <4704> 2 Corinthians 10:4; <3123> 1 Thessalonians 2:13. And sharper than any two-edged sword; τομωτερος υπερ, more cutting than. The word of God penetrates deeper into a man than any sword; it enters into the soul and spirit, into all our sensations, passions, appetites, nay, to our very thoughts; and sits as judge of the most secret intentions, contrivances, and sentiments of the heart. Phocylides has an expression very similar to our author, where he says, of reason, ‘that it is a weapon which penetrates deeper into a man than a sword.’ See also <2404> Isaiah 40:4; <3037> Ephesians 6:17; <3016> Revelation 1:16; 2:16.*

“*Piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit.*-When the *soul* is thus distinguished from the *spirit*, by the former is meant that *inferior faculty* by which we *think of* and *desire* what concerns our *present being* and *welfare*. By *spirit* is meant a *superior power* by which we *prefer future things* to *present*, by which we are directed to pursue *truth* and *right* above all things, and even to despise what is agreeable to our present state, if it stand in competition with, or is prejudicial to, our *future happiness*. See <3123> **1 Thessalonians 5:23.** Some have thought that by the expression before us is implied that the *word of God* is able to bring

death, as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira; for, say they, if the *soul* and *spirit*, or the *joints* and *marrow* are separated one from another, it is impossible that life can remain. But perhaps the meaning of the latter clause may rather be: ‘It can divide the joints and divide the marrow; i.e. enter irresistibly into the soul, and produce some sentiment which perhaps it would not willingly have received; and sometimes discover and punish secret, as well as open wickedness.’ Mr. *Pierce* observes that our author has been evidently arguing from a tremendous judgment of God upon the ancient Israelites, the ancestors of those to whom this epistle is directed; and in this verse, to press upon them that care and diligence he had been recommending, he sets before them the efficacy and virtue of the *word of God*, connecting this verse with the former by a *for* in the beginning of it; and therefore it is natural to suppose that what he says of the *word of God* may have a relation to somewhat remarkable in that sore punishment of which he had been speaking, particularly to the destruction of the people by *lightning*, or *fire from heaven*. See <sup><B100></sup>**Leviticus 10:1-5**; <sup><H10></sup>**Numbers 11:1-3; 16:35**; <sup><P78></sup>**Psalm 78:21**. All the expressions in this view will receive an additional force, for nothing is more *quick* and *living*, more *powerful* and *irresistible*, *sharp* and *piercing*, than *lightning*. If this idea be admitted, the meaning of the last clause in this verse will be, ‘That the word of God is a judge, to censure and punish the evil thoughts and intents of the heart.’ And this brings the matter home to the exhortation with which our author began, <sup><H3></sup>**Hebrews 3:12, 13**; for under whatever disguise they might conceal themselves, yet, from such tremendous judgments as God executed upon their fathers, they might learn to judge as Moses did, <sup><N32></sup>**Numbers 32:23**: *If ye will not do so, ye have sinned against the Lord; and be sure your sin will find you out.*” See *Hammond, Whitby, Sykes, and Pierce*.

Mr. Wesley’s note on this verse is expressed with his usual precision and accuracy:—

“*For the word of God*-preached, <sup><H4></sup>**Hebrews 4:2**, and armed with threatenings, <sup><H4></sup>**Hebrews 4:3**, *is living and powerful*-attended with the power of the living God, and conveying either life or death to the hearers; *sharper than any two-edged sword*-penetrating the heart more than this does the body; *piercing* quite through, and laying open, *the soul and spirit*,

*joints and marrow*-the inmost recesses of the mind, which the apostle beautifully and strongly expresses by this heap of figurative words; *and is a discerner, not only of the thoughts, but also of the intentions.*”

The *law*, and the *word of God* in general, is repeatedly compared to a *two-edged sword* among the Jewish writers, **twypyp ytv brj chereb shetey piphioth**, the sword with the two mouths. *By this sword the man himself lives, and by it he destroys his enemies.* This is implied in its two edges. See also *Schoettgen*.

**Is a discerner of the thoughts]** **και κριτικός ενθυμησεων και εννοιων καρδιας.** *Is a critic of the propensities and suggestions of the heart.* How many have felt this property of God’s word where it has been *faithfully* preached! How often has it happened that a man has seen the whole of his own character, and some of the most private transactions of his life, held up as it were to public view by the preacher; and yet the parties absolutely unknown to each other! Some, thus exhibited, have even supposed that their neighbours must have privately informed the preacher of their character and conduct; but it was the *word of God*, which, by the direction and energy of the Divine Spirit, thus searched them out, was a *critical examiner* of the *propensities* and *suggestions of their hearts*, and had pursued them through all their public haunts and private ways. Every genuine minister of the Gospel has witnessed such effects as these under his ministry in repeated instances.

But while this effect of the word or true doctrine of God is acknowledged, let it not be supposed that *it, of itself* can produce such effects. The word of God is compared to a *hammer* that *breaks the rock in pieces*, **Jeremiah 23:29**; but will a *hammer* break a *stone* unless it is applied by the *skill* and *strength* of some powerful *agent*? It is here compared to a *two-edged sword*; but will a *sword* *cut* or *pierce* to the dividing of joints and marrow, or separation of soul and spirit, unless some *hand* *push* and *direct* it? Surely, no. Nor can even the words and doctrine of God produce any effect but as directed by the experienced teacher, and applied by the Spirit of God. It is an *instrument* the most apt for the accomplishing of its work; but it will do nothing, can do nothing, but as used by the *heavenly workman*. To this is the reference in the next verse.

**Verse 13. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest]** God, from whom this word comes, and by whom it has all its *efficacy*, is infinitely

wise. He well knew how to construct his word, so as to suit it to the state of all *hearts*; and he has given it that infinite fulness of meaning, so as to suit it to all *cases*. And so infinite is he in his *knowledge*, and so *omnipresent* is he, that the whole creation is constantly *exposed to his view*; nor is there a *creature* of the *affections*, *mind*, or *imagination*, that is not constantly under his eye. He marks every rising thought, every budding desire; and such as these are supposed to be the *creatures* to which the apostle particularly refers, and which are called, in the preceding verse, the *propensities* and *suggestions of the heart*.

**But all things are naked and opened]** **παντα δε γυμνα και τετραχληλισμενα.** It has been supposed that the phraseology here is *sacrificial*, the apostle referring to the case, of *slaying* and *preparing a victim* to be *offered to God*. 1. It is *slain*; 2. It is *flayed*, so it is *naked*; 3. It is *cut open*, so that all the intestines are exposed to view; 4. It is carefully *inspected* by the priest, to see that all is *sound* before any part is offered to him who has prohibited all *imperfect* and *diseased* offerings; and, 5. It is *divided* exactly into two equal parts, by being split down the chine from the nose to the rump; and so exactly was this performed, that the spinal marrow was cloven down the centre, one half lying in the divided cavity of each side of the backbone. This is probably the metaphor in <sup><ST215></sup>2 Timothy 2:15, where see the note.

But there is reason to suspect that this is not the metaphor here. The verb **τραχηλιζω**, from which the apostle's **τετραχληλισμενα** comes, signifies to have the *neck bent back* so as to expose the face to full view, that every feature might be seen; and this was often done with *criminals*, in order that they might be the better *recognized* and *ascertained*. To this custom *Pliny* refers in the very elegant and important panegyric which he delivered on the Emperor Trajan, about A. D. 103, when the emperor had made him consul; where, speaking of the great attention which Trajan paid to the public morals, and the care he took to extirpate informers, &c., he says: *Nihil tamen gratius, nihil sæculo dignius, quam quod contigit desuper intueri delatorum supina ora, retortasque cervices. Agnoscebamus et fruebamur, cum velut piaculares publicæ sollicitudinis victimæ, supra sanguinem noxiorum ad lenta supplicia graviorisque pœnas ducerentur.* *Plin. Paneg., cap. 34.* "There is nothing, however, in this age which affects us more pleasingly, nothing more deservedly, than to behold from above the supine faces and reverted necks of the informers. We thus knew them, and were gratified when, as expiatory victims of the public disquietude,



they were led away to lingering punishments, and sufferings more terrible than even the blood of the guilty.”

The term was also used to describe the action of *wrestlers* who, when they could, got their hand under the chin of their antagonists, and thus, by bending both the head and neck, could the more easily give them a fall; this stratagem is sometimes seen in ancient monuments. But some suppose that it refers to the custom of *dragging them by the neck*. Diogenes the philosopher, observing one who had been victor in the Olympic games often fixing his eyes upon a *courtezan*, said, in allusion to this custom: **ιδε κριον αρειμανιον, ως υπο του τυχοντος κορασιου τραχηλιζεται.** “See how this mighty champion (martial ram) *is drawn by the neck by a common girl.*” See Stanley, page 305.

**With whom we have to do.] προς ον ημιν ο λογος.** *To whom we must give an account.* He is our *Judge*, and is well qualified to be so, as all our hearts and actions are *naked* and *open* to him.

This is the true meaning of **λογος** in this place; and it is used in precisely the same meaning in **Matthew 12:36; 18:23;** **Luke 16:2.**

**Romans 14:12:** *So then every one of us λογος δωσει, shall give an account of himself to God.* And **Hebrews 13:17:** *They watch for your souls, ως λογον αποδωσοντες, as those who must give account.* We translate the words, *With whom we have to do;* of which, though the phraseology is *obsolete*, yet the meaning is nearly the same. *To whom a worde to us,* is the rendering of my old MS. and Wiclif. *Of whom we speake,* is the version of our other early translators.

**Verse 14. Seeing then that we have a great high priest]** It is contended, and very properly, that the particle **ουν**, which we translate *seeing*, as if what followed was an immediate inference from what the apostle had been speaking, should be translated *now*; for the apostle, though he had before mentioned Christ as the *High Priest of our profession*, **Hebrews 3:1**, and as the *High Priest* who made *reconciliation for the sins of the people*, **Hebrews 2:17**, does not attempt to prove this in any of the preceding chapters, but now enters upon that point, and discusses it at great length to the end of chap. x.

After all, it is possible that this may be a resumption of the discourse from **Hebrews 3:6**; the rest of that chapter, and the preceding thirteen verses of this, being considered as a parenthesis. These parts left out, the

discourse runs on with perfect connection. It is very likely that the words, here, are spoken to meet an objection of those Jews who wished the Christians of Palestine to apostatize: “You have no tabernacle-no temple-no high priest-no sacrifice for sin. Without these there can be no religion; return therefore to us, who have the perfect temple service appointed-by God.” To these he answers: *We have a High Priest who is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God; therefore let us hold fast our profession.* See on <sup><scri></sup>**Hebrews 3:1**, to which this verse seems immediately to refer.

Three things the apostle professes to prove in this epistle:—

1. That Christ is greater than the *angels*.
2. That he is greater than *Moses*.
3. That he is greater than *Aaron*, and all *high priests*.

The *two* former arguments, with their applications and illustrations, he has already despatched; and now he enters on the *third*. See the *preface* to this epistle.

The apostle states, 1. That we have a *high priest*. 2. That this high priest is Jesus, the *Son of God*; not a *son* or *descendant* of *Aaron*, nor coming in that way, but in a more transcendent line.

3. *Aaron* and his successors could only pass into the holy of holies, and that once a year; but our High Priest has passed into the heavens, of which that was only the type. There is an allusion here to the high priest going into the holy of holies on the great day of atonement. 1. He left the congregation of the people. 2. He passed through the veil into the holy place, and was not seen even by the priests. 3. He entered through the second veil into the holy of holies, where was the symbol of the majesty of God. Jesus, our High Priest, 1. Left the people at large. 2. He left his disciples by ascending up through the visible heavens, the clouds, as a veil, screening him from their sight. 3. Having passed through these veils, he went immediately to be our Intercessor: thus *he passed ουρανους*, the visible or ethereal heavens, into the presence of the Divine Majesty; *through the heavens, διεληλυθοτα τους ουρανους*, and the empyreum, or heaven of heavens.

**Verse 15. For we have not a high priest]** To the objection, “Your High Priest, if entered into the heavens, can have no participation with you, and no sympathy for you, because out of the reach of human feelings and

infirmities,” he answers: **ου γαρ εχομεν απχιερα μη δυναμενον συμπαθησαι ταις ασθeneιαις ημων.** *We have not a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weakness.* Though he be the Son of God, as to his *human nature*, and equal in his *Divine nature* with God; yet, having partaken of human nature, and having submitted to all its trials and distresses, and *being in all points tempted like as we are, without feeling or consenting to sin*; he is able to succour them that are tempted. See ~~<8018>~~ **Hebrews 2:18**, and the note there.

The words **κατα παντα καθομοιοτητα** might be translated, *in all points according to the likeness*, i.e. as far as his human nature could bear affinity to ours; for, though he had a perfect human body and human soul, yet that body was perfectly tempered; it was free from all morbid action, and consequently from all *irregular movements*. His *mind*, or *human soul*, being free from all sin, being every way perfect, could feel no *irregular temper*, nothing that was inconsistent with infinite purity. In all these respects he was different from us; and cannot, as *man*, sympathize with us in any feelings of this kind: but, as *God*, he has provided support for the *body* under all its trials and infirmities, and for the *soul* he has provided an *atonement* and *purifying sacrifice*; so that he cleanses the heart from all unrighteousness, and fills the soul with his Holy Spirit, and makes it his own temple and continual habitation. He took our flesh and blood, a human body and a human soul, and lived a human life. Here was the *likeness of sinful flesh*, ~~<8018>~~ **Romans 8:5**; and by *thus* assuming human nature, he was completely qualified to make an atonement for the sins of the world.

**Verse 16.** **Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace]** The allusion to the high priest, and his office on the day of atonement, is here kept up. The *approach* mentioned here is to the **τρpk kapporeth**, **ιλαστηριον**, the *propitiatory* or *mercy-seat*. This was the covering of the ark of the testimony or covenant, at each end of which was a cherub, and between them the *shechinah*, or symbol of the Divine Majesty, which appeared to, and conversed with, the high priest. Here the apostle shows the great superiority of the privileges of the new testament above those of the old; for *there* the high priest *only*, and he with *fear* and *trembling*, was permitted to approach; and that not without the blood of the victim; and if in any thing he transgressed, he might expect to be struck with death. The throne of grace in heaven answers to this propitiatory, but to *this* ALL may

approach who feel their need of salvation; and they may approach **μετα παρρησιας**, *with freedom, confidence, liberty of speech*, in opposition to the *fear and trembling* of the Jewish high priest. Here, nothing is to be feared, provided the heart be right with God, truly sincere, and trusting alone in the sacrificial blood.

**That we may obtain mercy]** **ἵνα λαβωμεν ελεον.** *That we may take mercy—that we may receive the pardon of all our sins; there is mercy for the taking.* As Jesus Christ *tasted death for every man*, so *every man* may go to that propitiatory, and take the mercy that is suited to his degree of guilt.

**And find grace]** *Mercy* refers to the pardon of sin, and being brought into the favour of God. *Grace* is that by which the soul is supported after it has received this mercy, and by which it is purified from all unrighteousness, and upheld in all trials and difficulties, and enabled to prove faithful unto death.

**To help in time of need.]** **εις ευκαιρον βοηθειαν.** *For a seasonable support; that is, support when necessary, and as necessary, and in due proportion to the necessity.* The word **βοηθεια** is properly rendered *assistance, help, or support*; but it is an assistance in consequence of the *earnest cry* of the person in distress, for the word signifies to *run at the cry*, **θειν εις βοηην**, or **επι βοηην θειν**. So, even at the *throne of grace*, or great *propitiatory*, no help can be expected where there is no *cry*, and where there is no *cry* there is no *felt* necessity; for he that *feels* he is perishing will *cry aloud* for help, and to such a cry the compassionate High Priest will *run*; and the *time of need* is the time in which God will show mercy; nor will he ever delay it *when it is necessary*. We are not to cry *to-day* to be helped *to-morrow*, or at some *indefinite time*, or at the *hour of death*. We are to call for mercy and grace *when we need them*; and we are to expect to receive them *when we call*. This is a part of our *liberty or boldness*; we *come up* to the throne, and we *call aloud* for mercy, and God hears and dispenses the blessing we need.

That this exhortation of the apostle may not be lost on us, let us consider:—

1. That there is a *throne of grace*, i.e. a *propitiatory*, the place where God and man are to *meet*.

2. That this propitiatory or mercy-seat is sprinkled with the atoning blood of that *Lamb of God* which taketh away the sin of the world.
3. That we must *come up*, *προσερχομεθα*, to this throne; and this implies *faith* in the efficacy of the sacrifice.
4. That we must *call aloud* on God for his mercy, if we expect him to *run* to our assistance.
5. That we must *feel* our spiritual necessities, in order to our *calling* with fervency and earnestness.
6. That calling thus we shall infallibly get what we want; for in Christ Jesus, as a sacrificial offering, God is ever well pleased; and he is also well pleased with all who take refuge in the atonement which he has made.
7. That thus coming, feeling, and calling, we may have the *utmost confidence*; for we have *boldness, liberty of access, freedom of speech*; may plead with our Maker without *fear*; and expect all that heaven has to bestow; because Jesus, who died, sitteth upon the throne! Hallelujah! the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.
8. All these are reasons why we should persevere.

## HEBREWS

### CHAPTER 5.

*The nature of the high priesthood of Christ; his pre-eminence, qualifications, and order, 1-10. Imperfect state of the believing Hebrews, and the necessity of spiritual improvement, 11-14.*

#### NOTES ON CHAP. 5.

**Verse 1.** For every high priest taken from among men] This seems to refer to <sup><12110></sup>Leviticus 21:10, where it is intimated that the high priest shall be taken *wj am meachaiv*, from his brethren; i.e. he shall be of the tribe of Levi, and of the family of Aaron.

**Is ordained for men]** ὑπερ ανθρωπων καθισταται τα προς τον θεον. Is appointed to preside over the Divine worship in those things which relate to man's salvation.

**That he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins]** God ever appeared to all his followers in two points of view: 1. As the author and dispenser of all temporal good. 2. As their lawgiver and judge. In reference to this twofold view of the Divine Being, his worship was composed of two different parts: 1. *Offerings* or *gifts*. 2. *Sacrifices*. 1. As the creator and dispenser of all good, he had *offerings* by which his *bounty* and *providence* were acknowledged. 2. As the *lawgiver* and *judge*, against whose injunctions offences had been committed, he had *sacrifices* offered to him to make atonement for sin. The δωρα, or *gifts*, mentioned here by the apostle, included every kind of *eucharistical* offering. The θυσιαι, *sacrifices*, included *victims* of every sort, or *animals* whose *lives* were to be offered in sacrifice, and their blood poured out before God, as an atonement for sins. The high priest was the mediator between God and the people; and it was his office, when the people had brought these gifts and sacrifices, to offer them to God in their behalf. The people could not legitimately offer their own offerings, they must be all brought to the priest, and he alone could present them to God. As we have a high priest over the house of God, to offer all *our gifts* and his *own sacrifice*, therefore we may come with boldness to the throne of grace. See above.

**Verse 2. Who can have compassion on the ignorant]** The word **μετριοπαθειν**, signifies, not merely to have compassion, but to *act with moderation*, and to bear with each in *proportion* to his ignorance, weakness, and untoward circumstances, all taken into consideration with the offences he has committed: in a word, to *pity, feel for, and excuse*, as far as possible; and, when the provocation is at the highest, to *moderate one's passion* towards the culprit, and be *ready to pardon*; and when punishment must be administered, to do it in the *gentlest manner*.

Instead of **αγνοουσι**, *the ignorant*, one MS. only, but that of high repute, has **ασθενουσι**, *the weak*. Most men sin much through *ignorance*, but this does not excuse them if they have within reach the means of instruction. And the great majority of the human race sin through *weakness*. The principle of evil is *strong* in them; the occasions of sin are many; through their fall from God they are become exceedingly *weak*; and what the apostle calls, <sup><3120></sup>**Hebrews 12:1**, that **ευπεριστατον αμαρτιαν**, *the well-circumstanced sin*, often occurs to every man. But, as in the above ease, weakness itself is no excuse, when the means of strength and succour are always at hand. However, all these are circumstances which the Jewish high priest took into consideration, and they are certainly not less attended to by the High Priest of our profession.

The reason given why the high priest should be slow to punish and prone to forgive is, that he himself is also *compassed with weakness*; **περικειται ασθενειαν**; *weakness lies all around him*, it is his *clothing*; and as he feels his clothing, so should he feel *it*; and as he feels it, so he should deplore it, and compassionate others.

**Verse 3. And by reason hereof]** As he is also a transgressor of the commands of God, and unable to observe the law in its spirituality, he must offer sacrifices for sin, not only for the people, but for himself also: this must teach him to have a fellow feeling for others.

**Verse 4. This honour]** **την τιμην** undoubtedly signifies here *the office*, which is one meaning of the word in the best Greek writers. It is here an *honourable office*, because the man is the high priest of God, and is appointed by God himself to that office.

**But he that is called of God, as was Aaron.]** God himself appointed the tribe and family out of which the high priest was to be taken, and Aaron and his sons were expressly chosen by God to fill the office of the high

priesthood. As God alone had the right to appoint his own priest for the Jewish nation, and man had no authority here; so God alone could provide and appoint a high priest for the whole human race. Aaron was thus appointed for the Jewish people; Christ, for all mankind.

Some make this “an argument for the *uninterrupted succession of popes and their bishops* in the Church, who alone have the authority to ordain for the sacerdotal office; and whosoever is not thus appointed is, with them, illegitimate.” It is idle to employ time in proving that there is no such thing as an *uninterrupted succession* of this kind; it does not exist, it never did exist. It is a silly fable, invented by ecclesiastical tyrants, and supported by clerical coxcombs. But were it even true, it has nothing to do with the text. It speaks merely of the appointment of a high priest, the succession to be preserved in the tribe of Levi, and in the family of Aaron. But even this succession was *interrupted and broken*, and the office itself was to cease on the coming of Christ, after whom there could be no high priest; nor can Christ have any successor, and therefore he is said to be a *priest for ever*, for he ever liveth the intercessor and sacrifice for mankind. The verse, therefore, has nothing to do with the *clerical office*, with preaching God’s holy word, or administering the sacraments; and those who quote it in this way show how little they understand the Scriptures, and how ignorant they are of the nature of their own office.

**Verse 5. Christ glorified not himself]** The man Jesus Christ, was also appointed by God to this most awful yet glorious office, of being the High Priest of the whole human race. The Jewish high priest represented this by the sacrifices of beasts which he offered; the Christian High Priest must offer *his own life*: Jesus Christ did so; and, rising from the dead, he ascended to heaven, and there ever appeareth in the presence of God for us. Thus he has *reassumed the sacerdotal office*; and because he *never dies*, he can never have a *successor*. He can have no *vicars*, either in heaven or upon earth; those who pretend to be such are impostors, and are worthy neither of respect nor credit.

**Thou art my Son]** See on <sup><30105></sup> **Hebrews 1:5**, and the observations at the end of that chapter. And thus it appears that God can have no high priest but his Son; and to that office none can now pretend without blasphemy, for the Son of God is still the High Priest in his temple.

**Verse 6. He saith also in another place]** That is, in <sup><9804></sup> **Psalm 110:4**, a psalm of extraordinary importance, containing a very striking prediction of



the birth, preaching, suffering, death, and conquests of the Messiah. See the notes there. For the mode of quotation here, **See the note on “He 2:6”**.

**Thou art a priest for ever]** As long as the sun and moon endure, Jesus will continue to be high priest to all the successive generations of men, as he was the lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If he be a priest *for ever*, there can be no *succession of priests*; and if he have all power in heaven and in earth, and if he be present wherever two or three are gathered together in his name, he can have no *vicars*; nor can the Church need one to act in *his place*, when he, from the necessity of his nature, fills all places, and is everywhere present. This one consideration nullifies all the pretensions of the Romish pontiff, and proves the whole to be a tissue of imposture.

**After the order of Melchisedec.]** Who this person was must still remain a secret. We know nothing more of him than is written in <sup><01418></sup>**Genesis 14:18**, &c., where see the notes, and particularly the observations at the end of that chapter, in which this very mysterious person is represented as a type of Christ.

**Verse 7. Who in the days of his flesh]** The time of his incarnation, during which he took all the infirmities of human nature upon him, and was afflicted in his body and human soul just as other men are, irregular and sinful passions excepted.

**Offered up prayers and supplications]** This is one of the most difficult places in this epistle, if not in the whole of the New Testament. The labours of learned men upon it have been prodigious; and even in *their* sayings it is hard to find the meaning.

I shall take a *general view* of this and the two following verses, and then examine the particular expressions.

It is probable that the apostle refers to something in the agony of our Lord, which the evangelists have not distinctly marked.

The Redeemer of the world appears here as simply man; but he is the representative of the whole human race. He must make expiation for sin by *suffering*, and he can suffer only as man. *Suffering* was as necessary as *death*; for man, because he has *sinned*, must *suffer*, and because he has *broken the law*, should *die*. Jesus took upon himself the nature of man,

subject to all the trials and distresses of human nature. He is now making atonement; and he begins with sufferings, as sufferings commence with human life; and he terminates with death, as that is the *end* of human existence in this world. *Though he was the Son of God*, conceived and born without sin, or any thing that could render him *liable* to suffering or death, and only suffered and died through infinite condescension; yet, to constitute him a complete Saviour, he must submit to whatever the law required; and therefore he is stated to have *learned* OBEDIENCE *by the things which he suffered*, <sup><S></sup>Hebrews 5:8, that is, *subjection* to all the requisitions of the law; and being *made perfect*, that is, having *finished* the whole by *dying*, he, by these means, became the *author of eternal salvation to all them who obey him*, <sup><S></sup>Hebrews 5:9; to them who, according to his own command, repent and believe the Gospel, and, under the influence of his Spirit, walk in holiness of life. “But he appears to be under the most dreadful apprehension of death; for *he offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death*, <sup><S></sup>Hebrews 5:7.” I shall consider this first in the common point of view, and refer to the subsequent notes. This fear of death was in Christ a widely different thing from what it is in men; *they* 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 man, 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. *Death*, temporal and eternal, was the portion of man; and now Christ is to *destroy death* by agonizing and dying! The tortures and torments necessary to effect this destruction Jesus Christ alone could feel, Jesus Christ alone could sustain, Jesus Christ alone can comprehend. We are referred to them in this most solemn verse; but the apostle himself only drops *hints*, he does not attempt to explain them: he prayed; he supplicated with strong crying and tears; and he was *heard* in reference to that *which he feared*. His prayers, as our *Mediator*, were answered; and his sufferings and death were complete and effectual as our *sacrifice*. This is the glorious sum of what the apostle here states; and it is enough. We may hear it with awful respect; and adore him with silence whose grief had nothing common in it to that of other men, and is not to be estimated according to the measures of human miseries. It was:—

*A weight of wo, more than whole worlds could bear.*

I shall now make some remarks on particular expressions, and endeavour to show that the words may be understood with a shade of difference from the common acceptation.

**Prayers and supplications, &c.]** There may be an allusion here to the manner in which the Jews speak of prayer, &c. “Rabbi Yehudah said: All human things depend on repentance and the *prayers* which men make to the holy blessed God; especially if *tears* be poured out with the prayers. There is no *gate* which *tears* will not pass through.” *Sohar, Exod.*, fol. 5.

“There are three degrees of prayer, each surpassing the other in sublimity; *prayer, crying, and tears*: prayer is made in silence; crying, with a loud voice; but tears surpass all.” *Synops. Sohar*, p. 33.

The apostle shows that Christ made every species of prayer, and those especially by which they allowed a man must be successful with his Maker.

The word **ικετηριας**, which we translate *supplications*, exists in no other part of the New Testament. **ικετης** signifies a *supplicant*, from **ικομαι**, *I come or approach*; it is used in this connection by the purest Greek writers. Nearly the same words are found in Isocrates, *Deuteronomy Pace*:

**ικετηριας πολλας και δεησεις ποιουμενοι.** *Making many supplications and prayers.* **ικετηρια**, says Suidas, **καλειται ελαιας κλαδος, στεμματι εστεμμενος.---εστιν, ην οι δεομενοι κατατιθενται που, η μετα χειρας εχουσις.** “*Hiketeria* is a branch of olive, rolled round with wool—is what suppliants were accustomed to deposite in some place, or to carry in their hands.” And **ικετης**, *hiketetes*, he defines to be, **ο δουλοπρεπως παρακαλων, και δεομενος περι τινος οτουουν.** “He who, in the most humble and servile manner, entreats and begs any thing from another.” In reference to this custom the Latins used the phrase *velamenta pratendere*, “to hold forth these covered branches,” when they made supplication; and *Herodian* calls them **ικετηριας θαλλους**, “branches of supplication.” *Livy* mentions the custom frequently; see lib. xxv. cap. 25: lib. xxix. c. 16; lib. xxxv. c. 34; lib. xxxvi. c. 20. The place in lib. xxix. c. 16, is much to the point, and shows us the full force of the word, and nature of the custom. “*Decem legati Locrensium, obsiti squalore et sordibus, in comitio sedentibus consulibus velamenta supplicium, ramos oleæ (ut Græcis mos est,) porrigentes, ante tribunal cum flebili vociferatione humi procubuerunt.*” “Ten delegates from the Locrians, squalid and covered with rags, came into the hall where the consuls were sitting, *holding out in their hands olive branches covered*

*with wool*, according to the custom of the Greeks; and prostrated themselves on the ground before the tribunal, with weeping and loud lamentation.” This is a remarkable case, and may well illustrate our Lord’s situation and conduct. The Locrians, pillaged, oppressed, and ruined by the consul, *Q. Plemmius*, send their delegates to the Roman government to implore protection and redress they, the better to represent their situation, and that of their oppressed fellow citizens, take the *hiketeria*, or *olive branch wrapped round with wool*, and present themselves before the consuls in open court, and with wailing and loud outcries make known their situation. The senate heard, arrested Plemmius, loaded him with chains, and he expired in a dungeon. Jesus Christ, the representative of and delegate from the whole human race, oppressed and ruined by Satan and sin, with the *hiketeria*, or ensign of a most distressed suppliant, presents himself before the throne of God, with *strong crying and tears*, and prays against *death* and his ravages, in behalf of those whose representative he was; and he was *heard in that he feared*-the evils were removed, and the oppressor cast down. Satan was bound, he was spoiled of his dominion, and is reserved in chains of darkness to the judgment of the great day.

Every scholar will see that the words of the Roman historian answer exactly to those of the apostle; and the allusion in both is to the same custom. I do not approve of allegorizing or spiritualizing; but the allusion and similarity of the expressions led me to make this application. Many others would make more of this circumstance, as the allusion in the text is so pointed to this custom. Should it appear to any of my readers that I should, after the example of great names, have gone into this house of Rimmon, and bowed myself there, they will pardon their servant in this thing.

**To save him from death]** I have already observed that Jesus Christ was the *representative* of the human race; and have made some observations on the peculiarity of his sufferings, following the common acceptance of the words in the text, which things are true, howsoever the text may be interpreted. But here we may consider the pronoun **αυτον**, *him*, as implying the *collective body* of mankind; *the children who were partakers of flesh and blood*, <sup><S124></sup>**Hebrews 2:14**; *the seed of Abraham*, <sup><S126></sup>**Hebrews 2:16**, *who through fear of death were all their life subject to bondage*. So he made supplication with strong crying and tears to him who was able to save THEM from death; for I consider the **τουτους**, *them*, of <sup><S125></sup>**Hebrews 2:15**, the same or implying the same thing as **αυτον**, *him*, in this verse;

and, thus understood, all the difficulty vanishes away. On this interpretation I shall give a paraphrase of the whole verse: *Jesus Christ, in the days of his flesh, (for he was incarnated that he might redeem the seed of Abraham, the fallen race of man,) and in his expiatory sufferings, when representing the whole human race, offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, to him who was able to save THEM from death: the intercession was prevalent, the passion and sacrifice were accepted, the sting of death was extracted, and Satan was dethroned.*

If it should be objected that this interpretation occasions a very unnatural change of *person* in these verses, I may reply that the change made by my construction is not greater than that made between verses 6 and 7; in the first of which the apostle speaks of *Melchisedec*, who at the conclusion of the verse appears to be antecedent to the relative *who* in <sup><S107></sup>**Hebrews 5:7**; and yet, from the nature of the subject, we must understand Christ to be meant. And I consider, <sup><S108></sup>**Hebrews 5:8**, *Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered*, as belonging, not only to Christ considered in his *human nature*, but also to him in his *collective capacity*; i.e., belonging to all the sons and daughters of God, who, by means of suffering and various chastisements, *learn submission, obedience and righteousness*; and this very subject the apostle treats in considerable detail in <sup><S121></sup>**Hebrews 12:2-11**, to which the reader will do well to refer.

**Verse 8. Though he were a Son]** See the whole of the preceding note.

**Verse 9. And being made perfect]** **και τελειωθεις**. And having *finished* all-having *died* and *risen again*. **τελειωθηναι** signifies to have *obtained the goal*; to have *ended one's labour*, and enjoyed the fruits of it.

<sup><S122></sup>**Hebrews 12:23**: *The spirits of just men made perfect*, **πνευμασι δικαιων τετελειωμενων**, means the souls of those who have gained *the goal*, and *obtained the prize*. So, when Christ had *finished* his course of tremendous sufferings, and consummated the whole by his death and resurrection, he became **αιτιος σωτηριας αιωνιος**, *the cause of eternal salvation unto all them who obey him*. He was consecrated both high priest and sacrifice by his offering upon the cross.

“In this verse,” says Dr. Macknight, “*three things are clearly stated*: 1. That *obedience* to Christ is equally necessary to salvation with *believing* on him. 2. That he was made perfect as a high priest by offering himself a sacrifice

for sin, <sup><800B></sup>**Hebrews 8:3**. 3. That, by the merit of that sacrifice, he hath obtained pardon and eternal life for them who obey him.” He *tasted death for every man*; but he is the *author* and *cause* of eternal salvation only to them who *obey him*. It is not merely *believers*, but obedient believers, that shall be finally saved. Therefore this text is an absolute, unimpeachable evidence, that it is not the imputed obedience of Christ that saves any man. Christ has bought men by his blood; and by the infinite merit of his death he has purchased for them an endless glory; but, in order to be prepared for it, the sinner must, through that grace which God withholds from no man, repent, turn from sin, believe on Jesus as being a sufficient ransom and sacrifice for his soul, receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, be a worker together with him, walk in conformity to the Divine will through this Divine aid, and continue faithful unto death, through him, out of whose fulness he may receive grace upon grace.

**Verse 10. Called of God a high priest]** **προσαγορευθεις**. Being *constituted, hailed, and acknowledged* to be a high priest. In *Hesychius* we find **προσαγορευει**, which he translates **ασπαζεταιαι** hence we learn that one meaning of this word is *to salute*; as when a man was constituted or anointed king, those who accosted him would say, *Hail king!* On this verse Dr. Macknight has the following note, with the insertion of which the reader will not be displeased: “As our Lord, in his conversation with the Pharisees, recorded <sup><122B></sup>**Matthew 22:43**, spake of it as a thing certain of itself, and universally known and acknowledged by the Jews, that David wrote the 110th Psalm by inspiration, concerning the Christ or Messiah; the apostle was well founded in applying the whole of that Psalm to Jesus. Wherefore, having quoted the fourth verse, *Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec*, as directed to Messiah, David’s Lord, he justly termed that speech of the Deity a *salutation* of Jesus, according to the true import of the word **προσαγορευθεις**, which properly signifies to *address* one by his *name, or title, or office*; accordingly *Hesychius* explains **προσαγορευομαι** by **ασπαζομαι**. Now, that the deep meaning of this *salutation* may be understood, I observe, *First*, that, by the testimony of the inspired writers, Jesus sat down at the right hand of God when he returned to heaven, after having finished his ministry upon earth; <sup><1169></sup>**Mark 16:19**; <sup><4756></sup>**Acts 7:56**; <sup><800B></sup>**Hebrews 1:3; 8:1**; <sup><1122></sup>**1 Peter 3:22**. Not, however, *immediately*, but *after* that he had offered the sacrifice of himself in heaven, by presenting his crucified body before the presence of God; <sup><800B></sup>**Hebrews 1:3; 10:10**. *Secondly*, I observe, that God’s *saluting* Messiah

*a priest after the order of Melchisedec*, being mentioned in the psalm after God is said to have invited him *to sit at his right hand*, it is reasonable to think the salutation was given him after he had offered the sacrifice of himself; and had taken his seat at God's right hand. Considered in this order, the *salutation* of Jesus, as a priest *after the order of Melchisedec*, was a public declaration on the part of God that he accepted the sacrifice of himself, which Jesus then offered, as a sufficient atonement for the sin of the world, and approved of the whole of his ministrations on earth, and confirmed all the effects of that meritorious sacrifice, And whereas we are informed in the psalm that, after God had *invited* his Son, in the human nature; to sit at his right hand as Governor of the world, and foretold the blessed fruits of his government, he published the *oath* by which he made him *a Priest for ever*, before he sent him into the world to accomplish the salvation of mankind; and declared that he would never repent of that oath: *The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent; Thou art a Priest for ever after the similitude of Melchisedec*. It was, in effect, a solemn publication of the method in which God would pardon sinners; and a promise that the effects of his Son's government as a *King*, and of his ministrations as a *Priest*, should be eternal; see <sup><803d></sup>**Hebrews 6:20**. Moreover, as this solemn declaration of the dignity of the Son of God, as a King and a Priest for ever in the human nature, was made in the hearing of the angelical hosts, it was designed for this instruction, that they might understand their subordination to God's Son, and pay him that homage that is due to him as Governor of the world, and as Saviour of the human race; <sup><803d></sup>**Philippians 2:9, 10**; <sup><803d></sup>**Hebrews 1:6**. The above explanation of the import of God's *saluting* Jesus a Priest for ever, is founded on the apostle's reasonings in the *seventh* and following chapters, where he enters into the deep meaning of the *oath* by which that salutation was conferred."

**Verse 11. Of whom we have many things to say]** The words *περι ου*, which we translate *of whom*, are variously applied: 1. To *Melchisedec*; 2. To *Christ*; 3. To the *endless priesthood*. Those who understand the place of *Melchisedec*, suppose that it is in reference to this that the apostle resumes the subject in the *seventh* chapter, where much more is said on this subject, though not very difficult of comprehension; and indeed it is not to be supposed that the Hebrews could be more capable of understanding the subject when the apostle wrote the *seventh chapter* than they were when, a few hours before, he had written the *fifth*. It is more likely, therefore, that the words are to be understood as meaning *Jesus*, or that *endless*

*priesthood*, of which he was a little before speaking, and which is a subject that carnal Christians cannot easily comprehend.

**Hard to be uttered]** **δυσερμηνευτος**. *Difficult to be interpreted*, because Melchisedec was a *typical* person. Or if it refer to the *priesthood of Christ*, that is still more difficult to be explained, as it implies, not only his being *constituted a priest* after this *typical order*, but his paying down the *ransom* for the sins of the whole world; and his *satisfying the Divine justice* by this sacrifice, but also thereby opening the kingdom of heaven to all believers, and giving the whole world an entrance to the holy of holies by his blood.

**Dull of hearing.]** **νωθοι ταις ακοαις**. Your souls do not *keep pace* with the doctrines and exhortations delivered to you. As **νωθος** signifies a person *who walks heavily* and makes *little speed*, it is here elegantly applied to those who are called to the Christian race, have the road laid down plain before them, how to proceed specified, and the blessings to be obtained enumerated, and yet make no *exertions* to get on, but are always learning, and never able to come to the full knowledge of the truth.

**Verse 12. For when for the time]** They had heard the Gospel for *many years*, and had professed to be Christians for a *long time*; on these accounts they might reasonably have been expected to be well instructed in Divine things, so as to be able to instruct others.

**Which be the first principles]** **τινα ρα στοιχεια**. *Certain first principles or elements*. The word **τινα** is not the nominative plural, as our translators have supposed, but the accusative case, governed by **διδασκειν**. and therefore the literal translation of the passage is this: *Ye have need that one teach you a second time (παλιν) certain elements of the doctrines of Christ, or oracles of God; i.e. the notices which the prophets gave concerning the priesthood of Jesus Christ, such as are found in Psa. 110:, and in Isa. 53: By the oracles of God the writings of the Old Testament, are undoubtedly meant.*

**And are become such]** The words seem to intimate that they had once been better instructed, and had now forgotten that teaching; and this was occasioned by their being *dull of hearing*; either they had not *continued* to hear, or they had heard so *carelessly* that they were not profited by what they heard. They had probably totally omitted the preaching of the Gospel, and consequently forgotten all they had learned. Indeed, it was to reclaim



those Hebrews from backsliding, and preserve them from total *apostasy*, that this epistle was written.

**Such as have need of milk]** *Milk* is a metaphor by which many authors, both sacred and profane, express the *first principles* of *religion* and *science*; and they apply *sucking* to learning; and every student in his novitiate, or commencement of his studies, was likened to an *infant* that derives all its nourishment from the breast of its mother, not being able to digest any other kind of food. On the contrary, those who had well learned all the first principles of religion and science, and knew how to apply them, were considered as *adults* who were capable of receiving **στερεα τροφη**, *solid food*; i.e. the more difficult and sublime doctrines. The rabbins abound with this figure; it occurs frequently in *Philo*, and in the Greek ethic writers also. In the famous Arabic poem called [Arabic] *al Bordah*, written by Abi Abdallah Mohammed ben Said ben Hamad Albusiree, in praise of Mohammed and his religion, every couplet of which ends with the letter [Arabic] mim, the first letter in Mohammed's name, we meet with a couplet that contains a similar sentiment to that of the apostle:—

[Arabic]

[Arabic]

“The soul is like to a young infant, which, if permitted, will grow up to manhood in the love of sucking; but if thou take it from the breast it will feel itself weaned.”

Dr. Owen observes that there are two Sorts of hearers of the Gospel, which are here expressed by an elegant metaphor or similitude; this consists, 1. In the *conformity* that is between bodily food and the Gospel as preached. 2. In the *variety* of natural food as suited to the various states of them that feed on it, answered by the truths of the Gospel, which are of *various kinds*; and, in exemplification of this metaphor, natural food is reduced to two kinds: 1. *milk*; 2. *strong* or *solid meat*; and those who feed on these are reduced to two sorts: 1. *children*; 2. *men of ripe age*. Both of which are applied to hearers of the Gospel.

1. Some there are who are **νηπιοι**, *babes* or *infants*, and some are **τελειοι**, *perfect* or *full grown*.

2. These babes are described by a double properly:

1. They are dull of hearing;
2. They are unskilful in the word of righteousness.

In opposition to this, those who are *spiritually adult* are,

1. They who are *capable of instruction*.
2. Such as *have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil*.
3. The different means to be applied to these different sorts for their good, according to their respective conditions, are expressed in the terms of the metaphor: to the first, **γαλα**, *milk*; to the others, **στεοεα τροφη**, *strong meat*. All these are compromised in the following scheme:—

The hearers of the Gospel are,

I. **νηπιοι**. BABES or INFANTS.

Who are

1. **Νωθοι ταις ακοαις**. *Dull of hearing*.
2. **Απειροι λογου δικαιοσυνης**. *Inexperienced in the doctrine of righteousness*.

These have need

**Γαλακτος**. Of *milk*.

II. **τελειοι**. PERFECT or ADULT

Who are

1. **Φρονιμοι**. *Wise and prudent*.
2. **Τα αισθητηρια γεγυμνασμενα εχοντες**. *And have their senses properly exercised*.

These have need

**Στερεας τροφης**. Of *solid food*.

But all these are to derive their nourishment or spiritual instruction **εκ των λογιων του θεου**, *from the oracles of God*. The word *oracle*, by which we translate the **λογιον** of the apostle, is used by the best Greek writers to signify a *divine speech*, or *answer of a deity to a question proposed*. It always implied a *speech* or *declaration* purely *celestial*, in which man had no part; and it is thus used wherever it occurs in the New Testament. 1. It signifies the LAW received from God by Moses, ~~4073~~ **Acts 7:38**.

2. The *Old Testament* in general; the holy men of old having spoken by the *inspiration* of the Divine Spirit, <sup><STR></sup>**Romans 3:2**, and in the text under consideration.

3. It signifies *Divine revelation* in general, because all delivered immediately from God, <sup><STR></sup>**1 Thessalonians 2:13**; <sup><STR></sup>**1 Peter 4:11**. When we consider what respect was paid by the heathens to their oracles, which were supposed to be delivered by those gods who were the objects of their adoration, but which were only *impostures*, we may then learn what respect is due to the *true oracles* of God.

Among the heathens the credit of oracles was so great, that in all doubts and disputes their determinations were held sacred and inviolable; whence vast numbers flocked to them for advice in the management of their affairs, and no business of any importance was undertaken, scarcely any war waged or peace concluded, any new form of government instituted or new laws enacted, without the advice and approbation of the oracle. *Cræsus*, before he durst venture to declare war against the Persians, consulted not only the most famous oracles of Greece, but sent ambassadors as far as Libya, to ask advice of Jupiter Ammon. *Minos*, the Athenian lawgiver, professed to receive instructions from Jupiter how to model his intended government; and *Lycurgus*, legislator of Sparta, made frequent visits to the Delphian Apollo, and received from him the platform of the Lacedemonian commonwealth. See *Broughton*.

What a reproach to Christians, who hold the Bible to be a collection of the oracles of God, and who not only do not consult it in the momentous concerns of either this or the future life, but go in direct opposition to it! Were every thing conducted according to these oracles, we should have neither war nor desolation in the earth; families would be well governed, and individuals universally made happy.

Those who consulted the ancient oracles were obliged to go to enormous expenses, both in *sacrifices* and in *presents* to the *priests*. And when they had done so, they received oracles which were so *equivocal*, that, howsoever the event fell out, they were capable of being interpreted *that way*.

**Verse 13.** For every one that useth milk] It is very likely that the apostle, by using this term, refers to the *doctrines of the law*, which were only the

*rudiments* of religion, and were intended to lead us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

**The word of righteousness]** **αογος δικαιοσυνης.** *The doctrine of justification.* I believe this to be the apostle's meaning. He that uses *milk*-rests in the ceremonies and observances of the law, *is unskilful in the doctrine of justification*; for this requires faith in the sacrificial death of the promised Messiah.

**Verse 14. But strong meat]** The high and sublime doctrines of Christianity; the atonement, justification by faith, the gift of the Holy Ghost, the fulness of Christ dwelling in the souls of men, triumph in and over death, the resurrection of the body, the glorification of both body and soul in the realms of blessedness, and an endless union with Christ in the throne of his glory. This is the *strong food* which the genuine Christian understands, receives, digests, and by which he grows.

**By reason of use]** Who, by constant hearing, believing, praying, and obedience, *use* all the graces of God's Spirit; and, in the faithful use of them, find every one improved, so that they daily grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Have their senses exercised]** The word **αισθητηρια** signifies the different organs of sense, as the *eyes, ears, tongue, and palate, nose, and finger ends*, and the nervous surface in general, through which we gain the sensations called *seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and feeling*. These organs of sense, being *frequently* exercised or employed on a variety of subjects, acquire the power to discern the various objects of sense: viz. all objects of *light*; difference of *sounds*; of *tastes or savours*; of *odours* or *smelling*; and of hard, soft, wet, dry, cold, hot, rough, smooth, and all other *tangible* qualities.

There is something in the soul that answers to all these senses in the body. And as universal *nature* presents to the other senses their different and appropriate *objects*, so *religion* presents to these interior senses the objects which are suited to them. Hence in Scripture we are said, even in spiritual things, to *see, hear, taste, smell, and touch* or *feel*. These are the means by which the soul is rendered comfortable, and through which it derives its happiness and perfection.

In the *adult Christian* these senses are said to be **γεγυμνασμενα**, *exercised*, a metaphor taken from the *athletæ* or *contenders* in the Grecian games, who were wont to employ all their powers, skill, and agility in mock fights, running, wrestling, &c., that they might be the better prepared for the actual contests when they took place. So these employ and improve all their powers, and in using grace get more grace; and thus, being able to discern good from evil, they are in little danger of being imposed on by false doctrine, or by the pretensions of hypocrites; or of being deceived by the subtleties of Satan. They feel that their security depends, under God, on this exercise-on the proper use which they make of the grace already given them by God. Can any reader be so dull as not to understand this?

## HEBREWS

### CHAPTER 6.

*We must proceed from the first principles of the doctrine of Christ unto perfection, and not lay the foundation a second time, 1-3. Those who were once enlightened, and have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost and the various blessings of the Gospel, if they apostatize from Christ, and finally reject him as their Saviour, cannot be renewed again to repentance, 4-6. The double similitude of the ground blessed of God, and bearing fruit; and of that ground which is cursed of God, and bears briers and thorns, 7, 8. The apostle's confidence in them, and his exhortation to diligence and perseverance, 9-12. God's promise and oath to Abraham, by which the immutability of his counsel is shown, in order to excite our hope, 13-18. Hope is the anchor of the soul, and enters within the veil, 19, 20.*

#### NOTES ON CHAP. 6.

**Verse 1. Therefore]** Because ye have been so indolent, *slow of heart*, and have still so many advantages.

**Leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ]** Ceasing to continue in the state of *babes*, who must be fed with *milk*-with the *lowest* doctrines of the Gospel, when ye should be capable of understanding the highest.

**Let us go on unto perfection]** 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.

The words τον της αρχης. του χριστου λογον might be translated, *The discourse of the beginning of Christ*, as in the *margin*; that is, the account of his *incarnation*, and the different types and ceremonies in the law by which his advent, nature, office, and miracles were pointed out. The whole law of Moses pointed out *Christ*, as may be seen at large in my comment on the Pentateuch; and therefore the words of the apostle may be understood thus: Leave the *law*, and come to the *Gospel*. Cease from *Moses*, and come to the *Messiah*.

*Let us go on unto perfection.*-The original is very emphatic: **επι την τελειότητα φερωμεθα**. *Let us be carried on to this perfection*. God is ever ready by the power of his Spirit, to *carry us forward* to every degree of light, life, and love, necessary to prepare us for an eternal weight of glory. There can be little difficulty in attaining the *end* of our faith, the salvation of our souls from all sin, if God *carry us forward* to it; and this he will do if we submit to be saved in his own way, and on his own terms. Many make a violent outcry against the doctrine of *perfection*, i.e. against the heart being cleansed from all sin in this life, and filled with love to God and man, because *they* judge it to be impossible! Is it too much to say of these that *they know neither the Scripture nor the power of God*? Surely the *Scripture* promises the thing; and the *power* of God can *carry us* on to the possession of it.

**Laying again the foundation of repentance]** The phrase **νεκρα εργα**, *dead works*, occurs but once more in the sacred writings, and that is in <sup><80914></sup>**Hebrews 9:14** of this epistle; and in both places it seems to signify *such works as deserve death*-works of those who were *dead in trespasses, and dead in sins*; and *dead by sentence of the law*, because they had by these works broken the law. Repentance may be properly called the *foundation* of the work of God in the soul of man, because by it we forsake sin, and turn to God to find mercy.

**Faith toward God]** Is also a *foundation*, or fundamental principle, without which it is impossible to please God, and without which we cannot be saved. By *repentance* we *feel* the need of God's mercy, by *faith* we *find* that mercy.

But it is very likely that the apostle refers here to the *Levitical law*, which, in its painful observances, and awful denunciations of Divine wrath against every breach of that law, was well calculated to produce repentance, and make it a grievous and bitter thing to sin against God. And as to *faith in God*, that was essentially necessary, in order to see the *end* of the commandment; for without faith in him who was to come, all that *repentance* was unavailable, and all ritual observances without profit.

**Verse 2. Of the doctrine of baptisms]** "There were two things," says Dr. Owen, "peculiar to the Gospel, the *doctrine* of it and the *gifts of the Holy Ghost*. Doctrine is called *baptism*, <sup><65312></sup>**Deuteronomy 32:2**; hence the people are said to be *baptized to Moses*, when they were initiated into his *doctrines*, <sup><6102></sup>**1 Corinthians 10:2**. The *baptism* of John was his *doctrine*,

<419B> **Acts 19:3**; and the *baptism of Christ* was the *doctrine of Christ*, wherewith he was to *sprinkle many nations*, <28215> **Isaiah 52:15**. This is the *first* baptism of the Gospel, even its *doctrine*. The *other* was the communication of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, <4005> **Acts 1:5**; and this alone is what is intended by the *laying on of hands*; and then the sense will be the foundation of the Gospel baptisms, namely *preaching* and the *gifts of the Holy Ghost*.”

I am afraid, with all this great man’s learning, he has not hit the meaning of the apostle. As *teaching* is the means by which we are to obtain the gifts of the Holy Ghost, surely the apostle never designed to separate them, but to lead men immediately through the one to the possession of the other. Nor is the word *baptism* mentioned in the passage in Deuteronomy which he quotes; nor, indeed, any word properly synonymous. Neither βαπτισμος, *baptism*, ραντισμος, *sprinkling*, nor any verb formed from them, is found in the *Septuagint*, in that place. But the other proofs are sufficiently in point, viz. that by *baptism* in the other places referred to, *doctrine* or TEACHING is meant; but to call TEACHING *one baptism*, and the *gifts* of THE HOLY GHOST *another baptism*, and to apply this to the explanation of the difficulty here, is very far from being satisfactory.

I am inclined to think that all the terms in *this verse*, as well as those in the *former*, belong to the *Levitical law*, and are to be explained on that ground.

*Baptisms*, or *immersions* of the body in water, *sprinklings*, and *washings*, were frequent as religious rites among the Hebrews, and were all emblematical of that purity which a holy God requires in his worshippers, and without which they cannot be happy here, nor glorified in heaven.

**Laying on of hands**] Was also frequent, especially in *sacrifices*: the person bringing the victim laid his hands on its head, confessed his sins over it, and then gave it to the priest to be offered to God, that it might make atonement for his transgressions. This also had respect to Jesus Christ, that *Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world*.

The doctrine also of the *resurrection* of the *dead* and of *eternal judgment*, were both Jewish, but were only partially revealed, and then referred to the *Gospel*. Of the *resurrection of the dead* there is a fine proof in <23619> **Isaiah 26:19**, where it is stated to be the consequence of the *death* and *resurrection* of Christ, for so I understand the words, *Thy dead shall live*;



with my dead body shall they arise: awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead. The valley of dry bones, <sup><2650></sup>**Ezekiel 37:1**, &c., is both an illustration and proof of it. And Daniel has taught both the *resurrection* and the *eternal judgment*, <sup><2710></sup>**Daniel 12:2**: *And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.*

Now the *foundation* of all these doctrines was laid in the Old Testament, and they were variously represented under the law, but they were all referred to the Gospel for their proof and illustration. The apostle, therefore, wishes them to consider the Gospel as holding forth these in their full spirit and power. It preaches, 1. *Repentance*, unto life. 2. *Faith* in God through Christ, by whom we receive the atonement. 3. The *baptism* by water, in the name of the holy Trinity; and the *baptism* of the *Holy Ghost*. 4. The *imposition* of hands, the true sacrificial system; and, by and through it, the communication of the various gifts of the *Holy Spirit*, for the instruction of mankind, and the edification of the Church. 5. The *resurrection* of the *dead*, which is both proved and illustrated by the resurrection of Christ. 6. The doctrine of the *eternal* or *future judgment*, which is to take place at the bar of Christ himself, God having committed all judgment to his Son, called here **κριμα αιωνιον**, *eternal* or *ever during judgment*, because the sentences then pronounced shall be irreversible. Some understand the whole of the *initiation* of persons into the Church, as the candidates for admission were previously *instructed* in those doctrines which contained the *fundamental* principles of Christianity. The Hebrews had already received these; but should they Judaize, or mingle the Gospel with the law, they would thereby exclude themselves from the Christian Church, and should they be ever again admitted, they must come through the same gate, or lay a *second time*, **παλιν**, this foundation. But should they totally *apostatize* from Christ, and finally reject him, then it would be *impossible to renew them again to repentance*—they could no more be received into the Christian Church, nor have any right to any blessing of the Gospel dispensation; and, finally rejecting the Lord who bought them, would bring on themselves and their land swift destruction. See the 4th and following verses, and particularly the notes on verses 8 and 9. “<sup><3068></sup>**Hebrews 6:8-9**”

**Verse 3. And this will we do]** God being my helper, I will teach you all the sublime truths of the Gospel; and show you how all its excellences were typified by the law, and particularly by its sacrificial system.

**Verse 4. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened]** Before I proceed to explain the different terms in these verses, it is necessary to give my opinion of their design and meaning: 1. I do not consider them as having any reference to any person *professing Christianity*. 2. They do not belong, nor are they applicable, to *backsliders* of any kind. 3. They belong to *apostates* from Christianity; to such as reject the whole *Christian system*, and its *author*, the Lord Jesus. 4. And to those of them only who join with the blaspheming Jews, call Christ an impostor, and vindicate his murderers in having crucified him as a malefactor; and thus they render their salvation impossible, by *wilfully* and *maliciously* rejecting the Lord that bought them. No man *believing in the Lord Jesus* as the great sacrifice for sin, and acknowledging *Christianity* as a *Divine revelation*, is here intended, though he may have unfortunately *backslidden* from any degree of the salvation of God.

The design of these solemn words is evidently, *First*, to show the Hebrews that apostasy from the highest degrees of grace was possible; and that those who were highest in the favour of God might sin against him, lose it, and perish everlastingly. *Secondly*, to warn them against such an awful state of perdition, that they might not be led away, by either the persuasions or persecutions of their countrymen, from the truth of the heavenly doctrine which had been delivered to them. And, *Thirdly*, to point out the destruction which was shortly to come upon the Jewish nation.

*Once enlightened-Thoroughly instructed* in the nature and design of the Christian religion, having received the knowledge of the truth, ~~810C~~ **Hebrews 10:32**; and being convinced of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and led to Jesus the Saviour of sinners.

**Tasted of the heavenly gift]** Having received *the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins*, through the Day Spring which from on high had visited them; such having received *Christ, the heavenly gift* of God's infinite love, ~~810B~~ **John 3:16**; the *living bread that came down from heaven*, ~~810A~~ **John 6:51**; and thus *tasting that the Lord is gracious*; ~~810B~~ **1 Peter 2:3**, and witnessing the full effects of the Christian religion.

**Partakers of the Holy Ghost]** The Spirit himself witnessing with their spirits that they were the children of God, and thus assuring them of God's mercy towards them, and of the efficacy of the atonement through which they had received such blessings.

**Verse 5. And have tasted the good word of God]** Have had this proof of the excellence of the promise of God in sending the Gospel, the Gospel being itself the *good word* of a *good God*, the reading and preaching of which they find sweet to the taste of their souls. Genuine believers have an *appetite* for the word of God; they *taste* it, and then their *relish* for it is the more abundantly increased. The more they get, the more they wish to have.

**The powers of the world to come]** **δυναμεις τε μελλοντος αιωνος.** These words are understood two ways: 1. *The powers of the world to come* may refer to the stupendous *miracles* wrought in confirmation of the Gospel, the Gospel dispensation being *the world to come* in the Jewish phraseology, as we have often seen; and that **δυναμις** is often taken for a *mighty work* or *miracle*, is plain from various parts of the gospels. The prophets had declared that the Messiah, when he came, should work many miracles, and should be as mighty in word and deed as was *Moses*; see **Deuteronomy 18:15-19**. And they particularly specify the giving *sight* to the *blind*, *hearing* to the *deaf*, *strength* to the *lame*, and *speech* to the *dumb*; **Isaiah 35:5, 6**. All these miracles Jesus Christ did in the sight of this very people; and thus they had the highest evidence they could have that Jesus was this promised Messiah, and could have no pretence to *doubt* his mission, or apostatize from the Christian faith which they had received; and hence it is no wonder that the apostle denounces the most awful judgments of God against those who had apostatized from the faith, which they had seen thus confirmed.

2. The words have been supposed to apply to those *communications* and *foretastes* of *eternal blessedness*, or of the *joys of the world to come*, which they who are justified through the blood of the covenant, and walk faithfully with their God, experience; and to this sense the word **γευσσαμενους** *have tasted*, is thought more properly to apply. But **γενομαι**, *to taste*, signifies *to experience* or *have full proof* of a thing. Thus, *to taste death*, **Matthew 16:28**, is *to die*, to come under the *power of death*, fully to *experience* its destructive nature as far as the body is concerned. See also **Luke 9:27**; **John 8:52**. And it is used in the same sense in **Hebrews 2:9** of this epistle, where Christ is said to *taste*

*death for every man*; for notwithstanding the *metaphor*, which the reader will see explained in the note on the above place, the word necessarily means that he did *actually die*, that he *fully experienced death*; and had the fullest proof of it and of its malignity he could have, independently of the corruption of his flesh; for over this death could have no power. And to *taste that the Lord is gracious*, ~~◀◀◀~~ **1 Peter 2:3**, is to experience God's graciousness thoroughly, in being made *living stones, built up into a spiritual house*, constituted *holy priests to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God*; see ~~◀◀◀~~ **1 Peter 2:5**. And in this sense it is used by the purest Greek writers. See several examples in *Schleusner*.

It seems, therefore, that the first opinion is the best founded.

**Verse 6. If they shall fall away] και παραπεσοντας** *And having fallen away*. I can express my own mind on this translation nearly in the words of Dr. Macknight: "The participles **φωτισθεντας**, *who were enlightened*, **γευσαμενους**, *have tasted*, and **γενηθεντας**, *were made partakers*, being *aorists*, are properly rendered by our translators in the *past time*; wherefore, **παραπεσοντας**, being an *aorist*, ought likewise to have been translated in the *past time*, *HAVE fallen away*. Nevertheless, our translators, following *Beza*, who without any authority from ancient MSS. has inserted in his version the word *si, if*, have rendered this clause, *IF they fall away*, that this text might not appear to contradict the doctrine of the *perseverance of the saints*. But as no translator should take upon him to add to or alter the Scriptures, for the sake of any favourite doctrine, I have translated **παραπεσοντας** in the *past time*, *have fallen away*, according to the true import of the word, as standing in connection with the other *aorists* in the preceding verses."

Dr. Macknight was a Calvinist, and he was a thorough scholar and an honest man; but, professing to give a *translation of the epistle*, he consulted not his creed but his candour. Had our translators, who were excellent and learned men, leaned less to their own peculiar creed in the present authorized version, the Church of Christ in this country would not have been agitated and torn as it has been with polemical divinity.

It appears from this, whatever sentiment may gain or lose by it, that there is a fearful possibility of *falling away from the grace of God*; and if this scripture did not say so, there are many that do say so. And were there no scripture express on this subject, the nature of the present state of man,

which is a state of *probation* or *trial*, must necessarily imply it. Let him who most assuredly standeth, take heed lest he fall.

**To renew them again unto repentance]** As *repentance* is the *first* step that a sinner must take in order to return to God, and as sorrow for sin must be useless in itself unless there be a proper sacrificial offering, these having rejected the only available sacrifice, their repentance for sin, had they any, would be nugatory, and their salvation impossible on this simple account; and this is the very reason which the apostle immediately subjoins:—

**Seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God]** They reject him on the ground that he was an impostor, and *justly* put to death. And thus they are said to *crucify him to themselves*-to do that in their present apostasy which the Jews did; and they show thereby that, had they been present when he was crucified, they would have joined with his murderers.

**And put him to an open shame.]** παραδειγματιζοντας. *And have made him a public example; or, crucifying unto themselves and making the Son of God a public example.* That is, they show openly that they judge Jesus Christ to have been worthy of the death which he suffered, and was justly made a public example by being crucified. This shows that it is *final apostasy*, by the total rejection of the Gospel, and blasphemy of the Saviour of men, that the apostle has in view. **See the note on “~~300~~ Hebrews 6:4”.**

**Verse 7. For the earth which drinketh in the rain]** As much as if he had said: In giving up such apostates as utterly incurable, we act as men do in cultivating their fields; for as the ground, which drinketh in the rain by which the providence of God waters it, brings forth fruit to compensate the toil of the tiller, and continues to be cultivated, God granting his blessing to the labours of the husbandman; so,

**Verse 8. That which beareth thorns and briers is rejected]** That is: The land which, notwithstanding the most careful cultivation, receiving also in due times the early and latter rain, produces nothing but thorns and briers, or noxious weeds of different kinds, is rejected, αδοκιμος, is given up as unimprovable; *its briers, thorns, and brushwood burnt down;* and then *left to be pastured on by the beasts of the field.* This seems to be the custom in *husbandry* to which the apostle alludes. The nature of the case prevents us from supposing that he alludes to the custom of *pushing and burning*, in

order to farther *fertilization*. This practice has been common from very early times:-

*Sæpe etiam steriles incendere profuit agros;  
Atque levem stipulam crepitantibus urere flammis.  
VIRG. Geor. i., v. 84.*

*Long practice has a sure improvement found,  
With kindled fires to burn the barren ground;  
When the light stubble to the flames resign'd,  
Is driven along, and crackles in the wind.  
DRYDEN.*

But this, I say the circumstances of the case prevent us from supposing to be intended.

Is **nigh unto cursing**] It is acknowledged, almost on all hands, that this epistle was written *before* the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. This verse is in my opinion a proof of it, and here I suppose the apostle refers to that *approaching destruction*; and perhaps he has this all along in view, but speaks of it *covertly*, that he might not give offence.

There is a *good sense* in which all these things may be applied to the Jews at large, who were favoured by our Lord's ministry and miracles. They were *enlightened* by his preaching; *tasted* of the benefits of the *heavenly gift*-the Christian religion established among them; saw many of their children and relatives *made partakers of the Holy Ghost*; *tasted the good word of God*, by the fulfilment of the promise made to Abraham; and saw the almighty *power* of God exerted, in working a great variety of *miracles*. Yet, after being convinced that never man spake as this man, and that none could do those miracles which he did, except God were with him; after having followed him in thousands, for three years, while he preached to them the Gospel of the kingdom of God; they *fell away* from all this, crucified him who, even in his sufferings as well as his resurrection, was demonstrated by miracles to be the Son of God; and then to vindicate their unparalleled wickedness, endeavoured to make him a *public example*, by reproaches and blasphemies. Therefore their state, which had received much moral cultivation from Moses, the prophets, Christ, and his apostles; and now bore nothing but the most vicious fruits, pride, unbelief, hardness of heart, contempt of God's word and ordinances, blasphemy, and rebellion; was *rejected*-reprobated, of God; was *nigh unto cursing*-about to be cast off from the Divine protection; and their city and temple were

shortly to be *burnt up* by the Roman armies. Thus the apostle, under the case of *individuals*, points out the destruction that was to come upon this people *in general*, and which actually took place about *seven* years after the writing of this epistle! And this appears to be the very subject which the apostle has in view in the parallel solemn passages, <sup><31025></sup> **Hebrews 10:26-31**; and, viewed in this light, much of their obscurity and difficulty vanishes away.

**Verse 9. But, beloved]** Here he softens what he had before said; having given them the most solemn warning against apostasy, he now encourages them to persevere, commends the good that is in them, and excites them to watchfulness and activity.

**Better things of you]** Than that you shall resemble that *unfruitful ground* that can be improved by no tillage, and is thrown into *waste*, and is fit only for the beasts of the forests to roam in.

**Things that accompany salvation]** τα εχομενα σωτηριας. *Things that are suitable to a state of salvation*; you give proofs still that you have not, whatever others have done, *departed from the living God*. Several of your brethren have already apostatized, and the whole nation is in a state of rebellion against God; and, in consequence of their final rejection of Christ and his Gospel, are about to be finally rejected by God. *They* must meet with *destruction*; *they* have *the things that are suitable to, and indicative of, a state of reprobation*; the wrath of God will come upon them to the *utmost*; but, while *they* meet with *destruction*, *you* shall meet with *salvation*. It is worthy of remark, that no *genuine Christian* perished in the destruction of Jerusalem; they all, previously to the siege by Titus, escaped to *Pella*, in *Cœlosyria*; and it is as remarkable that not one *Jew* escaped! all either fell by the *sword*, perished by *famine*, or were led into *captivity*! According to their own imprecation, *His blood be upon us and our children*, God visited and avenged the innocent blood of Christ upon them and upon their posterity; and they continue to be monuments of his displeasure to the present day.

**Verse 10. God is not unrighteous]** God is only *bound* to men by his own *promise*: this promise he is not obliged to make; but, when once made, his *righteousness* or *justice* requires him to keep it; therefore, whatever he has promised he will certainly perform. But he has promised to reward every good work and *labour of love*, and he will surely reward yours; God's *promise* is God's *debt*.

Every good work must spring from *faith* in the *name*, being, and goodness of God; and every work that is truly good must have *love* for its *motive*, as it has God for its *end*.

The word **του κοπου**, *labour*, prefixed to *love*, is wanting in almost every MS. and version of importance. Griesbach has left it out of the text.

**Ministered to the saints]** Have contributed to the support and comfort of the poor *Christians* who were suffering persecution in Judea. As they *had* thus ministered, and were *still* ministering, they gave full proof that they had a common cause with the others; and this was one of the *things* that proved them to be in a *state of salvation*.

**Verse 11. We desire]** **επιθυμουμεν**, We *earnestly wish*, that each person among you may continue **ενδεικνυσθαι**, to *manifest, exhibit to full view*, the same diligence. There might be reason to suspect that some, through *fear of man*, might not wish the good they did to be *seen*, lest they also should suffer persecution. This would not comport with the generous, noble spirit of the Gospel; the man who is afraid to let his decided attachment to God be known, is not far from backsliding. He who is more afraid of *man* than he is of *God Almighty*, can have very little religion. As the Church of Christ required all those who in these times embraced the Gospel to be publicly baptized, those who submitted to this rite gave full proof that they were thoroughly convinced of the truths of Christianity; and they gave this as a *public pledge* that they would be faithful.

**The same diligence]** They had an *active faith* and a *labouring love*, and the apostle wishes them to persevere in both. They were diligent, very diligent, and he desires them to continue so.

To the full assurance of hope, **προς την πληροφοριαν της ελπιδος**. “The *full assurance of faith*,” says Mr. Wesley, “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. So much as *faith* every moment *beholds* with *open face*, so much, and no more, does *hope see* to all eternity. But this assurance of faith and hope is not an opinion, not a bare construction of Scripture, but is given immediately by the power of the Holy Ghost, and what none can have for another, but for himself only.”



We must not misapprehend these excellent sayings of this eminent man. 1. The person who has this *full assurance of hope* is he who not only *knows* and *feels* that *his sins are forgiven* through Christ Jesus, but also that his *heart is purified from all unrighteousness*, that the whole body of sin and death is destroyed, and that he is fully made a partaker of the Divine nature. As without holiness, complete, entire holiness, no man can see God: so, without this, none can scripturally or rationally *hope* for eternal glory; it being a contradiction to profess to have the full assurance of hope to enjoy a state and place for which the soul is conscious it is *not* prepared. 2. All that is said here must be understood as still implying the absolute necessity of *continuing in the same degree* of grace from which this full assurance of hope is derived. This full assurance, therefore, does not imply that the man *will absolutely persevere* to the end; but that, if he do persevere in this same grace, he shall infallibly have an eternal glory. There is no unconditional perseverance in the Scripture, nor can there be such in a state of *probation*.

**Verse 12. That ye be not slothful]** This shows how the full assurance of hope is to be regulated and maintained. They must be *diligent*; slothfulness will deprive them both of hope and faith. That faith which worketh by love will maintain hope in its full and due exercise.

**Followers of them]** μιμηται δε----κληρονομουτων τας επαγγελιας. *That ye be mimics or imitators of them who are inheriting the promises.* And they inherited these promises by faith in him who is invisible, and who, they knew, could not lie; and they patiently endured, through difficulties and adversities of every kind, and persevered unto death. “The promises made to Abraham and to his seed were, 1. That Abraham should have a numerous seed by faith as well as by natural descent. 2. That God would be a God to him and to his seed in their generations, by being the object of their worship and their protector. 3. That he would give them the possession of Canaan. 4. That he would bless all the nations of the earth in him. 5. That he would thus bless the nations through Christ, Abraham’s seed. 6. That through Christ, likewise, he would bless the nations with the Gospel revelation. Four of these promises the believing Gentiles were inheriting at the time the apostle wrote this letter. 1. They were become Abraham’s seed by faith. 2. God was become the object of their worship and their protector. 3. They were enjoying the knowledge of God in the Gospel Church, and the gifts of the Spirit. Gal. 3: 4. All these blessings were bestowed upon them through Christ. By observing that the believing

Gentiles were actually inheriting the promises; i.e. the four promised blessings above mentioned, the apostle appealed to an undeniable fact, in proof that the believing Gentiles, equally with the believing Jews, were heirs of the promises made to Abraham and his seed.” See Dr. *Macknight*. The *promises* may be considered as referring to the *rest of faith* here, and the *rest of glory* hereafter.

**Verse 13. When God made promise to Abraham]** The promise referred to is that made to Abraham when he had offered his son Isaac on the altar, <sup><01216></sup>**Genesis 22:16-18:** “By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord; for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thy only son; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” Of this promise the apostle only quotes a part, as is generally the case, because he knew that his readers were well acquainted with the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and particularly with the law.

**He swore by himself]** He pledged his eternal power and Godhead for the fulfilment of the promise; there was no being superior to himself to whom he could make appeal, or by whom he could be bound, therefore he appeals to and pledges his immutable truth and Godhead.

**Verse 14. Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee]** I will continue to bless thee.

**Multiplying I will multiply thee.]** I will continue to increase thy posterity. In the most literal manner God continues to fulfil this promise; genuine Christians are Abraham’s seed, and God is increasing their number daily. See the notes on <sup><012212></sup>**Genesis 22:12-18;** and <sup><012201></sup>**Genesis 23:1.**

**Verse 15. He obtained the promise.]** Isaac was supernaturally born; and in his birth God began to fulfil the promise: while he lived, he saw a provision made for the multiplication of his seed; and, having continued steadfast in the faith, he received the *end* of all the promises in the enjoyment of an eternal glory. And the inference from this is: If we believe and prove faithful unto death, we shall also inherit the promises; and this is what is implied in the apostle’s exhortation, <sup><01612></sup>**Hebrews 6:12:** *Be not slothful, but followers of them, &c.*

**Verse 16. Men verily swear by the greater]** One who has greater authority; who can take cognizance of the obligation, and punish the breach of it.

**An oath for confirmation]** “This observation teaches us,” says Dr. Macknight, “that both promissory oaths concerning things lawful and in our power, and oaths for the confirmation of things doubtful, when required by proper authority, and taken religiously, are allowable under the Gospel.”

**Verse 17. The heirs of promise]** All the believing posterity of Abraham, and the nations of the earth or Gentiles in general.

**The immutability of his counsel]** His unchangeable purpose, to call the Gentiles to salvation by Jesus Christ; to justify every penitent by faith; to accept faith in Christ for justification in place of personal righteousness; and finally to bring every persevering believer, whether Jew or Gentile, to eternal glory.

**Verse 18. That by two immutable things]** The *promise* and *oath* of God: the *promise* pledged his faithfulness and justice; the *oath*, all the infinite perfections of his Godhead, for he swore by himself. There is a good saying in *Beracoth* on <sup>(12213)</sup> **Exodus 32:13**, fol. 32: *Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self.* “What is the meaning of *by thine own self*? Rab. Eleazar answered, Thus said Moses to the holy blessed God, Lord of all the world. If thou hadst sworn to them by the heavens and the earth, then I should have said, As the heavens and the earth shall pass away, so may thy oath pass away. But now thou hast sworn unto them by thy great name, which liveth, and which endureth for ever, and for ever and ever; therefore thy oath shall endure for ever, and for ever and ever.”

This is a good thought; if God had sworn by any thing finite, that thing might fail, and then the obligation would be at an end, but he has sworn by what is infinite, and cannot fail; therefore his oath is of eternal obligation.

**We might have a strong consolation]** There appears to be an allusion here to the cities of refuge, and to the persons who fled to them for safety. As the person who killed his neighbour unawares was sure if he gained the city of refuge he should be safe, and had strong consolation in the hope that he should reach it, this hope animated him in his race to the city; he

ran, he fled, knowing that, though in danger the most imminent of losing his life, yet, as he was now acting according to an ordinance of God, he was certain of safety provided he got to the place.

It is easy to apply this to the case of a truly penitent sinner. Thou hast sinned against God and against thy own life! The avenger of blood is at thy heels! Jesus hath 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! God hath sworn that he willeth not the death of a sinner; then he cannot will *thy* death: take God's *oath*, take his *promise*; credit what he hath spoken and sworn! Take encouragement! Believe on the Son of God, and thou shalt not perish, but have everlasting life!

**Verse 19. Which hope we have as an anchor]** The apostle here changes the allusion; he represents the state of the followers of God in this lower world as resembling that of a vessel striving to perform her voyage through a troublesome, tempestuous, dangerous sea. At last she gets near the port; but the tempest continues, the water is shallow, broken, and dangerous, and she cannot get in: in order to prevent her being driven to sea again she heaves out her sheet anchor, which she has been able to get within the pier head by means of her boat, though she could not herself get in; then, swinging at the length of her cable, she rides out the storm in confidence, knowing that her anchor is sound, the ground good in which it is fastened, and the cable strong. Though agitated, she is safe; though buffeted by wind and tide, she does not drive; by and by the storm ceases, the tide flows in, her sailors take to the capstan, wear the ship against the anchor, which still keeps its bite or hold, and she gets safely into port. **See on “~~Stob.~~ Hebrews 6:20”.**

The comparison of *hope* to an *anchor* is frequent among the ancient heathen writers, who supposed it to be as necessary to the support of a man in adversity, as the anchor is to the safety of the ship when about to be driven on a lee shore by a storm. “To ground *hope* on a false supposition,” says *Socrates*, “is like trusting to a weak *anchor*.” He said farther, **ουτε ναυν εξ ενος ακυριου, ουτε βιον εκ μιας ελπιδος ορμιστεον.** a ship ought not to trust to one *anchor*, nor life to one *hope*. *Stob.*, Serm. 109.

The *hope of eternal life* is here represented as the soul's anchor; the *world* is the *boisterous, dangerous sea*; the *Christian course*, the *voyage*; the *port*, everlasting *felicity*; and the *veil* or *inner road*, the *royal dock* in which that anchor was cast. The storms of life continue but a short time; the anchor, hope, if fixed by faith in the eternal world, will infallibly prevent all shipwreck; the soul may be strongly tossed by various temptations, but will not drive, because the anchor is in *sure ground*, and itself is *steadfast*; it does not *drag*, and it does not *break*; *faith*, like the *cable*, is the *connecting medium* between the *ship* and the *anchor*, or the *soul* and its *hope of heaven*; faith sees the haven, hope desires and anticipates the rest; faith works, and hope holds fast; and, shortly, the soul enters into the haven of eternal repose.

**Verse 20. Whither the forerunner]** The word **προδρομος**, *prodromos*, does not merely signify one that *goes* or *runs before* another, but also one who *shows the way*, *he who first does a particular thing*; also the *first fruits*. So in the *Septuagint*, <sup><2304></sup>**Isaiah 28:4**, **προδρομος συκου** signifies the *first fruits of the fig tree*, or the *first ripe figs*.

To this meaning of the word *Pliny* refers, *Hist. Nat.*, lib. xvi., c. 26: *Ficus et præcoces habet, quas Athenis PRODROMOS (προδρομος,) vocant.* “The fig tree produces some figs which are ripe before the rest, and these are called by the Athenians *prodromos*, forerunner.” The word is interpreted in the same way by *Hesychius*; it occurs in no other part of the *New Testament*, but may be found in **Ecclus. 12:8**, and in <sup><2304></sup>**Isaiah 28:4**, quoted above from the *Septuagint*. From this we may at once perceive the meaning of the phrase: Jesus is the *first fruits* of human nature that has entered into the heavenly kingdom; the first human body that was ripe for glory, and ripe long before the rest of the children who are partakers of flesh and blood. And he is entered *for us*, as the first fruits of all who have found redemption in his blood. Compare <sup><3142></sup>**John 14:2**; <sup><6152></sup>**1 Corinthians 15:20, 23**; and the notes there.

The metaphorical allusion is to the person who carries the anchor within the pier head, because there is not yet water sufficient to carry the ship in; and to this I have already referred.

**After the order of Melchisedec.]** After a long digression the apostle resumes his explanation of <sup><3904></sup>**Psalm 110:4**, which he had produced, <sup><3806></sup>**Hebrews 5:6, 10**, in order to prove the permanency of the high priesthood of Christ.

1. WE have in this chapter a very solemn warning against *backsliding* and *apostasy*, and that *negligence* and *sloth* which are their forerunners. A man cannot be careless about God and heaven, till he has lost his relish for sacred things; and this relish he cannot lose while he is diligent and faithful. The slightest departure from *truth* and *purity* may ultimately lead to a denying, and even reviling, of the Lord who bought him.

2. Every obedient believer in Christ Jesus has both the oath and promise of God that he will make all grace abound towards him, for in blessing God will bless him; he may be greatly agitated and distressed, but, while he continues in the obedience of faith, he will ride out the storm. His anchor is within the veil while his heart is right with God. Jesus is gone before to prepare a place for him; and where the first fruits are, there will soon be the whole lump. He who perseveres unto death shall as surely see God as Jesus Christ now does. God's oath and promise cannot fail.

## HEBREWS

### CHAPTER 7.

*Concerning the greatness of Melchisedec, after whose order Christ is a high priest, 1-4. The Levites had authority to take tithes of the people; yet Abraham, their representative, paid tithes to Melchisedec, 5-10. Perfection cannot come by the Mosaic law, else there could be no need for another priest after the order of Melchisedec, according to the prediction of David in Psalm cx., which priest is sprung from a tribe to which the priesthood, according to the law, did not appertain; but Christ is a priest for ever, not according to the law, but after the order of an endless life, 11-17. The law, therefore, is disannulled, because of its unprofitableness and imperfection; and Christ has an unchangeable priesthood, 18-24. He is therefore able always to save them that come unto him, being in every respect a suitable Saviour; and he has offered up himself for the sins of the people, 25-27. The law makes those priests who have infirmity; but he who is consecrated by the oath is perfect, and endures for ever, 28.*

#### NOTES ON CHAP. 7.

**Verse 1. For this Melchisedec, king of Salem]** See the whole of this history largely explained in the notes, See “<sup><-01418></sup>Genesis 14:18”, &c., and the concluding observations at the end of that chapter.

The name Melchisedec, **qdxyl m** is thus expounded in *Bereshith Rabba*, sec. 43, fol. 42, **wybvwy ta qydxm matsdie eth Yoshebaiv**, “The Justifier of those who dwell in him;” and this is sufficiently true of Christ, but false of *Jerusalem*, to which the rabbins apply it, who state that it was originally called *Tsedek*, and that it *justified its inhabitants*.

*Salem* is generally understood to be *Jerusalem*; but some think that it was that city of Shechem mentioned <sup><-0307></sup>**Joshua 20:7**. St. Jerome was of this opinion.

**Verse 2. Gave a tenth part of all]** It was an ancient custom, among all the nations of the earth, to consecrate a part or *tenth* of the spoils taken in war

to the objects of their worship. Many examples of this kind occur. This however was not according to any provision in law, but merely *ad libitum*, and as a eucharistic offering to those to whom they imagined they owed the victory. But neither Abraham's decimation, nor theirs, had any thing to do, either with tithes as *prescribed* under the Mosaic dispensation, or as *claimed* under the Christian.

**Verse 3. Without father, without mother]** The object of the apostle, in thus producing the example of Melchisedec, was to show, 1. That Jesus was the person prophesied of in the 110th Psalm; which psalm the Jews uniformly understood as predicting the Messiah. 2. To answer the objections of the Jews against the legitimacy of the priesthood of Christ, taken from the stock from which he proceeded. The objection is this: If the Messiah is to be a true priest, he must come from a legitimate stock, as all the priests under the law have regularly done; otherwise we cannot acknowledge him to be a priest: but Jesus of Nazareth has not proceeded from such a stock; therefore we cannot acknowledge him for a priest, the antitype of Aaron. To this objection the apostle answers, that it was not necessary for the priest to come from a particular stock, for Melchisedec was a priest of the most high God, and yet was not of the stock, either of Abraham or Aaron, but a Canaanite. It is well known that the ancient Hebrews were exceedingly scrupulous in choosing their high priest; partly by Divine command, and partly from the tradition of their ancestors, who always considered this office to be of the highest dignity. 1. God had commanded. <sup><R210></sup>**Leviticus 21:10**, that the high priest should be chosen from among their brethren, *i.e.* from the family of Aaron; 2. that he should marry a virgin; 3. he must not marry a widow; 4. nor a divorced person; 5. nor a harlot; 6. nor one of another nation. He who was found to have acted contrary to these requisitions was, *jure divino*, excluded from the pontificate. On the contrary, it was necessary that he who desired this honour should be able to prove his descent from the family of Aaron; and if he could not, though even in the priesthood, he was cast out, as we find from <sup><S102></sup>**Ezra 2:62**, and <sup><G76></sup>**Nehemiah 7:63**.

To these Divine ordinances the Jews have added, 1. That no *proselyte* could be a priest; 2. nor a *slave*; 3. nor a *bastard*; 4. nor the *son of a Nethinim*; 5. nor one whose father exercised any *base trade*. And that they might be well assured of all this, they took the utmost care to preserve their genealogies, which were regularly kept in the archives of the temple. When any person aspired to the sacerdotal function, his genealogical table



was carefully inspected; and, if any of the above blemishes were found in him, he was rejected.

He who could not support his pretensions by just genealogical evidences, was said by the Jews to be *without father*. Thus in *Bereshith Rabba*, sect. 18, fol. 18, on these words, *For this cause shall a man leave father and mother*, it is said: If a proselyte to the Jewish religion have married his own sister, whether by the same father or by the same mother, they cast her out according to *Rabbi Meir*. But the wise men say if she be of the *same mother*, they cast her out; but if of the *same father*, they retain her, **ywgl ba nyav shein ab legoi**, “for a Gentile *has no father*,” i.e. his father is not reckoned in the Jewish genealogies. In this way both Christ and Melchisedec were *without father* and *without mother*; i.e. were not descended from the original Jewish sacerdotal stock. Yet Melchisedec, who was a Canaanite, was a priest of the most high God. This sense Suidas confirms under the word Melchisedec, where, after having stated that, having reigned in Salem 113 years, he died a righteous man and a bachelor, **αγενεαλογητος ειριuai, παρα το μη υπαρχειν εκ του σπερματος αβρααμ ολωσ, ειναi δε χαναναιον το γενος, και εκ της επαρατου σπορας ορμωμενον, οθεν ουδε γενεαλογιας ηξιωτο**, he adds, “He is, therefore, said to be *without descent* or *genealogy*, because he was not of the seed of Abraham, but of Canaanitish origin, and sprung from an accursed seed; therefore he is without the honour of a genealogy.” And he farther adds, “That, because it would have been highly improper for him, who was the most righteous of men, to be joined in affinity to the most unrighteous of nations, he is said to be **απατορα και αμητορα**, *without father and without mother*.” This sort of phraseology was not uncommon when the genealogy of a person was unknown or obscure; so Seneca, in his 108th epistle, speaking of some of the Roman kings, says: *Deuteronomy Servii matre dubitatur; Anci pater nullus dicitur*. “Of the mother of Servius Tullus there are doubts; and Ancus Marcus is said to have *no father*.” This only signifies that the parents were either unknown or obscure. Titus Livius, speaking of Servius, says he was born of a slave, named *Cornicularia*, *da patre nullo, of no father*, i.e. his father was *unknown*. Horace is to be understood in the same way:—

*Ante potestatem Tulli, atque ignobile regnum,  
Multos sæpe viros, NULLIS MAJORIBUS ortos,  
Et vixisse probos, amplis et honoribus auctos.  
Serm. l. I. Sat. vi., ver. 9.*

*Convinced that, long before the ignoble reign  
And power of Tullius, from a servile strain  
Full many rose, for virtue high renown'd,  
By worth ennobled, and with honours crown'd.*  
**FRANCIS.**

The *viri nullis majoribus orti*, men sprung from *no ancestors*, means simply men who were born of *obscure* or undistinguished parents; i.e. persons, who had never been famous, nor of any public account.

The old *Syriac* has given the true meaning by translating thus:—

[Syriac]

*Dela abuhi vela, emeh ethcathebu besharbotho.*

Whose father and mother are not inscribed among the genealogies.

The *Arabic* is nearly the same:—

[Arabic]

*He had neither father nor mother; the genealogy not being reckoned.*

The *Æthiopic*: He had neither father nor mother upon earth, nor is his genealogy known.

As this passage has been obscure and troublesome to many, and I have thought it necessary to show the meaning of such phraseology by different examples, I shall, in order to give the reader full information on the subject, add a few observations from Dr. Owen.

“It is said of Melchisedec in the first place that he was **απατωρ, αμητωρ**, *without father and without mother*, whereon part of the latter clause, namely, *without beginning of days*, doth depend. But how could a mortal man come into the world without father or mother? ‘*Man that is born of a woman*’ is the description of every man; what, therefore, can be intended! The next word declares he was **αγενεαλογητος**. ‘*without descent*,’ say we. But **γενεαλογια** is a generation, a descent, a *pedigree*, not absolutely, but *rehearsed, described, recorded*. **γενεαλογητος** is he whose stock and descent is entered on record. And so, on the contrary, **αγενεαλογητος** is not he who has no descent, no genealogy; but he whose descent and pedigree is nowhere entered, recorded,

reckoned up. Thus the apostle himself plainly expresses this word, <sup><8076></sup>**Hebrews 7:6:** ο μη γενεαλογουμενος εξ αυτων, ‘whose descent is not counted;’ that is, reckoned up in record. Thus was Melchisedec without father or mother, in that the Spirit of God, who so strictly and exactly recorded the genealogies of other patriarchs and types of Christ, and that for no less an end than to manifest the truth and faithfulness of God in his promises, speaks nothing to this purpose concerning him. He is introduced as it were one falling from heaven, appearing on a sudden, reigning in Salem, and officiating in the office of priesthood to the high God.

“2. On the same account is he said to be μητε αρχην ημερων, μητε ζωης τελος εχων, ‘without beginning of days or end of life.’ For as he was a mortal man he had both. He was assuredly born, and did no less certainly die than other men. But neither of these is recorded concerning him. We have no more to do with him, to learn from him, nor are concerned in him, but only as he is described in the Scripture; and there is no mention therein of the beginning of his days, or the end of his life. Whatever therefore he might have in himself, he had none to us. Consider all the other patriarchs mentioned in the writings of Moses, and you shall find their descent recorded, who was their father, and so up to the first man; and not only so, but the time of their birth, the beginning of their days, and the end of their life, are exactly recorded. For it is constantly said of them, such a one lived so long, and begat such a son, which fixed the time of birth. Then of him so begotten it is said, he lived so many years, which determines the end of his days. These things are expressly recorded. But concerning Melchisedec none of these things are spoken. No mention is made of father or mother; no genealogy is recorded of what stock or progeny he was; nor is there any account of his birth or death. So that all these things are wanting to him in his historical narration, wherein our faith and knowledge are alone concerned.”

**Made like unto the Son of God]** Melchisedec was without father and mother, having neither beginning of days nor end of life. His genealogy is not recorded; when he was born and when he died, is unknown. His priesthood, therefore, may be considered as perpetual. In these respects he was like to Jesus Christ, who, as to his *Godhead*, had neither father nor mother, beginning of time nor end of days; and has an everlasting

priesthood. The priesthood of Melchisedec is to abide continually on the same ground that he is said to be without father and mother; i.e. there is no record of the end of his priesthood or life, no more than there is any account of his ancestry.

**Verse 4. Consider how great this man was]** There is something exceedingly mysterious in the person and character of this king of Salem; and to find out the whole is impossible. He seems to have been a sort of *universal* priest, having none superior to him in all that region; and confessedly superior even to Abraham himself, the father of the faithful, and the source of the Jewish race. See <sup><3007></sup>**Hebrews 7:7**.

**The patriarch Abraham]** ὁ πατριάρχης. Either from *πατήρ*, a *father*, and *αρχή*, a *chief* or *head*; or from *πατριὰς ἀρχή*, *the head of a family*.' But the title is here applied, by way of eminence, to him who was the *head* or *chief* of all the *fathers*-or patriarch of the patriarchs, and father of the faithful. The Syriac translates it [Syriac] *Rish Abahatha*, "head of the fathers." The character and conduct of Abraham place him, as a man, deservedly at the *head* of the human race.

**Verse 5. They that are of the sons of Levi]** The priests who are of the posterity of the Levites, and receive the priesthood in virtue of their descent from Aaron, have authority from the law of God to receive tithes from the people.

**According to the law]** That is, the Levites received a *tenth* from the people. The priests received a *tenth* of this *tenth* from the Levites, who are here called their brethren, because they were of the same tribe, and employed in the same sacred work. The apostle is proceeding to show that Melchisedec was greater even than Abraham, the head of the fathers, for to him Abraham gave tithes; and as the Levites were the posterity of Abraham, they are represented here as paying tithes to Melchisedec through *him*. Yet Melchisedec was not of this family, and therefore must be considered as having a more honourable priesthood than even Aaron himself; for he took the *tenth* from Abraham, not for his *maintenance*, for he was a *king*, but in virtue of his *office* as universal high priest of all that region.

**Verse 6. Blessed him that had the promises.]** This is a continuation of the same argument, namely, to show the superiority of Melchisedec; and, in consequence, to prove the superiority of the priesthood of Christ beyond

that of Aaron. As in the seed of Abraham all the nations of the earth were to be blessed, Abraham received a sacerdotal blessing from Melchisedec, who was the representative of the Messiah, the promised seed, to show that it was through him, as the high priest of the human race, that this blessing was to be derived on all mankind.

**Verse 7. The less is blessed of the better.]** That the *superior* blesses the *inferior* is a general proposition; but Abraham was blessed of Melchisedec, therefore Melchisedec was greater than Abraham. “The blessing here spoken of,” says Dr. Macknight, “is not the simple *wishing of good* to others, which may be done by inferiors to superiors; but it is the action of a person *authorized* to declare *God’s intention* to bestow good things on another. In this manner Isaac and Jacob blessed their children under a prophetic impulse; in this manner the priests under the law blessed the people; in this manner, likewise, Melchisedec, the priest of the most high God, blessed Abraham.”

**Verse 8. Here men that die receive tithes]** The apostle is speaking of the ecclesiastical constitution of the Jews, which was standing at the time this epistle was written. Under the Jewish dispensation, though the priests were successively removed by *death*, yet they were as duly replaced by others appointed from the same family, and the payment of tithes was never interrupted. But as there is no account of Melchisedec *ceasing to be a priest*, or of *his dying*, he is represented as still living, the better to point him out as a type of Christ, and to show his priesthood to be more excellent than that which was according to the law, as an *unchanging* priesthood must be more excellent than that which was continually *changing*.

**But there he receiveth them]** The **ὧδε**, *here*, in the first clause of this verse refers to *Mosaical institutions*, as then existing: the **ἐκεῖ**, *there*, in this clause refers to the place in Genesis (<sup>-01140</sup>**Genesis 14:20**) where it is related that Abraham gave *tithes* to Melchisedec, who is still considered as being alive or without a successor, because there is no account of his death, nor of any termination of his priesthood.

**Verse 9. And as I may so say]** **καὶ ὡς εἶπος εἶπειν**. *And so to speak a word*. This form of speech, which is very frequent among the purest Greek writers, is generally used to *soften* some *harsh* expression, or to *limit* the meaning when the proposition might otherwise appear to be too *general*. It answers fully to our *so to speak-as one would say-I had almost said-in a*

*certain sense*. Many examples of its use by Aristotle, Philo, Lucian, Josephus, Demosthenes, Æschines, and Plutarch, may be seen in *Raphelius* and *Kypke*.

**Payed tithes in Abraham.**] The Levites, who were descendants of Abraham, paid tithes to Melchisedec **δία** *through*, Abraham, their progenitor and representative.

**Verse 10. For he was yet in the loins of his father**] That is, Levi was seminally included in Abraham, his forefather.

**Verse 11. If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood**] The word **τελειωσις**, as we have before seen, signifies the *completing* or *finishing* of any thing, so as to leave *nothing imperfect*, and *nothing wanting*. Applied here to the Levitical priesthood, it signifies the accomplishment of that for which a priesthood is established, viz.: giving the Deity an acceptable service, enlightening and instructing the people, pardoning all offences, purging the conscience from guilt, purifying the soul and preparing it for heaven, and regulating the conduct of the people according to the precepts of the moral law. This *perfection* never came, and never could come, by the Levitical law; it was the shadow of good things to come, but was not the substance. *It* represented a perfect system, but was imperfect in itself. *It* showed that there was guilt, and that there was an absolute need for a sacrificial offering to atone for sin, and it typified that sacrifice; but every sacrificial act under that law most forcibly proved that it was *impossible for the blood of BULLS and GOATS to take away sin*.

**For under it the people received the law**] That is, as most interpret this place, under the priesthood, **ερωσυνη** being understood; because, on the priesthood the whole Mosaical law and the Jewish economy depended: but it is much better to understand **επαύτη** *on account of it*, instead of *under it*; for it is a positive fact that the law was given before any priesthood was established, for Aaron and his sons were not called nor separated to this office till Moses came down the second time from the mount with the tables renewed, after that he had broken them, <sup><B40></sup>**Exodus 40:12-14**. But it was in *reference* to the great sacrificial system that the law was given, and on that law the priesthood was established; for, why was a priesthood necessary, but because that law was *broken* and must be fulfilled?

**That another priest should rise]** The law was given that the offence might abound, and sin appear exceeding sinful; and to show the absolute necessity of the sacrifice and mediation of the great Messiah, but it was neither perfect in itself, nor could it confer perfection, nor did it contain the *original priesthood*. Melchisedec had a priesthood more than *four* hundred years (422) before the law was given; and David prophesied, <sup><19804></sup>**Psalm 110:4**, that another priest should arise after the order of Melchisedec, nearly *five* hundred years (476) after the law was given. The law, therefore, did not contain the original priesthood; this existed *typically* in Melchisedec, and *really* in Jesus Christ.

**Verse 12. The priesthood being changed]** That is, The order of Aaron being now abrogated, to make way for that which had preceded it, the order of Melchisedec.

**There is made of necessity a change also of the law.]** The very essence of the Levitical law consisting in its *sacrificial offerings*; and as these could not confer *perfection*, could not *reconcile God to man*, purify the unholy heart, nor open the kingdom of heaven to the souls of men, consequently it must be abolished, according to the order of God himself; for he said, *Sacrifice and offering, and burnt-offering, and sacrifice for sin, he would not*; see <sup><19406></sup>**Psalm 40:6, 7**, compared with <sup><38105></sup>**Hebrews 10:5-10**, and with <sup><19804></sup>**Psalm 110:4**, where it is evident God designed to change both the law and the priesthood, and to introduce Jesus as the only Priest and Sacrifice, and to substitute the Gospel system for that of the Levitical institutions. The priesthood, therefore, being changed, Jesus coming in the place of Aaron, the law of ordinances and ceremonies, which served only to point out the Messiah, must of necessity be changed also.

**Verse 13. For he of whom these things are spoken]** That is, Jesus the Messiah, spoken of in <sup><19804></sup>**Psalm 110:4**, who came, not from the tribe of Levi, but from the tribe of Judah, of which tribe no priest ever ministered at a Jewish altar, nor could minister according to the law.

**Verse 14. For it is evident]** As the apostle speaks here with so much confidence, it follows that our Lord's descent from the tribe of Judah was incontrovertible. The genealogical tables, both in Matthew and Luke, establish this point; and whatever difficulties *we* may find in them now, there were none apprehended in those days, else the enemies of the Gospel would have urged these as a chief and unanswerable argument against Christ and his Gospel.

**Verse 15. And it is yet far more evident]** και περισσοτερον επι καταδηλον εστιν. *And besides, it is more abundantly strikingly manifest.* It is very difficult to translate these words, but the apostle's meaning is plain, viz., that God designed the Levitical priesthood to be changed, because of the oath in Psa. cx., where, addressing the Messiah, he says: *Thou art a Priest for ever after the order, or ομοιοτητα, similitude, of Melchisedec, who was not only a priest, but also a king.* None of the Levitical priests sustained this *double* office; but they both, with that of *prophet*, appear and were exercised in the person of our Lord, who is the Priest to which the apostle alludes.

**Verse 16. Who is made]** Appointed to this high office by God himself, not succeeding one that was *disabled* or *dead, according to that law* or ordinance directed to *weak* and *perishing* men, who could not *continue* by reason of death.

This is probably all that the apostle intends by the words *carnal commandment, εντολης σαρκικης*, for *carnal* does not always mean *sinful* or *corrupt*, but *feeble, frail*, or what may be said of or concerning *man* in his present *dying condition*.

**But after the power of an endless life.]** Not dying, or ceasing through weakness to be a priest; but properly immortal himself, and having the power to confer life and immortality on others. HE ever lives, as Priest, to make intercession for men; and they who believe on him shall never perish, but have everlasting life.

**Verse 17. For he testifieth]** That is, either the *Scripture*, in the place so often quoted, or God by that Scripture.

**Thou art a priest for ever]** This is the proof that he was not appointed according to the carnal commandment, but according to the power of an endless life, because he is a priest *for ever*; i.e. one that never dies, and is never disabled from performing the important functions of his office; for if he be a priest for ever, he *ever lives*.

**Verse 18. For there is verily a disannulling]** There is a total abrogation, προαγουσης εντολης, of the former law, relative to the Levitical priesthood. See <sup>3719</sup>Hebrews 7:19.



**For the weakness]** It had no *energy*; it communicated none; it had no *Spirit* to minister; it required perfect obedience, but furnished no *assistance* to those who were under it.

**And unprofitableness]** No man was *benefited* by the mere observance of its precepts: it pardoned no sin, changed no heart, reformed no life; it found men dead in trespasses and sins, and it consigned them to eternal death. It was therefore weak in itself, and unprofitable to men.

The Jews, who still cleave to it, are a proof that it is both *weak* and *unprofitable*; for there is not a more miserable, distressed, and profligate class of men on the face of the earth.

**Verse 19. For the law made nothing perfect]** It completed nothing; it was only the *outline* of a great plan, the *shadow* of a glorious substance; see on <sup><8071></sup>**Hebrews 7:11**. It neither pardoned sin, nor purified the heart, nor gave strength to obey the moral precepts. *ουδεν*, *nothing*, is put here for *ουδενα*, *no person*.

**But the bringing in of a better hope]** The original is very emphatic, *επεισαγωγή*, the *superintroduction*, or the *after introduction*; and this seems to be put in opposition to the *προαγουσα εντολη*, the *preceding commandment*, or *former Levitical law*, of <sup><80718></sup>**Hebrews 7:18**. This *went before* to prepare the way of the Lord; to show the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the strict justice of God. *The better hope*, which referred not to earthly but to spiritual good, not to temporal but eternal felicity, founded on the priesthood and atonement of Christ, was afterwards introduced for the purpose of doing what the law could not do, and giving privileges and advantages which the law would not afford. One of these privileges immediately follows:—

**By the which we draw nigh unto God.]** This is a sacerdotal phrase: the high priest alone could *approach* to the Divine presence in the holy of holies; but not without the blood of the sacrifice, and that only once in the year. But through Christ, as our high priest, all believers in him have an entrance to the holiest by his blood; and through him perform acceptable service to God. *The better hope* means, in this place, Jesus Christ, who is the author and object of the hope of eternal life, which all his genuine followers possess. He is called *our hope*, <sup><50101></sup>**1 Timothy 1:1**; <sup><10127></sup>**Colossians 1:27**.

**Verse 20. Not without an oath]** “The apostle’s reasoning here is founded on this, that God never interposed his *oath*, except to show the *certainty* and *immutability* of the thing sworn. Thus he swore to *Abraham*, <sup><01216></sup>**Genesis 22:16-18**, that *in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed*; and to the rebellious *Israelites*, <sup><0134></sup>**Deuteronomy 1:34, 35**, that *they should not enter into his rest*; and to *Moses*, <sup><0121></sup>**Deuteronomy 4:21**, that *he should not go into Canaan*; and to *David*, <sup><19804></sup>**Psalm 89:4**, that *his seed should endure for ever, and his throne unto all generations*. Wherefore, since Christ was made a priest, *not without an oath* that he should be *a priest for ever, after the similitude of Melchisedec*, that circumstance showed God’s immutable resolution never to change or abolish his priesthood, nor to change or abolish the covenant which was established on his priesthood; whereas the Levitical priesthood and the law of Moses, being established *without an oath*, were thereby declared to be changeable at God’s pleasure.” This judicious note is from Dr. *Macknight*.

**Verse 21. Those priests]** The Levitical, *were made without an oath*, to show that the whole system was changeable, and might be abolished.

**But this]** The everlasting priesthood of Christ, *with an oath*, to show that the Gospel dispensation should never change, and never be abolished.

**By him]** God the Father, *that said unto him*-the promised Messiah, <sup><19804></sup>**Psalm 110:4**, *The Lord swore*, to show the immutability of his counsel, *and will not repent*-can never change his mind nor purpose, *Thou art a priest for ever*-as long as time shall run, and the generations of men be continued on earth. Till the necessity of the mediatorial kingdom be superseded by the fixed state of eternity, till this kingdom be delivered up unto the Father, and God shall be all in all, shall this priesthood of Christ endure.

**Verse 22. By so much]** This solemn, unchangeable *oath* of God, *was Jesus made a surety*, **εγγυος**, a mediator, one who brings the two parties together, witnesses the contract, and offers the covenant sacrifice on the occasion. See at the end of the chapter.

**A better testament.]** **κρειττονος διατηκης**. *A better covenant*; called, in the title to the sacred books which contain the whole Christian code, **ἡ καινη διαθηκη**, THE NEW COVENANT, thus contradistinguished from the *Mosaic*, which was the *old covenant*; and this is called the *new* and *better* covenant, because God has in it promised other blessings, to other people,

on other conditions, than the old covenant did. The *new* covenant is *better* than the *old* in the following particulars: 1. God promised to the Jewish nation certain secular blessings, peculiar to that nation, on condition of their keeping the law of Moses; but under the new covenant he promises pardon of sin, and final salvation to all mankind, on condition of believing on Jesus Christ, and walking in his testimonies. 2. The Jewish priests, fallible, dying men, were mediators of the old covenant, by means of their sacrifices, which could not take away sin, nor render the comers thereunto perfect. But Jesus Christ, who liveth for ever, who is infinite in wisdom and power, by the sacrifice of himself has established this new covenant, and by the shedding of his blood has opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

**Verse 23. And they truly were many priests]** Under the Mosaic law it was necessary there should be a succession of priests, because, being mortal, they were not suffered to continue always by reason of death.

**Verse 24. But this]** ὁ δε, *But he*, that is, Christ, *because he continueth ever-is eternal, hath an unchangeable priesthood, ἀπαράβατον ἱερωσύνην*, a *priesthood that passeth not away* from him; he lives for ever, and he lives a *priest* for ever.

**Verse 25. Wherefore]** Because he is an everlasting priest, and has offered the only available sacrifice, *he is able to save*, from the power, guilt, nature, and punishment of sin, *to the uttermost, εἰς τὸ παντελές*, to all intents, degrees, and purposes; and always, and in and through all times, places, and circumstances; for all this is implied in the original word: but *in and through all times* seems to be the particular meaning here, because of what follows, *he ever liveth to make intercession for them*; this depends on the *perpetuity* of his *priesthood*, and the *continuance* of his *mediatorial* office. As Jesus was the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world, has an everlasting priesthood, and is a continual intercessor; it is in virtue of this that all who were saved from the foundation of the world were saved through him, and all that shall be saved to the end of the world will be saved through him. He ever was and ever will be the High Priest, Sacrifice, Intercessor, and Mediator of the human race. All successive generations of men are equally interested in him, and may claim the same privileges. But none can be saved by his grace that do not *come unto God through him*; i.e. imploring mercy through him as their sacrifice and

atonement; confidently trusting that God can be just, and yet the justifier of them who thus come to him, believing on Christ Jesus.

The phrase *εντυγγαλνειν τιμι*, *to make intercession* for a person, has a considerable latitude of meaning. It signifies, 1. *To come to or meet a person* on any cause whatever. 2. *To intercede, pray for, or entreat in the behalf of*, another. 3. *To defend or vindicate* a person. 4. *To commend*. 5. *To furnish any kind of assistance or help*. 6. And, with the preposition *κατα*, *against*, *to accuse, or act against another* in a judicial way.

“The nature of the apostle’s arguments,” says Dr. Macknight, “requires that, by Christ’s *always living*, we understand his *always living in the body*; for it is thus that he is an affectionate and sympathizing High Priest, who, in his intercession, pleads the merit of his death to procure the salvation of all who come unto God through him. Agreeably to this account of Christ’s intercession, the apostle, in <sup><S07Z></sup>**Hebrews 7:27**, mentions the sacrifice of himself, which Christ offered for the sins of the people as the foundation of his intercession. Now, as he offered that sacrifice in heaven, <sup><S0RD></sup>**Hebrews 8:2, 3**, by presenting his crucified body there, (See <sup><S0RE></sup>**Hebrews 8:5**’), and as he continually resides there in the body, some of the ancients were of opinion that his continual intercession consists in the *continual presentation of his humanity before his Father*, because it is a continual declaration of his earnest desire of the salvation of men, and of his having, in obedience to his Father’s will, made himself flesh, and suffered death to accomplish it. See <sup><S0R34></sup>**Romans 8:34**”, note 3. This opinion is confirmed by the manner in which the Jewish high priest made intercession for the people on the day of atonement, and which was a type of Christ’s intercession in heaven. He made it, not by offering of prayers for them in the most holy place, but by *sprinkling the blood of the sacrifices on the mercy-seat*, in token of their death. And as, by that action, he opened the earthly holy places to the prayers and worship of the Israelites during the ensuing year; so Jesus, by presenting his humanity continually before the presence of his Father, opens heaven to the prayers of his people in the present life, and to their persons after the resurrection.”

**Verse 26. Such a high priest became us]** Such a high priest was in every respect *suitable* to us, every way qualified to accomplish the end for which he came into the world. There is probably here an allusion to the qualifications of the Jewish high priest:—

1. He was required to be *holy*, **οσιος**, answering to the Hebrew **דַּיָּסַד** *chasisd, merciful*. Holiness was his calling; and, as he was the representative of his brethren, he was required to be *merciful* and *compassionate*.
2. He was to be *harmless*, **ακακος**, *without evil*-holy without, and holy within; injuring none, but rather living for the benefit of others.
3. He was *undefiled*, **αμικαντος** answering to the Hebrew **לֹא בַמִּטְמֵאָה** *baal mum, without blemish*-having no *bodily imperfection*. Nothing low, mean, base, or unbecoming in his conduct.
4. He was *separate from sinners*, **κεχωρισμενος απο των αμαρτωλων**. By his office he was *separated* from all men and worldly occupations, and entirely devoted to the service of God. And as to *sinners*, or *heathens*, he was never to be found in their society.
5. *Higher than the heavens*. There may be some reference here to the exceeding *dignity* of the high priesthood; it was the highest office that could be sustained by man, the high priest himself being the immediate representative of God.

But these things suit our Lord in a sense in which they cannot be applied to the high priest of the Jews.

1. He was *holy*, infinitely so; and *merciful*, witness his shedding his blood for the sins of mankind.
2. *Harmless*-perfectly without sin in his humanity, as well as his divinity.
3. *Undefiled*-contracted no sinful infirmity in consequence of his dwelling among men.
4. *Separate from sinners*-absolutely unblamable in the whole of his conduct, so that he could challenge the most inveterate of his enemies with, *Which of you convicteth me of sin?* Who of you can show in my conduct the slightest deviation from truth and righteousness!

5. *Higher than the heavens*-more exalted than all the angels of God, than all created beings, whether thrones, dominions, principalities, or powers, because all these were created by him and for him, and derive their continued subsistence from his infinite energy.

But how was a person of such infinite dignity *suitable* to us! His *greatness* is put in opposition to our meanness. HE was *holy*; WE, *unholy*. HE was *harmless*; WE, *harmful, injuring* both ourselves and others. HE was *undefiled*; WE, *defiled*, most *sinfully spotted* and impure. HE was *separate from sinners*; WE were *joined to sinners*, 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 *despiteful control*, the trample and spurn, of all the other *damned*, and 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 *lower-most*, the most dejected, most *under-foot* and *down-trodden vassals of perdition*.”  
MILTON on *Reformation*, in *fine*.

**Verse 27. Who needeth not daily]** Though the high priest offered the great atonement only once in the year, yet in the Jewish services there was a daily acknowledgment of sin, and a daily sacrifice offered by the priests, at whose head was the high priest, for their own sins and the sins of the people. The Jews held that a priest who neglected his own expiatory sacrifice would be smitten with death. (*Sanhedr.*, fol. 83.) When they offered this victim, they prayed the following prayer: “O Lord, I have sinned, and done wickedly, and gone astray before thy face, I, and my house, and the sons of Aaron, the, people of thy holiness. I beseech thee, for thy name’s sake, blot out the sins, iniquities, and transgressions by which I have sinned, done wickedly, and gone astray before thy face, I, and my house, and the sons of Aaron, the people of thy holiness; as it is written in the law of Moses thy servant, (<sup>(BIG)</sup> **Leviticus 16:30**;) *On that day shall he make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord!*” To which the Levites answered: “Blessed be the name of the glory of thy kingdom, for ever and ever!”

This prayer states that the priest *offered a sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people*, as the apostle asserts.

**For this he did once]** For *himself* he offered no sacrifice; and the apostle gives the reason—he needed none, because he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners: and for the *people* he offered himself once for all, when he expired upon the cross.

It has been very properly remarked, that the sacrifice offered by Christ differed in four essential respects from those, offered by the Jewish priests: 1. He offered no sacrifice for himself, but only for the people. 2. He did not offer that sacrifice *annually*, but once for all. 3. The sacrifice which he offered was not of calves and goats, but of himself. 4. This sacrifice he offered, not for *one people*, but for the *whole human race*; for he tasted death for *every man*.

**Verse 28. For the law maketh men high priests]** The Jewish priests have need of these repeated offerings and sacrifices, because they are fallible, sinful men: *but the word of the oath* (still referring to <sup><JER04></sup> **Psalm 110:4**) *which was since the law*; for David, who mentions this, lived nearly 500 years after the giving of the law, and consequently that oath, constituting another priesthood, abrogates the law; and by this the SON is *consecrated*, **τετελειωμενον**, *is perfected, for evermore*. Being a high priest without blemish, immaculately holy, every way perfect, immortal, and eternal, HE is a priest **εις τον αιωνα**, to ETERNITY.

I. THERE are several respects in which the apostle shows the priesthood of Christ to be more excellent than that of the Jews, which priesthood was typified by that of Melchisedec.

1. Being after the order of Melchisedec, there was no need of a rigorous examination of his *genealogy* to show his right.
2. He has an *eternal* priesthood; whereas theirs was but *temporal*.
3. The other priests, as a token of the dignity of their office, and their state of dependence on God, received tithes from the people. Melchisedec, a priest and king, after whose order Christ comes, *tithed Abraham*, **δεδεκατωκε τον αβρααμ**, the father of the patriarchs; Jesus, infinitely greater than all, having an absolute and independent life, needs none. He is no man's debtor, but all receive out of his fulness.

4. He alone can bless the people, not by *praying for their good* merely, but by communicating the good which is necessary.

5. As another priesthood, different from that of Aaron, was promised, it necessarily implies that the Levitical priesthood was insufficient; the priesthood of Christ, being that promised, must be greater than that of Aaron.

6. That which God has appointed and consecrated with an *oath*, as to endure for ever, must be greater than that which he has appointed simply for a time: but the priesthood of Christ is thus appointed; therefore, &c.

7. All the Levitical priests were fallible and sinful men; but Christ was holy and undefiled.

8. The Levitical priests were only by their office distinguished from the rest of their brethren, being equally frail, mortal, and corruptible; but Jesus, *our* high priest, is *higher than the heavens*. The statements from which these differences are drawn are all laid down in this chapter.

II. As the word *surety*, **εγγυος**, in <sup><8172></sup>**Hebrews 7:22**, has been often abused, or used in an unscriptural and dangerous sense, it may not be amiss to inquire a little farther into its meaning. The Greek word **εγγυος**, from **εγγυη**, a *pledge*, is supposed to be so called from being lodged **εν γυιοις**, *in the hands* of the creditor. It is nearly of the same meaning with *bail*, and signifies an engagement made by C. with A. that B. shall fulfil certain conditions then and there specified, for which C. makes himself answerable; if, therefore, B. fails, C. becomes wholly responsible to A. In such *suretiship* it is never *designed* that C. shall pay any debt or fulfil any engagement that belongs to B.; but, if B. fail, then C. becomes responsible, because he had *pledged* himself for B. In this scheme A. is the person legally empowered to take the bail or pledge, B. the debtor, and C. the surety. The idea therefore of B. paying his own debt, is necessarily implied in taking the surety. Were it once to be supposed that the surety undertakes *absolutely* to pay the debt, his suretiship is at an end, and he becomes the debtor; and the real debtor is no longer bound. Thus the nature of the transaction becomes entirely changed, and we find nothing but *debtor* and *creditor* in the case. In this sense, therefore, the word **εγγυος**, which we translate *surety*, cannot be applied in the above case, for Christ never became *surety* that, if men did not fulfil the conditions of this *better covenant*, i.e. repent of sin, turn from it, believe on the Son of God,



and having received grace walk as children of the light, and be faithful unto death, he would do all these things for them himself! This would be both absurd and impossible: and hence the gloss of some here is both absurd and dangerous, viz., “That Christ was the surety of the first covenant to pay the debt; of the second, to perform the duty.” That it cannot have this meaning in the passage in question is sufficiently proved by Dr. Macknight; and instead of extending my own reasoning on the subject, I shall transcribe his note.

“The Greek commentators explain this word **εγγυος** very properly by **μεσιτης**, a *mediator*, which is its etymological meaning; for it comes from **εγγυς**, *near*, and signifies one who draws near, or who causes another to draw near. Now, as in this passage a comparison is stated between Jesus as a high priest, and the Levitical high priests; and as these were justly considered by the apostle as the mediators of the Sinaitic covenant, because through their mediation the Israelites worshipped God with sacrifices, and received from him, as their king, a political pardon, in consequence of the sacrifices offered by the high priest on the day of atonement; it is evident that the apostle in this passage calls Jesus *the High Priest*, or *Mediator of the better covenant*, because through his mediation, that is, through the sacrifice of himself which he offered to God, believers receive all the blessings of the better covenant. And as the apostle has said, <sup><80719></sup>**Hebrews 7:19**, that *by the introduction of a better hope, εγγιζομεν, we draw near to God*; he in this verse very properly calls Jesus **εγγυος**, rather than **μεσιτης**, to denote the effect of his mediation. See <sup><80725></sup>**Hebrews 7:25**. Our translators indeed, following the *Vulgate* and *Beza*, have rendered **εγγυος** by the word *surety*, a sense which it has, **Ecclus. 29:16**, and which naturally enough follows from its etymological meaning; for the person who becomes *surety* for the good behaviour of another, or for his performing something stipulated, brings that other *near to the party* to whom he gives the security; he reconciles the two. But in this sense the word **εγγυος** is not applicable to the Jewish high priests; for to be a *proper surety*, one must either have power to compel the party to perform that for which he has become his surety; or, in case of his not performing it, he must be able to perform it himself. This being the case, will any one say that the Jewish high priests were sureties to God for the Israelites performing their part of the covenant of the law! Or to the people for God’s performing his part of the covenant! As little is the appellation, *surety of the new covenant*, applicable to Jesus. For since the new covenant

does not require perfect obedience, but only the obedience of faith; if the obedience of faith be not given by men themselves, it cannot be given by another in their room; unless we suppose that men can be saved without personal faith. I must therefore infer, that those who speak of Jesus as the surety of the new covenant, must hold that it requires perfect obedience; which, not being in the power of believers to give, Jesus has performed for them. But is not this to make the covenant of grace a covenant of works, contrary to the whole tenor of Scripture! For these reasons I think the Greek commentators have given the true meaning of the word *εγγυος*, in this passage, when they explain it by *μεσιτης*, *mediator*.”

The chief difference lies here. The old covenant required perfect obedience from the very commencement of life; this is impossible, because man comes into the world depraved. The new covenant declares God’s righteousness for the remission of sins that are *past*; and furnishes grace to enable all true believers to live up to all the requisitions of the moral law, as found in the gospels. But in this sense Christ cannot be called the *surety*, for the reasons given above; for he does not perform the obedience or faith in behalf of any man. It is the highest privilege of believers to love God with all their hearts, and to serve him with all their strength; and to remove their obligation to keep this moral law would be to deprive them of the highest happiness they can possibly have on this side heaven.

## HEBREWS

### CHAPTER 8.

*The sum, or chief articles, of what the apostle has spoken, concerning the eternal priesthood of Christ, 1-5: The excellency of the new covenant beyond that of the old, 6-9. The nature and perfection of the new covenant stated from the predictions of the prophets, 10-12. By this new covenant the old is abolished, 13.*

#### NOTES ON CHAP. 8.

**Verse 1. Of the things which we have spoken this is the sum]** The word κεφαλαιον, which we translate *sum*, signifies the *chief*, the *principal*, or *head*; or, as St. Chrysostom explains it, κεφαλαιον αει το μεγαιστον λεγεται, “that which is greatest is always called *kephalaion*,” i.e. the *head*, or *chief*.

**Who is set on the right hand of the throne]** This is what the apostle states to be the *chief* or *most important point* of all that he had yet discussed. His sitting down at the right hand of the throne of God, proves, 1. That he is higher than all the high priests that ever existed. 2. That the sacrifice which he offered for the sins of the world was sufficient and effectual, and as such accepted by God. 3. That he has all power in the heavens and in the earth, and is able to save and defend to the uttermost all that come to God through him. 4. That he did not, like the Jewish high priest, depart out of the holy of holies, after having offered the atonement; but abides there at the throne of God, as a continual priest, in the permanent act of offering his crucified body unto God, in behalf of all the succeeding generations of mankind. It is no wonder the apostle should call this sitting down at the right hand of the throne of the Divine Majesty, the *chief* or *head* of all that he had before spoken.

**Verse 2. A minister of the sanctuary]** των αγιων λειτουργος. A *public minister of the holy things* or *places*. The word λειτουργος, from λειτος, *public*, and εργον, a *work* or *office*, means a person who officiated for the public, a public officer; in whom, and his work, all the people had a common right: hence our word *liturgy*, the *public work* of prayer and praise, designed for the *people at large*; all having a right to attend it, and

each having an equal interest in it. Properly speaking, the Jewish priest was the servant of the public; he transacted the business of the people with God. Jesus Christ is also the same kind of public officer; both as *Priest* and *Mediator* he transacts the business of the whole human race with God. He performs the *holy things* or *acts* in the *true tabernacle*, HEAVEN, of which the Jewish tabernacle was the *type*. The tabernacle was the place among the Jews where God, by the *symbol of his presence*, dwelt. This could only typify *heaven*, where God, in his *essential glory*, dwells, and is manifest to angels and glorified saints; and hence heaven is called here the *true tabernacle*, to distinguish it from the *type*.

**Which the Lord pitched]** The Jewish tabernacle was *man's work*, though made by God's direction; the *heavens*, this *true tabernacle*, the work of God alone, and infinitely more glorious than that of the Jews. The tabernacle was also a type of the *human nature* of Christ, <sup><E0114></sup>**John 1:14:** *And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, ΚΑΙ ΕΣΚΗΝΩΣΕΝ ΕΝ ΗΜΙΝ* and *tabernacled among us*; for, as the Divine presence dwelt in the tabernacle, so the fulness of the Godhead, bodily, dwelt in the man Christ Jesus. And this human body was the *peculiar work of God*, as it came not in the way of *natural generation*.

**Verse 3. Every high priest is ordained]** *καθίσταται*, *Is set apart*, for this especial work.

**Gifts and sacrifices]** *δωρα τε και θυσιας*. *Eucharistic offerings*, and *sacrifices for sin*. By the *former*, God's government of the universe, and his benevolence to his creatures in providing for their support, were acknowledged. By the *latter*, the destructive and ruinous nature of sin, and the necessity of an atonement, were confessed.

**Wherefore-of necessity]** If Christ be a high priest, and it be essential to the office of a high priest to offer atoning sacrifices to God, Jesus must offer such. Now it is manifest that, as he is the *public minister*, officiating in the *true tabernacle* as high priest, he must make an atonement; and his being at the right hand of the throne shows that he has offered, and continues to offer, such an atonement.

**Verse 4. For if he were on earth]** As the Jewish temple was standing when this epistle was written, the whole temple service continued to be performed by the legal priests, descendants of Aaron, of the tribe of Levi; therefore if Christ had been then on earth, he could not have performed the

office of a priest, being of the tribe of Judah, to which tribe the office of the priesthood did not appertain.

**There are priests that offer gifts]** This is an additional proof that this epistle was written before the destruction of Jerusalem. As the word **θυσια**, *sacrifices*, is not added here as it is in <sup><388B></sup> **Hebrews 8:3**, is it any evidence that bloody sacrifices had then ceased to be offered? Or, are both kinds included in the word **δωρα**, *gifts*? But is **δωρον**, a *gift*, ever used to express a *bloody sacrifice*? I believe the Septuagint never used it for **j bz zebach**, which signifies an animal offered to God in sacrifice.

**Verse 5. Who serve]** **οιτινες λατρευουσι**. Who perform Divine worship.

**Unto the example and shadow]** **υποδειγματι και σκια**, WITH *the representation and shadow*; this is Dr. Macknight's translation, and probably the true one.

The whole Levitical service was a representation and shadow of heavenly things; it appears, therefore, absurd to say that the priests served UNTO *an example* or *representation* of heavenly things; they served rather unto the *substance* of those things, WITH appropriate *representations* and *shadows*.

**As Moses was admonished]** **καθως κεχηρηματισται μωσης**. As *Moses was Divinely warned or admonished of God*.

**According to the pattern]** **κατα τον τυπον**. According to the *type, plan, or form*. It is very likely that God gave a regular plan and *specification* of the tabernacle and all its parts to Moses; and that from this Divine plan the whole was constructed. See on <sup><10254></sup> **Exodus 25:40**.

**Verse 6. Now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry]** His office of priesthood is more excellent than the Levitical, because the covenant is better, and established on better promises: the old covenant referred to *earthly* things; the new covenant, to *heavenly*. The old covenant had promises of *secular* good; the new covenant, of spiritual and eternal blessings. As far as Christianity is preferable to Judaism, as far as Christ is preferable to Moses, as far as spiritual blessings are preferable to earthly blessings, and as far as the enjoyment of God throughout eternity is preferable to the communication of earthly good during time; so far does the new covenant exceed the old.

**Verse 7. If that first had been faultless]** This is nearly the same argument with that in <sup><8071></sup>**Hebrews 7:11**. The simple meaning is: If the first covenant had made a provision for and actually conferred pardon and *purity*, and given a *title* to eternal life, then there could have been no need for a second; but the first covenant did not give these things, therefore a second was necessary; and the covenant that gives these things is the Christian covenant.

**Verse 8. For finding fault with them]** The meaning is evidently this: God, in order to show that the first covenant was inefficient, saith to *them*, the Israelites, *Behold, the days come when I will make a new covenant, &c.* He *found fault* with the *covenant*, and addressed the *people* concerning his purpose of giving another covenant, that should be such as the necessities of mankind required. As this place refers to <sup><2483></sup>**Jeremiah 31:31-34**, the words *finding fault with them* may refer to the *Jewish people*, of whom the Lord complains that they had broken his covenant *though he was a husband to them*. See below.

**With the house of Israel and with the house of Judah]** That is, with all the descendants of the twelve sons of Jacob. This is thought to be a promise of the conversion of all the Jews to Christianity; both of the *lost tribes*, and of those who are known to exist in Asiatic and European countries.

**Verse 9. Not according to the covenant]** The new covenant is of a widely different nature to that of the old; it was only temporal and earthly in itself, though it pointed out spiritual and eternal things. The new covenant is totally different from this, as we have already seen; and such a covenant, or *system of religion*, the Jews should have been prepared to expect, as the Prophet Jeremiah had, in the above place, so clearly foretold it.

**They continued not in my covenant]** It should be observed that the word **διαθικην**, which we translate *covenant*, often means *religion* itself; and its various precepts. The old covenant in general stated, on God's side, *I will be your God*; on the Israelites' side, *We will be thy people*. This covenant they brake; they served other gods, and neglected the precepts of that holy religion which God had delivered to them.

**And I regarded them not]** **καγω ημελησα αυτων**. *And I neglected them or despised them*; but the words in the Hebrew text of the prophet are **yb ytl** [**b yknaw** *veanochi baalti bam*, which we translate, *although I was a*

*husband to them.* If our translation be correct, is it possible to account for this most strange difference between the apostle and the prophet? Could the Spirit of God be the author of such a strange, not to say *contradictory*, translation of the same words? Let it be observed: 1. That the apostle quotes from the Septuagint; and in quoting a version accredited by and commonly used among the Jews, he ought to give the text as he found it, unless the Spirit of God dictated an extension of meaning, as is sometimes the case; but in the present case there seems to be no necessity to alter the meaning. 2. The Hebrew words will bear a translation much nearer to the Septuagint and the apostle than our translation intimates. The words might be literally rendered, *And I was Lord over them*, or *I lorded or ruled over them*; i.e., I chastised them for their transgressions, and punished them for their iniquities; *ημελησα*, *I took no farther care of them*, and gave them up into the hands of their enemies, and so they were carried away into captivity. This pretty nearly reconciles the Hebrew and the Greek, as it shows the act of God in reference to them is nearly the same when the proper meaning of the Hebrew and Greek words is considered.

Some suppose that the letter [ *ain* in *ytI [b* is changed for *j cheth*, and that the word should be read *ytI j b bachalti*, *I have hated or despised them*. An ancient and learned Jew, Rab. *Parchon*, has these remarkable words on this passage, *zy[h wzw μyτανv b μb ytI [b yknav ytwahav b yb hl hk μvbn μgw gv tyj k hbl j tm*, and *I baatti baam*, translate, *I hated them*; for *y ain* is here changed and stands for *j cheth*, as it is said, *their soul bachalah bi*, translate, *hath hated me.*” None of the Hebrew MSS. collated by *Kennicott* and *Deuteronomy Rossi* give any various reading on this word. Some of the versions have used as much latitude in their translations of the Hebrew as the Septuagint. But it is unnecessary to discuss this subject any farther; the word *I [b baal* itself, by the consent of the most learned men, signifies to *disdain* or *despise*, and this is pretty nearly the sense of the apostle’s expression.

**Verse 10. This is the covenant]** This is the nature of that glorious system of religion which I shall publish among them *after those days*, i.e., in the times of the Gospel.

**I will put my laws into their mind]** I will influence them with the principles of law, truth, holiness, &c.; and their understandings shall be fully enlightened to comprehend them.

**And write them in their hearts]** All their affections, passions, and appetites, shall be purified and filled with holiness and love to God and man; so that they shall willingly obey, and feel that *love is the fulfilling of the law*: instead of being written on *tables of stone*, they shall be written on the *fleshly tables of their hearts*.

**I will be to them a God]** These are the two grand conditions by which the parties in this covenant or agreement are bound: 1. *I will be your God*. 2. *Ye shall be my people*. As the object of religious adoration to any man is that Being from whom he expects light, direction, defence, support, and happiness: so God, promising to be their God, promises in effect to give them all these great and good things. To be God's people implies that they should give God their whole hearts, serve him with all their light and strength, and have no other object of worship or dependence but himself. Any of these conditions broken, the covenant is rendered null and void, and the other party absolved from his engagement.

**Verse 11. They shall not teach every man his neighbour]** Under the old covenant, properly speaking, there was no public instruction; before the erection of synagogues all worship was confined at first to the tabernacle, afterwards to the temple. When synagogues were established they were used principally for the bare reading of the law and the prophets; and scarcely any such thing as a *public ministry* for the continual instruction of the *common people* was found in the land till the time of John the Baptist, our Lord, and his apostles. It is true there were *prophets* who were a sort of general teachers, but neither was *their* ministry extended through all the people; and there were *schools of the prophets* and *schools of the rabbins*, but these were for the instruction of *select persons*. Hence it was necessary that every man should do what he could, under that dispensation, to *instruct his neighbour* and *brother*. But the prophecy here indicates that there should be, under the Gospel dispensation, a profusion of Divine light; and this we find to be the case by the plentiful diffusion of the sacred writings, and by an abundant Gospel ministry: and these blessings are not confined to *temples* or *palaces*, but are found in every corner of the land; so that, literally, all the people, from the least to the greatest, know and acknowledge the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent. Almost every man, at least in this land, has a Bible, and can read it; and there is not a family that has not the opportunity of hearing the Gospel preached, explained, and enforced.



Some have thought that *from the least to the greatest* is intended to signify the order in which God proceeds with a work of grace; he generally begins with the poor, and through these the *great* and the *high* often hear the Gospel of Christ.

**Verse 12. I will be merciful to their unrighteousness]** In order to be their God, as mentioned under the preceding verse, it is requisite that their iniquity should be pardoned; this is provided for by the immolation of Jesus Christ as the *covenant sacrifice*. By his blood, redemption has been purchased, and all who with penitent hearts believe on the Lord Jesus receive remission of sins, and God remembers their iniquities no more against them so as to punish them on that account. All spiritual evil against the nature and law of God is represented here under the following terms:-

1. *Unrighteousness*, **αδικια**, *injustice* or *wrong*. This is against God, his neighbour, and himself.
2. *Sin*, **αμαρτια**, deviation from the Divine law; MISSING THE MARK; aiming at happiness but never attaining it, because sought *out* of God, and *in* the breach of his laws.
3. *Iniquity*, **ανομια**, *lawlessness*, not having, knowing, or acknowledging, a law; having no law written in their hearts, and restrained by none in the conduct of their lives. All these are to be removed by God's *mercy*; and this is to be understood of his mercy in Christ Jesus.

**Verse 13. He hath made the first old.]** That is: He has considered it as *antiquated*, and as being no longer of any force.

**That which decayeth and waxeth old]** Here is an allusion to the ancient laws, which either had perished from the *tables* on which they were written through *old age*, or were fallen into *disuse*, or were *abrogated*.

Is **ready to vanish away.]** **εγγυς αφανισμου**. *Is about to be abolished*. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, speaking of the laws of Numa, which had been written on *oak boards*, says: **ας αφανισθηναι συνεβη τω χρονω**. "which had perished through old age." And the word **αφανιζειν** is used to express the *abolition of the law*. The apostle, therefore, intimates that the old covenant was just about to be abolished; but he expresses himself cautiously and tenderly, that he might not give unnecessary offence.

WHEN the apostle said, *All shall know the Lord, from the least to the greatest*, under the new covenant, he had copious authority for saying so from the rabbins themselves. In *Sohar Chadash*, fol. 42, it is said: “In the days of the Messiah knowledge shall be renewed in the world, and the law shall be made plain among all; as it is written, <sup>26133</sup> **Jeremiah 31:33**, *All shall know me, from the least to the greatest.*” We find the following legend in *Midrash Yalcut Simeoni*, part 2, fol. 46: “The holy blessed God shall sit in paradise and explain the law; all the righteous shall sit before him, and the whole heavenly family shall stand on their feet; and the holy blessed God shall sit, and the *new law*, which he is to give by *the Messiah*, shall be interpreted.”

In *Sohar Genes.*, fol. 74, col. 291, we find these remarkable words: “When the days of the Messiah shall approach, even the little children in this world shall find out the hidden things of wisdom; and in that time all things shall be revealed to all men.”

And in *Sohar Levit.*, fol. 24, col. 95: “There shall be no time like this till the Messiah comes, and then the knowledge of God shall be found in every part of the world.”

This day are all these sayings fulfilled in our ears: the word of God is multiplied; many run to and fro, and knowledge is increased; all the nations of the earth are receiving the book of God; and men of every clime, and of every degree-Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites; the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judea, in Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt, in Libya; strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes; Cretes and Arabians; Americans, Indians, and Chinese-hear, in their own tongues, the wonderful works of God.

## HEBREWS

### CHAPTER 9.

*Of the first covenant, and its ordinances, 1. The tabernacle, candlestick, table, show-bread, veil, holy of holies, censer, ark, pot of manna, Aaron's rod, tables of the covenant, cherubim of glory, and mercy seat, 2-5. How the priests served, 6, 7. What was signified by the service, 8-10. The superior excellency of Christ's ministry and sacrifice, and the efficacy of his blood, 11-26. As men must once die and be judged, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and shall come without a sin-offering, a second time, to them that expect him, 27, 28.*

#### NOTES ON CHAP. 9.

**Verse 1. The first covenant had also ordinances**] Our translators have introduced the word *covenant*, as if διαθηκη had been, if not originally in the text, yet in the apostle's mind. Several MSS., but not of good note, as well as printed *editions*, with the *Coptic* version, have σκηνη *tabernacle*; but this is omitted by ABDE, several others, both the *Syriac*, *Æthiopic*, *Armenian*, *Vulgate*, some copies of the *Itala*, and several of the Greek fathers; it is in all probability a spurious reading, the whole context showing that *covenant* is that to which the apostle refers, as that was the subject in the preceding chapter, and this is a continuation of the same discourse.

**Ordinances**] δικαιωματα. Rites and ceremonies.

**A worldly sanctuary.**] ἀγιον κοσμικον. It is supposed that the term *worldly*, here, is opposed to the term *heavenly*, <sup>σιν</sup> **Hebrews 8:5**; and that the whole should be referred to the carnality or secular nature of the tabernacle service. But I think there is nothing plainer than that the apostle is speaking here in *praise* of this sublimely emblematic service, and hence he proceeds to enumerate the various things contained in the first tabernacle, which added vastly to its *splendour* and importance; such as the table of the show-bread, the golden candlestick, the golden censer, the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, in which was the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the two tables which

God had written with his own finger: hence I am led to believe that **κοσμικος** is here taken in its proper, natural meaning, and signifies *adorned, embellished, splendid*; and hence **κοσμος**, *the world: Tota hujus universi machina, cælum et terram complectens et quicquid utroque contineter, κοσμος dicitur, quod nihil ea est mundius, pulchrius, et ornatus.* “The whole machine of this universe, comprehending the heavens and the earth, and whatsoever is contained in both, is called **κοσμος**, because nothing is more *beautiful, more fair, and more elegant.*” So Pliny, Hist. Nat., l. ii. c. 5: *Nam quem κοσμον Græci nomine ornamenti appellaverunt, eum nos a perfecta absolutaque elegantia, MUNDUM.* “That which the Greeks call **κοσμος**, *ornament*, we, (the Latins,) from its perfect and absolute elegance call *mundum*, world.” See on “<sup>COICODI</sup>Genesis 2:1”.

The Jews believe that the tabernacle was an epitome of the world; and it is remarkable, when speaking of their city, that they express this sentiment by the same Greek word, in Hebrew letters, which the apostle uses here: so in *Bereshith Rabba*, s. 19, fol. 19: **אֵוֹ הַמִּן וְלִבְּנֵי הַקּוֹזְמִיקוֹן** *kol kozmikon* (**κοσμικον**) *shelo sham hu.* “All his world is placed there.” Philo says much to the same purpose.

If my exposition be not admitted, the next most likely is, that God has a *worldly tabernacle* as well as a *heavenly one*; that he as truly *dwelt* in the Jewish tabernacle as he did in the heaven of heavens; the one being his *worldly house*, the other his *heavenly house*.

**Verse 2. For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein]** The sense is here very obscure, and the construction involved: leaving out all punctuation, which is the case with all the very ancient MSS., the verse stands thus: **σκηνη γαρ κατασκευασθη η πρωτη εν η η τε λυχνια, κ. τ. λ.** which I suppose an indifferent person, who understood the language, would without hesitation render, *For, there was the first tabernacle constructed, in which were the candlestick, &c.* And this tabernacle or dwelling may be called the *first dwelling place* which God had among men, to distinguish it from the *second dwelling place*, the temple built by Solomon; for tabernacle here is to be considered in its general sense, as implying a *dwelling*.

To have a proper understanding of what the apostle relates here, we should endeavour to take a concise view of the tabernacle erected by Moses in the wilderness. This tabernacle was the epitome of the Jewish temple; or

rather, according to this as a model was the Jewish temple built. It comprised, 1. The court where the people might enter. 2. In this was contained the altar of burnt-offerings, on which were offered the sacrifices in general, besides offerings of bread, wine, and other things. 3. At the bottom or lower end of this court was the *tent* of the covenant; the two principal parts of the tabernacle were, the holy place and the holy of holies. In the temple built by Solomon there was a court for the Levites, different from that of the people; and, at the entrance of the holy place, a vestibule. But in the tabernacle built by Moses these parts were not found, nor does the apostle mention them here.

In the holy place, as the apostle observes, there were,

1. The golden candlestick of seven branches, on the *south*.
2. The golden altar, or altar of incense, on the *north*.
3. The altar, or table of the show-bread; or where the twelve loaves, representing the twelve tribes, were laid before the Lord.

1. In each branch of the golden candlestick was a lamp; these were lighted every evening, and extinguished every morning. They were intended to give light by night. 2. The altar of incense was of gold; and a priest, chosen by lot each week, offered incense every morning and evening in a golden censer, which he probably left on the altar after the completion of the offering. 3. The table of the show-bread was covered with plates of gold; and on this, every Sabbath, they placed *twelve* loaves in two piles, six in each, which continued there all the week till the next Sabbath, when they were removed, and fresh loaves put in their place. The whole of this may be seen in all its details in the book of Exodus, from chap. xxxv. to xl. See *Calmet* also.

**Which is called the sanctuary.]** ἡ τις λεγεται αγια. *This is called holy.* This clause may apply to any of the nouns in this verse, in the nominative case, which are all of the feminine gender; and the adjective *αγια*, *holy*, may be considered here as the nominative singular feminine, agreeing with *ητις*. Several *editions* accent the words in reference to this construction. The word *σκηνη*, *tabernacle*, may be the proper antecedent; and then we may read *αγια*, instead of *αγια*: but these niceties belong chiefly to grammarians.

**Verse 3. And after the second veil]** The first veil, of which the apostle has not yet spoken, was at the entrance of the holy place, and separated the

temple from the court, and prevented the people, and even the Levites, from seeing what was in the holy place.

The *second* veil, of which the apostle speaks here, separated the holy place from the holy of holies.

**The tabernacle, which is called the Holiest of all]** That is, that part of the tabernacle which is called the holy of holies.

**Verse 4. Which had the golden censer]** It is evident that the apostle speaks here of the tabernacle built by Moses, and of the state and contents of that tabernacle as they were during the lifetime of Moses. For, as Calmet remarks, in the temple which was afterwards built there were many things *added* which were not in the tabernacle, and *several* things *left out*. The ark of the covenant and the two tables of the law were never found after the return from the Babylonish captivity. We have no proof that, even in the time of Solomon, the golden pot of manna, or the rod of Aaron, was either in or near the ark. In Solomon's temple the holy place was separated from the holy of holies by a solid *wall*, instead of a veil, and by strong wooden doors, <sup><1106B></sup> **1 Kings 6:31-33**. In the same temple there was a large vestibule before the holy place; and round about this and the holy of holies there were many chambers in three stories, <sup><1106B></sup> **1 Kings 6:5, 6**. But there was nothing of all this in the Mosaic tabernacle; therefore, says Calmet, we need not trouble ourselves to reconcile the various scriptures which mention this subject; some of which refer to the tabernacle, others to Solomon's temple, and others to the temple built by Zorobabel; which places were very different from each other.

The apostle says that the *golden censer* was in the holy of holies; but this is nowhere mentioned by Moses. But he tells us that the high priest went in, once every year, with the golden censer to burn incense; and Calmet thinks this censer was *left there* all the year, and that its place was supplied by a new one, brought in by the priest the year following. Others think it was left just within the veil, so that the priest, by putting his hand under the curtain, could take it out, and prepare it for his next entrance into the holiest.

**The ark of the covenant]** This was a sort of chest overlaid with plates of gold, in which the two tables of the law, Aaron's rod, the pot of manna, &c., were deposited. Its top, or lid, was the propitiatory or mercy-seat.

**Verse 5. And over it the cherubims of glory]** Cherubim is the plural of *cherub*, and it is absurd to add our plural termination (s) to the plural termination of the Hebrew. The *glory* here signifies the *shechinah* or symbol of the Divine presence.

**Shadowing the mercy-seat]** One at each end of the ark, with their faces turned toward each other, but looking down on the cover or propitiatory, *ιλαστηριον*, here called the *mercy-seat*.

**Of which we cannot now speak particularly.]** The apostle did not judge any farther account of these to be necessary; and I may be excused from considering them particularly here, having said so much on each in the places where they occur in the Pentateuch. What these point out or signify is thus explained by St. Cyril: Christus licet unus sit, multifariam tamen a nobis intelligitur: Ipse est *Tabernaculum* propter carnis tegumentum: Ipse est *Mensa*, quia noster cibus est et vita: Ipse est *Arca* habens legem Dei reconditam, quia est Verbum Patris: Ipse est *Candelabrum*, quia est lux spiritualis: Ipse est *Altare incensi*, quia est odor suavitatis in sanctificationem: Ipse est *Altare holocausti*, quia est hostia pro totius mundi vita in cruce oblata. “Although Christ be but one, yet he is understood by us under a variety of forms. He is the *Tabernacle*, on account of the human body in which he dwelt. He is the *Table*, because he is our Bread of life. He is the *Ark* which has the law of God enclosed within, because he is the Word of the Father. He is the *Candlestick*, because he is our spiritual light. He is the *Altar of incense*, because he is the sweet-smelling odour of sanctification. He is the *Altar of burnt-offering*, because he is the victim, by death on the cross, for the sins of the whole world.” This father has said, in a few words, what others have employed whole volumes on, by refining, spiritualizing, and allegorizing.

**Verse 6. When these thing were thus ordained]** When the tabernacle was made, and its furniture placed in it, according to the Divine direction.

**The priests went always into the first Tabernacle]** That is, into the *first part* of the tabernacle, or holy place, into which he went *every day twice, accomplishing the services*, *τας λατρειας επιτελουντες*, which included his burning the incense at the morning and evening sacrifice, dressing the lamps, removing the old show-bread and laying on the new, and sprinkling the blood of the sin-offerings before the veil <sup><BR></sup> **Leviticus 4:6:** and for these works he must have *constant access* to the place.

**Verse 7. But into the second]** That is, the holy of holies, or *second part* of the tabernacle, *the high priest alone*, once every year, that is, on one day in the year only, which was the day on which the general atonement was made. The high priest could enter into this place only on one day in the year; but on that day he might enter several times. See Lev. 16.

**Not without blood]** The day prescribed by the law for this great solemnity was the *tenth of the month Tisri*, in which the high priest brought in the incense or perfumes, which he placed on the golden censer; he brought also the blood of the bullock; and sprinkled some portion of it seven times before the ark, and the veil which separated the holy place from the holy of holies. See <sup><B1614></sup>**Leviticus 16:14**. He then came out, and, taking some of the blood of the goat which had been sacrificed, he sprinkled it between the veil and the ark of the covenant, <sup><B1615></sup>**Leviticus 16:15**.

**Which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people]** ὑπερ των του λαου αγνοηματων. For transgressions of which they were not conscious: there were so many niceties in the ritual worship of the Jews, and so many ways in which they might offend against the law and incur guilt, that it was found necessary to institute sacrifices to atone for these sins of *ignorance*. And as the high priest was also clothed with infirmity, he required to have an interest in the same sacrifice, on the same account. This was a national sacrifice; and by it the people understood that they were absolved from all the errors of the past year, and that they now had a renewed right of access to the mercy-seat.

**Verse 8. The Holy Ghost this signifying]** These services were divinely appointed, and by each of them the Holy Spirit of God is supposed to speak.

**The way into the holiest]** That full access to God was not the *common privilege* of the people, while the Mosaic economy subsisted. That the apostle means that it is only by Christ that any man and every man can approach God, is evident from <sup><S1019></sup>**Hebrews 10:19-22**, and it is about this, and not about the tabernacle of this world, that he is here discoursing.

I have already observed that the apostle appears to use the word σκηνη, or *tabernacle*, in the general sense of a *dwelling place*; and therefore applies it to the *temple*, which was reputed the *house* or *dwelling place* of God, as well as the ancient *tabernacle*. Therefore, what he speaks here concerning the *first tabernacle*, may be understood as applying with propriety to the



then Jewish *temple*, as well as to the ancient tabernacle, which, even with all their sacrifices and ceremonies, could not make the way of holiness plain, nor the way to God's favour possible.

**Verse 9. Which]** Tabernacle and its services, was a *figure*, παραβολη, a dark enigmatical representation, *for the time then present*-for that age and dispensation, and for all those who lived under it.

*In which, καθόν, during which, time or dispensation were offered both gifts and sacrifices-eucharistic offerings and victims for sin, that could not make him that did the service, whether the priest who made the offering, or the person who brought it in the behalf of his soul, perfect as pertaining to the conscience-could not take away guilt from the mind, nor purify the conscience from dead works. The whole was a figure, or dark representation, of a spiritual and more glorious system: and although a sinner, who made these offerings and sacrifices according to the law, might be considered as having done his duty, and thus he would be exempted from many ecclesiastical and legal disabilities and punishments; yet his conscience would ever tell him that the guilt of sin was still remaining, and that it was impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take it away. Thus even he that did the service best continued to be imperfect-had a guilty conscience, and an unholy heart.*

The words καθόν, *in which*, referred in the above paraphrase to τον καιρον, *the time*, are read καθήν by ABD, and several others, one copy of the Slavonic, the Vulgate, and some of the fathers, and thus refer to την σκηνην, *the tabernacle*; and this is the reading which our translators appear to have followed. Griesbach places it in his margin, as a very probable reading; but I prefer the other.

**Verse 10. In meats and drinks, and divers washings]** He had already mentioned eucharistic and sacrificial offerings, and nothing properly remained but the different kinds of clean and unclean animals which were used, or forbidden to be used, as articles of food; together with the different kinds or drinks, washings, βαπτισμοις, *baptisms, immersions, sprinklings and washings of the body and the clothes, and carnal ordinances, or things which had respect merely to the body, and could have no moral influence upon the soul, unless considered in reference to that of which they were the similitudes, or figures.*

**Carnal ordinances]** δικαιώματα σαρκος. Rites and ceremonies pertaining merely to the *body*. The word *carnal* is not used here, nor scarcely in any part of the New Testament, in that catachrestical or *degrading* sense in which many preachers and professors of Christianity take the liberty to use it.

**Imposed on them until the time of reformation.]** These rites and ceremonies were enacted, by Divine authority, as proper representations of the Gospel system, which should reform and rectify all things.

*The time of reformation, καιρος διορθωσεως, the time of rectifying, signifies the Gospel dispensation, under which every thing is set straight; every thing referred to its proper purpose and end; the ceremonial law fulfilled and abrogated; the moral law exhibited and more strictly enjoined; (see our Lord's sermon upon the mount;) and the spiritual nature of God's worship taught, and grace promised to purify the heart: so that, through the power of the eternal Spirit, all that was wrong in the soul is rectified; the affections, passions, and appetites purified; the understanding enlightened; the judgment corrected; the will refined; in a word, all things made new.*

**Verse 11. But Christ being come a high priest of good things]** I think this and the succeeding verses not happily translated: indeed, the *division* of them has led to a wrong translation; therefore they must be taken together, thus: *But the Christ, the high priest of those good things (or services) which were to come, through a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is, not of the same workmanship, entered once for all into the sanctuary; having obtained eternal redemption for us, not by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, <sup><80913></sup> **Hebrews 9:13.** *For if the blood of GOATS, and bulls, and calves, and a heifer's ashes, sprinkled on the unclean, sanctifieth to the cleansing of the flesh, (<sup><80914></sup> Hebrews 9:14,) how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, cleanse your consciences from dead works, in order to worship (or that ye may worship) the living God?**

In the above translation I have added, in <sup><80913></sup> **Hebrews 9:13, τραγων, of goats, on the authority of ABDE, three others, the Syriac, the Arabic of Erpen, Coptic, Vulgate, two copies of the Itala, and Theodoret. And I have rendered εις το λατρευειν, (<sup><80914></sup> **Hebrews 9:14,)** IN ORDER to worship, or**

THAT YE MAY *worship*; for this is the meaning of these particles **εις το** in many parts of the New Testament. I shall now make a few observations on some of the principal expressions.

**High priest of good things**] Or *services, to come*, **των μελλοντων αγαθων**. He is the High Priest of Christianity; he officiates in the behalf of all mankind; for by him are all the prayers, praises, and services of mankind offered to God; and he ever appears in the presence of God for us.

**A greater and more perfect tabernacle**] This appears to mean our Lord's *human nature*. That, in which dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, was fitly typified by the tabernacle and temple, in both of which the majesty of God dwelt.

**Not made with hands**] Though our Lord's body was a perfect human body, yet it did not come in the way of natural generation; his *miraculous conception* will sufficiently justify the expressions used here by the apostle.

**Verse 12. But by his own blood**] Here the redemption of man is attributed to the *blood of Christ*; and this blood is stated to be shed in a *sacrificial* way, precisely as the blood of bulls, goats and calves was shed under the law.

**Once**] *Once for all*, **εφαπαξ**, in opposition to the *annual* entering of the high priest into the holiest, with the blood of the *annual* victim.

**The holy place**] Or *sanctuary*, **τα αγια**, signifies *heaven*, into which Jesus entered with his own blood, as the high priest entered into the holy of holies with the blood of the *victims* which he had sacrificed.

**Eternal redemption**] **αιωνιαν λυτρωσιν**. A redemption price which should stand good *for ever*, when once offered; and an *endless redemption* from sin, in reference to the pardon of which, and reconciliation to God, there needs no other sacrifice: it is *eternal* in its *merit* and *efficacy*.

**Verse 13. Sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh**] Answers the end proposed by the law; namely, to remove legal disabilities and punishments, having the *body* and its interests particularly in view, though adumbrating or typifying the soul and its concerns.

**Verse 14. Who through the eternal Spirit**] This expression is understood two ways: 1. Of the Holy Ghost himself. As Christ's *miraculous conception* was by the *Holy Spirit*, and he wrought all his *miracles* by the

*Spirit of God*, so his *death* or final offering was made through or by the *eternal Spirit*; and by that *Spirit* he was *raised from the dead*, <sup><GIBIS></sup> **1 Peter 3:18**. Indeed, through the whole of his life he was *justified by the Spirit*; and we find that in this great work of human redemption, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were continually employed: therefore the words may be understood of the Holy Spirit properly. 2. Of the *eternal Logos* or Deity which dwelt in the man Christ Jesus, through the energy of which the offering of his humanity became an infinitely meritorious victim; therefore the Deity of Christ is here intended. But we cannot well consider one of these distinct from the other; and hence probably arose the various readings in the MSS. and versions on this article. Instead of **δια πνευματος αιωνιου**, by the *ETERNAL Spirit*, **δια πνευματος αγιου**, by the *HOLY Spirit*, is the reading of D\*, and more than twenty others of good note, besides the *Coptic, Slavonic, Vulgate*, two copies of the *Itala, Cyril, Athanasius* sometimes, *Damascenus, Chrysostom*, and some others. But the common reading is supported by ABD\*\*, and others, besides the *Syriac*, all the *Arabic, Armenian, Æthiopic, Athanasius* generally, *Theodoret, Theophylact, and Ambrosius*. This, therefore, is the reading that should be preferred, as it is probable that the *Holy Ghost*, not the *Logos*, is what the apostle had more immediately in view. But still we must say, that the *Holy Spirit*, with the *eternal Logos*, and the *almighty Father*, equally concurred in offering up the sacrifice of the human nature of Christ, in order to make atonement for the sin of the world.

**Purge your conscience**] **καθαριει την συνειδησιν**. *Purify your conscience*. The term *purify* should be everywhere, both in the translation of the Scriptures, and in preaching the Gospel, preferred to the word *purge*, which, at present, is scarcely ever used in the sense in which our translators have employed it.

**Dead works**] Sin in general, or acts to which the *penalty of death* is annexed by the law. **See the phrase explained, “<sup><S001></sup>Hebrews 6:1”**.

**Verse 15. And for this cause**] Some translate **δια τουτο**, *on account of this* (blood.) Perhaps it means no more than a mere inference, such as *therefore*, or *wherefore*.

**He is the Mediator of the new testament**] There was no proper reason why our translators should render **διαθηκη** by *testament* here, when in almost every other case they render it *covenant*, which is its proper

ecclesiastical meaning, as answering to the Hebrew **hyrb** berith, which see largely explained, <sup><011510></sup>**Genesis 15:10**, and in other places of the Pentateuch.

Very few persons are satisfied with the translation of the following verses to the 20th, particularly the 16th and 17th; at all events the word *covenant* must be retained. *He*-Jesus Christ, is *Mediator*; the **μεσιτης**, or *mediator*, was the person who witnessed the contract made between the two contracting parties, slew the victim, and sprinkled each with its blood.

**Of the new testament]** The *new contract* betwixt God and the whole human race, by *Christ Jesus* the Mediator, distinguished here from the *old covenant* between God and the *Israelites*, in which *Moses* was the mediator.

**That by means of death]** His own death upon the cross.

**For the redemption of the transgressions]** To make atonement for the transgressions which were committed under the old covenant, which the blood of bulls and calves could not do; so the death of Jesus had respect to all the time antecedent to it, as well as to all the time afterward till the conclusion of the world.

**They which are called]** The GENTILES, *might receive the promise*-might, by being brought into a covenant with God, have an equal right with the *Jews*, not merely to an inheritance such as the promised land, but to an *eternal inheritance*, and consequently infinitely superior to that of the *Jews*, inasmuch as the new covenant is superior in every point of view to the old.

How frequently the *Gentiles* are termed **οι κλητοι** and **οι κεκλημενοι**, *the called*, all St. Paul's writings show. And they were thus termed because they were *called* and *elected* in the place of the *Jews*, the ancient *called* and *elect*, who were now *divorced* and *reprobated* because of their disobedience.

**Verse 16. For where a testament is]** A learned and judicious friend furnishes me with the following translation of this and the 17th verse:—

“For where there is a covenant, it is necessary that the death of the appointed *victim* should be exhibited, because a covenant is confirmed over dead *victims*, since it is not at all valid while the appointed *victim* is alive.”

He observes,

“There is no word signifying *testator*, or *men*, in the original. **διαθεμενος** is not a substantive, but a participle, or a participial adjective, derived from the same root as **διατηκη**, and must have a substantive understood. I therefore render it *the disposed* or *appointed* victim, alluding to the manner of *disposing* or *setting apart* the pieces of the victim, when they were going to ratify a covenant; and you know well the old custom of ratifying a covenant, to which the apostle alludes. I refer to your own notes on <sup><010618></sup>**Genesis 6:18**, and <sup><011510></sup>**Genesis 15:10**.-J. C.”

Mr. Wakefield has translated the passage nearly in the same way.

“For where a covenant *is*, there must be necessarily introduced *the* death of that which establisheth the covenant; because a covenant *is* confirmed over dead things, and is of no force at all whilst that which establisheth the covenant is alive.” This is undoubtedly the meaning of this passage; and we should endeavour to forget that *testament* and *testator* were ever introduced, as they totally change the apostle’s meaning. See the observations at the end of this chapter.

**Verse 18. Whereupon] ὅθεν.** *Wherefore*, as a *victim* was required for the ratification of every covenant, the first covenant made between God and the Hebrews, by the mediation of Moses, was *not dedicated*, **εγκεκλιτισται**, renewed or solemnized, *without blood*-without the death of a victim, and the aspersion of its blood.

**Verse 19. When Moses had spoken every precept]** The place to which the apostle alludes is <sup><022404></sup>**Exodus 24:4-8**, where the reader is requested to consult the notes.

**And sprinkled both the book]** The sprinkling of the *book* is not mentioned in the place to which the apostle refers, (see above,) nor did it in fact take place. The words **αυτο τε το βιβλιον**, and *the book itself*, should be referred to **λαβων**, *having taken*, and not to **επραντισε**, *he sprinkled*; the verse should therefore be read thus: *For after every commandment of the law had been recited by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of the calves, and of the goats, with water and scarlet wool, and the book itself, and sprinkled all the people.* The rite was performed thus: Having received the blood of the calves and goats into basins, and

mingled it with water to prevent it from coagulating, he then took a bunch of *hyssop*, and having bound it together with *thread* made of *scarlet wool*, he dipped this in the basin, and sprinkled the blood and water upon the people who were nearest to him, and who might be considered on this occasion the representatives of all the rest; for it is impossible that he should have had blood enough to have sprinkled the whole of the congregation.

Some think that the blood was actually sprinkled *upon the book itself*, which contained the written covenant, to signify that the covenant itself was ratified by the blood.

**Verse 20. This is the blood of the testament]** (*covenant.*) Our Lord refers to the conduct of Moses here, and partly quotes his words in the institution of the eucharist: *This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins,* <sup><4052></sup>**Matthew 26:28**. And by thus using the words and applying them, he shows that *his* sacrificial blood was intended by the blood shed and sprinkled on this occasion, and that by it alone the remission of sins is obtained.

**Verse 21. He sprinkled-with blood-all the vessels of the ministry.]** To intimate that every thing used by sinful man is polluted, and that nothing can be acceptable in the sight of a holy God that has not in effect the sprinkling of the atoning blood.

**Verse 22. And almost all things are-purged with blood]** The apostle says *almost*, because in some cases certain vessels were purified by *water*, some by *fire*, <sup><4123></sup>**Numbers 31:23**, and some with the *ashes* of the *red heifer*, <sup><4192></sup>**Numbers 19:2-10**, but it was always understood that every thing was at *first* consecrated by the blood of the victim.

**And without shedding of blood is no remission.]** The apostle shows fully here what is one of his great objects in the whole of this epistle, viz. that there is no salvation but through the sacrificial death of Christ, and to prefigure this the law itself would not grant any remission of sin without the blood of a victim. This is a maxim even among the Jews themselves, **µdb al a hrpk `ya ein capparrah ella bedam**, "There is no expiation but by blood." *Yoma*, fol. 5, 1; *Menachoth*, fol. 93, 2. Every sinner has forfeited his *life* by his transgressions, and the law of God requires his *death*; the blood of the victim, which is its *life*, is shed as a *substitute* for the *life* of the sinner. By these victims the sacrifice of Christ was typified.

He gave his *life* for the *life* of the world; human life for human life, but a life infinitely dignified by its union with God.

**Verse 23. The patterns of things in the heavens]** That is: The tabernacle and all its utensils, services, &c., must be purified *by these*, viz.: *The blood of calves and goats, and the sprinkling of the blood and water with the bunch of hyssop bound about with scarlet wool.* These are called *patterns*, **υποδειγματα**, *exemplars*, earthly things, which were the representatives of heavenly things. And there is no doubt that every thing in the tabernacle, its parts, divisions, utensils, ministry, &c., as appointed by God, were representations of *celestial matters*; but how *far* and in *what way* we cannot now see.

*Purification* implies, not only cleansing from defilement, but also *dedication* or *consecration*. All the utensils employed in the tabernacle service were thus *purified* though incapable of any moral pollution.

**But the heavenly things themselves]** Some think this means *heaven* itself, which, by receiving the sacrificed body of Christ, which appears in the presence of God for us, may be said to be *purified*, i.e., *set apart* for the reception of the souls of those who have found redemption in his blood. 2. Others think the *body of Christ* is intended, which is the *tabernacle* in which his Divinity dwelt; and that this might be said to be *purified* by its own sacrifice, as he is said, <sup><B1719></sup>**John 17:19**, to *sanctify himself*; that is, to *consecrate* himself unto God as a sin-offering for the redemption of man. 3. Others suppose the Church is intended, which he is to *present to the Father without spot or wrinkle or any such thing*. 4. As the *entrance* to the holy of holies must be made by the sprinkling of the blood of the sacrifice, and as that holy of holies represented *heaven*, the apostle's meaning seems to be that there was and could be no entrance to the holiest but through his blood; and therefore, when by a more perfect tabernacle, <sup><S911></sup>**Hebrews 9:11, 12**, he passed into the heavens, not with the blood of bulls and goats, but by his own blood, he thus purified or laid open the entrance to the holiest, by a more valuable sacrifice than those required to open the entrance of the holy of holies. *It was necessary*, therefore, for God had appointed it so, that the *tabernacle* and its *parts*, &c., which were *patterns of things in the heavens*, should be *consecrated* and *entered* with such sacrifices as have already been mentioned; but the heaven of heavens into which Jesus entered, and whither he will bring all his faithful followers, must be propitiated, consecrated, and entered, by the infinitely *better*



*sacrifice* of his own body and blood. That this is the meaning appears from the following verse.

**Verse 24. Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands]**

He is not gone into the *holy of holies* of the *tabernacle* or *temple*, as the Jewish high priest does once in the year with the blood of the victim, to sprinkle it before the mercy-seat there; but *into heaven itself*, which he has thus opened to all believers, having made the propitiatory offering by which both he and those whom he represents are entitled to enter and enjoy eternal blessedness. And hence we may consider that Christ, appearing in his crucified body before the throne, is a real offering of himself to the Divine justice in behalf of man; and that there he continues in the constant act of being offered, so that every penitent and believer, coming unto God through him, find him their ever ready and available sacrifice, officiating as the High Priest of mankind in the presence of God.

**Verse 25. Nor yet that he should offer himself often]** The sacrifice of Christ is not like that of the Jewish high priest; his must be offered every year, Christ has offered himself *once for all*: and this sacrificial act has ever the same efficacy, his crucified body being still a powerful and infinitely meritorious sacrifice before the throne.

**Verse 26. For then must he often have suffered]** In the counsel of God, Christ was considered the *Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*, <sup><6138></sup>**Revelation 13:8**, so that all believers *before* his advent were equally interested in his sacrificial death with those who have lived *since* his coming. Humanly speaking, the virtue of the annual atonement could not last long, and must be repeated; Christ's sacrifice is ever the same; his life's blood is still considered as in the act of being *continually poured out*. See <sup><6116></sup>**Revelation 5:6**.

**The end of the world]** The conclusion of the Jewish dispensation, the Christian dispensation being that which shall continue till the end of time.

**To put away sin]** εἰς ἀθετησὶν ἁμαρτίας. *To abolish the sin-offerings*; i.e. to put an end to the *Mosaic economy* by his one offering of himself. It is certain that, after Christ had offered himself, the typical sin-offerings of the law ceased; and this was expressly foretold by the Prophet Daniel, <sup><2024></sup>**Daniel 9:24**. Some think that the expression should be applied to the *putting away the guilt, power, and being* of sin from the souls of believers.

**Verse 27. As it is appointed]** ἀποκειται. It is *laid before them* by the Divine decree: *Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return. Unto men generally, during the course of the present world, not all men as some falsely quote; for Enoch and Elijah have not died, and those that shall be alive at the day of judgment shall not die, but be changed.*

**But after this the judgment]** They shall die but *once*, and be judged but once, therefore there is no *metempsychosis*, no *transmigration from body to body*; judgment succeeds to dying; and as they shall be judged but *once*, they can die but *once*.

**Verse 28. So Christ was once offered]** He shall die no more; he has borne away the sins of many, and what he has done once shall stand good for ever. Yet *he will appear a second time without sin, χωρις αμαρτιας, without a sin-offering; THAT he has already made.*

**Unto salvation.]** To deliver the *bodies* of believers from the *empire of death*, to reunite them to their purified souls, and bring both into his eternal glory. This is *salvation*, and the very highest of which the human being is capable. Amen! Even so, come Lord Jesus! Hallelujah!

1. IN the preceding notes I have given my reasons for dissenting from our translation of the 15th, 16th, and 17th verses. Many learned men are of the same opinion; but I have not met with one who appears to have treated the whole in a more satisfactory manner than Dr. *Macknight*, and for the edification of my readers I shall here subjoin the substance of what he has written on this point.

“Verse 15. *Mediator of the new covenant.* See <sup><8007></sup> **Hebrews 8:7.**

The word διαθηκη, here translated *covenant*, answers to the Hebrew word *berith*, which all the translators of the Jewish Scriptures have understood to signify *a covenant*. The same signification our translators have affixed to the word διαθηκη, as often as it occurs in the writings of the evangelists and apostles, except in the history of the institution of the supper, and in <sup><4006></sup> **2 Corinthians 3:6:** and <sup><8072></sup> **Hebrews 7:22,** and in the passage under consideration; in which places, copying the Vulgate version, they have rendered διαθηκη by the word *testament*. Beza, following the Syriac Version, translates διαθηκη everywhere by the words *foedas, pactum*, except in the 16th, 17th, and 20th verses of this chapter, where likewise following the Syriac version, he has

*testamentum*. Now if **καινη διαθηκη**, *the new testament*, in the passages above mentioned, means the Gospel covenant, as all interpreters acknowledge, **παλαια διαθηκη**, *the old testament*, <sup><87814></sup>**2 Corinthians 3:14**, and **πρωτη διαθηκη**, *the first testament*, <sup><88015></sup>**Hebrews 9:15**, must certainly be the *Sinaitic covenant* or *law of Moses*, as is evident also from <sup><88020></sup>**Hebrews 9:20**. On this supposition it may be asked, 1. In what sense the Sinaitic covenant or law of Moses, which required perfect obedience to all its precepts under penalty of death, and allowed no mercy to any sinner, however penitent, can be called a *testament*, which is a deed conferring something valuable on a person who may accept or refuse it, as he thinks fit? Besides, the transaction at Sinai, in which God promised to continue the Israelites in Canaan, on condition they refrained from the wicked practices of the Canaanites, and observed his statutes, Lev. xviii., can in no sense be called a testament. 2. If the law of Moses be a testament, and if, to render that testament valid, the death of the testator be necessary, as the English translators have taught us, <sup><88016></sup>**Hebrews 9:16**, I ask who it was that made the testament of the law? Was it God or Moses? And did either of them die to render it valid? 3. I observe that even the Gospel covenant is improperly called a *testament*, because, notwithstanding all its blessings were procured by the death of Christ, and are most freely bestowed, it lost any validity which, as a testament, it is thought to have received by the death of Christ, when he revived again on the third day. 4. The things affirmed in the common translation of <sup><88015></sup>**Hebrews 9:15**, concerning *the new testament*, namely, that it has a Mediator; that that Mediator is the Testator himself; that there were transgressions of a former testament, for the redemption of which the Mediator of the new testament died; and, <sup><88019></sup>**Hebrews 9:19**, that the first testament was made by sprinkling the people in whose favour it was made with blood; are all things quite foreign to a testament. For was it ever known in any nation that a testament needed a mediator? Or that the testator was the mediator of his own testament? Or that it was necessary the testator of a new testament should die to redeem the transgressions of a former testament? Or that any testament was ever made by sprinkling the legatees with blood? These things however were usual in covenants. They had mediators who assisted at the making of them, and were sureties for the performance of

them. They were commonly ratified by sacrifices, the blood of which was sprinkled on the parties; withal, if any former covenant was infringed by the parties, satisfaction was given at the making of a second covenant. 5. By calling Christ *the Mediator of the new testament* our thoughts are turned away entirely from the view which the Scriptures give us of his death as a sacrifice for sin; whereas, if he is called *the Mediator of the new covenant*, which is the true translation of **διαθηκης καινης μεσιτης**, that appellation directly suggests to us that the new covenant was procured and ratified by his death as a sacrifice for sin. Accordingly Jesus, on account of his being made a priest by the oath of God, is said to be *the Priest or Mediator of a better covenant* than that of which the Levitical priests were the mediators. I acknowledge that in classical Greek **διαθηκη**, commonly signifies *a testament*. Yet, since the Seventy have uniformly translated the Hebrew word *berith*, which properly signifies a *covenant*, by the word **διαθηκη**, in writing Greek the Jews naturally used **διαθηκη** for **σονθηκη** as our translators have acknowledged by their version of <sup><31016></sup>**Hebrews 10:16**. To conclude: Seeing in the verses under consideration **διαθηκη** may be translated *a covenant*; and seeing, when so translated, these verses make a better sense, and agree better with the scope of the apostle's reasoning than if it were translated *a testament*; we can be at no loss to know which translation of **διαθηκη** in these verses ought to be preferred. Nevertheless, the absurdity of a phraseology to which readers have been long accustomed, without attending distinctly to its meaning, does not soon appear.

*“He is the Mediator.* Here it is remarkable that Jesus is not called **διαθεμενος**, *the Testator*, but **μεσιτης**, *the Mediator*, of the new covenant; first, because he procured the new covenant for mankind, in which the pardon of sin is promised; for, as the apostle tells us, his death, as a sacrifice for sin, is the consideration on account of which the pardon of the transgressions of the first covenant is granted. Secondly, because the new covenant having been ratified as well as procured by the death of Christ, he is fitly called *the Mediator* of that covenant in the same sense that God's oath is called, <sup><30517></sup>**Hebrews 6:17**, *the mediator, or confirmor, of his promise*. Thirdly, Jesus, who died to procure the new covenant,

being appointed by God the high priest thereof, to dispense his blessings, he is on that account also called, <sup><80816></sup>**Hebrews 8:6**, *the mediator of that better covenant*.

“Verse 16. *For where a covenant [is made by sacrifice,] there is a necessity that the death of the appointed sacrifice be produced. This elliptical expression must be completed, if, as is probable, the apostle had now in his eye the covenant which God made with Noah and Abraham. His covenant is recorded, <sup><10030></sup>Genesis 8:20, where we are told, that on coming out of the ark Noah offered a burnt-offering of every clean beast and fowl. And the Lord smelled a sweet savour. And the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground, neither will I again smite any more every living thing as I have done. This promise or declaration God called his covenant with men, and with every living creature. <sup><10000></sup>Genesis 9:9, 10. In like manner God made a covenant with Abraham by sacrifice, <sup><10150></sup>Genesis 15:9, 18, and with the Israelites at Sinai, <sup><12408></sup>Exodus 24:8. See also <sup><19305></sup>Psalms 50:5. By making his covenants with men in this manner, God taught them that his intercourses with them were all founded on an expiation afterwards to be made for their sins by the sacrifice of the seed of the woman, the bruising of whose heel, or death, was foretold at the fall. On the authority of these examples, the practice of making covenants by sacrifice prevailed among the Jews; <sup><24418></sup>Jeremiah 34:18; Zecariah 9:11; and even among the heathens; for they had the knowledge of these examples by tradition. *Stabant et cæsa jungebant fœdera porca*; Virgil, *Æneid*, viii. 611. Hence the phrases, *fœdus ferire* and *percutere*, to strike or kill the covenant.*

“*There is a necessity that the death του διαθεμενου, of the appointed. Here we may supply either the word θυματος, sacrifice, or ζωου, animal, which might be either a calf, a goat, a bull, or any other animal which the parties making the covenant chose. διαθεμενου is the participle of the second aorist of the middle voice of the verb διατιθημι, constituo, I appoint.*

Wherefore its primary and literal signification is, *of the appointed*. Our translators have given the word this sense, <sup><4722></sup>**Luke 22:29**; *καγω διατιθεμαι υμιν, καθως διετιθετο μοι ο πατηρ μου, βασιλειαν. And I appoint to you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed to me a kingdom.*

“*Be brought in*; **θανατον αναγκη φερεσθαι του διαθεμενου**, Elsner, vol. ii., p. 381, has shown that the word **φερεσθαι** is sometimes used in a forensic sense for what is *produced*, or *proved*, or made apparent in a court of judicature. Wherefore the apostle’s meaning is, that it is necessary the death of the appointed sacrifice be brought in, or produced, at the making of the covenant. In the margin of our Bibles this clause is rightly translated, *be brought in*. See <sup><4237></sup>**Acts 25:7**, where **φεροντες** is used in the forensic sense.

“Verse 17. *A covenant is firm over dead sacrifices*; **επι νεκοις, νεκροις** being an adjective, it must have a substantive agreeing with it, either expressed or understood. The substantive understood in this place, I think, is **θυμασι**, *sacrifices*; for which reason I have supplied it in the translation. Perhaps the word **ζωοις**, *animals*, may be equally proper; especially as, in the following clause, **διαθεμενος** is in the gender of the animals appointed for the sacrifice. Our translators have supplied the word **ανθρωποις**, *men*, and have translated **επι νεκροις**, *after men are dead*, contrary to the propriety of the phrase.

“*It never hath force whilst the appointed liveth*; **οτε ζη ο διαθεμενος**. Supply **μοσχος**, or **τραγος**, or **ταυρος**. *whilst the calf, or goat, or bull, appointed for the sacrifice of ratification, liveth*. The apostle having, in <sup><3915></sup>**Hebrews 9:15**, showed that Christ’s death was necessary as **ο μεσιτης**, *the Mediator*, that is, *the procurer*, and *ratifier* of the new covenant, he in the 16th and 17th verses observes that, since God’s covenants with men were all ratified by sacrifice to show that his intercourses with men are founded on the sacrifice of his Son, it was necessary that the new covenant itself should be ratified by his Son’s actually dying as a sacrifice.

“The faultiness of the common translation of the 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, and 20th verses of this chapter having been already shown in the notes, nothing needs be added here, except to call the reader’s attention to the propriety and strength of the apostle’s reasoning, as it appears in the translation of these verses which I have given, compared with his reasoning as represented in the common version.”

2. It is supposed that in **Hebrews 9:28**, the apostle, in speaking about Christ's bearing the sins of many, alludes to the ceremony of the *scape goat*. This mysterious sacrifice was to be presented to God, **Leviticus 16:7**, and the sins of the people were to be confessed over the head of it, **Leviticus 16:21**, and after this the goat was dismissed into a land uninhabited, laden, as the institution implied, with the sins of the people; and this the word *αβεεγκειν*, *to bear or carry away*, seems to imply. So truly as the goat did metaphorically bear away the sins of the many, so truly did Christ literally bear the punishment due to our sins; and in reference to every believer, has so *borne them away* that they shall never more rise in judgment against him.

3. In Christ's coming, or *appearing the second time*, it is very probable, as Dr. Doddridge and others have conjectured, that there is an allusion to the return of the high priest from the inner tabernacle; for, after appearing there in the presence of God, and making atonement for the people in the plain dress of an ordinary priest, **Leviticus 16:23, 24**, he came out arrayed in his magnificent robes, to bless the people, who waited for him in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation. "But there will be this difference," says Dr. Macknight, "between the return of Christ to bless his people, and the return of the high priest to bless the congregation. The latter, after coming out of the most holy place, made a new atonement in his pontifical robes for himself and for the people, **Leviticus 16:24**, which showed that the former atonement was not *real* but *typical*. Whereas Jesus, after having made atonement, [and presented himself in heaven, before God,] will not return to the earth for the purpose of making himself a sacrifice the second time; but having procured an eternal redemption for us, by the sacrifice of himself once offered, he will return for the purpose of declaring to them who wait for him that they are accepted, and of bestowing on them the great blessing of eternal life. This reward he, being surrounded with the glory of the Father, **Matthew 16:27**, will give them in the presence of an assembled universe, both as their *King* and their *Priest*. This is the great salvation which Christ came to preach, and which was confirmed to the world by them who heard him: **Hebrews 2:3**." Reader, lay this sincerely to heart!

4. The *form* in which the high priest and the ordinary priests were to bless the people, after burning the incense in the tabernacle, is prescribed, **Numbers 6:23-26**. Literally translated from the Hebrew it is as follows, and consists of three parts or benedictions:—

1. May Jehovah bless thee, and preserve thee!
2. May Jehovah cause his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee!
3. May Jehovah lift up his faces upon thee, and may he put prosperity unto thee! (See my notes on the place.)

We may therefore say that Christ, our High Priest, came to *bless* each of us, by turning us away from our iniquity. And let no one ever expect to see him at his second coming with joy, unless he have, in this life, been turned away from *his* iniquity, and obtained remission of all his sins, and that holiness without which none can see God. Reader, the time of his reappearing is, to thee, at hand! Prepare to meet thy God!

On the word *conscience*, which occurs so often in this chapter, and in other parts of this epistle, see the observations at the end of “~~81325~~ **Hebrews 13:25**”.



## HEBREWS

### CHAPTER 10.

*The insufficiency of the legal sacrifices to take away sin, 1-4. The purpose and will of God, as declared by the Psalmist, relative to the salvation of the world by the incarnation of Christ; and our sanctification through that will, 5-10. Comparison between the priesthood of Christ and that of the Jews, 11-14. The new covenant which God promised to make, and the blessings of it, 15-17. The access which genuine believers have to the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 18-20. Having a High Priest over the Church of God, we should have faith, walk uprightly, hold fast our profession, exhort and help each other, and maintain Christian communion, 21-25. The danger and awful consequences of final apostasy, 26-31. In order to our perseverance, we should often reflect on past mercies, and the support afforded us in temptations and afflictions; and not cast away our confidence, for we shall receive the promise if we patiently fulfil the will of God, 32-37. The just by faith shall live; but the soul that draws back shall die, 38. The apostle's confidence in the believing Hebrews, 39.*

#### NOTES ON CHAP. 10.

**Verse 1.** The law, having a shadow of good things to come] *A shadow, σκία*, signifies, 1. *Literally*, the shade cast from a body of any kind, interposed between the place on which the shadow is projected, and the sun or light; the rays of the light not shining on that place, because intercepted by the opacity of the body, through which they cannot pass. 2. It signifies, *technically*, a sketch, rude plan, or imperfect draught of a building, landscape, man, beast, &c. 3. It signifies, *metaphorically*, any faint adumbration, symbolical expression, imperfect or obscure image of a thing; and is opposed to *σωμα*, *body*, or the *thing* intended to be thereby defined. 4. It is used *catachrestically* among the Greek writers, as *umbra* is among the Latins, to signify any thing *vain, empty, light, not solid*; thus *Philostratus*, Vit. Soph., lib. i. cap. 20: ὅτι σκία καὶ οὐεῖρατα αἰ ἡδοναὶ πασαί. *All pleasures are but SHADOWS and dreams.* And *Cicero*, in *Pison.*, cap. 24: *Omnes umbras falsæ gloriae consectari.* “All pursue the

SHADOWS of FALSE GLORY.” And again, *Deuteronomy Offic.*, lib. iii. cap. 17: *Nos veri juris germanæque justitiæ solidam et expressam effigiem nullam tenemus; umbra et itnaginibus utimur.* “We have no solid and express effigy of true law and genuine justice, but we employ shadows and images to represent them.”

And **not the very image**] **ΕΙΚΩΝ**, *image*, signifies, 1. A simple *representation*, from **ΕΙΚΩ**, *I am like*. 2. The *form* or particular fashion of a thing. 3. The *model* according to which any thing is formed. 4. The *perfect image* of a thing as opposed to a faint representation. 5. *Metaphorically*, a *similitude*, agreement, or conformity.

The law, with all its ceremonies and sacrifices, was only a *shadow* of spiritual and eternal good. The Gospel is the *image* or *thing itself*, as including every spiritual and eternal good.

We may note *three* things here: 1. The *shadow* or general outline, limiting the size and proportions of the thing to be represented. 2. The *image* or *likeness* completed from this shadow or general outline, whether represented on paper, canvass, or in statuary, 3. The *person* or *thing* thus represented in its actual, natural state of existence; or what is called here *the very image of the things*, **ΑΥΤΗΝ ΤΗΝ ΕΙΚΟΝΑ ΤΩΝ ΠΡΑΓΜΑΤΩΝ**. Such is the *Gospel*, when compared with the *law*; such is *Christ*, when compared with *Aaron*; such is his *sacrifice*, when compared with the *Levitical offerings*; such is the *Gospel remission of sins* and *purification*, when compared with those afforded by the law; such is the *Holy Ghost*, ministered by the Gospel, when compared with its types and shadows in the Levitical service; such the *heavenly rest*, when compared with the *earthly Canaan*. Well, therefore, might the apostle say, *The law was only the shadow of good things to come.*

**Can never-make the comers thereunto perfect.]** Cannot remove guilt from the conscience, or impurity from the heart. I leave *preachers* to improve these points.

**Verse 2. Would they not have ceased to be offered?]** Had they made an effectual reconciliation for the sins of the world, and contained in their once offering a plenitude of permanent merit, they would have ceased to be offered, at least in reference to any individual who had once offered them; because, in such a case, his conscience would be satisfied that its guilt had been taken away. But no Jew pretended to believe that even the annual

atonement cancelled his sin before God; yet he continued to make his offerings, the law of God having so enjoined, because these sacrifices pointed out that which was to come. They were offered, therefore, not in *consideration* of their own efficacy, but as referring to Christ; **See on “~~800~~ Hebrews 9:9”**.

**Verse 4. For it is not possible]** Common sense must have taught them that shedding the blood of bulls and goats could never satisfy Divine justice, nor take away guilt from the conscience; and God intended that they should understand the matter so: and this the following quotation from the Psalmist sufficiently proves.

**Verse 5. When he (the Messiah) cometh into the world]** Was about to be incarnated, *He saith* to God the Father, *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not*-it was never thy *will* and design that the sacrifices under thy own law should be considered as making atonement for sin, they were only designed to point out my incarnation and consequent sacrificial death, and therefore *a body hast thou prepared me*, by a miraculous conception in the womb of a virgin, according to thy word, *The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent*.

**A body hast thou prepared me]** The quotation in this and the two following verses is taken from Psalm xl., 6th, 7th, and 8th verses, as they stand now in the Septuagint, with scarcely any variety of reading; but, although the general meaning is the same, they are widely different in verbal expression in the Hebrew. David's words are, *yl tyrk μynza oznayim caritha li*, which we translate, *My ears hast thou opened*; but they might be more properly rendered, *My ears hast thou bored*, that is, thou hast made me *thy servant for ever*, to dwell in thine own house; for the allusion is evidently to the custom mentioned, ~~(12102)~~ **Exodus 21:2**, &c.: “If thou buy a Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve, and in the seventh he shall go out free; but if the servant shall positively say, I love my master, &c., I will not go out free, then his master shall bring him to the door post, and shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall serve him for ever.”

But how is it possible that the Septuagint and the apostle should take a meaning so totally different from the sense of the Hebrew? Dr. Kennicott has a very ingenious conjecture here: he supposes that the Septuagint and apostle express the meaning of the words as they stood in the copy from which the Greek translation was made; and that the present Hebrew text is

corrupted in the word **μynza oznayim**, ears, which has been written through carelessness for **hwg za az gevah**, THEN A BODY. The first syllable **za**, THEN, is the same in both; and the latter **μyn**, which joined to **za**, makes **μynza oznayim**, might have been easily mistaken for **hwg gevah**, BODY; **n nun**, being very like **g gimel**; **y yod**, like **w vau**; and **h he**, like final **μ mem**; especially if the line on which the letters were written in the MS. happened to be blacker than ordinary, which has often been a cause of mistake, it might have been easily taken for the under stroke of the **mem**, and thus give rise to a corrupt reading: add to this the root **hrk carah**, signifies as well to **prepare as to open, bore, &c.** On this supposition the ancient copy, translated by the Septuagint, and followed by the apostle, must have read the text thus: **yl tyrk hwg za az gevah caritha li, σωμα δε κατηρτισω μοι**, **then a body thou hast prepared me**: thus the Hebrew text, the version of the Septuagint, and the apostle, will agree in what is known to be an indisputable fact in Christianity, namely, that Christ was **incarnated** for the sin of the world.

The **Æthiopic** has nearly the same reading; the **Arabic** has both, **A body hast thou prepared me, and mine ears thou hast opened**. But the **Syriac**, the **Chaldee**, and the **Vulgate**, agree with the present Hebrew text; and none of the MSS. collated by **Kennicott** and **Deuteronomy Rossi** have any various reading on the disputed words.

It is remarkable that all the offerings and sacrifices which were considered to be 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.

Four kinds are here specified, both by the psalmist and the apostle, viz.: SACRIFICE, **j bz zebach, θυσια**. OFFERING, **hj nm minchah, προσφορα**. BURNT-OFFERING, **hl w[ olah, ολοκαυτωμα**. SIN-OFFERING, **hacj chataah, περι αμαρτιας**. Of all these we may say, with the apostle, it was impossible that the blood of bulls and goats, &c., should take away sin.

**Verse 6. Thou hast had no pleasure.]** Thou couldst never be pleased with the victims under the law; thou couldst never consider them as

atonements for sin; as they could never satisfy thy justice, nor make thy law honourable.

**Verse 7. In the volume of the book]** *rps tlgmb bimgillath sepher*, “in the *roll* of the book.” Anciently, books were written on skins and rolled up. Among the Romans these were called *volumina*, from *volvo*, *I roll*; and the Pentateuch, in the Jewish synagogues, is still written in this way. There are two wooden rollers; on one they roll *on*, on the other they roll *off*, as they proceed in reading. The *book* mentioned here must be the *Pentateuch*, or five books of Moses; for in David’s time no other part of Divine revelation had been committed to writing. This whole book speaks about Christ, and his accomplishing the *will* of God; not only in, *The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent*, and, *In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed*, but in all the *sacrifices* and sacrificial rites mentioned in the law.

**To do thy will]** God *willed* not the sacrifices under the law, but he *willed* that a human victim of infinite merit should be offered for the redemption of mankind. That there might be *such a victim*, a *body* was prepared for the eternal Logos; and in that body *he came* to do the *will of God*, that is, to suffer and die for the sins of the world.

**Verse 9. He taketh away the first]** The offerings, sacrifices, burnt-offerings, and sacrifices for sin, which were prescribed by the *law*.

**That he may establish the second.]** The offering of the *body of Jesus* once for all. It will make little odds in the meaning if we say, he taketh away the first *covenant*, that he may establish the second *covenant*; he takes away the first *dispensation*, that he may establish the second; he takes away the *law*, that he may establish the *Gospel*. In all these cases the sense is nearly the same: I prefer the *first*.

**Verse 10. By the which will we are sanctified]** Closing in with this so solemnly declared *WILL of God*, that there is no name given under heaven among men, by which we can be saved, but Jesus the Christ, we believe in him, find redemption in his blood, and are sanctified unto God through the sacrificial *offering of his body*.

1. Hence we see that the sovereign *WILL* of God is, that Jesus should be incarnated; that he should suffer and die, or, in the apostle’s words, *taste*

*death for every man*; that all should believe on him, and be saved from their sins: for this is the WILL of God, our *sanctification*.

2. And as the apostle grounds this on the words of the psalm, we see that it is the WILL of God that that system shall end; for as the essence of it is contained in its *sacrifices*, and God says he *will not* have these, and has prepared the *Messiah* to do his will, i.e. to *die for men*, hence it necessarily follows, from the psalmist himself, that the introduction of the Messiah into the world is the abolition of the law, and that his sacrifice is that which shall last for ever.

**Verse 11. Every priest standeth]** The office of the Jewish priest is here compared with the office of our High Priest. The Jewish priest *stands* daily at the altar, like a servant ministering, *repeating* the same sacrifices; our High Priest offered himself once for all, and *sat down* at the right hand of God, as the only-begotten Son and Heir of all things, <sup><881012></sup>**Hebrews 10:12**. This *continual* offering argued the *imperfection* of the sacrifices. Our Lord's *once* offering, proves his was *complete*.

**Verse 13. Till his enemies be made his footstool.]** Till all that oppose his high priesthood and sacrificial offering shall be defeated, routed, and confounded; and acknowledge, in their punishment, the supremacy of his power as universal and eternal King, who refused to receive him as their *atoning* and *sanctifying Priest*. There is also an oblique reference here to the destruction of the Jews, which was then at hand; for Christ was about to *take away the second* with an overwhelming flood of desolations.

**Verse 14. For by one offering]** His death upon the cross.

**He hath perfected for ever.]** He has procured remission of sins and holiness; for it is well observed here, and in several parts of this epistle, that *τελειωω*, *to make perfect*, is the same as *αφεσιν αμαρτιων ποιωω*, *to procure remission of sins*.

**Them that are sanctified.]** *τους αγιαζομενους*. Them that have received the sprinkling of the blood of this offering. These, therefore, receiving redemption through that blood, have no need of any other offering; as this was a complete atonement, purification, and title to eternal glory.

**Verse 15. The Holy Ghost-is a witness to us]** The words are quoted from <sup><2413></sup>**Jeremiah 31:33, 34**, and here we are assured that Jeremiah spoke by the inspiration of the Spirit of God.

**Had said before]** See <sup><8010></sup>**Hebrews 8:10, 12**, and the notes there.

**Verse 18. Now where remission of these is]** In any case, where sin is once pardoned, there is no farther need of a sin-offering; but every believer on Christ has his sin blotted out, and therefore needs no other offering for that sin.

“If,” says Dr. Macknight, “after remission is granted to the sinner, there is no need of any more sacrifice for sin; and if Christ, by offering himself once, has *perfected for ever the sanctified*, <sup><8104></sup>**Hebrews 10:14**, the *sacrifice of the mass*, as it is called, about which the Romish clergy employ themselves so incessantly, and to which the *papists* trust for the pardon of their sins, has no foundation in Scripture. Nay, it is an evident impiety, as it proceeds upon the supposition that the offering of the body of Christ once is not sufficient to procure the pardon of sin, but must be *frequently* repeated. If they reply that their mass is only the representation and commemoration of the sacrifice of Christ, they give up the cause, and renounce an article of their faith, established by the council of Trent, which, in session xxii. can. 1, 3, declared *the sacrifice of the mass to be a true and propitiatory sacrifice for sin*. I say, give up the cause; for the *representation* and *commemoration* of a sacrifice is not a sacrifice. Farther, it cannot be affirmed that the body of Christ is offered in the mass, unless it can be said that, as often as it is offered, *Christ has suffered death*; for the apostle says expressly, <sup><8025></sup>**Hebrews 9:25, 26**, that if Christ offered himself often, *he must often have suffered since the foundation of the world.*” Let him disprove this who can.

**Verse 19. Having therefore, brethren, boldness]** The apostle, having now finished the doctrinal part of his epistle, and fully shown the superiority of Christ to all men and angels, and the superiority of his priesthood to that of Aaron and his successors, the absolute inefficacy of the Jewish sacrifices to make atonement for sin, and the absolute efficacy of that of Christ to make reconciliation of man to God, proceeds now to show what influence these doctrines should have on the hearts and lives of those who believe in his merits and death.

**Boldness to enter]** *παρρησιαν εις την εισοδον*. *Liberty, full access to the entrance of the holy place, των αγιων*. This is an allusion to the case of the high priest going into the holy of holies. He went with fear and trembling, because, if he had neglected the smallest item prescribed by the law, he could expect nothing but death. Genuine believers can come even to the throne of God with confidence, as they carry into the Divine presence the infinitely meritorious blood of the great atonement; and, being justified through that blood, they have a right to all the blessings of the eternal kingdom.

**Verse 20. By a new and living way]** It is a *new* way; no *human* being had ever before entered into the heaven of heavens; Jesus in human nature was the first, and thus he has opened the way to heaven to mankind, his own resurrection and ascension to glory being the proof and pledge of ours.

The way is called *οδον προσφατον και ζωσαν*, *new or fresh, and living*. This is evidently an allusion to the blood of the victim *newly shed, uncoagulated*, and consequently proper to be used for *sprinkling*. The blood of the Jewish victims was fit for sacrificial purposes only so long as it was *warm and fluid*, and might be considered as yet possessing its *vitality*; but when it grew *cold*, it *coagulated*, lost its *vitality*, and was no longer proper to be used sacrificially. Christ is here, in the allusion, represented as *newly slain*, and yet *living*; the blood ever considered as *flowing* and giving life to the world. The *way* by the old covenant neither gave life, nor removed the liability to death. The way to peace and reconciliation, under the old covenant, was through the dead bodies of the animals slain; but Christ is living, and ever liveth, to make intercession for us; therefore he is a new and *living* way.

In the Choephoræ of *Æschylus*, ver. 801, there is an expression like this of the apostle:—

*αγετε, των παλαι πεπραγμενων  
λυσσασθαίμα προσφατοις δικαις.*

*Agite, olim venditorum  
Solvite sanguinem recenti vindicta.*

This way, says Dr. Owen, 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. 4. The way of the tabernacle waxed old, and so



was prepared for a removal; but the Gospel way of salvation shall never be altered, nor changed, nor decay; it is always *new*, and remains for ever.

It is also called ζῶσαν, *living*, 1. In opposition to the way into the holiest under the tabernacle, which was by *death*; nothing could be done in it without the blood of a victim. 2. It was the cause of death to any who might use it, except the high priest himself; and he could have access to it only one day in the year. 3. It is called *living*, because it has a spiritual *vital* efficacy in our access to God. 4. It is *living* as to its effects; it leads to life, and infallibly brings those who walk in it unto *life eternal*.

**Through the veil]** As the high priest lifted up or drew aside the veil that separated the holy from the most holy place, in order that he might have access to the Divine Majesty; and as the veil of the temple was rent from the top to the bottom at the crucifixion of Christ, to show that the way to the holiest was then laid open; so we must approach the throne through the mediation of Christ, and through his sacrificial death. His pierced side is the way to the holiest. Here the veil-his humanity, is rent, and the kingdom of heaven opened to all believers.

**Verse 21. A high priest over the house of God]** The *house* or family of God is the Christian Church, or all true believers in the Lord Jesus. Over this Church, house, or family, Christ is the High Priest-in their behalf he offers his own blood, and their prayers and praises; and as the high priest had the ordering of all things that appertained to the house and worship of God, so has Christ in the government of his Church. This government he never gave into other hands. As none can govern and preserve the world but God, so none can govern and save the Church but the Lord Jesus: He is *over* the house; He is its *President*; he instructs, protects, guides, feeds, defends, and saves the flock. Those who have such a President may well have *confidence*; for with him is the fountain of life, and he has all power in the heavens and in the earth.

**Verse 22. Let us draw near]** Let us come with the blood of our sacrifice to the throne of God: the expression is sacrificial.

**With a true heart]** Deeply convinced of our need of help, and truly in earnest to obtain it.

**In full assurance of faith]** Being fully persuaded that God will accept us for the sake of his Son, and that the sacrificial death of Christ gives us full authority to expect every blessing we need.

**Having our hearts sprinkled]** Not our *bodies*, as was the case among the Hebrews, when they had contracted any pollution, for they were to be *sprinkled with the water of separation*, see <sup><GREEK></sup>**Numbers 19:2-10**; but our *hearts*, sprinkled by the cleansing efficacy of the blood of Christ, without which we cannot draw nigh to God.

**From an evil conscience]** Having that deep sense of guilt which our conscience felt taken all away, and the peace and love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us.

**Our bodies washed with pure water.]** The high priest, before he entered into the inner tabernacle, or put on his holy garments, was to wash his flesh in water, <sup><GREEK></sup>**Leviticus 16:4**, and the Levites were to be cleansed the same way, <sup><GREEK></sup>**Numbers 8:7**. The apostle probably alludes to this in what he says here, though it appears that he refers principally to *baptisms*, the washing by which was an emblem of the purification of the soul by the grace and Spirit of Christ; but it is most likely that it is to the Jewish baptisms, and not the Christian, that the apostle alludes.

**Verse 23. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith]** The word **ομολογια**, from **ομου**, *together*, and **λογος**, *a word*, implies that general consent that was among Christians on all the important articles of their faith and practice; particularly their acknowledgment of the truth of the Gospel, and of Jesus Christ, as the only victim for sin, and the only Saviour from it. If the word *washed* above refer to Christian baptism in the case of adults, then the profession is that which the baptized then made of their faith in the Gospel; and of their determination to live and die in that faith.

The various readings on this clause are many in the MSS., &c. **της ελπιδος την ομολογιαν**, *the confession of our HOPE*; D\*, two of the *Itala*, *Vulgate*, *Erpen's Arabic*, and the *Æthiopic*. **ὁμολογιαν της πιστεως**, *the confession of FAITH*; one of the Barberini MSS. and two others. This is the reading which our translators have followed; but it is of very little authority. **την επαγγελιαν της ελπιδος**, *the promise of HOPE*; *St. Chrysostom*. **την ελπιδα της ομολογιας**, *the HOPE of our PROFESSION*; one of Petavius's MSS. But among all these, the *confession* or *profession of HOPE* is undoubtedly the genuine reading. Now, among the

primitive Christians, the *hope* which they professed was the *resurrection of the body, and everlasting life*; every thing among these Christians was done and believed in reference to a future state; and for the joy that this set before them, they, like their Master, endured every cross, and despised all shame: they *expected* to be with God, through Christ; this *hope* they *professed to have*; and they *confessed* boldly and publicly the *faith* on which this hope was built. The apostle exhorts them to *hold fast* this *confession without wavering*-never to doubt the declarations made to them by their Redeemer, but having the *full assurance of faith* that their hearts were sprinkled from an evil conscience, that they had found redemption in the blood of the lamb, they might expect to be glorified with their living Head in the kingdom of their Father.

**He is faithful that promised]** The eternal life, which is the *object* of your *hope*, is promised to you by him who cannot lie; as he then is *faithful* who has given you this *promise, hold fast the profession of your hope*.

**Verse 24. And let us consider one another]** **κατανοωμεν.** Let us *diligently and attentively consider* each other's trials, difficulties, and weaknesses; feel for each other, and *excite* each other to an increase of *love* to God and man; and, as the proof of it, to be fruitful in *good works*. The words **εις παροξυσμον**, *to the provocation*, are often taken in a *good sense*, and signify *excitement, stirring up*, to do any thing laudable, useful, honourable, or necessary. Xenophon, *Cyrop.*, lib. vi., page 108, speaking of the conduct of Cyrus towards his officers, says: **και τουτους επαινων τε, παρωξυνε, και χαριζομενος αυτοις ο τι δυναιτο.** "He by praises and gifts *excited* them as much as possible." See the note on "Ac 15:39", where the subject is farther considered.

**Verse 25. Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves]** **επισυναγωγην εαυτων.** Whether this means *public* or *private* worship is hard to say; but as the word is but once more used in the New Testament, (<sup><5001></sup>**2** **Thessalonians 2:1**;) and there means the *gathering together* of the redeemed of the Lord at the day of judgment, it is as likely that it means here *private* religious meetings, for the purpose of mutual exhortation: and this sense appears the more natural here, because it is evident that the Church was now in a state of persecution, and therefore their meetings were most probably held in *private*. For fear of persecution, it seems as if some had deserted these meetings, **καθως εθος τισιν**, *as the custom of*

*certain persons is.* They had given up these strengthening and instructive means, and the others were in danger of following their example.

**The day approaching.]** **θην ημερων.** *That day*-the time in which God would come and pour out his judgments on the Jewish nation. We may also apply it to the day of death and the day of judgment. Both of these are approaching to every human being. He who wishes to be found ready will carefully use every means of grace, and particularly the communion of saints, if there be even but *two* or *three* in the place where he lives, who stately meet together in the name of Christ. Those who relinquish Christian communion are in a backsliding state; those who backslide are in danger of *apostasy*. To prevent this latter, the apostle speaks the awful words following. See at the end of this chapter. {See “<sup>←SR03→</sup>**Hebrews 10:39**”}

**Verse 26. For if we sin wilfully]** If we deliberately, for fear of persecution or from any other motive, *renounce the profession of the Gospel* and the *Author* of that Gospel, after having received the knowledge of the truth so as to be convinced that Jesus is the promised Messiah, and that he had sprinkled our hearts from an evil conscience; for such *there remaineth no sacrifice for sins*; for as the Jewish sacrifices are abolished, as appears by the declaration of God himself in the fortieth Psalm, and Jesus being now the only sacrifice which God will accept, those who reject him have *none other*; therefore their case must be utterly without remedy. This is the meaning of the apostle, and the case is that of a *deliberate apostate*-one who has utterly rejected Jesus Christ and his atonement, and renounced the whole Gospel system. It has nothing to do with *backsliders* in our common use of that term. A man may be overtaken in a fault, or he may deliberately go into sin, and yet neither renounce the Gospel, nor deny the Lord that bought him. His case is dreary and dangerous, but it is not *hopeless*; no case is *hopeless* but that of the deliberate *apostate*, who rejects the whole Gospel system, after having been saved by grace, or convinced of the truth of the Gospel. To him there remaineth no *more sacrifice for sin*; for there was but the ONE, Jesus, and this he has utterly rejected.

**Verse 27. A certain fearful looking for of judgment]** From this it is evident that God will pardon no man without a sacrifice for sin; for otherwise, as Dr. Macknight argues, it would not follow, from there remaining to apostates no more sacrifice for sin, that there must remain to them a dreadful expectation of judgment.

**And fiery indignation]** **και πυρος ζηλος.** A *zeal*, or *fervour of fire*; something similar to the fire that came down from heaven and destroyed Korah and his company; <sup><0465></sup>**Numbers 16:35.**

Probably the apostle here refers to the case of the unbelieving Jews in general, as in chap. vi. to the dreadful judgment that was coming upon them, and the burning up their temple and city with fire. These people had, by the preaching of Christ and his apostles, received the knowledge of the truth. It was impossible that they could have witnessed his miracles and heard his doctrine without being convinced that he was the Messiah, and that their own system was at an end; but they rejected this only sacrifice at a time when God abolished their own: to that nation, therefore, *there remained no other sacrifice for sin*; therefore the dreadful judgment came, the fiery indignation was poured out, and they, as *adversaries*, were *devoured* by it.

**Verse 28. He that despised Moses' law]** **αθετησας.** He that rejected it, *threw it aside*, and denied its Divine authority by presumptuous sinning, *died without mercy*-without any extenuation or mitigation of punishment; <sup><0453></sup>**Numbers 15:30.**

**Under two or three witnesses]** That is, when convicted by the testimony of two or three respectable witnesses. See <sup><0576></sup>**Deuteronomy 17:6.**

**Verse 29. Of how much sorer punishment]** Such offences were trifling in comparison of this, and in justice the punishment should be proportioned to the offence.

**Trodden under foot the Son of God]** Treated him with the utmost contempt and blasphemy.

**The blood of the covenant-an unholy thing]** The blood of the covenant means here the sacrificial death of Christ, by which the new covenant between God and man was ratified, sealed, and confirmed. And counting this *unholy*, or common, **κοινον**, intimates that they expected nothing from it in a sacrificial or atoning way. How near to those persons, and how near to their destruction, do they come in the present day who reject the atoning blood, and say, "that they expect no more benefit from the blood of Christ than they do from that of a cow or a sheep!" Is not this precisely the crime of which the apostle speaks here, and to which he tells us God would show no mercy?

**Despise unto the Spirit of grace?**] Hath *insulted* the Spirit of grace. The apostle means the Holy Spirit, whose gifts were bestowed in the first age on believers for the confirmation of the Gospel. See <sup><3806></sup>**Hebrews 6:4-6**. Wherefore, if one apostatized in the first age, after having been witness to these miraculous gifts, much more after having possessed them himself, he must, like the scribes and Pharisees, have ascribed them to *evil spirits*; than which a greater indignity could not be done to the Spirit of God. *Macknight*. This is properly the sin against the Holy Ghost, which has no forgiveness.

**Verse 30. Vengeance belongeth unto me]** This is the saying of God, <sup><6326></sup>**Deuteronomy 32:35**, in reference to the idolatrous Gentiles, who were the enemies of his people; and is here with propriety applied to the above apostates, who, being enemies to God's ordinances, and Christ's ministry and merits, must also be enemies to Christ's people; and labour for the destruction of them, and the cause in which they are engaged.

**The Lord shall judge his people.]** That is, he shall execute judgment *for* them; for this is evidently the sense in which the word is used in the place from which the apostle quotes, <sup><6326></sup>**Deuteronomy 32:36**: *For the Lord shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants, when he seeth that their power is gone*. So God will avenge and vindicate the cause of Christianity by destroying its enemies, as he did in the case of the Jewish people, whom he destroyed from being a nation, and made them a proverb of reproach and monuments of his wrathful indignation to the present day.

**Verse 31. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.]** To fall into the hands of God is to fall under his *displeasure*; and he who *lives for ever* can *punish for ever*. How dreadful to have the displeasure of an *eternal, almighty* Being to rest on the soul for ever! Apostates, and all the persecutors and enemies of God's cause and people, may expect the heaviest judgments of an incensed Deity: and these, not for a *time*, but through *eternity*.

**Verse 32. But call to remembrance]** It appears from this, and indeed from some parts of the Gospel history, that the first believers in Judea were greatly persecuted; our Lord's crucifixion, Stephen's martyrdom, the persecution that arose after the death of Stephen, <sup><4080></sup>**Acts 8:1**, Herod's persecution, <sup><4120></sup>**Acts 12:1**, in which James was killed, and the various persecutions of St. Paul, sufficiently show that this disposition was predominant among that bad people.

**A great fight of afflictions]** πολλήν ἀθλήσιν παθημάτων. *A great combat or contention of sufferings.* Here we have an allusion to the combats at the Grecian games, or to exhibitions of gladiators at the public spectacles; and an intimation how *honourable* it was to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, and to overcome through the blood of the Lamb, and their own testimony.

**Verse 33. Ye were made a gazing-stock]** θεατριζόμενοι. Ye were exhibited as wild beasts and other shows at the theatres. See the note on ~~400~~ **1 Corinthians 4:9**, where all this is illustrated.

**Companions of them that were so used.]** It appears, from ~~5014~~ **1 Thessalonians 2:14,15**, that the Churches of God in Judea were greatly persecuted, and that they believed with courage and constancy in their persecutions. When any victim of persecuting rage was marked out, the rest were prompt to take his part, and acknowledge themselves believers in the same doctrine for which he suffered. This was a noble spirit; many would have slunk into a corner, and put off the marks of Christ, that they might not be exposed to affliction on this account.

**Verse 34. Ye had compassion of me in my bonds]** συνεπαθήσατε. *Ye suffered with me, ye sympathized with me*, when bound for the testimony of Jesus. This probably refers to the sympathy they showed towards him, and the help they afforded him, during his long imprisonment in Cæsarea and Jerusalem. But instead of τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου, *my bonds*, τοῖς δεσμοῖς, *the prisoners*, is the reading of AD, and several others, both the Syriac, the Arabic of Erpen, the Coptic, Armenian, Vulgate, some of the Itala, and several of the Greek fathers. This reading appears to be so well supported, that *Griesbach* has admitted it into the text. If it be genuine, it shows that there had been, and perhaps were *then*, several bound for the testimony of Jesus, and that the Church in Judea had shown its attachment to Christ by openly acknowledging these prisoners, and ministering to them.

**Took joyfully the spoiling of your goods]** They were deprived of their inheritances, turned out of their houses, and plundered of their goods; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented. To suffer such persecution patiently was great; to endure it without a murmur was greater; to rejoice in it was greatest of all. But how could they do all this? The next clause informs us.

**Knowing in yourselves]** They had the fullest evidence that they were the children of God, the Spirit itself bearing this witness to their spirits; and if *children* than *heirs*, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. They knew that heaven was their *portion*, and that to it they had a sure right and indefeasible title by Christ Jesus. This accounts, and this alone can account, for their *taking joyfully the spoiling of their goods*: they had Christ in their hearts; they knew that they were his children, and that they had a kingdom, but that kingdom was not of this world. They had the support they needed, and they had it in the time in which they needed it most.

**Verse 35. Cast not away therefore your confidence]** *την παρρησιαν υμων*. Your liberty of access to God; your title and right to approach his throne; your *birthright* as his sons and daughters; and the *clear evidence* you have of his favour, which, if you be not steady and faithful, you must lose. *Do not throw it away*, *μη αποβαλητε*. neither men nor devils can take it from you, and God will never deprive you of it if you continue faithful. There is a reference here to cowardly soldiers, who throw away their shields, and run away from the battle. This is your shield, your faith in Christ, which gives you the *knowledge of salvation*; keep it, and it will keep you.

The Lacedemonian women, when they presented the shields to their sons going to battle, were accustomed to say: *η των, η επι τας*. “Either bring this back, or be brought back upon it;” alluding to the custom of bringing back a slain soldier on his own shield, a proof that he had preserved it to the last, and had been faithful to his country. They were accustomed also to excite their courage by delivering to them their fathers’ shields with the following short address. *ταυρην ο πατηρ σοι αιει εσωζε. και συ ουν ταυταν σωζε η μη εσο*. “This shield thy father always preserved; do thou preserve it also, or perish;” *Lacænarum Apophthegmata*, PLUT. OPERA, a Wittenbach, vol. i. p. 682. Thus spake the Lacedemonian mothers to their sons; and what say the oracles of God to us? *μη αποβαλητε την παρρησιαν υμων*. Cast not away your confession of faith. This is your shield; keep it, and it will ever be your sure defence; for by it you will quench every fiery dart of the wicked one. The Church of Christ speaks this to all her sons, and especially to those employed in the work of the ministry. Of *this shield*, of this glorious system of *salvation by Jesus Christ*, illustrated and defended in this work, I say to each of my children: *ταυτην ο πατηρ σοι αιει εσωζε. και συ ουν ταυταν σωζε, η μη εσο*. This faith, thy father, by the grace of God, hath always kept; keep thou it



also, or thou must expect to perish! May this be received both as a warning and encouragement!

**Great recompense of reward.]** No less than God's continual approbation; the peace that passeth all understanding ruling the heart here; and the glories of heaven as an eternal portion. Conscientiously keep the *shield*, and all these shall be thine. This will be thy *reward*; but remember that it is the *mercy* of God that gives it.

**Verse 36. Ye have need of patience]** Having so *great a fight of sufferings* to pass through, and they of so long continuance. God furnishes the *grace*; you must exercise it. The grace or principle of patience comes from God; the use and exercise of that grace is of yourselves. Here ye must be workers together with God. *Patience* and *perseverance* are nearly the same.

**Have done the will of God]** By keeping the faith, and patiently suffering for it.

**Verse 37. For yet a little while]** *επι γαρ μικρον οσον.* *For yet a very little time.* In a very short space of time the Messiah will come, and execute judgment upon your rebellious country. This is determined, because they have filled up the measure of their iniquity, and their destruction slumbereth not. The apostle seems to refer to <sup><500></sup>**Habakkuk 2:3, 4**, and accommodates the words to his own purpose.

**Verse 38. Now the just shall live by faith]** *ὁ δε δικαιος εκ πιστεως ζησεται.* *But the just by faith*, i.e. he who is justified by faith, *shall live*-shall be preserved when this overflowing scourge shall come. See this meaning of the phrase vindicated, <sup><5017></sup>**Romans 1:17**. And it is evident, both from this text, and <sup><8011></sup>**Galatians 3:11**, that it is in this sense that the apostle uses it.

**But if any man draw back]** *και εαν υποστειληται.* *But if he draw back; he, the man who is justified by faith;* for it is of *him*, and none other, that the text speaks. The insertion of the words *any man*, if done to serve the purpose of a *particular creed*, is a wicked perversion of the words of God. They were evidently intended to turn away the *relative* from the *antecedent*, in order to save the doctrine of final and *unconditional* perseverance; which doctrine this text destroys.

**My soul shall have no pleasure in him.]** My very heart shall be opposed to him who makes shipwreck of faith and a good conscience. The word **υποστειλλειν** signifies, not only to *draw back*, but to *slink away and hide through fear*. In this sense it is used by the very best Greek writers, as well as by *Josephus* and *Philo*. As dastards and cowards are hated by all men, so those that *slink away* from Christ and his cause, for fear of persecution or secular loss, God must despise; in them he cannot delight; and his Spirit, grieved with their conduct, must desert their hearts, and lead them to *darkness and hardness*.

**Verse 39. But we are not of them who draw back]** **ουκ εσμεν υποστολης-- , αλλα πιστεως.** “We are not the cowards, but the courageous.” I have no doubt of this being the meaning of the apostle, and the form of speech requires such a translation; it occurs more than once in the New Testament. So, <sup><407></sup>**Galatians 3:7: οι εκ πιστεως**, *they who are of the faith*, rather *the faithful*, the *believers*; <sup><426></sup>**Romans 3:26: ο εκ πιστεως**, *the believer*; <sup><418></sup>**Romans 2:8: οι εξ επιθειας**, *the contentious*; in all which places the learned reader will find that the form of speech is the same. We are not cowards who slink away, and notwithstanding meet *destruction*; but we are *faithful*, and have our souls saved alive. The words **περιποιησις ψυχης** signify the *preservation of the life*. **See the note,** “<sup><4014></sup>**Ephesians 1:14**”. He intimates that, notwithstanding the persecution was hot, yet they should escape with their *lives*.

1. It is very remarkable, and I have more than once called the reader’s attention to it, that not one Christian life was lost in the siege and destruction of Jerusalem. Every *Jew* perished, or was taken captive; all those who had *apostatized*, and slunk away from Christianity, perished with them: all the genuine *Christians* escaped with their lives. This very important information, which casts light on many passages in the New Testament, and manifests the grace and providence of God in a very conspicuous way, is given both by *Eusebius* and *Epiphanius*. I shall adduce their words: “When the whole congregation of the Church in Jerusalem, according to an oracle given by revelation to the approved persons among them before the war, **κατα τινα χρησμον τοις αυτοθι δοκιμοις διαποκαλυψεως δοθεντα προ του πολεμου, μεταναστηναι της πολεως, και τινα της περαιας πολιν οικειν κεκελευσμενου, πελλαν αυτην ονομαζουσιν**, were commanded to depart from the city, and inhabit a certain city which they call Pella, beyond Jordan, to which, when all those who believed in Christ had removed from Jerusalem, and

when the saints had totally abandoned the royal city which is the metropolis of the Jews; then the Divine vengeance seized them who had dealt so wickedly with Christ and his apostles, and utterly destroyed that wicked and abominable generation.” EUSEB. *Hist. Eccles*, l. iii. c. v. vol. i. p. 93. Edit. a *Reading*.

St. *Epiphanius*, in *Hæres. Nazaren*, c. 7, says: “The Christians who dwelt in Jerusalem, being forewarned by Christ of the approaching siege, removed to Pella.”

The same, in his book *Deuteronomy Ponderibus et Mensuris*, says: “The disciples of Christ being warned by an angel, removed to Pella; and afterwards, when Adrian rebuilt Jerusalem, and called it after his own name, *Ælia Colonia*, they returned thither.” As those places in *Epiphanius* are of considerable importance, I shall subjoin the original: *εκειθεν γαρ η αρχη γεγονε μετα την απο των ιεροσολυμων μεταστασιν, παντων των μαθητων των εν πελλη ωκηκοτων, χριστου φησαντος καταλειψαι τα ιεροσολυμα, και αναχωρησαι, επειδη ημελλε πασχειν πολιορκιαν*. EPIPH. *adver. Hæres.*, l. i. c. 7, vol. i. p. 123. Edit. Par. 1622. The other place is as follows: *ήνικα γαρ εμελλεν η πολις αλισκεσθαι υπο τών ρωμαιων, προεχρηματισθησαν υπο αγγελου παντες οι μαθηται μεταστηναι απο της πολεως, μελλουσης αρδην απολλυσθαι. οι τινες και μετανασται γενομενοι ωκησαν εν πελλη-περαν του ιορδανου, η τις εκ δεκαπολεως λεγεται ειναι*. *Ibid. Deuteronomy Pon. et Mens.*, vol. ii. p. 171.

These are remarkable testimonies, and should be carefully preserved. Pella, it appears, was a city of Cœlesyria, beyond Jordan, in the district of Decapolis. Thus it is evident that these Christians held fast their faith, preserved their shields, and continued to believe to the *saving of their lives* as well as to the *saving of their souls*. As the apostle gives several hints of the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, it is likely that this is the true sense in which the words above are to be understood.

2. I have already said a little, from <sup><S1025></sup>**Hebrews 10:25**, on the importance of *social worship*. *PUBLIC worship* is not of less consequence. Were it not for *public*, private worship would soon be at an end. To this, under God, the Church of Christ owes its being and its continuance. Where there is no public worship there is no *religion*. It is by this that God is acknowledged; and he is the *universal Being*; and by his *bounty* and *providence* all live; consequently, it is the duty of every intelligent creature *publicly* to

acknowledge him, and offer him that worship which himself has prescribed in his word. The ancient Jews have some good maxims on this subject which may be seen in Schoettgen. I shall quote a few.

In *Berachoth*, fol. 8, it is written: “Rabbi Levi said, He who has a synagogue in his city, and does not go thither to pray, shall be esteemed a bad citizen;” or a bad neighbour. And to this they apply the words of the prophet, <sup>34124</sup>**Jeremiah 12:14**: *Thus saith the Lord against all my evil neighbours-behold, I will pluck them out of their land.*

In *Mechilta*, fol. 48: “Rabbi Eliezer, the son of Jacob, said,” speaking as from God, “If thou wilt come to my house, I will go to thy house; but if thou wilt not come to my house, I will not enter thy house. The place that my heart loveth, to that shall my feet go.” We may safely add, that those who do not frequent the house of God can never expect his presence or blessing in their own.

In *Taanith*, fol. 11, it is said that “to him who separates himself from the congregation shall two angels come, and lay their hands upon his head and say, This man, who separates himself from the congregation, shall not see the comfort which God grants to his afflicted Church.” The wisest and best of men have always felt it their duty and their interest to worship God in public. As there is nothing more necessary, so there is nothing more reasonable; he who acknowledges God in all his ways may expect all his steps to be directed. The public worship of God is one grand line of distinction between the atheist and the believer. He who uses not public worship has either no God, or has no right notion of his being; and such a person, according to the rabbins, is a *bad neighbour*; it is dangerous to live near him, for neither he nor his can be under the protection of God. No man should be forced to attend a particular place of worship, but every man should be obliged to attend some place; and he who has any fear of God will not find it difficult to get a place to his mind.

## HEBREWS

## CHAPTER 11.

*A definition of faith, 1, 2. What are its immediate objects, 3. What are its effects, instanced in Abel, 4 In Enoch, 5, 6. In Noah, 7. In Abraham, 8-10. In Sara, 11. In their righteous posterity, 12-16 In Abraham's offering of his son Isaac, 17-19. In Isaac, 20. In Jacob, 21. In Joseph, 22. In Moses, 23-28. In the Israelites in the wilderness, 29. In the fall of Jericho, 30. In Rahab, 31. In several of the judges, and in David, Samuel, and the prophets, 32-34. The glorious effects produced by it in the primitive martyrs, 35-40.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 11.

**Verse 1. Faith is the substance of things hoped for]** *εστι δε πιστις ελπιζομενων υποστασις. Faith is the SUBSISTENCE of things hoped for; πραγματων ελεγχος ου βλεπομενων. The DEMONSTRATION of things not seen.* The word *υποστασις*, which we translate *substance*, signifies *subsistence*, that which becomes a *foundation* for another thing to stand on. And *ελεγχος* signifies such a *conviction* as is produced in the mind by the *demonstration* of a *problem*, after which demonstration no doubt can remain, because we see from it that the thing *is*; that it *cannot but be*; and that it cannot be *otherwise* than as it is, and is proved to be. Such is the faith by which the soul is justified; or rather, such are the effects of justifying faith: on it subsists the peace of God which passeth all understanding; and the love of God is shed abroad in the heart where it lives, by the Holy Ghost. At the same time the Spirit of God witnesses with their spirits who have this faith that their sins are blotted out; and this is as fully manifest to their judgment and conscience as the axioms, “A whole is greater than any of its parts;” “Equal lines and angles, being placed on one another, do not exceed each other;” or as the deduction from prop. 47, book i., Euclid: “The square of the base of a right-angled triangle is equal to the difference of the squares of the other two sides.” *ελεγχος* is defined by logicians, *Demonstratio quæ fit argumentis certis et rationibus indubitatis, qua rei certitudo efficitur.* “A demonstration of the certainty of a thing by sure arguments and indubitable reasons.” Aristotle uses it for a mathematical demonstration, and properly defines it thus: *ελεγχος δε*

εστις ο μη δυσκατος αλλως εξεις, αλλουτως ως ημεις λεγομεν, “Elenehos, or Demonstration, is that which cannot be otherwise, but is so as we assert.” Rhetor. ad Alexand., cap. 14, *περι ελεγχου*. On this account I have adduced the above theorem from *Euclid*.

**Things hoped for]** Are the peace and approbation of God, and those blessings by which the soul is prepared for the kingdom of heaven. A *penitent* hopes for the pardon of his sins and the favour of his God; faith in Christ puts him in possession of this pardon, and thus the thing that was hoped for is enjoyed by faith. When this is received, a man has the fullest conviction of the truth and reality of all these blessings though *unseen* by the *eye*, they are *felt* by the *heart*; and the man has no more doubt of God’s approbation and his own free pardon, than he has of his being.

In an extended sense the *things hoped for* are the resurrection of the body, the new heavens and the new earth, the introduction of believers into the heavenly country, and the possession of eternal glory.

The *things unseen*, as distinguished from the things hoped for, are, in an extended sense, the creation of the world from nothing, the destruction of the world by the deluge, the miraculous conception of Christ, his resurrection from the dead, his ascension to glory, his mediation at the right hand of God, his government of the universe, &c., &c., all which we as firmly believe on the testimony of God’s word as if we had seen them. See *Macknight*. But this faith has particular respect to the being, goodness, providence, grace, and mercy of God, as the subsequent verses sufficiently show.

**Verse 2. For by it the elders obtained a good report.]** By the *elders* are meant *ancestors, forefathers*, such as the patriarchs and prophets, several of whom he afterwards particularly names, and produces some fact from the history of their lives.

It is very remarkable that among the whole there is root one word concerning poor Adam and his wife, though both *Abraham* and *Sarah* are mentioned. 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 veil*. Conjectures relative to their state would be very precarious; little else than *hope* can be exercised in their favour: but as to them the promise of Jesus was given, so we may believe they found redemption in that blood which was shed from the foundation of the world. Adam's rebellion against his Maker was too great and too glaring to permit his name to be ever after mentioned with honour or respect.

The word **εμαρτυρηθησαν**, which we translate *obtained a good report*, literally signifies, *were witnessed of*; and thus leads us naturally to GOD, who by his word, as the succeeding parts of the chapter show, *bore testimony* to the faith and holiness of his servants. The apostle does not mention one of whom an account is not given in the Old Testament. This, therefore, is God's witness or testimony concerning them.

**Verse 3. Through faith we understand]** By *worlds*, **τους αιωνας**, we are to understand the *material fabric of the universe*; for **αιων** can have no reference here to age or any measurement of time, for he speaks of the *things which are SEEN*; *not being made out of the things which do APPEAR*; this therefore must refer to the *material creation*: and as the word is used in the *plural* number, it may comprehend, not only the earth and visible heavens, but the whole planetary system; the different worlds which, in our system at least, revolve round the sun. The apostle states that these things were *not made* out of a *pre-existent matter*; for if they were, that matter, however extended or *modified*, must *appear* in that thing into which it is compounded and modified, consequently it could not be said that the things which are *seen* are not made of the things that *appear*; and he shows us also, by these words, that the present mundane fabric was not formed or *reformed* from one anterior, as some suppose. According to Moses and the apostle we believe that God made all things out of *nothing*. **See the note on “<sup>ομοιοι</sup>Genesis 1:1”**, &c.

At present we see trees of different kinds are produced from trees; beasts, birds, and fishes, from others of the same kind; and man, from man: but we are necessarily led to believe that there was a *first man*, who owed not his being to man; first there were *beasts*, &c., which did not derive their being from others of the same kind; and so of all manner of *trees*, *plants*, &c. God, therefore, made all these out of *nothing*; his word tells us so, and we credit that word.

**Verse 4. By faith Abel offered-a more excellent sacrifice]** **πλειονα θυσιαν.** *More sacrifice*; as if he had said: Abel, by faith, made *more* than *one* offering; and hence it is said, God testified of his GIFTS, **τοις δωροις.** The plain state of the case seems to have been this: Cain and Abel both brought offerings to the altar of God, probably the altar erected for the *family worship*. As Cain was a *husbandman*, he brought a *mincha*, or *eucharistic offering*, of the fruits of the ground, by which he acknowledged the being and providence of God. Abel, being a *shepherd* or a feeder of cattle, brought, not only the *eucharistic offering*, but also of the produce of his flock as a *sin-offering* to God, by which he acknowledged his own *sinfulness*, God's *justice* and *mercy*, as well as his *being* and *providence*. Cain, not at all apprehensive of the demerit of sin, or God's holiness, contented himself with the *mincha*, or *thank-offering*: this God could not, consistently with his holiness and justice, receive with complacency; the other, as referring to him who was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, God could receive, and did particularly testify his approbation. Though the *mincha*, or *eucharistic offering*, was a very proper offering in its place, yet this was not received, because there was no *sin-offering*. The rest of the history is well known.

Now by this faith, thus exercised, in reference to an atonement, he, Abel, *though dead, yet speaketh*; i.e. preacheth to mankind the necessity of an atonement, and that God will accept no sacrifice unless connected with this. **See this transaction explained at large in my notes on “<sup><01008></sup>Genesis 4:3”**, &c.

**Verse 5. By faith Enoch was translated]** It is said, in <sup><01034></sup>**Genesis 5:24**, that Enoch walked with God, and *he was not, for God took him*. Here the apostle explains what God's taking him means, by saying that *he was translated that he should not see death*; from which we learn that he did not die, and that God took him to a state of blessedness without obliging him to pass through death. See his history explained at large in the above place, in <sup><01032></sup>**Genesis 5:22-24**.

**Verse 6. He that cometh to God]** The man who professes that it is his duty to worship God, must, if he act rationally, do it on the conviction that there is such a Being infinite, eternal, unoriginated, and self-existent; the cause of all other being; on whom all being depends; and by whose energy, bounty, and providence, all other beings exist, live, and are supplied with the means of continued existence and life. He must believe, also, that he



rewards them that diligently seek him; that he is not indifferent about his own worship; that he *requires* adoration and religious service from men; and that he blesses, and especially protects and saves, those who in simplicity and uprightness of heart seek and serve him. This requires *faith*, such a faith as is mentioned above; a faith by which we can *please God*; and now that we have an abundant revelation, a faith *according* to that revelation; a faith in God through Christ the great sin-offering, without which a man can no more please him, or be accepted of him, than Cain was. As the knowledge of the being of God is of infinite importance in religion, I shall introduce at the end of this chapter a series of propositions, tending to prove the being of God, 1st, *a priori*; and 2dly, *a posteriori*; omitting the proofs that are generally produced on those points, for which my readers may refer to works in general circulation on this subject: and 3dly, I shall lay down some *phenomena* relative to the heavenly bodies, which it will be difficult to account for without acknowledging the infinite skill, power, and *continual energy* of God.

**Verse 7. By faith Noah]** See the whole of this history, <sup><010613></sup>**Genesis 6:13.**

**Warned of God]** **ξηρηματισθεις.** As we know from the history in Genesis that *God* did warn Noah, we see from this the real import of the verb **ξηρηματιζω**, as used in various parts of the New Testament; it signifies to *utter oracles*, to *give Divine warning*.

**Moved with fear]** **ευλαβηθεις.** Influenced by *religious fear* or *reverence towards God*. This is mentioned to show that he acted not from a fear of losing his life, but from the fear of God; and hence that fear is here properly attributed to faith.

**He condemned the world]** HE credited God, *they* did not; *he* walked in the way God had commanded, *they* did not; *he* repeatedly admonished them, <sup><010620></sup>**1 Peter 3:20**, *they* regarded it not; this aggravated their crimes while it exalted his faith and righteousness. “His faith and obedience condemned the world, i.e. the *unbelievers*, in the same sense in which every good man’s virtues and exhortations condemn such as will not attend to and imitate them.” *Dodd*.

**Became heir of the righteousness]** He became entitled to that justification which is by faith; and his temporal deliverance was a pledge of the salvation of his soul.

**Verse 8. Abraham, when he was called]** See on <sup><01120></sup>**Genesis 12:1-4.**

**Not knowing whither he went.]** Therefore his *obedience* was the fullest proof of his *faith* in God, and his faith was an *implicit* faith; he obeyed, and went out from his own country, having no prospect of any good or success but what his implicit faith led him to expect from God, *as the rewarder of them that diligently seek him*. In all the preceding cases, and in all that follow, the apostle keeps this maxim fully in view.

**Verse 9. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise]** It is remarkable that Abraham did not acquire any right in Canaan, except that of a *burying place*; nor did he build any house in it; his faith showed him that it was only a *type* and *pledge* of a better country, and he kept that better country continually in view: he, with Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs of the same promise, were contented to dwell in tents, without any *fixed* habitation.

**Verse 10. For he looked for a city which hath foundations]** He knew that earth could afford no permanent residence for an immortal mind, and he looked for that heavenly building of which God is the architect and owner; in a word, he lost sight of earth, that he might keep heaven in view. And all who are partakers of his faith possess the same spirit, walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing.

**Whose builder and maker is God.]** The word  $\tau\epsilon\chi\nu\iota\tau\eta\varsigma$  signifies an *architect*, one who *plans*, *calculates*, and *constructs* a building. The word  $\delta\eta\mu\iota\omicron\upsilon\rho\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  signifies the *governor of a people*; one who *forms them by institutions* and *laws*; the framer of a *political constitution*. God is here represented the *Maker* or *Father* of all the heavenly inhabitants, and the *planner* of their *citizenship* in that heavenly country. See *Macknight*.

**Verse 11. Through faith also Sara]** Her history, as far as the event here is concerned, may be seen <sup><01179></sup>**Genesis 17:19**, and <sup><01202></sup>**Genesis 21:2**. Sarah at first treated the Divine message with ridicule, judging it to be absolutely impossible, not knowing then that it was from God; and this her age and circumstances justified, for, humanly speaking, such an event was impossible: but, when she knew that it was God who said this, it does not appear that she doubted any more, but implicitly believed that what God had promised he was able to perform.

**Verse 12. Him as good as dead]** According to nature, long past the time of the procreation of children. The birth of Isaac, the circumstances of the

father and mother considered, was entirely supernatural; and the people who proceeded from this birth were a supernatural people; and were and are most strikingly singular through every period of their history to the present day.

**Verse 13. These all died in faith]** That is, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, and Jacob, continued to believe, to the *end of their lives*, that God would fulfil this promise; but they neither saw the numerous seed, nor did they get the promised rest in Canaan.

**Strangers and pilgrims]** Strangers, *ξενοι*, persons who are out of their own country, who are in a foreign land: *pilgrims*, *παρεπιδημοι*, sojourners only for a time; not intending to take up their abode in that place, nor to get naturalized in that country.

How many use these expressions, professing to be strangers and pilgrims here below, and yet the whole of their conduct, spirit, and attachments, show that they are *perfectly at home*! How little consideration and weight are in many of our professions, whether they relate to earth or heaven!

**Verse 14. Declare plainly that they seek a country.]** A man's *country* is that in which he has constitutional rights and privileges; no stranger or sojourner has any such rights in the country where he sojourns. These, by declaring that they felt themselves strangers and sojourners, professed their faith in a heavenly country and state, and looked beyond the grave for a place of happiness. No intelligent Jew could suppose that Canaan was all the *rest* which God had promised to his people.

**Verse 15. If they had been mindful of that country]** They considered their right to the promises of God as dependent on their utter renunciation of Chaldea; and it was this that induced Abraham to cause his steward Eliezer to *swear* that he would not carry his son Isaac to Chaldea; see <sup>10245</sup>**Genesis 24:5-8**. There idolatry reigned; and God had called them to be the patriarchs and progenitors of a people among whom the knowledge of the true God, and the worship required by him, should be established and preserved.

**Verse 16. But now they desire a better]** They all expected *spiritual blessings*, and a *heavenly inheritance*; they sought God as their *portion*, and in such a way and on such principles that he is not *ashamed to be called their God*; and he shows his affection for them by preparing for

them a city, to wit, *heaven*, as themselves would seek no city on earth; which is certainly what the apostle has here in view. And from this it is evident that the patriarchs had a proper notion of the immortality of the soul, and expected a place of residence widely different from Canaan. Though to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the promises were made in which Canaan was so particularly included, yet God did not give them any inheritance in that country, *no, not so much as to set a foot on*; <sup><407b></sup>Acts 7:5. Therefore, if they had not understood the promises to belong to *spiritual things*, far from enduring, as seeing him who is invisible, they must have considered themselves deceived and mocked. The apostle therefore, with the highest propriety, attributes their whole conduct and expectation to *faith*.

**Verse 17. Abraham, when he was tried]** See the history of this whole transaction explained at large in the notes on <sup><0120></sup>Genesis 22:1-9.

**Offered up his only-begotten]** Abraham did, *in effect*, offer up Isaac; he built an altar, bound his son, laid him upon the altar, had ready the incense, took the knife, and would immediately have slain him had he not been prevented by the same authority by which the sacrifice was enjoined. Isaac is here called *his only-begotten*, as he was the *only son* he had by his legitimate wife, who was heir to his property, and heir of the promises of God. The man who proved faithful in such a trial, deserved to have his faith and obedience recorded throughout the world.

**Verse 19. To raise him up, even from the dead]** Abraham staggered not at the promise through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God. The resurrection of the dead must have been a 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.

**He received him in a figure.]** *εν παραβολη*. In my discourse on *paraboli- cal writing* at the end of <sup><0138></sup>Matthew 13:58, I have shown (signification\_9) that *παραβολη* sometimes means a *daring exploit*, a *jeoparding of the life*; and have referred to this place. I think it should be so understood here, as pointing out the very imminent danger he was in of losing his life. The clause may therefore be thus translated: "Accounting that God was able to raise him up from the dead, from whence he had received him, he being in the most imminent danger of losing his life." It is not, therefore, the natural deadness of Abraham and Sarah to which the

apostle alludes, but the death to which Isaac on this occasion was exposed, and which he escaped by the immediate interference of God.

**Verse 20. By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau]** He believed that God would fulfil his promise to his posterity; and God gave him to see what would befall them in their future generations. The apostle does not seem to intimate that one should be an object of the *Divine hatred*, and the other of *Divine love*, in reference to their *eternal* states. This is wholly a *discovery* of later ages. For an ample consideration of this subject, see the notes on Gen. xxvii.

**Verse 21. Blessed both the sons of Joseph]** That is, Ephraim and Manasseh. See the account and the notes. <sup><014875></sup>**Genesis 48:5**, &c.

**Worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff]** This subject is particularly considered in the note, See <sup><014731></sup>**Genesis 47:31**".

It appears, that at the time Joseph visited his father he was very weak, and generally confined to his couch, having at hand his *staff*; either that with which he usually supported his feeble body, or that which was the *ensign* of his office, as *patriarch* or *chief* of a very numerous family. The ancient chiefs, in all countries, had this staff or sceptre continually at hand. See Homer throughout. It is said, <sup><014872></sup>**Genesis 48:2**, that when Joseph came to see his father Jacob, who was then in his last sickness, *Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed*. Still I conceive he had his staff or sceptre at hand; and while sitting upon the bed, with his feet on the floor, he supported himself with his staff. When Joseph swore to him that he should be carried up from Egypt, he *bowed himself on his bed's head*, still supporting himself with his staff, which probably with this last act he laid aside, *gathered up his feet*, and reclined wholly on his couch. It was therefore indifferent to say that he worshipped or bowed himself on his staff or on his bed's head. But as **hj v shachah** signifies, not only to *bow*, but also to *worship*, because acts of adoration were performed by *bowing* and *prostration*; and as **hcm mittah**, a *bed*, by the change of the vowel points becomes *matteh*, a *staff*, hence the *Septuagint* have translated the passage **και προσεκυνησεν. ισραηλ επι το ακρον της ραβδου αυτου**. And *Israel bowed or worshipped on the head of his staff*. This reading the apostle follows here *literatim*.

Wretched must that cause be which is obliged to have recourse to what, at best, is an equivocal expression, to prove and support a favourite opinion.

The Romanists allege this in favour of *image worship*. This is too contemptible to require confutation. To make it speak this language the Rheims version renders the verse thus: *By faith Jacob dying, blessed every one of the sons of Joseph, and adored the top of his rod*. A pretty object of adoration, indeed, for a dying patriarch! Here the preposition **επι** upon, answering to the Hebrew **ל** [*al*, is wholly suppressed, to make it favour the corrupt reading of the Vulgate. This preposition is found in the *Hebrew text*, in the *Greek version of the Seventy*, the *printed Greek text of the New Testament*, and in *every MS.* yet discovered of this epistle. It is also found in the *Syriac, Æthiopic, Arabic, and Coptic*: in which languages the connection necessarily shows that it is not an idle particle: and by no mode of construction can the text be brought to support *image worship*, any more than it can to support *transubstantiation*.

**Verse 22. Joseph, when he died]** **τελευτων**, *When he was dying, gave commandment concerning his bones*. On this subject I refer the reader to the **notes on “<sup>GENES</sup>Genesis 50:25”**. And I have this to add to the account I have given of the *sarcophagus* now in the *British Museum*, vulgarly called *Alexander’s coffin*, that it is more probably the *coffin of Joseph himself*; and, should the time ever arrive in which the hieroglyphics on it shall be interpreted, this conjecture may appear to have had its foundation in truth.

**Verse 23. By faith Moses, &c.] See the notes on “<sup>EXOD</sup>Exodus 2:2”**, and **See “Ac 7:20”**. We know that Moses was bred up at the Egyptian court, and *there* was considered to be the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; and probably might have succeeded to the throne of Egypt: but, finding that God had visited his people, and given them a promise of *spiritual and eternal blessings*, he chose rather to take the lot of this people, i.e. God as his portion for ever, than to *enjoy the pleasures of sin*, which, however gratifying to the animal senses, could only be **προσκαιρον**, *temporary*.

After the 23d verse, there is a whole clause added by DE, two copies of the *Itala*, and some copies of the *Vulgate*. The clause is the following: **πιστει μεγας γενομενος μωυσης ανειλεν τον αιγυπτιον, κατανοων την ταπεινωσιν των αδελφων αυτου**. *By faith Moses, when he was grown up, slew the Egyptian, considering the oppression of his own brethren*. This is a remarkable addition, and one of the largest in the whole New Testament. It seems to have been collected from the history of Moses as given in Exodus, and to have been put originally into the margin of some MS., from which it afterwards crept into the text.

**Verse 26. The reproach of Christ]** The *Christ* or *Messiah* had been revealed to Moses; of him he prophesied, <sup><151815></sup>**Deuteronomy 18:15**; and the *reproach* which God's people had, in consequence of their decided opposition to idolatry, may be termed the *reproach of Christ*, for they refused to become one people with the Egyptians, because the *promise of the rest* was made to them, and in this *rest* CHRIST and his *salvation* were included: but, although it does not appear these things were known to the Hebrews *at large*, yet it is evident that there were sufficient intimations given to Moses concerning the Great Deliverer, (of whom himself was a type,) that determined his conduct in the above respect; as he folly understood that he must renounce his interest in the promises, and in the life eternal to which they led, if he did not obey the Divine call in the present instance. Many have been stumbled by the word **ο χριστος**, *Christ*, here; because they cannot see how Moses should have any knowledge of him. It may be said that it was just as easy for God Almighty to reveal Christ to *Moses*, as it was for him to reveal him to *Isaiah*, or to the *shepherds*, or to *John Baptist*; or to manifest him in the *flesh*. After all there is much reason to believe that, by **του χριστου**, here, of *Christ* or the *anointed*, the apostle means the whole body of the Israelitish or Hebrew people; for, as the word signifies the *anointed*, and anointing was a consecration to God, to serve him in some particular office, as prophet, priest, king, or the like, all the Hebrew people were considered thus *anointed* or *consecrated*; and it is worthy of remark that **χριστος** is used in this very sense by the Septuagint, <sup><1025></sup>**1 Samuel 2:35**; <sup><194515></sup>**Psalms 105:15**; and **Hab 3:13**; where the word is necessarily restrained to this meaning.

**He had respect unto the recompense]** **απεβλεπε** He *looked attentively* to it; his eyes were *constantly directed* to it. This is the import of the original word; and the whole conduct of Moses was an illustration of it.

**Verse 27. He forsook Egypt]** He believed that God would fulfil the promise he had made; and he cheerfully changed an *earthly* for a *heavenly* portion.

**Not fearing the wrath of the king]** The apostle speaks here of the departure of Moses *with the Israelites*, not of his *flight to Midian*, <sup><10214></sup>**Exodus 2:14, 15**; for he was then in great fear: but when he went to Pharaoh with God's authority, to demand the dismissal of the Hebrews, he was without fear, and acted in the most noble and dignified manner; he then feared nothing but God.

**As seeing him who is invisible.]** He continued to act as one who had the judge of his heart and conduct always before his eyes. By calling the Divine Being *the invisible*, the apostle distinguishes him from the *god's of Egypt*, who were *visible, corporeal, gross, and worthless*. The Israelites were worshippers of the *true God*, and this worship was not tolerated in Egypt. His pure and spiritual worship could never comport with the adoration of *oxen, goats, monkeys, leeks, and onions*.

**Verse 28. He kept the passover]** God told him that he would destroy the first-born of the Egyptians, but would spare all those whose doors were *sprinkled with the blood* of the paschal lamb. Moses believed this, kept the passover, and *sprinkled the blood*. See the notes on Exodus 12. One of the Itala adds here, *Fide prædaverunt Ægyptios exeuntes*. “By faith, when they went out, they spoiled the Egyptians.” This is any thing but *genuine*.

**Verse 29. By faith they passed through the Red Sea]** See the notes on “<sup><[142]></sup>Exodus 14:22”. The Egyptians thought they could walk through the sea as well as the Israelites; they tried, and were drowned; while the former passed in perfect safety. The one walked by *faith*, the other by *sight*; one perished, the other was saved.

**Verse 30. The walls of Jericho fell down]** This is particularly explained <sup><[141]></sup>Joshua 6:1, &c. God had promised that the walls of Jericho should fall down, if they compassed them about seven days. They *believed*, did as they were commanded, and the promise was fulfilled.

**Verse 31. The harlot Rahab perished not]** See this account <sup><[140]></sup>Joshua 2:1, 9, 11, and <sup><[143]></sup>Joshua 6:23, where it is rendered exceedingly probable that the word *חנז* *zonah* in Hebrew, and *πορνη* in Greek, which we translate *harlot*, should be rendered *innkeeper* or *tavernkeeper*, as there is no proper evidence that the person in question was such a woman as our translation represents her. As to her having been a *harlot* before and converted afterwards, it is a figment of an idle fancy. She was afterwards married to *Salmon*, a Jewish prince; see <sup><[140]></sup>Matthew 1:5. And it is extremely incredible that, had she been what we represent her, he would have sought for such an alliance.

**Received the spies with peace.]** μετεῖρηνης. The same as *μwl vb beshalom*, giving them a *kind welcome, good fare, and protection*. After these words the Slavonic adds: *και ετερα οδω εκβαλουσα*, and *sent them out another way*.



**Verse 32. Time would fail me]** με διηγουμενον ο χρονος. A very usual mode of expression with the best Greek writers, when they wish to intimate that much important intelligence remains to be communicated on the subject already in hand, which must be omitted because of other points which have not yet been handled.

**Gedeon]** Who by faith in God, with 300 men, destroyed a countless multitude of Midianites and Amalekites, and delivered Israel from oppression and slavery. Judges 6., 7., 8.

**Barak]** Who overthrew Jabin, king of Canaan, and delivered Israel from servitude. Jud. 4.

**Samson]** Who was appointed by God to deliver Israel from the oppressive yoke of the *Philistines*; and, by extraordinary assistance, discomfited them on various occasions. Jud. 13.-16.

**Jephthae]** Who, under the same guidance, defeated the Ammonites, and delivered Israel. Jud. 11., 12.

**David]** King of Israel, whose whole life was a life of faith and dependence on God; but whose character will be best seen in those books which contain an account of his reign, and the book of Psalms, to which, and the notes there, the reader must be referred. It is probable he is referred to here for that act of faith and courage which he showed in his combat with Goliath. See 1Sam 17.

**Samuel]** The last of the Israelitish *judges*, to whom succeeded a race of *kings*, of whom Saul and David were the two first, and were both anointed by this most eminent man. See his history in the *first* book of *Samuel*.

All these are said to have performed their various exploits *through faith*. 1. The faith of *Gideon* consisted in his throwing down the altar of Baal, and cutting down his grove, in obedience to the command of God. 2. The faith of *Barak* consisted in his believing the revelation made to Deborah, and the command to go against Jabin's numerous army. 3. *Samson's* faith consisted in his obeying the various impulses produced by the Spirit of God in his own mind. 4. *Jephthae's* faith consisted particularly in his believing the promise made to Abraham and his posterity, that they should possess the land of Canaan; and in his resolutely fighting against the Ammonites, that they might not deprive the Israelites of the land between Arnon and Jabbok. It may be observed, here, that the apostle does not produce these

in *chronological order*; for Barak lived before Gideon, and Jephthae before Samson, and Samuel before David. He was not producing facts in their chronological order, but instances of the power of God exerted in the behalf of men who had strong confidence in him.

**Verse 33. Who through faith subdued kingdoms]** As *Joshua*, who subdued the seven Canaanitish nations; and *David*, who subdued the Moabites, Syrians, Ammonites, and Edomites. 2Sam viii., &c.

**Wrought righteousness]** Did a great variety of works indicative of that faith in God without which it is impossible to do any thing that is good.

**Obtained promises]** This is supposed to refer to *Joshua* and *Caleb*, who, through their faith in God, obtained the promised land, while all the rest of the Israelites were excluded; to Phineas also, who, for his act of *zealous faith* in slaying *Zimri* and *Cosbi*, got the promise of an *everlasting priesthood*; and to *David*, who, for his *faith* and *obedience*, obtained the kingdom of Israel, and had the promise that from his seed the Messiah should spring.

**Stopped the mouths of lions]** Daniel, who, though cast into a den of lions for his fidelity to God, was preserved among them unhurt, and finally came to great honour.

**Verse 34. Quenched the violence of fire]** As in the case of the three faithful Hebrews, *Shadrach*, *Meshach*, and *Abed-nego*, who, for their steady attachment to God's worship, were cast into a fiery furnace, in which they were preserved, and from which they escaped unhurt. Dan. 3.

**Escaped the edge of the sword]** Moses, who escaped the sword of Pharaoh, <sup><12184></sup>**Exodus 18:4**; *Elijah*, that of Jezebel; and *David*, that of Saul: and many others.

**Out of weakness were made strong]** Were miraculously restored from *sickness*, which seemed to threaten their life; as *Hezekiah*, <sup><23821></sup>**Isaiah 38:21**.

**Waxed valiant in fight]** Like *Gideon*, who overthrew the camp of the Midianites, and *Jonathan*, that of the Philistines, in such a way as must have proved that God was with them.

**Verse 35. Women received their dead]** As did the widow of *Zarephath*, <sup><11721></sup>**1 Kings 17:21**, and the *Shunammite*, <sup><12184></sup>**2 Kings 4:34**. What other

cases under all the above heads the apostle might have in view, we know not.

**Others were tortured]** **ετυμπανισθησαν.** This is a word concerning the meaning of which the critics are not agreed. **τυμπανον** signifies a stick, or *baton*, which was used in *bastinadoing* criminals. And **τυμπανιζω** signifies to *beat violently*, and is thus explained by the best lexicographers. After considering what others have written on this subject, I am inclined to think that the *bastinado* on the *soles of the feet* is what is here designed. That this was a most torturing and dangerous punishment, we learn from the most authentic accounts; and it is practised among the *Turks* and other *Mohammedans* to the present day. Mr. *Antes*, of Fulnek, is Yorkshire, twenty years a resident in Egypt, furnishes the latest account I have met with; he himself was the unhappy subject of his own description. See at the end of this chapter, article 4. See “<sup><8114></sup>**Hebrews 11:40**”

**Not accepting deliverance]** This looks very like a reference to the case of the mother and her seven sons, mentioned **2Mac 7:1**, &c.

**Verse 36. Had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings]** We do not know the cases to which the apostle refers. The *mockings* here can never mean such as those of Ishmael against Isaac, or the youths of Bethel against Elisha. It is more probable that it refers to public exhibitions of the people of God at idol feasts and the like; and Samson’s case before Dagon, when the Philistines had put out his eyes, is quite in point. As to *scourgings*, this was a common way of punishing minor culprits: and even those who were to be punished *capitally* were first scourged. See the case of our Lord.

**Bond’s and imprisonment]** Joseph was cast into prison; Jeremiah was cast into a dungeon full of mire, <sup><2576></sup>**Jeremiah 37:16**, and <sup><2436></sup>**Jeremiah 38:6**; and the Prophet Micaiah was imprisoned by Ahab, <sup><1227></sup>**1 Kings 22:27**.

**Verse 37. They were stoned]** As Zechariah, the son of Barachiah or Jehoida, was, between the altar and the temple; see the account, <sup><4321></sup>**2 Chronicles 24:21**; and See the notes on “<sup><4235></sup>**Matthew 23:35**”. And as Naboth the Jezreelite, who, on refusing to give up his father’s inheritance to a covetous king, because it had respect to the promise of God, was falsely accused and stoned to death; <sup><12101></sup>**1 Kings 21:1-14**.

**They were sawn asunder]** There is a tradition that the Prophet Isaiah was thus martyred. In *Yevamoth*, fol. 49, 2, it is thus written: “Manasseh slew Isaiah; for he commanded that he should be slain with a wooden saw. They then brought the saw, and cut him in two; and when the saw reached his mouth, his soul fled forth.” St. Jerome and others mention the same thing; and among the Jews the tradition is indubitable.

**Were tempted]** *επειρασθησαν*. I believe this word has vexed the critics more than any other in the New Testament. How being *tempted* can be ranked among the *heavy sufferings* of the primitive martyrs and confessors is not easy to discern, because *to be tempted* is the common lot of every godly man. This difficulty has induced learned men to mend the text by conjecture: Beza proposes *επυρωθησαν*, *they were branded*. Junius, Piscator, and others, propose *επυρασθησαν*, *they were burnt alive*. Gataker thinks *επρησθησαν*, a word of the same import, should be preferred. Tanaquil Faber gives the preference to *επηρωθησαν*, *they were mutilated*—had different parts of their bodies *lopped off*. Sir Norton Knatchbull contends for *επαρτησαν*, *they were transfixed*, or *pierced through*. Alberti thinks the original reading was *εσπειρασθησαν*, *they were strangled*. About as many more differences have been proposed by learned men, all hearing a very clear resemblance to the words now found in the Greek text. By three MSS. the word is entirely *omitted*; as also by the *Syriac*, *Arabic* of Erpen, the *Æthiopic*, and by *Eusebius* and *Theophylact*. Of all the conjectures, that of *Knatchbull* appears to me to be the most probable: *they were transfixed* or *impaled*; and even the present reading might be construed in this sense.

**Were slain with the sword]** As in the case of the eighty-five priests slain by Doeg, see <sup><12218></sup> **1 Samuel 22:18**; and the *prophets*, of whose slaughter by the sword Elijah complains, <sup><11910></sup> **1 Kings 19:10**. Probably the word means being *beheaded*, which was formerly done with a *sword*, and not with an axe; and in the east is done by the sword to the present day.

**They wandered about in sheepskins]** *μηλωταις* *Sheepskins dressed with the wool on*. This was probably the sort of mantle that Elijah wore, and which was afterwards used by Elisha; for the Septuagint, in <sup><1118></sup> **2 Kings 2:8-13**, expressly say: *και ελαβεν ηλιας την μηλωτην αυτου*. and *Elijah took his SHEEPSKIN* (mantle.) *και υψωσε την μηλωτην ηλιου, η επεσεν επανωθεν αυτου*. And he (Elisha) took the SHEEPSKIN of Elijah which had fallen from off him. It was most probably on this account, as

Dr. Macknight conjectures, that Elijah was called a *hairy man*, <sup><1008></sup>**2 Kings 1:8**; and not on account of having a preposterously *long beard*, as those murrers of all the unities of time, place, circumstances, and common sense, the *painters*, represent him. And it is likely that the prophets themselves wore such garments, and that the false prophets imitated them in this, in order that they might gain the greater credit. *And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision-neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive, Zecariah 13:4; δερριν τριχινην*, a *hairy skin*, SEPT., probably the *goatskins* mentioned above. In general, this was an *upper garment*; but, in the cases to which the apostle alludes, the *sheepskin* and *goatskin* seem to have been the *only covering*.

**Being destitute]** ὄστερουμενοι. *In want of all the comforts and conveniences of life, and often of its necessities.*

**Afflicted]** In consequence of enduring such privations.

**Tormented]** κακουχουμενοι. *Maltreated, harassed, variously persecuted by those to whom they brought the message of salvation.*

**Verse 38. Of whom the world was not worthy]** Yet they were obliged to wander by day in *deserts* and *mountains*, driven from the society of men, and often obliged to hide by night in dens and caves of the earth, to conceal themselves from the brutal rage of men. Perhaps he refers here principally to the case of Elijah, and the hundred prophets hidden in caves by Obadiah, and fed with bread and water. See <sup><1180></sup>**1 Kings 18:4**. David was often obliged thus to hide himself from Saul; <sup><9243></sup>**1 Samuel 24:3**, &c.

**Verse 39. Having obtained a good report** (having been witnessed to; see <sup><8102></sup>**Hebrews 11:2**) **through faith]** It was *faith in God* which supported all those eminent men who, in different parts of the world, and in different ages, were persecuted for righteousness sake.

**Received not the promise]** They all heard of the promises made to Abraham of a heavenly rest, and of the promise of the *Messiah*, for this was a constant tradition; but they died without having seen this *Anointed of the Lord*. Christ was not in any of their times manifested in the flesh; and of him who was the expectation of all nations, they heard only by the hearing of the ear. This must be the promise, without receiving of which the apostle says *they died*.

**Verse 40. God having provided some better thing for us]** This is the dispensation of the Gospel, with all the privileges and advantages it confers.

**That they without us should not be made perfect.]** Believers before the flood, after the flood, under the law, and since the law, make but one Church. The Gospel dispensation is the last, and the Church cannot be considered as *complete* till the believers under all dispensations are gathered together. As the Gospel is the last dispensation, the preceding believers cannot be consummated even in glory till the Gospel Church arrive in the heaven of heavens.

There are a great variety of meanings put on this place, but the above seems the most simple and consistent. See <sup><661></sup>**Revelation 6:11.** “White robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also, and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.” This time, and its blessings, are now upon the wing.

See ancillary data for:—

### **OBSERVATIONS ON THE BEING OF A GOD.**

And

*A short account of the BASTINADO, supposed to be referred to in*  
<sup><8115></sup>**Hebrews 11:35.**

## HEBREWS

## CHAPTER 12.

*Having so many incitements to holiness, patience, and perseverance, we should lay aside every hinderance, and run with patience the race that is set before us, taking our blessed Lord for our example, 1-4. These sufferings are to be considered as fatherly chastisements from God, and to be patiently submitted to on account of the benefits to be derived from them, 5-11. They should take courage and go forward, 12, 13. Directions to follow peace with all men, and to take heed that they fall not from the grace of God, 14, 15. References to the case of Esau, 16, 17. The privileges of Christians, compared with those of the Jews, by which the superior excellence of Christianity is shown, 18-24. They must take care not to reject Jesus, who now addressed them from heaven, and who was shortly to be their Judge, 25-27. As they were called to receive a kingdom, they should have grace, whereby they might serve God acceptably, 28, 29.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 12.

**Verse 1. Wherefore]** This is an inference drawn from the examples produced in the preceding chapter, and on this account both should be read in connection.

**Compassed about]** Here is another allusion to the *Olympic games*: the *agonistæ*, or contenders, were often greatly animated by the consideration that the eyes of the *principal men* of their country were fixed upon them; and by this they were induced to make the most extraordinary exertions.

**Cloud of witnesses]** **νεφος μαρτυρων**. Both the *Greeks* and *Latins* frequently use the term *cloud*, to express a *great number* of persons or things; so in *Euripides*, *Phœniss.* ver. 257: **νεφος ασπιδων πυκνον**, a *dense cloud of shields*; and *Statius*, *Thebiad.*, lib. ix., ver. 120: *jaculantum nubes*, a cloud of spearmen. The same metaphor frequently occurs.

**Let us lay aside every weight]** As those who ran in the *Olympic races* would throw aside every thing that might impede them in their course; so Christians, professing to go to heaven, must throw aside every thing that

might hinder them in their Christian race. Whatever weighs down our hearts or affections to earth and sense is to be carefully avoided; for no man, with the love of the world in his heart, can ever reach the kingdom of heaven.

**The sin which doth so easily beset]** **ευπεριστατον αμαρτιαν.** *The well circumstanced sin*; that which has every thing in its favour, *time*, and *place*, and *opportunity*; the *heart* and the *object*; and a sin in which all these things frequently occur, and consequently the transgression is frequently committed. **ευπεριστατος** is derived from **ευ**, *well*, **περι**, *about*, and **ιστημι**, *I stand*; the sin that stands well, or is favourably situated, ever surrounding the person and soliciting his acquiescence. What we term the *easily besetting sin* is the sin of our constitution, the sin of our trade, that in which our worldly honour, secular profit, and sensual gratification are most frequently felt and consulted. Some understand it of *original sin*, as that by which we are enveloped in body, soul, and spirit. Whatever it may be, the word gives us to understand that it is what meets us at every turn; that it is always presenting itself to us; that as a pair of compasses describe a circle by the revolution of one leg, while the other is at rest in the centre, so this, springing from that point of corruption within, called the *carnal mind*, surrounds us in every place; we are *bounded* by it, and often hemmed in on every side; it is a circular, well fortified wall, over which we must leap, or through which we must break. The man who is addicted to a particular species of sin (for every sinner has *his way*) is represented as a prisoner in this strong fortress.

In laying aside the weight, there is an allusion to the long garments worn in the eastern countries, which, if not laid aside or tucked up in the girdle, would greatly incommode the traveller, and utterly prevent a man from running a race. The easily besetting sin of the Hebrews was an aptness to be drawn aside from their attachment to the Gospel, for fear of persecution.

**Let us run with patience the race]** **τρεχωμεν τον προκειμενον ημιν αγωνα.** Let us *start*, *run on*, and *continue running*, till we get to the goal. This figure is a favourite among the Greek writers; so *Euripides*, *Alcest.*, ver. 489: **ου τον δαγωνα πρωτον αν δραμοιμεγω.** *This is not the first race that I shall run.* Id. *Iphig. in Aulid.*, ver. 1456: **δεινους αγωνας δια σε κεινον δει δραμειν.** *He must run a hard race for thee.* This is a race



which is of infinite moment to us: the prize is ineffably great; and, if we lose it, it is not a simple loss, for the whole soul perishes.

**Verse 2. Looking unto Jesus]** ἀφορωντες. Looking *off* and *on*, or *from* and *to*; looking *off* or *from* the world and all secular concerns *to* Jesus and all the spiritual and heavenly things connected with him. This is still an allusion to the Grecian games: those who ran were to keep their eyes fixed on the mark of the prize; they must keep the goal in view. 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.

**The author and finisher of-faith]** αρχηγος, translated here *author*, signifies, in general, captain or leader, or the first inventor of a thing; see <8010>**Hebrews 2:10**. But the reference seems to be here to the βραβευς, or judge in the games, whose business it was to admit the contenders, and to give the prize to the conqueror. Jesus is here represented as this officer; every Christian is a contender in this race of life, and for eternal life. The heavenly course is *begun* under Jesus; and under him it is *completed*. He is the finisher, by awarding the prize to them that are faithful unto death. Thus he is the *author* or the judge under whom, and by whose permission and direction, according to the rules of the heavenly race, they are permitted to enter the lists, and commence the race, and he is the finisher, τελειωτης, the *perfecter*, by awarding and giving the prize which consummates the combatants at the end of the race.

**Who, for the joy that was set before him]** The joy of fulfilling the will of the Father, <1916>**Psalm 40:6-8**, &c., in tasting death for every man; and having endured the cross and despised the shame of this ignominious death, He is set down at the right hand of God, ever appearing in the presence of God for us, and continuing his exhibition of himself as our Sacrifice, and his intercession as our Mediator. **See the notes on** “<8105>**Hebrews 10:5**”, &c. There are different other explanations given of this clause, but I think *that* here offered is the most natural. It never can, in any sense, be said of Jesus that he endured the cross, &c., in the prospect of gaining an everlasting glory; when he had the fulness of that glory with the Father before the world began; <8175>**John 17:5**.

**Verse 3. For consider him]** αναλογισασθε--ινα μη καμητε, ταις ψυχαις--εκλυμενοι. Attentively observe and analyze every part of his

conduct, enter into his spirit, examine his motives and object, and remember that, as he acted, ye are called to act; he will furnish you with the same Spirit, and will support you with the same strength. He bore a continual opposition of sinners against himself; but he conquered by meekness, patience, and perseverance: he has left you an example that ye should follow his steps. If ye trust in him, ye shall receive strength; therefore, howsoever great your opposition may be, ye shall not *be weary*: if ye confide in and attentively look to him, ye shall have continual *courage* to go on, and never *faint* in your minds.

Here is a continued allusion to the contenders in the Grecian games, who, when exhausted in bodily strength and courage, yielded the palm to their opponents, and were said **καμνειν**, to be weary or exhausted; **εκλυεσθαι**, to be dissolved, disheartened, or to have lost all bravery and courage.

**Verse 4. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood]** Many of those already mentioned were martyrs for the truth; they persevered unto death, and lost their lives in bearing testimony to the truth. Though you have had opposition and persecution, yet you have not been called, in bearing your testimony against sin and sinners, to seal the truth with your blood.

**Striving against sin.] προς την αμαρτιαν ανταγωνι ζομενοι.** An allusion to *boxing* at the Grecian games. In the former passages the apostle principally refers to the foot races.

**Verse 5. And ye have forgotten]** Or, have ye forgotten the exhortation? This quotation is made from <sup><A1B1></sup>**Proverbs 3:11, 12**, and shows that the address there, which at first sight appears to be from Solomon to his son, or from some fatherly man to a person in affliction, is properly from *God himself* to any person in persecution, affliction, or distress.

**Despise not thou the chastening]** **μη ολιγωρει παιδειας κυριου.** *Do not neglect the correction of the Lord.* That man neglects correction, and profits not by it, who does not see the hand of God in it; or, in other words, does not fear the rod and him who hath appointed it, and, consequently, does not humble himself under the mighty hand of God, deplore his sin, deprecate Divine judgment, and pray for mercy.

**Nor faint]** Do not be discouraged nor despair, for the reasons immediately alleged.

**Verse 6. For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth]** Here is the *reason* why we should neither *neglect* correction, nor *faint* under it: it is a proof of the fatherly love of God Almighty, and shows his most gracious designs towards us; from which we may be fully convinced that the affliction will prove the means of good to our souls, if we make a proper use of it.

**And scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.]** Μαστιγοι δε παντα υιον, ον παραδεξεται. This is a quotation, literatim from the Septuagint, of <sup>α1812</sup>**Proverbs 3:12**, of which place our version is: *Even as the father the son in whom he delighteth.* But, howsoever near this may appear to be the Hebrew, it bears scarcely any affinity to the apostle's words. The Hebrew text is as follows: *ḥ-b-ta bakw hxry uchab eth-ben yirtseh.* Now, *bal w* may be a *noun*, compounded of the conjunction *w vau*, “and,” the *comparative* particle *k ke*, “as” or “like;” and *ba ab*, “a father:” or it may be the third person preterite *kal* of *bak caab*, “he spoiled, wasted, marred, ulcerated,” compounded with the conjunction *w vau*, “and.” And in this sense the *Septuagint* most evidently understood it; and it is so understood by the *Arabic*; and both readings seem to be combined by the *Syriac* and *Chaldee* versions. And as to *hxr ratsah*, one of its prime meanings is to *accept*, to receive *graciously*, to *take into favour*; the translation, therefore, of the *Septuagint* and apostle is perfectly consonant to the Hebrew text, and our version of <sup>α1812</sup>**Proverbs 3:12** is wrong.

**Verse 7. If ye endure chastening]** If ye submit to his authority, humble yourselves under his hand, and pray for his blessing, you will find that he deals with you as beloved children, correcting you that he may make you partakers of his holiness.

**God dealeth with you as with sons]** He acknowledges by this that you belong to the *family*, and that he, as your *Father*, has you under proper discipline. It is a maxim among the Jewish rabbins that “the love which is not conjoined with reproof is not genuine.”

**Verse 8. Then are ye bastards]** This proceeds on the general fact, that *bastards* are neglected in their manners and education; the fathers of such, feeling little affection for, or obligation to regard, their spurious issue. But *all* that are legitimate children *are partakers* of chastisement or discipline; for the original word παιδεια does not imply *stripes* and *punishments*, but the whole discipline of a child, both at home and at school.

**Verse 9. We have had fathers of our flesh]** The fathers of our flesh, i.e. our natural parents, were correctors; and we revered them, notwithstanding their corrections often arose from whim or caprice: but *shall we not rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits; to him from whom we have received both body and soul; who is our Creator, Preserver, and Supporter; to whom both we and our parents owe our life and our blessings; and who corrects us only for our profit; that we may live and be partakers of his holiness?* The apostle in asking, *Shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live?* alludes to the punishment of the *stubborn and rebellious son*, <sup>Ex 21:18</sup> **Deuteronomy 21:18-21:** “If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, who will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them; then shall his father and mother lay hold on him and bring him to the elders of the city, and they shall say, This our son is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice: and all the men of the city shall stone him with stones that he DIE.” Had he been subject to his earthly parents, he would have *lived*; because not subject, he *dies*. If we be subject to our heavenly Father, we shall LIVE, and be partakers of his holiness; if not, we shall DIE, and be treated as *bastards* and not *sons*. This is the sum of the apostle’s meaning; and the *fact* and the *law* to which he alludes.

**Verse 10. For-a few days]** The chastisement of our earthly parents lasted only a *short time*; that of our heavenly Father will also be but a *short time*, if we submit: and as our parents ceased to correct when we learned obedience; so will our heavenly Father when the end for which he sent the chastisement is accomplished. God delights not in the rod; judgment is his strange work.

**Verse 11. No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous]** Neither correction, wholesome restraint, domestic regulations, nor gymnastic discipline, are pleasant to them that are thus exercised; but it is by these means that *obedient children, scholars, and great men* are made. And it is by God’s discipline that *Christians* are made. He who does not bear the yoke of Christ is good for nothing to others, and never gains rest to his own soul.

**The peaceable fruit of righteousness]** *i.e.* The joyous, prosperous fruits; those fruits by which we gain much, and through which we are made happy.

**Exercised thereby.]** γεγυμνασμενοις. *To the trained.* There is still an allusion to the Grecian games; and in the word before us to those *gymnastic exercises* by which the candidates for the prizes were trained to the different kinds of exercises in which they were to contend when the games were publicly opened.

**Verse 12. Wherefore lift up the hands]** The apostle refers to ~~235B~~ **Isaiah 35:3.** The words are an address to persons almost worn out with sickness and fatigue, whose hands hang down, whose knees shake, and who are totally discouraged. These are exhorted to exert themselves, and take courage, with the assurance that they shall infallibly conquer if they persevere.

**Verse 13. Make straight paths for your feet]** That is, Take the straight path that is before you, do not go in crooked or rough ways, where are stones, briars, and thorns, by which you will be inevitably lamed, and so totally prevented from proceeding in the way; whereas, if you go in the even, proper path, though you have been wounded by getting into a wrong way, that which was wounded will *be healed* by moderate, equal exercise, all impediments being removed. The application of all this to a correct, holy deportment in religious life, is both natural and easy.

**Verse 14. Follow peace with all men]** Cultivate, as far as you possibly can, a good understanding, both with Jews and Gentiles. ειρηνην διωκετε, pursue peace with the same care, attention, and diligence, as *beasts* do their *game*; follow it through all places; trace it through all winding circumstances; and have it with all men, if you can with a safe conscience.

**And holiness]** τον αγιασμον. That state of continual *sanctification*, that life of *purity* and *detachment* from the *world* and all its lusts, without which detachment and sanctity *no man shall see the Lord*-shall never enjoy his presence in the world of blessedness. *To see God*, in the Hebrew phrase, is to *enjoy him*; and without holiness of heart and life this is impossible. No soul can be fit for heaven that has not suitable dispositions for the place.

**Verse 15. Looking diligently]** επισκοπουντες. *Looking about, over, and upon*; being constantly on your guard.

**Lest any man fail of the grace of God]** μη τις υστερων απο της χαριτος του θεου. *Lest any person should come behind, or fall off from, this grace or GIFT of God; this state of salvation, viz. the Gospel system or Christianity; for this is most evidently the meaning of the apostle. It is not the falling from a work of grace in their own souls, but from the Gospel, to apostatize from which they had now many temptations; and to guard them against this, the whole epistle was written.*

**Lest any root of bitterness springing up]** A root of bitterness signifies a *poisonous plant*. The Hebrews call every species of poison a *bitter*, and with considerable propriety, as most plants are poisonous in proportion to the quantum of the bitter principle they possess. The *root of bitterness* is here used metaphorically for a *bad man*, or a man holding *unsound doctrines*, and endeavouring to spread them in the Church.

**Trouble you]** This alludes to the effects of poison taken into the body: the whole animal system is disturbed, sometimes violent retchings, great disturbances through the whole alimentary canal, together with the most fatal changes in the whole sanguineous system, are the consequences of poison taken into the stomach. The *blood* itself (the principle, under God, of life) becomes putrescent; and probably to this the intelligent apostle alludes when he says, *and thereby many be defiled, μιανθωσι, corrupted or contaminated.*

Bad example and false teaching have corrupted thousands, and are still making desolation in the *world* and in the *Church*.

**Verse 16. Lest there be any fornicator]** Any licentious person who would turn the Gospel of the grace of God into lasciviousness.

**Or profane person, as Esau]** It is not intimated that Esau was a *fornicator*; and the disjunctive η, *or*, separates the *profane person* from the *fornicator*. And Esau is here termed *profane*, because he so far disregarded the spiritual advantages connected with his rights of primogeniture, that he alienated the whole for a single mess of pottage. **See the note on “<sup>402534</sup>Genesis 25:34”**. The word βεβηλος, which we translate *profane*, is compounded of βε, which in composition has a *negative* signification, and βηλος, *the threshold of a temple or sacred edifice*; and was applied to those who were not *initiated* into the sacred mysteries, or who were *despisers of sacred things*, and consequently were to be denied *admittance to the temple*, and were not permitted to *assist at holy rites*. Indeed,

among the Greeks βεβηλος signified any thing or person which was *not consecrated to the gods*. Hence, in the opening of their worship, they were accustomed to proclaim,

*Procul, O procul, este profani!*  
*VIRG.*

*“Hence! O hence! ye profane.”*

And,

*Odi profanum vulgus, et arceo.*  
*HOR.*

*“I abominate the profane vulgar, and drive them from the temple.”*

The Latin *profanus*, from which we have our word, is compounded of *procul a fano*, “far from the temple,” properly an *irreligious man*.

**Sold his birthright.]** *The first-born*, in patriarchal times, 1. Had a right to the priesthood, <sup><0229></sup>**Exodus 22:29**. 2. And a double portion of all the father’s possessions, <sup><0217></sup>**Deuteronomy 21:17**. 3. And was *lord over his brethren*, <sup><0279></sup>**Genesis 27:29, 37; 49:3**. 4. And in the family of Abraham the first-born was the very source whence the Messiah as the Redeemer of the world, and the Church of God, were to spring. Farther, 5. The first-born had the right of conveying especial blessings and privileges when he came to die. See the case of Isaac and his two sons, Jacob and Esau, in the history to which the apostle alludes, Genesis 27; and that of Jacob and his twelve sons, Genesis 49; In short, the rights of primogeniture were among the most noble, honourable, and spiritual in the ancient world.

**Verse 17. When he would have inherited the blessing]** When he wished to have *the lordship over the whole family conveyed to him*, and sought it earnestly with tears, he found no place for a *change* in his *father’s mind* and counsel, who now perceived that it was the will of God that Jacob should be made *lord of all*.

**Repentance]** Here μετανοια is not to be taken in a theological sense, as implying *contrition* for sin, but merely *change of mind or purpose*; nor does the word refer here to *Esau* at all, but to his *father*, whom Esau could not, with all his tears and entreaties, persuade to reverse what he had done. *I have blessed him*, said he, *yea, and he must be blessed*; I cannot reverse it now. See the whole of this transaction largely considered and explained,

See the notes on “<sup><01253></sup>Genesis 25:29”, &c., and See “<sup><012701></sup>Genesis 27:1”, &c. Nothing spoken here by the apostle, nor in the history in Genesis to which he refers, concerns the *eternal* state of either of the two brothers. The use made of the transaction by the apostle is of great importance: Take heed lest, by apostatizing from the Gospel, ye forfeit all right and title to the heavenly birthright, and never again be able to retrieve it; because they who reject the Gospel reject the only means of salvation.

**Verse 18. - 21. For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched]** I believe the words ψηλαφωμενω ορει should be translated *to a palpable or material mountain*; for that it was not a mountain that on this occasion *might be touched*, the history, <sup><01912></sup>Exodus 19:12, 13, shows; and the apostle himself, in <sup><08123></sup>Hebrews 12:20, confirms. It is called here a *palpable or material* mount, to distinguish it from that *spiritual mount* Sion, of which the apostle is speaking. Some contend that it should be translated *tacto de caelo*, thunder-struck; this sense would agree well enough with the scope of the place. The apostle’s design is to show that the dispensation of the law engendered terror; that it was most awful and exclusive; that it belonged only to the Jewish people; and that, even to them, it was so terrible that they *could not endure that which was commanded*, and entreated that God would not communicate with them in his own person, but by the ministry of Moses: and even to Moses, who held the highest intimacy with Jehovah, the revealed glories, the burning fire, the blackness, the darkness, the tempest, the loud-sounding trumpet, and the voice of words, were so terrible that he said, *I exceedingly fear and tremble*.

These were the things which were exhibited on that *material* mountain; but the Gospel dispensation is one grand, copious, and interesting display of the infinite love of God. It is all encouragement; breathes nothing but mercy; is not an exclusive system; embraces the whole human race; has Jesus, the sinner’s friend, for its mediator; is ratified by his blood; and is suited, most gloriously suited, to all the wants and wishes of every soul of man.

**Verse 22. But ye are come unto mount Sion]** In order to enter fully into the apostle’s meaning, we must observe, 1. That the Church, which is called here the *city of the living God*, the heavenly Jerusalem, and mount Sion, is represented under the notion of a CITY. 2. That the great assembly of believers in Christ is here opposed to the congregation of the Israelites



assembled at Mount Sinai. 3. That the *innumerable company of angels* is here opposed to, those angels by whom the law was ushered in, <sup><4073></sup>**Acts 7:53**; <sup><1019></sup>**Galatians 3:19**. 4. That the Gospel *first-born, whose names are written in heaven*, are here opposed to the *enrolled first-born* among the Israelites, <sup><1246></sup>**Exodus 24:5; 19:22**. 5. That the *mediator* of the new covenant, the Lord *Jesus*, is here opposed to *Moses*, the mediator of the old. 6. And that the *blood of sprinkling*, of Christ, our High Priest, refers to the act of Moses, <sup><1248></sup>**Exodus 24:8**: “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.”

1. The description in these verses does not refer to a *heavenly state*; for the *terrible nature* of the *Mosaic dispensation* is never opposed to heaven or life eternal, but to the economy of the New Testament. 2. In heaven there is no need of a *mediator*, or *sprinkling of blood*; but these are mentioned in the state which the apostle describes.

**The heavenly Jerusalem]** This phrase means the Church of the New Testament, as *Schoettgen* has amply proved in his dissertation on this subject.

**To an innumerable company of angels]** **μυριασιν αγγελων.** *To myriads, tens of thousands, of angels.* These are represented as the attendants upon God, when he manifests himself in any external manner to mankind. When he gave the law at Mount Sinai, it is intimated that myriads of these holy beings attended him. “The chariots of the Lord are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels; the Lord is among them as in Sinai, in the holy place;” <sup><19817></sup>**Psalms 68:17**. And when he shall come to judge the world, he will be attended with a similar company. “Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him;” <sup><20710></sup>**Daniel 7:10**. In both these cases, as in several others, these seem to be, speaking after the manner of men, the *body guard* of the Almighty. Though angels make a part of the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem, yet they belong also to the Church below. Christ has in some sort incorporated them with his followers, for “they are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them that shall be heirs of salvation,” and they are all ever considered as making a part of God’s subjects.

**Verse 23. To the general assembly]** **πανηγυρει.** This word is joined to the preceding by some of the best MSS., and is quoted in connection by

several of the fathers: *Ye are come-to the general assembly of innumerable angels*; and this is probably the true connection.

The word **πανηγυρις** is compounded of **παν**, *all*, and **αγυρις**, an *assembly*; and means, particularly, an assembly collected on *festive* occasions. It is applied to the assembly of the *Grecian states* at their national games, Olympic, Isthmian, &c.; and hence a speech pronounced in *favour* of any person at such festive assemblies was called **πανηγυρικός λογος**, a *panegyrical discourse*; and hence our word *panegyric*.

**The first-born**] Those who first received the Gospel of Christ, and who are elsewhere termed the *first fruits*: this is spoken in allusion to the first-born among the Israelites, who were all considered as the Lord's property, and were dedicated to him. The Jews gave the title **רִבְכָּב** *bechor*, first-born, to those who were very eminent or excellent; what we would term the *head* or *top of his kin*. *The Church of the first-born* is the assembly of the *most excellent*.

**Which are written in heaven**] Who are enrolled as citizens of the New Jerusalem, and are entitled to all the rights, privileges, and immunities of the Church here, and of heaven above. This is spoken in allusion to the custom of enrolling or writing on tables, &c., the names of all the citizens of a particular city; and all those thus registered were considered as having a right to live there, and to enjoy all its privileges. All genuine believers are denizens of heaven. That is their country, and there they have their rights, &c. And every member of Christ has a right to, and can demand, every ordinance in the Church of his Redeemer; and wo to him who attempts to prevent them!

**God the Judge of all.**] The supreme God is ever present in this general assembly: *to* him they are all gathered; *by* him they are admitted to all those rights, &c.; under his inspection they continue to act; and it is he alone who erases from the register those who act unworthily of their citizenship. *Judge* here is to be taken in the Jewish use of the term, i.e. one who exercises *sovereign rule* and *authority*.

**The spirits of just men made perfect**] We cannot understand these terms without the assistance of Jewish phraseology. The Jews divide mankind into three classes:—

1. The JUST PERFECT, μῦρῳμῖ μῦαῖδῃ *tsaddikim gemurim*.
2. The wicked perfect, μῦρῳμῖ μῦ[νρ *reshaim gemurim*.
3. Those between both, μῦγῳμῖ μῦβ *beinoniyim*.

1. The *just perfect* are those, 1. Who have conquered all brutal appetites and gross passions. 2. Who have stood in the time of strong temptation. 3. Who give alms with a sincere heart. 4. Who worship the true God only. 5. Who are not invidious. 6. Those from whom God has taken [ρῃ ρxy *yetser hara*, evil concupiscence, and given bwc ρxy *yetser tob*, the good principle.

2. The *wicked perfect* are those, 1. Who never repent. 2. They receive their portion in this life, because they can have none in the life to come, and are under the influence of [ρῃ ρxy *yetser hara*, the evil principle.

3. The *intermediate* are those who are influenced partly by the evil principle, and partly by the good.—See *Schoettgen*.

In several parts of this epistle τελειος, *the just man*, signifies one who has a *full knowledge* of the Christian system, who is justified and saved by Christ Jesus; and the τετελειωνεμοι are the *adult Christians*, who are opposed to the νηπιοι or *babes in knowledge and grace*. See <812> **Hebrews 5:12-14; 8:11**; and <800> **Galatians 4:1-3**. *The spirits of the just men made perfect*, or the *righteous perfect*, are the full grown Christians; those who are justified by the blood and sanctified by the Spirit of Christ. Being *come* to such, implies that spiritual union which the disciples of Christ have with each other, and which they possess how far soever separate; for they are *all joined in one spirit*, <8218> **Ephesians 2:18**; they are *in the unity of the spirit*, <8043> **Ephesians 4:3, 4**; and of *one soul*, <4042> **Acts 4:32**. This is a *unity* which was never possessed even by the Jews themselves in their best state; it is peculiar to real Christianity: as to *nominal* Christianity, wars and desolations between man and his fellows are quite consistent with *its* spirit. See at the end of the chapter. See <8122> **Hebrews 12:29**”

**Verse 24.** And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant] The old covenant and its mediator, Moses, are passed away. See <8113> **Hebrews 8:13**. The new covenant, i.e. the Gospel, is now in force, and will be to the end of the world; and Jesus, the Son of God, the brightness of the Father’s glory, the Maker and Preserver of all things, the Saviour and the Judge of

all men, is its mediator. Both the covenant and its mediator are infinitely superior to those of the Jews, and they are very properly set down here among the superior benefits and glories of Christianity.

**To the blood of sprinkling]** This is an allusion, as was before observed, to the sprinkling of the blood of the covenant sacrifice upon the people, when that covenant was made upon Mount Sinai; to the sprinkling of the blood of the sin-offerings before the mercy-seat; and probably to the sprinkling of the blood of the paschal lamb on their houses, to prevent their destruction by the destroying angel. But all these sprinklings were *partial* and inefficacious, and had no meaning but as they referred to this: the blood of sprinkling under the new covenant is ever ready; all may have it applied; it continues through ages; and is the highest glory of Christianity, because by it we draw nigh to God, and through it get our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience; and, in a word, have an entrance unto the holiest by the blood of Jesus.

**Better things than that of Abel.]** God accepted Abel's sacrifice, and, was well pleased with it; for Abel was a righteous man, and offered his sacrifice by *faith* in the great promise. But the blood of Christ's sacrifice was infinitely more precious than the blood of Abel's sacrifice, as Jesus is infinitely greater than Abel; and the blood of Christ avails for the sins of the *whole world*, whereas the blood of Abel's sacrifice could avail only for *himself*.

Many have supposed that the *blood of Abel* means here the blood that was shed by Cain in the murder of this holy man, and that the blood of Jesus *speaks better things than it does*, because the blood of Abel *called for vengeance*, but the blood of Christ *for pardon*; this interpretation reflects little credit on the understanding of the apostle. To say that the blood of Christ *spoke better things than that of Abel* is saying little indeed; it might speak very little good to any soul of man, and yet speak *better things than that* blood of Abel which spoke no kind of good to any human creature, and only called for vengeance against him that shed it. The truth is, the *sacrifice* offered by Abel is that which is intended; that, as we have already seen, was pleasing in the sight of God, and was accepted in behalf of him who offered it: but the blood of Christ is infinitely more acceptable with God; it was shed for the whole human race, and cleanses all who believe from all unrighteousness.

**Verse 25. See] βλέπετε.** *Take heed, that ye refuse not him-* the Lord Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, who now speaketh *from heaven*, by his Gospel, to the Jews and to the Gentiles, having in his incarnation come down from God.

**Him that spake on earth]** Moses, who spoke on the part of God to the Hebrews, every transgression of whose word received a just recompense of reward, none being permitted to *escape* punishment; consequently, if ye turn away from Christ, who speaks to you from heaven, you may expect a much sorer punishment, the offence against God being so much the more heinous, as the privileges slighted are more important and glorious.

**Verse 26. Whose voice then shook the earth]** Namely, at the giving of the law on Mount Sinai; and from this it seems that it was the voice of *Jesus* that then shook the earth, and that it was he who came down on the mount. But others refer this simply to God the Father giving the law.

**Not the earth only, but also heaven.]** Probably referring to the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, and the total abolition of the political and ecclesiastical constitution of the Jews; the one being signified by the *earth*, the other by *heaven*; for the Jewish state and worship are frequently thus termed in the prophetic writings. And this seems to be the apostle's meaning, as he evidently refers to <sup>3016</sup> **Haggai 2:6**, where this event is predicted. It may also remotely refer to the final dissolution of all things.

**Verse 27. The removing of those things that are shaken]** The whole of the *Jewish polity*, which had been in a *shaken state* from the time that Judea had fallen under the power of the Romans.

**As of things that are made]** That is, subjects intended to last only for a time. God never designed that the Jewish religion should become general, nor be permanent.

**Those things which cannot be shaken]** The whole *Gospel system*, which cannot be *moved* by the power of man.

**May remain.]** Be permanent; God designing that this shall be the *last dispensation* of his grace and mercy, and that it shall continue till the earth and the heavens are no more.

**Verse 28. We receiving a kingdom]** The Gospel dispensation, frequently termed the *kingdom of God* and the *kingdom of heaven*, because in it God reigns among men, and he reigns in the hearts of them that believe, and his kingdom is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

**Which cannot be moved]** Which never can fail, because it is the last dispensation.

**Let us have grace]** ἐξωμεν χάριν. *Let us have, keep, or hold fast, the benefit or gift*, that is, the heavenly kingdom which God has given us. This is the meaning of the word, ~~αἰδοῦς~~ **2 Corinthians 8:4**, and is so rendered by our translators; and it is only by this *heavenly gift* of the Gospel that we can serve God acceptably, for he can be pleased with no service that is not performed according to the Gospel of his Son.

If we prefer the common meaning of the word *grace* it comes to the same thing; without the *grace*-the especial *succour* and *influence of Christ*, we cannot serve, λατρευομεν, pay religious worship to God; for he receives no *burnt-offering* that is not kindled by fire from his own altar.

**Acceptably]** ευαρεστοως. In such a way as to *please* him well. And the offering, with which he is *well pleased*, he will *graciously accept*; and if he accept our service, his Spirit will testify in our conscience that our ways please him. When *Abel* sacrifices, God is well pleased; where *Cain* offers, there is no approbation.

**Reverence]** αιδους. With *shamefacedness* or *modesty*.

**Godly fear]** ευλαβειας. *Religious fear*. We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, but let that boldness be ever tempered with *modesty* and *religious fear*; for we should never forget that *we have sinned*, and that *God is a consuming fire*. Instead of αιδους και ευλαβειας, *modesty and religious fear*, ACD\*, several others, with the Slavonic and Chrysostom, have ευλαβειας και δεους, and others have φοβου και τρομου, *fear and trembling*; but the sense is nearly the same.

**Verse 29. For our God is a consuming fire.]** The apostle quotes ~~αἰδοῦς~~ **Deuteronomy 4:24**, and by doing so he teaches us this great truth, that sin under the Gospel is as abominable in God's sight as it was under the law; and that the man who does not labour to serve God with the principle and in the way already prescribed, will find that fire to consume *him* which would otherwise have consumed his *sin*.

Additional remarks on verses ~~8122~~ **Hebrews 12:22-24.**

On the whole, I think the description in these verses refers to the state of the Church *here below*, and not to any *heavenly state*. Let us review the particulars: 1. As the law was given on Mount *Sinai*, so the Gospel was given at Mount *Sion*. 2. As *Jerusalem* was the city of the living God while the Jewish dispensation lasted, (for *there* was the temple, its services, sacrifices, &c.,) the Christian Church is now called the *heavenly Jerusalem*, the city of the living God. In it is the great sacrifice, in it that spiritual worship, which God, the infinite Spirit, requires. 3. The ministry of angels was used under the *old covenant*, but that was *partial*, being granted only to particular persons, such as Moses, Joshua, Manoah, &c., and only to a few before the law, as Abraham, Jacob, &c. It is employed under the *new covenant* in its utmost latitude, not to a few peculiarly favoured people, but to all the followers of God in general; so that in this very epistle the apostle asserts that they are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them that shall be heirs of salvation. 4. At the giving of the law, when the Church of the old covenant was formed, there was a *general assembly* of the *different tribes* by their representatives; in the Gospel Church all who believe in Christ, of every nation, and kindred, and tongue, form one grand aggregate body. Believers of all nations, of all languages, of all climates, however differing in their colour or local habits, are one in Christ Jesus; one body, of which he is the head, and the Holy Spirit the soul. 5. The *first-born* under the old dispensation had exclusive privileges; they had authority, emolument, and honour, of which the other children in the same family did not partake: but under the new, all who believe in Christ Jesus, with a heart unto righteousness, are equally children of God, are all entitled to the same privileges; for, says the apostle, ye are all children of God by faith in Christ, and to them that received him he gave authority to become the children of God; so that through the whole of this Divine family all have *equal rights* and *equal privileges*, all have GOD for their *portion*, and *heaven* for their *inheritance*. 6. As those who had the rights of citizens were *enrolled*, and their names *entered on tables*, &c., so that it might be known who were *citizens*, and who had the rights of such; so all the faithful under the new covenant are represented as having their names written in heaven, which is another form of speech for, *have a right to that glorious state*, and all the blessings it possesses; *there* are their possessions, and there are their rights. 7. Only the high priest, and he but one day in the year, was permitted to *approach God* under the Old

Testament dispensation; but under the New, every believer in Jesus can *come even to the throne*, each has liberty to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, and, to real Christians alone it can be said, *Ye are come-to God the Judge of all*-to him ye have constant access, and from him ye are continually receiving grace upon grace. We have already seen that the *righteous perfect*, or the *just men made perfect*, is a Jewish phrase, and signified those who had made the farthest advances in moral rectitude. The apostle uses it here to point out those in the Church of Christ who had received the highest degrees of grace, possessed most of the mind of Christ, and were doing and suffering most for the glory of God; those who were most deeply acquainted with the things of God and the mysteries of the Gospel, such as the apostles, evangelists, the primitive teachers, and those who presided in and over different Churches. And these are termed the *spirits διακων τετελειωμενων*, *of the just perfected*, because they were a *spiritual* people, forsaking *earth*, and living in reference to that *spiritual rest* that was typified by Canaan. In short, all genuine Christians had communion with each other, through God's Spirit, and even with those whose faces they had not seen in the flesh. 9. Moses, as the servant of God, and *mediator of the old covenant*, was of great consequence in the Levitical economy. By his laws and maxims every thing was directed and tried; and *to him* the whole Hebrew people *came* for both their civil and religious ordinances: but Christians *come* to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant; he not only stands immediately between God and man, but reconciles and connects both. From him we receive the Divine law, by his maxims our conversation is to be ruled, and he gives both the light and life by which we walk; these things Moses could not do, and for such *spirituality* and *excellence* the old covenant made no provision; it was therefore a high privilege to be able to say, *Ye are come-to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant*. 10. The Jews had their blood of sprinkling, but it could not satisfy as touching things which concerned the conscience; it took away no guilt, it made no reconciliation to God: but the blood of sprinkling under the Christian covenant purifies from all unrighteousness; for the blood of the new covenant was shed for the remission of sins, and by its infinite merit it still continues to sprinkle and cleanse the unholy. All these are privileges of infinite consequence to the salvation of man; privileges which should be highly esteemed and most cautiously guarded; and because they are so great, so necessary, and so unattainable in the Levitical economy, therefore we should lay aside every weight, &c., and run with perseverance the race that is set before us. I see nothing therefore



in these verses which determines their sense to the heavenly state; all is suited to the state of the Church of Christ militant here on earth; and some of these particulars cannot be applied to the Church triumphant on any rule of construction whatever.

## HEBREWS

### CHAPTER 13.

*Exhortations to hospitality to Strangers, 1, 2. Kindness to those in bonds, 3. Concerning marriage, 4. Against covetousness, 5, 6. How they should imitate their teachers, 7, 8. To avoid strange doctrines, 9. Of the Jewish sin-offerings, 10, 11. Jesus suffered without the gate, and we should openly confess him and bear his reproach, 12, 13. Here we have no permanent residence; and while we live should devote ourselves to God, and live to do good, 14-16. We should obey them that have the rule over us, 17. The apostle exhorts them to pray for him, that he might be restored to them the sooner, 18, 19. Commends them to God in a very solemn prayer, 20, 21. Entreats them to bear the word of exhortation, mentions Timothy, and concludes with the apostolical benediction, 22-25.*

#### NOTES ON CHAP. 13.

**Verse 1. Let brotherly love continue.]** Be all of one heart and one soul. Feel for, comfort, and support each other; and remember that he who professes to love God should love his brother also. They had this brotherly love among them; they should take care to retain it. As God is remarkable for his φιλανθρωπια, *philanthropy*, or love to man, so should they be for φιλαδελφια, or *love to each other*. See the note on “~~STIB~~ Titus 3:4”.

**Verse 2. To entertain strangers]** In those early times, when there were scarcely any public inns or houses of entertainment, it was an office of charity and mercy to receive, lodge, and entertain travellers; and this is what the apostle particularly recommends.

**Entertained angels]** Abraham and Lot are the persons particularly referred to. Their history, the angels whom they entertained, not knowing them to be such, and the good they derived from exercising their hospitality on these occasions, are well known; and have been particularly referred to in the notes on ~~DIRB~~ **Genesis 18:3; 19:2.**

**Verse 3. Remember them that are in bonds]** He appears to refer to those Christian's who were suffering imprisonment for the testimony of Jesus.

**As bound with them]** Feel for them as you would wish others to feel for you were you in their circumstances, knowing that, being in the body, you are liable to the same evils, and may be called to suffer in the same way for the same cause.

**Verse 4. Marriage is honourable in all]** Let this state be highly esteemed as one of God's own instituting, and as highly calculated to produce the best interests of mankind. This may have been said against the opinions of the *Essenes*, called *Therapeutæ*, who held marriage in little repute, and totally abstained from it themselves as a state of comparative imperfection. At the same time it shows the absurdity of the popish tenet, that marriage in the clergy is both dishonourable and sinful; which is, in fact, in opposition to the apostle, who says marriage is honourable in ALL; and to the institution of God, which evidently designed that every male and female should be united in this holy bond; and to nature, which in every part of the habitable world has produced men and women in due proportion to each other.

**The bed undefiled]** Every man cleaving to his own wife, and every wife cleaving to her own husband, because *God will judge*, i.e. punish, all *fornicators* and *adulterers*.

Instead of **δε** but, **γαρ**, for, is the reading of AD\*, one other, with the *Vulgate*, *Coptic*, and one of the *Itala*; it more forcibly expresses the *reason* of the prohibition: *Let the bed be undefiled, FOR whoremongers and adulterers God will judge*.

**Verse 5. Let your conversation]** That is, the whole tenor of your conduct, **τροπος**, the *manner of your life*, or rather the *disposition* of your hearts in reference to all your secular transactions; for in this sense the original is used by the best Greek writers.

Be **without covetousness]** Desire nothing more than what God has given you; and especially covet nothing which the Divine Providence has given to another man, for this is the very *spirit* of *robbery*.

**Content with such things as ye have]** **αρκουμενοι τοις παρουσιν.** *Being satisfied with present things.* In one of the sentences of *Phocylides*

we have a sentiment in nearly the same words as that of the apostle: *αρκεισθαι παρευσι, και αλλοτριων απεχεσθαι*. *Be content with present things, and abstain from others*. The covetous man is ever running out into futurity with insatiable desires after secular good; and, if this disposition be not checked, it increases as the subject of it increases in years. Covetousness is the vice of old age.

**I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.**] These words were, in sum, spoken to Joshua, <sup><40105></sup>**Joshua 1:5**: “As I was with Moses, so will I be with thee; *I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.*” They were spoken also by David to Solomon, <sup><13300></sup>**1 Chronicles 28:20**: “David said to Solomon his son, Be strong and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed; for the Lord God, even my God, will be with thee; *he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.*” The apostle, in referring to the same promises, feels authorized to strengthen the expressions, as the Christian dispensation affords more consolation and confidence in matters of this kind than the old covenant did. The words are peculiarly emphatic: *ου μη σε ανω, ουδου μη σε εγκαταλιπω*. There are no less than *five negatives* in this short sentence, and these connected with two verbs and one pronoun twice repeated. To give a literal translation is scarcely possible; it would run in this way: “No, I will not leave thee; no, neither will I not utterly forsake thee.” Those who understand the genius of the Greek language, and look at the manner in which these negatives are placed in the sentence, will perceive at once how much the meaning is strengthened by them, and to what an emphatic and energetic affirmative they amount.

This promise is made to those who are patiently bearing affliction or persecution for Christ’s sake; and may be applied to any faithful soul in affliction, temptation, or adversity of any kind. Trust in the Lord with thy whole heart, and never lean to thy own understanding; for he hath said, “No, I will never leave thee; not I: I will never, never cast thee off.”

**Verse 6. So that we may boldly say**] We, in such circumstances, while cleaving to the Lord, may confidently apply to ourselves what God spake to Joshua and to Solomon; and what he spake to David, “The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man can do.” God is omnipotent, man’s power is limited; howsoever strong he may be, he can do nothing against the Almighty.

**Verse 7. Remember them which have the rule over you**] This clause should be translated, *Remember your guides, των ηγουμενων, who have*

*spoken unto you the doctrine of God.* Theodoret's note on this verse is very judicious: "He intends the saints who were dead, Stephen the first martyr, James the brother of John, and James called the Just. And there were many others who were taken off by the Jewish rage. 'Consider these, (said he,) and, observing their example, imitate their faith.'" This remembrance of the dead saints, with admiration of their virtues, and a desire to imitate them, is, says Dr. Macknight, the only worship which is due to them from the living.

**Considering the end of their conversation]** ὧν αναθεωρουντες την εκβασιν της αναστροφης. "The issue of whose course of life most carefully consider." They lived to get good and do good; they were faithful to their God and his cause; they suffered persecution; and for the testimony of Jesus died a violent death. God never left them; no, he never forsook them; so that they were happy in their afflictions, and glorious in their death. Carefully consider this; act as they did; keep the faith, and God will keep you.

**Verse 8. Jesus Christ the same yesterday]** In all past times there was no way to the holiest but through the blood of Jesus, either actually shed, or significantly typified. *To-day*-he is the lamb newly slain, and continues to appear in the presence of God for us. *For ever*-to the conclusion of time, he will be the way, the truth, and the life, none coming to the Father but through him; and throughout eternity, εις τους αιωνας, it will appear that all glorified human spirits owe their salvation to his infinite merit. This Jesus was thus witnessed of by your guides, who are already departed to glory. Remember HIM; remember *them*; and take heed to *yourselves*.

**Verse 9. Be not carried about]** μη περιφερεσθε. *Be not whirled about.* But ABCD, and almost every other MS. of importance, with the *Syriac, Coptic, Arabic, Vulgate*, and several of the Greek fathers, have μη παραφερεσθε, *be not carried away*, which is undoubtedly the true reading, and signifies here, *do not apostatize*; permit not yourselves to be carried off from Christ and his doctrine.

**Divers and strange doctrines.]** διδαχαις, ποικιλαις. *Variiegated doctrines*; those that blended the law and the Gospel, and brought in the Levitical sacrifices and institutions in order to perfect the Christian system. Remember the old covenant is abolished; the *new* alone is in force.

**Strange doctrines, διδαχαις ξεναις**, foreign doctrines; such as have no *apostolical* authority to recommend them.

**That the heart be established with grace]** It is well to have the heart, the mind, and conscience, fully satisfied with the truth and efficacy of the *Gospel*; for so the word **χαρις** should be understood here, which is put in opposition to **βρωμασιν**, meats, signifying here the Levitical institutions, and especially its *sacrifices*, these being emphatically termed *meats*, because the offerers were permitted to *feast* upon them after the blood had been poured out before the Lord. See <sup><18715></sup>**Leviticus 7:15**;  
<sup><6126></sup>**Deuteronomy 12:6, 7.**

**Which have not profited them]** Because they neither took away guilt, cleansed the heart, nor gave power over sin.

**Verse 10. We have an altar]** The altar is here put for the sacrifice on the altar; the Christian altar is the Christian sacrifice, which is Christ Jesus, with all the benefits of his passion and death. To these privileges they had no right who continued to offer the Levitical sacrifices, and to trust in them for remission of sins.

**Verse 11. For the bodies of those beasts]** Though in making covenants, and in some victims offered according to the law, the flesh of the sacrifice was eaten by the offerers; yet the flesh of the *sin-offering* might no man eat: when the blood was sprinkled before the holy place to make an atonement for their souls, the skins, flesh, entrails, &c., were carried without the camp, and there entirely consumed by fire; and this entire consumption, according to the opinion of some, was intended to show that sin was not pardoned by such offerings. For, as *eating* the other sacrifices intimated they were made *partakers* of the benefits procured by those sacrifices, so, not being permitted to eat of the *sin-offering* proved that they had no benefit from it, and that they must look to the Christ, whose sacrifice is pointed out, that they might receive that real pardon of sin which the shedding of his blood could alone procure. While, therefore, they continued offering those sacrifices, and refused to acknowledge the Christ, they had no right to any of the blessings procured by him, and it is evident they could have no benefit from their own.

**Verse 12. That he might sanctify the people]** That he might consecrate them to God, and make an atonement for their sins, he *suffered without the gate* at Jerusalem, as the *sin-offering* was consumed *without the camp*

when the tabernacle abode in the wilderness. Perhaps all this was typical of the abolition of the Jewish sacrifices, and the termination of the whole Levitical system of worship. He left the city, denounced its final destruction, and abandoned it to its fate; and suffered without the gate to bring the Gentiles to God.

**Verse 13. Let us go forth therefore unto him]** Let us leave this city and system, devoted to destruction, and take refuge in Jesus alone, bearing his reproach—being willing to be accounted the refuse of all things, and the worst of men, for his sake who bore the contradiction of sinners against himself, and was put to death as a malefactor.

**Verse 14. For here have we no continuing city]** Here is an elegant and forcible allusion to the approaching destruction of Jerusalem. The Jerusalem that was *below* was about to be burnt with fire, and erased to the ground; the Jerusalem that was *from above* was that alone which could be considered to be **μενουσαν**, *permanent*. The words seem to say: “Arise, and depart; for this is not your rest: it is polluted:” About seven or eight years after this, Jerusalem was wholly destroyed.

**Verse 15. By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise]** He has now fulfilled all vision and prophecy, has offered the last bloody sacrifice which God will ever accept; and as he is the gift of God’s love to the world, let us through him offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, this being the substitute for all the Levitical sacrifices.

The Jews allowed that, in the time of the Messiah, all sacrifices, except the sacrifice of praise, should cease. To this maxim the apostle appears to allude; and, understood in this way, his words are much more forcible. In *Vayikra Rabba*, sect. 9, fol. 153, and *Rabbi Tanchum*, fol. 55: “Rabbi Phineas, Rabbi Levi, and Rabbi Jochanan, from the authority of Rabbi Menachem of Galilee, said, *In the time of the Messiah all sacrifice shall cease, except the sacrifice of praise.*” This was, in effect, quoting the authority of one of their own maxims, that *now* was the time of the Messiah; that Jesus was that Messiah; that the Jewish sacrificial system was now abolished; and that no sacrifice would now be accepted of God, except the sacrifice of praise for the gift of his Son.

**That is, the fruit of our lips]** This expression is probably borrowed from <sup>2814D</sup>**Hosea 14:2**, in the version of the Septuagint, **καρπον χειλεων** which in the Hebrew text is **מִנְיַתְּךָ מִיִּמְרָא** *parim sephatheinu*, “the heifers of our

lips.” This may refer primarily to the *sacrifices, heifers, calves, &c.*, which they had *vowed* to God; so that the *calves of their lips* were the sacrifices which they had *promised*. But how could the Septuagint translate **μυρρ** *parim, calves*, by **καρπον**, *fruit*? Very easily, if they had in their copy **υρρ** *peri*, the *mem* being omitted; and thus the word would be literally *fruit*, and not *calves*. This reading, however, is not found in any of the MSS. hitherto collated.

**Verse 16. But to do good and to communicate]** These are continual sacrifices which God requires, and which will spring from a sense of God’s love in Christ Jesus. Praise to God for his unspeakable gift, and acts of kindness to men for God’s sake. No reliance, even on the infinitely meritorious sacrifice of Christ, can be acceptable in the sight of God if a man have not love and charity towards his neighbour. Praise, prayer, and thanksgiving to God, with works of charity and mercy to man, are the sacrifices which every genuine follower of Christ must offer: and they are the proofs that a man belongs to Christ; and he who does not bear these fruits gives full evidence, whatever his *creed* may be, that he is no Christian.

**Verse 17. Obey them that have the rule over you]** Obey your *leaders*, **τοις ηγουμενοις**. He is not fit to *rule* who is not capable of *guiding*. See Clarke on “<sup><S137></sup>Hebrews 13:7”. In the former verse the apostle exhorts them to remember those who had been their leaders, and to imitate their faith; in this he exhorts them to obey the leaders they now had, and to submit to their authority in all matters of doctrine and discipline, on the ground that they *watched for their souls*, and should have to give an account of their conduct to God. If this conduct were improper, they must give in their report before the great tribunal with *grief*; but *in* it must be given: if holy and pure, they would give it in with *joy*. It is an awful consideration that many pastors, who had loved their flocks as their own souls, shall be obliged to accuse them before God for either having *rejected* or *neglected* the great salvation.

**Verse 18. Pray for us]** Even the success of apostles depended, in a certain way, on the prayers of the Church. 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.



**We trust we have a good conscience]** We are persuaded that we have a conscience that not only acquits us of all fraud and sinister design, but assures us that in simplicity and godly sincerity we have laboured to promote the welfare of you and of all mankind.

**To live honestly.]** *εν πασι καλως θελοντες αναστρεφεσθαι.* *Willing in all things to conduct ourselves well-to behave with decency and propriety.*

**Verse 19. The rather to do this]** That is, pray for us, that, being enabled to complete the work which God has given us *here* to do, we may be the sooner enabled to visit *you*. It is evident, from this, that the people to whom this epistle was written knew well who was the author of it; nor does there appear, in any place, any design in the writer to conceal his name, and how the epistle came to lack a name it is impossible to say. I have sometimes thought that a part of the beginning might have been lost, as it not only begins without a name, but begins very abruptly.

**Verse 20. Now the God of peace]** We have often seen that *peace* among the Hebrews signifies *prosperity* of every kind. *The God of peace* is the same as the God of all blessedness, who has at his disposal all temporal and eternal good; who loves mankind, and has provided them a complete salvation.

**Brought again from the dead our Lord]** As our Lord's sacrificial death is considered as an atonement offered to the Divine justice, God's acceptance of it as an atonement is signified by his raising the human nature of Christ from the dead; and hence this raising of Christ is, with the utmost propriety, attributed to *God the Father*, as this proves his acceptance of the sacrificial offering.

**That great Shepherd of the sheep]** This is a title of our blessed Lord, given to him by the prophets; so <sup>2301</sup>**Isaiah 40:11;** *He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; He shall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those which are with young:* and <sup>2302</sup>**Ezekiel 34:23;** *I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them; even my servant David, (i.e. the beloved, viz. Jesus,) and he shall feed them, and be their shepherd:* and **Zecariah 13:7;** *Awake, O sword, against my shepherd-smite the shepherd, and the flock shall be scattered.* In all these places the term *shepherd* is allowed to belong to our blessed

Lord; and he appropriates it to himself, <sup><43101></sup>**John 10:11**, by calling himself *the good Shepherd, who, lays down his life for the sheep.*

**Through the blood of the everlasting covenant]** Some understand this in the following way, that “God brought back our Lord from the dead on account of his having shed his blood to procure the everlasting covenant.” Others, that the Lord Jesus became the great Shepherd and Saviour of the sheep by shedding his blood to procure and ratify the everlasting covenant.” The sense, however, will appear much plainer if we connect this with the following verse: “Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead, our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, make you, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, perfect in every good work to do his will.” The Christian system is termed the *everlasting covenant*, to distinguish it from the *temporary covenant* made with the Israelites at Mount Sinai; and to show that it is the *last* dispensation of grace to the world, and shall endure to the end of time.

**Verse 21. Make you perfect]** **καταρτισια υμας.** Put you completely *in joint*. See Clarke’s note on “<sup><47139></sup>**2 Corinthians 13:9**”, where the meaning of the original word is largely considered. From the following terms we see what the apostle meant by the *perfection* for which he prays. They were to do the will of God in every good work, from God working in them that which is well pleasing in his sight. 1. This necessarily implies a complete change in the whole soul, that God may be well pleased with whatsoever he sees in it; and this supposes its being cleansed from all sin, for God’s *sight* cannot be *pleased* with any thing that is unholy. 2. This complete *inward purity* is to produce an outward conformity to God’s will, so they were to be *made perfect in every good work*. 3. The *perfection within* and the *perfection without* were to be produced *by the blood of the everlasting covenant*; for although God is love, yet it is not consistent with his justice or holiness to communicate any good to mankind but through his Son, and through him as having died for the offences of the human race.

**To whom be glory for ever.]** As God does all *in, by, and through* Christ Jesus, to him be the honour of his own work ascribed through time and eternity. Amen.

**Verse 22. Suffer the word of exhortation]** Bear the word or doctrine of this exhortation. This seems to be an epithet of this whole epistle: and as the apostle had in it shown the insufficiency of the Levitical system to atone for sin and save the soul; and had proved that it was the design of

God that it should be abolished; and had proved also that it was now abolished by the coming of Christ, whom he had shown to be a greater priest than Aaron, higher than all the angels, the only Son of God as to his human nature, and the Creator, Governor, and Judge of all; and that their city was shortly to be destroyed; he might suppose that they would feel prejudiced against him, and thus lose the benefit of his kind intentions toward them; therefore he entreats them to bear the exhortation which, notwithstanding the great extent of the subject, he had included in a short compass.

**I have written a letter unto you in few words.]** Perhaps it would be better to translate **δια βραχέων επεστειλα υμιν**, *I have written to you briefly*, as **επιστελλειν** often signifies simply to *write*, and this appears to be its meaning here.

**Verse 23. Know ye that our brother Timothy]** The word **ημων**, *our*, which is *supplied* by our translators, is very probably genuine, as it is found in ACD\*, ten others, the *Syriac*, Erpen's *Arabic*, the *Coptic*, *Armenian*, *Slavonic*, and *Vulgate*.

**Is set at liberty]** **απολελυμενον**. *Is sent away*; for there is no evidence that Timothy had been imprisoned. It is probable that the apostle refers here to his being sent into Macedonia, <sup><5669></sup>**Philippians 2:19-24**, in order that he might bring the apostle an account of the affairs of the Church in that country. In none of St. Paul's epistles, written during his confinement in Rome, does he give any intimation of Timothy's *imprisonment*, although it appears from <sup><5010></sup>**Philippians 1:1**; <sup><5100></sup>**Colossians 1:1**; <sup><5700></sup>**Philemon 1:1**; that he was with Paul during the greatest part of the time.

**With whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.]** Therefore Paul himself, or the writer of this epistle, was now at liberty, as he had the disposal of his person and time in his own power. Some suppose that Timothy did actually visit Paul about this time, and that both together visited the Churches in Judea.

**Verse 24. Salute all them that have the rule over you]** *Salute all your leaders or guides*, **τους ηγουμενους υμων**. See Clarke on "<sup><58137></sup>**Hebrews 13:7**" and "<sup><58137></sup>**Hebrews 13:17**".

**And all the saints.]** All the *Christians*; for this is the general meaning of the term in most parts of St. Paul's writings. But a *Christian* was then a

*saint*, i.e. by profession a holy person; and most of the primitive Christians were actually such. But in process of time the term was applied to all that bore the Christian name; as *elect, holy people, sanctified, &c.*, were to the nation of the Jews, when both their piety and morality were at a very low ebb.

**They of Italy salute you.]** Therefore it is most likely that the writer of this epistle was then in some part of Italy, from which he had not as yet removed after his being released from prison. By *they of Italy* probably the apostle means the Jew's there who had embraced the Christian faith. These salutations show what a brotherly feeling existed in every part of the Christian Church; even those who had not seen each other yet loved one another, and felt deeply interested for each other's welfare.

**Verse 25. Grace be with you all.]** May the Divine favour ever rest upon you and among you; and may you receive, from that source of all good, whatsoever is calculated to make you wise, holy, useful, and happy! And may you be enabled to *persevere* in the truth to the end of your lives! *Amen.* May it be so! May God seal the prayer by giving the blessings!

THE subscriptions to this epistle are, as in other cases, various and contradictory.

The VERSIONS are as follow:—

The Epistle to the Hebrews was written from Roman Italy, and sent by the hand of Timothy.-SYRIAC.

VULGATE nothing, in the present printed copies.

It was written from Italy by Timothy: with the assistance of God, disposing every thing right, the fourteen epistles of the blessed Paul are completed, according to the copy from which they have been transcribed. May the Lord extend his benedictions to us. *Amen.*-ARABIC.

The Epistle to the Hebrews is completed. The end.-ÆTHIOPIC.

Written in Italy, and sent by Timothy.-COPTIC.

The MANUSCRIPTS, and ancient editions taken from MSS., are not more to be relied on.

To the Hebrews, written from Rome.-CODEX ALEXANDRINUS.

The epistles of Saint Paul the apostle are finished.-COLOPHON, at the end of this epistle; in one of the first printed Bibles; and in an ancient MS. of the Vulgate in my own collection.

The end of the Epistle to the Hebrews.-GREEK TEXT of the COMPLUTENSIAN EDITION.

The Epistle of the blessed Paul to the Hebrews is finished.-LATIN TEXT of ditto.

To the Hebrews.-The Epistle of Paul the apostle to the Hebrews.-The Epistle to the Hebrews, written from Italy.-From Athens.-From Italy by Timothy.-Written in the Hebrew tongue, &c.-Various MSS.

Written to the Hebrews from Italy by Timothy.-COMMON GREEK TEXT.

That it was neither written from *Athens*, nor in the Hebrew tongue, is more than probable; and that it was not sent by *Timothy*, is evident from <sup><81323></sup>**Hebrews 13:23**. For the author, time, place, and people to whom sent, see the INTRODUCTION.

I. On the term “conscience,” as frequently occurring in this epistle, I beg leave to make a few observations.

*Conscience* is defined by some to be “that judgment which the rational soul passes on all her actions;” and is said to be a faculty of the soul itself, and consequently natural to it. Others state that it is a ray of Divine light. Milton calls it “God’s umpire;” and Dr. Young calls it a “god in man.” To me it seems to be no other than a *faculty capable of receiving light and conviction from the Spirit of God*; and answers the end in spiritual matters to the soul, that the eye does to the body in the process of vision. The *eye* is not *light* in itself, nor is it capable of discerning any object, but by the instrumentality of solar or artificial light; but it has organs properly adapted to the reception of the rays of light, and the various images of the objects which they exhibit. When *these* are present to an eye the organs of which are perfect, then there is a *discernment* of those objects which are within the sphere of vision; but when the light is absent, there is no *perception* of the shape, dimensions, size, or colour of any object, howsoever entire or perfect the optic nerve and the different humours may be.

In the same manner (comparing spiritual things with natural) the Spirit of God enlightens that eye of the soul which we call *conscience*; it penetrates

it with its effulgence; and (speaking as human language will permit on the subject) it has powers properly adapted to the reception of the Spirit's emanations, which, when received, exhibit a real view of the situation, state, &c., of the soul, as it stands in reference to God and eternity. Thus the Scripture says, "The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit," &c., i.e. it shines into the conscience, and reflects throughout the soul a conviction, proportioned to the degree of light communicated, of *condemnation* or *acquittance*, according to the end of its coming.

The late Mr. J. Wesley's definition of conscience, taken in a *Christian* sense, is nearly the same with the above: "It is," says he, "that *faculty* of the soul which, by the *assistance of the grace of God*, sees at one and the same time, 1. Our own tempers and lives; the real nature and quality of our thoughts, words and actions. 2. The *rule* whereby we are to be directed. And 3. The *agreement* or *disagreement* therewith. To express this a little more largely: Conscience implies, *first*, the *faculty* a man has of knowing himself; of discerning, both in general and in particular, his temper, words, thoughts, and actions: but this is not possible for him to do, *without the assistance of the Spirit of God*; otherwise self-love, and indeed every other irregular passion, would disguise and wholly conceal him from himself. It implies, *secondly*, a *knowledge* of the rule whereby he is to be directed in every particular, which is no other than the written word of God.

Conscience implies, *thirdly*, a knowledge that all his thoughts, and words, and actions are *conformable* to that rule. In all these offices of conscience, the *unction of the holy One* is indispensably needful. Without this, neither could we clearly discern our lives and tempers, nor could we judge of the rule whereby we are to walk, nor of our conformity or disconformity to it. A *good* conscience is a Divine consciousness of walking in all things according to the written word of God. It seems, indeed, that there can be no conscience that has *not a regard to God*. I doubt whether the words *right* and *wrong*, according to the Christian system, do not imply, *in the very idea of them*, agreement and disagreement to the will and word of God. And if so, there is no such thing as conscience in a Christian, *if we leave God out of the question*." Sermon on *Conscience*, page 332.

Some of the Greek fathers seem to consider it as an especial gift of God; a principle implanted immediately by himself. So *Chrysostom*, on Psa 7., speaking of conscience, says: **φυσικον γαρ εστι, και παρα του θεου ημιν παρα την αρχην εντεθεν**. *It is a natural thing, but is planted in us by our God from our birth*, In his homily on <sup>2311D</sup> **Isaiah 6:2**, he explains

himself more particularly: **θειον γαρ εστι, και παρα, θεου ταις ημετεραις ενιδρυμενον φυχαις.** *It is a Divine principle, and is by God himself implanted in our souls.* It is allowed on all hands that it is a recorder and judge of human actions, which cannot be corrupted, or be induced to bear a false testimony. Every sense of the body, and every faculty of the mind, may be weakened, obstructed, or impaired, but conscience; all other powers may be deceived or imposed on, but conscience. “No man,” says *Chrysostom*, “can flee from the judgment of his own conscience, which cannot be shunned. It cannot be corrupted; it cannot be terrified; it cannot be flattered or bribed; nor can its testimony be obscured by any lapse of time.” *Epist. ad Olymp.* This strongly argues its Divine nature; and, *while* the Spirit of God strives with man, conscience has its full influence, and is ever alert in the performance of its office. *Cicero*, in his oration for Milo, describes the power of conscience well in a few words: *Magna est vis conscientiae in utramque partem, ut neque timeant qui nihil commiserint, et pœnam semper ante oculos versari putent qui peccarint.* “Great is the power of conscience in both cases; they fear nothing who know they have committed no evil; on the contrary, they who have sinned live in continual dread of punishment.” One of our poets has said, “‘Tis conscience that makes cowards of us all.” And had we been sure that Shakespeare was a scholar, we might have supposed that he had borrowed the thought from Menander.

**ὁ συνιστορων αυτω τι, καν η θρασυτατος,  
ἡ συνεσις αυτον δειλοτατον ειναι ποιει.**

***If a man be conscious of any crime, although he  
were the most undaunted of mankind,  
His conscience makes him the most timid of mortals.  
Apud Stobæum, Serm. xxiv., p. 192.***

Conscience is sometimes said to be *good, bad, tender, seared, &c.*: *good*, if it acquit or approve; *bad*, if it condemn or disapprove; *tender*, if it be alarmed at the least approach of evil, and severe in scrutinizing the actions of the mind or body; and *seared*, if it feel little alarm, &c., on the commission of sin. But these epithets can scarcely belong to it if the common definition of it be admitted; for how can it be said there is a “tender light,” a “dark or hardened light,” a “bad god,” &c., &c.? But on the other definition these terms are easily understood, and are exceedingly proper; e. g. “a *good* conscience” is one *to* which the Spirit of God has brought intelligence of the pardon of all the sins of the soul, and its

reconciliation to God through the blood of Christ; and this good conscience *retained*, implies God's *continued* approbation of such a person's conduct; see <sup><4231></sup>**Acts 23:1**; <sup><5406></sup>**1 Timothy 1:5,19**; and here, <sup><581318></sup>**Hebrews 13:18**. "A *bad* or evil conscience" supposes a charge of guilt brought against the soul by the Holy Spirit, for the breach of the Divine laws; and which he makes known to it by conscience, as a *medium* of conveying his own light to the mind; see <sup><58102></sup>**Hebrews 10:22**; <sup><54012></sup>**1 Timothy 4:2**; <sup><59013></sup>**Titus 1:3**. "A *tender* conscience" implies one fully irradiated by the light of the Holy Ghost, which enables the soul to view the good as *good*, and the evil as *evil*, in every important respect; which leads it to abominate the latter, and cleave to the former; and, if at any time it act in the smallest measure opposite to these views, it is severe in its reprehensions, and bitter in its regret. "A *darkened* or *hardened* conscience" means one that has little or none of this Divine light; consequently, the soul feels little or no self-reprehension for acts of transgression, but runs on in sin, and is not aware of the destruction that awaits it, heedless of counsel, and regardless of reproof. This state of the soul St. Paul calls by the name of a "seared conscience," or one cauterized by repeated applications of sin, and resistings of the Holy Ghost; so that, being grieved and quenched, he has withdrawn his light and influence from it.

The word conscience itself ascertains the above explication with its deductions, being compounded of *con*, *together*, or *with*, and *scio*, to *know*, because it *knows* or convinces *by* or *together* with the Spirit of God. The Greek word **συνειδησις**, which is the only word used for *conscience* through the whole New Testament, has the very same meaning, being compounded of **συν**, *together* or *with*, and **ειδω**, to *know*. This is the same as **συνειδος**, which is the word generally used among ecclesiastical writers.

From the above view of the subject I think we are warranted in drawing the following inferences:-

1. All men have what is called conscience; and conscience plainly supposes the light or Spirit of God.
2. The Spirit of God is given to enlighten, convince, strengthen, and bring men back to God.
3. Therefore all men may be saved who attend to and coincide with the light and convictions communicated; for the God of the Christians does not give men his Spirit to enlighten, &c., merely to leave them without excuse; but that it may



direct, strengthen, and lead them to himself, that they may be finally saved. 4. That this spirit comes from the *grace* of God is demonstrable from hence: it is a “good and perfect gift,” and St. James says all such come from the Father of lights. Again, it cannot be merited, for as it implies the influence of the Holy Spirit, it must be of an infinite value; yet it is GIVEN; *that* then which is *not merited* and yet is *given* must be of *grace*; not *ineffectual grace*, there is no such principle in the Godhead.

Thus it appears all men are partakers of the grace of God, for all acknowledge that conscience is common to *all*; and this is but a recipient faculty, and necessarily implies the spirit of grace given by Jesus Christ, not that the world might be thereby condemned, but that it might be saved. Nevertheless, multitudes, who are partakers of this heavenly gift, sin against it, lose it, and perish everlastingly, not through the deficiency of the gift, but through the abuse of it. I conclude that conscience is not a power of the soul, acting *by or of itself*; but a *recipient faculty*, in which that *true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world* has its especial operation.

II. In this chapter the apostle inculcates the duty of hospitality, particularly in respect to entertaining *strangers*; i.e. persons of whom we know nothing, but that they are now in a state of distress, and require the necessaries of life. Some, says the apostle, have entertained angels without knowing them; and some, we may say, have entertained great men, kings, and emperors, without knowing them. By exercising this virtue many have *gained*; few have ever *lost*.

God, in many parts of his own word, is represented as the stranger’s friend; and there is scarcely a duty in life which he inculcates in stronger terms than that of hospitality to strangers. The heathen highly applauded this virtue; and among them the person of a stranger was sacred, and supposed to be under the particular protection of Jove, Homer gives the sentiment in all its beauty when he puts the following words into the mouth of Eumæus, when he addressed Ulysses, who appeared a forlorn stranger, and, being kindly received by him, implored in his behalf a Divine blessing:—

ζευς τοι δοιη, ξεινε, και αθανατοι θεοι αλλοι  
 ὅτι μαλιστέθειλεις, οτι με προφρων υπεδεξο.  
 τον δάπαμειβομενος προσεφης, ευμαιε συβωτα.  
 ξειν, ου μοι θεμις εστ, ουδεί κακιων σεθεν ελθοι,  
 ξεινον ατιμησαι. προς θαπ διος εισιν απαντες

Ξεινοι τε, πτωχοι τε. δοσις δ'άλιγη τε φιλη τε  
γινεται ημετερη.

ODYSS., lib. xiv., v. 53.

*My gentle host, Jove grant thee, and the gods  
All grant thee, for this deed thy best desire!  
To whom the herd Eumæus thus replied;  
My guest, it were unjust to treat with scorn  
The stranger, though a poorer should arrive  
Than even thou; for all the poor that are,  
And all the strangers, are the care of Jove.  
Little, and with good will, is all that lies  
Within my scope.  
COWPER.*

The Scriptures which more particularly recommend this duty are the following: *He 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;* <sup><51018></sup> **Deuteronomy 10:18, 19.** *I was a stranger, and ye took me in. Come, ye blessed of my Father,* <sup><4258></sup> **Matthew 25:35.** *Given to hospitality;* <sup><51213></sup> **Romans 12:13.** *Neglect not to entertain strangers;* <sup><8132></sup> **Hebrews 13:2.**

“The entertaining of unknown strangers,” says Dr. Owen, “which was so great a virtue in ancient times, is almost driven out of the world by the wickedness of it. The false practices of some, with wicked designs, under the habit and pretence of strangers, on the one hand, and pretences for sordid covetousness on the other, have banished it from the earth. And there are enough who are called Christians who never once thought it to be their duty.” But it is vain to inculcate the duty where the spirit of it is not found; and we shall never find the spirit of it in any heart where the love of God and man does not rule.

Benevolent wishes of *Be ye warmed* and *Be ye clothed* are frequent enough; these cost nothing, and therefore can be readily used by the most parsimonious.

But to draw out a man’s soul to the hungry, to draw out his warmest affections, while he is drawing out, in order to divide with the destitute, the contents of his purse, belongs to the man of genuine feeling; and this can scarcely be expected where the compassionate mind that was in Christ does not rule. One bountiful meal to the poor may often be a preventive of

death; for there are times in which a man may be brought so low for want of proper nourishment that, if he get not a timely supply, after-help comes in vain, nature being too far exhausted ever to recover itself, though the vital spark may linger long. One wholesome meal in time may be the means of enabling nature to contend successfully with after privations; and he who has afforded this meal to the destitute has saved a life. "But most who go about seeking relief are idle persons and impostors, and it would be sinful to relieve them." When you *know* the applicant to be such, then refuse his suit; but if you have nothing but suspicion, which suspicion generally arises from an uncharitable and unfeeling heart, then beware how you indulge it. If, through such suspicion, a man should lose his life, God will require his blood at your hand.

Reader, permit me to relate an anecdote which I have heard from that most eminent man of God, the reverend *John Wesley*; it may put thee in mind to entertain *strangers*. "At Epworth, in Lincolnshire, where (says he) I was born, a poor woman came to a house in the market-place and begged a morsel of bread, saying, *I am very hungry*. The master of the house called her a *lazy jade*, and bade her *be gone*. She went forward, called at another house, and asked for a little small-beer, saying, *I am very thirsty*. Here she was refused, and told to *go to the workhouse*. She struggled on to a third door and begged a little water, saying, *I am faint*. The owner drove her away, saying, *He would encourage no common beggars*. It was winter, and the snow lay upon the ground. The boys, seeing a poor ragged creature driven away from door to door, began to throw snow-balls at her. She went to a little distance, sat down on the ground, lifted up her eyes to heaven, reclined on the earth, and expired!" Here was a stranger; had the first to whom she applied relieved her with a morsel of bread, he would have saved her life, and not been guilty of blood. As the case stood, the woman was murdered; and those three householders will stand arraigned at the bar of God for her death. Reader, fear to send any person empty away. If you know him to be an *impostor*, why then give him nothing. But if you only *suspect* it, let not your suspicion be the rule of your conduct; give something, however little; because that little may be sufficient to preserve him, if in real want, from present death. If you know him not to be a knave, to you he may be an *angel*. God may have *sent* him to exercise your charity, and try your faith. It can never be a matter of regret to you that you gave an alms for God's sake, though you should afterwards find that the person to whom you gave it was both a hypocrite and impostor. Better

to be imposed on by ninety-nine hypocrites out of a hundred applicants,  
than send *one*, like the poor *Epworth woman*, empty away.

*Finished correcting this epistle for a new edition, Dec. 30, 1831-A. C.*