

Hebrews 1 - 6

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Part 1 of An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews with a new version.

Preface.

Not a few works of less or more value have been written on the grand Epistle to the Hebrews. Nevertheless room seemed to be left for an exposition, not occupied with the discussion of details, and demanded more than ever by the unbelieving spread in our day of ritualism, which it was written to supplant by the exhibition of the grace and truth in Christ's person, work, and office as Priest in the heavenly sanctuary. I therefore commend the work, notwithstanding every shortcoming, to Him who sent His Son in pitiful mercy to every creature, and in triumphant blessing for all that believe, awaiting the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

W.K. London, *May, 1905.*

Introduction.

From the absence of an address it has been doubted whether this is an epistle. The closing chapter however, with not a few confirmations less marked throughout, is proof positive that it has a real epistolary nature, though, like the letter to the saints in Rome, somewhat of a treatise also. Its contents demonstrate beyond just question that the epistle before us was directed to Jews professing the name of the Lord Jesus. For all would be truly applicable if not a Gentile were called at this time to believe. Beyond all other books of the New Testament it is as to every point of doctrine and even exhortation based on the ancient scriptures familiar only to the people chosen of old. And the believing remnant of Jews as being the true "people" is strikingly kept before us throughout in Heb. 2: 17; Heb. 4: 9 (as the people of old in Heb. 5: 3; Heb. 7: 5, 11, 27); Heb. 8: 10; Heb. 9: 7 (29 *bis*; Heb. 10: 30; Heb. 11: 25; Heb. 13: 12); as in 1 Peter 2: 9, 10 *bis* (2 Peter 2: 1; Jude 5). So indeed it is with the apostle Paul (Rom. 9: 25 *bis*; Rom. 10: 21 Rom.; 11: 1, 2; Rom.15: 10 (21 pl.); 1 Cor. 10: 7; 1 Cor. 14: 21; 2 Cor. 6: 16). The only exception is Titus 2: 14, where "people" is used morally.

This stamps it with a character different, whoever the writer might be, from every other. It appeals to the Old Testament from first to last as no other epistle does. Yet the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets are made to speak, as it were, with new tongues. They all render a distinct, united, and glorious testimony, once earthly in the letter, now heavenly in spirit, to the Lord seated at God's right hand, His proper position for the Christian. To lead on the believing Jew to know and enjoy Christ where He is, to worship and walk in this faith, is the prime object of the bright, glowing, deeply interesting, and instructive Epistle that claims our attention.

It is therefore the inspired exercise of the teacher's gift rather than of the apostle and prophet announcing absolutely new revelations. There is no such language here as "I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery," as in Rom. 11: 25. There is not a word about his apostleship here, as in the two Epistles to the Corinthians; of the mystery of Christ, as to the Ephesians and the Colossians; nor even "this we say unto you by the word of the Lord," as to the Thessalonians. The writer speaks of others as "those that heard" the Lord; he himself is here a "teacher of" Israelites "in faith and verity." He simply cites and reasons on the ancient oracles as well as histories; he applies prophecies and expounds the types of the law but rarely, if ever, does he unveil the magnificent scenes of the latter day, when Israel shall be blessed, under Messiah and the new covenant, and the nations also in a circle, concentric indeed but not so close. He writes with the utmost fulness of Christ's exaltation on high in view of the heavenly calling and those who now partake of it before that day. In Heb. 4: 9 he touches on the broad fact of "a sabbatism" which remains for the people of God when the wilderness is past, though without detail, when we who now believe have our "better" portion on high. We may also compare Heb. 12, when the circle of the future glory, earthly and heavenly, is grouped as that to which we have come by faith already, though only to be established and displayed when the Lord appears.

Christ is never spoken of as the Head, nor consequently is the one body wherein the old differences vanish, nor that new man wherein is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all. The nearest approach to unity is that the Sanctifier and the sanctified are all of one. The assembly is of firstborn ones, viewed as an aggregate of individuals and not as the body of Christ. Those who composed it were heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ; but joined to the Lord as one spirit and of His body is not said here.

This may be conceived by some as implying another hand rather than Paul's. But the inference is baseless. For though he alone develops the mystery concerning Christ and concerning the church, it is only in the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians, with the First to the Corinthians practically and in that to the Romans allusively. In the rest of his epistles we find "the body" no more than in that to the Hebrews; and this as distinctly in the ordering of the Holy Spirit, as in those which contain it fully. Our individual relationships are no less important than our corporate. The divine design regulates the topics introduced as much as their appropriate handling. Each epistle or other book of Scripture is perfect for the purpose God had in view when He inspired each writer. As the main object in that to the Hebrews is Christ's priesthood with its necessary basis, due adjuncts, and suited results, and as this is for the saints individually, the one body of Christ could not fittingly fall within its scope, if it were a divinely inspired composition, whether by Paul or by any other. Its central doctrine is, not we one with Him as members of His body, but He appearing before the face of God for us. Abiding for ever, having His priesthood unchangeable, He is able to save to the uttermost those that by Himself approach God, as He always lives to intercede for them. The same persons compose the body of Christ; but the associations are wholly distinct and only compatible through the fulness of Christ.

Some have wondered why Paul, if the writer, should not have given his name at the beginning. The

peculiarity is at least equally true of any writer. It would in fact be more strange in one who had written no other epistle. If the great apostle wrote, its analogue is in the First Epistle of John, who does not prefix his name there, though in the two lesser he addresses himself "as elder" in a style unmistakably his own. In the Revelation, where the difference of the subject-matter calls for a manner of writing wholly distinct from either his Gospel or his Epistles, his name appears alike in the preface and in the conclusion. Is not this self-evidently as it should be?

Now supposing Paul to have written the Epistle to the Hebrews, it is not difficult to suggest weighty motives for his putting forward, not his own name and apostolic authority, but such a treatment of the Old Testament scriptures as must carry divine light and firm conviction to all who weigh them before God. That the Hebrew Christians were prejudiced and disputatious even in early days is a fact beyond question for one who reads Acts 11, 15, 21, to cite nothing else. They could not but feel that the doctrine of the apostle had a depth, and height, and comprehensiveness which for those so long swathed in Jewish bands made it a strain to follow him. He was apostle of the uncircumcision, in itself no small trial to ordinary minds of their mould, as we may assuredly conclude even from the apostles Peter and Barnabas, favoured as they had personally been of God toward Gentiles. Therefore does the writer, supposing him to be Paul, approach them with the most consummate delicacy and tact, as his burning love for his brethren — doubly brethren, both after the flesh and now after the Spirit — would dictate. He becomes as a Jew that he might gain the Jews; to them that were under the law as under law, though being himself not under law, that he might gain those under law. The omission of his name had thus at the starting-point a special propriety in his case beyond that of any other man.

Another ground for its omission is plain from the unusual task before him. The force of the appeal lay in its coming from the first and throughout with the authority of God; and to Jewish Christians this could be effected in no way so telling as that here employed. "In many measures and in many manners God, having spoken of old to the fathers in the prophets, spoke to us in a [or, the] Son whom He constituted heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds" (Heb. 1: 1, 2). How enfeebling would have been the apostle's introduction of himself in such a connection! Even we who were of the Gentiles, and who are of the church, would feel it in either way out of place, aesthetically in the one instance, spiritually in the other. For the Hebrew Christian no method so impressive, welcome, and authoritative. It was the true end of controversy. Impossible to evade or to gainsay that which carried in itself the evidence of God's mind revealed in His word — at least to a believer.

Hence all flows on the ground of what is confessedly divine; and any living man's authority, however truly conferred of God and admitted by believers, would be felt rather to interfere than to be seasonable. Therefore we hear in Heb. 2 of the word which, having had its commencement in being spoken "by the Lord," was confirmed to us by those that heard, even thus God also bearing witness both by signs and wonders, and manifold powers and distributions of the Holy Ghost according to His own will. In like beautiful accordance Jesus is shown in Heb. 3 to be the Apostle as well as High Priest of our confession. Clearly therefore it is superficial in the extreme to reason on Heb. 2: 3, 4, as evidence against Paul's authorship. Those who were designated apostles by the Lord on earth are merely "those that heard"; and as Saul then was but an unbeliever of Israel like the mass, he graciously sinks himself among the rest as "to us." Just thus, long after he was an apostle by call, he could say on meet occasion, "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia," and even "I am a Pharisee, son of Pharisees," and "according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee." It would have been self-importance, not gracious wisdom, to have asserted his apostleship in this place, writing as he was by the will and inspiration of God, but evidently outside his special field of the nations, as laid down in Gal. 2: 7-9 and elsewhere. It was a final warning to the Christian Jews; and who so fitted in love no less

than in everything else as one who had ere this testified to the Roman Christians that he loved the ancient people as much as Moses, when he asked Jehovah to blot him out of His book if He would not forgive their sin? As the apostle of the circumcision had been employed, and not Paul, to open the kingdom of heaven to the Gentiles (Acts 10), so did the only wise God use the apostle of the uncircumcision, and not Peter, to summon for the last time the Hebrew Christians, whose attachment to the old and earthly system He had so long borne with, but would not any more.

No doubt there were not a few who had learnt better than the amalgam which had hitherto prevailed in Jerusalem among the baptised. But the time was come, and the most suited instrument ever raised up on earth, to bring to a close a state of things abnormal to the spiritual eye, and dangerous for the carnal: who, even if they love the Lord at bottom, are apt to fluctuate and more prone to palliate and foster natural and educational inclinations than to judge them by the word. Jerusalem was about to pass visibly away with the temple, ritual, and priesthood. It was of moment that, before the external blow of judgment fell, the faithful in Palestine should learn what they had been too slow to apprehend. Jesus is not only the Saviour and the Lord, but the great High Priest Who has passed through the heavens, and to this end both Son of God in the supreme sense, owned as God and as Jehovah by Him Who is God and Jehovah, and thus as both divine and human in one person seated at God's right hand on His throne where no creature ever did or can sit.

Hence the Epistle starts with Christ in that glorious condition; and we know who it was that saw this great sight to his conversion from Judaism as well as sin — who it is that above every other even of inspired men was given to seize and preach and write down permanently the great truth of a Christ known no longer after the flesh, but dead, risen and exalted in heaven; who accordingly writes death on all that flesh and even religious flesh gloried in, that he and we might find life, righteousness, wisdom, sanctification, and redemption, in a word all we and all that God wills us to possess in Christ at His right hand. We are thus heavenly, as is the Heavenly; and have the assurance of safe keeping and ultimate triumph over every foe; for as we have borne the image of the earthly (Adam's), we shall also bear the image of the Heavenly (Christ's).

This was the apostle's great ministry of the church, and thus he was enabled by the Holy Spirit to fill up the word of God, even that blank which was left for the revelation of the mystery that had been hid from all ages and generations. Here it is circumscribed, no doubt, as was necessary because of the infantine state of the believing Jews, who little suspected that their adhesion to the old things, and mingling them with the new, hindered progress more than aught else could. Hence the aim of the Epistle is to show the substance, force, and perfection of all the ancient forms in the truth of Christ's person and office, work and position, thus raising the Jews who believed to heaven in faith, affection, worship, service, and hope, and making it easy and even happy for them to see the old covenant passing away, the Aaronic priesthood giving place to a better, and earthly sacrifices of no account, yea of exceeding peril if they became rivals of that finished work by which the faithful have been and are sanctified, and perfected in perpetuity, as surely as Christ sat down in perpetuity at God's right hand.

Thus again "the camp," once the place so favoured of God's people, is a place for the Christian Jew to leave. For the blood of atonement has been carried into the holiest for us, and He Who shed it suffered "without the gate." Our place therefore is now within the holiest before God, and without the camp before man; for it is effectively and ought to be only with Christ in both. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness for the entering into the holies by the blood of Jesus, a new and living way, which he inaugurated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having a great priest over the house of God; let us approach with true heart in full assurance of faith, sprinkled as to our hearts from an evil conscience, and washed as to our body with pure water" (Heb. 10: 19-22). But let us not forget the

other side and present duty: "Let us go forth unto him without the camp bearing his reproach; for here we have not an abiding city, but we seek after the coming one" (Heb. 13: 13, 14).

It is impossible to conceive anything equal to this Epistle, whether in the most winning approach to the Jewish Christians where they were, or in the no less admirable deliverance from the ritual yoke, by the proof from God's word that Christianity alone yields the true and intended and complete meaning of all they had been well-nigh idolising in the letter.

It ought not to surprise any that scripture has settled the authorship of the Epistle; and this not by men reasoning on the reference to imprisonment and release in Italy, and the relationship to Timothy, but by a sufficiently determinate statement of Peter in his Second Epistle, addressed as we know it is to the elect Jews of the dispersion (cf. 1 Peter 1: 1, 2; and 2 Peter 3: 1), as the Epistle to the Hebrews contemplates those in the land. In either case believing Jews are contemplated. What then can be plainer than the apostle Peter's word? "Even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote to you; as also in all epistles speaking in them of these things" (2 Peter 3: 15, 16). Now this Epistle repeatedly speaks of the day of the Lord, with some things as usual hard, especially for Jewish minds, to understand, as in 9, 10, 12. Thus it is certain that Paul as well as Peter wrote to the Hebrew Christians; and that these are spoken of as "scriptures" by implication in the words that follow. Either then the Epistle to the Hebrews is what Paul wrote to them — or that portion of the "scriptures" is lost. It has been shown already that the scope of truth is eminently that of Paul; and the peculiarity of his task to any reflecting mind would readily account for an elaborate handling of types, most desirable for Jews but out of place in his writing to Gentile saints.

The contents and connection of the Epistle are plainly defined; which from its nature is less coloured with personalia than the other letters of the writer. The personal glory of the Lord Jesus is the basis of all, Heb. 1 Son of God, Heb. 2 Son of man. Thence follows in Heb. 3 the superiority of the Apostle and High Priest of the Christian confession to Moses and Aaron. He was the divine Builder of all, Son over God's house, Moses being but a ministering servant, though faithful. And this introduces the wilderness as the scene through which we are tried, with promise of entering into God's rest — glory at Christ's return. Hence not only is God's word needed by us, but a great high priest able to sympathise with our infirmities, as in Heb. 4. This leads in Heb. 5: to the contrast of Christ's priesthood, God's Son according to the order of Melchizedek, with that of Aaron taken from among men, and able to exercise forbearance toward the ignorant and erring, since he himself was clothed with infirmity, and was bound to offer for sins, as for the people, so also for himself.

But here the apostle turns aside, as his manner is, to lay bare the hindrance through Jewish elements, still pertinaciously clung to, yet incompatible with the everlasting and heavenly things which suit our relation to that great High Priest Who has passed through the heavens and set Himself in a seat so glorious. The word of the beginning of Christ, however good, is quite insufficient; and the Christian must go on to full growth (Heb. 6); for as it is expressed elsewhere, we are no longer under law, suited and given as it was to man in flesh, but under grace, as should be self-evident. How else could we be heavenly, as is the Heavenly? Sovereign grace, reigning through righteousness, alone accounts for it. And hence the danger of going back from the heavenly privileges now revealed to those elements which are nailed to the cross and vanished away to faith in the light of Christ on high: a danger to which none were so exposed as Hebrews. He therefore desires that each might show diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end, having God's oath as well as word with a forerunner in Christ within the veil.

Heb. 7 proves how immeasurably and in all respects the priesthood of Jesus, the Son of God,

surpasses that of Aaron bound up as it was with the law which made nothing perfect. The ancient oracles which fully prepare for it intimate also a new and better covenant (Heb. 8), before which the first grows old and ready to vanish away, instead of possessing that immutability with which rabbinical pride and imagination clothed it. And this leads to the great truth of sacrifice according to God's mind and will (Heb. 9, 10), which has found alone its adequate force in the blood of Christ, Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself spotless to God. Therefore its unity is insisted on, as its completeness is attested by His sitting in perpetuity on God's right hand, the work finished, and those that are sanctified perfected, not merely for ever but in perpetuity or without break also, by that one offering. Here too the warning of abandoning for sin such a sacrifice is solemnly rendered, while it is allowed that we have need of patience in faith, till Jesus come.

This is followed (Heb. 11) by the striking roll of Gods worthies, all being testified of for their faith, before the law and during it, culminating in Jesus the Leader and Completer of faith, Who, infinitely above all in person, suffered immeasurably more and differently, and is alone now in commensurate glory at the right hand of the throne of God (Heb. 12). And here is beautifully shown that for believers suffering flows from His love as the Father of our spirits, and not now of a nation. Our standing is in His grace, not the law of Sinai; and we are come in faith to the glorious results anticipated for heaven and earth, as the kingdom will display when at His appearing He will cause not the earth only but the heaven to tremble and shake.

Brotherly love, hospitality, and compassion are urged, with the sanctity of marriage, and freedom from avarice through trust in the Lord (Heb. 13). Departed leaders are to be remembered, as living ones to be obeyed. Jesus abides the same. Serving the tabernacle has no more value: all is found in Him, His work, and His offices. "Let us therefore go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach." Such is Christianity as here shown from divinely handled Jewish types and Old Testament teaching. Prayer for the writer and those with him is asked, as he beseeches of the Lord peace for them, saluting all their leaders and all the saints.

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

I. In many measures and in many manners of old God having spoken to the fathers in the prophets 2 at [the] end of these days spoke to us in a (or, the) Son, whom he constituted heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; 3 who being effulgence of his glory and expression of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, having made [by himself] purification of our, sins sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, 4 having become by so much better than the angels as he hath by inheritance a name more excellent than they. 5 For to which of the angels did he ever say, My Son art thou: I this day have begotten thee? and again, I will be to him for father, and *he* shall be to me for Son? 6 But again, when he bringeth in the firstborn into the inhabited earth, he saith, And let all God's angels worship him. 7 And indeed as to the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels winds and his ministers a flame of fire 8 but as to the Son, Thy throne, O God, [is] for ever and ever (or, unto the age of the age); a sceptre of righteousness [is] the sceptre of thy kingdom. 9 Thou lovedst righteousness and hatedst lawlessness: for this reason, God, thy God, anointed thee with oil of gladness above thy companions. 10 And, Thou in the beginning, Lord, foundedst the earth, and the heavens are works Of thy hands. 11 *They* shall perish, but *thou* continuest; and they all shall grow old as a garment, 12 and as a covering thou shalt roll them up, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail. 13 But as to which of the angels hath he ever said, Sit at my right hand until I set thine enemies a footstool of thy feet? 14 Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth for service on account of those who are about to inherit salvation?

II. For this reason we ought to give heed more abundantly to the things heard, lest in any way we should be carried (or, slip) away. 2 For if the word spoken by angels was made firm, and every transgression and disobedience received just retribution, 3 how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which, having begun to be spoken by the Lord, was confirmed unto us by those that heard 4 God joining witness with both signs and wonders, and various powers, and distributions of the Holy Spirit according to his will.

5 For not to angels he subjected the inhabited earth that is to come whereof we speak; 6 but one somewhere testified, saying, What is man that thou rememberest him? or son of man that thou visitest him? 7 Thou madest him some little less than angels; thou crownest him with glory and honour and didst set him over the works of thy hands; 8 thou didst subject all things under his feet. For in subjecting all things to him, he left nothing unsubject to him. But now we see not yet all things subjected to him; 9 but we behold Jesus that was made some little less than angels on account of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour; so that by God's grace he should taste of death for every thing (or, one). 10 For it became him for whom [are] all things and by whom [are] all things in bringing many sons unto glory, to perfect through sufferings the leader of their salvation. 11 For both he that sanctifieth and those sanctified [are] all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, 12 I will declare thy name to my brethren, amidst the congregation (or, church) will I sing thy praise. 13 And again, I will trust in him; and again, Behold, I and the little children which God crave to me. 14 Since then the little children are partakers of blood and flesh, *he* also in like manner took part of the same, that through death he might annul him that hath the might of death, that is, the devil; 15 and might set free all those who through fear of death were through all their life subject to bondage. 16 For verily not of angels doth he take hold but of Abraham's seed he taketh hold. 17 Wherefore it behoved him in all things to be made like to his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things relating to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people; 18 for in that himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to help those that are tempted.

III. Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Jesus, 2 faithful as he was to him that appointed him, as also Moses in all his house. 3 For *he* hath been accounted worthy of more glory than Moses by how much he that built it hath more honour than the house. 4 For every house is builded by some one; but he that built all things [is] God. 5 And Moses indeed [was] faithful in all his house as an attendant, for a testimony of the things to be spoken, 6 but Christ as Son over his house, whose house are *we* if indeed we hold fast the boldness and the boast of the hope firm unto the end. 7 Wherefore even as the Holy Spirit saith, Today, if ye will hear his voice, 8 harden not your hearts as in the provocation, through the day of temptation in the wilderness 9 when your fathers tempted [me], proved [me], and saw my works forty years. 10 Wherefore I was wroth with this generation and said, They always err in their heart, and *they* knew not my ways: 11 as I swore in my wrath, If they shall (or, They shall not) enter into my rest. 12 See, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of you a wicked heart of unbelief in falling away from a living God. 13 But encourage yourselves each day while it is called Today, that none of you be hardened by [the] deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we are become companions of Christ if indeed we hold fast the beginning of the confidence firm unto the end. 15 In that it is said, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation. 16 For who having heard provoked? But did not all that came out of Egypt by Moses? 17 And with whom was he wroth forty Years? [Was it] not with those that sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest but to those that disobeyed? 19 And we see that they could not enter in on account of unbelief.

IV. Let us therefore fear lest haply, a promise being left of entering into his rest, any one of you might seem to have failed (or, come short) of it. 2 For indeed we have had glad tidings presented to us, just as they also; but the word of the report did not profit them, not having been mixed with faith in those that heard. 3 For we that believed enter into the rest, even as he hath said, As I swore in my wrath, If they shall enter into my rest, although the works were done from the world's foundation. 4 For he hath said somewhere of the seventh [day] thus, And God rested on the seventh day from all his works; 5 and in this again If they shall enter into my rest. 6 Since therefore it remaineth that some enter into it, and those who first had the glad tidings entered not on account of disobedience, 7 again he determineth a certain day, saying in David, Today after so long a time, even as it hath been said before, Today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. 8 For if Joshua (or, Jesus) had given them rest, he would not have spoken afterward of another day. 9 There remaineth therefore a sabbatism for the people of God. 10 For he that entered into his rest himself also rested from his works as God from his own. 11 Let us therefore use diligence to enter into that rest that no one fall in (or, after) the same example of disobedience. 12 For living [is] the word of God, and effectual, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge heart's thoughts and intents. 13 And not a creature is unmanifest in his sight; but all things [are] naked and laid bare to his eyes with whom [is] our account. 14 Having therefore a great high priest, passed as he hath through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast the (or, our) confession. 15 For we have not a high priest unable to sympathise with our infirmities, but tempted as he hath been in all things alike apart from sin. 16 Let us approach therefore with boldness to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and find grace for seasonable help.

V. For every high priest taken from among men is constituted for men in things relating to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; 2 being able to forbear with the ignorant and erring, since himself also is compassed with infirmity; 3 and on account of this he ought, even as for the people, so also for himself to offer for sins. 4 And no one taketh the honour to himself but called by God, just as Aaron also. 5 So the Christ also glorified not himself to be made high priest; but he that spoke unto him, My Son art thou: I today have begotten thee; 6 even as also in another [place] he saith, *Thou [art] priest for ever according to the order of Melchizedek*; 7 who in the days of his flesh having offered up both supplications and entreaties to him that was able to save him out of death, with strong crying and tears, and having been heard because of his godly fear, 8 though being Son, he learned obedience from the things which he suffered, 9 and, perfected, he became to all those that obey him author of salvation everlasting, 10 addressed by God high priest according to the order of Melchizedek. 11 Of whom we have much to say and hard to be interpreted in speaking, 12 since ye have become dull of hearing. For when on account of the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need again that some one teach you the elements of the beginning of the oracles of God, and have become such as have need of milk, not of solid food. 13 For every one that partaketh of milk [is] unskilled in the word of righteousness for he is an infant. 14 But solid food belongeth to perfect (or, full-grown), those that on account of habit have their senses exercised for distinguishing both good and evil.

VI. Wherefore leaving the word of the beginning of the Christ, let us go on to perfection (or, full growth), not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith Godward, 2 of teaching of washings, and of imposition of hands, and of resurrection of dead [men], and of judgment everlasting; 3 and this will we do if God permit. 4 For [it is] impossible to renew again unto repentance those that were once enlightened 5 and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit and tasted God's good word, and powers of an age to come, 6 and have fallen away, while for themselves crucifying and making a show of the Son of God. 7 For ground (or, land) that drank the rain coming oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for those for whose sake also it is tilled, participateth

in blessing from God; 8 but if bringing forth thorns and briars, [is] worthless and near a curse, whose end [is] for burning. 9 But of you, beloved, we are persuaded things better and connected with salvation, if even thus we speak. 10 For God is not unrighteous to forget your work, and the love which ye showed unto his name, in that ye ministered to his saints and do minister. 11 But we desire earnestly that each of you should show the same diligence unto the full assurance of hope until the end, 12 that ye become not sluggish but imitators of those who through faith and long-suffering inherit the promises. 13 For God when he made promise to Abraham, since he had no greater to swear by, swore by himself, 14 saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee, 15 and thus after long-suffering he obtained the promise. 16 For men, indeed, swear by the greater, and to them the oath for confirmation [is] an end of all dispute. 17 Wherein God willing to show more abundantly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of his counsel, 18 intervened by an oath, that by two unchangeable things in which [it was] impossible that God should lie we might have strong encouragement that fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us, 19 which we have as the soul's anchor both secure and firm and entering into the inner [side] of the veil, 20 where entered forerunner for us Jesus, become for ever high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

VII. For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, that met Abraham returning from smiting the kings, and blessed him; 2 to whom also Abraham divided a tenth from all, first being interpreted King of righteousness, and then also King of Salem, which is peace, 3 without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but assimilated to the Son of God, abideth a priest continuously. 4 Now consider how great *he* [was] to whom the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth out of the spoils. 5 And they indeed from among the sons of Levi that receive the priesthood have commandment to take tithes from the people according to the law, that is, from their brethren, though these have come out of the loins of Abraham; 6 but he who hath no genealogy from them hath tithed Abraham, and hath blessed him that hath the promises. 7 Now apart from all dispute the less is blessed by the better. 8 And here dying men receive tithes, but there one witnessed of that he liveth; 9 and, so to speak, through Abraham even Levi that receiveth tithes hath been tithed. 10 For he was yet in the loins of his father when Melchizedek. met him. 11 If therefore perfection were through the Levitical priesthood, for [based] on it the people had the law, what further need that a different priest should arise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be said according to the order of Aaron? 12 For the priesthood being changed there cometh of necessity a change of law also. 13 For he of whom these things are said hath part in a different tribe from which no one hath attended to the altar; 14 for [it is] evident beforehand that our Lord hath sprung out of Judah, as to which tribe Moses spoke nothing about priests. 15 And it is yet more abundantly evident if according to the similitude of Melchizedek there ariseth a different priest 16 who hath been made not according to law of fleshly commandment but according to power of indissoluble life. 17 For the witness is, *Thou* [art] priest for ever according to the order of Melchizedek. 18 For there cometh a setting aside of foregoing commandment on account of its weakness and unprofitableness 19 (for the law perfected nothing), and an introduction of a better hope through which we draw near to God. 20 And by how much not apart from oath-swearing 21 (for they indeed apart from oath-swearing are become priests, but he with oath-swearing by him that saith unto him, The LORD (Jehovah) swore and will not repent, *Thou* [art] priest for ever [according to the order of Melchizedek]), 22 by so much Jesus hath become surety of a better covenant. 23 And they indeed are become many more priests, because by death they are hindered from continuing; 24 but he because of his abiding for ever hath the priesthood untransferable. 25 Whence also he is able to save completely those that approach God through him, as ever living to intercede for them. 26 For such a high priest became us, holy (or, pious), guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and become higher than the heavens, 27 who hath no need

day by day as the high priests, first to offer up sacrifices for his own sins then [for] those of the people; for this he did once for all when he offered up himself. 28 For the law constituteth men high priests, having infirmity; but the word of the oath-swearing that [was] after the law, a Son perfected for ever.

VIII. Now a chief point [in connection] with the things said [is]: We have such a high priest who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; 2 minister of the holies and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, not man. 3 For every high priest is constituted for the offering both gifts and sacrifices, whence necessity [is] that *The* also have something which he may offer. 4 If then indeed he were on earth, he would not even be a priest, as there are those that offer the gifts according to law; 5 being such as serve for example and shadow of the heavenly things even as Moses is oracularly told when about to make (or, effect) the tabernacle, for, See, saith he, thou shalt make all things according to the pattern that was shown to thee in the mountain. 6 But now he hath obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is mediator of a better covenant which hath been enacted upon better promises. 7 For if that first was faultless, no place had been sought for a second. 8 For finding fault he saith to them, Behold, days come, saith Jehovah, and (or, that) I will make (or, consummate) a new covenant on (or, with) the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; 9 not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers in a day when I took their hand to lead them out of Egypt's land; because they continued not in my covenant, and I disregarded them, saith Jehovah. 10 Because this [is] the covenant which I will covenant to the house of Israel after those days, saith Jehovah, giving my laws into their mind, I will also write them upon their hearts, and I will be to them for God, and *they* shall be to me for people. 11 And they shall not teach each his fellow-citizen and each his brother, saying, Know the Lord, because all shall inwardly know me from little of them unto great of them; 12 because I will be merciful to their unrighteousnesses, and their sins and their lawlessnesses I will never remember more. 13 In his saying, New, he hath made the first old; but that which groweth old and aged [is] near disappearing.

IX. The first then also had ordinances of service, and its sanctuary worldly. 2 For a tabernacle was constituted, the first, in which [were, or are] both the candlestick and the table and the setting forth of the loaves, which is called Holy; 3 but after the second veil a tabernacle that is called Holy of holies, 4 having a golden censer and the ark of the covenant covered round everywhere with gold, in which [were] a golden pot having the manna, and the rod of Aaron that sprouted, and the tables of the covenant, 5 and above over it cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy-seat, concerning which things it is not now [opportune] to speak in detail (or, severally). 6 Now these things having been thus constituted, into the first tabernacle indeed the priests enter at all times accomplishing the services, 7 but into the second the high priest alone once the year, not apart from blood, which he offereth for himself and for the errors (or, ignorances) of the people: 8 the Holy Spirit showing this that the way of the holies hath not yet been manifested, while yet the first tabernacle hath a standing: 9 the which [is] a parable for the time present, according to which are offered both gifts and sacrifices, unable as to conscience to perfect the worshipper (or, him that serveth), 10 only with meats and drinks and different (or, divers) washings, ordinances of flesh imposed until a season of rectification.

11 But Christ having come high priest of the good things to come by the better and more perfect tabernacle, not handmade (that is, not of this creation), 12 neither by blood of goats and calves but by his own blood, entered once for all into the holies, having found an everlasting redemption. 13 For if the blood of goats and 'bulls and a heifer's ashes sprinkling the defiled sanctifieth for the purity of the flesh, 14 by how much rather shall the blood of the Christ, who by [the] eternal Spirit offered himself spotless to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve (or, worship) a living God? 15 And for this reason he is mediator of a new covenant, so that, death having taken place for redemption of the

transgressions under (or, upon) the first covenant, those that are called might receive the promise of the everlasting inheritance. 16 For where a testament [is], the death of the testator must be brought in; 17 for a testament [is] valid after men [are] dead: since it in no wise hath force while the testator liveth. 18 Whence neither the first hath been inaugurated without blood. 19 For when every commandment was spoken according to law by Moses to all the people, having taken the blood of calves and of goats with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, he sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, 20 saying, This [is] the blood of the covenant which God enjoined on you. 21 And the tabernacle too, and all the vessels of service he sprinkled alike with the blood; 22 and almost all things are purified with blood according to the law, and apart from blood-shedding cometh no remission. 23 Necessity therefore [was] that the examples of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 24 For the Christ entered not into handmade holies, figures of the true, but into the heaven itself now to appear to the face of God for us; 25 neither that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holies yearly with blood not his own, 26 since he were bound often to suffer from [the] world's foundation. But now once on consummation of the ages he hath been manifested for putting away of sin by his sacrifice. 27 And forasmuch as it is appointed to men once to die, and, after this, judgment; 28 so also the Christ, having been once offered to bear sins of many, shall appear a second time apart from, sin to those that look for him unto salvation.

X. For the law, having a shadow of the coming good things, not the image itself of the things, can never by the same sacrifices, which they offer yearly continuously, perfect those that approach. 2 Since would they not have ceased being offered on account of the worshippers once purified having no longer any conscience of sins? 3 But in these [is] a calling to mind of sins yearly. 4 For blood of bulls and goats [is] incapable of taking away sins. 5 Wherefore entering into the world he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou willedst not, but a body thou preparedst for me: 6 in whole burnt-offerings and [sacrifices] for sin thou hadst no pleasure. 7 Then I said, Lo, I am come (in the book-roll it is written of me) to do thy will, O God. 8 Above saying Sacrifice and offering and whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou willedst not nor hadst pleasure in (the which are offered according to the law), 9 then he hath said, Lo, I am come to do thy will. He taketh away the first that he may establish the second; 10 by which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11 And every priest indeed standeth daily ministering and offering often the same sacrifices, the which can never take away sins; 12 but *he* having offered one sacrifice for sins, continuously sat down on God's right hand, 13 henceforth waiting until his enemies be set as footstool of his feet. 14 For by one offering he hath perfected continuously the sanctified. 15 And the Holy Spirit also witnesseth to us; for after he had said, 16 This [is] the covenant which I will covenant unto them after those days, saith Jehovah, Giving my laws on their hearts, I will also write them on their understanding; 17 and their sins and their lawlessnesses I will never remember more. 18 But where remission of these [is] [there is] no longer an offering for sin.

19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness for the entrance into the holies by the blood of Jesus, 20 a new and living way which he inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, his flesh, 21 and having a great priest over the house of God 22 let us approach with true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from a wicked conscience, and our body washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast the confession of the hope unwavering, for [he is] faithful that promised; 24 and let us consider one another for provoking love and good works, 25 not forsaking the gathering of ourselves together as [is] a custom for some, but encouraging, and by so much rather as ye see the day drawing near. 26 For if we sin wilfully after receiving the full knowledge of the truth, there no longer remaineth a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain fearful. expectation of judgment and heat of fire about to devour the adversaries. 28 Any one if he set at nought Moses' law dieth apart from mercy on two or three witnesses: 29 of how

much worse punishment, think ye, shall he be judged worthy that trod down the Son of God, and counted common the blood of the covenant whereby he was sanctified, and insulted the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know him that said, To me [is] vengeance; I will recompense, saith Jehovah; and again, Jehovah shall judge his people. 31 Fearful [it is] to fall into a living God's hands.

32 But call to mind the former days, in which enlightened as ye were ye endured a great fight of afflictions, 33 on this side made a spectacle in both reproaches and afflictions, and on that 'become companions of those so used; 34 for ye both sympathised with prisoners and accepted with joy the plunder of your goods, knowing that ye have for yourselves a better and abiding substance. 35 Cast not away therefore your confidence, the which hath great recompence. 36 For ye have need of endurance, that having done the will of God ye may receive the promise. 37 For yet a very little while: he that cometh will have come and will not delay. 38 But the (or, my) just shall live by faith; and if he (or, one) draw back, my soul hath no pleasure in him. 39 But we are not of drawing back unto perdition but of faith unto soul-saving.

XI. Now faith is substance (or, substantiating) of [things] hoped for, demonstration (or, test) of things not seen. 2 For in (virtue of) this the elders were witnessed of. 3 By faith we apprehend that the worlds were framed by God's word, so that the [things] beheld have not derived their being out of [things] apparent (or, phenomena). 4 By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain by which it was witnessed that he was righteous, God witnessing in respect of his gifts; and through it he, having died, yet speaketh. 5 By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death, and was not found because God translated him; for before the translation, it hath been witnessed that he had pleased God. 6 But apart from faith [it is] impossible to please [him], for he that approacheth to God must believe that he is, and becometh a rewarder of those that seek him out. 7 By faith Noah, oracularly warned of things not yet beheld, moved with fear, constructed an ark for saving his house, by which he condemned the world and became heir of righteousness that is according to faith.

8 By faith Abraham, when called, obeyed to go out into a place which he was to receive for an inheritance, and went out not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise as not his own, dwelling as he did in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the joint-heirs of the same promise; 10 for he waited for the city that hath the foundations, of which God is architect and master-builder. 11 By faith also Sarah herself received power for deposition of seed even beyond season of age, since she counted faithful him that promised. 12 Wherefore also there were born from one, and that one become dead, even as the stars of the heaven in multitude, and as the countless sand that is by the sea-shore. 13 All these died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them from afar, and greeted (or, embraced), and confessed that they were strangers and sojourners on the earth. 14 For they that say such things make plain that they seek out a country. 15 And if indeed they called to mind that from which they went out, they might have had opportunity to return; 16 but now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God, for he prepared for them a city. 17 By faith Abraham when tried offered up Isaac, and he that received to himself the promises was offering his only-begotten 18 as to whom it was spoken, In Isaac shall thy seed be called; 19 accounting that God [is] able to raise even from out of dead [men], whence also he received him back in parable (or, figure). 20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. 21 By faith Jacob when dying blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshipped on the top of his staff. 22 By faith Joseph when ending life called to mind the going forth of the sons of Israel and gave commandment concerning his bones.

23 By faith Moses when born was hid three months by his parents, because they saw the child beautiful; and they did not fear the order of the king. 24 By faith Moses when become great refused to

be called son of Pharaoh's daughter, 25 choosing rather to be ill-treated with the people of God than to have temporary pleasure of sin, 26 counting the Christ's reproach greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, for he looked off unto the recompence. 27 By faith he left Egypt, not afraid of the wrath of the king; for he persevered as seeing the Invisible. 28 By faith he hath celebrated the passover and the sprinkling of the blood, that the destroyer of the firstborn should not touch them. 29 By faith they passed through the Red Sea, as through dry land, of which the Egyptians made trial and were swallowed up. 30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell, having been encircled seven days. 31 By faith Rahab the harlot perished not along with the disobedient, having received the spies with peace. 32 And what more do I say? For the time would fail me telling of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets: 33 who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped lions' mouths, 34 quenched fire's power, escaped sword's edge, were strengthened from weakness, became mighty in war, put to flight armies of aliens. 35 Women received their dead again by (or, out of) resurrection; and others were tortured, not having accepted their deliverance that they might obtain a better resurrection; 36 and others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yea and of bonds and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they died by slaughter of sword. They went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated 38 (of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and the chinks of the earth. 39 And these all having been witnessed of through their faith received not the promise, 40 God having foreseen some better thing concerning us, that apart from us they should not be perfected.

XII. Therefore let us also, having so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, laying aside every weight and the readily besetting sin, run with (or, through) endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking, off unto Jesus the leader and completer of (or, the) faith; who for the joy set before him endured cross, despising shame, and is set down on the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider well him that endured so great contradiction by sinners against himself, that ye weary not, fainting in your souls. 4 Not yet unto blood resisted ye, wrestling against sin. 5 And ye have quite forgotten the exhortation the which discourseth with you as sons, My son, regard not lightly Jehovah's chastening, nor faint when reprov'd of him: 6 for whom Jehovah loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 7 For chastisement ye are enduring: God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son [is he] whom a father chasteneth not? 8 But if ye are apart from chastisement of which all have been made partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons. 9 Then indeed we had fathers of our flesh as chasteners, and we revered them: shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of the spirits and live? 10 For they indeed chastened for a few days, as seemed good to them; but he for profit in order to the partaking of his holiness. 11 Now no chastisement for the time seemeth to be of joy but of grief; yet afterward it yieldeth peaceable fruit of righteousness to those that have been exercised thereby. 12 Wherefore lift up the exhausted hands and the enfeebled knees, 13 and make straight paths for your feet that what is lame be not turned out of the way but rather be healed. 14 Pursue peace with all, and holiness apart from which no one shall see the Lord, 15 looking carefully lest [there be] any one falling short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up give trouble and through it [the] many be defiled; 16 lest [there be] any fornicator or profane one as Esau who for one meal sold his own birthright; 17 for ye know that even when afterward desiring to inherit the blessing he was rejected (for he found no place of repentance), though he sought it earnestly with tears.

18 For ye have not approached to a palpable thing and all aglow with fire, and to obscurity and gloom and tempest, 19 and to trumpet's sound, and a voice of words, which those that heard deprecated that a word more should be addressed to them; 20 for they could not bear what was enjoined, And if a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned; 21 and, so fearful was the appearance, Moses said, I am

affrighted and trembling all over. 22 But ye have approached to mount Zion; and to a living God's city, heavenly Jerusalem; and to myriads of angels, a universal assemblage; 23 and to an assembly of firstborns, enrolled in heavens; and to God judge of all; and to spirits of just ones made perfect; 24 and to Jesus mediator of a new covenant, and to blood of sprinkling speaking better than Abel. 25 Look that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if *those* did not escape, refusing as they did him speaking oracularly on earth, much more we that turn away from him from [the] heavens; 26 whose voice then shook the earth, but now hath he promised, saying, Yet once will I shake not only the earth but also the heaven. 27 But this Yet once signifieth the removing of what are shaken as being made that what are not shaken may remain. 28 Wherefore let us, receiving a kingdom not to be shaken, have grace by which we may (or, let us) serve God acceptably with reverence and fear. 29 For also our God is a consuming fire.

XIII. Let brotherly love abide. 2 Be not forgetful of hospitality; for by it some unawares entertained angels. 3 Remember prisoners as bound with [them]; the ill-treated, as being yourselves also in a body. 4 [Be] marriage in all [things] held in honour, and the bed undefiled; but (or, for) fornicators and adulterers God will judge. 5 Free from love of money [be] your course of life, satisfied with present things for *he* hath said, I will not leave thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee: 6 so that *we* courageously say, Jehovah [is] my helper, and I will not be afraid: what shall man do to me? 7 Remember your leaders the which spoke to you the word of God; and considering the issue of their conduct imitate their faith. 8 Jesus Christ [is] the same yesterday and today, and unto the ages (or, for ever). 9 Be not carried away with divers and strange doctrines. for [it is] good that the heart be confirmed with grace; not with meats, in which those that walked were not profited. 10 We have an altar of which they have no right to eat that serve the tabernacle. 11 For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the holies for sin, are burned without the camp. 12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people through his own blood, suffered without the gate. 13 Therefore let us go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. 14 For here we have not an abiding city, but we seek after the coming one. 15 Through him then let us offer sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, fruit of lips confessing his name. 16 But to do good and communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. 17 Obey your leaders, and be submissive, for *they* watch over (or, in behalf of) your souls, as those that shall give account; that they may do this with joy, and not groaning, for this [were] unprofitable for you.

18 Pray for us: for we persuade ourselves that we have a good conscience, in all things desiring to walk well (or, honourably). 19 And more exceedingly I exhort [you] to do this, that I may be more quickly restored to you. 20 But the God of peace, that brought again from among [the] dead our Lord Jesus the great Shepherd of the sheep in virtue of blood of an everlasting covenant, 21 perfect you in every good work unto the (loin(, of his will, working in you [or, us] what is well-pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ; to whom [be] the glory unto the ages of the ages (or, for ever and ever). Amen. 22 But I exhort you, brethren, bear with the word of exhortation, for also briefly do I write to you. 23 Know that our brother Timothy is set at liberty (or, let go); with whom if he come soon I will see you. 24 Salute all your leaders, and all the saints. They from Italy salute you. 25 Grace [be] with you all. Amen.

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

Hebrews 1.

The opening words are worthy of the great theme. In Christ only is the perfection of all that Israel gloried in. Every other person and office, every other walk or object, honoured in God's living oracles, had it most of all in and for preparing the way for Him. He is the one comprehensive aim of the Holy Spirit, open or understood, positively or negatively by contrast, throughout scripture.

Here that which was comparatively obscure of old is set in the light; for Christ is the true light. It is He who, once dimly discerned, now stands fully revealed, and thus illumines what once seemed dark, what without Him is and must be dark indeed still. Thus is all scripture knit together into one whole. There is the Old Testament; there is also what is called the New Testament, even if the Spirit avoid so characterising it. Together they constitute the Bible, whose unity turns on Christ, once promised, now come and, after accomplishing His work on earth, exalted at God's right hand in heaven. It is above all God revealed in the Son.

Hence it will be apparent, when once pointed out, why this Epistle does not unfold the mystery of Christ; for this would involve the introduction of what was absolutely unknown to Israel, yea, not then revealed by God. The revelation of the mystery supposes the rejection of the people of God, to make way for an entirely new and distinct purpose where a Jew as such is no more than a Gentile; and the church of God becomes the absorbing scene of the Holy Spirit's operation to the present exclusion of Israel. The church therefore in its full character implies a break in God's dealings with His ancient people, not merely because of idolatry which let in the times of the Gentiles, but because of the rejection and cross of the Messiah, His only-begotten Son, which let in the new and heavenly purpose of God in the church, Christ's body.

Here it is rather the continuity of divine testimony culminating in Christ, Who has laid in His blood and death the unchangeable basis for everlasting blessing, and gives the most glorious expression to its character in His own session as man on the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. For this reason, from the first chapter to the last of this Epistle to the Hebrews, we have the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets cited more fully than in any other part of the N.T. So also the ritualistic services, the vessels, and the holy places are turned to direct account in an elaborate way; and the persons whom the Holy Spirit could employ from the beginning are either detailed or taken in the gross (Heb. 11) till we are brought to Christ, the crown and fulness of all. With this will be found to agree the particulars, which we now proceed to consider.

"In many measures and in many manners God, having spoken of old to the fathers in the prophets, spoke to us at [the] end of these days in a Son."

The words that compose this grand exordium are most pregnant, as well as undeniable truth. They briefly, yet distinctly, convey the character of the O.T. communications. It was not in their nature to be complete or final. They were essentially piecemeal. No doubt the prophets wrought "at sundry times," and the modes in which God dealt were "divers": but neither phrase of the A.V. conveys the force of πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως. The common translation is borrowed from the Version of Geneva in 1539. Wiclif, in this not faithful to the Vulgate, had dropped altogether the first words, though he rightly gave "in many manners." Tyndale and Cranmer unite in "diversly and many wayes," as does the Rhemish with a chance in the order. "In time past," or "of old," πάλαι, is the sole expression of time. It was the same God and the same Christ; yet the object is to prove an immense change of His dealing:

God speaking in a Son, after having spoken to the fathers in the prophets; also Christ no longer connected with the earth but in heavenly glory. Then He spoke "in many parts." His word was but fragmentary, perfect in its object, but in no wise that fulness which it was in His purpose to bestow when the due moment arrived. As a variety of persons were employed in that work, so "many ways" or methods of revealing, as open speaking to Moses, but visions, and dreams ordinarily. "I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets. And by a prophet Jehovah brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved" (Hosea 12: 10, 13).

How mighty the advance now! God, though He be not here revealed in the elevation and intimacy of the Father, "spoke to us at the end of these days in a Son." The apostle in no way dissociates himself from the chosen nation, though he takes care throughout to show that only the Israel of God the true believing remnant, have valid title. But writing to those who were dull to appreciate that which was absolutely new and above this creation, he gives full weight to all previous revelations, however partial and short of what was now come. not only does he record the honour from God put on "the fathers," but ranges himself with their sons, as among the "us" to whom His word had now come in a completeness beyond all given before.

"In these last years" (as Tyndale began, followed by all the Protestant English) is too vague a rendering, and apt to be confounded with the different phraseology of 2 Peter 3, Jude 18, or even the more distant phrases in 1 Tim. 4 and in 2 Tim. 3. Still more objectionable is the Rhemish text following the Vulgate. Wiclif is nearer the mark, "at the last in these daies," though not quite right. "At [the] end," or [the] last of these days is the literal and true force, the close of these days of the age under the law, when the Messiah comes.

God who spoke to the fathers in past days spoke to us at the last of these days in a Son. The omission of the article has to do neither with the preposition going before nor with emphatic position, as many learned men have said. That there was intention is obvious; for ἐν τοῖς προφ. would naturally call for ἐν τῷ υἱῷ. Yet the phrase is anarthrous, and therefore does not present the person as an object before the mind, but brings character into prominence. The prophets were, like Moses, only servants; He in whom God spoke at the end of these days was Son. Compare Heb. 5: 8, etc. Such was the quality, such the relationship to Himself, of the One in Whom He now spoke. Our language does not so well bear the absence of the article; but it is regular in Greek, and at once the most forcible and the most accurate form of expressing character, which is precisely what was wanted here. Not in the prophets any longer, nor in angelic guise as often, but as Son God spoke now.

This adds a fresh reason why a man's name, however blessed or in whatever a position, would be unsuitable; and we have already shown grounds why the author in divinely given wisdom and grace preferred his name in particular not to appear, though the character of the truth and the final notices ought to leave no doubt who he was, without any external voucher, inspired or not. This is much confirmed by the next chapter (verses 3, 4), where our Lord Himself is introduced, the Prophet that should and did come, though Son. The apostles themselves, the twelve, were but His hearers, God joining in the attestation both with signs and wonders and divers powers, and distributions of the Holy Spirit according to His own will. How out of place would have been the introduction of his own apostolate! The Son of God, the Christ, had deigned to be the Apostle of our confession (Heb. 3: 1).

Was there aught in this justly to offend the warmest love and reverence for the O.T.? Rather does the O.T. bear it out and even require it to seal its own truth. For Law and Prophets bear their consenting witness that One would come, even a prophet like unto Moses, only greater as he himself testifies; who

should speak in God's name, but so that whosoever would not hearken must bear the penalty from God. Then should be made on God's part a new covenant, not according to the former one when they were brought out of Egypt — a covenant which they broke no less than they idolised it; but a new one marked by God's grace and power, as the former one was by man's responsibility and total failure.

This Epistle proves that the Blessing is come, if not yet all the blessing, and appropriately opens with God's speaking in the Son. His silence after Malachi made it all the more impressive, since that last messenger of Jehovah sealed the O.T. canon. Then the interval of four hundred years, not without marked and varied premonitory signs, is closed by a prophet and more than a prophet in John the Baptist, disclaiming to be more than a "voice," yet proclaiming One standing in their midst whom they knew not, whose shoe-latchet he was not worthy to unloose, the Lamb of God, who baptises with the Holy Spirit. "This is the Son of God."

With the same truth we start here. God speaking was no new thing; for He had in many parts and in many ways. Now there was no limit; for it was in a Son Only-begotten, full of grace and truth. It was therefore no mere assemblage of revelations from God, divine but partial and suited to the instruments and the circumstances; it was God revealing Himself. His Son was the sole competent One for this purpose. In the beginning of the Epistle it is God so speaking when He was on earth; toward the close it is He that speaks from heaven (Heb. 12: 25). Everywhere it is God revealed, and not merely communications from Him. This therefore gives the utmost force and impressiveness and authority in the last resort to every subject that is handled, especially to that change which it is the main object of the Epistle to make known. "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of law" (Heb. 7: 12).

The immeasurable superiority of Christ, and consequently of Christianity, comes out in this respect at the starting-point, and the more strikingly, because no Christian questions the divine inspiration of all the ancient oracles. Yet every true Christian feels the different and surpassing character, not only of Christ's words in the Gospels, but of the apostolic writings and the N.T. as a whole. It is truly Christ speaking in them all; it is God revealing Himself in Him as Son, with an intimacy peculiar to Him alone and in all its perfectness. And this superiority we may see running through the entire Epistle. He is above all men and angels; He is God and Jehovah, seated though man where no creature could be. He is the true captain of salvation, not Joshua. He is far above Moses the apostle of the Jewish confession, far beyond Aaron the Levitical high priest, more than filling up the wonderful picture of Melchizedek too. And no wonder; for Moses and Aaron were but servants in that house of which He was the builder, as indeed of all things. They were all brought into, being by Him, and without Him was not one thing brought into being of the created universe.

Nor is it only above all persons and offices that we see Jesus; but He alone gives a fuller and more divine meaning to every institution God set up in Israel. Take covenant in Heb. 8; and sanctuary, sacrifice, and offering in Heb. 9, 10. Everywhere His incontestable superiority is no less apparent; so as in Christianity at least to involve and prepare the way for their passing away, as the shadows and signs of that substance which now abides in all its preciousness to God, in all its efficacy for the believer.

If we look at faith, on which in every way the N.T. lays the utmost stress, others of old may and do show its beautifully refracted colours; but away from so great a cloud of witnesses we must look stedfastly on Jesus if we would see the Leader and Completer of faith. He is the full and pure light of it all. Therefore are we come in spirit even now to such an assemblage of glories (Heb. 12: 18-24) as not only eclipses but contrasts with the earthly and terror-inspiring associations of Sinai, whence dates the national distinction of Israel as God's people on the footing of the law. It is ours, receiving a kingdom

which cannot be moved, to have grace whereby let us serve acceptably with reverence and godly fear. Others, however to be remembered and imitated in their faith, pass; but another blessed superiority is that Jesus Christ, God and man now glorified, is the same yesterday, and today, and for ever. And He defines our place with Him both before God and man: within the veil through His blood, without the camp bearing His reproach. What God has joined, let not man's unbelief and selfishness sunder. The force of this for the Jewish Christian was immense: do we now make them both good in our souls and ways?

It is the voice of the Christ all through if on earth to gain the ear of the remnant and attach them to Himself, to God in a Son; in heaven to detach from all the earthly elements of Judaism which had done for the faithless their worst in becoming a rival through Satan's wiles, their best in spelling His name who is all and in all them that believe. And here is another superiority which we shall trace in detail, that what He gives us is in each case declared to be "eternal," in contrast with the temporary good things of Israel. He is the author of "eternal salvation" (Heb. 5: 9). He has found an "eternal redemption," and we receive the promise of the "eternal inheritance" (Heb. 9), even as He by the "eternal Spirit" offered Himself without spot to God, and the covenant consequently is "eternal" (Heb. 13).

The personal glory of Christ, Son of God, and His work as profound as His dignity is of high account for all, when we see Him to reveal God and give effect to His grace beyond all thought of man. This would, if anything could, draw Jews out of Judaism, when made willing to grow by the knowledge of God. And this we shall find to be the practical gist of our Epistle from first to last; nor was any so suited for the work as Saul of Tarsus, nor any time so seasonable as before Jerusalem was swept away, and the temple with its priesthood and sacrifices came to an open end as already defunct.

The peculiar form of the phrase then "in a Son," difficult without loss or a paraphrase to convey adequately in our language, is simply to characterise the relationship, not who but what, as in Matt. 4: 6, Matt. 9: 29, Matt. 27: 40, 43, 54; Luke 4: 3; John 1: 1 (last clause θεὸς), John 5: 27, John 8: 54, John 10: 33, 36, John 19: 7; as well as in Heb. 3: 6, Heb. 5: 8, Heb. 7: 8, 28. Where the person is the object before us, the article is invariably inserted, as may be seen in the context of these texts and in Scripture generally. "In the person of the, or His, Son," or "in Him who is Son," would therefore require ἐν τῷ υἱῷ. A subordinate sense where the article is absent is in no way the truth, in the mind either of friends or of foes. Where character is predicated, the article is excluded as here. Only in English we must say "a" or "the," which so far enfeebles the expression of what is here intended: "a" as capable of implying others, which is not at all meant but the reverse; "the" as presenting Christ objectively, where is meant predicatively that character of intimate relationship to God which is proper to Him only in eternal title and right. Some only have it subordinately by creation, as angels; others again, as the faithful, by sovereign grace through faith in Christ and eternal life in the Son.

Next comes His heirship. "Whom he constituted heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds":* testimonies to the glory of Christ of exceeding moment, to which we shall return after citing the passage in full. "Who being the effulgence of his glory and the very impress of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high, become so much better than the angels, as he hath inherited a name more excellent than they" (verses 2-4).

* τοὺς αἰῶνας, in general "the ages," but also beyond just dispute used by Hellenistic Jews for the universe (perhaps as the theatre of the divine dispensations or ages) as here and in Heb. 11: 3. See Eccles. 3: 11 in the Sept., and elsewhere.

As in Rom. 9 to Gentile saints, so here to Jewish, the apostle proves that Christianity reveals the Messiah in a grandeur far surpassing the imagination of the former or the tradition of the latter. He is Son as none else. He is Heir of the universe; and no wonder. For as He created the worlds, so He upholds all things by the word of His power. Yes, the very Man whom they crucified by the hand of lawless men, who was crucified through weakness! At the moment He bowed His head and expired, He was sustaining all creation. It were absurd to think or say so, had He been only man; but He was God; and the dissolution of the tie between the outer and the inner man in no way touched His almighty power.

Jesus then is not merely the Messianic Heir of the nations as in Psalm 2. He is the Heir of all things as He created all. Compare John 1: 3. All things in the heavens, and the things on the earth, are to be summed or headed up in Christ: such is God's good pleasure which He purposed in Him (Eph. 1: 9, 10). He is exalted accordingly to the highest seat, the pledge of all that is to follow for now we see not yet all things subjected to Him, but we behold Himself crowned with glory and honour. And we know from elsewhere why He does not yet enter on the immense and glorious inheritance. He awaits the calling out of all the joint-heirs whom He will invest with the inheritance at the same time as He takes it Himself; for if children then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. Such are the wondrous counsels of God, through his Son and to His glory, both before the world for a while, and afterward for ever.

He, Who is the appointed inheritor of the universe, and also fully entitled as being the Creator of the worlds, is yet more set forth in verse 3: being the effulgence of God's glory and the very impress of His substance or being, and upholding all things by the word of His power. He is in the highest sense (as intrinsically there can be none other) a divine person no less than the Father, and the Holy Spirit. But He is specially the displayer of Godhead, as in power and providence so in goodness, and in grace even to the lost. Compare 2 Cor. 4: 4 and Col. 1: 15. And this comes into the utmost prominence in the words that follow: "having made," or when He made, "purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high"; where we may observe that, even omitting "by Himself" with the oldest uncials and good versions, etc., the participle carries in itself the remarkable force of having done it for Himself. He took His seat on high on the accomplishment of His work for the purification of sins. For this He had come as being the will of God, and only goes on high to take that place of glory when He had Himself done the work, whereby believers were to be blessed.

It will be observed that Christ is said here to be the outshining of God's glory. In our Epistle it is not the Father (as in John), but God. Both are true and each has its own importance. And it is scarcely needful to say that "person," borrowed in the A.V. from that of Geneva, is a mistake. It is "substance" or essential being, as in Wiclif, Tyndale, Cranmer, and the Rhemish from the Vulgate. The doctrine of course is one hypostasis and three persons, as is commonly known: both truths are made evident in Isa. 6 compared with John 12 and Acts 28, as indeed by many other scriptures.

Christ's maintenance of the universe presents His divine glory in a striking way. "By Him all things consist," as the apostle affirms in Col. 1. They were created by Him and for Him, and they subsist together in virtue of Him. This becomes all the more remarkable because He deigned for the deepest purposes to become true man. This, however, trenched not on His deity; for the incarnation means not Godhead swamped by humanity, but this taken into everlasting union with itself, each nature abiding in its own perfectness, not metamorphosed but constituting together the one person of Christ. As He therefore brought all into being, so does He sustain all the universe, and ever did so.

There is another and profounder element of His glory, His effecting in His own person the

purgation of sins. To create needed but His word; to sustain, His will; but not so redemption. To command in this case would have been wholly insufficient. The purging of sins could not be without the shedding of blood, without sacrificial death, for which the O.T. prepared men from the beginning. The earthly sacrifices could neither suffice for God's glory, nor cleanse man's conscience, as we are taught fully later on. But they were weighty testimonies from the days. of Adam downward, though only elaborated into a system of types most full and instructive by divine inspiration under Moses. Christ's was indeed

"A sacrifice of nobler name,
And richer blood than they."

Christ alone gives the full meaning and the true dignity to sacrifice, as is here briefly shown and bound up with the glory of His person. Sin is rebellion against God; it is lawlessness. God therefore is the One invariably concerned, whether it be also a human wrong or not. "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight ": yet he who so cried had been guilty of blood as well as of the worst corruption. As God's majesty and character are thus intimately in question, it is He who undertook to settle all in His Son. But here nothing less could avail than His death, yea, death of the cross, where God Himself laid the sins on the spotless Victim's head (Isa. 53) that they might thus be borne, and borne away. Not otherwise could there be forgiveness of sins according to God. There must be the purification of sins; and it is the "blood of Jesus Christ His Son" that "cleanseth from all sin," from every sin.

No wonder this deepest work of God is treated here as part of the divine glory of Christ. He must be man on behalf of men, He must be God to be available with God; He is both in one person; and thus as the justification was thus perfect, the result is unailing for all who believe. Once cleansed thereby the worshippers have no more conscience of sins; and He, having offered one sacrifice for sins, "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high," sat down in perpetuity, as Heb. 10: 12 tells us, not only for ever but without a break in the efficacy of His sacrifice. How could it be otherwise if God in a Son undertook that work? And as this is thoroughly reasoned out and applied in the latter part of the Epistle, here we have the great truth stated clearly at the start: a truth "hard to be understood," by a Jew particularly, accustomed as he was to the routine and repetition of sacrifice as well as of all other Levitical observances. But the Holy Spirit of God does not keep it back, giving it a foremost place in the introduction.

It was scarce needed to say that Christ "by Himself" made purification of sins. For He alone suffered for sins — He alone was sacrificed for us. The Father had His will in giving Him for the purpose; and the Holy Spirit bears testimony to the complete efficacy, as He previously held out types and predictions and promises. But it was for Christ alone to suffer for sin; and this He did to the uttermost. "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. . . . It pleased Jehovah to bruise him; He hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin," etc. "He poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors, yet he bare the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors" (Isa. 53).

And this is the basis of what the apostle elsewhere calls the "righteousness of God," that righteousness, not of man which the law sought yet found not in the sinful, but of God Who in virtue of Christ's propitiation can fully bless all that believe, and freely plead with and call on all men as they are. The purification of sins effected by a divine person is not limited and cannot fail; but it necessarily

can take effect on none that hear the gospel unless they believe: God would be consenting to the dishonour of the Son if He made light of men's unbelief. Besides, the word received in faith has a morally cleansing power, as all believers are born of water and the Spirit. But here it is the work, not in man but efficacious before God, which occupies the apostle; and this is the purification of sins by Christ before He sat down at God's right hand.

What an attestation is that seat of His to the perfection and completeness of the work He undertook! When Jehovah laid our sins on Christ, He was made sin for us, and treated as it deserved at the hand of God. For what did man, or even saints, know then of that infinite task? God indeed marked it by a darkness for which nothing in nature can account, and Christ confessed it in that cry of His inapplicable to all others but Himself: "My God, My God, why didst thou forsake Me?" This was the necessary accompaniment of sin-bearing: absolute abandonment by God. Though He were His God, yet Christ was made sin; and it was no make-believe but real if anything ever was; no slurring over the least sin, no leaving out the greatest. It was Christ bearing the judgment of sin, the sole righteous way for the purification of sins. And the work was done and finished in such perfectness, that the only adequate seat for Him who had borne all was at the right hand of the Majesty on high. David's throne will be taken another day when blessing dawns for the earth on Israel. And when the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then shall He sit on the throne of His glory; and before Him shall be gathered all the nations. But here is a seat incomparably more august, and in fact proper and possible to none but a divine person. yet is it also presented as the place suited to Him who had just made purification of sins. In this He suffered and wrought; on that He sat down, the work completed and thus accepted. What more glorious for the humbled Messiah? What more blessed in its fruit for the believer? A sacrifice *to* God, He gave Himself up *for* us.

There is another word added here, the bearing of which is no less evident on Jewish minds. They thought much of angelic glory. The law they received as ordained by ministry of angels (Acts 7: 50; Gal. 3: 19). They were wont therefore to regard with awe and wonder those obedient messengers of God's power, of which there can be no stronger proof than John's temptation in Rev. 19, 22. Hence the gravity of the further testimony to Christ's glory here, "made so much better than the angels, as he hath inherited a name more excellent than they" (ver. 4).

It is Christ who renders evident the ground of God's counsel to raise from among men those destined to a place incomparably higher than that of angels. If the Son of God became man, it was at once intelligible, becoming, and necessary. And the redemption that is in Christ, and our consequent nearness of relationship into which grace brings the believer, make plain our association with Him and our elevation above angels. For they *are not called but kept. Not sunk into moral ruin, they have no experience of the mercy that saves and unites with Christ. Hence angels are never said to reign. They serve, instead of sitting on thrones. We are to reign with Him, yet shall we serve then as we serve now, and all the better through grace, because, delivered from the lowest estate of guilt and evil, we are objects of His ceaseless and infinite love, and shall share His glory as surely as we now rest on His grace. Angels know not either extreme, as we do; but all we boast is through Him who became so much better than the angels as He hath an inheritance more excellent than they. It is the Messiah of whom we are hearing.

Next comes a series of quotations from the O.T. pertinent to the Sonship of Christ just laid down. This fulness of citing the ancient oracles, though found elsewhere in the apostle's writings and conspicuously in the Epistle to the Romans, is nowhere so rich as here. Nor could we well conceive it otherwise, if he were writing to believers from among the chosen people, and anxious in his loving consideration for them to rest all on God's word, already known to them familiarly, rather than on his

own fresh prophetic communications.

"For to whom of the angels did he ever say, My Son art *Thou*: *I* this day have begotten Thee? And again, I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son? And again, when he bringeth in the firstborn into the habitable earth, he saith, And let all God's angels worship him. And indeed as to the angels he saith, "Who maketh his angels winds and his ministers a flame of fire; but as to the Son, Thy throne, O God, [is] unto the age of the age, and a sceptre of uprightness [is] the sceptre of Thy kingdom. Thou lovedst righteousness and hatedst lawlessness: therefore God, thy God, anointed thee with oil of gladness above thy fellows" (vers. 5-9).

As Jews they were accustomed to think much of angels, who were seen often on critical occasions by the fathers, and took a most distinguished part in bringing in the law, as well as in heralding or accomplishing, deliverances afterwards, as everyone can see who reads the Law and the Prophets with attention. This tended to produce no small veneration in the minds of the just, and superstition too in such as went beyond Scripture. Christ alone gives and keeps the truth in us by grace. And here we have a clear instance in point, as throughout the Epistle. Not only was the Life the light of men rather than of angels, but the Son of God becoming man really, as He had often anticipatively intervened in human guise, gave proof that the good pleasure of God is in men, and prepared the way for the revelation of the glorious counsels He has ever had for such as believe, in the day of Christ, when even angels are to be in a subordinate place as indeed throughout eternity. This assuredly could not be without redemption, as redemption in the full sense could not be without incarnation, supposed in Heb. 1 and openly stated in Heb. 2, as we shall see. As the Son is incontestably above the prophets, so is He now proved far above the angels and He is the foundation of all our blessedness.

The first scripture quoted is from Psalm 2: 7: "My Son art *thou*: - *I* this day have begotten thee." Never was such a word addressed to an angel. It applies only to Christ. But how? The apostle John loves to expatiate on His eternal Sonship. Again, elsewhere in the epistles of Paul He is often shown as Son of God in resurrection (Rom. 1: 4, Rom. 8: 29; Col. 1: 18), as of course also when He returns from heaven (1 Thess. 1: 10). How is He regarded here? As Son of God born in time: so we see Him in Luke 1: 32 and yet more definitely in verse 35. The assumption of flesh in no way lowered His Sonship: Son of God eternally, He was still and no less Son of God when born of the Virgin, as He is in resurrection and evermore in glory; He only, and in virtue of divine right acknowledged of God, and to Jesus solely by the word magnified above all Jehovah's name.

It is the more important that this should be seen clearly and irrefragably, because even the learned Bishop Pearson, in his famous work on the Creed, over and over again gives countenance to the mystic view * of this verse of the Psalm cited in Acts 13: 32, 33, as if the apostle had so definitely ruled. But this is quite an oversight. On the contrary, and beyond controversy, the apostle *distinguishes* in verse 34 the Lord's resurrection (attested by Isa. 55: 3 and Psalm 16: 10) from His Sonship in the days of His flesh as in Psalm 2: 7. The raising up" (not "up again," as in A.V.) in 32, 33, is as Messiah on earth; with which is contra-distinguished in 34 God's raising Him up *from the dead*.

* "As He was raised from the dead, out of the womb of the earth unto immortal life," etc. (Exposition i. 57, Oxford, 1797). "The grave is as the womb of the earth: Christ, who is raised from thence, is as it were begotten to another life," etc. (i. 173). "Upon the morning of the third day did those words of the Father manifest a most important truth, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee" (i. 400).

Hence there is no need or even room for swerving from the simple yet grand truth that, as the Psalmist, so the apostle, in preaching at Antioch of Pisidia and here in writing to the Christian Jews,

speaks of what Jehovah said of His Son when born a man. It is therefore His birth in time: "I this day have begotten thee." But it is of all moment for the truth and His own personal dignity, to remember that His Sonship when incarnate as well as in resurrection is based on His eternal relationship as Son, the great theme of the apostle John, without which the other two could not have been. Here too many Christians have fallen short.

The next citation appears to be from 1 Chron. 17: 13 (2 Sam. 7, where the same words occur, being more historical): "I will be to him a father, and he will be to me a son." This is the assertion of the perfect and mutual affection that reigned between the Father and His Son, now a living man; not what became an accomplished fact as in Psalm 2: 7, and what should subsist when He was born of woman, "Son of David, Son of Abraham" (Matt. 1: 1).

As to the second text there has been little discussion among orthodox men. Not so in the third, which stands in our Epistle identical with the Vatican (not the Alexandrian) Septuagintal text of Deut. 32: 43, and in substance with Psalm 97: 7). But it has been keenly urged as to the prefatory words that "again" (πάλιν) belongs to εἰσαγάγη, and denotes a new and second introduction of the Messiah, instead of being as in the A.V. and many others the mark of another citation. Not a few ancients, mediaevals, and moderns have so understood, though they differ widely as to the alleged second introduction. But the Pesch. Syr. found no such difficulty as the Vulgate; nor did Erasmus, Luther, Calvin, Beza, Bengel, Wolf, any more than the fullest of modern commentators, Bleek. It is assumed that πάλιν would not stand where it is in the Greek if it introduced another citation; yet the good scholar who so speaks allows that in point of interpretation the rendering of the A.V. is much to be preferred! Is this really safe? That a false version yields better sense than the true? That the true is not justifiable grammatically?

The fact is that the collocation stands alone, as far as I can see, in the N.T., and that there is nothing either way in the LXX. Now in the other instances of the N.T. there is no case precisely like this before us, not only no ο{tan de; , but nothing analogous. I do not admit (until a real case is produced adverse to what is confessed by a candid and competent man, Canon Humphry, to be a much preferable resulting, sense) that we are driven to deny an elasticity to the Greek, of which our tongue is perfectly susceptible. Englishmen are certainly not tied down to such an order, as "Again, when he bringeth in." What proof is there that the far more pliant Greek is more restricted? Not infrequently there are solitary examples of collocation or construction even in the N.T. as in other writings. If we may say, "And when, again, he bringeth in," etc., I know not why the writer may not with equal liberty have adopted a corresponding order, even though there be no other instance of or call for such a variety.

What then is the grammatical principle or the usage which is supposed to be traversed here? "In this epistle, when it is joined to a verb, it has always the sense of a second time, e.g. Heb. 4: 7, Heb. 5: 12, Heb. 6: 1, 6." Is it not unfortunate that the very first is adverse? It is no more joined to a verb there than in the verse debated. It means "Again, he limiteth," not "He limiteth a second time." No one doubts that in verse 12, like 6: 1, 6, it means *iterum* (not *rursus*, particularly when used as a sort of parenthesis, as in Heb. 1 and often elsewhere). Indeed, the very first occurrence in the N.T. refuses this imaginary canon of grammar. Our Lord said (Matt. 5: 33) πάλιν ἤκούσατε, of which the unequivocal and universally allowed sense is, again, ye heard, and not, because a verb follows, Ye heard a second time. To say "joined to a verb" begs the question. Is it really so? We may be assured it may not be.

The fact is that the apostle's object appears to be, not defining time when God ushers the Firstborn into the world, but (whenever it shall have been, past or future perhaps) proving the universal homage

of all God's angels to the glory of the Son. And surely Luke 2: 13, 14 is a beautiful witness to it. Nor is there the smallest ground to limit "the firstborn" to resurrection. As any reader may see, Col. 1: 15 points out the Lord Jesus as the Firstborn of all creation, quite distinctly from His subsequent and still more glorious position of Firstborn from the dead" in verse 18 (cf. Rev. 1: 5). "Firstborn as such is therefore more suitable to Him simply as incarnate; which tells, as far as it goes, against construing π. with the verb as "a second time." At the same time it is frankly allowed that the fulfilment of Deut. 32 or of Psalm 97 as a whole awaits the Lord's second advent.

We have, after this, words cited from two psalms, Ps. 104: 4 as to the angels, which no Jew would dispute, and indeed such messengers and servants cannot but be angelic, whatever Calvin may argue to the contrary; Ps. 45: 6, 7 as to the Lord Jesus. I have no right to pronounce on the true objects and the true predicates in the Hebrew. But it cannot be doubted that the Epistle to the Hebrews cites from the Sept. as in the Vat., save in the form of the last words; and there the true order admits of no question. So the meaning of the earlier psalm is beyond just controversy. The glorious beings of heaven, its natural denizens, are made to do God's will in providence and to act in wind or flame. But instead of making Christ this or that, He says, Thy throne, O God, is for the age of the age (for ever), and the sceptre of uprightness is sceptre of Thy kingdom.

Here, be it remarked, that it is a question of the time of fulfilment no more than in Deut. 32 (or Psalm 97); for it is very certain that the judicial kingdom described in Psalm 45 is still future, having had no real accomplishment yet. But none the less is the recognition of Messiah's glory most available even now for the object of the Epistle. For God owns the Messiah as no less than Himself — and, if God, it cannot be a mere question of time, whatever of glorious display may yet be in store.

The past too is not forgotten, nor ever can be by God. "Thou didst love righteousness and didst hate lawlessness." Such was Jesus as man here below; for in truth He is both in one person, neither more truly God than man, nor man than God. Compare Phil. 2 "Therefore God, thy God, anointed thee with oil of gladness beyond thy fellows."

How beautiful to see the largeness of grace and truth. After this lofty owning of Messiah as God by God comes the fullest acknowledgment of others. He Himself is no more ashamed to own us His companions or fellows than God is to own Him God. He that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one. Yet He is God no less than the Father, Who will have all men honour the Son even as] Himself. What have infidel dreams of progress to compare with simple and sure Christian truth?

The quotation from Psalm 45 was most distinct and conclusive. No Jew then, if now, could doubt that the psalm refers throughout to the Messiah introducing and maintaining His kingdom on earth in association with the godly Jewish remnant. Christ is seen as King, not Head of the church (though godly Jews are now anointed as His partners, before He appears in His royal glory). But the one object for which it is cited is to prove that *God* recognises the Messiah as *God*. It is not men only nor angels, nor Jews nor Gentiles. It is "God," the divine title, not of special earthly relationship, but of essential nature in contrast with the creature. What an answer to reproach and rejection!

It might be supposed impossible to find any ascription beyond this in honour of Christ; but it is not so: the next witness exceeds. Here is another and higher testimony to the Son from the fourth book of Psalms (Ps. 102: 25-27): "And, thou in the beginning, Lord, didst found the earth, and the heavens are works of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou continuest; and they all shall grow old as a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou roll them up, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail" (verses 10-12).

The "And" simply connects this fresh quotation with the former as said to the Son. But the divine

title differs. It is the name which every Jew owns as incommunicable and supreme. "God" *may* be used subordinately in peculiar circumstances of those who represent His authority as kings or judges. Compare Ex. 21, 22; Psalm 82. But Jehovah, in the LXX., translated "LORD as here used, is never applied otherwise than to God in the highest sense, and this in special or covenant character of relationship with Israel as the Everlasting and Immutable. It is therefore anarthrous.

The force of this application of the closing words in the psalm is immense. It is Jehovah's answer to the prayer of the afflicted, the humbled, cast off, and suffering Messiah, and especially to His petition in verse 24. No language can more thoroughly show Him man when overwhelmed and pouring out complaint before Jehovah, yet the Holy One of God, so born and so sustained under unparalleled temptations in unbroken dependence and obedience. In verses 1-11 Messiah spreads out His distress, His heart smitten like grass, His enemies' reproach, Himself taken up and cast down because of Jehovah's indignation and wrath — certainly not against Him but for Israel's sake — so that His days were as a shadow. Then from verse 12 He contrasts Jehovah's permanence and fidelity to His covenant as the security of Zion, whatever her desolations, even in the set time to have pity on her, with the results sure and blessed, not only for the generation to come, but for the peoples and kingdoms and nations in that day of fearing and serving Jehovah. Lastly, in verses 23, 24, He spreads before Jehovah His own strength weakened and His days shortened, and begs not to be taken away in the midst of them, while owning that Jehovah's years are throughout all generations. Thereon follows the glorious answer to the self-emptied and suffering Son: "Of old didst thou lay the foundation," etc. "They shall be changed, but thou art the same," etc.

It is Jehovah from above who thus answers Jehovah below in the midst of His entire submission to sorrow and humiliation "crucified in weakness." Jehovah will arise and build up Zion; and when He does, He will appear in His glory; but Zion shall not be without her humbled and afflicted Messiah, whatever the weakness He bowed under for the glory of God and the deliverance of His people; for the Son is as truly Jehovah as the Father. "Hear, O Israel, Jehovah thy Elohim is one Jehovah." Such is the meaning of Psalm 102, as interpreted by one no less inspired than he who wrote the Psalm. Without Heb. 1 we might not have found it out; with it we at once see that no other interpretation gives adequate meaning to the Psalm. But what a proof of Christ's supreme deity, and this grounded on His possession of the ineffable Name from Him Who has it confessedly! The divine glory of Christ is the answer to all appearances and every dilemma.

If it be argued that the word "Lord" (κύριε) in the LXX. has no counterpart in the Hebrew, the answer is that the truth meant in no way depends on the insertion of that word, but on the attributes of creative and judicial glory, as well as divine unchangeableness in His changing all creation ascribed to the Messiah by Jehovah. He was man, and crushed to the uttermost, as must be if He made good the errand of grace on which He came — righteously vindicating God in the face of sin and delivering the people on whom lay indignation and wrath; and this He did in suffering weakness, not in power, but He is owned in that suffering as ever the same, the Eternal: not only as having an everlasting kingdom, but as the One who was and who is and who is to come, the Ancient of days albeit Son of man, as John testifies in Rev. 1. We may compare also Dan. 7: 13, 22, where the Son of Man, who came to the Ancient of Days, is Himself also identified with the Ancient of Days. So careful is scripture while exhibiting His manhood to mention His deity.

The contrast of perishable creation with the permanence of Christ (really Jehovah) deserves to be weighed. For the assumed perpetuity of the world is a root principle of infidelity, and never more than in the matter worship of modern philosophers, the revival of ancient heathenism. Scripture, on the contrary, insists on the certainty of a God of judgment, and not less physically than morally. All

depends on His sovereign and holy will. It is not only that science is obliged to confess divine intervention in creating and destroying (I say not annihilating, for this is false) the earth many times and through many periods, ever so long between its original call into being, and its being made the dwelling of man. But since Adam's children lived on it, a judgment both moral and physical has borne witness, however scorned may be willingly ignorant, that God is not indifferent to wickedness breaking through creature bounds; for the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished; as it will surely meet with a more signal doom, being reserved against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. Now all judgment is committed to the Son. He has executed it, as He will execute it.

Nor is it only that these or those subordinate parts of creation shall perish. But as the earth and the heavens were the works of the Son's hands (John 1: 3), so they all shall wax old as a garment. Nor is it from creature's defectibility, but from the Creator's righteous will: "as a mantle shalt Thou roll them up." The unchangeableness of the heavens and of all that is visible or invisible in them is no more true than that of the earth and of all in it that men aver to continue as they were. The astronomers, the geologists, the chemists, the physicists, the physiologists, to speak of no more, are apt to swamp all recognition of the true God in sole occupation with His works, and thus sink into an atheism so much the more guilty, because it is apostasy from the only true Light that revealed Him. Yet not more truly are they to die than they must rise. For the resurrection of Christ gives the pledge of clearance from judgment, yea, of present justification to His own, and of sure judgment to follow for all who despise Him. Christ's resurrection proves the succession of cause and effect to be in fact under God's absolute control — as is true of every real miracle. There will be a grand change to inaugurate Christ's coming; a complete and final one as the result when the kingdom gives place to all things made new for eternity.

This series of quotations closes with words taken from the opening of Psalm ex., which is again Jehovah's utterance to Messiah on His rejection.

"But unto which of the angels hath He said at any time, Sit at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies a footstool of thy feet? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to do service for the sake of those that shall inherit salvation?" (verses 13, 14).

Psalm 110 is the more striking as immediately following the psalm which describes the son of perdition, Messiah's betrayer. Here the rejected of Israel and of man is told to take His seat at God's right hand, a fact alluded to or quoted throughout the N.T. perhaps more than any other O.T. statement, unless it be to His sacrifice or His kingdom. Nor need we wonder at this. Christ's present glory is asserted therein. It gives occasion to the bringing in of "the mystery of Christ." It is the starting-point of the gospel in its heavenly character. It explains the enigma of Christ exalted above, whilst rejected outwardly and having nothing of His rights as Yet here below. It equally falls in with the mystery of Israel's eclipse while unbelieving, and with Satan's claim as the god of this age.

No angel was ever invited as He is to sit on that throne. Indeed, though the saints are to sit with Christ on His throne in the age of His display, no angel will ever be. Angels were made to serve, not to reign; they never did, nor will. Dominion was given to Adam, the type of Him that was to come. God ever had the Kingdom in view from the foundation of the world. Of this kingdom Christ is the destined King. But as He will have in His grace the changed saints to reign with Him, so also He will have saints unchanged set on His right hand and despisers on His left, when He sits on His throne of glory and judges all the nations according to their treatment of His messengers (His brethren) to be sent forth just before He appears again.

Never will the church sit where Christ sits now, nor any member of it, even apostle or prophet. It is

peculiar to God Who calls Christ there: because Christ is also God and Jehovah (as we have seen no less than He who sent Him), Christ sits there. During the Apocalyptic period judgments from God fall successively and with increasing intensity on guilty man, especially in Christendom; and at length, when His enemies are set a footstool, Christ personally appears to tread them down. Then when in association with His ancient people, Jehovah sends the rod of His strength out of Zion, and Christ rules in the midst of His foes. But such no longer are the Jews, who once constrained the Gentiles to crucify Him; they offer themselves willingly in the day of His power. He will have then the dew of His youth, the generation to come. "Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children." Men corrupt themselves more and more, whatever they vaunt of progress. Nevertheless under Christ there will surely be the best wine for the earth kept till then. And then will the blessedness be shown of Jehovah's oath about the great Melchizedek; for though Christ is so now as to order, only then will it be exercised. He will bring out the bread and the wine for the victors in all their meaning, blessing man on the part of God most high, and blessing God on man's part. For indeed will it be the good age, and every one and thing in its due place, which He only can accomplish. No doubt that day will open with wrath, as we know it will close with judgment when time melts into eternity.

But then again the aim of the Spirit is not to open out the coming glory for the earth, but to demonstrate the singular dignity proper to Christ at God's right hand in contrast with angels who at best are all ministering spirits sent forth on service for those that are to inherit salvation. Higher than this they never rise. Christ might and did become David's Son; but He was also David's Lord, as our Lord Himself put the case to the Jews, and unanswerably, because their lips were held fast in unbelief. But faith here answers at once. He was God equally with the Father. Where else then should He sit but at God's right hand? Surely none the less because man or Israel would have none of Him. The first of Israel's royal line, the father (after a long succession then to come) of Him whose is that kingdom everlasting, though yet awaiting it, owns his Son by the strangest reversal of nature as his Lord: a thing unaccountable, unless He were God, the Root as well as Offspring of David. The holy angels are sustained of the Lord. It is ours to know salvation, whether as now seen complete in Christ (as in Eph. 2, etc.) or as completed in us at His coming and therefore future (as here and elsewhere).

Hebrews 2

From the foregoing cluster of O.T. quotations this conclusion is drawn:-

"Therefore we ought to pay the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply [or, ever] we should slip away.* For if the word spoken through angels proved stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation? The which having begun to be spoken through the Lord was confirmed unto us by those that heard, God also bearing witness with [them] both with signs and wonders, and varied powers, and distributions of [the] Holy Spirit according to his own will" (verses 1-4).

The danger set before these Hebrews is of the gravest. They had known the Jews' religion originally. They had now professed to believe the gospel. Woe to such, above all men, if they slipped away from Christ; for the truth of God and the blessing of man centre only in Him. Christianity and Judaism are as different as heaven from earth; but as the heavenly things are not yet displayed, all enjoyment of them must be by faith of God's revelation, crowned by the standing facts that Christ is come, has accomplished redemption as far as remission of our sins is concerned, and so glorified God in it, that He has now glorified the Son of man in Himself, the Holy Spirit being already given the believer as unction, seal, and earnest. If the believer look away from Christ, he is like his forefathers in

the desert without the living God and nothing but the barren sand. Now a Jew naturally expected a bright path of honour and prosperity on earth. The cross stumbled him when Messiah came. "We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever; and how sayest thou, that the Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this, the Son of man?" (John 12: 34) If they got occupied with trial and disappointment, not only did murmuring set in but faith was imperilled. And if self-judgment did not work restoration of communion, what could the end be but total drifting away? Where could this end? How could it be otherwise?

* The real force of the verb is intransitive, not transitive as in the A.V. Prov. 3: 21 (LXX.) means, "Do not slip away," not "Let them not pass from thee." Though the context modifies that rendering a little, the usage is uniform. Wiclif seems nearest ("fleten meie"), Tyndale and Cranmer "peryshe," Geneva the worst of all. The margin is far from satisfactory.

God had spoken fully and finally in a Son, the Heir as Creator too of the universe, to whom even the preparatory testimonies of His word bore witness as His Son, God, and Jehovah; whose position after He made purification of sins was unique in heavenly glory, the object of angelic homage according to God's will and word. The greater His grace and glory, the more solemn the responsibility to heed the testimony. For this only it is as yet: the time is not yet arrived, nor can it be under the gospel, for His power to compel absolute submission, as it will do by-and-by (Phil. 2: 10, 11). It is the day for obedience of faith. But the word was nigh them in their mouth and in their heart, the things read as well as heard. To grow light, cool, or listless exposed them to the danger of slipping away, not for the truth only but themselves also. God would not be mocked in His Son and in His grace. To have once owned His glory binds the soul ever to heed His word and person.

Here again angels are introduced as the occasion for a stronger call. "For if the word spoken by angels was made stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglected so great salvation?" (vers. 2, 3).

The Jews were not mistaken in boasting of the singular honour God had put on the law, introduced as it was by angelic ministration. The N.T. is as clear in this attestation as the O.T. Nor were they wrong in maintaining the inviolability of the law in itself. How could its authority waver, if it be as it is, God's law? It is not only in great things, but in small as man would think and say, that we see God vindicating it. Every transgression and every refusal to hear received righteous requital. Other ways of God came in no doubt, whereby mercy could rejoice against judgment; but unsparing judgment of evil was the principle proclaimed and enforced throughout. It was a ministry of death and condemnation.

Incomparably more serious is it to despise grace brought in by the Head of all glory. No notion more contrary to truth than that grace makes light of evil — that the gospel is a sort of mitigated or attenuated law. It was when man, and man under law, was proved wholly bad and irreparably ruined, that God sent His Son and laid on Him the entire burden. Salvation is the fruit for him that believes. There is and can be for sinners no other way. It is entirely Christ's work, exclusively His suffering. His blood cleanses from every sin — if not from all, from none. Such is the grace of God that has appeared in Christ, and especially in His death. But man is the enemy of God through listening to an older and mightier rebel than himself; and grace is far more alien and offensive to man than law. In the law his conscience can but bow to righteousness, even though thinking himself righteous; for he knows and approves what is right, while he follows what is wrong. Grace is beyond all his thoughts, all his feelings, all his hopes, because it is divine love in God rising above all His hatred of evil, which He lays on the only sacrifice capable of bearing it before Himself and taking it away righteously.

This the gospel proclaims, not promises only but preaches, because the Saviour has come and

finished the work given Him to do on behalf of sinners to God's glory. And hence the supreme danger of neglecting so great salvation. For its immensity is proportionate to His dignity who came to save sinners, and to the unparalleled work in suffering at God's hand for all our sins what they deserved. His divine person gave Him competency to endure as well as infinite efficacy for His work. He became indeed man to suffer for man; but He never ceased to be God, even when for sin forsaken by God.

Such is the doctrine here and uniformly in scripture where it is treated. It is a salvation on which the Holy Spirit never wearies of expatiating. And how gracious of God toward those who have His word and yet are in danger of neglecting "so great salvation"! not only neglecting to receive it but negligent of it when professed. This snare of a religious people like Israel is just the danger of Christendom now yet more.

It will be observed that "we" is emphatic in the first part of verse 3, and that the writer includes himself too in its occurrence before the close. This is one of the stock arguments against Paul's authorship of the Epistle. But it appears to be quite superficial from an oversight of its character. For, supposing Paul to be the writer, his merging himself with the Hebrews he was addressing outside his special apostolic province is precisely in keeping with the task in hand. To make this inconsistent with Gal. 1: 12 seems petty indeed; for the latter is distinctively personal, and Heb. 2: 3, 4 has evidently a studious generality. He is setting forth the claim of that word which began to be spoken by the Lord Himself in contrast with the law of old, august as its introduction may have been, which he would have been the last to deny. But the Lord was here in the midst of the Jews to bring us not the law that kills the guilty, but His own great salvation for the lost. The first person does not at all mean that *he* had heard it, but that when it thus began to be spoken it was confirmed "unto us" by those that heard. Indeed he distinguishes himself rather from those ear-witnesses, without at all branching off to his own peculiar and long subsequent privilege outside Damascus. But he does identify himself with those whom the Lord addressed at the beginning without in the least implying that he had himself heard Him. Was he not a Hebrew of the Hebrews? To cite Eph. 3: 2, 3 is therefore wholly beside the mark. Both are true, and manifestly so.

The great aim of all indeed is to put forward the Lord as the Apostle no less than High Priest of the Christian profession, as He is styled in Heb. 3: 1. This accordingly leaves out not only himself born out of due time but the twelve as apostles. In presence of Him they are only "those that heard." The Lord began the word of this salvation; they heard and confirmed it to the people responsible to receive the

Christ of God; and God also bore witness with them in a way beyond all example. The object in view excluded all mention of the extraordinary Gentile apostleship, to say nothing of the grace in Paul that sought to meet the Jews as God did, that He might disarm them of their prejudices, and give all glory to the word from His Son.

Nor can any description be conceived more exact and guarded than the language here used, while at the same time intended to impress the believing Jews with the superiority of the gospel to the law. "The which [salvation] having begun to be spoken through the Lord was confirmed unto us by those that heard, God also bearing witness with [them], both by signs and wonders and varied powers and distributions of [the] Holy Spirit according to his own will" (verses 3, 4).

Salvation took only a beginning of publication in the days of His flesh. For the work of atonement was not yet touched, as it was and could only be accomplished by His death at the close. Yet salvation assuredly began to be spoken of, when the Lord entered on His public ministry. Of this Luke 4: 16 *et seqq.* is the beautiful witness, founded on His reading Isa. 61: 1, 2, on the sabbath in the synagogue of Nazareth, and stopping with the acceptable year of Jehovah. The day of vengeance, surely to come in

its season, was not to be till He comes again. It is salvation now. "Today hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears." Earlier still Simeon saw in the Babe the salvation of God. Now a further step was taken: the Lord had begun to speak of it. For indeed the Spirit of Jehovah was upon Him, and He was anointed to preach good tidings to the poor. Jehovah had sent Him to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering sight to the blind, to set at liberty those that were bruised, in short to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. And so to weary, heavy-laden souls He gave rest in His grace from first to last, as the cross itself testifies to the utmost.

Certainly when in due season Christ died for the ungodly, when He rose with "peace be unto you," and again "Peace" in sending by them, that salvation was confirmed by those that heard. Nor did God fail to bear His joint testimony, if those sent out were weak indeed. The Spirit given was of power and of love and of a sound mind. And His operations were such as to arrest the most careless and even hardened, while they did not, as they could not, fail to awaken unbelievers however prejudiced. Such was the effect of the Pentecostal signs and wonders and manifold powers and distributions of the Holy Spirit according to His own will. The tongues of scattered man's speech were spoken in a moment, as the Lord had promised (Mark 16), not only a "wonder" but a "sign" to Jews gathered to the feast from all nations, as the "varied powers" were displayed in healing the sick, casting out demons, and the like. "Distributions of the Holy Spirit" find their explanation in such a scripture as 1 Cor. 12. They all were forms of divine attestation that accompanied or rather followed the great salvation confirmed by those that preached it.

The glory of Christ has, however, another side. He is Son of God before the worlds, Son of God incarnate, Son of God risen from the dead. He is God; He is Jehovah. His position suits and attests His divine dignity. But He is Son of man also; and the moral glory of His humiliation is answered by His conferred glory, as the Epistle proceeds to develop, but with marked reference to the present exaltation of our Lord since the cross on high, and not to the millennial day, though this is assured for the earth by-and-by.

"For not to angels did he subject the habitable [earth] to come whereof we speak, but one somewhere testified, saying, What is man that thou rememberest him? Or son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than angels; with glory and honour thou crownedst him [and didst set him over the works of thy hands*]: thou didst put all things in subjection beneath his feet. For in that he subjected them all to him, he left nothing unsubjected to him. But now we see not yet them all in subjection to him. But we see him that hath been made a little lower than angels, Jesus, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, that by God's grace he should taste of death for every thine," (verses 5-9).

* B, etc., omit this clause, for which A D P. etc. vouch.

Here the angels are not only surpassed beyond comparison, but have no place whatever. It is a question of subjection and of rule; but this is not for angels. They serve; they never reign. Man is called to rule, to have dominion. God was looking on to His Son, the Son of man. For Him the habitable earth is destined. God has not made it in vain. He knew from the first that the first man would fail. His counsels ever centre in Christ. But He must reign alone, if this were all; for all sinned and do come short of the glory of God. Yet rest for man with God in glory was ever His design. This could only be by death, the death of the Lord Jesus. His death is therefore the sole possible meeting-point, the solution of all hardest enigmas, the conciliation of perfect love with inflexible righteousness, of grace to the sinner with the untarnished glory of God, of man's weakness and of Satan's power, of judgment borne and of peace made, of the Highest taking the lowest place in obedience that He might receive the

highest on a ground on which He could have the vilest now sanctified with Him, the sharers of His joy through redemption. Such the counsels, such the ways, of God in Christ.

It will be observed that man, the Son of man, comes into the greatest and most fitting prominence. It was only the name of shame and sin, if He to whom it specially belongs were not Son of God as no one else is, as divine. But this held fast, what can be sweeter to man if he believes God? For its true force and ways we have His word, the only sure standard. Now it is never applied to Him vaguely. It is His title when He is the consciously, evidently, rejected Messiah.

In the N.T. it first occurs in Matt. 8: 20. So He speaks of Himself to a scribe that proposed to follow Him "whithersoever thou goest." This might be all well for a Jew subject to the Messiah, the King, the fountain of dignity and reward. But the Lord even then realises His position. "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the sky nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." He had come to His own things, but His own people received Him not. This was about to be fully and awfully demonstrated; but He knew it then, and speaks as already outcast and having nothing. The death of the cross would be ere long the undeniable and absolute proof; but He realises it and expresses it, not only by the title but by what accompanies it, if any were ignorant of its import. Again, "the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins," and proves it by enabling the paralytic at a word to arise, take up his bed, and walk (Matt. 9). He will have come before His envoys shall have gone through the cities of Israel (Matt. 10) — a mission to be resumed before that day. At the later stage of Matt. 11: 19 the transition is plain; as in the solemn charge of Matt. 12: 32, 40, preparatory to His bringing out the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens, the earth and earthly people were morally judged and found good for nothing. It was now a question of "the Sower," of a new system which He was to begin, though Satan again would ruin it as far as public result on earth appeared, yet would He secure the good and judge the evil.

Still more emphatic is the testimony of Matt. 16, where the utter unbelief of the Jews forms the background, in contrast with which shines the faith of the chief spokesman of the twelve, who receives a new name from the Lord, and learns that, on the rock of the Father's revelation of the Son, the Son of the living God, Christ was to build His church. It was then He charged His disciples to tell no one that He was "the Christ," *not* Jesus (which is absurd and not authentic, the addition of copyists ignorant of the truth). From that time forth He began to show them that He must suffer many things and be killed and raised again: His manifest chance to the full meaning of Son of man, as is pointed out expressly in Mark 8: 29-31: Luke 9: 20-22. The Gospel of John in his personal way sets out the same truth of transition for the Lord in John 12, where, after being presented as the Christ as is written in Zech. 9: 9, in the face of the Pharisees more hostile when He raised Lazarus from the grave as the quickening Son of God, His word to Andrew and Philip speaking for the Greeks is, "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say to you, Except a corn of Wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (verses 23, 24). All judgment is committed to the Son of man, Who must be honoured thus by those who, not believing in Him as Son of God, despised Him as man: He will judge all such (John 5). So He appears to the Jew coming in the clouds of heaven (Matt. 24); so He deals with the Gentiles in that day (Matt. 25).

Nor is it otherwise in the O.T. It is the same Spirit, as the truth is one. For it will be observed that, as Psalm 2 is a weighty testimony to His Sonship as incarnate in Heb. 1, Psalm 8 is the no less appropriate citation here in Heb. 2. Nor is this casual, but the kernel that they respectively bear. The first Psalm speaks according to the Jewish covenant and contrasts the righteous with the ungodly, as the judgment will manifest. Psalm 2 introduces the Christ, Jehovah's King on Zion. Such is the decree. For He is Son, begotten in time, as we are told here for His kingdom, before time and all things (being their

Creator) as we are told elsewhere. When He asks, He will receive not Judea merely but the nations for His inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. But this is characterised by judgment executed publicly, in His breaking them with a rod of iron, and dashing them to pieces like a potter's vessel. Clearly this is postponed by His rejection on the part of the unbelieving Jews and lawless Gentiles; and when it is fulfilled, the church will be with Him and share His rule in a glorified state, as is explicitly declared in Rev. 2; 26, 27. Now this further stage of His rejection and its blessed consequence in a higher elevation and larger sphere, not as the Messiah only but as the humbled and glorified Son of man, is precisely the truth taught in Psalm 8 as we are instructed in our Epistle.

Thus the prefatory Psalms 1 and 2 give us the righteous man and the Messiah according to Jehovah's purpose, spite of opposing kings and peoples; the Psalms that follow, Ps. 3 - 7, point out how His Spirit works in the circumstances and sorrows of the righteous while He does not reign; and Psalm 8 closes this series by Christ as the humbled Son of man set over all things. Though the habitable earth be not yet subjected to Him, as our scripture tells us, yet when we look at Him crowned with glory and honour on high, we behold by faith even now the divine glory set in Him above the heavens, the pledge that His name will soon be acknowledged excellent in all the earth, as it really is. Without Christ man is indeed feeble and fallen. Angels excel in might; and we naturally look up to the heavens, the moon, and the stars, though but the work of Jehovah's fingers and His ordinances. But look at man in Christ! His shame and suffering on the cross are the ground of the highest glory even God could confer on the Man that went down below all, now exalted above all far beyond the oath to David or the promise to Abram. It is the glorious *dénouement* of His abasement for the ' suffering of death, as it is here explained, and that God's grace might have its fullest exercise. His present place is in heaven, in no way the subjection of the habitable earth which is "to come," as the scripture itself says; still less is His seat on the Father's throne the assumption of His own throne. It is God straightway glorifying in Himself the Son of man Who glorified Him as to sin in death. For the rest we await, as He does, the times and seasons the Father has set within His own authority. He is Himself, and as man, in the highest; and we seeing it by faith bear witness to Him, to His sufferings and the glories that should follow. His immeasurable superiority to angels as man is not to be doubted, though the time is not yet for seeing all things subjected to Him. From 1 Cor. 15 we learn that it awaits the resurrection at His coming. So absolute and universal is the supremacy over the universe He had created as God, that it seems good to the Holy Spirit in the Epistle to the Corinthians to except Him who subjected all to Christ; as here it is affirmed that He left nothing that is not put under Him.

How blessed and precise the appended words, "that He by God's grace should taste death for every thing!" This last rather than "man" appears best to suit the bearing of the context. It is the sphere not merely as a universe but including "every thing" brought under the reconciling power of His death. The following verse brings in persons, and different language is used.

What gives peculiar force to "the habitable earth * to come" is the undeniable fact that the main object of the Epistle is to develop and maintain the present glory of Christ as He sits, on the accomplishment of redemption, at the right hand of God on High From first to last this is obvious and all-important. The Jewish Christian, disposed to abide in or glide away into earthly hopes with the Messiah or His throne for their centre, needed to be continually recalled to his actual relationship with Christ in heaven. At the same time there is no lack of testimony throughout, to the rest of God that remaineth for His people (Heb. 4), to the age to come, of which the powers vouchsafed in apostolic era were a sample and pledge (Heb. 6), to the new covenant to be made with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah (Heb. 8), of which we have now only the principle, not the letter but spiritually, in the blood shed which is its basis, to the appearing of Christ a second time (Heb. 9), to the day

approaching (Heb. 10), to the blessing concerning the things to come when the promise shall be received in fact instead of in faith (Heb. 11), to the full and ordered scene of glory in heaven and earth (Heb. 12), when the Lord shakes not earth only but also heaven, and to the city actually come and continuing (Heb. 13).

* That ἡ οἰκουμένη means "the habitable earth," or the world, whether as it is or as it will be in the age to come, and neither heaven nor eternity, nor a gospel or church state, will be plain from an examination of its occurrences: Matt. 24: 14; Luke 2: 1, Luke 4: 5, Luke 21: 26; Acts 11: 28, Acts 17: 6, 31, Acts 19: 27, Acts 24: 5; Rom. 10: 18; Heb. 1: 6, Heb. 2: 5; Rev. 3: 10, Rev. 12: 9, Rev. 16: 14.

Here we have the most distinct evidence that, whatever may be the displayed glory of the heavens in that day (and no one intelligent in Eph. 1, Col. 1, and other scriptures, would enfeeble but insist on it for Christ and the risen saints), yet it is an irreparable blank to leave out of that day's blessedness "the habitable earth." Abundant strains of the prophets anticipate it with assurance, joy, and praise, as the Law had of old, and the Psalms afterwards. Nor does the fullest light of the N.T. omit the earth in the proclamation of the coming kingdom, though the opening of heaven as the characteristic faith and hope made the *higher naturally* predominant. If the Lord taught His disciples to pray that the Father's kingdom should come, He did not fail to add as the next petition, "Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth." The revelation of new things does not blot out the old; as indeed Christ will be the centre and head of both in that day to the glory of God the Father. So is His outpouring in John 17. He asks what assuredly will be fully answered in connection with His giving to the saints the glory which the Father gave Him (not, of course, what was personally intrinsic and eternal), "that they may be one, even as we [are] one; I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected into one; that the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and lovedst them even as Thou lovedst Me." In the day of glory it will be a question of "knowing," not as now an appeal to "faith" (cf. verses 20, 21). But there is undeniably "the world" to *know* when they see those truly divine counsels of grace fulfilled in the manifested glory of Christ and His own. There are earthly things no less than heavenly in the kingdom (John 3), which is as different from the present time of the gospel as from the still more remote eternity with its conditions of total and fixed change.

And how suitable is it that "the habitable earth" where the Lord was born, where He laboured, suffered, and died on the cross, should be subjected to His government, and behold His glory, and experience more blessedness under His sceptre than it groaned in misery and corruption under rebellious man misled by a mightier rebel than himself! It is His due, not only as Creator of it all but as Redeemer. There He was put to shame, there He will triumph. There man and Satan brought in death and the curse; there God and His Son will fill the earth with peace and glory. How sad the blank if this were not to be!

In vain do ancients and moderns err from the word and pervert this scripture to the state of the church under the gospel. On the face of it "to come" distinguishes the world into which God brought in the Firstborn (Heb. 1: 6). Such is its state in the future; as no mystification or argument can make it legitimately mean a heavenly and spiritual system. Such as our condition of gospel and church privilege. Nor is there any difficulty in the clause that follows, "whereof we speak." For the matter treated of is the future subjection of this habitable world to the Second man, and not to angels. Undoubtedly it is not the eternal state when He shall deliver up the kingdom to Him Who is God and Father. It is His reign till He has put all His enemies under His feet, death last of all. It is not the time when He ministers as the High Priest in heaven for those who on earth suffer and need His succour and sympathy. It is not the gospel state, but the millennial kingdom which intervenes between the gospel as now and the eternity which closes all. It is the world or habitable earth under the manifested power and

kingdom of the Lord Jesus, the rejected Messiah but Son of man exalted to reign over all peoples, nations, and languages.

Certainly the death of Christ is not here associated with God's law. What possible boon was law for the guilty? For such it can bring no blessing nor pardon, but a curse, and this righteously. Compare with Deut. 27; Rom. 4: 15; 1 Cor. 15: 56; Gal. 3: 10; 1 Tim. 1: 9. But here it is grace, God's grace; and by it Christ tasted death for everyone, if it be not rather "everything." Compare the verses before. What more, what so, expressive of outspreading mercy, with glorious consequences to the universe, from His personal glory who thus deigned to die by God's grace! God could not but have worthy purposes of goodness to accomplish rising over sin and ruin by such a death. Where sin carried the first man and his race, the Second man went by God's grace. By it He tasted death; but it was for everything.

"For it became Him for whom [are] all things, and by whom [are] all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the leader of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both the sanctifier and the sanctified [are] all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name to my brethren — in [the] midst of [the] assembly will I sing thy praise. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold, I and the children which God gave me. Since then the children have a common share of blood and flesh,* He also Himself in like manner took part in the same, that through death he might annul him that hath the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver all those that by fear of death were through the whole of their life subject to bondage" (verses 10-15).

* The great weight of the best MSS. supports the less usual order (A B C D E M P, some cursives, and many ancient versions and fathers). The same order occurs in Eph. 6: 12, and even in Polyaen. Strag. iii. 11.

The grand truth first before us, and justly, is that it became God — Him for whom and by whom is the universe — in bringing (not everybody but) "many sons" unto glory, to make the Leader of their salvation perfect through sufferings. Where sin is, in God's righteous government there must follow suffering. Undoubtedly in Christ was no sin, not only no sin done but none in Himself. But He became the responsible Man to retrieve God's honour, outraged everywhere by the creature above and below. Satan and his angels had left their first estate. Man was disobedient. All was ruin. The Son of man goes down in obedience and bears all the consequences, glorifying God infinitely even as to sin, and on the road endures sufferings in every shape and decree as none else could, according to His moral perfection and personal glory, till all was exhausted in the cross, so that it was for God's righteousness to exalt Him as now in glory. Thus was His course finished, that He in glory might bring "many sons" to glory; but the path lay through sufferings. Thus was He perfected: not that He was not ever the perfect One, but that so only could it be if God were to be vindicated and Himself the Leader of salvation for the many sons to share that heavenly glory. The work is done which gives Him a title to "everything" by redemption, as He had also the rights of Creator. He died, having made peace by the blood of His cross to reconcile all things. whether the things on the earth or the things in the heavens. But He responded entirely to the gracious purpose of God which would also have "many sons" reconciled to share the glory with Him, and therefore He accepted all the sufferings which were the necessary condition. Judgment must have closed the door irrevocably on all men as on all angels that sinned. Where would grace then have been? The sufferings of Christ made it righteous to have many sons in the same glory as Himself, not derogating from God's glory but enhancing it and giving it a new, larger, and higher form than ever. Where would judgment, have been otherwise? What did the "sons" deserve?

"For both he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one." No thought can be more

opposed to the truth than confounding this blessed association of the saints and incarnation, so as to bring in all mankind. Beyond controversy without incarnation it could not be; but their association is founded on His death and displayed in His resurrection. Incarnation means not Christ's union with all the race, nor yet the union of the saints with Him, but (what was essential to redemption as the basis for this union) Deity united with humanity in the Word become flesh. Sinful man could not be sanctified otherwise. Incarnation was now the state of His person: henceforth God and man indissolubly joined, in order to His suffering for sins once, as He did atoningly on the tree; but it is as risen and glorified that He is said to be "made perfect," and to have become the author of everlasting salvation to all those that obey Him (Heb. 5: 9).

Christ is thus effectually separating us to God. He is the Sanctifier; and both He and the sanctified are all of one. The Epistle does not rise to the unity of which we learn in Eph. and Col., or even in 1 Cor. He and they are not here said to be one, but "of one." There is efficacious and blessed association, yet the unity of the body of Christ is not the truth which is here opened, but rather heavenly calling, as we read in Heb. 3: 1. Nothing can be conceived more unwise, irreverent, and childish than therefore to slight its aim. No Epistle is more adapted than this to the Hebrews to exalt the Lord or to draw out the renewed affections of the saints. So far from being Jewish, it is the final word to deliver the too slow disciples from earthly thoughts and fleshly hopes and worldly religion to Christ in heaven.

But it is false that He and mankind are "all of one"; only He and the sanctified are.* And sanctification is not union but separation to God. Therefore is it that in John 17 our Lord speaks of Himself, not as sanctifying others, but as sanctifying Himself. This He did not at all in the moral sense (for He was ever the Holy One of God, and even demons confessed Him so), but as setting Himself apart in heaven the model as the glorified Man to form and fashion us now by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; and this expressly in absolute separation from the world of which we are not, as He is not nor was. There was grace toward the race in all perfection. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. But the world proved itself irreconcilable, though there He was rising above human sin, selfishness, and misery, "not reckoning their trespasses to them." But they despised the reconciliation and rejected Himself. In His rejection on the cross God made Him sin — laid on Him atoningly its awful consequences — that the believer might become God's righteousness in Him. Thus both the Sanctifier and the sanctified are all of one. They are one set as set apart to God.

* It may be well to observe how that οἱ ἁγιαζόμενοι here does not mean the process going on, although the phrase in itself is quite capable of such a force. The present in Greek, as in other tongues also, can express character apart from time, as every scholar knows and every person of intelligence must own on reflection. This is rendered certain of "the sanctified" here by comparing Heb. 10: 10, 14, which could not be said at the same time if sanctification were here viewed as only in progress. In other words, if we were only being sanctified, we could not also be said, as we are, to have been now sanctified (ἡγιασμένοι) as a distinct and enduring fact, and further that He has perfected without a break (τετελείωκεν εἰς τὸ διηκεῖς) τοὺς ἁγιομένους. It is not true, as Dean Alford said, that the perfect expresses God's purpose respecting these objects. It is on the contrary present standing, the actual result of a past action.

This truth, so often gainsaid by some and undermined by others, is set forth by apt quotations from the O.T. introduced by the words, "for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." As God was not ashamed to be called the God of the fathers, so Christ is not ashamed (I say not to be called Brother but) to call us, the children, brethren. It is His relationship which He nowhere extends to man as he is, nor even to His own disciples though born of God, till He rose from the dead. Before then the utmost He uttered was altogether vague: "Behold, my mother and my brethren. For whosoever shall do

the will of my Father that is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother." As risen, He sends the new message, "But go unto my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God," followed the same day at evening by His characteristic act of inbreathing and saying, Receive the Holy Spirit. Henceforth they had life in resurrection power, life abundantly as indeed He had promised.

But Psalm 22: 22 intimates more. The time was not yet come for Messiah's praise of God in "the great congregation" (verse 25) of Judah and Ephraim in their twelve-tribed fulness (Acts 26), when all the ends of the earth also shall remember and turn to Jehovah, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Him. Verse 22 is pointedly different, and applied now by the Spirit that inspired the Epistle to the Hebrews. Indeed the truth of it was made good that evening when Jesus came (though the doors were shut for fear of the Jews), and stood in the midst of the assembled disciples, and said, "Peace be unto you," showing them withal His hands and His side, the marks of that death in which He was made a sacrifice for sin. The Psalm impresses on the scene, not the mission of peace as in the gospel, but the united praise of the assembly which Jesus Himself leads as "in the midst." And how deep and high and truly of divine savour is that praise which Jesus hymns! How unbelieving to doubt that, as He is in the midst where two or three are gathered to His name, we may count on His leadership of praise! May we be not faithless but believing!

Is this to lower the Lord? It ought to strengthen us in the grace that is in Him, drawing out the proof how truly the Sanctifier and the sanctified are all of one. Hear further, "And again, I will put my trust in Him; and again Behold, I and the children which God gave me." The first of these truths occurs repeatedly in the O.T., but it would seem that it is cited with a suitable modification from the same prophecy which furnishes the second, Isa. 8: 14, 18. The original passage is full of interest, and affords a strikingly pertinent application to the Christian Hebrews. For the Son of David had been just before predicted as to be born of the virgin, yet called Immanuel (Isa. 7), and owned (Isa. 8) as a child born to the Jews, yet Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, unquestionably the Messiah. Before the day when He increases the nation and breaks the rod of the oppressor, He shall be for a sanctuary, but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many shall stumble thereon and fall and be broken and be snared and be taken. Still more remarkable language follows. "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. And I will wait for Jehovah that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him. Behold, I and the children whom Jehovah hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from Jehovah of hosts who dwelleth in Mount Zion."

This has been accomplished to the letter. The day is at hand for the display of His power and glory in the deliverance of Israel. Meanwhile it is only a remnant of them that is in relationship with Him; and they are more than ever favoured spiritually. The testimony is bound up, the law or teaching sealed, among His disciples to whom He is a sanctuary, while His face is hid from the house of Jacob generally. So that He and the children given Him of Jehovah, the Sanctifier and the sanctified, are for signs and for wonders while He is a rock of offence to both houses of Israel. It is just the place of Him who became man to trust in Jehovah, and of those given Him by Jehovah from the Jews (as in principle true of all Christians) meanwhile. He was as truly man as Jehovah; and we who are given Him reap the blessing of both facts united in His person. The dependent man was the Lord God of Israel, the sanctuary of the remnant when the nation stumbled at the Stumbling-stone.

Here is the deduction. "Since then the children have a common share (κεκοινώνηκεν) of blood and flesh, he also himself in like manner took part in the same, that through death he might annul him that hath the power of death, that is, the devil, and might deliver all those that by fear of death were through

the whole of their life subject to bondage" (verses 14, 15). The Son of God became man, as the children were men, in order to meet Satan in his last stronghold of death, and thus by dying exhaust his power for those who being under law were harassed all their life long by fear in their conscience. It is plain that the enemy is here in view, as God was in verse 10, and as the sufferings of Christ vindicated God's holy nature and character, leaving His love free to act in saving us and bringing us to glory, so did His death break Satan's power to nought and deliver from fear the troubled saints, henceforth in peace, for He was raised for their justification. Satan is no longer to the believer the King of terrors. Christ has disarmed the enemy by submitting to death, and his power is gone for ever for His own. His resurrection proved the seal of death broken for us, as for us He died; and our resurrection will be the demonstration of its truth, not to us that believe who have in ourselves the witness of His grace and glory, but to all who disbelieve, rejecting Christ and the gospel.

"Since then the children have a common share of blood and flesh, he also himself in like manner took part in the same, that through death he might annul him that hath the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver those that by fear of death were through the whole of their life subject to bondage" (verses 14, 15).

Here we have indeed the Incarnation set out more definitely than anywhere else in this Epistle or perhaps in any other. Here then those who base their theology on that immense and to us most affecting truth, considering Who He was that was thus made flesh, should compare their deductions with the revealed mind of God. The Holy Spirit brings before us its true objects and design. Far be it from the heart to seek to limit its scope. Let other scriptures be taken into account, and no ray of heavenly light from any be shut out. Only let it be the divine truth, and not human speculation; for no one fully knows (ἐπιγινώσκει) the Son but the Father. Be it ours therefore to hear, and to adore.

Clearly then "the children" are in immediate view, and not a vague and vain thought of all mankind. As they had blood and flesh as their common portion, He also in like manner took part in the same. Blessed a proof as it may be that God's good pleasure is not in angels, however near Him and in themselves glorious, but in men, weak though they are, yea, worthless and wretched through sin, His eye is on them for good, His heart toward them in mercy, and so much the more because misled and oppressed by a powerful and relentless foe. But it is no ineffectual testimony that we hear. Jesus had come in grace, or, as we are told elsewhere, "anointed of God with the Holy Ghost and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him." But man would none of Him, however welcome at first; least of all His own people. Jew and Gentile conspired to reject Him even to the death of the cross. In that death God broke the power of the devil, wrought deliverance for His own, and laid an atoning and eternal basis, not only to meet but through faith to save the foulest sinners on earth. Nothing but the death of Christ could bring to nought him that had the power of death; nothing else deliver all those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Incarnation is a blessed truth, but it is only the means to the end here specified — and where misused as it often is, it clouds and shuts out that death which defeats the enemy and delivers the captives, as being the true ground of God's righteousness, because there only was sin judged definitely and in grace toward the guilty. Infidelity denies God and His Christ altogether: His deity and His incarnation are to it nothing, as God is in none of its thoughts. But with fallen Christendom the controversy habitually is, whether deliverance turns on a living Christ on earth? or on a dead and risen Christ exalted to heaven? Tradition and humanitarianism affirm the former. Scripture alone asserts the truth, because it alone, while declaring incarnation fully, leaves room for the vindication of God and the annulling of Satan, the judgment of sin and the deliverance of the believer, as well as the glorifying

of Christ.

The same death of Christ lays doubtless a ground for all men, as we see in Rom. 3 and elsewhere. In virtue of the blood on the mercy-seat God's righteousness is "unto all," and "upon all that believe." Here it is the last only. It is "the children" who are in question, whom Christ is not ashamed to call "brethren." The world at large does not therefore come into this account. We must be subject to the word of God, and receive truth as God reveals it: else we fall into confusion.

Now we come to those in whom the Saviour is directly and blessedly interested. Here again is nothing vague, but all is made carefully precise.

"For doubtless not of angels doth he lay hold,* but of Abraham's seed he layeth hold. Whence it behoved him in all things. to be made like to his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high-priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to help those that are tempted" (verses 16-18).

* Wiclif, following the Latin, says simply "He took "; Tyndale, better still, "He taketh on Him," though wrongly giving "in no place": so Cranmer. The Geneva V. gave the past tense and "in no sort" wrongly. The A.V., though right as to "verily," went farther astray by inserting "the nature of."

The rendering of verse 16 is faultily given in many versions, in none perhaps worse than our own A.V. The sense is totally changed, and a preterite form assigned to the verb, instead of the present tense, the natural consequence of such a change of sense. "He took not on Him *the nature of* angels, but He took," etc. This, it is evident, ἐπιλαμβάνεται cannot bear. It is expressly a present. Again the word means to lay hold of, especially when with a genitive as here in the middle voice. Such is its force, even when uncompounded; and the preposition defines or emphasises. Never does it mean to take a nature, though the A.V. seems to have been led into this, partly by Beza,* chiefly by certain Greek commentators,† for whose mistake no excuse can be made. They were occupied with controversies which misled them to catch at straws. The incarnation was the chief one in this case. But this had been fully treated and just closed. The Holy Spirit here goes on to Christ's making a special object, not of angels but of Abraham's seed, which of itself ought to have guarded reflecting minds from the error. Why Abraham rather than Adam? It is evidently owing to another truth, no longer the assumption of human nature, but their cause he undertakes. Incarnation was the necessary means, in order to accomplish this and other ends according to God. Here the seed of promise comes into view, a truth palatable to those who valued their descent from Abraham; but, as our Lord showed (John 8), they only are Abraham's children who do the works of Abraham; and none do his works who share not his faith; which, as it did not go with mere fleshly descent, so it was open to those who had like precious faith. For they that be of faith are blessed with the faithful Abraham (Gal. 3: 9).

* The substance of his annotation I transcribe from the fifth and last edition of his N.T., dedicated to Queen Elizabeth, 1598. "*Angels*, that is, angelic nature. . . . He a little before said κεκοινωνηκε instead of κοινωνεῖ!, so now on the other hand he employs the present for the past!! which exchanges of tenses everywhere occur with Hebrews. Vulg. *apprehendit* not badly, but a word unusual in setting out the hypostatic union of the two natures. *Abraham's seed* that is, the real nature of man, especially of Abraham's family. . . . Wherefore the more to be execrated is the audacity of Castalio, who renders ἐπιλαμβάνεται by *opitulatur* [helpeth], an interpretation not only false but irreverent, since ἐπ. never expresses this among the Greeks," etc., etc. Now it is true that Dean Alford, etc., who agree with C., go too far. With the dative the verb does mean to help. But the fact is that the French divine was blinded by theological prejudice, to say nothing of feeling against a rival translator, who here, if not quite accurate, was nearer the truth, would not swerve from grammatical requirement, and gave the sense

substantially. There is on the one hand no enallage, as Beza says, but a clear and correct statement of a manifest and indisputable truth; on the other, it is untrue that Castalio invented a meaning new and unheard of, but pertinent to the unfolding argument of the chapter, whereas Beza offends against correct language, and destroys the truth here intended, confounding it with what was already laid down.

† Take the best of them, J. Chrysostom, who comments as follows on the passage: "What is this he says? He took up an angel's nature, not a man's. But what is, He layeth hold? Not that nature of the angels, says he, did He seize, but ours. And wherefore did he not say, He took up, but employ this expression, He layeth hold? From the metaphor of those that pursue persons that turn away and do everything so as to catch them though they flee, and lay hold of them though bounding off. For He pursued closely and caught human nature in its flight from Him and flying far, for we were far off. He showed that this He has done by kindness to man alone, and love and guardian care" (In Epp. Paul. vii. 63, ed. Field, Oxen., 1862). Theodoret adds nothing of real value, as he repeats the same exegetical mistake. He notices the peculiarity of Abraham's seed in such a connection, and tries to explain it as a reminder of the promise. Quite true; but incarnation and promise are wholly distinct, though this could not have been without that.

The uncertainty that has prevailed is extraordinary as to almost every word. "For" is the only right sense, not "moreover" as Macknight says, nor "besides" with M. Stuart. The word *δήπου* was quite mistaken by those that followed the laxity of the Vulgate. The Syriac Versions early and late pass it by altogether. It occurs nowhere else in the Greek Testament nor yet in the Septuagint, but its force is unequivocally in the ordinary usage of the language, as "doubtless," "I presume," "forsooth." We have already seen that "to take up" or "undertake the cause" is the meaning of the verb so emphatically repeated, negatively and positively. Angels He has not as the object of His care, but Abraham's seed He has. It may be applied to laying hold or arresting with hostile intent: where a gracious aim is plain as here, the sense is no less certain. Assuming a nature is without example and in no way involved in the word itself. Nor does it suit the verse either; because for our Lord to assume Abraham's seed had no nature distinctively. Of blood and flesh it had been already declared He partook, but this is humanity; and the reason assigned is that, as the children, or Abraham's seed, had a common share of the same, He is no doubt undertaking their cause, not that of angels. When it comes to the question of espousing a cause, not of incarnation, we hear not of human nature, but expressly of those separated on the ground of divine promise, the objects of grace.

Hence the moral necessity that He should be "in all things made like to his brethren." Even though deigning to become man, *He* might have been in wholly different circumstances from most or all. Yet Adam never knew what it was to be a man, as the Lord of glory did from birth onward. From what trial or suffering was He exempted, sin only excepted? and this that He might in due time be of God made sin on the cross, bearing its bitterest consequences? And this we see as the end in view in 18, "That He might be a merciful and faithful high-priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people."

The allusion is plain to the exceptional position of the high-priest on the day of atonement. He and he alone was the actor on that day, and this typically. Christ and Christ alone was the one sufferer also in the antitype. What was wrought on the cross goes far beyond the "shadow," though the shadow was constructed to indicate a great deal. But Christ alone gives us the full truth of atonement or of anything else, because He is the truth. His person, unique and divine, made the superiority in every respect.

It was not at all the normal action of priesthood in the holy place. The high priesthood on that day was representative of the people before God in their sins. This was quite extraordinary. A far deeper

need was in question than intercession that followed, or representing them within in their acceptance. If sin was to be adequately dealt with even in type, and only for the purifying of the flesh, and but for a year, no other way lay open. It is not application, but God met according to His nature: even the people's lot was putting the confessed sins away out of His sight in the form. The momentous reality appears in all its moral glory and efficacy in that work of Christ's death for sin and our sins, which has perfected and glorified God, and brought in eternal redemption.

The English versions are various, and none of them exact, yet there is no uncertainty as to the sense. Wiclif is the most paraphrastic — "that He schulde be made merciful and a feithful bischop to God, that He schulde be merciful to the trespassis of the puple." Tyndale is closer, "that He myght be mercifull, and a faythfull hye preste in thynges concernynge God, for to pouрге the peoples synnes." And so Cranmer and the Geneva Bible. The Rhemish has the barbarous Latin servilely reproduced, "that He might repropitiate," etc. The A.V. gives "to make reconciliation for the sinnes of the people": an awkward misrendering. Reconciliation is *of* persons, as well as of creation; but *for* sins is not justifiable. Propitiation or atonement for them is correct.

Here too it will be noticed that the Spirit of God does not warrant that unlimited extension for which so many contend. And such is the frailty and caprice of man's mind that those who without and contrary to the text would widen the sphere of "the people," and "the children of Abraham," and "His brethren" to all mankind are often the same who on shallow grounds would expunge the universality of the outlook of divine righteousness in Rom. 3: 22, and chance the beautiful distinction of "unto all, and upon all those that believe," into the indiscriminate and feeble generality of "unto all them that believe."

The propitiation of Christ is the basis of His priestly action on high. Save the exceptional work of atonement, there was and could be nothing of the kind. For heaven alone is its regular sphere; and this runs through our Epistle from first to last. It was when made perfect (and this was clearly after His sufferings were complete), that He became the cause of everlasting salvation to all that obey Him, being addressed or saluted of God as High Priest after the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 5). But the basis of an all-sufficing, God-glorifying propitiation must first be laid and accepted; and then He takes His place in heaven to intercede for those whose sins He bore.

But there was another necessity fully met. He must know not sin but suffering. He must be tempted to the uttermost, sin excepted (Heb. 4), in order to succour the tempted. "For in that he hath suffered when tempted, he is able to help those that are tempted," (verse 18).

Temptation means trial; never in Christ's case, what is in fallen man's inward solicitation to evil. This is what the Holy Spirit expressly denies of Him, and what no one who believed in His person ought to have allowed for a moment. Lustful experience or sin is incompatible with the Holy One of God; and, so far from being in a single instance predicated of Him, it is wholly excluded: $\chi\omega\rho\iota\varsigma$ $\acute{\alpha}\mu\alpha\rho\tau\acute{\iota}\alpha\varsigma$ could be said of neither Enoch nor Elijah, nor of John and Paul, but of Him only. The blessed endurance of temptation (James 1: 2, 12) He knew beyond any; but what James describes in verses 13-15 of his first chapter was foreign to Him, and a blasphemous imputation, as it proves fundamental unbelief of Who and what He is. We are too familiar with the human and selfish argument that He could not sympathise with us adequately if exempt from those internal and evil workings, bemoaned in Rom. 7 and bitterly known by every soul born of God, at least in the early days of his awakening. But if we needed the Lord to be similarly harassed in order to feel fully with us, we should on that ground want Him to have yielded, as we alas! have often done, in order to sympathise with us in our sad failures. No! that ground is wretchedly and absolutely opposed to Christ; and what the word

reveals as the remedy for evil within and without in every form and degree is not Christ's sympathy, but His propitiatory suffering for us. He sympathises with us in our holy, not in our unholy, temptations. For our unholiness He died; the cross alone has met it fully in God's sight. Had there been in fact the least inward taint of sin, His sensibility of evil had been impaired, His sufferings diminished, and His sympathy hindered, to say nothing of the deadly wound to His person, unfitted by such an evil nature to be a sacrifice for sin.

Hebrews 3

Hebrews 3 follows 1 and 2 in beautiful order. For "the Apostle and High Priest of our confession" answers to the chapters before: the first of these titles of Christ being specially connected with His being Son of God, as the second is with that of Son of man. He comes from God to man on earth; He goes from man to God in heaven. And this is largely, though not entirely, the reason why the writer was led not to speak of himself as an apostle. He had it as his task to present Christ as the Apostle. This might have been enough for one whose reverence was guided unerringly by the Holy Spirit. We can understand why he forebore to speak of himself or any other when so speaking of Him; even if there had not been the gracious reason of not so introducing himself beyond his allotted sphere of the uncircumcision. And we may notice the further and not unimportant or uninteresting fact that, in writing to the Hebrew believers, he is exercising the function of a teacher rather than of an apostle, however truly he was this. He is unfolding the treasures of the O.T. in the light of Christ, of His blood, and His presence in heaven most particularly. And thus we are indebted to the exceptional circumstances in which the Epistle was written that it is the richest specimen of inspired teaching in the Bible, more than any other affording and applying the key of Christ's work and position and offices, and grace and glory in all; to unlock what had otherwise been to us hard and obscure. What an incentive and aid to encourage us to follow in the same path in our poor measure, by His grace who so enabled him! Were all the commentaries that are extant on the O.T. to be effaced, is it too much to say that it would be a real gain if the Lord's servants betook themselves afresh to its study with a believing use of this single Epistle to the Hebrews? Certain it is that few have adequately profited by it, because they have so much tradition to unlearn; and that the mass even of saints are so steeped in preconceived ideas that the simple yet profound truth it presents is foreclosed and escapes them.

Christ's apostleship leads to the comparison with Moses, as His high priesthood with that of Aaron, the main topic in a large part of the treatise.

"Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Jesus; faithful as he is to him that appointed him, as also [was] Moses, in all his house. For he hath been accounted worthy of more glory than Moses, by so much as he that built the house hath more honour than it. For every house is builded by some one; but he that built all things [is] God. And Moses indeed [was] faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things afterward to be spoken; but Christ as Son over his house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the boldness and the glorying of the hope firm to the end" (verses 1-6).

There is emphasis, of course, in the unusual combination, "holy brethren." Since the Jews as such were accustomed to be called "brethren" after the flesh, there was the more propriety in designating Christian Jews "holy brethren," however truly it applies to any Christian.

Again, as the chosen nation was partaker of an earthly position and hope, we can understand well the force of describing the believers in Christ from its midst as "partakers of a heavenly calling." Such indeed they were. They entered the new privilege not by a tie of birth but by call of God; and this, as it

was from Christ in heaven, so it was to heavenly glory, bearing earthly rejection, suffering and shame, as the Epistle shows from first to last. The calling upward or high calling of Phil. 3: 14 answers to it.

Truly we must distinguish the heavenly calling from the calling in Eph. 4: 1, developed in that Epistle which is still more intimate and precious. For it is bound up with the mystery concerning Christ and concerning the church. Accordingly we do not hear of the oneness of the body with its Head in the Epistle to the Hebrews, as we do not hear of Christ the High Priest in that to the Ephesians. Even when church is spoken of in our Epistle (Heb. 12: 23), it is regarded in its individual components, not in its unity: so distinct is the design of each. Hence we are not viewed here as quickened with Christ, raised up together with Him and seated together in Him in heavenly places, but as represented by Him in heaven, where He appears for us and gives us while here below access into the holies.

Christ is shown to surpass Moses and Aaron next, as we have already seen the angels left behind in Heb. 1, 2. The contrast with Moses is traced in Heb. 3. That with Aaron begins in the latter part of Heb. 4. But it is well also to notice "our confession." It leaves room for such as turn out mere professors; for it is not even said "our faith," though this might soon become a lifeless creed. And this is borne out by the solemn warnings not to neglect, to hold fast, and the like, which abound throughout our Epistle, as we find similarly in the First Epistle to the Corinthians and in that to the Colossians.

It will be noticed that the name of "Jesus" stands here in its simple majesty. For a Jewish Christian it was all-important. Every Jew owned the Messiah or Christ. The Christian Jews confessed Him already come in Jesus. And the aim of this Epistle is to open even from the ancient oracles the varied glories that centre in Him with all the store of blessing for those that are His.

Nor is it only that Jesus "was" faithful, though this is true. But "is" goes farther as the more general and absolute term. Only it seems strange that reverent minds should venture to apply to Him ποιῆ, in the sense, so liable to misconstruction and error, of making or creating Him, when the context clearly points to constituting Him officially.

If Moses was a messenger of God singularly honoured as all confess, he was after all in an inferior position, however faithful in all the house of God. But Jesus was not only a Man approved of God among the Jews beyond all by miracles and wonders and signs in their midst, not only anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, going about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, unequalled in word and deed yet withal the lowliest in obedience and love and holiness; but "He hath been accounted worthy of more glory than Moses, by so much as He that built the house hath more honour than it" *i.e.* the house. And in this case the reason has no limit. "For every house is builded by some one; but he that built all things [is] God." The allusion is evident to the argument and the proofs of Heb. 1. Jesus, whatever office He may fill, is God. He sheds glory on the position He takes, though assuredly the way in which He administers each office redounds to the glory of Him that appointed Him.

It is interesting to see that the axiom of the fourth verse is the morally irresistible argument from design, which has been more or less ably applied by those who have written on the evidence of creation to its Creator. Prof. M. Stuart labours in vain over this verse, and gives up its relevance in the context as hopelessly obscure. But as in Heb. 1 and 2 we have seen the universe in relation to Christ, so it is here. God formed it all, but Christ created it as the divine person active in the work, for He is God no less than the Father, and set over the house not as servant like Moses but as Son, and this in the closer sense of the house wherein He dwells, besides the broader one of the universe which He established. The Jews were apt to confine their regards to His choice of themselves. God does not forget, nor would He have us to forget, Christ's supremacy as Heir of all things.

But there is a truth also of the deepest interest to believers. The house or dwelling-place depends on redemption. Whatever might be the ultimate end of God in what He made, sin came in at once through the creature's lack of dependence. God could only dwell on the ground of redemption. Hence it is that in Genesis we have no dwelling of God here below. He might visit Adam, or yet more and more touchingly Abraham; but even with Abraham He does not dwell. In Exodus God has His dwelling in the midst of a poor unworthy and failing people; but it is solely in virtue of redemption. No doubt it was only partial and provisional, alike the redemption and the dwelling of God, each the type of that which is perfect and everlasting. And the wonderful fact in Christianity is that both are now verified by the coming and work of our Lord Jesus. No redemption will ever surpass or even equal what is already. With (or by) His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained everlasting redemption. Hence, as Ephesians teaches, we are builded together for God's habitation in Spirit. The Holy Ghost sent down from heaven makes it good. What an incomparable privilege is God's dwelling, and Christ's body, as the same chapter had shown, to say nothing now of the many and yet fuller testimonies! Redemption of the body and of the inheritance will be more evident., but the redemption of our souls now, while only in Christ before God, which is attested and enjoyed in the Holy Spirit's power, bringing the deepest knowledge of and communion with God for heaven.

Here, however, it is first the general truth of the universe as God's house, with which we do well to compare Rev. 21: 3. It is in the eternal scene fully that this will be vindicated and manifested. Our Epistle does not here develop that perfect rest of God, but pursues its present aim of comparing the great chief of the legal economy with the still greater One Whom the Jews had crucified by the hands of lawless Gentiles. "And Moses indeed was faithful in all his house as an attendant for a testimony of things afterward to be spoken; but Christ as Son over His house, whose house are we" — we emphatically, as the Epistle never confounds the "sanctified" with mere Jews or all mankind. It states carefully those that are set apart by the Sanctifier, even Jesus, the test of God for man. Moses never rose above a servant, nor is the creature in any case, were he Gabriel in heaven or yet Michael the archangel. Jesus is the Son, the eternal Word, the Only-Begotten who is (not was merely, but is) in the bosom of the Father from everlasting to everlasting. In His case therefore it was not merely for a testimony of what should be spoken. His was and is glory intrinsic and personal. He was the Faithful Witness, as in all things He has the pre-eminence; and so He is here and now spoken of as Son over His house, the house of God, as it ought not to be doubted. There is no sufficient ground for "His own" house as in the A.V. It is the house of God throughout, even though its present application is immensely and necessarily modified by redemption in Christ. Hence His confessors really constitute this house, with the implication in the serious words that follow, "if we hold fast the boldness and the boast of the hope firm to the end."

The Spirit of God foresaw the danger of those addressed. Freshness of enjoyment is apt to pass, and souls are thereby exposed, under trying circumstances, to turn toward what was left behind when grace and truth wrought in power. The course of time, with distractions within (for so it will be till Christ come, in presence of an enemy who hates all that is of Him) and with attractions for the flesh without, tests souls. It is well when we hold fast firm to the end the boldness and the glorying which the hope forms and entitles us to. But it may be very different even with real children of God; and it will assuredly prove those that are unreal. For the same things which injure those born of God are the ruin of those who have not life in Christ. Hence the grave caution here enjoined, peculiarly needed by those addressed, and in no small measure by those drawn to the Lord's name out of a professing mass, when clouds gather, difficulties increase, and desertions are frequent.

Is it not an extraordinary deduction from verse 6, that the Christian is in danger from confidence in

his soul, and from the boast which glory before us inspires? Yet such is the perversion that prevails among those who shrink from enjoying the revealed riches of God's grace in Christ. It is plain and sure that the Holy Spirit here takes for granted that the Christian has the confidence to which Christ and His redemption entitle every simple-hearted believer, and that the glory of God we hope for is a happy and settled boast. Those who think otherwise have been defrauded of their proper portion by ignorant, perhaps false, guides. The real danger against which the Hebrew confessors are warned is giving up that confidence and boast. They are urged to hold it fast. This is the reverse of cautioning them against such confidence. The Christian dishonours the Lord by not cherishing true confidence and abounding hope; and yet more by giving them up, through difficulties or trials, when once possessed. *This* is the dangerous unbelief against which they are admonished.

It is clearly not our standing which is in question; for this being wholly of God and in Christ is settled and sure and unchanging. There is no "if" either as to Christ's work or as to glad tidings of God's grace. All there is unconditional grace to faith. The wilderness journey is before us, flowing very simply from the allusion to Moses. And this is followed up with evident suitability in the quotation from Psalm 95. Here it is that "if" has its necessary place, because it is our walk through the desert, where there are so many occasions of failure, and we need constant dependence on God.

"Wherefore even as the Holy Spirit saith, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation in the day of temptation in the wilderness, where your fathers tempted [me] * by proof and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was displeased with this * generation, and said, They always err in their heart, and they ignored my ways: as I swore in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest. See, brethren, lest there be in any one of you a wicked heart of unbelief in falling away from a living God; but exhort yourselves each day while it is called today lest any of you be hardened by deceitfulness of sin" (verses 7-13).

*Text. Rec. follows the later copies, as they with the Septuagint add me and read ἔδοκίμασάν με. The more ancient give the text adopted in this version. A similar remark applies to "this" rather than "that" as in the common text.

Now Psalm 95 is in its open force a final call from the Spirit of Christ to Israel in view of the great morrow when the kingdom is introduced for the earth in the power and glory of Messiah's presence. They are therefore to hear His voice "today" (verse 7). Hence it is truly applicable since the apostles called souls to believe the gospel in view of Christ's appearing. But nowhere is it more apt than as here urged on the Hebrews.

To hear His voice is the characteristic of Christ's sheep. So the rejected Son of God puts it Himself in John 10: 3, 4, 16, 27: compare John 5: 24. On this depend the most blessed issues; as the rejection of His voice is to lie down in sorrow, the prey of a mightier rebel than man. It is the work of the Spirit to give one hitherto deaf to hear Him, according to His will who spoke on "the holy mount" (Matt. 17: 5; Mark 9: 7; Luke 9: 35). It is life, eternal life.

Alas! it was easy to hear with the outward ear only, and to harden the heart, even as Stephen warned. "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye" (Acts 7: 5 1). Sin is in the measure of truth heard and despised; and what testimony can God present to those who refused the voice of Christ not only humbled but glorified, who died for sinners? The very blessedness of the gospel, "so great salvation," marks the desperateness of the need, and the imminence of the danger.

So, but not at all to the same degree, it was with Israel of old "in the provocation, in the day of the temptation in the wilderness" (verse 8). The allusion is to Meribah and Massah which the Septuagint

thus translates. Compare Psalm 95: 8: The Septuagint, however, in Ex. 17: 7, gives not "provocation" as in the Psalms, but "reviling" as in verse 2 also. Elsewhere Meribah is rendered ἀντιλογία, contradiction. Massah is uniformly translated πειρασμός, temptation, and this against God as the strife or reviling was against Moses more immediately. Tempting Jehovah in the desert was saying, Is Jehovah among us or not? This may seem to unbelievers a small offence; in the eyes of God and of faith it is heinous. Had He not broken the pride and power of Egypt on behalf of His poor unworthy people? Had He not brought them out of the house of bondage. triumphantly, their Guide and their Rearguard, to dwell among them and be their God?

"For ask now of the days that are past which were before thee" (says Moses to Israel, Deut. 4), "since the day that God created man upon the earth and from the one end of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it? Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live? Or hath God essayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation by temptation, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors according to all Jehovah your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?" And was He less toward them all the wilderness journey in daily manna and rock-flowing water, in sheltering care and guiding mercy, notwithstanding their too constant murmuring and waywardness, their disobedience and stubborn rebellion every now and then? Righteousness indeed there was in Him, and holy abhorrence of evil; but O what unwearied compassion and unfailing goodness! Truly they tempted by putting Him to the proof in the midst of unceasing tokens of His faithful presence. It was bad for heathen blinded by lusts and Satan's power to say, because of the chastisements of Israel's sins, Where is their God? How much worse for themselves to ask, Is Jehovah among us or not? And they tempted God in their heart by asking meat for their lust. . . . How often did they rebel against Him in the wilderness and grieve Him in the desert! And they turned again, and tempted God and provoked (or limited) the Holy One of Israel (Psalm 78: 18, 41, 42). The least that became such a people before such a God was to judge self and go forward in the assurance of His gracious power. But not so did Israel, though they "saw His works forty years" (verse 9).

"Wherefore I was displeased with this generation, and said, They always err in their hearts, and they ignored my ways" (verse 10). It was just because He is just and true that God felt so deeply the refractory and deceitful rising up of Israel against His will. Their error lay not in their understanding but in their heart: hence they never got to learn God's ways but ignored them. Moses truly feared and loved Him: thus only are His ways discovered and delighted in. as it is written in another psalm (103), "He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel." Above His palpable doings they did not discern. "As I swore in my wrath if they shall enter into my rest" (i.e. they shall not). A solemn sentence of exclusion. In man's mouth it is elliptical, God do so to me and more, if — ! In God's lips the condition of man's entering is the moral certainty that it is all over with him. Good is only and wholly of grace. There is no entrance into the rest of God, if it depend on man's deserts. If they shall enter means for unbelievers, that they shall not enter.

It may be well here to say that God's rest is for us future and in glory. We lose the force of the teaching in these two chapters, especially Heb. 4 in which it is so conspicuous, if we conceive it to be anything given to us on our first believing in Jesus, or found experimentally in submitting to His easy yoke and light burden. Both of these are real and important now, as we know from Matt. 11: 28-30. But the rest of God is when work is over and burden is no more; when the enemy deceives not and creation no longer groans, when judgment is executed on earth and righteousness reigns, and Jehovah alone is exalted in that day, Heaven and earth shall be united in a chain of descending goodness and universal

blessing, when Christ is no longer hid in God, and His sons are revealed for the deliverance which the long enthralled creation awaits. Till that day God works, because there is still unremoved sin and misery; and we work in the communion of His love. When it comes, we shall be in the rest of God.

"See, brethren, lest there be in any one of you a wicked heart of unbelief in falling away from a living God; but exhort yourselves each day while it is called today, lest any one of you be hardened by deceitfulness of sin" (verses 12, 13).

Here the root of the mischief is touched. It is "unbelief." This hindered Israel of old from setting their hope in God (Psalm 78: 7). This exposed them to forget His works and to break His commandments, neither the heart prepared aright nor the spirit steadfast with God. It is impossible that He should lie or be not faithful, yea gracious. Faith is invited and may be bold to rest on Him confidently, now especially that He has raised Christ from the dead and given Him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God. None, however, were so liable to stop short and ask for signs as the Jews, accustomed as they were to a religious system of rite, ceremony, and symbolism. As Christendom has largely fallen back from faith into a resumption of these rudiments of the world, which the work and glory of Christ now condemn as weak and "beggarly elements" (Gal. 4). there is like danger of unbelief. It is in truth departure from a living God for forms which He used to do service before Christ came and died atoningly, when redemption from under the law was effected, and the believer passed from bond-service into the status of a son and heir of God, receiving the Spirit of adoption so as to cry Abba, Father. Anything short of this is not Christian relationship; and it is in evident contrast with Jewish subjection to ordinances, to which the Catholic bodies (not Romanist only) have turned back again. It is a deceptive form of unbelief, a going away from the living God to dead forms, because the heart lacks confidence in His grace in Christ.

So it was with Israel; so it is with Christendom. No wonder that it is denounced as "a wicked heart" of unbelief. For what else is or can be distrust of such a God? The more His love is revealed, the more is the heart convicted of wickedness that refuses to receive His grace, or (worse still) gives it up. Nothing more false than to regard faith as a mere process of the mind, involving nothing moral, but on the deep principle of subjection to God's word. To believe, to bow to Christ Whom God has sent, is the first and most imperative of calls. What obligation to compare with being at the feet of the Son of God, Who became incarnate to suffer for my sins? God too was glorified in Him and His cross, as in nought else. Hence the Father's glory raised Him from the dead, that believing in Him I should know myself and all who have been brought nigh to God. Is it not a wicked heart of unbelief that neglects so great salvation? It is this even in a worse degree, after confessing Him, to depart from a living God thus proved for any other object: for here only is He known truly by a sinner and best honoured. For us love, service, worship, and all that is good follow faith and cannot exist without it.

Hence the call to encourage, not exactly one another, though this is included, but "yourselves," which seems rather more pointed than the former phrase. They were to encourage each other day by day as long as it is called today (the day of grace), that none should be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. For which of us knows not by humbling and bitter experience its luring character and slippery paths? A little evil allowed is the beginning of very great evil. The heart is hardened as we look off from Jesus, and self-pleasing takes the place of doing God's will; and only mercy's intervention hinders the end from being, according to the way. Truly sin is deceitful.

It is the wilderness which is ever before us in this Epistle; not Canaan, the type of the heavenly places, which is the ground of the Epistle to the Ephesians. It is here therefore the scene of trial and danger through unbelief, with the fleshly and worldly lusts to which it exposes. Hence here too the

early exhortations are interspersed with doctrine. Further, as in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, profession has prominence. For though reality is assumed, room is left for those whose minds only accepted the truth which their lips confessed, but they were not born of God, and hence fell away through fear, external attractions, revival of their religious habits, or other causes of a natural kind. For this reason we have responsibility urged with grave warnings, and as the Gentile saints are so dealt with in Corinth, so here are the Hebrews that bore the name of the Lord Jesus. Therefore, as has been often remarked, the "ifs" which so abound in this context as elsewhere. Faith profits by the admonitions which flesh takes lightly to its fall in the desert. Where the tie of life and love was never formed between Christ and the soul, the need of grace and mercy is not felt; glory on high, fades into nothingness, as the earth rises before the heart as a place of present enjoyment in desire, if not effectively.

"For we have become companions of Christ, if indeed we hold fast the beginning of the assurance until the end while it is said, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. For who on hearing did provoke? Nay, did not all that came out of Egypt through Moses? And with whom was he displeased forty years? And to whom swore He that they should not enter into His rest but to the disobedient? And we see that they could not enter in on account of unbelief" (verses 14-19).

The word often translated is the same as is quoted from the Greek version of Psalm 45 in Heb. 1: 9. "Companion" would be more modern English, but the same rendering is kept up here as in the Psalm to which the allusion is made. "Partakers" not only breaks the thread of connection, but suggests what might easily mislead. There is no lowering of Christ's glory in applying the word to those who confess Him. For when first used, the Holy Spirit carefully recalls how God owns Messiah as God, and even when grace adds companions of His people, He is anointed as man above them all. He that sanctifies and they that are sanctified are all of one, and to be manifested in the same heavenly glory. But some who seem to begin well stop short or turn aside. It was faith of mere mind and feeling, not the Holy Spirit's living work in the conscience; and such in the strain of trial, or weary of habitual self-judgment, or turning again to the mirth and pleasant enjoyments of the world, abandon first the path and then the word and the name of Christ. The dangers of the Hebrew confessors found its parallel in their fathers' snares during the journeyings of the wilderness, and we now in Christendom are exposed to like danger. The possession of the heavenly privileges is evidenced and conditioned by holding stedfast to the end the beginning of the assurance of the Christian.

How then say some who assume to teach that it is presumption to have any such "assurance"? For the assurance here insisted on as proper, incumbent, and necessary from first to last is grounded on the glorified Lord Jesus, our propitiation and our high, priest, on the divine dignity of His person and the accepted efficacy of His work for us, leading, as He undertook, many sons to glory. One can hardly therefore find doctrine more opposed to the gospel than a preliminary denial of that assurance which every Christian is solemnly exhorted, not merely to have but to hold fast, yea firm to the end. If assurance be founded on anything in ourselves, the sooner the better to abandon what was really self-righteous and unbecoming and spurious. The confidence which dispenses with continued dependence on God is worthless and a delusion of the enemy. But if we rest on Him by faith, we are bound to have and cherish by faith what is only His due. And it may be that the Hellenistic sense of "confidence," while certain from the usage of Polybius (4: 54, 10; 5: 16, 4; 6: 55, 2; Diod. Sic., etc.), as cited in modern commentaries, flows from its primitive meaning of subsistence, substance, and the like. Compare Heb. 4: 3; Heb. 11: 1. It points strongly to an objective base in the Christ, instead of a mere sentiment in the soul which might easily change and fade away. But the Spirit, where there is life,

keeps believers true to the Lord.

Doubtless "today" is a serious and trying time (verse 15). We are in the wilderness, and without God what is there but difficulty and danger for His people, weak as spilt water in themselves? But there especially He speaks in His word; and even when the kingdom comes, the prophetic word calls His own to hear His voice. If they were bitterly provoking, He was patient and gracious. And if there be difference now, as there is assuredly, since Christ accomplished redemption, and took His seat at God's right hand, and sent down the Holy Spirit to be in us who believe, it is still said, "Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation." What He has done and revealed and made ours, so transcending all wrought of old in Egypt and the desert, ought to be the most powerful stimulus, as well as firm foundation, in heeding His revealed will against our treacherous hearts, so sure to grow hard if we slight His word or tamper with sin. "Today" is till Jesus comes, the point so constant in N.T. expectation. Is He your expectation, my brother?

"For who on hearing did provoke? Nay, did not all who came out of Egypt through Moses?" (verse 16).

The A.V. followed the indefinite pronoun, not the interrogative as is here preferred with the R.V. Thus the appeal has all force. It was not "some" only but the mass, as is put immediately afterwards, a shameful answer to Jehovah's favour toward Israel. And it is of painful interest to observe how the Spirit employs the same scenes with yet more detail in 1 Cor. 10 to warn the Gentile faithful at Corinth, as here for the Jewish. What made the case so grave is that it was after they heard they fell into the provocation. So sin is worse far in a baptised man than in a mere Jew or Gentile; and the idolatry of Mary or Peter or an angel worse in the sight of God than that of Zeus or Venus. "All that came out of Egypt by Moses!" O what power, judicial and delivering, had they not witnessed! What continual goodness and withal solemn dealings with rebellion and profanity! The Christian profession is admonished to beware of similar departure. "And with whom was He displeased forty years? Was it not with those that sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?" (verse 17.) It was no mere sudden slip, but the grave evil of habitual state that aroused His strong displeasure; alas! the whole period of His unparalleled intervention in the wilderness, where their stay gave occasion to His constant and wondrous tokens of mercy before all eyes. But without faith it is impossible to please Him, or walk in obedience, holiness, and love. Without it there is but sin continually; as they sinned, and their carcasses fell. For God is not mocked, nor His righteous government which was then visibly displayed.

"And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to the disobedient?" (verse 18.) Disobedience, and above all disobedience such as this, God abhors and judges. It is not meant in isolated acts, but insubjection to Himself; just the opposite of what Rom. 1 calls the obedience of faith, now especially as He has in grace revealed Himself in the lord Jesus. It is yet deeper than obedience to His commands, however important this may be in its place, and the proof not only of love but of divinely characterised faith, and therefore of life in Christ Such as are insubmissive to Himself, especially now that the Son has declared Him, shall assuredly not enter into the rest of God, the heavenly glory at Christ's coming. So He swore then; as His wrath is now revealed from heaven against all such ungodliness, even if after a sort they hold the truth ever so fast in unrighteousness.

The next verse closes this portion with a word on the root of the evil thus disclosed. "And we see that they could not enter in on account of unbelief" (verse 19). Their having disobeyed God in the sense of hearkening not to His word, and thus of insubjection to Himself, pointed to their inward unbelief. Present, palpable, visible things were their all. God was in none of their thoughts really; for it is no question of idle dreamy sentiment but of spiritual life. How could unbelief or those marked by it enter

His blessed glorious rest?

Hebrews 4

The all-important point for a just interpretation is that God's rest is here before us, His glory with Christ. It is not at all rest for the conscience or for the heart, which the believer has or Ends now in Christ. "The rest of God" is exclusively future.

The perfect word of God distinguishes even outwardly what may be and ought to be now enjoyed from what is only in hope, however sure. Our Lord in Matt. 11:; 28, 29, speaks of what His grace makes good while we are here; Heb. 3, 4, only of what the believers enter at His coming. Hence ἀνάπαυσις is the word for rest in the Gospel, κατάπαυσις in the Epistle. Jesus, rejected as Messiah, does not only fall back on the heavenly and universal glory He looks for as the Son of Man, but unveils Himself as the Son of the Father, and invites to Himself all that labour and are burdened. To those that come to Him the Son gives rest. It is free and sovereign grace, present and full relief from the toil of law and the burden of sin. This rest He gives to conscience, the starting-point by faith to all holiness. But He also adds, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye *shall find* rest for your souls." This is rest for the heart of the Christian day by day, and found only in obedience. It is not help, as men say, nor peace exactly, but rest of heart in the submissive acceptance of God's will. So Christ Himself bowed and was blessed here below so all that follow Him. But *He* gives rest to the conscience (without here explaining how) before we find rest for our souls in judging self and doing God's will.

Faith makes both our own now; but we are called also to exult in hope of the glory of God. This is His rest; and we are going on toward it, as Israel to Canaan. Such is the text here applied. It is God resting in what satisfies His love and holiness, when righteousness reigns and sorrow flees away, κατάπαυσις being stronger than ἀνάπαυσις. The former is applied in Gen. 2 (Lxx.) when sin and death had not yet entered the world. It is used here also for the scene and time of glory, when they will be manifestly vanquished.

"Let us fear therefore lest, a promise being left of entering into his rest, any one of you should seem to have come short. For indeed we have had good tidings borne to us, as they also [had]; but the word of the report did not profit them, not having been mixed with faith in those that heard" (verses 1-2).

It is impossible to understand the entire context, if we regard the rest here spoken of as any other than the future rest of God into which Christ will introduce us at His coming. Wrest it to the primary need of the soul as men are apt to do, and all is confusion. Would the Spirit say, "let us fear" if it were a question of believing in Christ to all joy and peace? The word of the Lord to the troubled soul is "Fear not"; "I will: be thou clean"; "Thy faith hath saved thee: go in peace;" "Daughter, be of good comfort," and the like: never a syllable to induce a doubt of the Saviour's grace, or of the believer's salvation. For indeed He came to seek and save that which is lost. But here the warning is given to those that bear His name who, like Israel, were stopping short and weary of the pilgrimage through the wilderness. There is danger on all sides. It may be the desire to go back into Egypt, or despairing of Canaan — the pleasant land, and murmuring against Moses and Aaron meanwhile. In every case it is unbelief; and Israel paid the penalty. "Let us therefore fear lest, a promise having been left of entering into His rest any one of you should seem to have fallen short."

Fallen unbelieving man is ever in quest of this or that. He is restless, and knows no happiness (or rather, pleasure) in this world but change, the pursuit of what he has not but wishes to have. Had he the

gift of God's love, the water that Christ gives would be in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life, of which he drinking shall never thirst again. Even so he needs to have always before his heart that heaven to which he now belongs, his new fatherland, where Christ is gone before. If Israel had a hope, we have assuredly no less, but in far richer measure and brighter light. The hope of the future according to God has a mighty effect in delivering from the power of present things opposed to Him. The renewed heart needs it and has it clearly set before us in Scripture as here. Let us fear therefore lest anyone of us should seem to come short in this respect. What is destructive where there is no faith is injurious, and may be so to the last degree, to the believer. Therefore do we hear of "seeming" to have come short. There is no rest of God now, nor for us is it here but in heaven. Let us fear even the appearance of settling down on earth; which indeed is not our rest or hope.

Hope was natural to a Jew's feeling and expectation, especially if Messiah were come. But He is rejected, gone up, and is glorified on high. There with Him will be our rest, and what is far better, the rest of God. Let none of us (for surely it is no less true and weighty, for the Gentile believer) — let none of us seem to have come short of that rest. The Christian Jew was in nothing behind his fathers; if the elders had good tidings, those who cleave to Christ in heaven had yet more. But if the word be not mixed with faith, it can no more profit the hearer now than of old. Then the fathers saw wonders and heard the Voice more awful than thunder or earthquake; yet they fell through unbelief, and disobedience its effect. So now, when it is no question of sight or sound, the word mixed with faith for those that heard is indispensable: else the ruin is still more irretrievable than falling in the wilderness.

I am aware that the mass of ancient MSS. favours the strange reading adopted by the Revisers, as well as by most modern critics, "because they were not united by faith with them that heard." So almost all the uncials and cursives and many ancient versions. Here I cannot but agree with Tischendorf that the Sinai MS. () is right, as are a few cursives, the Peschito Syriac, and some good copies of the Vulgate, etc. The externally best-supported reading seems hardly sense, if not wrong doctrine. And this is no solitary instance.

The rest then is God's rest, made by Him, and suited to Him, which He will enjoy in perfected glory with those who believe in Christ, who alone by His work could fit sinful men to share it, perfected as they are through His one offering.

"For we that believed enter into the rest, even as he hath said, As I swore in my wrath, If they shall enter into my rest, although the works were done from [the] world's foundation. For he hath said somewhere of the seventh day thus, And God rested on the seventh day from all his works, and in this again, If they shall enter into my rest" (verses 3-5).

The present tense of verse 3 is not historical but absolute, a usage most frequent in Scripture and in ordinary speech too, especially as to principles of truth. Believers are the enterers into the rest of glory: not all men, nor yet all Israel, but "we that believed"; for the past participle adds to the definiteness of the class accepted for the blessing, not simply those who believe as if they might later or when they pleased. There is no thought of an actual entrance now; for the whole argument shows the rest here is future, whatever rest may be for faith to apprehend before God shares His rest with all that are His own. This Epistle always regards the believer as on the way. The sabbatism here in view is not yet enjoyed by the saints, but "remaineth" (verse g). It is for those that believed, and none else. Of those that did not believe, how true it was, as God swore to give it all the greater solemnity and assurance, that they should not enter into His rest! Their unbelief of Christ made it conditional on themselves; and they were ungodly, as all such are and must be. For Christ only is the source of life as well as forgiveness, the one strengthener of the weak and guide of the erring, the sole Saviour either of sinners

or of saints. For what could even saints be or do without Him? As unbelievers trust themselves or certainly do not trust Christ, they shall not enter into the rest of God. The "if" is their death-knell. If self is the sinner's condition, it is all over with him; and as with Israel, it is no less sure in Christendom. "If they shall enter into my rest," practically as in principle for those who know what unbelief is, means that they shall not.

Yet God had revealed His rest from the beginning. Only the Adamic world is spoken of, only those "works" of God which were effected on the six "days." The vast operations of creation in geologic time are outside consideration and have nothing to do directly with His rest. But His works in view of man immediately conduct to it. Therefore it is said in Gen. 2, "And God rested on the seventh day from all his works," as He had in Psalm 95 thousands of years after, "If they shall enter into my rest." The first scripture proves that He had a rest Himself the second, that even His people had not yet entered into it. Sin came in for Adam and his race at the beginning. God could not rest in sin, nor could sinners as such enter into God's rest. God indeed did not then speak of any entering in. But He did, in thus speaking, imply that the unbelievers who provoked Him in the wilderness should not enter. Preferring self to Christ they, as all like them, must reap the ruinous consequence. And this He records in a psalm which not only recalls the ruin of the rebellious people in the desert, but looks on to the future day of glory when Israel are invited to come with songs of joy and thanksgiving before Jehovah, not only the Creator (as the gods were not, but mere demons and impostors) but their Maker and God. They having believed at length, after ages of judgment because of their unbelief, shall enter into His rest. How welcome and sweet for that people, His people, after such a history of sorrow, shame, and unrest, through sin and the unbelief that barred all escape or deliverance! For "today" will be then, not merely a persevering call of grace (as more pre-eminently in the gospel), but God's power in salvation; "and so all Israel shall be saved" in that day.

"Since then it remaineth that some should enter into it, and that those that had first good tidings borne did not enter because of disobedience, again he defineth a certain day, saying, Today in David after so long a time, even as it hath been said before, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. For if Joshua made them rest, he would not have spoken after these things of another day. There remaineth therefore a sabbatism for the people of God. For he that entered into his rest, himself also rested from his works, as God from his own" (verses 6-10).

The inference is drawn that some would hear and believe, whilst the mass were unbelieving and perished; and both were verified in the type: Israel fell as a whole; Joshua and Caleb entered Canaan. It was a sad issue then with which grace would point the moral to the Jews that professed the name of the Lord, and indeed to any now in Christendom. God's mercy would not be hindered by human opposition or indifference. If those first appealed to refused the glad tidings, He persists in calling He again fixes a day, and in David, long after Moses and Joshua, "Today" is the word (as it has been said) "Today, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." He is coming, and Israel will not harden their hearts in that day, but will say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of Jehovah. But the Christian and the church now say, Come, for they at least have proved His infinite grace. They dread not, but long for His presence. But withal the call goes on to the unbelieving while He tarries. For He is a Saviour as well as their Bridegroom (Rev. 22).

It is impossible to maintain that Israel's entry into Canaan was God's rest or man's entrance into it. The failure is as evident in Canaan as in Eden. Neither was His rest. But in that reasoning His word is definitive. Long after Joshua made Israel rest in the land, God by David speaks of His rest not yet realised, as sure to be lost by unbelief as of old, as open to faith as ever — we may say now in the gospel more than ever; but this is scarcely the object in this part of the Epistle. It is a final call to the

people, and a solemn warning against unbelief to such of them as called on the Lord Jesus. Whatever measure of rest Joshua then gave Israel, it was not the rest of God, for this in David is still held out prospectively. There remains therefore a sabbath-keeping for the people of God.

So in Rom. 8 we are said to be saved by hope, for the salvation spoken of goes beyond the soul, taking in the body (verses 11, 23) and creation generally (verses 19 *et seqq.*). But hope, says the apostle, that is seen is not hope; for who hopeth for that which he sees? But if we hope for that which we see not, we do with patience wait for it. It is thus with the rest God will have prepared for those that love Him, where even He can see no flaw, and which, when all work is done, He will give us to enjoy with Himself. Hence it is wholly future., it remains for His people, whether for those above or for those below. For Christ is the Heir of all things, and we are joint-heirs with Him. All things in heaven and all things on earth are to be under Him, not in title only by personal exaltation at God's right hand, but by actual possession in indisputable and acknowledged power when He reigns on His own throne. Such is the rest of God, as His word presents it, but alas! many that bear Christ's name feebly believe if at all. It is as sure as His death, which is the ground of hope as of so much else infinitely precious; and shown carefully in Heb. 2.

No present rest then is the rest of God — and the futurity of that rest is a grand safeguard against the snare for any Christian, most of all for a Jewish one, to seek it now here below. As God cannot rest in sin or misery, neither ought we to allow it even in our desires, still less make it our life. Now is the time for the labour of love if we know His love, now to seek true worshippers of the Father as He is seeking Himself: as the Son loved to do here below, so the Spirit does now sent down from heaven. Thus should we show that we have fellowship with the Father and the Son downward and all around in grace, as upward in praise and thanksgiving; while we wait for the rest of God to come, and this when it comes is everlasting.

Verse 10 is an added word very characteristic of the inspired writer. It asserts the general principle, by the case put, that we cannot be working and have rest in the same things and in the same sense. When one is entered into his rest, he also has rested from his works. It is not at all the common notion of resting from bad works when a man gets peace with God. However true this may be, it has nothing whatever to do with what is here written. And this is demonstrable, not only from the whole passage treating, not of the soul's spiritual rest by faith of Jesus but of God's future rest in glory, yet by the comparison that follows, as God from His own (works). Now assuredly His works were never bad, but always and perfectly good. Nevertheless He is to rest even from the activity of His love to enjoy the glorious results. Such is the case spoken of. He that is entered into his rest is no longer busied with his works. It is a necessary principle and a blessed application to the matter in hand, and in no way a moralising on a sinner ceasing from his evil works and finding rest in Christ. Now is the time for the saint not to cease from his good works. Soon he will enter the eternal rest of God. The prevalence of sin and misery calls for unremitting labour while it is day; in this too we have communion with the Father and the Son (John 5: 17). When they rest, so shall we; and eternity, as the active Arnauld d'Andilly said to Nicole, will be long enough to rest in. The A.V. is very faulty in its mistaken emphasis, which helps on the popular misapprehension.

The eleventh verse concludes the caution against present rest for the Christian, followed by a statement of the means grace supplies to safeguard us through the wilderness.

"Let us therefore be diligent to enter into that rest,* that no one fall into the same example of disobedience. For the word of God [is] living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing to dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and a discernor of thoughts and

intents of [the] heart. And there is not a creature unapparent before him; but all things [are] naked and laid open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (verses 11-13).

*I had overlooked the late Dean Alford's adoption of objections to the evidently trite sense of verse 10, which led to the idea that it means Christ entering God's rest. But it is an error that the aorist has really a perfect force in the former case, It is ethical and suitable as an aphorism.

We are exhorted to earnest striving now; for there is much that invites us to ease and relaxation. The very mercy of God to our souls might so dispose us, especially if brought up in a previous school of legal thought. For deep and full is the peace with God into which faith in Christ introduces; and so much the more is it enjoyed, if we have been toiling to better our case by self-denying efforts and a round of religious observances. Immense is the deliverance from bondage and doubt and dimness by the simple yet profound gospel of God. Yet the danger of reaction is not small. We are saved that we may diligently serve Him. We are put into fellowship with God's feelings as to all that surrounds us as well as what surrounds Him. This is not our rest, but our scene of labour where people and things are estranged from God. We shall rest when we enter what is perfectly according to His nature and purpose. Hence now and here below is the strongest call to diligence, not to rest. The rest for our conscience sets us the more free to labour in presence of sin, misery, and death. For we are now by faith in the secret of God, and our eyes are opened to discern the deceptions of the enemy. The world no longer appears a pleasant place, 'but the great snare to hinder progress and to turn from the glory of God where Christ is. It is the scene of His rejection and sufferings; it had the guilt of crucifying Him. And from this guilt no one is purged, save by faith of His blood which brings us nigh to God, whose love too calls us to be witnesses of Christ to sinners and saints, as our Lord was when here.

Let us then be diligent to enter into that rest, refusing every other. Israel is the great example of falling through not hearkening to the Lord. This is the fatal disobedience here spoken of. They stumbled at the word, being disobedient. And such is the danger of all Christians now, as well as of those immediately addressed. We stop short, grow weary, make difficulties, get preoccupied, distracted from God's objects, attracted by things that are seen and temporal. We are called now to the work of faith and labour of love, while we patiently wait for rest in glory at Christ's coming.

Unbelief may work in us as in Israel as to both the way and the end. They were weary of the one, and they despised the other. Let us take heed that none of us fall into the same example of disobedience. Therefore had that generation, instead of going peacefully into the inheritance of Jehovah, to wander forty years in the wilderness that the unbelievers might fall, and a generation to come be led into the goodly land.

The word of God is the needed correction, as we see it here. Indeed it is the revelation of God to the soul. Hence it is spoken of in terms which so approach the person of Christ that many take the language here as pointing to Him. And beyond doubt there is the closest connection between the word written or spoken and the Word personal. Scripture habitually has Christ as its object direct or indirect, for it may be an analogy of contrast as well as of resemblance, as we see in Adam or Aaron, David or Solomon, or any other person or thing spoken of, as the Epistle largely exemplifies.

Now it is the flesh, self in one form or another, which, when unjudged, exposes to falling in the wilderness. If we walked in the Spirit as we live in it, we should be kept straight and go forward. For the Holy Spirit ever glorifies Christ, and acts by the word in us, as Christ when here lived by the word. It is the true path of dependence and obedience, which glorifies the God who gave it. So the Lord defeated the enemy and did the will of God. Nor was it so only in the activity of His blessed life; but not less, yea, much more, in that death which pre-eminently accomplished the will and word of God.

And we are now following His steps in the same world which hated and cast Him out. As here we are kept by the power of God through faith, so it is His word that acts on and in us by the Holy Spirit. For this alone applies to us the revelation of God's nature as seen in Christ, which nourishes the life we have received in Christ, and detects the working in us of all that is outside the life which would dishonour God and would defile and endanger us. "For the word of God is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword." There is no instrument so exquisitely keen and cutting to deal with what is opposed to the mind and grace and holy purpose of God about us.

Therefore do the true-hearted 'believers welcome the application of its edge; for, if not pleasant to nature, it is profitable to us and due to God. As we are further told, it penetrates "even to dividing, of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and capable of judging heart's thoughts and intents." No word of man has any such effect. It may be instructive, or pathetic, or alarming to say nothing of its lighter qualities; but the word of God has the energy of its source and its own unmistakable character. It arrests the conscience, it sounds the heart, so that feelings and motives can no longer be hid. Christ, its great theme, shines as the True Light and makes everything manifest that is not like Himself. And how much there is in that horrid thing, self, which was never for an instant in Him!

Thus God's word acts "to dividing of soul and spirit," two things so closely allied and so resembling as to yield to no other discriminating means. "Of both joints and marrow" seems to be a figure of close physical conjunction, which are beyond the reach of human instrument, as "soul and spirit" still more impalpably. It is possible that both phrases go beyond severing one from the other, and mean that each is pierced by the word of God as nothing else could. For it is the life of the Spirit, and in no way an instrument of death, save to that which it expels as foreign and evil.

The word of God is also said to be able to discern "heart's thoughts and intents." Every working within the heart is thereby judged. There is no sparing of our own will. This the believer can hail, having a new nature which hates evil and feels according to Christ, the only One who, though man, never did His own will, and who is applied as a test and pattern. Thoughts before they are articulated in word, intents not yet reaching action, are sifted and vanish. Now where spiritual integrity exists, this is just what is wanted and desired; for we, from our new birth, are sanctified by the Spirit to the obedience of Christ; nor could it be otherwise, if Christ be our life. For life is prompt to act according to its nature, as we cannot fail to see, even in the bent of any animal according to its kind. Only in our case we have still the old Adam in us, which is never good and in the Christian to be always refused, now that we have a new and eternal life in Christ, which alone the Spirit exercises and directs, strengthens and cheers.

Even an O.T. saint ignorant of the superior power and privilege of the gospel could say, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139: 23, 24). How much more should we not welcome that word which makes it good in us! The germs of mischief are thus detected and destroyed; what can be more gracious, though the probe may be sharp? It is just because we are redeemed out of Egypt, but not yet in that rest where all will be according to the perfect love and glory of God. We are still in the view of this Epistle journeying through the desert, where God in His goodness is proving us to know and let us know what is in our heart. It may be humbling, but nothing can be more wholesome.

The final words are very impressive. "And there is not a creature unapparent before him; but all things [are] naked and laid open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do." This is exactly what unbelief hates and shirks at all cost; anything but the presence of God, and the consciousness of all out undisguisedly and without reserve in His sight. How much there is that we fail to discern within us!

Self-love, will, haste, zeal, constantly tend to blind us. He with whom we have to do acts in His absolute knowledge of all, and uses this or that to discover what is the moving spring or the hidden aim. Not only in vain is the snare set in the sight of any bird, but we have the comfortable certainty of God as it were speaking, to us, and this in the most safe and solemn manner; for He has magnified His word above all His name. Those who slight His word, treating it as dead and powerless, unless you have an erring, man to enforce it, forget that we have to do with a living God, who abounds toward us in suited helps and mercies even in this day of weakness, declension, and scattering. And if all other things and persons fail, He cannot, but watches over us in a holy love that acts for His own glory. His word puts us morally before Him when His eyes deal with our consciences. And as there is not a creature hidden from Him, all things are bare and laid open to His eyes with whom we have to do. It is verifying in us now what manifestation before Christ's tribunal will do perfectly by-and-by; and the effect is to deliver from settling down into a present rest of our own, that we may pursue our pilgrim path and labour of love, intent on His rest in glory to come.

The word of God, above all price and powerful though it be, is not the only declared means for our safe conduct through the wilderness. No instrument is so effectual to sift and deal with not outward ways only but all that is of man. Yet we need and have far more: even the active grace of Christ's priesthood, occupied with us in every sorrow and trial of our pilgrimage.

"Having then a great high priest passed as he is* through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast the confession. For we have not a high priest unable to sympathise with our infirmities, but having been tempted in all things in like manner apart from sin. Let us then approach with boldness to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace for seasonable help" (verses 14-16).

*I know not how better to represent two things apt to be overlooked; the absence of the article and the perfect tense of the participle. "Who," or "That" hath passed implies the article and is designative "Passed" simply would answer to the aorist.

It is not surprising that Tyndale made Hebrews 5 to begin with three verses which ordinarily conclude Hebrews 4. For such is their direct connection. Nevertheless, following up as they do the power of the word in detecting the flesh even in its subtlest forms, which is the death of the spirit practically, one can understand their more usual position.

Here the "great high priest" is presented in His normal position, not exceptionally as in Heb. 2: 17. That extraordinary action, the effecting of propitiation, was the basis of all for God's glory and man's salvation; but here we have the only due place of His intercessional functions. We see Him gone on through the heavens, not simply "entered," as in all the old English versions, save Wiclif who adhering to the Vulgate was here kept fairly right. Christ's immense superiority to Aaron and his succession is thus set out for the Christian's assurance. Hence is the great High Priest enabled most effectually to meet our every need, He being before God evermore on high, we encompassed with infirmity in the wilderness, and exposed to trial, danger, and sorrow. But it is the same "Jesus the Son of God," who made purification of the sins He bore in His body on the tree, before He set Himself down on God's right hand. The question of our slavery and guilt is therefore settled everlastingly for all that believe; as there was no claim of Egypt or its prince on Israel after passing through the Red Sea.

Yet the wilderness was full of snares and perils, as is our Christian path through the world. Only we, in a higher meaning and the fullest sense, are the redeemed of the Lord, needing no more for the soul's redemption, and awaiting that of the body at His coming. Still we are here in this wilderness, with nothing but the dreary barren sand if we have not God with us. Therefore to sustain us and sympathise with us in our weakness He has given us a great High Priest, whose love to us we have

already proved when there was nothing, to love in us, whose blood cleansed us from every sin, whose death and resurrection set us free, and raised an impassable barrier against our old enemies to be seen again no more for ever. We are not of the world, as Christ was not, slaves of Satan never more through His victory.

But we are not Yet as He is in the heavenly land. We are journeying through the dry and howling wilderness, and though we are not in the flesh (Rom. 8: 9) but in the Spirit as the Spirit dwells in us, none the less the flesh is in us ever ready to listen to the tempter, if our eyes be not set on Christ so as to walk after the Spirit. Hence the all-importance of our blessed Saviour for us on high, to which the presence of the Holy Spirit in us answers here below. Without both we should fall in the wilderness, as in it all flesh is judged and perishes. Nor do we as saints want sympathy with the evil thing in us. We have learnt to discern it by the word of God, and to hate the mind of the flesh as enmity against God and death. We have learnt too, that self and will are always and only evil; and therefore by grace we sit in judgment on ourselves, as now able each to say, "I am crucified with Christ, and live no longer I, but Christ liveth in me: and that which I now live in flesh, I live by faith in [lit., of] the Son of God who loved me and gave himself up for me" (Gal. 2).

Here then we now need constant vigilance and prayer, as we submit to that word which divinely scrutinises us and calls us to cut off every snare. But we have His gracious oversight where it is of chiefest efficacy, who feels for and with us, the Sanctifier with the sanctified, in every difficulty, danger, and suffering, as at the commandment of God we halt or march. But the cloud of the divine direction, however precious, is not enough, nor the warning or winning and cheering voices of the silver trumpets. We need a living person, inflexible for God's glory, unerring as to God's will, unailing in gracious power for us in our weakness and exposure; and all this we have, and incalculably more, in Jesus the Son of God passed through the heavens as a great High Priest. He is man as truly as you or any. He was not alone perfectly man but the perfect man. He knows therefore by experience what the world is, what Satan is; but that evil in the flesh, which He by His supernatural birth never had, He by dependence on God never let in for a moment. "The Holy Thing" born of Mary, He was and ever lived the Holy One of God.

Hence Him only could God make sin for us on the cross that we might become God's righteousness in Him. Hence now as the ever-living, High Priest He is exactly and exclusively the One to intercede for us and to sympathise with us. Had there been (I say not the blasphemy of sin or failure on His part, but) ever so little of what Scripture calls the mind of flesh or indwelling sin in Him, it would have both tainted fatally the offering for sin and blunted that heart of holy love from its sympathies with us in our desires and opposition by, the Spirit against the flesh. But there was absolutely none. Taking part in blood and flesh as we had both, in Him was no sin as in us there is: not merely no acts, but no root, of evil. Satan found nothing in Him (John 14: 30), nor God (Psalm 17: 3). Therefore could He die effectually for our sins and for sin; therefore does He live to plead no less efficaciously for us and sympathise with our infirmities. Death, and His death alone, could avail against sin; and God has accepted it in the fullest way, setting Jesus (who glorified Him in all things and in this the deepest of all) at His own right hand, and sending down His Spirit that we might know His estimate of its effectual value for us now and henceforth and for ever.

But we want One who lives and every moment interests Himself in all our difficulties and weakness as now living to God in an evil world, and not yet divested of that evil principle, the mind of the flesh, which was never in Him but in us. This draws out for us His sympathies so much the more, because we have not only to resist Satan as He alone did perfectly, but an inward enemy, or traitor which He had not. And He is absolutely competent, being God and Man in one person, and this after

Himself treading all the way through as completely as none else ever did or could in heaven or earth. For us then, passed as He is through the heavens, He pleads and feels with us perfectly. "Let us then hold fast the confession." Such is the demand and the cry of the new man against the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Had the Son of God been simply above the heavens, there could have been no such motive to simply hold fast, no such comfort in our trials as Christians. But here He lived, suffered, and died, knowing each and all as no one else ever did or can but Jesus the Son of God. Hence He was fitted, being man, and of unrivalled experience. He is able as none else to sympathise, not with our sins which as saints we dare not seek but most heartily repudiate, but with our infirmities. Not even a Paul, who gloried in these (certainly not in sins!) could do without His sympathy. Nay, it was because he knew and appreciated His sympathy so much better than we, that he could exult when we are too often depressed. It is not however in flesh or on the earth that He exercises these functions for us, but as passed through the heavens where neither sin nor infirmity can ever come. Thus does He bear us up, and with tenderest feeling for us, for each as truly as if none other existed to share it, being God no less than man. To allow a priest on earth, yea, to conceive Him such, is to judaize. Save for the wholly different work of laying the foundation of all in atonement, His priestly work is exclusively on high, as we are partakers of a heavenly calling, and are called to hold fast that confession and none other.

But in order to such a priesthood Jesus had been tempted in all things in like manner, sin excepted. Here we need to be on our guard. For the foisting in of "yet" in the last clause is apt to convey a notion wholly contrary to the truth and most derogatory to Christ. Most readers would gather thence that, though Christ was in all points tempted like as we are, yet He never sinned. Now one may boldly affirm that this is altogether short of the true meaning, and indeed quite another thought, so as to miss the mind of God in the passage. It is not sins or failures excepted, but "apart from sin." We have evil temptations from within, from fallen humanity; Christ had none. This was absolutely incompatible with His holy person. By a miracle He was even as to humanity exempt from taint of evil, as no one else was since the fall. And it is of these holy temptations that the Epistle to the Hebrews treats, not of our unholy ones. The Epistle of James distinguishes them very definitely in James 1. Compare verses 2, 12, on the one hand and verses 13-19 on the other. We know the latter too well, Jesus never. But He knew the former as no other before or since. He was in all things tempted according to likeness *i.e.* with us, with this infinite difference, "sin apart." He knew no sin, He had no inward sinful temptation. He is therefore the more, not the less, able to sympathise with us. For sin within, even if not yielded to, blinds the eye and dulls the heart, and hinders from unreserved occupation with the trials of others.

Having then such tender and efficacious intervention in our ever-living Intercessor at God's right hand, we are exhorted to draw near with boldness to the throne of grace. Carefully observe that it is not coming to Christ to plead for us, which supposes a soul not at ease before God and doubting the grace in which we who believe habitually stand through redemption. Christ did not go on high till all was cleared for us on earth, and ourselves, as we know from John 20, placed in the enjoyment of His own relationship with His Father and His God (His Deity of course always excepted), children and saints quickened together with Him, being forgiven all our trespasses (Col. 2: 13). "Let us approach therefore with all boldness unto the throne of grace." This is what we now need and have.

We are entitled thus to come with all boldness to God on His throne. To us, through the redemption of Christ, it is a throne of grace. Early in the Revelation we see a throne whence the expressions of judgment proceed. Toward the close it is a throne of glory, the throne of God and of the Lamb, whence issues a river of life clear as crystal; so will it be known after the marriage of the Lamb is come and His wife has prepared herself. Need we add the solemnity of the great white throne of

everlasting judgment The throne of grace, though of the same God, has a totally different character toward the many sons that are being brought to glory.

To this then we are now told to approach with all boldness. Some prefer what they call "a humble hope." But this is mere human sentiment or worse. In ourselves we have no ground even for the faintest hope; if we have Christ by faith, we wrong both His work and God's grace, now righteously and perfectly vindicated, if we do not approach with all boldness to the throne of grace. Is this to exaggerate the word of God? or is not that unbelieving? Alas, the unbelief of believers!

Observe what the aim is when we thus approach: "that we may receive mercy and find grace for seasonable help." Our weakness needs this mercy; and God's pleasure is that we, engaged with the difficulties of the way, may find grace for seasonable help. He sits there and invites thus that we may depend on Him for help in good time. Having such a Priest let us approach the throne of grace boldly. God and His Son Are pledged to bless us, as also we can look to Him without doubt or fear. Such is His word, no less than His will.

Hebrews 5

We now enter on the main doctrinal development of the Epistle, the detailed comparison of the priesthood of Christ with that of Aaron, pursued with collateral truths to the middle of Hebrews 10. The aim evidently is to prove the incontestable superiority of Christ in this as in every other point of view. It was of the utmost moment for such confessors of His name as were Jews; it is of scarcely less importance for souls accustomed to the traditions and practices of Christendom, where an order of officials has been set up, not always sacerdotal in name but ever tending to fall back on that Aaronic order, though according to God it grew old and vanished away when the substance was established for ever in Christ by redemption.

"For every high priest, taken as he is from among men, is appointed for men in things pertaining unto God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins, being able to exercise forbearance toward the ignorant and erring, since he himself also is compassed with infirmity; and on account of this he ought, even as for the people, so also for himself also to offer for sins. And no one taketh the honour to himself but when called by God even as Aaron also" (verses 1-4).

The description is general, but with Aaron in view in order to bring in the glorious contrast of Christ. This has not always been seen, and the consequence is often disastrous. Such an oversight is inexcusable, because God has clearly revealed the infinite dignity of Christ's person and the grace of His work. Were these foundations of the faith held fast, they afford an invaluable safeguard for souls. Where it is not so, what is there to preserve from error of the deadliest kind? Christ is the truth. This scripture upholds Him, as the Holy Spirit is here to glorify Him and will never be a consenting party to His dishonour. And the Father's love is never tasted otherwise. For His complacency was ever there, and especially expressed to Him as man on earth, that we who believe in Christ might hear the Son and have fellowship with the Father no less than with Him.

Assuredly Christ is only viewed as priest, and only became such after the assumption of manhood, and indeed much more. As little can it be questioned that He entered on that office for the partakers of the heavenly calling, to sympathise with them, as well as appear and intercede for them in God's presence. But the language here employed does not refer to Him; rather is it to give point, by way of contrast as a whole, with that earthly priesthood whose highest representative was Aaron. Hence the language, however comprehensive, leaves out what is most distinctive of Christ, and expresses a ground in verse 2 and a consequence in verse 3 which faith ought to have regarded as intolerable in His

case, because it is opposed to the truth of both His person and His work. The fact is that it is simply every case of human high priesthood which is set before us here, and not that of Christ, which follows subsequently and is placed in marked contradistinction. Indeed the basis laid at the beginning of the Epistle refutes the inclusion of Christ; for He is carefully shown to be Son of God as well as Son of man. His divine glory is carefully maintained from the first and throughout. It is this, as well as the accomplishment of redemption, that gives infinite efficacy to His office no less than to His sacrifice.

The opening verses of our chapter therefore set out the ordinary requirements of any and every high priest, however truly the Lord may have possessed some and superseded others by His surpassing and unique dignity. The real aim is to evince the necessary inferiority of a human high priest, great as the privilege was in divine things, even if the high priest were Aaron the most honoured of all; and thus to enhance the incomparable glory of Christ's high priesthood.

Every high priest was "taken from among men." This would be most inadequate if applied to Christ, but perfectly true of Aaron and his successors. They were but men, though taken from among them. So to speak of the Lord is to forget who He is. The Word was made flesh. He became man, but God He was and is from everlasting to everlasting, the Eternal. An angel had been wholly unsuited, and is only employed in prophetic vision when the object is to express distance without losing the fact of priesthood, as in Rev. 8: But in fact, a high priest was of necessity a man, though taken from among men. He was to represent man before God, and to represent God before men. His appointment was on behalf of men in things relating to God, and more definitely to "offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins." What a meagre statement, if Christ were in view, who gave Himself up for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour! It is, on the contrary, precise and full if the inspired writer were treating only of human high priesthood as distinguished from that of Christ.

Still more evident is the other side of high priestly functions, "being able to exercise forbearance toward the ignorant and erring, since he himself also is compassed with infirmity." He can feel and make considerate allowance for the ignorant and erring, being no more than a weak man himself, whatever be the exalted character of his office; he himself also is beset round about with infirmity. How true this is of every high priest without qualification needs no proof. But what guards and limitations and reserves are necessary if a believer essays to bring Christ within the range! That the Son deigned to become man is truth only secondary to His being God, perfectly man and perfect man. That He knew hunger, thirst, weariness, is certain, that He was crucified in (or of) weakness* is so revealed to us. Were this or its like that which is conveyed here, none ought to hesitate; for it is a wrong to the truth to detract from His real humanity, as of course from His proper deity. But to my mind the passage speaks of a mere man, such as every other high priest is necessarily, and grounds his ability to exercise forbearance toward the ignorant and erring on his own besetment with weakness; whereas, when He is without doubt referred to, He is spoken of as "Jesus the Son of God" and thus shown in the power of divine nature and relationship, though partaking of ours to sympathise with us fully, in fact tempted in all things after a like manner with the momentous exception of sin. Of that class of temptation He had absolutely none, as it was incompatible with the integrity and holiness of His person as well as the efficacy and acceptance of His work.

* Calvin in his Commentary argues on Christ bearing our infirmities, though free from sin and undefiled. The reference is of course to Matthew's application (Matt 8: 17) of Isa. 53: 4. But it is erroneous. The meaning is, not that He took our infirmities and bare our sickness as in His person, but that thus He acted in healing diseases and expelling demons. It was not mere power; but He felt before God in grace the weight of all the evil that He removed.

But what absolutely precludes and expels this loose, erroneous, and Christ-dishonouring application is the pendant in verse 3. "And on account of this [infirmity] he ought, even as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins." This is bound up with the verses that precede, and rigorously pertains to "every high priest" intended in them. All well-read men are aware that some scholars have dared to apply even this to Christ, following out logically the mistake that applies the passage to Him generally. They ought to have judged rather that, as it is a blasphemous falsehood that Christ offered for sins on His own account, the verses that precede describe high priesthood in general but not His, which has a higher ground in His deity and in His humanity Son of God as born of woman, and thus a more glorious character with power and efficacy intrinsic and eternal. The contrast here cannot be fairly denied. And it is the more striking because of the only point where resemblance is expressed immediately following. "And no one taketh the honour to himself but when called by God even as Aaron also." The call of God was essential, and one might have thought indisputably clear in Aaron's, and all the more after the gainsaying of Korah was answered in the destruction of himself and his rebellious companions. But the mind of the flesh is enmity against God, and Christendom is apprised of that very woe in the solemn warning of Jude, no less prophetic than that of Enoch which he cites.

It is evident from the last verse under consideration that the priest is viewed according to God's mind and statutes, not as the facts had long misrepresented this in fallen Israel. For notoriously intrigue, corruption, and violence had reigned for many a year in Jerusalem, and the civil power had taken the place of God as things at length grew irretrievably evil. If the priests did not take the honour to themselves, it was because the power of the sword forbade any save its own nominee. Hence the disorder that prevailed when the word of God came to John, the forerunner of the Messiah, "Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests," not only two but such a pair! Far different was the will of God even for the time of shadows.

From Scripture we know that the early uprising of Korah the Levite with others not even of that tribe disputed the priesthood of Aaron. This gainsaying, however, God settled publicly and solemnly by a destruction without parallel of the ringleaders, and by a plague that cut off thousands of the guilty people only stayed by the gracious and effectual intervention of Aaron at the bidding of Moses. Nor was this all. For Jehovah directed twelve rods to be laid up in the tabernacle of the congregation before the testimony, one for each house of their fathers, that He might cause that man's rod to blossom whom He chose to draw near to Himself on behalf of all the others. On the morrow the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi alone budded, and blossomed, and yielded almonds: the figure of a better priesthood, of life out of death and fruit by the evident grace of God, of the One that ever liveth to make intercession. From Aaron the descent was fixed in his sons, not without striking dealings in good and evil that modified the succession according to the declared will of God. With Phinehas in the desert was the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; as it was manifest later when Solomon thrust out Abiathar from being priest and set Zadok in his stead, thus fulfilling the prophetic word about the intruding line of Eli. God alone was entitled to order it; and this He did, as He will by-and-by in the new age when all Israel shall be saved. Then the sons of Zadok reappear to minister to Jehovah, and stand in His presence to offer unto Him the fat and the blood, saith the Lord Jehovah. Ezek. 44: 15-31; Ezek. 48: 8-14.

But of this future restoration when temple, priesthood, and sacrifice shall be in force, never more to be misused but rather to remind Israel under the new covenant of their accomplished blessing in the Messiah, we hear nothing in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The habitual aim is to bring out what the believer has now in Him Who died and is risen and exalted at God's right hand. There are hints here and there of the age and habitable earth to come, of the rest that remaineth for the people of God, of

good things to come, of the day approaching, and the like. There are those intimations which look onward to another state and for blessing to the elect nation. But it would have undone the object of the Spirit to have expatiated on these earthly glories, though enough is said to prove that they are in no way effaced or forgotten, but await their fulfilment when Christ appears. Yet the evident and earnest and urgent task in hand is to bring out a "better thing" already verified in Christ on high, for those who believe while He is hidden in God and have the Holy Spirit to show us the efficacy of His sacrifice as seen in the light of glory, and the present application of His priesthood to the partakers of a heavenly calling, and the heavens themselves as the only true and adequate sanctuary, into which we are invited to draw near with all boldness in spirit. Hence the regeneration and its assured earthly privileges for Israel by-and-by stand in the background that the lustre of present heavenly associations may be undimmed, and that those who now believe in Christ while the nation rejects Him may see and enjoy their portion as incomparably deeper and higher.

Accordingly, whether for vindicating God's glory on the one hand or for the soul's complete blessedness on the other, we are waiting for no work. The mightiest for both is already done and accepted; as the person who has wrought all is the guarantee of its absolute and eternal excellency. And it is all the more precious and admirable, because He previously came down into the reality of a race and a scene ruined by sin, suffering for it yet perfectly free from it. This place He accepted loyally with an entire submissiveness and an unswerving obedience, whatever it might cost. Never was such a servant. Divine dignity, infinite love, unflinching devotedness, met in Him who took a bondman's place all through His life on earth, yea, in the end was made sin where none could follow.

"Thus the Christ also glorified not himself to be made high priest, but he that spake unto him, Thou art my Son: I today have begotten thee: even as he saith also in another [place], Thou [art] a priest for ever according to the order of Melchizedek" (verses 5, 6).

Truly He glorified not Himself in any respect, even when the atoning work was done. For His kingdom He waits, though Ruler of the kings of the earth. He is gone into the far country and on receiving it He will return. Meanwhile we have in Him a great High Priest, as we have seen. But in this too He "glorified not Himself to be made high priest." He waited on Him that sent Him, It was for God to speak, as He did. And here Psalm 2: 7 is again cited. The dignity of His relationship is acknowledged. "Thou art my Son: I today have begotten Thee" (verse 5). Others were lifted out of their nothingness. God conferred as He would on such as were but men compassed with infirmity like Aaron. Christ too deigned to be truly born of woman, but even so God owned Him His Son as none else. To partake of blood and flesh through and of His mother was in no way to forfeit His title. Son of God from everlasting to everlasting, in time also as man He has God declaring "I today have begotten thee." His personal dignity, His relationship as Son of God, we hear repeated in connection with the office of priest. Such is the true ground in contrast with every other. Undoubtedly the Word was made flesh to be made high priest; and He has been already shown truly Son of man in this very connection (Heb. 2). Still there is the utmost care to reiterate the words of the second Psalm, though cited long before, that we may remember the more distinctly who He is that was made high priest in contradistinction with the highest human one of God's own appointment.

Not till then have we the direct and explicit prediction from Psalm ex. "As he saith also in another [place], Thou [art] a priest for ever according to the order of Melchizedek" (verse 6). "For ever" is of course here qualified by the necessity and the existence of priesthood. In the eternal state, where sin and suffering are no more, it will cease in the final result of grace triumphant in glory.

Farther on we shall have before us the detailed application of this remarkable oath of Jehovah, the

oath of which, it is added, He will not repent, the key to the scene historically introduced in Gen. 14. Suffice it here to say that the Spirit appears in this allusion to be simply drawing attention to the singular honour of the Christ, as in no way sharing in the order of Aaron but giving force to that of Melchizedek, who comes before us long before as sole priest, without successor, predecessor, or subordinates. The order of Aaron was essentially successional, and for a reason that attaches to man as he is, subject to death because of sin. Melchizedek is strikingly brought before us as a living priest, alone in his blessing the faithful man on God's part, and in blessing God most high on man's part: the eloquent type which the Spirit so often uses of the Christ, as the sole and ever-living Priest on high.

We have had the first reference to the order of Melchizedek, which is repeated so often in the Epistle as to prove to any one who reverences Scripture its immense importance in the mind of God. It is a striking part of the typified glory of the Messiah, foreshown in Gen. 14, predicted and declared with divine solemnity in Psalm ex., applied and expounded with care and fulness in our Epistle, which can be examined as each reference comes before us. In the present chapter it is the peculiar and personal dignity which is insisted on in distinction from Aaron, however eminent by God's choice and appointment. But the Christ was God's Son, begotten too in time according to Psalm 2, as in John's Gospel Only-begotten before time and above dispensation, being eternal no less than the Father. Such was His person; and His office was no less singularly glorious even if typified by a royal priest of early days. For, as the psalm cited puts it, He is a priest for ever according to the order of Melchizedek. As Melchizedek stands alone, without predecessor or successor so far as the record speaks, the negative in his case becomes the positive in the case of Christ. And this the unimpeachably divine authority of the Psalm lays down with all simplicity and assurance. And such will be the *exercise* of His priesthood for the earth when the days of heaven shine upon it in the future kingdom. Meanwhile, as our Epistle urges, He is priest after this *order* now as for ever. As He alone is Son, so He is exclusively royal priest without end, yet not glorifying Himself any more than Aaron, but a thousand years before so addressed by God, as the typical shadow met Abram not far from a thousand years before the Psalm.

Here we are first directed to His earthly path, then to His heavenly place, and the blessed results. "Who in the days of his flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him out of death, and having been heard for his pious fear, though he were Son, learned obedience from the things which he suffered; and having been perfected, he became to all those that obey him author of everlasting salvation, addressed by God high priest according to the order of Melchizedek" (verses 7-10). Suffering was to be distinctively His portion. It had no place in Aaron any more than in Melchizedek. In the Christ it was altogether pre-eminent and peculiar.

Glory intrinsic and conferred is His beyond comparison yet this is not all that grace gives in Him, nor yet all that we need, not merely as sinners but here especially as saints. Our sin and our misery but furnished the opportunity to divine love, and this is only shown and learnt in Christ, in Him that suffered infinitely here below — and Christ alone from the mystery of His person was capable of such suffering. Thus has He glorified, and thus reached hearts opened by grace to feel in our measure the wonders of His love. In the days of His flesh we behold the surface and hear the sound of His sorrows which God alone was able to fathom. For this as for other reasons essential to the purpose of God and the blessing of man the Word was made flesh and tabernacled among us, and obeyed unto death, yea, death of the cross. And if ever prayers and supplications, if ever strong crying and tears, were realities for the heart before God, His were. For His divine nature screened Him from no pain, grief, or humiliation, or suffering, but rather gave competency of person to endure perfectly, while all was accepted in absolute dependence on, and subjection to, His Father.

Not a particle of hardness or insensibility was in Christ. It was no small thing for His love to have

hatred and contempt, to be despised and rejected of men; not only not to be honoured by the people of God and His people, but to be esteemed stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted; to be deserted by all His disciples, denied by one, betrayed by another; and, far the most terrible of all and wholly different from all, to be forsaken of God just when He most needed His consolation and support. But so it must have been if sin was to be duly judged in His sacrifice, if our sins were to be completely borne away, and God to be glorified as to evil adequately and for ever. Gethsemane and the cross, or the first part of Psalm 22, are the best comment on verse 7. It was equally in keeping with God that He was not heard while atonement was in accomplishment, and that He was heard when He poured out His soul unto death, and Jehovah made it an offering for sin. For He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.

Christ therefore, besides that which fell exclusively on Him as the propitiation for our sins in vindicating God at all cost sacrificially, knew as no saint ever did all that can befall holiness and love in a world and in the midst of a people alienated from God, yet claiming all the more that privilege as theirs only. As at the beginning Satan sought to attract Him from the path of lowly suffering and absolute obedience, by temptations subtly suited to the circumstances, so he assailed Him at the end with the terrors of death, and of such a death! But all was in vain. He suffered but did not succumb. Though prayer characterised Him at all times, then especially in His sorrow and deep depression He is alone with His Father (even His chosen three left behind about a stone's throw), and fallen on His face deprecates that cup, yet in meek submission; and this a second time (while others could not watch one hour with Him), and a third time from that agony in which He prayed more earnestly. And if an angel appeared to strengthen him, none the less did His sweat become as great drops of blood falling down on the ground. He endured the temptation and was blessed, suffering to the utmost. They slept for sorrow and, instead of praying entered into the temptation and fell. And He was saved not from dying but out of death. Whatever His inward and unwavering confidence, He could have no public answer till resurrection, when He was saved and out of death. To be saved from dying had left man in his sins, and Satan's power unbroken, and God's judgment in suspense, and His grace impotent. But the Son of man was there to deliver from all evil and to set all good on an immutable foundation to God's glory, even while saving the lost. He was heard for His pious fear,* but after unsparing judgment had taken its course. Though Son of God, He learned † obedience from the things which He suffered. We learn to obey as God's children, who were once sons of disobedience; He being Son was used to speak, and it was done; He knew not what obedience was. But when He became man, He took loyally this place: in the volume of the book it is written of Him, not of the first man, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." Indeed He suffered it to the uttermost as well as did it in all perfection. His "having learned obedience" is only "difficult and much agitated," because of weakness in holding fast His personal glory as true God, used only to command till He became man, and then "learned obedience" in all perfection as the perfect Servant, absolutely submissive to what He subsequently suffered.

* Not only Calvin and Beza of the Reformed, but the old Latin versions, followed by Ambrose, and by moderns, especially Lutherans, strangely render this "delivered from fear," or the like.

† Dr. Whitby fell into the perversion of rendering the verb "taught"!

This expression "perfected" means the completeness of His course through sufferings in resurrection and heavenly glory, as we may see far beyond controversy in Heb. 7: 28, where the word has a form to express permanent result, instead of only indicating the fact accomplished as here. Neither "sanctified" nor "consecrated" is the true force: other words signify these correctly. Nor would either suit this place when His completed work of suffering is in view, by which alone salvation could

be. And the result is here affirmed in terms of triumph: "He became to all those that obey Him author of everlasting salvation." Thus on the one hand is His glorious position maintained, and on the other everlasting salvation is assured to all who own Him. He is none other than the prophet like unto Moses whom Jehovah promised long ago to raise up. But He is far more, and more blessed. For instead of only the threat of God's retribution to him that hearkens not, He is become author of salvation to those that obey Him; yea, in contrast with legal uncertainty, "of everlasting salvation to those that obey Him." How indeed could it be otherwise if we believe in the glory of His person and the efficacy of His work? But all have not faith; and faith — obedience is the root of all other obedience precious in God's eyes, who disdains to accept the homage that is proffered to Himself while making light of His Son and of His infinite sufferings. "He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father who sent Him." "Whoever denieth the Son hath not the Father either; he that confesseth the Son hath the Father also."

The rest of the chapter, and the following one, compose a long and instructive digression on the state of those addressed, the more to be blamed because they had had time to become mature. This it was forbade opening up the subject of Melchizedek, which otherwise might have been happy. It even exposed souls to the danger of going back from Christianity, though better things were expected of themselves, seeing that grace already had wrought practically in them. Hence on the one hand they are encouraged to be imitators of those that through faith and patience inherit the promises; and on the other God is shown to have given strong encouragement to the most tried and feeble by Jesus within the veil, the Forerunner gone in for us.

"Concerning whom [or, which] we have much to say and hard to be interpreted in saying, since ye are become dull of hearing. For whereas on account of the time ye ought to be teachers, ye again have need that some one teach you the elements of the beginning of the oracles of God, and have become in need of milk, [and] not of solid food. For every one that partaketh of milk [is] inexperienced in word of righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food belongeth to full-grown [persons], who on account of habit have their senses exercised for distinguishing both good and evil (verses 11-14).

There is no such hindrance to spiritual intelligence as traditional religion, and hence none exposed to it so much as Jewish believers. The wisdom of the world is another great impediment, which drew out the censure and warning of the apostle to the Corinthian saints, especially in 1 Cor. 2, 3, and in terms somewhat parallel. Both are hostile to that faith which is only nourished by the divine word, and is impaired by any human admixture. But of the two the religious rival is the more dangerous, because it has more seeming devotedness and humility, and so appeals, however groundlessly, to conscience instead of to mere mind. The effect is that growth in the Lord cannot but be arrested. Instead of becoming spiritual, souls abide fleshly and infantine. For the Holy Spirit is grieved, and reproves the state, instead of being free to lead on and strengthen by taking the things of Christ and showing them to such. We learn thereby how much the moral condition has to do with God's training of the saint; and we may well thank Him that so it is. For nothing is more dangerous than advancing in knowledge where flesh and the world are unjudged: the devil at once seizes his opportunity to overthrow the unwary and careless, and seek His dishonour whose name they bear. But it is no remedy for the evil to be dwarfed by tradition or diverted by philosophy. The Holy Spirit has ample matter to convey; but if we are dulled and darkened by seeking to glean in other fields, the word of God becomes hard Of interpretation to us. Hence it is added "Since ye are become" (not simply "are" as in the A.V.) "dull in your hearing" (the dative of reference, and naturally thence in the plural).

Our Lord had touched on the same difficulty and danger for His Israelitish hearers in the first Gospel. From every hearer of the word of the kingdom, if he *understand it not*, the wicked one comes and catches away what had been sown in his heart; as on the other hand the seed sown on the good

ground is he that hears and *understands the word* (Matt. 13: 19, 23). In Mark, as with a view to service, it is a question of reception or not; in Luke, as looking on to strangers of the Gentiles, the point is "believing" and being "saved," keeping the word and bringing forth fruit with patience. But the Jew, as being in continual contact with religious prejudice and tradition, was in peculiar danger of not "understanding" what was new and of God, the present test of faith.

The apostle now expostulates because of their backwardness in the truth (after professing it so long). "For whereas ye ought on account of the time to be teachers, ye again have need that some one teach you the elements," etc. Christendom lies open to the self-same rebuke, and from similar causes. Rom. 11 had pointed out a danger peculiar to it, and tending to as great if not greater self-complacency, the danger of conceiving itself secure for ever, and so perverting the obvious admonition from the excision of the Jew into the proud assurance of immunity for the Gentile craft. It is indeed the very snare into which the Romish system has fallen beyond all others — and is it not striking that the Spirit gave this warning there in particular? Here it is only the stop put to their learning the things of God that is noticed. Instead of being teachers now, after so long bearing the Lord's name, they had need again to be taught the very rudiments. So in similar conditions it ever is. No man ever became mighty in God's word by the study of theology, though some theologians have in a measure grown in spite of what is calculated to obstruct and blind. It is the general effect which proves the character of what works for profit or loss. Now who can doubt the lamentable ignorance of God's word in Christendom at large? And is it not certain that the darkness is greatest where men are most shut up to tradition and least search the Scriptures?

No doubt when souls are in this state, they need a powerful means to set them free; and this Epistle is a fine sample of the truth grace employs to that end. The person of Christ has to be clearly presented, and their distinct and blessed association with Him through His atoning work, as well as His position and gracious functions for them on high. This alone dispels all earth-born clouds, and extricates from the din and dust of human schools. Therefore was the apostle ministering these fundamental truths throughout in order to their deliverance. He implies, nay affirms, that they were spiritually infants needing to learn the elements over again. These, qualified as "of the beginning of the oracles of God," mean what God gave in Christ here below, short of His redemption and His heavenly place, with the gift of the Spirit, which lend Christianity its true distinctive character and its power. The eyes of the disciples were blessed because they saw, and their ears because they heard, what many prophets and righteous men desired to see and hear but did not. The accomplishment of redemption and the new place of Christ in heaven went far beyond. Here they were utterly dull, not so much about the facts as respecting their blessed import and results to faith, as well as for God's glory. The issue was that the very rudiments were rendered obscure and uncertain: so little can the Christian afford to waste his time in seeking the living One among the dead, and so injurious is the issue of turning from the actual testimony of God on our relationships to a vague and dreamy sentiment about the past. Not one thing is understood aright. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." It is never so, if we look not to Christ where God is now pointing us. In His light we see light. Failure here exposes the Christian now as then to become a person Having need of milk and not of solid food — of fare for babes rather than for adults: a state quite anomalous since redemption.

This figure is unfolded in the next two verses. In no way is milk slighted in its due place. It is the most wholesome and suited of all nourishment for the infant; but the grown man requires quite different food for his developed state and appropriate duties. "For every one that partaketh of milk [is] unskilled (or, without experience) in the word of righteousness, for he is an infant; but solid food belongeth to full-grown persons that have by reason of habit their senses exercised for distinguishing

both good and evil." By "partaking" is meant having milk for one's share in ordinary use, as a babe takes it not for partial or occasional fare, as any one might. The word translated "full-grown" is literally "perfect," and given in the A.V. so repeatedly that some lose the true force, which is simply those come to maturity.

Now this is the present aim of the gospel, and its effect wherever souls submit to God's righteousness in Christ. We may see the same truth in substance set forth in Gal. 3, 4. Faith having come (i.e. dispensationally), we are no longer under a child-guide, as the law had been unto Christ; "for ye are all," says the apostle to the Galatian saints, "God's sons by faith in Christ Jesus." "Now I say that the heir, as long as he is an infant, differeth nothing from a slave, though he be lord of all, but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father. So we too, when we were infants, were enslaved under the elements of the world. But when the fulness of time came, God sent forth his Son, come of woman, come under law, that he might redeem those under the law, that we might receive our sonship. And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

We may gather therefore that to stop short of liberty and sonship is to abide in the bondage of law, and to undo the privileges of the gospel. Further, we may note how indigenious to the heart is this fear of God's grace, which, even when the gospel is sounding freedom to the slave through faith in Christ, is ever prone to go back to what is annulled (2 Cor. 3); and this among Gentiles as well as Jews: a retrograde tendency which the apostle was combating always and everywhere. Whatever its source, whether worldly wisdom or legalism, it is an evil to which no quarter should be shown, more particularly as we have rarely to do with it now in Jews, for whom old and fond habits might be pleaded. But for the ordinary Christian, what extenuation can be offered? The risen and ascended Christ supposes the work accepted of God whereby peace was made; and every believer is justified from all things from which none could be justified by the law of Moses.

The Hebrews addressed had not gone on with the gospel. They were as infants needing milk, and unable to digest solid food. It was not God's will, but their prejudices and unbelief which thwarted their growth. The believer if simple passes, we may say, at once into sonship; if occupied with self, with his ordinances, with his church, or with any object to engage his soul other than Christ, he remains an infant like those Hebrews, and in no real sense full-grown any more than they. God is not mocked, nor does He suffer even saints to slight or doubt the gospel with impunity. It is to prefer bondage when grace is proclaiming liberty; and to need milk instead of that solid food which suits the full-grown; yet every Christian ought to be full-grown. Christ redeemed him, even if a Hebrew of Hebrews or a Pharisee of Pharisees, to know the sonship of God in the power of His Spirit.

Hebrews 6

It is of the highest importance then that the believer should wake up to his due place according to the call of grace. Christ as He now is makes His relationship evident. By Him and to Him where He sits at God's right hand we are called. It is therefore in the fullest sense a heavenly calling. Old things not evil things only, are passed away. We are by faith associated with the glorified Christ who, having accomplished redemption, is on that ground gone into heaven, so as to confer on the faithful a heavenly relationship. All that is distinctive of the Christian accordingly is in contrast with the ancient people of God, whose position, associations, worship, and hope were earthly, though ordered of God. The danger of the Christian therefore, and especially for the Hebrew Christian, was a lapse into earthly things which was the more easily done as the O.T. was no less divinely inspired than the New, and hence

might plausibly be pleaded to justify such a return.

"Wherefore, leaving the word of the beginning of the Christ, let us press on unto full growth [lit. perfection], not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith in God, of teaching of washings and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of dead [persons], and of everlasting judgment; and this will we do if God permit" (verses 1-3).

We could not be exhorted in any just sense to leave "the principles" of the doctrine of Christ. For first principles never become antiquated. Nor does the text really say so here, any more than it does in truth speak slightly of, "the first principles of the oracles of God" in Heb. 5: 12. "Principles" or "first principles" of Christianity it is of all moment to apprehend and hold fast; and in fact the Epistle insists on this from first to last. It was here the Hebrew confessors of Christ were weak. They had faintly if at all realised the truth that was wrapped up in the person of Christ and in the facts on which the gospel is based. They were occupied with whatever lay short of His death, resurrection, and ascension, with a Messiah known after the flesh. But these were such "rudiments" as were in keeping with Him on earth, when the Holy Spirit was not yet given and the words the Lord spoke were dimly understood. Indeed many things He had yet to say which they could not then bear. This was but "the beginning of the oracles of God"; whereas the principles of the doctrine of Christ would better express that profound connection of truth with fundamental facts and Christ's person which characterises the Epistles of Paul and John. What is really meant here is "the word of the beginning of Christ," that which was revealed in the days of His flesh and in due time recorded as His ministry in the Gospels. To limit the soul to this, perfect as it was in its season and in itself, is to do without that blessed use of His redemption and heavenly headship which the Holy Spirit inspired the apostles to preach and teach, and which we have permanently in the apostolic writings. His cross totally changed the standing of the believer. To ignore this is in fact to stop short of full and proper Christianity, to remain infants, where the Lord would have His own to reach their majority. Let us not slight the riches of His grace.

"Wherefore, leaving the word of the beginning of the Christ, let us press on unto full growth." The new status of the Christian depends on Christ dead, risen, and in heaven. The infinite sacrifice is already offered and accepted; and only so has Christ taken His seat on the right hand of the Majesty on high. We cannot therefore go to elements before the cross for that which forms and fashions the Christian. We, if full-grown, need the corn of the land, now that it is no longer a question of raining manna in the wilderness.

The various English versions are disappointing. Wiclif seems to have read or mistaken "immittentes" for "intermittentes" in the Vulgate, for he has the strange error of "bringing in," etc., instead of leaving off. And Tyndale is loose indeed: let us leave the doctryne pertayninge to the beginnunge of a Christen man." In result it is not far from the general sense, though intolerable as a translation. Cranmer's Bible and the Genevese followed Tyndale less or more closely. The Rhemish, save in its servile adherence to the Latin, is more exact than any; for even the A. and the R.Vv., as we have seen, might mislead in the text, though precise in the margin. The Revisers rightly gave "full grown" for perfect in Heb. 5: 14; consistency would therefore demand "full growth" here. For it is not the quite ignorant who fail to understand that "Perfection" means only this, the adult standing of the Christian as compared with infancy before redemption. But the enemy has a hand in keeping believers back now, while this Epistle chides the Hebrews for the same culpable dulness in early days.

The statement in the chapter before, that Christ having been made perfect became, to all those that obey Him, Author of eternal salvation, helps much to see what perfection or full growth means here. Till then the saints could not rise above promise. Now whatever, or how many soever, be the promises

of God, in Him is the Yea, and in Him the Amen for glory to God by us. Till redemption the Spirit of prophecy could say that God's salvation was near to come, and His righteousness to be revealed. But the gospel declares that His righteousness has been manifested, and that the believer has eternal life and receives the end of His faith, even soul-salvation, though we have to wait for that of the body yet. Meanwhile those that are Christ's are cleansed once for all, not only sanctified through the offering of Christ, but perfected in perpetuity (εἰς τὸ διηνεκές), as Heb. 10 tells us unhesitatingly. The Holy Ghost, instead of keeping our guilt continually before us, testifies that through Christ's work God will remember our sins and iniquities no more. Thus for the Christian, with full remission, there is no more offering for sins; and hence he has boldness to enter the holies by the blood of Jesus. Those that by faith seize this, the truth of the gospel, are no more under age, held in bondage (as the apostle says elsewhere) under the rudiments of the world. By the faith of Him who died and rose we receive the adoption of sons, and through His Spirit cry, Abba, Father. So we draw nigh.

It was here the Hebrews were slow to hear and learn of God. They did not doubt that Jesus was the Christ; but they were dull to own both the full glory of His person and the present eternal efficacy of His work. This failure in faith kept them babes, and for this they are blamed; for God could not reveal more distinctly the dignity of Christ, nor could Father, Son, and Holy Ghost add to the fulness of what His cross is to God as well as to the believer. The Holy Spirit is come down from the glory of heaven to attest what Christ is there, and what His work has done for all those that believe in Him. Entrance by faith into this portion is full growth.

It was really going back from heavenly glory and eternal redemption on the part of all who refused to go forward into the full privileges of the gospel, content to know no more than what the disciples had before the cross. All they had then did not give them peace with God, for it did not cleanse their consciences. The middle wall of partition stood unbroken. There was no access for them into the holies, nor had they the Spirit of adoption. Neither the sting of death was gone, nor the power of sin annulled. Full growth implies, on the contrary, all this blessedness, and more; and to this the Hebrews are here exhorted to go on. It is not attainment, but simple faith in the word of truth, the gospel of our salvation, in a word Christianity. Alas! how many who call themselves Christians, as sincere believers as the Hebrews addressed, are no less than they looking behind, instead of moving on to the enjoyment by faith of the risen Saviour, and of their nearness to His God and Father!

The next words give a sample of the things that occupied those who were not full grown, from which they are here dissuaded: "not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and faith in God." It was all well to have laid such a foundation once; it was childish to be ever learning and never coming to the knowledge of the truth. Repentance is indispensable for a sinful man; faith in God must ever be in a saint. But eternal life is now bestowed, Christ sent as propitiation, and the Holy Ghost given to us. Is all this to leave believers where they were? Take again yet lower things, "of doctrine of washings and imposition of hands." These had their place, as we know, and many heed them much now as then, external though they are and in no way perfecting the worshipper as touching the conscience. The "washings" may include John's baptism, or that of the disciples, though the word slightly differs in its form; and the laying on of hands was certainly an ancient sign of blessing, which we see practised in various ways even after the gospel. But those whose hearts dwell in such signs and set not their mind on things above betray the symptoms of their infantine condition. God has provided some better thing for us. They are among the things whatever their teaching might be, which the light of the glory now revealed in Christ leaves in the shade. So again with the still weightier doctrine "of resurrection of the dead and of eternal judgment." No Christian denies either for a moment, but acknowledges both truths; yet he looks for his blessing at Christ's coming, as he knows from His own lips that judgment awaits

only those who reject Him, and that believers are to rise in the contrasted resurrection of life and do not come into judgment.

Let souls beware then of labour in vain that diverts from better blessing, "And this we will do, if God permit." For yet another and urgent danger is set before the Hebrew Christians, not a little connected with obstinate clinging to old things however infantine, or a yet more ensnaring return of affection for them after being apparently weaned.

God had put honour upon the Son of man, not only here below (Acts 2: 23. 10: 38), but yet more when redemption had vindicated Him, and overthrown Satan, and made not only righteousness but heavenly glory available for man in sovereign grace. The consequence was an outburst of divine light and a display of power of the Spirit in man, such as had never been, and such as could never be otherwise. The time for the public deliverance of the world is not yet come, though Jesus the Lord of lords and King of kings sits at God's right hand. In fact another and still more intimately. blessed work is in hand, the call of the heavenly saints, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, His body and even to be His bride, though the marriage be not yet come. These He is gathering by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Meanwhile the Spirit could not but bear witness of the victory over evil and death and Satan already achieved by the risen and ascended Christ Hence the power that wrought at Pentecost and afterward according to the promise of the Lord, a promise amply fulfilled.

For His was title, not only to give eternal life to as many as the Father gave Him, but over all flesh. And the Lord manifested power not only in the apostles, but in multitudes of others. It was never guaranteed to be all the days till the end with His servants, as His presence was. If we in these days cannot speak of it, let us have grace at least to feel and own why this is, and how little His saints know deliverance from that which dishonours Him and makes it morally questionable whether such a display could be now without compromising the truth. For how consistently could there be such a divine energy shed on *all* Christians after being gathered in one when scattered again to the shame of His name? How could *one* company be singled out to have such an honour conferred without the most imminent danger of self-satisfaction or of despite done to others? That grace works by God's word and Spirit, wherever Christ is preached, is a proof of His faithful goodness and unfailing purpose; as also that faith may and ought to see His will for His own to walk together according to His immutable word and with becoming lowliness, so as to please Him, is ever true and binding. But it must be owned that the church is stripped of her ornaments, and justly.

Now this system of power and privilege had naturally great attraction in early days for the Hebrew saints, as for others, notably the Corinthians, as we may gather from the First Epistle. And those not born of God, who therefore could not appreciate aright either their own evil and ruin or the immense grace of God in Christ and His work, would naturally dwell much on that which so distinguished the Christian confession. Hence the Holy Spirit leads to a setting forth of a real and fatal peril for all who idolised visible power and slighted the far deeper wonders of unseen things. All other displays, though subserving the glory of the Lord, were altogether subordinate to the grace of God in which He tasted death, annulled Satan's power, made propitiation, and thus laid a righteous and everlasting basis for all blessing to God's glory, but to each purpose in God's time, yet for ever.

"For those that were once enlightened, and tasted the heavenly gift, and became partakers of the Holy Spirit, and tasted God's good word and powers of [an] age to come, and fell away, [it is] impossible to renew again unto repentance, crucifying for themselves as they do and putting to shame the Son of God. For land that drank the rain that often cometh upon it, and bringeth forth herbage meet for those for whose sake it is also tilled, partaketh of blessing from God; but Yielding thorns and

thistles [it is] worthless and near a curse, the end of which [is] to be burned" (verses 4-8).

It is observable that we read here of enlightenment, not of new birth or eternal life. Undoubtedly the heavenly gift comes before us; and so it is not earthly like the associations of the Messiah, but "heavenly" because of contrast with Canaan hopes. How great a boon that God is now revealing heavenly grace! Further, it is not the old and essential truth of the Holy Spirit quickening a soul by the word, still less of now sealing the believer and for ever dwelling in him. We must not forget that He was sent down also to constitute the assembly God's habitation; so that all introduced therein were in a general way partakers of the Spirit. Whoever bowed to the gospel tasted God's word as good, and received it with joy as of far different savour from that law which was a ministration of death and condemnation. Then the powers exercised in casting out demons, healing, and the like, were samples of the age to come when they will be fully displayed, under the reign of the Son of man.

Now the substance of Christian privileges remains, and must as long as the church lives on earth and the gospel of Christ's glory is preached. There is real light of God shining on souls, not the dark or the dimness which could not but be before the gospel. It is still a heavenly calling, not an earthly one. Again, it is not of God to put forward His law when His Spirit is here still more fully to demonstrate sin, righteousness, and judgment to the world. And His word showing (not law nor promise only, but) accomplishment in Christ is surely "good"; as it is for all the baptised at least to taste that it is good, even if there be no longer the powers of the coming age, as we see them notably absent from the seven churches of the Revelation. But to give up all this, after having once profited by its wondrous excellence in the name of the glorified Jesus, is fatal. For what more can grace do or give to act on souls? If the Jews rejected the Messiah on earth, the Holy Spirit could and did meet them with a call to repentance and remission in His name exalted by and at God's right hand. But after having confessed Him on high and shared these privileges and powers, as members of the heavenly firm (which the baptised are, in privilege and responsibility), to fall away is to forfeit all. Yea too, there is no more resource in the treasures of grace. God has no fresh and higher way of presenting Christ to act on such for recovery. Therefore is it added for those that "fell away" that it is "impossible to renew such again unto repentance, crucifying for themselves as they do and putting to shame the Son of God." There had been Christ here in humiliation; there is Christ in glory above: what more, deeper, higher, has God to win the heart by?

There is no such hope now as a Messiah after the flesh. Him the Jewish people definitely cast out. If any had known Him so, henceforth He was thus known no more. He is the Christ dead, risen, and glorified in heaven. This is the Christian faith. To this the believer must go on, to Christ not on earth but on high with its blessed consequences. To lay hold of Him thus is "perfection" or full growth.

Carefully notice how the scripture before us guards us from confounding light and power with life. Not a word implies that those that fell away were ever quickened in the Christ, or sealed with the Spirit, or baptised in His energy into the one body. It is simply the case of disciples walking no more with Christ, stumbling at the truth or its consequences. So it was when He was here; so it followed when He sat on high with aggravation of guilt, as is here shown, for those that since fell away. Light shone, goodness was tasted, evidence abundant and undeniable; yet they fell away, through (not ignorance but) selfwill which could not bear God's will. They undoubtedly and fatally shrank from the tribulation through which we must enter the kingdom.

The illustration that follows confirms this fully. It was bad land, fruitful only in thorns and thistles, instead of a good return for the rain drunk in from above. Only grace in an evil world makes the heart good soil to bring forth herbs or fruit meet for those for whose sake also it is tilled. The Spirit uses the

word to deal with the ungodly, ploughs up the soul, as well as sows the incorruptible seed of the word of God which lives and abides. This is a wholly different thing from seeing the beauty and reasonableness of "the plan of salvation," and still more the unanswerable proofs from evidence: from both people may and do fall away on pressure.

So it is now in Christendom. What is it generally but land* that has drunk the rain that comes oft upon it, but, instead of bringing forth meet herbs, bears thorns and thistles? By God's word it is therefore rejected and nigh unto a curse (Luke 17: 28-37; Rom. 11: 21, 22; 1 Cor. 10: 1-15; 2 Thess. 2; 2 Tim. 3, 4; Rev. 17). Is not its end to be burned? See 2 Thess. 1: 7-10. The power displayed has long vanished to zero; but the awful fact is that the classes and the masses are alike departing from the truth of the gospel into a superstitious aping of effete and condemned Judaism, or into a still more audacious return to heathenism in the form of its unbelieving philosophy. And the retrogression both ways in our day is amazingly rapid and unblushing

*It is not "the earth" as a whole as in A. V., nor yet as in R. V. "the land," etc., as that particular one objectively viewed, but characteristically "land"; for here English idiom as often coincides with Greek.

But the apostle did not so think of those who stand, be it ever so feebly, while others go away. Continuance in good is of God, who had not left His own without other tokens of life. For the trees are not dead which bear a little fruit. And to this we are directed in the encouraging, words that follow.

"But, beloved, we are persuaded of you things better and akin to salvation, if even we thus speak. For God [is] not unrighteous to forget our work and the love* which ye showed to his name, in that ye ministered to the saints and do minister. And we earnestly desire that each of you may show the same diligence in regard to the full assurance of hope till the end; that ye become not sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and long-suffering inherit the promises" (verses 9-12).

* The Text. Rec. adds "labour of," probably from 1 Thess. 1: 3. The best authorities (A B D S P 6, 17, 31, 37, 47, etc., and almost all ancient Vv.) are adverse.

That we renounce all other dependence save Christ as our lord and Saviour is the faith that saves the soul, the one unchanging resting-place for every one conscious of his sins and of the evil of the nature that bore them, as ready as ever to break out unless we be kept by God's grace in the secret that we died to sin with Christ, and hence are free to live unto righteousness. Others cannot see this, but they may and ought to see in the Christian the fruits of the Spirit; as here the apostle, after so solemnly admonishing, could cheer the saints by the "better things" he was persuaded concerning them.

"Next" is a frequent sense of the term (ἔχ.) employed. Here it is modified by the context, as often in ordinary Greek, and means not "following," but "pertaining to" or "connected with" salvation. God is love, and "love" is of God, who has pleasure in reality of "work" rather than in the ideas which begin and end with man; and what is he to be accounted of? Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils. He who alone avails is near to all that call upon Him. But if faith is the inlet of all that is divine, it works by love, and thus affords testimony to others. Nor is it only those that believe and love who hail every good fruit, but God is not unjust to forget what His grace produces in "your work and the love which ye showed toward his name, in that ye ministered and do minister to his saints." So will our Lord when He sits on His throne as Son of man say to the Gentiles that are on His right hand, "Inasmuch as ye did it to the least of these my brethren, ye did it to me."

But it is false and foolish to say that love can be without faith. Yet the acceptable work is what is shown toward His name, and very especially in service to His saints. One may have all faith as a gift,

so as to remove mountains; but without love one is nothing. Yea, if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if in courage and zeal I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me to nothing. Christ is the true touchstone. "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: he that confesseth the Son hath the Father also." Then "whosoever loveth Him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him as on the other hand "hereby we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and do His commandments." This may not be Aristotelian logic; nor is it science; but it is the sole true and divine charity. And as it had been known in these Hebrew saints, so the apostle sees it going on. For the love which is of God is not blind but discerns clearly, as the eye is single.

Yet was there a lack which he longs to see filled up. "And we earnestly desire that each of you may show the same diligence as regards the full assurance of hope till the end." He was far from slighting hope any more than faith, because love is the greatest, abiding in fullest exercise when faith and hope vanish in the brightness of heavenly and everlasting fruition. For we are yet here below, though free of the sanctuary by faith, and entitled to regard heaven as our proper fatherland; as Christ is there our life, and the Holy Spirit is here to give us present enjoyment, the earnest of the inheritance. Therefore do we need to be kept from the present things that are seen, by our eyes fixing on the glory that is eternal and unseen (2 Cor. 4). And we reckon wrong if we do not reckon with the apostle, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward. Hope that is seen is not hope — for who hopeth for that which he seeth? But if we hope for that which we see not, with patience we wait.

It was here also that a failure was discerned, though pointed out with the delicacy of love, that they might show the same diligence as in what he delighted to own. So he here longs for the like "as to the full assurance of hope till the end." So only does hope exercise its power. Earthly hopes indulged are as destructive to the divine hope God gives, as other objects trusted are wholly inconsistent with living faith. Nothing less than the full assurance of hope could satisfy the apostle's heart for the saints; as he adds, "that ye become not sluggish but imitators of those who through faith and long-suffering inherit the promises." We need all whereby the Holy Spirit acts on our souls; and in this, as He employs the written word of God, so He is ever glorifying Christ and endearing Him to our hearts. We cannot afford to let our souls turn aside from what is revealed, nor even to make such a favourite of a part of what is revealed as to slight the rest. And assuredly the glory Christ gives is bright enough to call for full assurance of hope and to keep the blessed end in full view. Otherwise we become sluggish or dull where we ought to be earnest and keenly awake, "imitators" of the saints of old, "of those who through faith and long-suffering inherit the promises." The present here, as often elsewhere, is not the mere historical force, but the ethical or abstract. The inheritors of the promises have their faith put to the proof and their long-suffering in habitual exercise. "Blessed is he that endureth temptation; for, when he hath been proved, he shall receive the crown of life, which he hath promised to them that love him."

The desire that the saints should imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises at once recalls the father of the faithful in a way intended to strengthen their confidence.

"For God having made promise to Abraham, since he could swear by none greater, swore by himself saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee; and thus having patiently endured he obtained the promise. For men swear by the greater, and to them the oath [is] an end of all dispute for confirmation: wherein God, being minded to show more abundantly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of his counsel, intervened by an oath that through two unchangeable things, in which [it was] impossible for God to lie, we might have strong encouragement, who fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before [us], which we have as anchor of the soul both sure and stedfast and entering into the [part] within the veil; where as forerunner for us entered Jesus,

become for ever high priest according to the order of Melchizedek" (verses 13-20).

When faith grows dim, earthly things take the place of the heavenly objects that once filled the heart. The danger for these believing Jews remains for others, and indeed is urgent in the actual state of Christendom. A religion of antiquity has great attraction for some; so has social position for others. Both are of the earth, and irreconcilable with Him who was crucified by priests and governors (the highest that the world then knew), but is now crowned with glory in heaven. The faith of Him thus presented (and it is the essence of the gospel) is intended to form the heart and life of all that bear His name. When the truth shines brightly within according to the word, the Holy Spirit makes it energetic; and the world is judged alike in its religious pretensions and in its external case and honours. Doubtless there is far more revealed by and in the Saviour than the patriarchs ever knew. Yet substantially the sight of Abraham a pilgrim, as Scripture points out, was an appeal of no small power to act on the soul of a believing Jew, in danger of retrograding to that which was once his boast through losing sight of Christ in heavenly glory and the hope of sharing all with Him. Abraham possessed nothing in Canaan, having to buy even a grave; he hung on the promise of God. The Christian Jews were so far in a similar position; they were waiting to inherit the promises. Abraham and his son and his son's son (the most honoured of the fathers in general estimation, and surely ancient enough to satisfy the most ardent of those who affected antiquity), all died in faith, not in possession. They saw and greeted the promises from afar and confessed themselves strangers on the earth. Why should Christians repine when called to a like path? It is unbelief that despises the hope and craves some present enjoyment of an earthly sort.

Now God had even then given good ground of assurance to Abraham, who led the way. He had added His oath to His promise: a blessed confirmation for the tried, even though they were far from being gainsayers. Only theorists would think lightly of such a gracious provision only those who dream of pilgrimage in a palace and have no purpose of heart to live out the truth. When conscience is in earnest, our own weakness is felt, and the way of Christ seems difficult, dangerous, and repulsive. Hence the gracious wisdom of God gave His oath in addition to His promise, as we may read in Gen. 22: 17, 18: a precious cheer to him who at that very time received back his son as from the dead in a parable.

Nor was it for Abraham's sake only or those who immediately succeeded that God gave this twofold solemn guarantee. He was minded thus to show more abundantly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His counsel. Therefore did He mediate or interpose with an oath to lift up the eyes of all who believe from present and seen things to that hope which rests on His word confirmed by His oath. What loving condescension to those who march through an enemy's land! Such are clearly the "two unchangeable things in which it was impossible for God to lie"; the application of which is made, not to the fathers of old, but to the children now, "that we might have strong encouragement, that fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us."

Thus the chapter opens with a most serious warning. On the one hand the brightest light, the highest testimony, the participation of the Holy Spirit, the sweetness of the gospel, the powers of the age to come in token of Christ's triumph, are the chief external privileges of Christianity. Yet men might have them all, and utterly fall away so as to have no renewal to repentance possible. They are not life, eternal life in Christ; they include not the love of God shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit that was given to us. Neither illumination nor power is the same as being born again, which is not said or supposed here. On the other hand, when the good cheer of divine grace follows, these closing verses point out the lowest faith ever described in gospel days, "those who fled for refuge" (an allusion to the beautiful figure of the man-slayer only just saved from his pursuers) enabled "to lay hold of the

hope set before us": a truly "strong encouragement" for the weak and trembling faithful.

Nor is this all. The hope set now before the believer far transcends all that could be for the saints in O.T. times. We have it as "anchor of the soul both sure and stedfast and entering into that which is within the veil, where as forerunner for us entered Jesus, become for ever high priest according to the order of Melchizedek." Here the security is enhanced and crowned by One who is God no less than man, Jehovah-Messiah the Saviour, who is gone back to heaven for us, after having made the purification of sins and found an eternal redemption.

In Him and His work all is made sure. The rights of God are conciliated with His grace. Sin has been judged so as to vindicate the nicest regard for injured majesty and holiness. Mercy can flow freely yet on a basis of righteousness, no longer sought in vain from flesh and guilty man, but established by God as due to Christ (John 12) and ministered by the Spirit in the gospel (2 Cor. 3). He Who is exalted in heaven is the promised Messiah, the object, securer, and dispenser of all the promises of God. Thus will the earth be best blessed in due time: but meanwhile those who believe in Him before He appears are associated with Him in a heavenly relationship even while they are here, that they too on clearer and fairer ground than Moses could occupy may account the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. He as forerunner for us has entered within the veil — heaven itself: which none could know or claim till He had come here, suffered for sins, and been received up in glory. If this does not win the believer from an earthly mind, from a sanctuary of the world, nothing else can. He who has loved us, our forerunner in heaven, though rejected of men, draws and binds our hearts to Himself where He is; and God reveals Him to us there for this express end.