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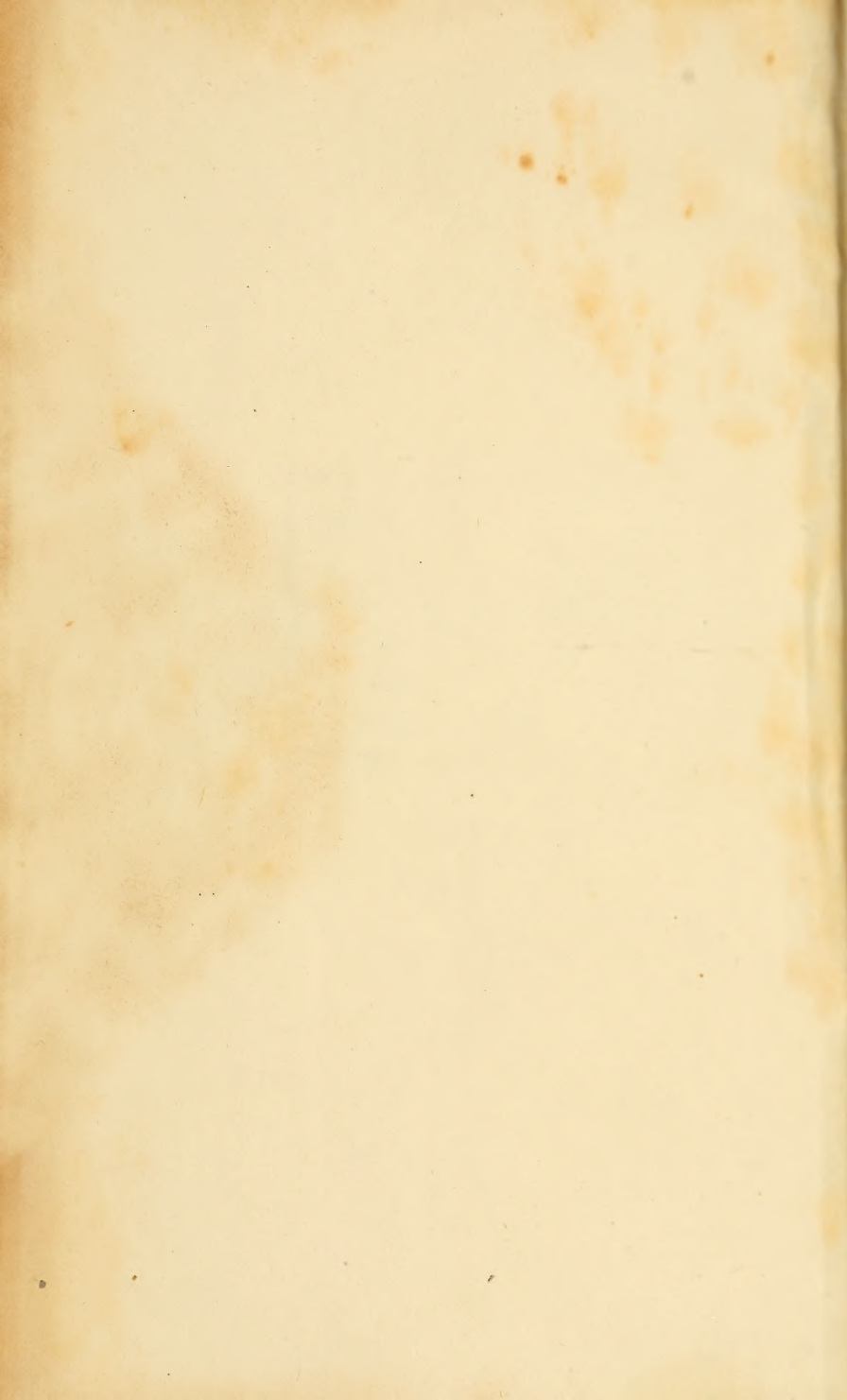
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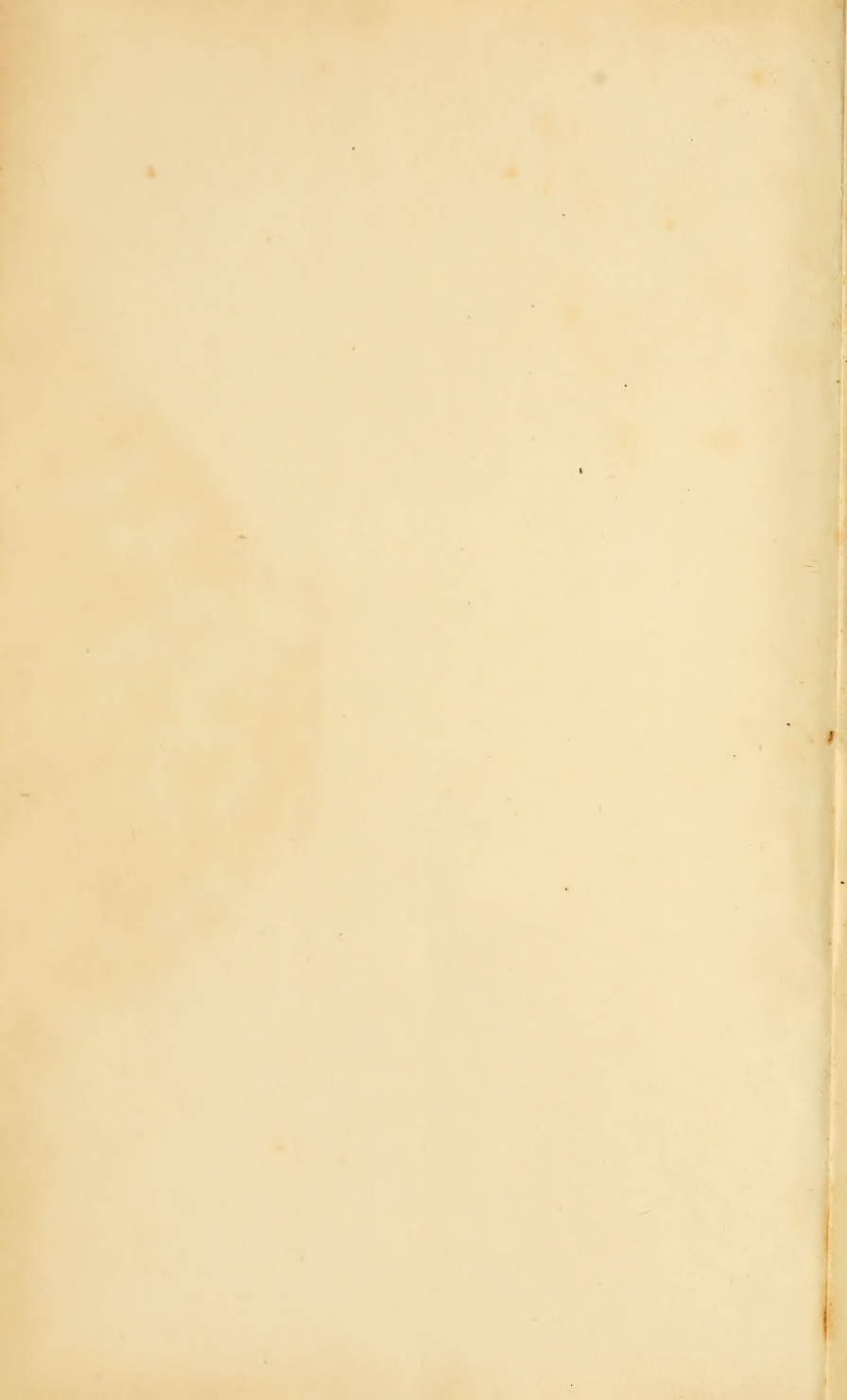
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OWEN'S EXPOSITION

OF THE

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

AN
EXPOSITION
OF THE
EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS,
WITH
PRELIMINARY EXERCITATIONS.

BY JOHN OWEN, D.D.

A NEW EDITION, IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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EXPOSITION

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12. A divine call is a sufficient warrant for the acting of them according unto it, who are so called, and the obedience of others unto them in their work or office	<i>ib.</i>
13. The first personal instituted type of Christ, was a priest	<i>ib.</i>
14. To keep up and preserve a due reverence of God in our minds and words, we should think of, and use those holy titles which are given to him, and	

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15. It is good at all times to fix our faith on that in God, which is meet to encourage our obedience and dependance upon him in our present circumstances	420
16. It is a matter of inestimable satisfaction, that he whom we serve is the most high God, the sovereign possessor of heaven and earth	<i>ib.</i>
17. Public profession in all ages, is to be suited and pointed against the opposition that is made unto the truth, or apostasy from it	<i>ib.</i>
18. All the commotions and concussions that are among the nations of the world, do lie in, or shall be brought into, a subserviency unto the interest of Christ and his church	422
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22. It is God's institution that makes all our administrations effectual	<i>ib.</i>
23. Whatsoever we receive signally from God in a way of mercy, we ought to return a portion of it unto him in a way of duty	432
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25. It is a great honour to serve in the church, by doing or suffering for the use and service of future generations	<i>ib.</i>
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3. Whereas even Abraham himself gave the tenth of all to Melchisedec, the highest privilege exempts not any from the obligation unto, and performance of, the meanest duty 451
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5. When the instituted use of consecrated things ceaseth, the things themselves cease to be sacred or of esteem *ib.*
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7. It is the duty of those who are employed in sacred ministrations, to receive what the Lord Christ hath appointed for their supportment, and in the way of his appointment 455
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7. To make new priests in the church, is virtually to renounce the faith of his living for ever as our priest, or to suppose that he is not sufficient to the discharge of his office	<i>ib.</i>
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2. The revelation of the will of God, in things relating unto his worship, is very difficultly received, where the minds of men are prepossessed with prejudices and traditions	<i>ib.</i>
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4. The introduction into the church, of what is better and more full of grace, in the same kind with what went before, doth disannul what so preceded; but the bringing in of that which is not better, which doth not communicate more grace, doth not do so	554
5. If God would disannul every thing that was weak and unprofitable in his service, though originally of his own appointment, because it did not exhibit the grace he intended, he will much more condemn any thing of the same kind that is invented by men	555
6. It is in vain for any man to look for that from the law, now it is abolished, which it could not effect in its best estate	<i>ib.</i>
7. When God hath designed any gracious end towards the church, it shall not fail nor his work cease for want of effectual means to accomplish it	559
8. Believers of old who lived under the law, did not live upon the law, but upon the hope of Christ, or Christ hoped for	561
9. The Lord Christ by his priesthood and sacrifice, makes perfect the church, and all things belonging thereunto	<i>ib.</i>
10. Out of Christ, or without him, all mankind are at an inconceivable distance from God	564
11. It is an effect of infinite condescension and grace, that God would appoint a way of recovery for those who had wilfully cast themselves into this woeful distance from him	<i>ib.</i>
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3. Although the decrees and purposes of God were always firm and immutable, yet there was no fixed state of outward dispensations, none confirmed with an oath, until Christ came	571
4. Although God granted great privileges unto the church under the Old Testament, yet still in every instance he withheld that which was the principle, and should have given perfection to what he did grant. He made them priests, but without an oath	573
5. God by his oath declares the determination of his sovereign pleasure unto the object of it	<i>ib.</i>
6. Christ's being made a priest by the oath of God for ever, is a solid foundation of peace and consolation to the church	<i>ib.</i>
7. All the transactions between the Father and the Son, concerning his offices, undertakings, and the work of our redemption, have respect unto the faith of the church, and are declared for our consolation	<i>ib.</i>
8. How good and glorious soever any thing may appear to be, or really be, in the worship of God, or as a way of our coming to him, or walking before him; if it be not ratified in and by the immediate suretiship of Christ, it must give way unto that which is better; it could be neither durable in itself, nor make any thing perfect in them that made use of it	578
9. All the privileges, benefits, and advantages of the offices and mediation of Christ, will not avail us, unless we reduce them all unto faith in his person	579
10. The whole undertaking of Christ, and the whole efficacy of the discharge of his office, depends on the appointment of God	580
11. The stability of the new covenant depends on the suretiship of Christ, and is secured to believers thereby	588
12. The Lord Christ's undertaking to be our surety, gives the highest obligation to all duties of obedience according to the covenant	591

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2. There is such a necessity of the continual administration of the sacerdotal office in behalf of the church, that the interruption of it by the death of the priests, was an argument of the weakness of that priesthood	595
3. The perpetuity of the priesthood of Christ depends on his own perpetual life	599
4. The perpetuity of the priesthood of Christ, as unchangeably exercised in his own person, is a principal part of the glory of that office	<i>ib.</i>
5. The addition of sacrificing priests as vicars of, or substitutes unto Christ, in the discharge of his office, destroys his priesthood, as to the principal eminency of it, above that of the Levitical priesthood	600
6. Considerations of the person and offices of Christ, ought to be improved unto the strengthening of the faith, and increase of the consolation of the church	601
7. The consideration of the office-power of Christ, is of great use unto the faith of the church	602
8. It is good to secure this first ground of evangelical faith, that the Lord Christ, as vested with his offices and in the exercise of them, is able to save us	605
9. Whatever hinderances and difficulties lie in the way of the salvation of believers, whatever oppositions do rise against it, the Lord Christ is able, by virtue of his sacerdotal office, and in the exercise of it, to carry the work through them all to eternal perfection	606
10. The salvation of all sincere gospel worshippers, is secured by the actings of Christ in the discharge of his priestly office	608
11. Attendance unto the service, the worship of God in the gospel, is required to interest us in the saving care and power of our high priest	<i>ib.</i>
12. Those who endeavour to come unto God in any other way but by Christ, as by saints and angels, may do well to consider, whether they have any such office in heaven, as by virtue whereof, they are able to save them to the uttermost	<i>ib.</i>
13. It is a matter of strong consolation to the church, that Christ lives in heaven for us	612
14. So great and glorious is the work of saving believers unto the utmost, that it is necessary that the Lord Christ should lead a mediatory life in hea-	

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15. The most glorious prospect that we can take into the things that are within the veil, into the remaining transactions of the work of our salvation in the most holy place, is in the representation that is made unto us of the intercession of Christ	619
16. The intercession of Christ, is the great evidence of the continuance of his love and care, his pity and compassion towards his church	620

VERSE 26.

1. God, in his infinite wisdom, love, and grace, gave us such a high priest, as in the qualifications of his person, the glory of his condition, and the discharge of his office, was every way suited to deliver us from the state of apostasy, sin, and misery, and to bring us unto himself through a perfect salvation	623
2. Although these properties of our high priest are principally to be considered as rendering him meet to be our high priest, yet are they also to be considered as an exemplar and idea of that holiness and innocency which we ought to be conformable to	633
3. Seeing all these properties were required unto Christ, and in him, that he might be our high priest, he was all that he is here said to be for us, and for our sakes; and benefit from them doth redound unto us	<i>ib.</i>
4. The infinite grace and wisdom of God, are always to be admired by us in providing such a high priest as was every way meet for us, with respect unto the great end of his office, namely, the bringing of us unto himself	<i>ib.</i>
5. The dignity, duty, and safety of the gospel church, depend solely on the nature, the qualifications, and the exaltation of our high priest	<i>ib.</i>
6. If such a high priest became us, was needful to us, for the establishment of the new covenant, and the communication of the grace thereof to the church, then all persons, Christ alone excepted, are absolutely excluded from all interest in this priesthood	<i>ib.</i>
7. If we consider aright what it is that we stand in need of, and what God hath provided for us, that we may be brought unto him in his glory, we shall find it our wisdom to forego all other expectations, and to betake ourselves unto Christ alone	634

VERSES 27, 28.

1. No sinful man was meet to offer the	
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great expiatory sacrifice for the church ; much less is any sinful man fit to offer Christ himself	644	VERSE 2.	
2. The excellency of Christ's person and priesthood, freed him in his offering from many things that the Levitical priesthood was obliged unto	<i>ib.</i>	1. The Lord Christ, in the height of his glory, condescends to discharge the office of a public minister in the behalf of the church	661
3. No sacrifice could bring us to God, and save the church to the utmost, but that wherein the Son of God himself was both priest and offering	<i>ib.</i>	2. All spiritually sacred and holy things are laid up in Christ	666
4. It was burdensome and heavy work to attain relief against sin, and settled peace of conscience, under the old priesthood, attended with so many weaknesses and infirmities	645	3. He hath the ministration of all these holy things committed to him	<i>ib.</i>
5. There never was, nor ever can be, any more than two sorts of priests in the church, the one made by the law, the other by the oath of God	650	4. The human nature of Christ is the only true tabernacle, wherein God would dwell personally and substantially	<i>ib.</i>
6. As the bringing in of the priesthood of Christ after the law, and the priesthood constituted thereby, did abrogate and disannul it : so the bringing in of another priesthood after his, will abrogate and disannul that also	<i>ib.</i>	5. The church hath lost nothing by the removal of the old tabernacle, and temple, all being supplied by the sanctuary, true tabernacle, and minister thereof	667
7. Plurality of priests under the gospel, overthrows the whole argument of the apostle in this place, and if we have yet priests that have infirmities, they are made by the law, and not by the gospel	<i>ib.</i>	6. We are to look for the gracious presence of God in Christ only	668
8. The sum of the difference between the law and the gospel, is issued in the difference between the priests of the one and the other state, which is inconceivably great	<i>ib.</i>	7. It is by Christ alone that we can make our approach unto God in his worship	<i>ib.</i>
9. The great foundation of our faith, and the hinge whereon all our consolation depends, is this, that our high priest is the Son of God	<i>ib.</i>	8. It was an institution of God, that the people in all their distresses should look unto, and make their supplications towards the tabernacle, or holy temple	<i>ib.</i>
10. The everlasting continuance of the Lord Christ in his office, is secured by the oath of God	651	9. If any one else can offer the body of Christ, he also is the minister of the true tabernacle	<i>ib.</i>

CHAPTER VIII.

VERSE 1.

1. When the nature and weight of the matter treated of, or the variety of arguments wherein it is concerned, do require that our discourse of it should be drawn forth to a length more than ordinary, it is useful to refresh the minds, and relieve the memories of our hearers, by a brief recapitulation of the things insisted on
2. When doctrines are important, and such as the eternal welfare of the souls of men are immediately concerned in, we are by all means to endeavour an impression of them on the minds of our hearers
3. The principal glory of the priestly office of Christ, depends on the glorious exaltation of his person

1. God's ordination of appointment gives rules, measures, and ends, unto all sacred offices and employments
2. There is no approach unto God, without continual respect unto sacrifice and atonement
3. There was no salvation to be had for us, no, not by Jesus Christ himself, without his sacrifice and oblation
4. As God designed unto the Lord Christ the work which he had to do, so he provided for him, and furnished him with whatever was necessary thereunto
5. The Lord Christ being to save the church in the way of office, he was not to be spared in any thing necessary thereunto
6. Whatever state or condition we are called unto, what is necessary unto that state, is indispensably required of us

VERSE 4.

1. God's institutions, rightly stated, do never interfere
2. The discharge of all the parts and duties of the priestly office of Christ, in their proper order, was needful unto the salvation of the church

VERSE 5.

1. God alone limits the signification and use of all his own institutions
2. It is an honour to be employed in any

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sacred service that belongs unto the worship of God, though it be of an inferior nature unto other parts of it	683
3. So great was the glory of heavenly ministration in the mediation of Jesus Christ, that God would not at once bring it forth in the church, until he had prepared the minds of men by types, shadows, examples, and representations of it	<i>ib.</i>
4. Our utmost care and diligence in the consideration of the mind of God, is required in all that we do about his worship	685

VERSE 6.

1. God, in his infinite wisdom, gives proper times and seasons to all his dispensations to, and towards the church	692
2. The whole office of Christ was designed to the accomplishment of the will and dispensation of the grace of God	<i>ib.</i>
3. The condescension of the Son of God to undertake the office of the ministry on our behalf, is unspeakable, and for ever to be admired	693
4. The Lord Christ by undertaking this office of the ministry, hath consecrated and made honourable that office unto all that are rightly called unto it, and do rightly discharge it	<i>ib.</i>
5. The exaltation of the human nature of Christ, into the office of this glorious ministry, depended solely on the sovereign wisdom, grace, and love of God	694
6. It is our duty and our safety to acquiesce universally and absolutely in the ministry of Jesus Christ	695
7. The provision of a mediator between God and man, was an effect of infinite wisdom and grace	699
8. There is infinite grace in every divine covenant, inasmuch as it is established on promises	707
9. The promises of the covenant of grace are better than those of any other covenant	<i>ib.</i>
10. Although one state of the church hath had great advantages and privileges above another, yet no state had whereof to complain, while they observed the terms prescribed unto them	734
11. The state of the gospel, or of the church under the New Testament, is accompanied with the highest spiritual privileges and advantages that it is capable of in this world	<i>ib.</i>

VERSE 7.

1. Whatever God had done before for the church, yet he ceased not in his wisdom and grace, until he had made it partaker of the best and most blessed condition whereof in this world it is capable	738
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2. Let those unto whom the terms of the new covenant are proposed in the gospel, take heed to themselves, that they sincerely embrace and improve them, for there is neither promise nor hopes of any farther or fuller administration of grace	739

VERSE 8.

1. God hath oftentimes just cause to complain of his people, when yet he will not utterly cast them off	741
2. It is the duty of the church to take deep notice of God's complaints of them	<i>ib.</i>
3. God often surpriseth the church with promises of grace and mercy	742
4. 'He saith,' that is, נאם ירור, 'saith the Lord,' is the formal object of our faith and obedience	<i>ib.</i>
5. Where God placeth a note of observation and attention, we should carefully fix our faith and consideration	743
6. The things and concerns of the new covenant, are all of them objects of the best of our consideration	<i>ib.</i>
7. There is a time limited and fixed for the accomplishment of all the promises of God, and all the purposes of his grace towards the church	744
8. The new covenant, as collecting into one all the promises of grace given from the foundation of the world, accomplished in the actual exhibition of Christ, and confirmed in his death, and by the sacrifice of his blood, and thereby becoming the sole rule of new spiritual ordinances of worship, suited thereunto, was the great object of the faith of the saints of the Old Testament, and is the great foundation of all our present mercies	746
9. All the efficacy and glory of the new covenant, do originally arise from, and are resolved into, the Author and supreme Cause of it, which is God himself	749
10. The covenant of grace in Christ, is made only with the Israel of God, the church of the elect	751
11. Those who are first and most advanced as to outward privileges, are oftentimes last and least advantaged by the grace and mercy of them	<i>ib.</i>

VERSE 9.

1. The grace and glory of the new covenant, are much set off and manifested by the comparing of it with the old	754
2. All God's works are equally good and holy in themselves, but as unto the use and advantage of the church, he is pleased to make some of them means of communicating more grace than others	<i>ib.</i>

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3. Though God makes an alteration in any of his works, ordinances of worship, or institutions, yet he never changeth his intention, or the purpose of his will 755
4. The disposal of mercies and privileges as unto times, persons, seasons, is wholly in the hand and power of God *ib.*
5. Sins have their aggravations from mercies received 760
6. Nothing but effectual grace will secure our covenant-obedience one moment *ib.*
7. No covenant between God and man ever was, or ever could be, stable and effectual, as unto the ends of it, that was not made and confirmed in Christ 763
8. No external administration of a covenant of God's own making, no obligation of mercy on the minds of men, can enable them unto steadfastness in covenant-obedience, without an effectual influence of grace from and by Jesus Christ *ib.*
9. God, in making a covenant with any, in proposing the terms of it, retains his right and authority to deal with persons according to their deportment in and towards that covenant *ib.*
10. God's casting men out of his special care upon the breach of his covenant, is the highest judgment that in this world can fall on any persons *ib.*

VERSES 10—12.

1. The covenant of grace, as reduced into the form of a testament, confirmed by the blood of Christ, doth not depend on any condition or qualification in our persons, but in a free grant and donation of God, and so are all the good things prepared in it 768
2. The precepts of the old covenant, are all turned into promises under the new *ib.*
3. All things in the new covenant, being proposed unto us by the way of promise, it is by faith alone that we may attain a participation of them *ib.*
4. Sense of the loss of an interest in, and participation of, the benefits of the old covenant, is the best preparation for receiving the mercies of the new *ib.*
5. God himself, in and by his own sovereign wisdom, grace, goodness, all-sufficiency, and power, is to be considered as the only cause and author of the new covenant *ib.*
6. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the new covenant, in its being, existence, and healing efficacy, is as large and extensive to repair our natures, as sin is, in its residence and power, to deprave them 777
7. All the beginnings and entrances into the saving knowledge of God, and thereon of obedience unto him, are effects of the grace of the covenant 778

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8. The work of grace in the new covenant, passeth on the whole soul in all its faculties, powers, and affections, unto their change and renovation 779
9. To take away the necessity and efficacy of renewing, changing, sanctifying grace, consisting in an internal, efficacious operation of the principles, habits, and acts of internal grace and obedience, is plainly to overthrow and reject the new covenant *ib.*
10. We bring nothing to the new covenant but our hearts, as tables to be written in, with the sense of the insufficiency of the precepts and promises of the law, with respect to our own ability to comply with them *ib.*
11. The Lord Christ, God and man, undertaking to be the mediator between God and man, and a surety on our behalf, is the spring and head of the new covenant, which is made and established with us in him 782
12. As nothing less than God becoming our God, could relieve, help, and save us, so nothing more can be required thereunto 783
13. The efficacy, security, and glory of this covenant, depend *originally* on the nature of God, *immediately* and *actually* on the mediation of Christ *ib.*
14. It is from the engagement of the properties of the divine nature, that this covenant is ordered in all things and sure *ib.*
15. As the grace of this covenant is inexpressible, so are the obligations it puts upon us unto obedience *ib.*
16. God doth as well undertake for our being his people, as he doth for his being our God 784
17. Those whom God makes a covenant withal, are his in a peculiar manner *ib.*
18. The instructive ministry of the old testament, as it was such, and as it had respect to the carnal rites thereof, was a ministry of the letter, and not of the Spirit, which did not really effect in the hearts of men the things which it taught 791
19. There is a duty incumbent on every man to instruct others, according to his ability and opportunity, in the knowledge of God *ib.*
20. It is the Spirit of grace alone, as promised in the new covenant, which frees the church from a laborious, but ineffectual way of teaching *ib.*
21. There was a hidden treasure of divine wisdom, of the knowledge of God, laid up in the mystical revelations and institutions of the Old Testament, which the people were not then able to look into, nor to comprehend 792
22. The whole knowledge of God in

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Christ, is both plainly revealed, and savingly communicated, by virtue of the new covenant, unto them who do believe	<i>ib.</i>
23. There are, and ever were, different degrees of persons in the church, as unto the saving knowledge of God	793
24. Where there is not some degree of saving knowledge, there no interest in the new covenant can be pretended	<i>ib.</i>
25. The full and clear declaration of God, as he is to be known of us in this life, is a privilege reserved for, and belonging unto, the days of the New Testament	794
26. To know God as he is revealed in Christ; is the highest privilege whereof in this life we can be made partakers	<i>ib.</i>
27. Persons destitute of this saving knowledge, are utter strangers unto the covenant of grace	<i>ib.</i>
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in the pardon of sin, is the original spring and foundation of all covenant mercies and blessings	795
29. The new covenant is made only with them who effectually and eventually are made partakers of the grace of it	796
30. The aggravations of sin are great and many, which the consciences of convinced sinners ought to have regard unto	798
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EXPOSITION,

ETC.

CHAPTER V.

THERE are three general parts of this chapter. First. A description of the office and duties of a high priest, ver. 1—4. Secondly. The application of this general description to the person and priesthood of Jesus Christ in particular, ver. 5—10. Thirdly. An occasional diversion into a reproof of, and expostulation with the Hebrews, for and about their backwardness in learning the mysteries of the gospel; begun in this, and carried on in the beginning of the next chapter, ver. 11—14.

First. In the first part, the general description of a high priest is given, 1. From his original, ‘he is taken from among men.’ 2. From the nature of his office, ‘he is ordained for men in things pertaining unto God.’ 3. From the especial end of it, ‘to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sin,’ ver. 1. 4. From the qualification of his person for the discharge of his office, ‘for he must be one that can have compassion on the ignorant, and them that are out of the way;’ whereunto is subjoined the ground of that qualification, ‘for he also himself is compassed with infirmity,’ ver. 2. 5. From the continual duty arising from his office and personal qualification for it, in respect of others and himself, ver. 3. ‘For by reason hereof, he ought as for the people, so also for himself to offer for sins. 6. From his call to his office, which is, 1. Asserted to be from God, ‘and no man taketh this honour to himself but he that is called of God.’ 2. Exemplified in the instance of Aaron’s, ‘as was Aaron.’

Secondly. The *αποδοσις*, or ‘application’ of this description to the person of Jesus Christ, which is the second part of the chapter, is not to show an exact conformity thereunto, as though all things should be the same, and even or equal, in the high priest which he had described, and in him whom he would now represent to them. This would have been contrary to the design of the apostle. For the description he hath given us of a high priest, is of him, or such an one as the Hebrews had, under the law. And his purpose was to show them how much more excellent a Priest he was of whom he treated. There must therefore of necessity be sundry differences between them. Wherefore in the application of this description of a legal high priest to the person and office of Christ, three things, (as we shall show afterwards

in particular) the apostle aimeth at. 1. To demonstrate that there was nothing essentially requisite to the constituting of any one to be a high priest, or in the discharge of that office, but it was found in, and agrees to the Lord Jesus Christ. 2. Whatever was of weakness or infirmity in the high priest of old, on account of his infirm and frail condition, that Jesus Christ was free from. 3. That he had in this office several preeminences and advantages, which the old high priest was not partaker of, nor sharer in; which things will in our progress be explained. Hence the application made by the apostle of the preceding description, is not to be expected such as should exactly correspond with it, in all particulars. Wherefore,

1. By an *ὑπερον προτερον*, he insisteth first in the application, on the last instance of his description; namely, the call of a high priest. And this as to the person of Christ is expressed, 1. Negatively, 'he glorified not himself to be made a priest.' 2. Positively, it was of God, which he proves by a double testimony, one from Ps. ii. 7, the other from Ps. cx. 4—6.

2. On the discharge of his office whereunto he was so called of God; which he describes, 1. From the season of it, 'it was in the days of his flesh.' 2. The manner of its performance, he offered up 'prayers and supplications with strong cries and tears.' 3. The general issue of it, 'he was heard in that he feared, ver. 7.

3. He proceeds by the anticipation of an objection, and therein the declaration of a singular preeminence that he had above all other priests, with the love and condescension with which the discharge of his office was accompanied, together with the great benefit which ensued thereon. 'Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered,' ver. 8.

4. The glorious end of his priesthood, manifesting the incomparable excellency of it, above that of Aaron, is expressed ver. 9. All issuing,

5. In a summary description of his call and office, as he intends afterwards to enlarge on them, ver. 10.

Thirdly. The third part of the chapter contains a diversion to a reproof of, and expostulation with the Hebrews, about the things concerning which he intended to treat with them, wherein is expressed, 1. The occasion; and that, First. On the part of the things which he treated about, not absolutely, but with respect to them. 'Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered.' Secondly. On their part, 'seeing that ye are dull of hearing,' ver. 11. 2. This fault of theirs, occasioning their reproof, is aggravated, First. From the means and advantages to the contrary which they had enjoyed, ver. 12. Secondly. By a particular elegant description of the nature of that weakness, evil, and defect which he blamed in them, ver. 12, 13. Thirdly. By a declaration of the contrary virtue, the want whereof in them he complains of, ver. 14.

This is the substance of the discourses of this chapter, considered apart by themselves. We must also inquire into their relation to those foregoing, and the design of the apostle in them, which is twofold. For,

First. They have respect to his general purpose and aim. And

herein they contain an entrance into a full and particular description of the sacerdotal office of Christ, with the excellency of it, and the benefits which thereby redound to the church. This was the principal intention of the apostle in the writing of the epistle; for besides the excellency of the doctrine hereof in itself, and the inestimable benefits which the whole church received thereby, it was peculiarly on many reasons necessary for the Hebrews, as hath been shown. Wherefore in the first chapter he lays down a description of the person of Christ, who under the New Testament, is vested with all those sacred offices, in and over the church of God, which were typically exercised by others under the Old. Of these offices, in the second, third, and fourth chapters, he more particularly treats of his kingly and prophetic; comparing him therein with Moses and Joshua, showing in sundry instances his preeminence above them. He had also by the way interspersed several things concerning his sacerdotal office; with a general description whereof, and declaration of the advantage of the church thereby, he closeth the foregoing chapter.

In all these things, it was the purpose of the apostle not to handle them absolutely, but with respect to that exercise of them, which by God's appointment was in use in the church of the Hebrews under the Old Testament, for that the nature of his treaty with them did require. And herein he effected two things both opposite to his principal end. For, 1. He declares what it was in all those institutions, which God intended to instruct them in, seeing they were all shadows of good things to come. So he lets them know that whatever esteem they had of them, and however they rested in them, they were not appointed for their own sakes, but only for a time to fore-signify what was now in the person and mediation of Christ, actually and really exhibited to them. 2. He makes it evident how exceedingly the way and worship of God which they were now called to, and made partakers of under the gospel, did excel those which before they were entrusted with; whence the conclusion was easy and unavoidable, to the necessity of their steadfastness in the profession of the gospel, the principal thing aimed at in the whole.

On these grounds the apostle undertaketh a comparison between the priesthood of Aaron and his successors, with that of Jesus Christ which was prefigured thereby. And this he doth with respect to both ends mentioned. For First. He shows them how they were of old instructed in the nature and use of that priesthood, which according to the promise of God, was to be introduced, and erected in the church, in the person of his Son. Hence he lays down sundry things which they knew to belong to the priesthood of old, whence they might learn somewhat, yea much, of the nature of this now exhibited, seeing they were instituted on purpose to declare it, although they did it but obscurely. And then also he makes known the excellency of this priesthood of Christ, above that of old, as the substance excels the shadow, and the permanent thing represented, the obscure and fading representations of it. To the handling of these things an entrance is here made, which with sundry occasional diversions is pursued to the end of the tenth chapter.

Secondly. In particular, the present discourse of this chapter hath relation to what immediately precedes in the close of the foregoing. For having therein proposed to their consideration the priestly office of Christ, and given a glorious description of it in general, with respect to his person, and exaltation, he shows how greatly this conduced to the advantage and consolation of the church, as may be seen in the text, and our exposition of it. To confirm what he had so proposed, and to strengthen our faith in the expectation of the benefits expressed, he enters on a particular description of that office as exercised by Christ. And in this respect, the ensuing discourse renders the reasons, and gives the grounds of what he had immediately before laid down and declared.

VER. 1.—Πας γαρ αρχιερεως, εξ ανθρωπων λαμβανομενος, υπερανθρωπων καθισταται τα προς τον Θεον, ινα προσφερη δωρα τε και θυσιας υπερ αμαρτιων

Εξ ανθρωπων, Syr. דמן בני נשא: 'who is of' (or from amongst) 'the sons of man.' Υπερ ανθρωπων καθισταται. Syr. חלק בני נשא קם, 'stands for men,' that is, in their stead. Τα προς τον Θεον. Syr. חלק דאנא דאנא: 'over the things which are of God,' or which belong to him, not so properly, as we shall see. Δωρα. Syr. קורבנא, 'oblations,' offerings, a general name for all sacrifices. The Arabic renders τα προς τον Θεον, 'in the things that are offered to God,' a good sense of the words; and the Ethiopic, is 'appointed for men, with or before God,' that is to do for them what is to be done with God.

Τα προς τον Θεον, Vulg. Lat. In iis quæ sunt ad Deum, 'in the things appertaining to God,' or which are to be done with him. So Arias, ea quæ ad Deum, to the same purpose. Beza, in iis quæ sunt apud Deum peragenda, 'in the things that are to be performed towards God,' more properly than ours; and the Rhemists, 'in the things appertaining to God;' for so do things innumerable on one account or other, that are not here intended.

Πας γαρ αρχιερεως. That is, כל כהן הגדול: 'Every chief or great priest.' Or as the Syriac כומר: 'prince or chief of the priests.' The first mention of a high priest, is Lev. xxi. 10. כהן הגדול מאחיו: 'the priest that is great among his brethren.' LXX. ὁ ἱερεὺς ὁ μέγας ἀπο τῶν ἀδελφῶν. Jun. Sacerdos qui maximus est fratrum suorum. All the males of the family of Aaron were equal, and brethren, as to the priesthood. But there was one, who was the head and prince of the rest, whose office was not distinct from theirs; but in the discharge of it, and preparation for it, there were many things peculiarly appropriated to him. And these things are distinctly appointed and enumerated in several places. The whole office was first vested in him, the remainder of the priests being as it were his present assistants, and a nursery for a future succession. The whole nature of the type was preserved in him alone. But as in one case, our apostle tells us of these high priests themselves, that by the law they were many, that is in succession one after another, because they were not suffered 'to continue by reason of death,' ch. vii. 23. One single high priest had

been sufficient to have represented the priesthood of Christ; but because God would have that done constantly, during the continuance of that church-state, and every individual person of them died in his season, they were to be multiplied by succession. So because of their weakness, and the multiplied carnal services which they had to attend to, no man was able to discharge the whole office, there were others added to the high priest for the time being as his assistants, who were in so far also types of Christ, as they were partakers of his office. But because the office was principally collated on, and vested in the high priest, and because many important parts of the duty of it were appropriated to him; as also, because the glorious vestments peculiar to the office, made for beauty and glory, to represent the excellency and holiness of the person of Christ, were to be worn by none but him; he alone is singled out as the principal representative of the Lord Christ in this office. And the high priest was a single person, there was but one at one time, the better to typify the office of Christ. It is true in the gospel there is mention *των αρχιερεων* 'of the high priests' that then were, Matt. ii. 3, xvi. 21, which we render 'chief priests,' So Sceva the father of the vagabond Exorcists is said to be *αρχιερεως*, Acts xix. 14. But these were only such as were *εκ γενους αρχιερατικου*, Acts iv. 6, of the stock, and near kindred of him, (or that family) who was at present high priest, or wherein at present the high priesthood was. For out of them in an ordinary course a successor was to be taken. It may be also, that those who were the heads or chiefs of the several orders or courses of the priests, were then so called. But absolutely by the law the high priest was but one at one time.

And it is of the high priest according to the law of Moses, that the apostle speaks. Grotius thinks otherwise. *Non tantum legem his respicit, sed et morem ante legem, cum aut primogeniti familiarum, aut à populis electi reges, inirent sacerdotium.* 'He respects not only the law, but the manner before the law, when the first-born of the families, or kings chosen by the people, took and exercised the priesthood.' But it is of a high priest distinctly, concerning whom the apostle speaks. And that there were any such among the people of God, either by natural descent, or the consent of many before the law, is not true. And this supposition is contrary to the design of the apostle, who treats with the Hebrews about the privileges and priesthood which they enjoyed by virtue of the law of Moses. So he says expressly, ch. vii. 11. 'If perfection were by the Levitical priesthood.' That is it whereof he speaks. And ver. 28. 'The law maketh men high priests.' He discourseth of the priests appointed by the law, that is, by the law of Moses, and of them only.

Some expositors of the Roman Church, as our Rhemists, take occasion to assert the necessity of a Christian priesthood to offer sacrifices to God; as also to dispose of all things wherein the worship of God is contained, and to reprove kings and princes, if they interpose ought therein, it being a matter wherewith they have not anything to do. But they cannot really imagine, that the apostle had the least intention to teach any such thing in this place. And therefore the most

sober interpreters amongst them do confine their discourses to the Levitical priesthood. Yea, indeed the purpose of the apostle is to prove, that all priesthood properly so called, and all proper sacrifices to be offered up by virtue of that office, were issued in the priesthood and sacrifice of Christ; seeing the sole use and end of them were to represent and prefigure these in the church. And to deny them now to be passed away, or to plead the continuance of any other proper priesthood and sacrifice, is to deny that Jesus is come again in the flesh, which is that spirit of antichrist, 1 John iv. 3.

Εξ ἀνθρώπων λαμβανόμενος, ‘taken from amongst men.’ This expression is not part of the subject of the proposition, or descriptive merely of that which is spoken of, as if the whole should be, ‘every high priest taken from amongst men;’ in which way and sense they are restrictive of the subject spoken of, as containing a limitation in them; and so intimate, that it is thus with every high priest who is taken from amongst men, though it may be otherwise with others who are not so. But this is one of the things which is attributed unto every high priest, every one that is so absolutely: he who is so, is to be taken from amongst men. And *ex hominibus assumptus*, is as much as *ex hominibus assumitur*, is taken from amongst men; and the whole sense may be supplied by a copulative, interposed before the next words, ‘is taken from amongst men, and is ordained.’ This is then the first thing that belongs unto a high priest, and which here is ascribed unto him, ‘He is taken from amongst men.’

And two things are here considerable: 1. That he is from amongst men; and, 2. That he is taken from amongst them.

First. He is ἐξ ἀνθρώπων; and herein two things are included: 1. That he is naturæ humanæ particeps. He is, and must be, partaker in common of human nature with the rest of mankind, or he is not on many reasons meet for the discharge of this office. Neither the divine nature nor angelical is capable of the exercise of it for men; and this is principally intended. 2. That antecedently unto his assumption unto this office, he was among the number of common men, as having nothing in his nature to prefer him above them. So was it with Aaron: he was a common man amongst his brethren, yea, a mean man in bondage, before his call to office. The first of these declares what every high priest is, and ought to be; the latter what the first legal high priest actually was.

I showed before, that in this description of the office of a high priest, and the application of it unto Jesus Christ, those things which are essential thereunto, and without which it could not be duly executed, are found in him, and that in a far more perfect and excellent manner, than in the priests of the law. But those things, which although they were found necessarily in all that were vested with this office, yet belonged not to the office itself, nor the execution of it, but arose from the persons themselves and their imperfections, they had no place in him at all. So is it here. It was essential to the office itself, that he should be partaker of human nature. And that it was so with the Lord Christ, our apostle signally declares, with the reason of it, ch. ii. 14. But it was not so, that he should be absolutely in the common

state of all other men, antecedently to his call to office. For so the apostle declares that he was not; but he was the Son, the Son of God, ver. 8. So the Son was consecrated, that is, a priest, for evermore, ch. vii. 28. For he was born into this world King, Priest, and Prophet, unto his church.

Secondly. He is *λαμβάνομενος*, *assumptus*, or ‘is taken, is separated from them.’ Being made a high priest, he is no more of the same rank and quality with them.

‘*Ὑπὲρ ἀνθρώπων καθίσταται τὰ πρὸς τὸν Θεόν*, is ordained ‘for men:’ *ὑπὲρ* is sometimes vice, or loco, ‘in the stead,’ John x. 11, 15, xiii. 38; sometimes pro, only as it denotes the final cause, as to do a thing for the good of men, 2 Tim. ii. 10. And both these senses may have place here; for where the first intention is, the latter is always included. He that doth any thing in the stead of another, doth it always for his good. And the high priest might be so far said to stand and act in the stead of other men, as he appeared in their behalf, represented their persons, pleaded their cause, and confessed their sins, Lev. xvi. 21. But in their behalf, or for their good and advantage, to perform what on their part is with God to be performed, is evidently intended in this place.

Καθίσταται τὰ πρὸς τὸν Θεόν. Some suppose that because *καθίσταται* is, as they say, ‘*verbum medium*,’ it may in this place have an active signification. And then the sense of it would be, that he might appoint, ordain, or order the things of God. But as it is used most frequently in a neuter or a passive sense, so in this place it can be no otherwise. So the apostle explains himself, ch. viii. 3, *Πας ἀρχιερεὺς εἰς τὸ προσφέρειν δῶρα τε καὶ θυσίας καθίσταται*, ‘Every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices,’ which place expoundeth this. And two things are intended in the word. 1. God’s designation and appointment. 2. Actual consecration according to the order of the law. For so it was in the case of Aaron.

First. God gave command that he should be set apart to the office of the priesthood.—‘Take Aaron thy brother,’ saith God to Moses, *מִבְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל*, ‘from amongst the children of Israel,’ that is, *ἐξ ἀνθρώπων*, from among men, ‘that he may minister unto me in the priest’s office,’ Exod. xxviii. 1. This was the foundation of his call, separation, and function.

Secondly. He was actually consecrated unto his office by sundry sacrifices, described at large, ch. xxix. So was he ordained, *τὰ πρὸς τὸν Θεόν*. Now, this latter part of his ordination belonged unto the weakness and imperfection of that priesthood, that he could not be consecrated without the sacrifices of other things. But the Lord Christ, being both priest and sacrifice himself, he needed no such ordination, nor was capable thereof. His ordination therefore, consisted merely in divine designation and appointment, as we shall see. And this difference there was to be between them who were made high priests by the law, and who had infirmity, and him who was made by the word of the oath of God, who is the Son, ch. vii. 28.

Τὰ πρὸς τὸν Θεόν. The expression is elliptical and sacred. But what is intended in it, is sufficiently manifest. ‘The things that were

to be done with God,' or towards God, in his worship, to answer the duties and ends of the office of the priesthood; that is, to do the things whereby God might be appeased, atoned, reconciled, pacified, and his anger turned away. See ch. ii. 17.

ἵνα προσφέρῃ δώρα τε καὶ θυσίας ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν, 'that he may offer,' ויקרב. The word compriseth the whole sacerdotal performance, from first to last, in bringing, slaying, and burning the sacrifice according to the law; of which, see Leviticus, ch. i.—v., and our former Exercitations concerning the sacrifices of the Jews. The object of this sacerdotal action is δώρα καὶ θυσίαι. Interpreters are much divided about the application of these words unto the ancient sacrifices. Some think, they answer to מנחה and עולה, 'any offering in common, and whole burnt-offerings.' Some שלמים and עולה, 'peace-offerings, and burnt-offerings.' Some חטאת and אשם, 'the sin and trespass-offering.' The most general opinion is, that by gifts, all offerings of things inanimate are intended, as meats, drinks, oils, first-fruits, meal, and the like; and by sacrifices, the offerings of all creatures that were slain, as lambs, goats, doves, whose blood was poured on the altar. And this difference the words would lead us unto, the latter signifying directly the offering of things killed or slain. But our Saviour seems to comprise all offerings whatever under the name of gifts, Matt. v. 23. And if a distinction be here to be supposed, I should think that by gifts, all free-will offerings might be intended; and by sacrifices, those that were determined as to occasions, times, and seasons, by the law. But I rather judge that the apostle useth these two words in general to express all sorts of sacrifices for sin whatever. And therefore that expression, ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν, 'for sins,' may refer to δώρα, gifts,' as well as θυσίας, 'sacrifices.'

VER. 1.—*For every high priest taken from amongst men, is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.*

What is the relation of these words unto the discourse of the apostle, both in general and particular, hath been declared before. I shall pursue that only, which is particular and immediate. Having therefore proposed the priesthood of Christ, as a matter of great advantage and comfort unto unbelievers, he engageth into the confirmation thereof, by declaring the nature of that office, making application of what he observes therein unto the Lord Christ as our high priest. In this verse we have, as was said, a general description of a high priest, as his office was constituted and consummated by the law. For he is described,

1. From his original.—He is one taken from amongst men; from amongst those for whom he is to be a priest, that so he may be one-partaker of the same nature with them, Exod. xxviii. 1. He was not to be an angel, whose nature was incapable of those compassionate impressions, which are required unto a due discharge of this office. Besides, the administrations of an angel amongst sinners, would have been attended with dread and terror, and have taken away that spiri-

tual boldness and confidence, which a high priest is to encourage men to. Moreover, there would not have been hereby any representation of that union between the Lord Christ and us, which was indispensably necessary unto our high priest, who was to be himself both priest and sacrifice. Wherefore, a high priest was to be taken from amongst men, and so was our Lord Christ, as hath been at large declared, on ch. ii. 10—16. And we are here taught, that,

Obs. I. Christ's participation of our nature, as necessary to him for the bearing and discharging of the office of a high priest on our behalf, is a great ground of consolation unto believers, a manifest evidence that he is, and will be, tender and compassionate towards them.

The reader may consult what hath been discoursed to this purpose, on the 2d chapter, ver. 10, 11. &c.

2. He is described from the nature of his office in general.—He is ordained for men, in things appertaining unto God. There are things to be done with God, on the behalf of men, as sinners, and with respect unto sin, as is declared in the close of the verse. Hence arose the necessity of priests, as we have shown elsewhere. Had there been no sin, no atonement to be made with God for sin, every one in his own person should have done that which appertained unto God, or what he had to do with God. For God required nothing of any man, but what he might do for himself. But now, all men being sinners, God will not immediately be treated withal by them; and besides, there is that now to be done for them, which in their own persons they cannot perform. It was therefore upon the account of the interposition of Jesus Christ, with respect unto his future priesthood, that any one was ever admitted to treat with God about an atonement for sin. And this was the ground of the typical priesthood of old. Those priests were ordained for men in things appertaining unto God.

Obs. II. It was the entrance of sin, that made the office of the priesthood necessary.—This hath been abundantly confirmed elsewhere.

Obs. III. It was of infinite grace that such an appointment was made.—Without it all holy intercourse between God and man must have ceased. For neither, 1. were the persons of sinners meet to approach unto God; nor, 2. was any service which they could perform, or were instructed how to perform, suited unto the great end which man was now to look after; namely, peace with God. For the persons of all men being defiled, and obnoxious unto the curse of the law, how should they appear in the presence of the righteous and holy God, Isa. xxxiii. 14; Micah vi. 8. It may be, it will be said, that these priests themselves, of whom the apostle treateth in the first place, were also sinners; and yet they were appointed for men in things appertaining unto God; so that sinners may appear in such matters before the Lord. I answer: It is true they were so. And therefore our apostle says, that they were to offer for their own sins, as well as for the sins of the people, ver. 3. But then, they did none of them officiate in that office merely in their own names, and on their own account, but as they were types and representatives of him who had no sin, and whose office gave virtue and efficacy unto theirs. Again, men in their own

persons had nothing to offer unto God but their moral duties, which the law of their creation, and the covenant of works required of them. Now these, as is known, for many reasons, were no way meet nor able to make atonement for sin, the great work now to be done with God, and without which, everything else that can be done by sinners, is of no consideration. God therefore appointed a new service for this end, namely, that of sacrifices, appointed also a new way, with performance by a priest in the name and behalf of others. And a most gracious appointment it was, as that on which all blessed intercourse with God, and all hopes of acceptance with him, doth solely depend : though the occasion was grievous, the relief is glorious.

Obs. IV. The priest is described by the especial discharge of his duty, or exercise of his office ; which is his offering both gifts and sacrifices for sin.—This is the proper and principal work of a priest, as we have at large declared in our Exercitations. Priests and sacrifices are so related, as that they cannot be separated. Take away the one, and you destroy the other. And these sacrifices here are for sin ; that is, offered unto God, to make atonement, propitiation, and reconciliation for sin.

Obs. V. Where there is no proper propitiatory sacrifice, there is no proper priest.—Every priest is to offer sacrifices for sin ; that is, to make atonement. And therefore,

Obs. VI. Jesus Christ alone is the high priest of his people.—For he alone could offer a sacrifice for our sins to make atonement. This our apostle designs to prove, and doth it accordingly in this and the ensuing chapters.

Obs. VII. It was a great privilege which the church enjoyed of old, in the representation which it had by God's appointment, of the priesthood and sacrifice of Christ, in their own typical priests and sacrifices.—In themselves they were things low and carnal, such as could by no means expiate their sin. That is a work not to be done with the blood of bulls and goats. An expectation of that issue and effects by the mere virtue of such sacrifices, is the highest affront to the nature rule, holiness, and righteousness of God. But this was their glory and excellency, that they typified and represented that, which should really accomplish the great mighty work, of taking up the controversy between God and man about sin.

Obs. VIII. Much more glorious is our privilege under the gospel, since our Lord Jesus hath taken upon him, and actually discharged this part of his office, in offering an absolutely perfect and complete sacrifice for sin.—Here is the foundation laid of all our peace and happiness. And this is now plainly proposed unto us, and not taught by types, or spoken in parables. Their teachings of old were obscure, and therefore many missed of the mind of God in them. Hence some thought that they must trust to their sacrifices for their righteousness and pardon. Of these, some took up with them, and rested in them to their ruin. Others, more galled with their convictions, thought of other ways, and how they might out-do what God required, seeing they could not trust unto what he did so require, Mic. vi. 7, 8. But now all things are clearly revealed and proposed unto us, for Jesus

Christ in the gospel is evidently crucified before our eyes, Gal. iii. 1. Our way is made plain, so that wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein, Isa. xxxv. 8. The veil being removed, we all with open face behold the glory of the Lord as in a glass, 2 Cor. iii. 18. The sum of all is,

Obs. IX. What is to be done with God on the account of sin, that it may be expiated and pardoned, and that the people of God who have sinned, may be accepted with him and blessed, is all actually done for them by Jesus Christ their high priest, in the sacrifice for sin which he offered on their behalf.—He was ordained, *τα προς τον Θεον*, to do all things with God that were to be done for us; namely, that we might be pardoned, sanctified, and saved. This he undertook, when he took his office upon him. His wisdom, faithfulness, and mercy, will not allow us to suppose, that he hath left anything undone that belonged thereunto. If anything be omitted, as good all were so. For none besides himself in heaven or earth could do aught in this matter. He hath therefore faithfully, mercifully, fully done all that was to be done with God on our behalf. Particularly he hath offered that great Sacrifice which was promised, expected, represented, from the foundation of the world, as the only means of reconciliation and peace between God and man. So saith the text he was to do: he was to offer sacrifice for sin. How he did it, and what he effected thereby, must be declared in our progress. For the present it may suffice, that there is no more to be done with God about sin, as to atonement, propitiation, and pardon; there needs no more sacrifice for it, no masses, no merits, no works of our own.

VER. 2.—Two things the apostle hath proposed unto himself, which in this and the ensuing verses he doth yet further pursue. 1. A description of a high priest according to the law. 2. The evincing, first, that whatever was useful or excellent in such a high priest, was to be found in a more eminent manner in Jesus Christ, the only real and proper priest of the church; as also, secondly, that whatever was weak and infirm in such a priest, necessarily attending his frail and sinful condition, which either eclipsed the glory, or weakened the efficacy of the office as by him discharged, had no place in him at all. For whereas the affections and infirmities of our human nature are of two sorts.—*First*. Such as arise from the essence and constitution of it, and so are naturally and absolutely necessary to all that are partakers thereof as created. *Secondly*. Such as came occasionally on it by the entrance of sin, which adhere to all that are partakers of our nature as corrupted. The former sort were necessary to him that should be a high priest, and that not only to his being so, as is the participation of our nature in general, but also as to such a qualification of him as is useful and encouraging unto them, for whose good he doth exercise and discharge his office. But the latter sort are such as that although they did not evacuate the office in their discharge of it who were obnoxious to them, as to the proportion of their interest therein; yet was an impeachment of its perfection, and absolutely hindered it from being able to attain the utmost end of the priest-

hood. Wherefore, the first sort of these affections, such as are compassion, love, condescension, care, pity, were not only in Christ our high priest, but also, as graciously prepared, did belong unto his holy qualification, for the effectual and encouraging discharge of his office. The latter sort, as death natural, sickness, distempers of mind, producing personal sins inevitably, with other frailties, as they were found in the high priest according to the law, and belonged unto the imperfection of that priesthood; so being either sinful or penal, with respect unto the individual person in whom they were, they had no place in Jesus Christ the Son of God. To understand, therefore, aright the comparison here made between the high priest under the law, and Jesus Christ, or the application of it, as spoken concerning a high priest by the law, unto him, we must observe that the apostle designs the two things mentioned in the second particular before laid down.

1. That all real, necessary, useful conditions and qualifications of a high priest, as required in him by the law, were all of them found in Jesus Christ as our high priest, whereby he did answer and fulfil the representation and prefigurations that were made of him under the Old Testament.

2. That whatever did adhere necessarily unto the persons of the high priests of old,—as they were sinful men, partakers of our nature, as depraved or corrupted,—was not to be sought for, nor to be found in him. And unto these there is added as a necessary exurgency of both.

3. That sundry things wherein the peculiar eminency, advancement, and perfection of this office doth consist, were so peculiar unto him, as that they neither were, nor could be represented by the high priest made so by the law.

Wherefore, it is not an exact parallel, or complete resemblance between the legal high priest, and Christ the Son of God, which the apostle designeth; but such a comparison, as wherein there being an agreement in things substantial, with respect unto a certain end, yet the differences are great and many, which only can take place, where one of the comparates is indeed on many accounts incomparably more excellent than the other. To this purpose is the observation of Chrysostome on the place. *Τεως ουν α κοινα εστι τιθησι πρωτα, και τοτε δεκνυνσιν οτι υπερεχει, η γαρ κατα συγκρισιν υπεροχη ουτω—οταν εν μεν τοις κοινωρη, εν δε τοις υπερεχη· ει δε μη ουκ επι κατα συγκρισιν.* ‘First. He sets down the things that are common to both, then declares wherein he, that is, Christ excelleth; for so an excellency is set out by comparison, when in some things there is an equality, in others, an excellency on one side, and if it be otherwise there is no comparison.’ The words of the second verse are,

VER. 2. *Μετριοπαζειν δυναμενος τοις αγνοουσι και πλανωμενοις, επει και αυτος περικειται ασθενειαν.*

Μετριοπαζειν δυναμενος, Vulg. Lat. *qui condolere possit*, ‘that can grieve with.’ Rhem. ‘that can have compassion.’ Arias. *mensurate*

pati potens, 'that is able to bear moderately.' Syr. נִמְךָ נִפְשָׁה וְנִכְשָׁ עֵם, 'and who can let down or humble himself, his soul, and suffer with,' or condescend to suffer with. Arab. 'who can spare and forgive.' The Ethiopic translation, referring this wholly to the high priest under the law, by way of opposition, not comparison, reads it, 'who cannot relieve them who err under their hands,' or by their conduct. Eras. qui compati possit, 'who can suffer together with,' or have compassion on. Beza. qui quantum satis est possit miserari vicem ignorantium, i. e. 'who can sufficiently pity and have compassion on the condition.' There is not only a variety of expression used, but various senses also are intended by these interpreters, as we shall see in the examination of them. Ours, 'who can have compassion on,' and in the margin, 'reasonably bear with.'

Τοις ἀγνοοῦσι καὶ πλανωμένοις, ignorantibus et errantibus. Bez. aberrantibus, whence is ours, 'out of the way;' one out of the way is properly aberrans. Rhem. 'and do err.' Arab. 'who deal foolishly and err.'

Περικείται ἀσθενεῖαν, Syr. לְבִישׁ, is 'clothed,' compassed with infirmity, as a man is with his clothing that is about him, and always cleaving to him.

VER. 2.—*Who can have compassion on (is able mercifully to bear with) the ignorant, and those that wander from the way, seeing that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.*

THE discourse begun in the preceding verse, is here continued, and all things spoken in it are regulated by the first words of it, 'every high priest;' every high priest is one who can have compassion; and the same construction and sense is carried on in the next verse.

There are three things in the words.

1. A great and necessary qualification or endowment of a high priest. He is, he was to be, one who 'is able to have compassion.'

2. The peculiar object of his office-acts, proceeding from, and suited unto that qualification, which is, 'those who are ignorant, and do wander from the way.'

3. A special reason, rendering this qualification necessary unto him, or the means whereby it is ingenerated in him; 'he himself is compassed with infirmity;' which things must be particularly inquired into.

First. Μετριοπαθεῖν δυναμενος. Δυναμαι doth, 1. and properly, signify natural ability; a power for the effecting of any thing. And it is used concerning God and man, according to their distinct powers and abilities; the one original and absolutely infinite, the other derived, dependant, and variously limited. This is the first and proper signification of the word, which is so known as that it needs no confirmation by instances. 2. It signifies a moral power, with respect unto the bounds and limits of our duty. So, illud possumus, quod jure possumus, 'that we can do, which we can do lawfully.' Men can do many things naturally, that they cannot do morally, that is, justly; and they do so every day. 1 Cor. x. 21, Οὐ δύνασθε ποτηριον Κυρίου

πινειν, και ποτηριον δαιμονιων, 'Ye cannot drink of the cup of the Lord and of devils;'—ye cannot do it righteously, ye ought not to do it. 2 Cor. xiii. 8, Ου γαρ δυναμεθα τι κατα της αληθειας, 'We can do nothing against the truth, but for it.' So then, it expresseth a power commensurate unto our duty, and exerted in the discharge of it, Gen. xxxix. 9. 3. Δυναμεως, potens, is as much as ικανος idoneus, one that is meetly qualified with dispositions and inclinations suited unto his work, or that which is affirmed of him. This sense of the word, we have opened on ch. ii. 17, 18, iv. 15. And this sense which is here intended, may be conceived two ways, or it includes two things. First. The denial of an incapacity for what is affirmed. He is not of such a nature, of such a condition, or so qualified, as that he should be unable, that is, unmeet and unfit for this work. Secondly. An assertion of a positive inclination, meetness, readiness, and ability for it. Who is able, hath nothing in nature or state to hinder him, is disposed unto it, and ready for it.

Μετριοπαθειν. This word is nowhere used in the New Testament, but in this place only. And as most suppose, it is here used in a sense new and peculiar. Hence have interpreters so variously rendered this word, as we before observed; nor are expositors less divided about its sense, though the differences about it are not great, nor of importance, seeing all ascribe a sound and useful meaning unto it. In other writers it signifies constantly, to moderate affections. Μετριοπαθης, is modice, or moderate affectus, qui modum tenet in animi perturbationibus, 'one who is moderate in his affections, who exceeds not due measure in perturbations of mind.' And μετριοπαθεια is rendered by Cicero, modus naturalis in omni perturbatione; that is, in the consideration of such things as are apt to disturb the mind and affections, especially anger; to observe a mean, not to be moved above or beyond due measure. So μετριοπαθω, is moderatè ferre, to bear any thing, especially provocations unto anger, moderately, without any great commotion of affections, so as to be stirred up to wrath, severity, and displeasure. So Arias, mensurate (better moderatè) ferre potens. An example hereof we may take in Moses. He was μετριοπαθης, in a high and excellent manner; whence is that character given of him by the Holy Ghost, Num. xii. 3, 'And the man Moses was מֵיֶשֶׁת מְאֹד, πραως σφοδρα, very meek above all men.' It is spoken of him with respect unto his quiet and patient bearing of exasperating provocations, when he was opposed and reproached by Miriam and Aaron. He was μετριοπαθης; but as the best in the best of men, is but weak and imperfect, so God in his wisdom hath ordered things, that the failings of the best, should be in their best, or that wherein they did most excel, that no man should glory in himself, but that he that glorieth, should glory in the Lord. Thus Abraham and Peter failed in their faith, wherein they were so eminent. And the failure afterwards of Moses, was in this meekness or moderate bearing with provocations. He was not able in all things, μετριοπαθειν, but upon the provocation of the people, spoke unadvisedly and in wrath, saying, 'Hear now, ye rebels, must we fetch you water out of this rock?' Num. xx. 10. This privilege is reserved in every case for Christ

alone; he can always bear quantum satis est, so much as shall assuredly prevent any evil consequent whatever.

If the word be used in this sense, then respect is had to what is of provocation and exasperation, in those who are ignorant and out of the way. The high priest is one who is fit and able to bear moderately and quietly with the failings, miscarriages, and sins of those for whom he executes his office; not breaking out into any anger or excess of indignation against them by reason of their infirmities. And this, as applied unto Jesus Christ, is a matter of the highest encouragement and consolation unto believers. Were there not an absolute sufficiency of this disposition in him, and that as unto all occurrences, he must needs cast us all off in displeasure.

Erasmus expresseth it, by qui placabilis esse possit, one 'who may be appeased,' who is ready to be pleased again when he is angry or provoked. But the apostle doth not teach us herein how the high priest may be appeased when he is angry, but how remote he is, or ought to be, from being so on any occasion.

The Vulg. Lat. as we saw, reads, qui condolere possit, which is the same with *δυναμενος συμπαθεῖν*, ch. iv. 15, 'can be touched with a feeling.' And it is not improbable but that *μετριοπαθεῖν* may be used here in the same sense with *συμπαθεῖν*, ch. iv. 15. But then, it may be questioned whether condoleo, to grieve with, be as extensive and significant as compatior, which also it may, seeing the proper signification of doleo is, to have a sense of pain. And thus, no more should be intended than what we have already opened on those other places. What is said, belongs to the description of the nature of a high priest as he is merciful, and of his disposition unto pity and compassion, with his readiness thereon to relieve and succour them that are tempted.

But I cannot judge that the apostle useth this word merely as it were for change, without a design to intimate something farther and peculiar therein. Hence is that translation of Beza, qui quantum satis est miserari possit vicem, 'who can meetly and sufficiently pity the condition of the ignorant.' By *μετριος*, in this composition, the apostle intends, the just and due measure of a disposition unto compassion; not that he sets bounds unto it with respect unto any excess, as if he had said, he hath no more compassion or condolency than becomes him, he shall observe a measure therein and not exceed it; which, although it be true, yet is not the intimation of it in this place, unto his purpose. But he is one that doth not come short herein, who will not fail in any instance, who hath a sufficient measure of it to answer the condition and necessities of all with whom he hath do. And this doth not infer a new sense, distinct from that last before mentioned, but only further explains it, according to the intention of the apostle in the peculiar use of this word. I see no reason to confine myself unto either of these senses precisely, but do rather think, that the apostle on purpose made use of this word, to include them both.

First. For suppose the object of this qualification of the high priest, in them that are ignorant and do wander out of the way, be their ig-

norance and wanderings, that is, their sins, and those considered as containing a provocation of himself, as every sin is attended with provocation, then *δυναμενος μετριπαθειν*, is qui potest moderate ferre, 'who is able to bear with them,' with that due moderation of mind and affections, as not to have any vehement commotion of the one or the other against them. For if he should be liable unto such impressions, he would be provoked to call them rebels, as did Moses, and to say, as in the prophet, 'I will feed you no more, let that that dieth, die,' Zech. xi. 9. But he is able to bear with them patiently and meekly, so as to continue the faithful discharge of his office towards them and for them. This, as we observed, Moses was not able always to do, as he also complains, Num. xi. 12, 'Have I conceived all this people? Have I begotten them, that thou shouldst say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child?' Yet this is required in a high priest, and that he should no more cast off poor sinners for their ignorance and wanderings, than a nursing father could cast away a sucking child for its crying or frowardness, which, whoso is ready to do, is very unfit for that duty. So our apostle, in his imitation of Jesus Christ, affirms, that in the church he 'was gentle amongst them, as a nurse cherisheth her children,' 1 Thess. ii. 7. Not easy to be provoked, not ready to take offence, or cast off the care of him. So it is said of God, Acts xiii. 18, that for forty years *ετροποφορησε*, 'he bare with the manners of the people in the wilderness;' or as some read it, *ετροφοφορησε*, he 'bare or fed them as a nurse feedeth her child.' Thus ought it to be with a high priest, and is it with Jesus Christ. He is able, with all meekness and gentleness, with patience and moderation, to bear the infirmities, sins, and provocations of his people, even as a nurse, or a nursing father, beareth with the weakness and frowardness of a poor infant.

Secondly. Suppose the immediate object of this qualification of the high priest, to be the sins, temptations, and infirmities of his people, as they are grievous, troublesome, and dangerous unto themselves; then this *δυναμενος μετριπαθειν*, signifies his nature and disposition, as meet, prepared, and inclined, so to pity and commiserate, and consequently relieve in the way of his office, as shall be sufficient on all occasions. He is one that wants no part nor degree of a compassionate frame of heart towards them. Both these the word signifies as diversely applied, and both of them, if I mistake not, are intended by the apostle; and for this end, that they might be both included, did he make use of this singular word. At least, I am not able to embrace either of these senses, unto the exclusion of the other. A high priest, therefore, is one who can quietly bear with the weaknesses and sinful provocations of them that are ignorant and wander out of the way, as also to commiserate or pity them unto such a measure and degree, as never to be wanting unto their help and assistance. Such a person as is *משכיל אל דל*, Ps. xli. 1. One that is so wise and understanding in the state and condition of the poor, as duly to relieve them.

Secondly. The compassion described, accompanied with meek and patient bearing, is exercised towards the 'ignorant, and them that

are out of the way.' These words may be taken two ways; first, as distinctive, secondly, as descriptive of the object of this compassion. In the first way, the sense of them is, 'whereas, there are amongst the people of God, some or many that are ignorant and out of the way,' the compassion of the high priest is to be extended unto them; yea, this qualification doth respect them chiefly, so that they need not be discouraged, but boldly make use of his help and assistance in every time of distress. 'The ignorant, and those that are out of the way;' that is, those amongst the people who are so. In the latter way, all the people of God are intended. There are indeed degrees in these things, some being more affected with them than others; for there are degrees in the infirmities and sins of believers. And those who are most obnoxious unto them, are hereby encouraged to expect relief by the high priest. Yet in general, this is the condition of all the people of God, they fall more or less under these qualifications. And because they are so, so obnoxious unto ignorance and wanderings, because actually in sundry things they are ignorant and do err from the right way, and because they know this in some measure of themselves, and are therefore apt to be cast down and discouraged, the Holy Ghost here proposeth this qualification of a high priest, for their relief, as that which is required in him, and necessary unto him for that end. And as such, he had peculiarly to do with the people, in his dealing with God on their behalf, both in his oblations and intercessions. So it is said of our Saviour, the great high priest, that he made 'reconciliation for the sins of the people, and intercession for transgressors.' And this is the proper sense of the words. It is the whole people of God who are thus described, as they lie under the eye and care of their great high priest. But because also it is their duty to make application unto him for relief, which they will not do without a sense of their want, it is required, moreover, in this description, that they be burdened with an apprehension of the guilt and danger that is in these things. Those who are sensible of their ignorance and wanderings.

Τοις ἀγνοοῦσι, 'To them that are ignorant.' Not the mere affection of the mind, or ignorance itself, but the consequence and effects of it in actual sins, are principally intended. To such as are obnoxious to sinning, to such as sin, through the ignorance and darkness of their minds. There was under the law a sacrifice provided for them who sinned, בְּשֹׁגְגָה, 'through ignorance or error,' Lev. iv. For whereas in the three first chapters, Moses had declared the institution and nature of all those sacrifices in general, whereby the justification and sanctification of the church was typically wrought and represented, with the obligation that thence was on them to walk in new obedience and holiness. He supposeth yet, notwithstanding what was done, that there would be sins yet remaining among the people, which if they had no relief for, or against, would prove their ruin. As our apostle in answer thereunto, having declared the free justification of sinners through the obedience and blood of Christ, Rom. iv. v. with their sanctification flowing from the efficacy of his life and death, ch. vi; yet adds, that there will be a remaining principle of sin in them bringing

forth fruits and effects answerable to its nature, ch. vii. which he declares how we are relieved against by Jesus Christ, ch. viii. So was it in the institution of these sacrifices, whose order and nature is in this chapter unfolded. For, as was said, after the declaration of the sacrifices which concerned the justification and sanctification of the church in general, Moses distributes the following sins of the people into two sorts; into those which were committed בְּשֹׁגְגָה, 'by ignorance,' unadvisedly, or in error; and those which were committed בְּדַרְמָה, with 'a high hand,' or presumptuously. For those of the first sort there were sacrifices allowed, but those who were guilty of the latter were to be cut off, Num. xv. 27, 28, 30, 'If any soul sin through ignorance, then he shall bring a she-goat of the first year for a sin-offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly; when he sinneth by ignorance before the Lord, to make an atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him. But the soul that doth aught presumptuously,' (with a high-hand,) 'the same reproacheth the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people.' And it is so also under the gospel. For after we profess an interest in the sacrifice of Christ to our justification and sanctification, there are sins that men may fall into presumptuously, and with an high hand, for which there is no relief. 'For if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries,' Heb. x. 26, 27. All other sins whatever, come within the rank and order of sins which are committed בְּשֹׁגְגָה, 'by ignorance,' or error of mind. Of these there is 'no man that liveth and is not guilty,' Eccles. vii. 20; 1 Sam. ii. 2. Yea, they are so multiplied in us, or on us, as 'no man living can know or understand them,' Ps. xix. 13. By sins of ignorance then, are not understood those which we 'ex ignorantia juris,' or when men sinned against the law, 'because they knew it not,' doing what it forbade, as not knowing that it was forbidden; and omitting what was commanded, as not knowing that it was commanded. This kind of ignorance Abimelech pleaded in the case of his taking Sarah the wife of Abraham, in that he knew her not to be a married woman; which plea as to some part of his guilt, God admits of, Gen. xx. 4—6. And this ignorance was that which preserved the case of our apostle, in his blasphemy and persecution, from being remediless, and his sin from being a sin of presumption, or with a high hand, 1 Tim. i. 12, 13. But it is not only this sort of sins which is intended, although we see by these instances, how great and heinous provocations may be of this kind; but in this case, and in opposition to presumptuous sins, those sins are also reckoned sins of ignorance, when the mind or practical understanding being corrupted or entangled by the power of sin, and its advantageous circumstances, doth not attend to its duty, or the rule of all its actions, whence actual sin doth ensue. And this is the principal cause and spring of all the sins of our lives, as I have elsewhere declared, treating of the power of indwelling sin. Those therefore who are 'ignorant' in this place, are such, as who through the inadvertency of their minds, or want of a due and diligent attendance

to the rule of all their actions, do fall into sin, as well as those who do so, through a mere ignorance of their duty.

He adds, *και πλανωμενοις*, 'To them that wander out of the way.' The reader may see what we have spoken concerning this word, on ch. iii. 10. Our sinning is often thus expressed, Ps. cxix. 176, 'I have gone astray like a perishing sheep.' Isa. liii. 6, 'We like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way.' We have erred or wandered astray from the way of God, and turned to our own ways. 'Ye were as sheep going astray,' 1 Pet. ii. 25. But we must observe, that there is a twofold erring or wandering expressed by this word in this Epistle. The one is in heart, *αι πλανωνται τη καρδια*, 'they always err in their heart,' ch. iii. 10. The other is in 'our ways,' going out of them, which is here intended. The former is the heart's dislike of the ways of God, and voluntary relinquishment of them thereon. This answers to the presumptuous sinning before mentioned, and is no object of compassion either in God or our high priest. For concerning them who did so, God 'sware in his wrath that they should not enter into his rest.' But there may be a wandering in men's ways, when yet their hearts are upright with God. So it is said of Asa, that his 'heart was perfect all his days,' 2 Chron. xv. 17. Yet his great wanderings from the ways of God are recorded, ch. xvi. 7—12. There is therefore included in this word, a seduction by temptation into some course of wandering for a season from the ways of God. Who then are these *οι πλανωμενοι*? Even those who by the power of their temptations, have been seduced and turned from the straight paths of holy obedience, and have wandered in some crooked paths of their own.

And in these two words doth the apostle comprise all sorts of sinners whatever, with all sorts of sins, and not merely those which are commonly esteemed of infirmity or ignorance. For he intends all those sins which the high priest was to confess, sacrifice, and intercede for, on the behalf of the people. And this was 'all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins,' Lev. xvi. 21. It is true, as the law was the instrument of the Jewish polity, there was no sacrifice appointed for some sins, if known and legally proved by witnesses, because the sinners were to be punished capitally, for the preservation of public order and peace. And God would not allow an instance of accepting a sacrifice where the offender was to suffer, which would have overthrown the principal notion of sacrifices, wherein the guilt of the offerer was, as to punishment, transferred to the beast to be offered. But otherwise, without respect to civil rule and legal proof, all sorts of sins were to be expiated by sacrifices. And they are here by our apostle reduced to two heads, whence two sorts of sinners are denominated. 1. Such as men fall into by the neglect and failure of their minds in attending to their duty, which is their sinful ignorance. 2. Such as men are seduced to some continuance in, through the power of their temptation, and that against their light and knowledge; such are ignorant, or wanderers out of the way. All sorts therefore of sins and sinners, are comprised in these expressions. And with respect to them, it is required of a

high priest. 1. That he should not take the provocation of them so high, or immoderately, as to neglect or cast them off on their account. 2. That he should have such pity and compassion towards them, as is needful to move him to act for their relief and deliverance. And this the high priest of old was prompted to.

Thirdly. A special reason for this qualification of the high priest is added. *Ἐπεὶ καὶ αὐτὸς περικείται ἀσθενείαν.* *Ἐπεὶ*, quoniam, 'seeing it is so,' καὶ αὐτὸς, 'that even he himself.' His own state and condition will remind him of his duty in this matter. *Περικείται ἀσθενείαν.* This is more than if he had said that he was *ἀσθενής*, 'weak and infirm.' He is beset and compassed about on every hand with infirmity. *Περικειμένην ἔχων ἀσθενείαν*, as is the meaning of the phrase; having infirmity 'round about him,' attended with it in all that he sets himself to. Now this *ἀσθενεία* is twofold, 1. 'Natural.' 2. 'Moral.' There is an infirmity which is inseparable from our human nature. Such are the weaknesses of its condition, with all the dolorous and afflictive affections in doing or suffering, that attend it. And this our Lord Jesus Christ himself was compassed withal; whence he was a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief, as hath been declared. Had it been otherwise, he could not have been such a merciful high priest as we stood in need of, nor indeed any priest at all; for he would not have had any thing of his own to offer, if he had not had that nature from which in this life, that sort of infirmity is inseparable, Matt. xxvi. 41. 2. There is a moral infirmity, consisting in an inclination to sin and weakness as to obedience, *οὐτῶν ἡμῶν ἀσθενῶν*, Rom. v. 6, 'When we were yet infirm without strength,' is the same with *οὐτῶν ἡμῶν ἁμαρτωλῶν*, ver. 8, 'whilst we were yet sinners,' for our weakness was such as was the cause of our sin, see 1 Cor. viii. 7. And the words, both substantive, adjective, and verb, are frequently used in the New Testament, to express bodily weakness by sickness and infirmities of every kind. Nothing hinders but that we may take it here in its most comprehensive signification, for infirmities of all sorts, natural, moral, and occasional. For the first sort do necessarily attend the condition of our human nature, and are requisite to him that would discharge aright the whole office of a priest. And the following verse affirming, that for this cause it was necessary for him to offer sacrifice for himself, declares directly that his moral or sinful infirmities are also included. He himself was subject to sin as the rest of the people. Whence there were peculiar sacrifices appointed for the anointed priest to offer for himself and his own sin, And for the last, or infirmities in bodily distempers to sickness and death, it is a necessary consequent of the former. Wherefore, as these words have respect to them that go before, or yield a reason why the high priest is such a one as can have compassion on the ignorant, they express the infirmity of nature, which inclined him thereunto from a sense of his own weakness and suffering. As they respect what ensues, ver. 3, they intend his moral infirmities, or sinful infirmities with their consequences, from whence it was necessary that he should offer sacrifice for himself. And in the latter sense the things intended belong peculiarly to the high priest according to the law, and not to Christ.

And this obviateth an objection that may be raised from the words.

For it may be said, if this be so, why is it mentioned in this place as an advantage; for the inducing of the high priest unto a due measure of compassion, or to equanimity and forbearance? For if this were not in Christ, he may be thought to come short in his compassion of the legal high priest, as not having this motive unto it, and incentive of it. *Ans.* 1. That natural infirmity whereof our Lord Christ had full experience, is every way sufficient to this purpose. And this alone was that which qualified the legal high priest with due compassion. His moral infirmity was not any advantage unto him, so as to help his compassion towards the people, which was, as all other graces, weakened thereby. It is therefore mentioned by the apostle, only as the reason why he was appointed to offer sacrifice for himself, which Christ was not to do. And what advantage soever may be made of a sense of moral weakness and proneness unto sin, yet is it in itself an evil, which weakens the duty that it leads unto; nor where this is, can we expect any other discharge of duty, but what proceeds from him, who is liable to sin and miscarriage therein. Now, the Lord Christ being absolutely free from this kind of infirmity, yet made sensible of one by the other, doth in a most perfect manner perform all that is needful to be done on our behalf. 2. The apostle treats not of the nature of the priesthood of Christ absolutely, but with respect unto the legal high priests, whom he exalts him above. It was necessary therefore that their true state should be represented, that it might appear as well wherein he excelled them, as wherein there was an agreement between them. And this he did among other things, in that he was not obnoxious unto any moral infirmity as they were. From the whole we may observe,

Obs. I. Compassion and forbearance, with meekness, in those from whom we expect help and relief, is the great motive and encouragement unto faith, affiance, and expectation of them.—It is unto this end that the apostle makes mention of this qualification or endowment of a high priest, with respect unto its application to Jesus Christ. He would thereby encourage us to come unto him, and to expect all that assistance which is necessary to relieve us in all our spiritual distresses, and to give us acceptance with God. No man will expect any good or kindness from one whom he looks upon as severe, incompassionate, and ready to lay hold on occasions of anger or wrath. When God himself saw it necessary to exercise severity, and give frequent instances of his displeasure, for the preservation of his worship in holiness and order, among that stubborn generation in the wilderness, they spake unto Moses, saying, ‘Behold we die, we perish, we all perish; whosoever cometh near to the tabernacle of the Lord, he shall die; Shall we be consumed with dying?’ Num. xvii. 12, 13. ‘Behold, the sword hath killed some of us, and behold the earth hath swallowed some of us; and behold some of us are dead with the pestilence,’ as the Chaldee Targum expresth it. Most apprehend this to be a sinful repining complaint against the righteous judgments of God wherewith they were consumed for their sins. I rather judge

it an expression of that bondage, legal apprehension of the terror of the Lord and his holiness, which they were then kept under, finding the commandment which was ordained for life, to become unto them, by reason of sin, unto death, Rom. vii. 9, 10. And therefore that last expostulation, 'Shall we be consumed with dying?' is a deprecation of wrath, as Ps. lxxxv. 5, 'Wilt thou be angry with us for ever?' and Lam. v. 22, 'Wilt thou utterly reject us?' But evident it is, that want of a clear insight into God's compassion and forbearance, is full of terror and discouragement. And he who framed unto himself a false notion of Christ, was thereby utterly discouraged from diligence in his service. 'I knew that thou wast a hard man,' or an austere severe man; 'and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth,' Matt. xxv. 24, 25; Luke xix. 22. His undue apprehensions of Christ, the proper effect of unbelief, ruined him for ever. Wherefore God himself doth not in his dealings with us, more properly, or more fully, set out any property of his nature, than he doth his compassion, long-suffering, and forbearance. And as he proposeth them unto us for our encouragement, so he declares his approbation of our faith in them. 'He delighteth in them that hope in his mercy,' Ps. xxxiii. 18. Hence when he solemnly declared his nature by his name to the full, that we might know and fear him, he doth it by an enumeration of those properties which may convince us of his compassionateness and forbearance, and not, till the close of all, makes any mention of his severity, as that which he will not exercise towards any, but such as by whom his compassion is despised, Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. So he affirms, that 'fury is not in him,' Isa. xxvii. 4. Although we may apprehend that he is angry and furious, ready to lay hold of all occasions to punish and destroy, yet is it not so towards them who desire sincerely to lay hold of him strongly, and to make peace with him by Jesus Christ, ver. 5. Elihu supposeth that Job had such apprehensions of God; 'Thou hast said, Behold, he findeth occasions against me, he counteth me for his enemy. He putteth my feet in the stocks, he marketh all my paths,' Job xxxiii. 10, 11. And indeed in his agony he had said little less, ch. xiv. 16, 17. But it is not so: for if God should so 'mark iniquities, who could stand?' Ps. cxxx. 3. Wherefore the great recompence that God gives to sinners from first to last, is from his compassion and forbearance. And for our Lord Jesus Christ, as Mediator, we have evinced, that all things were so ordered about him, as that he might be filled with tenderness, compassion, and forbearance towards sinners. And as this we stand in need of, so it is the greatest encouragement that we can be made partakers of. Consider us either as to our sins or sufferings, and it will appear that we cannot maintain a life of faith, without a due apprehension of it.

Obs. II. Wherefore, secondly, We live, the life of our souls is principally maintained, upon this compassionateness of our high priest; namely, that he is able to bear with us in our provocations, and to pity us in our weaknesses and distresses. To this purpose is the promise concerning him, Isa. xl. 11. There are three things that are apt to give great provocations unto them that are concerned in us. First.

Frequency in offending. Secondly. Greatness of offences. Thirdly. Instability in promises and engagements. These are things apt to give provocations, beyond what ordinary moderation and meekness can bear withal; especially where they are accompanied with a disregard of the greatest love and kindness. And all these are found in believers, some in one, and some in another, and some in all. For, 1. There is in us all a frequency of provocation, as Ps. xix. 12. Our sins are beyond our numbering or understanding. What believer is there, that doth not constantly admire how the Lord Christ hath patiently borne with him in the frequency of his daily failings? that he hath carried it towards him without being so provoked unto anger, as to lay him out of his care? 2. Some of them are overtaken with great offences, as was the case of Peter; and there is not one of them, but on one account or other, hath reason to make use of the prayer of the Psalmist, 'Be merciful unto my sin, for it is great.' And great sins are attended with great provocations. That our souls have not died under them, that we have not been rejected of God utterly for them, it is from this holy qualification of our high priest, that he is able sufficiently to bear with all things that are required in the discharge of his office. Were it not so, he would, on one occasion or another, wherein now we admire his lenity and forbearance, have sworn in his wrath, that we should not enter into his rest. 3. Instability in promises and engagements, especially as breaking forth into frequent instances, is a matter of great provocation. This is that which God complains of in Israel, as wherewith he was almost wearied, Hos. vi. 4. And herein also do we try and exercise the forbearance of our high priest. There is not a day wherein we answer and make good the engagements of our own hearts, either in matter or manner, as to our walking before him in the constant exercise of faith and love. And that we are yet accepted with him, it is because that, *δυναται μετριοπαθεῖν*, he can bear with us in all patience and moderation.

Again, our ignorances and wanderings are our sufferings, as well as our sins. Sin is the principal affliction, the principal suffering of believers. Yea, all other things are light unto them in comparison hereof. This is that which they continually groan under, and cry out to be delivered from. Herein our high priest is able so to pity us, as undoubtedly to relieve us; but this hath been already insisted on.

Obs. III. Though every sin hath in it the whole nature of sin, rendering the sinners obnoxious unto the curse of the law; yet as there are several kinds of sins, so there are several degrees of sin, some being accompanied with a greater guilt than others.—The papists have a distinction of sins into mortal and venial, which is the foundation of one moiety of their superstition. Some sins, they say, are such as in their own nature deserve death eternal, so that there is no deliverance from the guilt of them, without actual contrition and repentance. But some are so slight and small, as that they are easily expiated by an observance of some outward rites of the church. However, they endanger no man's eternal salvation, whether they repent of them or not. The worst is but a turn in purgatory, or the charge of a pardon. Because this distinction is rejected by Protestants, they accuse

them for teaching that all sins are equal. But this they do untruly. The popish distinction, I confess, might be allowed with respect unto offences against the law of old, as it was the rule of the Jewish polity. For some of them, as murder and adultery, were to be punished capitally without mercy, which therefore were mortal unto the offenders. Others were civilly as well as typically expiated by sacrifice, and so were venial in the constitution of the law; that is, such as were pardoned of course, by attending to some instituted observances. But with respect unto God, every sin is a transgression of the law, and the wages or reward of it is death, Rom. vi. 23. And the curse of the whole law was directed against every one who did not every thing required in it, or failed in any one point of obedience, Deut. xxvii. 26; Gal. iii. 10. And 'whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all,' James ii. 10. But there are degrees of sin, and degrees of guilt in sinning. As, 1. There is a distinction of sins with respect unto the persons that commit them. But this distinction ariseth from the event, and not from the nature of the sin itself intended. As suppose the same sin committed by an unregenerate person, and by one that is regenerate: unto the latter, it shall be pardoned; unto the former, continuing so, it shall never be pardoned. But whence is this difference? Is it that the sin is less in the one than in the other? Nay, being supposed of the same kind, commonly it hath more aggravating circumstances in the regenerate than in the unregenerate. Is it because God is less displeased with sin in some than others? Nay, God is equally displeased with equal sins, in whomsoever they are found; if there be any difference, he is more displeased with them in believers than in others. But the difference ariseth merely from the event. Regenerate persons will, through the grace of God, certainly use the means of faith and repentance for the obtaining of pardon, which the other will not; and if they are assisted also so to do, even they in like manner shall obtain forgiveness. No man therefore can take a relief against the guilt of sin from his state and condition, which may be an aggravation, and can be no alleviation of it. 2. There are degrees of sin amongst men unregenerate, who live in a course of sin all their days. We see it is so, and it ever was so in the world. And sometimes here, but certainly hereafter, God deals with them not only according to their state of sin, and their course of sin, but according to the degrees and aggravations of sin in great variety. All do not sin equally, nor shall all be equally punished. 3. In the sins of believers there are different degrees, both in divers, and in the same persons. And although they shall be all pardoned, yet have they different effects; with respect, 1. Unto peace of conscience. 2. Sense of the love of God. 3. Growth in grace and holiness. 4. Usefulness or scandal in the church or the world. 5. Temporal afflictions. And, 6. A quiet or troublesome departure out of this world; but in all, a reserve is still to be made for the sovereignty of God and his grace.

Obs. IV. Our ignorance is both our calamity, our sin, and an occasion of many sins unto us.—Having declared that the high priest was first to offer sacrifices for the sins of men, and then that he was

to be compassionate towards them, both in their sins and sorrows ; the first instance which the apostle gives of those who are concerned herein, is of them that are ignorant. They stand in need both of sacrifice and compassion. And ignorance in spiritual things is twofold : 1. Original, subjective, and universal. This is that whereby men have their understandings darkened, and are alienated from the life of God, Eph. iv. 18. The ignorance that is in men unregenerate, not savingly enlightened, consisting in the want or defect of a principle of heavenly or spiritual light in their minds, which I have elsewhere at large described. But it is not this sort of persons, nor this sort of ignorance, which are here intended. 2. There is an ignorance which is objective and partial, when the light and knowledge that is in us, is but weak and infirm, extending itself unto some objects, and affecting the mind with darkness and disorder in the apprehension of them also. And this also may be considered two ways. First. Absolutely ; and so the best, and the most wise, and the most knowing, are ignorant, and to be esteemed among them that are so ; for the best know but in part, and prophesy but in part, and see darkly as in a glass, 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 12. Yea, how little a portion is it that we know of God ! We cannot by searching find out the Almighty to perfection : such knowledge is too wonderful for us. Yea, we know nothing perfectly, neither concerning God nor ourselves. If we know him, so as to believe him, fear him, and obey him, it is all that is promised us in this life, all that we can attain unto. Wherefore, let the best of us, 1. Take care that we be not puffed up, or fall into any vain elation of mind upon the conceit of our knowledge. Alas ! how many things are there to be seen, to be known in God, that they who are puffed up know nothing of ; and nothing do they know as they ought, or as it shall be known. 2. Endeavour in the constant use of all means, to grow in the knowledge of God, and of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The more we learn here, the more we shall see there is to be learned. 3. Long for the time, or rather that eternity, wherein all these shades shall fly away, all darkness be removed from our minds, all veils and clouds taken away from about the divine being and glory ; when we shall see him as he is, with open face, and know as we are known, which is the eternal life and blessedness of our souls. 4. Know that on the account of the ignorance that is yet in the best, yea that was in the most holy saint that ever was on the earth, they all stand in need of the compassion of our high priest to bear with them, pity, and relieve them. Secondly. This second sort of ignorance may be considered comparatively. So among believers, some are more chargeable with this evil than others, and are more obnoxious unto trouble from it. And these we may distinguish into four sorts : 1. Such as are young and tender, either in years, or in the work of grace upon their souls. These the apostle calls babes and children, that have need to be nourished with milk, and not to have their minds overcharged with things too high and hard for them. And concerning this sort, many things are spoken graciously and tenderly in the Scripture. 2. Such as, through the weakness of their natural capacities, are slow in learning, and are never able to attain unto any great mea-

sure of sound knowledge and judgment; although we see many notable natural defects in the minds of them that are sincere, to be abundantly compensated by the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, shining plentifully upon them and in them. 3. Such as are so disposed of by the providence of God, in their outward concerns in this world, as that they enjoy not the means of knowledge and growth therein, at least in so full and effectual a manner as others do. Hereby are they kept low in their light and spiritual apprehensions of things, and are thereby obnoxious to manifold errors and mistakes. And of these, partly through the blindness of them, who in many places take upon themselves to be the only teachers and guides of the disciples of Christ, partly through some sloth of their own, in not providing as they ought for their own edification, there is a great number in the world. 4. Such as by reason of some corrupt affections, spiritual sloth, and worldly occasions perpetually diverting their minds, are dull and slow in learning the mysteries of the gospel, and thrive but little in light or knowledge, under an enjoyment of the most effectual means of them. These our apostle complains of, and reproves in particular, ver. 11—13. And this sort of comparative ignorance, is attended with the greatest guilt of any, the reasons whereof are obvious. But yet unto all these sorts, doth our high priest extend his compassion, and they are all of them here intended. And he is compassionate toward us under our ignorance, 1. As it is our calamity, or trouble, for so it is; and as such he pities us in it, and under it. Who is not sensible of the inconveniences and perplexities that he is continually cast into, by the remainders of darkness and ignorance in him? Who is not sensible how much his love and his obedience are weakened by them? Who doth not pant after fuller discoveries, and more clear and stable conceptions of the glorious mystery of God in Christ? Yea, there is nothing, on the account whereof believers do more groan for deliverance from their present state, than that they may be freed from all remainders of darkness and ignorance, and so be brought into a clear and intimate acquaintance with the uncreated glories of God, and all the holy emanations of light and truth from them. Herein then our merciful high priest exerciseth compassion towards us, and leads us on, if we are not slothfully wanting unto ourselves, with fresh discoveries of divine light and truth, which although they are not absolutely satisfactory to the soul, nor do utterly take away its thirst after the all-fulness of the eternal fountain of them; yet do they hold our souls in life, and give a constant increase unto our light towards the perfect day. 2. This ignorance also is our sin, as being our gradual falling short of the knowledge of the glory of God required in us, and the occasion of manifold failings and sins in our course; most of our wanderings being from some kind of defect in the conducting light of our minds, are things known and confessed. And with respect hereunto, namely, that efficacious influence which our ignorance hath into our frequent surprisals unto sin, it is principally that we have relief from the compassion of our high priest.

Obs. V. Sin is a wandering from the way.—See on ch. iii. 10.

Obs. VI. No sort of sinners are excluded from an interest in the care and love of our compassionate high priest, but only those who exclude themselves by their unbelief.—Our apostle useth these two expressions to comprise all sorts of sinners, as they did under the law, unless they were such presumptuous sinners as had no relief provided for them in the institution thereof. Of this nature is final unbelief alone under the gospel. Therefore on all others our high priest is able to have compassion, and will especially exercise it towards poor, dark, ignorant wanderers. And I would not forbear to manage from hence some encouragements to believing, as also to declare the aggravations of unbelief, but that these discourses must not be drawn out to a greater length. Wherefore I shall only add on this verse,

Obs. VII. It was well for us, and enough for us, that the Lord Christ was encompassed with the sinless infirmities of our nature.

Obs. VIII. God can teach a sanctified use of sinful infirmities, as he did in and to the priests under the law.

VER. 3.—In the third verse the apostle illustrates what he had asserted concerning the high priest, as to his being encompassed with infirmities, from a necessary consequent thereof. ‘He was to offer sacrifices for his own sins.’ Before he had declared in general that the end of his office was to offer gifts and sacrifices to God, that is, for the sins of the people, but proceeding in this description of him, he mentions his own frailty, infirmity, and obnoxiousness to sin. And this he did, that he might give an account of those known institutions of the law, wherein he was appointed to offer sacrifices for his own sins also.

VER, 3.—Και δια ταυτην οφειλει, καθως περι του λαου, ουτω και περι εαυτου, προσφερειν υπερ αμαρτιων.

For δια ταυτην MS. T. δι’ αυτην, that is, ασθενειαν. ‘Because of which infirmity.’ Vulg. Lat. Propterea debet. ‘Wherefore, or for which cause, he ought.’ Or as we, ‘and by reason hereof.’ Syr. ‘So also for himself to offer for his own sins.’

Και δια ταυτην, that is, say some, δια τουτο, the feminine put for the neuter by a Hebraism. Hence it is rendered by some, propterea. But ταυτην plainly and immediately refers to ασθενειαν. Propterea hanc, or istam infirmitatem. Had the high priest under the law been αναμαρτητος, without any sin or sinful infirmity, as the Lord Christ was, he should have had nothing to do, but to offer sacrifice for the sins of the people. But it was otherwise with him, seeing he himself also, as well as they, was encompassed with sinful infirmities.

Οφειλει, ‘he ought.’ He ought to offer for his own sins, and that on a double account whereinto this duty or necessity is resolved. 1. The nature of the things themselves, or the condition wherein he was. For seeing he was infirm and obnoxious to sin, and seeing he did, as other men, sin actually in many things, he must have been ruined by his office, if he might not have offered sacrifice for himself. It was

indispensably necessary that sacrifices should be offered for him and his sin, and yet this no other could do for him, he ought therefore to do it himself. 2. The command of God. He 'ought so to do,' because God had so appointed and ordained that he should. To this purpose there are sundry express legal institutions, as we shall see immediately.

Καθως περι του λαου, 'in like manner as for the people.' That is, either the whole people collectively, or all the people distributively, as their occasions did require. In the first way, the great anniversary sacrifice which he celebrated in his own person for the whole body of the people, is principally intended, Lev. xvi. 16, 24. Add hereunto the daily sacrifice belonging to the constant service of the temple, which is therefore used synecdochically for the whole worship thereof, Dan. viii. 11, 12. For herein also was the whole church equally concerned. In the latter way, it respects all those occasional sacrifices, whether for sin or trespasses, or in free-will offerings, which were continually to be offered, and that by the priests alone.

Ουτω και περι εαντου, 'so for himself,' in like manner, on the same grounds, and for the same reasons that he offered for the people. He had a common interest with them in the daily sacrifice, which was the public worship of the whole church: and therein he offered sacrifice for himself also, together and with the people. But besides this, there were three sorts of offerings that were peculiar to him, wherein he offered for himself distinctly or separately.

1. The solemn offering that ensued immediately on his inauguration, Lev. ix. 2, 'And he said to Aaron, Take thee a young calf for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt-offering, without blemish, and offer them before the Lord,' This was for himself, as it is expressed ver. 8, 'Aaron therefore went unto the altar, and slew the calf, which was the sin-offering for himself.' After this he offered distinctly for the people, a kid of the goats for a sin-offering, ver. 3, 15. And this was for an expiation of former sins, expressing the sanctification and holiness that ought to be in them that draw nigh to God.

2. There was an occasional offering or sacrifice which he was to offer distinctly for himself, on the breach of any of God's commandments by ignorance, or any actual sin, Lev. iv. 3, 'And if the priest that is anointed do sin, according unto the sin of the people,' (that is, in like manner as any of the people do sin,) 'then let him bring for his sin that he hath sinned, a young bullock without blemish unto the Lord for a sin-offering.' After which there is a sacrifice appointed of the like nature, and in like manner to be observed. 1. For the sin of the whole people, ver. 13, and then, 2. For the sin of any individual person, ver. 27. And hereby the constant application that we are, on all actual sins to make to the blood of Christ, for pardon and purification was prefigured.

3. There was enjoined him another solemn offering on the annual feast or day of expiation, which he was to begin the solemn service of that great day withal, Lev. xvi. 3, 'Aaron shall thus come into the holy place, with a bullock for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt-

offering.' Ver. 11, 'And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin-offering, which is for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock for the sin offering, which is for himself.' After this, he offers also on the same day, for the sins of the people, ver. 15, a bullock for himself, and a goat for the people. And this solemn sacrifice, respecting all sins and sorts of them, known and unknown, great and small, in general and particular, represents our solemn application unto Christ for pardon and sanctification, which, as to the sense of them, may be frequently renewed. The Jews affirm that the high priest used at his offering this sacrifice, the ensuing prayer: לפניך אני וביתי ובני אהרן ועם קדושך ה' השם עיתי פשעתי חטאתי לפניך נא לעזוב ולפשע ולחטא שעויתי ושפעת ושהחטאתי לפניך אני וביתי ובני אהרן ועם קדושך ככתוב בתורת משה עבדך כי ביום הזה יכפר עליכם לטהר אתכם מכל חטאתיכם לפניך i. e. 'I beseech thee, O Lord, I have done perversely, I have transgressed, I have sinned before thee: I and my house, and the children of Aaron, and thy holy people. I beseech thee, O Lord, be propitious unto, or pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquities, transgressions, and sins, wherein I have done amiss, transgressed, and sinned before thee, I and my house, and the sons of Aaron, and thy holy people, according as it is written in the law of Moses, thy servant, that in this day thou wouldst pardon and purify us from all our sins.' Mishnaïot. Tract. Jom. Perek. 4. And all these several sorts of sacrifices for himself, were all of them, as our apostle here speaks, ὑπερ ἁμαρτιων, for sins. And this was necessary, because he was encompassed with infirmities, and obnoxious unto sin, and so stood in no less need of expiation and atonement than the people.

Expositors generally agree, that this is peculiar unto the high priest according to the law, the Lord Christ being neither intended nor included in this expression. For we have shown, that in this comparison, the things compared being on some accounts infinitely distant, there may be that in the one, which nothing in the other answers unto. And that the Lord Christ is not intended in this expression appears,

I. The necessity of this offering for himself, by the high priest, arose from two causes, as was declared. 1st. His moral infirmity and weakness, that is, unto obedience, and obnoxiousness of sin. 2dly. From God's command and appointment. He had commanded and appointed that he should offer sacrifice for himself. But in neither of these had our Lord Christ any concern. For neither had he any such infirmities, nor did God ordain or require that he should offer sacrifice for himself.

2. Actually Christ had no sin of his own to offer for, nor was it possible that he should, for he was made like unto us, yet without sin. And the offering of the priest here intended, was of the same kind with that which was for the people. Both for actual sins of the same kind, one for his own, the other for the people's.

3. It is expressly said, that the Lord Christ needed not, as they, to offer, first for his own sins, and then for the people's, and that because he was in himself, holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from

sinner, ch. vii. 26, 27. This therefore belonged unto the weakness and imperfection of the legal high priest.

Two expositors of late have been otherwise minded. The first is Crellius or Slichtingius, who says, that the infirmities and evils that Christ was obnoxious unto, are here, by a catechesis, called sins, and for them he offered for himself. The other is Grotius, who speaks to the same purpose: Cum hoc generaliter de omni sacerdote dicitur, sequitur Christum quoque obtulisse pro se *ὑπερ ἁμαρτιῶν* i. e. Ut a doloribus illis qui peccatorum pœnæ esse solent, et occasione peccatorum nostrorum ipsi infligebantur, posset liberari. 'Whereas this is spoken generally of every priest, it follows that Christ also offered for himself for sins; that is, that he might be freed from those pains which are wont to be punishments of sins, and which on the occasion of our sins, were inflicted on him. It is well enough known what dogme or opinion is intimated in these expressions. But I answer,

1. This assertion is not universal and absolute concerning every high priest, but every high priest that was under the law, who was appointed to be a type of Christ, so far as was possible by reason of his infirmities.

2. It is not without danger to say that Christ offered himself *ὑπερ ἁμαρτιῶν*. He knew no sin, he did no sin, and therefore could not offer a sin-offering for himself. His offering himself to God for us, making his soul an offering for sin, our sins; his being made sin for us, to make atonement or reconciliation for our sins, is fully declared; but of this offering for himself, especially for sin, it is nowhere taught nor intimated.

3. If he be intended here, then must he offer himself, as the high priest did of old; this the letter of the text enforceth. But the high priest of old was to offer distinctly and separately, first for himself, and then for the people. So the words require it in this place, by the notes of comparison and distinction, *Καθώς* and *οὕτως*; as for the people, so or in like manner for himself. Therefore if the Lord Christ be intended, he must offer two distinct sacrifices, one for himself, another for us; now, whereas this he needed not to do, nor did, nor could do, it is undeniably manifest that he hath no concern in this expression.

There remaineth one difficulty only to be removed, which may arise from the consideration of this discourse. For if the high priest of old, notwithstanding his own sins, could first offer for himself, and then for the people, and so make expiation for all sin, what necessity was there that our high priest should be absolutely free from all sin, as our apostle declares that he was, and that it was necessary he should be, ch. vii. 25, 26. For it seems he might first have offered for his own sin, and then for ours.

Ans. 1. It is one thing to expiate sin typically, another to do it really. One thing to do it in representation by virtue of something else, another to do it effectually by itself. The first might be done by them that were sinners, the latter could not.

2. On that supposition it would have been indispensably necessary

that our high priest should have offered many sacrifices. Once he must have offered for himself, wherein we should have had no concern: and then he must again have offered himself for us. Hence, whereas he had nothing to offer but himself, he must have died and been offered more than once, which lay under all manner of impossibilities.

3. That a real atonement might be made for sin, it was required that our nature which was to suffer, and to be offered, should be united unto the divine nature in the person of the Son of God; but this it could not be, had it not been absolutely sinless and holy. Some observations ensue.

The order of God's institutions, with respect unto the sacrificing of the high priest for himself, and the people, is observable. And this was, that he should first offer for himself, and then for them. This order was constant, and is especially observable in the great anniversary sacrifice for atonement on the day of expiation, Lev. xvi. Now the reason of this was, 1. Typical, That having first received pardon and purification for himself, he might the better prefigure and represent the spotless holiness of our high priest, in his offering of himself for us. 2. Moral, to declare how careful they ought to be of their own sins, who deal about the sins of others. And we may observe,

Obs. I. That the absolute holiness and spotless innocence of the Lord Christ, in his offering of himself, had a signal influence unto the efficacy of his sacrifice, and is a great encouragement unto our faith and consolation.—This our apostle informs us to have been necessary, ch. vii. 26, *Τοιούτος γὰρ ἡμῶν ἐπρεπεὶ ἀρχιερεὺς*; It was meet, convenient, necessary for and unto us, that we should have such a high priest as was 'holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.' No other sort of high priest could have done what was to be done for us. Had he had any sin of his own he could never had taken all sin from us. From hence it was that what he did was so acceptable with God, and that what he suffered was justly imputed unto us, seeing there was no cause in himself why he should suffer at all. This therefore is frequently mentioned and insisted on, where his sacrifice is declared. 2 Cor. v. 21, 'He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' He was made sin for us when he was made a sacrifice for sin, when his soul was made an offering for sin. Hereon depends our being made the righteousness of God in him, or righteous before God through him. But not on this as absolutely considered, but as he was made sin, who knew no sin; who was absolutely innocent and holy. So the apostle Peter mentioning the redemption which we have by his blood, which was in the sacrifice of himself, he says it was 'as of a lamb without spot, and without blemish,' 1 Pet. 19. And treating again of the same matter he adds, 'Who did no sin, neither was there guile found in his mouth,' 1 Pet. ii. 22; so Rom. viii. 3. And we may see herein, 1. Pure unmixed love and grace. He had not the least concern in what he did or suffered herein for himself. This was the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that being rich, for our sakes he became poor. All that he did was from sove-

reign love and grace. And will he not pursue the same love unto the end? 2. The efficacy and merit of his oblation, that was animated by the life and quintessence of obedience. There was in it, the highest sufferings, and the most absolute innocency, knit together by an act of most inexpressible obedience. 3. The perfection of the example that is set before us, 1 Pet. ii. 21, 22. And from hence we may also observe, That,

Obs. II. Whosoever dealeth with God or man about the sins of others, should look well in the first place unto his own. The high priest was to take care about, and first to offer for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. And they who follow not this method, will miscarry in their work. Is is the greatest evidence of hypocrisy for men to be severe towards the sins of others, and careless about their own. There are four ways whereby some may act with respect unto the sins of others, and not one of them wherein they can discharge their duty aright, if in the same kind they take not care of themselves in the first place.

1. It is the duty of some, to endeavour the conversion of others from a state of sin. As this belongs to parents and governors in their place so is it the chief work of ministers, and principal end of the ministry. So the Lord Christ determines it in his mission of Paul. 'I send thee to the Gentiles, to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sin, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in me,' Acts xxvi. 17, 18. How shall he apply himself hereunto? how shall he be useful herein, who was never made partaker of this mercy himself? How can they press that on others, which they neither know what it is, nor whether it be or not, any otherwise than as blind men know there are colours? By such persons are the souls of men ruined, who undertake the dispensation of the gospel unto them, for their conversion unto God, knowing nothing of it themselves.

2. It is our duty to keep those in whom we are concerned, as much as in us lieth, from sinning, or from actual sin. 'These things I write unto you,' saith the apostle, 'that you sin not,' 1 John ii. 1. With what confidence, with what conscience can we endeavour this towards others, if we do not first take the highest care herein of ourselves? Some that should watch over others, are open and profligate sinners themselves. The preaching, exhortations, and reproofs of such persons do but render them the more contemptible, and on many accounts tend to the hardening of those whom they pretend to instruct. And where men regard iniquity in their hearts, although there be no notoriety in their transgressions, yet they will grow languid and careless in their watch over others; and if they keep up the outward form of it, it will be a great means of hardening themselves in their own sin.

3. To direct and assist others in the obtaining pardon for sin, is also the duty of some. And this they may do two ways. 1. By directing them in their application unto God by Jesus Christ, for grace and mercy. 2. By earnest supplications with them and for them. And what will they do, what can they do in these things sincerely for others, who

make not use of them for themselves? I look on this as one of the greatest blessings of the ministry, that we have that enjoined us to do with respect unto others, which may sanctify and save their souls; and God hath so ordered things, that we neither can, nor will diligently attend unto any thing of that kind towards others, concerning which we do not first endeavour to have its effect upon ourselves.

4. To administer consolation under sinning, or surprisals with sin, unto such as God would have to be comforted, is another duty of the like kind. And how shall this be done by such as were never cast down for sin themselves, nor ever spiritually comforted of God? It behoves us therefore in all things, wherein we may deal with others about sin, to take care of ourselves in the first place, that our consciences be purged from dead works, that in all we do we may serve the living God.

Obs. III. No dignity of person or place, no duty, no merit, can deliver sinners from standing in need of a sacrifice for sin. The high priest, being a sinner, was to offer himself.

Obs. IV. It was a part of the darkness and bondage of the church under the Old Testament, that their high priests had need to offer sacrifices for themselves and their own sins. This they did in the view of the people; who might fear lest he could not fully expiate their sins, who had many of his own, and was therefore necessitated in the first place, to take care of himself. It is a relief to sinners, that the word of reconciliation is administered unto them, and the sacrifice of Christ proposed, by men subject unto the like infirmities with themselves. For there is a testimony therein, how that they also may find acceptance with God, seeing he deals with them by those who are sinners also. But these are not the persons who procure the remission, or have made the atonement which they declare. Were it so, who could with any confidence acquiesce therein? But this is the holy way of God. Those who are sinners, declare the atonement which was made by him who had no sin.

VER. 4.—The foregoing verses declare the personal qualifications of a high priest. But these alone are not sufficient actually to invest any one with that office. It is required moreover, that he be lawfully called thereunto. The former makes him meet for it and this gives him his right unto it. And in the application of the whole unto Jesus Christ, this is first insisted on, ver. 5.

VER. 4.—*Και ουχ ἑαυτῷ τις λαμβάνει την τιμην, ἀλλὰ ὁ καλουμενος ὑπο του Θεου, κατὰπερ και ὁ Ααρων,*

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

There is no difficulty in the rendering of these words, and consequently very little difference among translators. The Syr. and Vulg. Lat. read honour, absolutely, without taking notice of the article *την*, which is here emphatical; 'this honour;' the honour of the priesthood.

And for 'himself,' the Syriac reads 'to his own soul;' by an idiom peculiar to the Eastern languages.

The words may be taken, as a negative universal proposition, with a particular exception subjoined. No man taketh this honour to himself but only he who is called. He that is called, taketh this honour to himself, or he that hath right so to do, namely, to possess and exercise the office of a high priest. Or they may be resolved into two disjunctive propositions; the one universally negative without exception or limitation; 'no man taketh this honour to himself,' The other particularly affirmative, 'he that is called of God,' he doth so, or he receiveth this honour. Thus there is an opposition expressed between a man's taking this honour unto himself, and his receiving of it on the call of God. Or we may yet more plainly express the meaning of the apostle. Having laid down the qualifications necessary unto him who was to be a high priest, he declares what is required for his actual investiture with this office. And this he expresseth, 1. Negatively, he is not to assume this honour to himself. 2. Positively, he is to be called of God, which he exemplifies in the instance of Aaron, 'as was Aaron.'

Οὐχ ἑαυτῷ τις λαμβάνει; 'any one doth not take;' that is, no man doth. And λαμβάνω, is not here simply sumo, 'to take;' but assumo, 'to take upon,' to take to him; or as it sometimes signifies, prehendo, corripio, 'unduly to take,' by laying hold of any thing. 'No man taketh,' that is, according to the law, according to divine institution; it was not the law that men should so do; men might do otherwise, and did do otherwise, both as to the office and exercise of the priesthood. So did king Uzziah as to the exercise of it, 2 Chron. xxvi. 16. And at the time of the writing of this Epistle, as also for many years before, there had been no lawful order nor call observed, in those who possessed the office of the high priesthood among the Jews. Some invaded it themselves, and some were intruded into it by foreign power. And both Chrysostome and Œcumenius suppose that our apostle in this place doth reflect on that disorder. His principal intention is plainly to declare, how things ought to be by the law and constitution of God. No man doth, that is, no man ought so to do; for it is contrary to the law, and the order appointed of God in his church; see Num. xviii. God's institution in the Scripture, is so far the sacred rule of all things to be done in his worship, that whatever is not done by virtue thereof, and in conformity thereunto, is esteemed as not done, or not at all done to him. But,

Τὴν τιμὴν; this is the object of the act prohibited. 'The honour;' this honour whereof we treat. Τιμὴ here intends either the office itself, or the dignity of it. The office itself may be called honour, because it is honourable. So also is the word used ch. iii. 3. No man taketh this honourable office upon him, of his own head, of himself, without warrant, call, and authority from God. If only the dignity of the office be intended, then it is, no man arrogateth so much to himself, so sets up or advanceth himself, as to set out himself for a high priest. I judge the office itself is first intended, yet not absolutely, but as it was honourable, such as men would naturally desire, and intrude themselves

into, had not God set bounds to their ambition by his law. So did Korah, for which he was first rebuked, and afterwards destroyed, Num. xvi. 9, 10. And this office was exceeding honourable, on a twofold account.

1. From the nature of it; wherein there was, 1. An especial separation unto God, Exod. xxviii. 2. An especial appropinquation or drawing nigh unto him, Lev. xvi. 3. The discharge of all peculiar divine services. These things made the office honourable; a high honour unto them that were duly vested with it. For what greater honour can a mortal creature be made partaker of, than to be peculiarly nigh unto God?

2. Because God required that honour should be given, both to the office, and to the person vested with it. For this end partly was he to be adorned with garments made for beauty and glory, and had power given him to rule in the house of God, 1 Sam. ii. 30. But even in general, it is a great honour, on any account, to be made nigh unto God.

Ἀλλὰ ὁ καλουμενος, 'But he that is called of God.' The called one of God, he hath, he receiveth, he is made partaker of the honour of this office. He is the high priest whom God calls. And this call of God, is the designation of a man unto an office or employment. He doth, as it were, look on a person among others, and calls him out to himself, as Exod. xxviii. 1. It compriseth also the end of the call, in the collation of right, power, and trust, whatever is necessary unto the due exercise of that whereunto any one is called: For God's will and pleasure is the supreme rule of all order and duty. And this call is here exemplified in the instance of Aaron, 'Even as was Aaron.'

Καθ'απερ και ὁ Ααρων, 'Even as Aaron,' in like manner as Aaron. And the note of similitude is regulated, either by the word called, or by the subject of the instance 'Aaron.' If by the former, no more is intended but that he must have a call of God, as Aaron had. The comparison proceeds no farther but unto the general nature of a call. A call he must have, but the especial nature of that call is not declared. But if the note of comparison be regulated by the instance of Aaron, then the especial manner and nature of the call intended, is limited and determined. He must be called of God as was Aaron; that is, immediately and in an extraordinary way. And this is the sense of the words and place.

It may be objected, if this be so, then all the high priests who succeeded Aaron in the Judaical church, are here excluded from a right entrance into their office. For they were not immediately called of God unto their office as Aaron was, but succeeded one another by virtue of the law or constitution, which was only an ordinary call.

Ans. It doth not exclude them from a right entrance into their office, but it doth, from being considered in this place. They had that call to their office which God had appointed, and which was a sufficient warrant unto them in the discharge of it. But our apostle disputes here about the erection of a new priesthood, such as was that of Christ. Herein no ordinary call, no law-constitution, no succession could take place, or contribute anything thereunto. The nature of such a work

excludes all those considerations. And he who first enters on such a priesthood not before erected, nor constituted, he must have such a call of God thereunto. So had Aaron at the first erection of a typical priesthood in the church of Israel. He had his call by an immediate word of command from God, singling him out from among his brethren to be set apart from that office, *Exod. xxviii. 1*. And although in other things which belonged unto the administration of their office, the Lord Christ is compared to the high priests in general, executing their office according to the law wherein they were types of him; yet as unto his entrance into his office upon the calls of God, he is compared with Aaron only.

This being the proper design of the words, the things disputed by expositors and others from this place, about the necessity of an ordinary outward call to the office of the priesthood, and by analogy unto the ministry of the gospel, though true in themselves, are foreign unto the intention of this place. For the apostle treats only of the first erection of a priesthood, in the persons of Aaron and Christ, whereunto an extraordinary call was necessary. And if none might take on him the office of the ministry but he that is called of God, as was Aaron, no man alive could do so at this day.

Again, the note of similitude expresseth an agreement in an extraordinary call, but not in the manner of it and its special kind. This is asserted, that the one and the other had an immediate call from God, but no more. But as unto the especial kind and nature of his immediate call, that of Christ was incomparably more excellent and glorious, than that of Aaron. This will be manifest in the next verses, where it is expressed and declared. In the meantime, we shall consider the call of Aaron, as our apostle doth in the ministry of Moses, *ch. iii.* declaring wherein indeed it was excellent, that so the real honour of the call of Christ above it may appear.

1. He was called of God, by a word of command for his separation unto the office of the priesthood. *Exod. xxviii. 1*, 'Take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office.' His sons were also mentioned, because provision was herein made for succession. This made his call extraordinary, he was called of God. But, 1. This command was given by a word from God immediately unto himself. God doth not say unto him, 'Thou art my priest, this day have I called thee.' But it is Moses to whom the command is given, and with whom the execution of it is intrusted. So that, 2. He is in his call put as it were in the power of another, that is, of Moses. To him God says, 'Take unto thee Aaron thy brother; be thou unto him in the room of God, and act towards him in my name.'

2. This command or call of God was expressed in his actual separation unto his office, which consisted in two things.

1. His being arrayed by God's appointment with glorious garments *Exod. xxviii. 3*. And they are affirmed to be contrived on purpose for beauty and glory. But herein also a double weakness is included or supposed. 1. That he stood in need of an outward robe to adorn him, because of his own weakness and infirmities, which God would, as it

were, hide and cover in his worship under those garments. 2. That indeed they were all of them but typical of things far more glorious in our high priest, namely, that abundant fulness of the graces of the Spirit, which being poured on him rendered him fairer than the children of men. It was therefore a part of the glory of Christ, that in the discharge of his office he stood in no need of outward ornaments, all things being supplied by the absolute perfection of his own personal dignity and holiness.

2. His actual consecration ensued hereon ; which consisted in two things. 1. His unction with the holy consecrated oil. 2. In the solemn sacrifice which was offered in his name and for him, *Exod. xxix.* And there was much order and glory in the solemnity of his consecration.

But yet still these things had their weakness and imperfection. For, 1. He had nothing of his own to offer at his consecration, but he was consecrated with the blood of a bullock and a ram. 2. Another offered for him, and that for his sins, And this was the call of Aaron, his call of God ; and that which God vindicated, setting a notable remark upon it, when it was seditiously questioned by Korah, *Num. xvi. 3, xvii. 10.* And all these things were necessary unto Aaron, because God in his person erected a new order of priesthood, wherein he was to be confirmed by an extraordinary call thereunto. And this is that, and not an ordinary call, which the call of Christ is compared unto and preferred above. After this all the successors of Aaron had a sufficient call to their office, but not of the same kind with that of Aaron himself. For the office itself was established to continue by virtue of God's institution. And there was a law of succession established, by which they were admitted into it, whereof I have treated elsewhere. But it was the personal call of Aaron which is here intended.

Obs. I. It is an act of sovereignty in God, to call whom he pleaseth unto his work and especial service ; and eminently so when it is unto any place of honour and dignity in his house. The office of the priesthood among the Jews, was the highest and most honourable, that was among them at the first plantation of the church. And an eminent privilege it was, not only unto the person of him who was first called, but with respect also unto his whole posterity ; for they, and they only, were to be priests unto God. Who would not think now, but that God would call Moses to this dignity, and so secure also the honour of his posterity after him ? But he takes another course, and calls Aaron and his family, leaving Moses and his children after him in the ordinary rank and employment of Levites. And the sovereignty of God is evident herein : 1. Because every call is accompanied with choice and distinction. Some one is called out from among others. So was it in the call of Aaron, *Exod. xxviii. 1*, ' Take unto thee Aaron, from among the children of Israel.' By mere act of sovereign pleasure, God chose him out from among the many thousands of his brethren. And this sovereign choice, God insisted on to express the favour and kindness that is in any call of his, *1 Sam. ii. 27, 28.* And herewith he reproacheth the sins and ingratitude of men, upbraiding them with his sovereign kindness, *Num. xvi. 9, 10.* 2. Because antecedently unto their call, there is nothing of merit in any to be so called, nor of ability in the

most, for the work whereunto they are called. Under the New Testament, none was ever called to greater dignity, higher honour, or more eminent employment, than the apostle Paul. And what antecedent merit was there in him unto his vocation? Christ takes him in the midst of his madness, rage, and blasphemy, turns his heart unto himself, and calls him to be his apostle, witness, and great instrument for the conversion of the souls of men, bearing forth his name to the ends of the earth. And this we know that he himself mentions on all occasions, as an effect of sovereign grace, wisdom, and mercy. What merit was there, what previous disposition unto their work, in a few fishermen about the Lake of Tiberias, or sea of Galilee, that our Lord Jesus Christ should call them to be his apostles, disposing them into that state and condition, wherein they sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel? So was it ever with all that God called in an extraordinary manner. See Exod. iv. 10, 11; Jer. i. 6; Amos vii. 15, 16. In his ordinary calls there is the same sovereignty, though somewhat otherwise exercised. For in such a call, there are three things: 1. A providential designation of a person to such an office, work, or employment. When any office in the house of God, suppose that of the ministry, is fixed and established, the first thing that God doth in the call of any one thereunto, is the providential disposition of the circumstances of his life, directing his thoughts and designs toward such an end. And were not the office of the ministry in some places accompanied with many secular advantages, yea provisions (for the lusts and luxuries of men) that are foreign unto it, this entrance into a call for God thereunto, by a mere disposal of men's concerns and circumstances, so as to design the ministry in the course of their lives, would be eminent and perspicuous. But whilst multitudes of persons, out of various corrupt ends, crowd themselves into the entrances of this office, the secret workings of the providence of God towards the disposal of them, whom he really designs unto his work herein, are greatly clouded and obscured. 2. It is a part of this call of God, when he blesseth, succeedeth, and prospereth the endeavours of men, to prepare themselves with those previous dispositions and qualifications which are necessary unto the actual call and susception of this office. And hereof also there are three parts. First. An inclination of their hearts, in compliance with his designation of them unto their office. Where this is not affected, but men proceed according as they are stimulated by outward impressions or considerations, God is not as yet at all in this work. Secondly. An especial blessing of their endeavours for the due improvement of their natural faculties and abilities, in study and learning, for the necessary aids and instruments of knowledge and wisdom. Thirdly. The communications of peculiar gifts unto them, rendering them meet and able unto the discharge of the duty of their office, which in an ordinary call is indispensably required as previous to an actual separation unto the office itself. 3. He ordereth things so, as that a person whom he will employ in the service of his house, shall have an outward call according unto rule, for his admission thereinto. And in all these things, God acts according to his own sovereign will and pleasure.

And many things might hence be deduced and insisted on. As, 1.

That we should have an awful reverence of, and a holy readiness to comply with the call of God ; not to run away from it, or the work called unto, as did Jonah, ch. i, nor to be weary of it because of difficulty and opposition which we meet withal in the discharge of our duty, as it sundry times was ready to befall Jeremiah, Jer. xv. 10, xx. 7—9, much less to desert or give it over, on any earthly account whatever ; seeing that he who sets his hand to this plough, and takes it back again, is unworthy of the kingdom of heaven. And it is certain that he who deserts his calling on worldly accounts, first took it up on no other. 2. That we should not envy nor repine at one another, whatever God is pleased to call any unto. 3. That we engage into no work wherein the name of God is concerned, without his call ; which gives a second observation, namely, that,

Obs. II. The highest excellency and utmost necessity of any work to be done for God in this world, will not warrant our undertaking of it, or engaging in it, unless we are called thereunto. Yea,

Obs. III. The more excellent any work of God is, the more express ought our call unto it to be.—Both these observations will be so fixed and confirmed, in the consideration of the instance given us in the next verse, as that there is no occasion here to insist upon them.

Obs. IV. It is a great dignity and honour to be duly called unto any work, service, or office in the house of God.

VER. 5.—The description of a high priest according to the law, with respect, 1st. unto his nature ; 2d. his employment, (ver. 1 ;) 3d. his qualification, (ver. 2 ;) 4th. his especial duty with regard, 1. to himself, 2. to others, (ver. 3 ;) 5th. his call in the instance of him who was the first of the order, (ver. 4,) being completed ; an application of the whole, is in these verses entered upon, unto our Lord Jesus Christ. And this is done in all the particulars wherein there was, or could be, an agreement or correspondence between them and him, with respect unto this office. And it was necessary to be thus declared by the apostle, unto the end designed by him, for two reasons. 1. Because the original institution of those priests, and their office, was to teach and represent the Lord Christ and his, which was his main intention to manifest and prove. Now this they could not do, unless there were some analogy and likeness between them ; neither could it be apprehended or understood for what end and purpose they were designed, and did so long continue in the church. 2. That the Hebrews might be satisfied, that their ministry and service in the house of God was now come to an end, and the whole use whereunto they were designed, accomplished. For by this respect and relation that was between them, it was evident that he was now actually exhibited, and had done the whole work which they were appointed to prefigure and represent. It was therefore impossible that there should be any farther use of them in the service of God ; yea, their continuance therein, would contradict and utterly overthrow the end of their institution. For it would declare that they had a use and efficacy unto spiritual ends of their own, without respect unto him and his work, whom they did represent ; which is to overthrow the faith of both churches, that under the Old Testa-

uent, and that under the New. Wherefore a full discovery of the proportion between them, and relation of the one unto the other was necessary, to evince that their continuance was useless, yea pernicious. But on the other side, it could not be, but that those high priests had many imperfections and weaknesses inseparable from their persons in the administration of their office, which could represent nothing, nor receive any accomplishment, in our Lord Jesus Christ. For if anything in him had answered thereunto, he could not have been such a high priest as did become us, or as we stood in need of. Such was it, that they were subject to death, and therefore were necessarily many, succeeding one another in a long series according to a certain genealogy. 'They truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death; but this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood,' or a priesthood that passeth not from one to another, ch. vii. 23, 24. Herein therefore, there was a dissimilitude between them, because of their being obnoxious unto death; whence it was inevitable that they must be many, one succeeding to another. But Jesus Christ was to be one high priest only, and that always the same.

Again, They were all of them personally sinners, and that both as men and as high priests, whence they might and did miscarry and sin, even in the administration of their office. Wherefore it was needful that they should offer sacrifice for their own sins also, as hath been declared. Now, as nothing could be represented hereby in Jesus Christ, who knew no sin, did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth, nor could therefore offer sacrifice for himself; so these things do cast some darkness and obscurity on those instances wherein they did represent him. Wherefore our apostle steers a strait course between all these difficulties. First. He manifests and proves, that the legal high priests were indeed types of Jesus Christ in his office, and did bear forth a resemblance of him therein; as also that they were appointed of God, for that very end and purpose. Secondly. He shows what were their qualifications and properties, which he distinguisheth into two sorts. 1. Such as belonged essentially, or were required necessarily unto the office itself, and its regular discharge. 2. Such as were unavoidable consequents or concomitants of their personal weakness or infirmity. This latter sort in this application of their description unto Christ and his office, as prefigured thereby, he discards and lays aside, as things which, though necessary unto them from their frail and sinful condition, yet had no respect unto Christ, nor accomplishment in him. And as for the former, he declares in the discourse immediately ensuing, how they were found in Christ as exercising this office, in a far more eminent manner than in them. This is the design of the discourse in the second part of the chapter, which we are now entering on. Only whereas in the description of a high priest in general, he begins with his nature, qualifications, work, and duty, closing and issuing it in his call; in his application of the whole unto the Lord Christ, he taketh up that first, which he had lastly mentioned, namely, the call of a high priest, and proceedeth unto the other in an order absolutely retrograde.

VER. 5.—Οὕτω καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς οὐχ ἑαυτὸν ἐδοξάσε γεννηθῆναι ἀρχιερεὰ ἀλλ' ὁ λαλήσας πρὸς αὐτὸν, Υἱὸς μου εἶ σύ, ἐγὼ σημεῖον γεγεννηκα σε.

VER. 5.—*So also Christ glorified not himself, to be made an high Priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee.*

Οὕτω καὶ, 'so also,' and so, or in like manner. A note *της αποδοσεως*, of the application of things before spoken, unto the subject principally intended. A respect may be herein unto all the instances in the preceding discourse; as it was with the legal high priest in all the things necessary unto that office, so in like manner was it with Christ, which he now designeth to manifest. Or the intention of this expression, may be restrained to the last express instance of a call to office. As they were called of God, so or in like manner was Christ also, which he immediately declares. And this is first regarded, though respect may be had to it, in all the particular instances of analogy and similitude which ensue.

On this note of inference, there ensueth a double proposition on the same supposition. The supposition that they both are resolved into is that Christ is a high priest. Hereon the first proposition with respect unto his call and entrance on that office is negative; 'He glorified not himself to be made a high priest.' The other is positive or affirmative; 'but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son;' that is, he glorified him so to be, or he made him so.

Ὁ Χριστός, 'Christ,' the subject spoken of; that is, the promised Messiah, the anointed One. The apostle in this Epistle calls him occasionally by all signal names; as the Son, ch. i. 2—8; the Son of God, ch. iv. 14; the word of God, ch. iv. 12; Jesus, ch. ii. 9; Christ, ch. iii. 6; Jesus Christ, ch. iii. 1. Here he useth the name of Christ, as peculiarly suited unto his present occasion. For he had designed to prove that the promised Messiah, the hope and expectation of the fathers, was to be the high priest for ever over the house of God. Therefore he calls him by that name whereby he was known from the beginning, and which signified his unction unto his office: the anointed One. He was to be, כהן המשיח, 'the anointed priest;' that is, Christ.

The subject spoken of being stated or described by his name, the supposition of his being a high priest takes place. This the apostle had before taught and proved, ch. ii. 17, iii. 1, iv. 14. But yet considering the constitutions of the law, and the way of any one's entering on that office, a difficult inquiry yet remained, namely, how he came so to be. Had he been of the tribe of Levi, and of the family of Aaron, he might have been a priest, he would have been so, and have been so acknowledged by all. But how he should become so, who was a stranger to that family, who sprang of the tribe of Judah, concerning which Moses spake nothing of the priesthood, might be highly questioned. Fully and satisfactorily to resolve this doubt, and therein to take in the whole difficulty whence it arose, the apostle in the pre-

ceding verse, lays down a concession in a universal maxim, that none who had not a right thereunto by virtue of an antecedent law or constitution, which Christ had not, as not being of the tribe of Levi, could be a priest, without an immediate call from God, such as Aaron had. By and on this rule, he offers the right of the Lord Christ unto this office to trial, and therein acknowledgeth, that if he were not extraordinarily called of God thereunto, he could be no high priest. To this purpose he declares,

First, negatively; *οὐχ ἑαυτον εδοξασε*, that he ‘glorified not himself to be made a high priest.’ Outward call by men, or a constitution by virtue of any ordinance of the law, he had none. Seeing therefore he is a priest, or if so he be, he must be made so by God, or by himself. But as for himself, neither did he take this honour to himself, nor was it possible that so he should do. For the whole office, and the benefit of his discharge of it, depended on a covenant or compact between him and his Father. Upon the undertaking of it also, he was to receive many promises from the Father, and was to do his will and work, as we have elsewhere declared and fully proved. It was therefore impossible that he should make himself a high priest.

The Socinians do but vainly raise a cavil against the Deity of Christ from this place. They say, if he were God, why did another glorify him in any kind, why did he not glorify himself? And the Jews, on all occasions, make the same exceptions. There were indeed some force in the objection against us, if we believed or professed that the Lord Christ were God only. But our doctrine concerning his person is that which is declared by our apostle, Phil. ii. 6—8. ‘Being in the form of God, he thought it no robbery to be equal with God; but he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.’ Wherefore there is no more weight in this cavil, than there would be in another; if one, unto those testimonies, ‘that all things were made by him,’ and he ‘in the beginning laid the foundation of the world,’ should ask, ‘How could this be seeing he was a man, born in the fulness of time?’ But this objection, for the substance of it, was raised by the Jews of old, and fully answered by himself. For whereas they objected unto him, that he being not fifty years old, could not have seen Abraham, as he pretended, who was dead near two thousand years before; he replied, ‘Before Abraham was, I am,’ John viii. 58. If he had no other nature than that wherein they thought he was not fifty years old, being indeed little more than thirty, he could not have known Abraham, nor Abraham him. As therefore, if he had been man only, he could not have been before Abraham, so had he been God only, another could not have glorified him to be a priest. But he was man also. And these words are spoken not with respect unto his divine nature, but his human.

Again, As it was impossible he should, so it is plain that he did not glorify himself to be a high priest, or take this dignity and honour to himself by his own will and authority. And this may be evidenced by a brief rehearsal of the divine acts necessary to the making of him a high priest; all which I have handled at large in the previous Exer-

citations. And they were of two sorts; 1. Authoritative, and wholly without him; 2. Perfective whereunto his own concurrence was required. Of the first sort were, 1. His eternal designation unto this office: 2. His mission unto the discharge of it: 3. His unction with the Spirit for its due discharge: 4. The constitution of the law of his priesthood, which consisted of two parts; the first prescribing what he should do, what he should undergo, what he should offer, or what should be the duties of his office; the other declaring, appointing, promising, what should be attained, effected, and accomplished thereby. 5. The committing and giving a people unto him, for whose sake, and on whose account, he was to bear, execute, and discharge this holy office. And all these, whereby he was authoritatively vested with his office, were sovereign acts of the will and wisdom of the Father, as I have elsewhere proved. By these was he called and glorified to be a high priest. Again, there were some acts perfective of his call, or such as gave it its complement; and these were wrought in him and by him; neither could they be otherwise: but yet by them did he not make himself a high priest, but only complied with the will and authority of the Father. Thus when Aaron was called of God to his office, the law for its constitution being made and given, the person designed and called out by name, his pontifical garments put on, and the anointing holy oil poured on him, a sacrifice was to be offered to complete and perfect his consecration. But because of his imperfection, whence it was necessary that he should come to his office by degrees, and the actings of others about him, he could not himself offer the sacrifice for himself. He only laid his hand on the head of it to manifest his concern therein, but it was Moses that offered it unto God, Exod. xxix. 10—12. Thus it could not be with respect unto Jesus Christ, nor did he need any other sacrifice than his own for his consecration, seeing it was necessary unto the legal high priests, on the account of their personal sins and infirmities. But although he was perfectly and completely constituted a high priest, by those acts of God the Father before mentioned, yet his solemn consecration and dedication, not to his office, but to the actual discharge of it, were effected by acts of his own, in his preparation for, and actual offering up himself a sacrifice once for all. And so he was perfected and consecrated in and by his own blood. Wherefore he did not glorify himself to be made a high priest, but that was an act and effect of the will and authority of God.

It remains only, as unto this first clause, that we inquire how it is said that Christ glorified not himself, as unto the end mentioned. Was there an addition of glory or honour made unto him thereby? Especially may this be reasonably inquired, if we consider what befel him, what he did, and what he suffered in the discharge of this office? Nay, doth not the Scripture every-where declare this as an act of the highest condescension in him, as Phil. ii. 6—9; Heb. ii. 10? How, therefore, can he be said not to glorify himself herein? Let those answer this inquiry, who deny his divine nature and being. They will find themselves in the same condition as the Pharisees were, when our Saviour posed them with a question to the same purpose; namely,

how David came to call Christ his Lord, who was to be his Son so long after. Unto us these things are clear and evident. For although, if we consider the divine nature and person of Christ, it was an infinite condescension in him to take our nature, and therein to execute the office of a priest for us; yet, with respect unto the nature assumed, the office itself was an honour and dignity unto him, on the accounts to be afterwards insisted on.

Secondly. In the affirmative proposition the way whereby Christ came unto his office is declared, or by what authority he was appointed a high priest. *Αλλ' ὁ λαλήσας πρὸς αὐτον*, 'but he that said unto him.' There is an ellipsis in the words which must be supplied to complete the antithesis; but he glorified him, or he made him to be a high priest, who said unto him, *υἱὸς μου εἰ σύ, ἐγὼ σημεῖον γεγεννηκα σε*. It is not easily apprehended how the apostle confirmeth the priesthood of Christ, or his call to office by these words. They are twice used elsewhere by himself to other ends, Heb. i. 5; Acts xiii. 33. For these words do originally signify, the eternal relation that is between the Father and the Son, with their mutual love thereon. To this purpose are they applied, Heb. i. 5. And because this was manifested in and by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, when and wherein 'he was declared to be the Son of God with power,' Rom. i. 4; this testimony is applied thereunto, Acts xiii. 33. For the direct intention, and the full meaning of the words, the reader may consult our exposition of ch. i. 5, where they are handled at large. But how they are produced by our apostle here, as a confirmation of the priesthood of Christ, is an inquiry that is not without its difficulties; and seeing expositors are variously divided about it, their apprehensions must necessarily be inquired into and examined.

First. Those of the Socinian way, as Crellius and Slichtingius affirm, that these words are constitutive of the priesthood of Christ; and that they were spoken to him after his resurrection. Hence they suppose two things will ensue: 2. That the Lord Christ was not a priest, at least no complete priest until after his resurrection; for not until then, was it said unto him, 'thou art my Son.' 2. That his priestly and kingly office are the same; for his exaltation in his kingly power, is principally intended in these words. But these things are fond and impious. For if the Lord Christ were not a priest until after his resurrection, then he was not so in the offering of himself to God, in his death and blood-shedding; which to say, is to offer violence to the common sense of all Christians, to the whole institution of the types of old, to the analogy of faith, and to express testimonies of Scripture in particular; as hath been evinced in our Exercitations. 2. It expressly contradicts the apostle in this very place, or would make him contradict himself. For after this he affirms, that as a priest he offered unto God in the days of his flesh, ver. 7. They say, therefore, that he had some kind of initiation into his office by death, but he was not completely a priest until after his resurrection. The meaning whereof is, that he was not a complete priest, until he had completely finished and discharged the principal work which belonged unto that office. I say therefore, 1. That this distinction of the Lord

Christ being first an incomplete priest, and then afterwards made so completely, is foreign to the Scripture, a vain imagination of bold men, and inconsistent with his holy perfection, who was at once made so by the oath of God. 2. It is destructive of all the instructive parts of the type; for Aaron neither did nor could offer any sacrifice to God, until he was completely consecrated unto his office. Nor is any thing in the law more severely prohibited, than that any one should draw nigh to God in offering sacrifice, that was not completely a priest. 3. Thus to interpret the testimony urged by the apostle, is completely to disappoint his purpose and intention in it. For he designs by it to prove, that Christ in the offering which he made in the days of his flesh, did not glorify himself to be made a priest, but was made so by him who said unto him, 'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.' And if this was not said unto him until after his resurrection, then in his offering of himself before, he glorified himself to be a priest, for he was not yet made so of God the Father. 4. The vanity of confounding the kingly and priestly offices of Christ, hath been sufficiently detected in our Exercitations.

Secondly. Others say, that the confirmation of the priesthood of Christ in these words, is taken from the ancient usage before the law, whereby the priesthood was annexed unto the primogeniture. Wherefore God declaring the Lord Christ to be his only begotten Son, the first-born, Lord and heir of the whole creation, did thereby also declare him to be the high priest. And this exposition is embraced by sundry learned men, whose conjecture herein I cannot comply withal. For 1. The foundation of it is very questionable, if not unquestionably false; namely, concerning the priesthood of the first-born before the law. This indeed is the opinion of the Jews, and is so reported by Hierome, Epist. ad Evagr. But the matter is not clear in the Scripture. Abel was not the first-born, nor Abraham either, yet they both offered sacrifice to God. 2. This would include an express contradiction unto the scope of the apostle. For his design is to prove, that Christ was a priest after the order of Melchisedec, called of God, and raised up extraordinarily, in a way peculiar and not common to any other. But on this supposition, he should be a priest after the order of the first-born. For what belonged unto Christ as the first-born, see our exposition on ch. i. 3.

Thirdly. Some judge, that although the apostle recites expressly only these words, 'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee,' yet he directs us thereby to the whole passage in the Psalm, whereof these words are a part, ver. 7, 8, 'I will declare thy decree; the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give the heathen for thine inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession.' Here seems to be an express constitution, such as the apostle refers unto. For if we would know when, or how God the Father glorified Christ to be a high priest, it was in that decree of his which is declared, Ps. ii. 7. It was before established in heaven, and then declared in prophecy. And moreover, here is added an especial mention of the discharge of one part of his office as a priest, in these words, 'Ask of me;' where-

in authority is given him to make intercession with God. And this exposition, whereof, as far as I can find, Junius was the author, I shall not oppose; only for two reasons, I cannot readily assent unto it. For, 1. It seems not probable that the apostle in the quotation of a testimony, should omit that which was directly to his purpose, and produce those words only, which alone were not so. 2. The asking here enjoined is not his sacerdotal intercession, but only an expression denoting the dependence of Christ as king on God the Father, for the subduing of his enemies.

Fourthly. Some conceive that the apostle intends not a testimony of the constitution of Christ in his office of priesthood, but only to give an account of the person by whom he was called thereunto. He made not himself a high priest, but was made so by him from whom he had all his honour and glory as Mediator, and that because he was his Son, and in his work declared so to be. But the testimony given unto his priesthood is brought in, in the next verse. Nor do I see any more than one exception which this exposition is liable unto, and which those that follow it have no notice of. And this is, that the manner of the introduction of the next testimony, 'as he also saith in another place,' doth evidence that they are both produced and urged to the same purpose, for the confirmation of the same assertion. But withal, I answer thereunto by concession, that indeed they are both here of the same importance, and used to the same purpose. For these words in this place, 'Thou art a priest after the order of Melchisedec,' are considered as spoken to him by God the Father, even as the former were. This, therefore, is the design of the apostle in the introduction of this testimony; for the clearing whereof, we may observe, 1. That it is not the priesthood of Christ, but his call thereunto, which in this place the apostle asserts, as was before declared. 2. As to this, he intends to show only, that it was God the Father, from whom he had all his mediatory power, as king, priest, and prophet to his church. 3. This is evidently proved by this testimony, in that therein God declares him to be his Son, and his acceptance thereby of him in the discharge of the work committed unto him. For this solemn declaration of his relation unto God the Father, in his eternal sonship, and his approbation of him, doth prove that he undertook nothing, performed nothing, but what he had appointed, designed, and authorized him unto. And that he had so designed him unto this office, is more particularly declared in the ensuing testimony.

Obs. I. The office of the high priesthood over the church of God, was an honour and glory to Jesus Christ. It was so unto his human nature, even as it was united unto the divine. For it was capable of glory, of degrees of glory, and an augmentation in glory, John xvii. 3; 1 Pet. i. 21. And the Lord Christ had a twofold glory upon him, in the bearing and discharging of this office: First. The glory that was upon him, or of the work itself; Secondly. The glory that was proposed unto him in the effects of it. 1. There was a glory upon him in his work, from the nature of the work itself. So it was prophesied of him, Zech. vi. 13, 'He shall build the temple of the Lord, and shall bear the glory.' All the glory of the house of God shall be

on him, Isa. xxii. 24. And it was a glory unto him, because the work itself was great and glorious. It was no less than the healing of the breach made between God and the whole creation, by the first apostasy. Sin had put variance between God and all his creatures, Gen. iii.; Rom. viii. 20. No way was left but that God must be perpetually dishonoured, or all creatures everlastingly cursed. And hereby there seemed to be a kind of defeating of God's first design to glorify himself in the making of all things. For to this purpose he made them all exceedingly good, Gen. i. 31. And his glory depended not so much upon their being, as their being good; that is, their beauty and order and subjection to himself. But this was now lost, as to all the creation, but only a part and portion of the angels, who sinned not. But yet the apostasy of those who were partakers of the same nature, privileges, and advantages with them, made it manifest what they also in their natural state and condition, were obnoxious unto. How great, how glorious a work must it needs be, to put a stop unto this entrance of confusion; to lay hold on the perishing creation, running headlong into eternal ruin, and to preserve it, or some portion of it, some first-fruits of it unto God from destruction? Must not this be a work equal unto, if not exceeding the first forming of all things? Certainly it is a glorious and honourable thing unto him that shall undertake and accomplish this great and glorious work. What is said with respect unto one particular in it, may be applied unto the whole. When the sealed book, containing the states of the church and the world was represented unto John, it is said that there was 'none in heaven, or earth, or under the earth, that was able to open the book, or look thereon,' Rev. v. 3, whereon the apostle wept, that none was found worthy to engage in that work. But when the Lord Christ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, appeared to do it, and prevailed therein, ver. 5, all the host of heaven, all the saints of God, joined together in ascribing glory and honour unto him, ver. 6—14. The work was great and honourable; and therefore, on the account of it, doth that harmonious ascription of glory and honour unto him ensue. How much more must the whole work be esteemed such, whereof that book contained only a small portion. Herein then was the Lord Jesus Christ exceedingly glorious in his priestly office, because in the discharge of it, he was the only means and way of the recovery and advancement of the glory of God; the greatness of which work, no heart can conceive, nor tongue express. 2. It appears from the effects and consequents of the discharge of his office, or the glory proposed unto him. And that, 1st. On the part of them for whom he did discharge it. And these were all the elect of God. He himself looked on this as a part of the glory set before him, that he should be a Captain of salvation unto them, and bring them unto the eternal enjoyment of God in immortal glory. And a double honour ariseth hence unto Jesus Christ. First. Initial, the love, thankfulness, and worship of the church in all ages in this world, see Rev. i. 5, 6. This is a glory wherein he is delighted, that all his saints, in all parts of the world, do severally, and in their assemblies, with all humility, love, and thankfulness, worship, adore, bless, praise, and glorify him, as the

Author and Finisher of their recovery unto God, and eternal salvation. Every day do they come about his throne, cleave unto him, and live in the admiration of his love and power. Secondly. This glory will be full at the latter day, and so hold unto all eternity, when all his saints, from the beginning of the world unto the end thereof, shall be gathered unto him, and abide with him, adoring him as their Head, and shouting for joy when they behold his glory. 2dly. On his own part there is a peculiar honour and glory given him of God, as a consequent of his discharge of this office, and on the account thereof, 1 Pet. i. 21; Phil. ii. 9, 10; Eph. i. 20—23, whereof see our exposition of ch. i. 2. 3dly. That glory wherein God will be exalted unto all eternity in the praise of his grace, the end of all his holy purposes towards his church, Eph. i. 6, doth ensue and depend hereon. For these and the like reasons it was, that our blessed Saviour, knowing how unable we are in this world to comprehend his glory, as also how great a part of our blessedness doth consist in the knowledge of it, makes that great request for us, that after we are preserved in, delivered from, and carried through our course in this world, as a principal part of our rest and reward, we may be with him where he is, to behold his glory which is given him of his Father, John xvii. 24. And our present delight in this glory and honour of Christ, is a great evidence of our love of him, and faith in him.

Obs. II. Relation and love are the fountain and cause of God's committing all authority in and over the church, to Jesus Christ. By this expression of relation and love, 'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee,' doth the apostle prove that God called him to be the high priest of the church. To the same purpose himself speaketh John iii. 35, 'The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.' In his constitution and declaration to be the great and only prophet of the church, God did it by an expression of his relation and love to him,—'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him,' Matt. xvii. 5. And this also was the foundation of his kingly office, ch. i. 2. He hath spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things; he who was his Son, and because he was his Son. God would give this glory and honour unto none, but unto his only Son, which to prove is the design of our apostle in the first chapter of this Epistle. And this his relation unto God, manifested itself in all that he did in the discharge of his office; for, saith the evangelist, 'We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth,' John i. 14. Now, first, the relation intended, is that one single eternal relation of his being the Son of God, the only begotten of the Father, through the divine ineffable communication of his nature with him or unto him. And hence, the faith hereof is the foundation of the church. For when Peter made that confession of it, in opposition unto all false conceptions of others concerning his person, 'Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God;' he answers, 'Upon this rock will I build my church,' Matt. xvi. 16, 18. And why doth the Lord Christ build his church on the profession of this article of our faith concerning his person? It is because we declare our faith therein, that God would

not commit all power in and over the church, and the work of mediation in its behalf, unto any but to him who stood in that relation to him, of his only begotten Son. And hereby, as God declares the greatness of this work, which none could effect but his Son, he who was God with himself, that none other should partake with him in this glory; so he directs us to the worship and honour of him as his Son. For it is the 'will of God, that all men should honour the Son as they honour the Father,' John v. And those who put in themselves, their wills and authorities, as the Pope; or bring in others into the honour of this work, as saints and angels; do rise up in direct opposition to the design of the will and wisdom of God. They must first give any one the relation of an only Son to God, before they ought to ascribe any thing of this great work or the honour of it to him. Secondly. The love intended is twofold. 1. The natural and eternal love of the Father unto the Son, and his delight in him, as participant of the same nature with himself. This is expressed, Prov. viii. 30, 31, which place hath been explained and vindicated before. 2. His actual love towards him on the account of his infinite condescension and grace, in undertaking this work, wherein his glory was so deeply concerned, see Phil. ii. 6—11. And this love hath a peculiar influence into the collation of that glory and honour on Christ, which God bestowed on him. And in these things, which must not be here enlarged on, doth lie the blessed, sure, stable foundation of the church, and of our salvation, by the mediation of Christ.

VER. 6.—THE next verse gives us a farther confirmation of the call of Christ unto his office, by another testimony taken from Ps. cx. 4. And much time with diligence would be needful to the explanation hereof, but that this is not its proper place. For that the whole Psalm was prophetic of Christ, I have proved before, and vindicated it from the exceptions of the Jews, both in our Exercitations and expositions on the first chapter. The subject-matter also spoken of, or the priesthood of Melchisedec, with the order thereof, the apostle expressly resumes and handles at large, ch. vii., where it must be considered. There is, therefore, only one concernment of these words here to be inquired into. And this is, how far, or wherein they do give testimony to the assertion of the apostle, that Christ did not glorify himself to be made a high priest, but that he was designed thereunto of God, even the Father.

VER. 6.—*Καθως και εν ετερω λεγει' Συ ιερεις εις τον αιωνα κατα την ταξιν Μελχισεδεκ.*

VER. 6.—*As he says in another (Psalm,) thou (art) a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec.*

There are two things in these words. 1. The manner of the introduction of a new testimony. 2. The testimony itself. The first, as 'he saith in another.' And therein we may consider, 1. The connection unto, and compliance with that foregoing. *Καθως και*, 'in the same

manner,' as he had said in Ps. ii. 'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee;' so he speaks in another place to the same purpose. So great and important a truth had need of solid confirmation. 2. The author of the testimony, or he that spake the words of it; λεγει, 'he saith.' And this may be taken two ways. 1. With respect unto the delivery of the words. 2. With respect unto the subject-matter of them, or the thing signified in them. In the first way, he that speaks may be, 1. David. He who was the penman of the second Psalm, was so also of this hundred and tenth. As, therefore, the words foregoing, as to the declaration of them, were his, so were these also. As he said in that place, so he saith in this. Or 2. The Holy Spirit himself, who in both places spake in and by David. 'Saying in David,' ch. iv. 7. But 2. The thing spoken and signified is principally here intended. And λεγει, 'he saith,' referreth immediately to God the Father himself. That which the apostle designed to prove, is, that Christ was called and constituted a high priest, by the authority of God the Father. And this was done by his immediate speaking unto him. The Holy Ghost by the mouth of David, speaks these things to us. But he doth only therein declare what the Father said unto the Son; and that was it whereby the apostle's intention was proved and confirmed. 'He saith.' This was that which God said unto him, and this is recorded, 3. Εν ἑτέρῳ, 'in another;' that is, τόπῳ, 'place,' or rather ψαλμῳ, in another 'Psalm;' that is, Ps. cx.

Secondly. The testimony itself is expressed, or the words of the Father unto the Son, whereby the apostle's assertion is confirmed.—'Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec.' It was sufficient for the apostle at present to produce these words only, but he will elsewhere make use of the manner how they were uttered; namely, by and with the oath of God, as it is declared in the Psalm, 'The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, thou art a Priest,' &c. And these words of ver. 4, do indissolubly depend on the first verse: 'The Lord said unto my Lord;' that is, God the Father said unto the Son, with respect unto his incarnation and mediation, as I have proved elsewhere. And this word, 'Thou art,' is verbum constitutum, 'a constituting word,' wherein the priesthood of Christ was founded. And it may be considered, 1. As declarative of God's eternal decree, with the covenant between the Father and the Son, whereby he was designed unto this office, whereof we have treated expressly and at large in the previous Exercitations. 2. As demonstrative of his mission, or his actual sending to the discharge of his office. These words are the symbol and solemn sign of God's conferring that honour upon him which gave him his instalment. 3. There is included in them a supposition that God would prepare a body for him, wherein he might exercise his priesthood, and which he might offer up unto him. In the whole, it is undeniable from this testimony, that God called and appointed him to be a priest, which was to be proved.

Thus Christ was called of God, as was Aaron; that is, immediately and in an extraordinary manner, which was necessary in the first erection of that office in his person. But yet, as to the special manner of his call, it was every way more excellent and glorious than that of

Aaron. What his call was, and what were the weaknesses and imperfections of it, was before declared. But the call of Christ, 1. had no need of any outward ceremony to express it; yea, it had a glory in it which no ceremony could express. 2. It consisted in the words of God spoken immediately to himself, and not to any others concerning him, only they are reported unto the church in the two Psalms mentioned. 3. The words spoken are present, effective, constituting, authoritative words, and not merely declarative of what God would have done. By these words was he called and made a Priest. 4. They are expressive of infinite love to, and acquiescency in the person of Christ as a high priest. 'Thou art my Son; THOU art a priest for ever.' 5. They were spoken and pronounced with the solemnity of an oath:—the Lord hath sworn; whereof elsewhere. He was not, therefore, only called of God, as was Aaron, but also in a peculiar way far more eminently and gloriously.

Obs. I. We may hence observe, that in all things wherein God hath to do with mankind, Jesus Christ should have an absolute preeminence. It was necessary that of old, some things should be made use of to represent and prefigure him. And it is necessary now that some things should be made use of to reveal and exhibit him unto us. And these things must, as they are appointments of God, effects of his wisdom, and out of their respect unto him, be precious and excellent. But yet, in and through them all, it is his own person, and what he doth therein, that hath the preeminence. And this is so on a twofold account. 1. Because in the representation which they made of him, there was an imperfection, by reason of their own nature, that they could not perfectly represent him. So Aaron was called in an extraordinary manner, to prefigure his call unto his priesthood. But that call of his was accompanied with much weakness and imperfection, as hath been declared. It belonged unto the preeminence of Christ, that there should be something, yea, very much in his call absolutely peculiar. 2. The principal dignity of all these things, depended on their respect and relation unto him, which exalts him infinitely above them. And so also is it with all the means of grace, whereby at present he is exhibited, and the benefits of his mediation communicated unto us.

VER. 7.—IN this verse, two instances of the qualifications of a high priest, are accommodated unto our Lord Jesus Christ, and that in the retrograde order before proposed. For the last thing expressed concerning a high priest according to the law, was, that he was encompassed with infirmities, ver. 2. And this in the first place is applied unto Christ, for that it was so with him when he entered upon the discharge of his office. And therein the apostle gives a double demonstration:—1. From the time and season wherein he did execute his office—it was in the days of his flesh. So openly do they contradict the Scripture, who contend that he entered not directly on his priestly office, until these days of his flesh were finished and ended. Now, in the days of his flesh, he was compassed with infirmities, and that because he was in the flesh. 2. From the manner of his deportment in

this discharge of his office—he did it with cries and tears. And these also are from the infirmity of our nature.

Secondly, The acting of the high priest, as so qualified in the discharge of his office, is accommodated unto him. For a high priest was appointed, *ἵνα προσφέρῃ δῶρα τε καὶ θυσίας ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν*, ver. 1, ‘that he might offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.’ So it is here affirmed of our Saviour, that he also offered to God, which is expressive of a sacerdotal act, as shall be declared. And this is farther described, 1. By an especial adjunct of the sacrifice he offered, namely, prayers and tears. 2. By the immediate object of them, and his sacrifice which they accompanied—he that was able to save him from death. 3. By the effect and issue of the whole—he was heard in that which he feared.

VER. 7.—*Ὁς ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ, δεήσεις τε καὶ ἱκετηρίας πρὸς τὸν δυναμένον σῶζειν αὐτὸν ἐκ θανάτου, μετὰ κραυγῆς ἰσχυρᾶς καὶ δακρυῶν προσενεγκας, καὶ εἰσακουσθεὶς ἀπο τῆς εὐλαξίας.*

Ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ. Syr. ‘Also when he was clothed with flesh.’ Arab. ‘In the days of his humanity.’ *Μετὰ κραυγῆς ἰσχυρᾶς.* Syr. ‘With a vehement outcry.’ *Ἀπο τῆς εὐλαξίας.* This is wholly omitted in the Syriac. Only in the next verse mention of it is introduced, as *ἡδὼν*, ‘fear or dread,’ which is evidently transferred from this place; the interpreter, it seems, not understanding the meaning of it in its present construction.

VER. 7.—*Who in the days of his flesh, offered up prayers and supplications, with a strong cry (or vehement outcry) and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard (or delivered) from (his) fear.*

The person here spoken of, is expressed by the relative *ὁς*, ‘who;’ that is, *ὁ Χριστός*, mentioned ver. 4, to whose priesthood thenceforward testimony is given. *Who*, that is Christ, not absolutely but as a high priest.

The first thing mentioned of him, is an intimation of the infirmity wherewith he was attended in the discharge of his office, by a description of the time and season wherein he was exercised in it: it was *ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ*, ‘in the days of his flesh.’ That these infirmities were in themselves perfectly sinless, and absolutely necessary unto him in this office, was before declared. And we may here inquire, 1. What is meant by the flesh of Christ? 2. What were the days of his flesh?

1. The *flesh* of Christ, wherein he was, is in the Scripture taken two ways. 1. Naturally, by a synecdoche, for his whole human nature, John i. 14, ‘The Word was made flesh.’ 1 Tim. iii. 16, ‘God was manifest in the flesh.’ Rom. ix. 5, ‘Of whom was Christ according to the flesh.’ Heb. ii. 9, 10, 14, ‘He partook of flesh and blood.’ 1 Pet. iii. 18; Rom. i. 3. See our exposition of ch. ii. 9–11. In this

flesh, or in the flesh in this sense, as to the substance of it, Christ still continues. The body wherein he suffered and rose from the dead, was altered upon his resurrection and ascension, as to its qualities, but not as to its substance; it consisted still of flesh and bones, Luke xxiv. 39. And the same spirit which, when he died, he resigned into the hand of God, was returned unto him again when he was quickened in the Spirit, 1 Pet. iii. 18, when God showed him again the path of life, according to his promise, Ps. xvi. 11. This flesh he carried entire with him into heaven, where it still continueth, though inwardly and outwardly exalted and glorified beyond our apprehension, Acts i. 11, and in this flesh shall he come again unto judgment, Acts i. 11, iii. 21, xvii. 31; Rev. i. 7. For the union of this flesh with the divine nature in the person of the Son of God, is eternally indissoluble. And they overthrow the foundation of faith, who fancy the Lord Christ to have any other body in heaven, than what he had on the earth; as they also do who make him to have such flesh as they can eat every day. It is not, therefore, the flesh of Christ in this sense as absolutely considered, which is here intended. For the days of this flesh abide always, they shall never expire to eternity.

2. Flesh, as applied unto Christ, signifies the frailties, weaknesses, and infirmities of our nature, or our nature as it is weak and infirm, during this mortal life. So is the word often used, Ps. lxxviii. 39, 'He remembereth *כִּי בֶשָׁר הֵמָּה*, that they are but flesh;' that is, poor, weak, mortal, frail creatures. Ps. lxxv. 2, 'Unto thee shall all flesh come:' poor helpless creatures, standing in need of aid and assistance. So flesh and blood is taken for that principle of corruption, which must be done away before we enter into heaven, 1 Cor. xv. 50. And this is that which is meant by the *flesh* of Christ in this place—human nature not yet glorified, with all its infirmities, wherein he was exposed unto hunger, thirst, weariness, labour, sorrow, grief, fear, pain, wounding, death itself. Hereby doth the apostle express what he had before laid down, in the person of the high priest according to the law—he was compassed with infirmities.

Secondly. What was intended by 'the days of his flesh?' It is evident that in general his whole course and walk in this world, may be comprised herein. From his cradle to the grave, he bare all the infirmities of our nature, with all the dolorous and grievous effects of them. Hence, all his days he was *אִישׁ מִכְּאֲבוֹת וִידוּעַ חָלִי*, Isa. liii. 3, 'a man of sorrows,' filled with them, never free from them, and familiarly acquainted with grief, as a companion that never departed from him. But yet respect is not had here unto this whole space of time, only the subject-matter treated of, is limited unto that season; it fell out neither before nor after, but in and during the days of his flesh. But the season peculiarly intended, is the close of those days, in his last suffering, when all his sorrows, trials, and temptations, came unto a head. The sole design of the expression is to show, that when he offered up his sacrifice, he was encompassed with infirmities, which hath an especial influence into our faith and consolation.

Secondly. An account is given of what he did in these days of his flesh, as a high priest, being called of God unto that office. And this

in general was his acting as a priest, wherein many things are to be considered.

First. The act of his oblation, in that word *προσενεγκας*. *Προσφερω*, is accedo, appropinquo, or accedere facio, when applied unto things in common use, or unto persons in the common occasions of life. So doth קרב signify in the Hebrew; but when it doth so, the LXX. constantly render it by *εγγιζω* and *προσεγγιζω*, that is, 'to draw near.' But when it is applied to things sacred, they render it by *προσφερω*, that is, offero, or 'to offer.' And although this word is sometimes used in the New Testament in the common sense before mentioned, yet it alone, and no other, is made use of to express an access with gifts and sacrifices, or offerings on the altar; see Matt. ii. 11, v. 23, 24, viii. 4; Mark i. 44; Luke v. 14, כִּי יִקְרִיב קרבן, Lev. i. 2, that is, *προσφερη δωρον*, 'offer a gift,' that is, at the altar. And in this Epistle, it constantly expresseth a sacerdotal act, ch. v. 1, 3, viii. 3, 4, ix. 7, 9, 14, 25, 28, x. 1, 2, 8, 11, 12, xi. 4, 17. And *προσφορα*, is 'a sacred oblation,' or 'a sacrifice,' ch. x. 5, 8, 10, 14, 18. Nor is the word otherwise used in this Epistle; and the end why we observe it, is to manifest, that it is a priestly sacerdotal offering that is here intended. He offered as a priest.

Secondly. The matter of his offering, is expressed by *δεησεις και ικετηριας*, 'prayers and supplications.' Both these words have the same general signification. And they also agree in this, that they respect an especial kind of prayer, which is for the averting or turning away of impendent evils, or such as are deserved and justly feared. For whereas all sorts of prayers may be referred unto two heads, 1. Such as are petitory, for the impetration of that which is good. 2. Such as are deprecatory for the keeping off, or turning away that which is evil: the latter sort only are here intended. *Δησεις*, are every-where preces deprecatoriæ; and we render it 'supplications,' 1 Tim. ii. 1. And supplicationes are the same with supplicia, which signifies both punishments and prayers for the averting of them; as in the Hebrew, חַטָּאת is both sin, and a sacrifice for the expiation of it.

Ίκετηρια is nowhere used in the Scripture, but in this place only. In other authors, it originally signifies 'a bough, or olive branch, wrapped about with wool or bays,' or something of the like nature, which they who were supplicants carried in their hands, and lifted up unto others for the obtaining of peace from them, or to avert their displeasure. Hence is the phrase of *velamenta prætere*, 'to hold forth such covered branches.' So Liv. de Bell. Punic. lib. 4. *Ramos oleæ ac velamenta alia supplicum porrigentes orare ut reciperent feste*. 'Holding forth olive branches, and other covered tokens used by supplicants, they prayed that they might be received into grace and favour.' And Virgil, of his Æneas to Evander,

Optime Grajugenum cui me fortuna precari,
Et vitta comptos voluit pretendere Ramos.

And Herodian calls them *ικετηριας θαλλους*, 'branches of supplication.' Hence the word came to denote a supplicatory prayer, the same with *ικετευμα*. And it is in this sense usually joined with *δεησεις*,

as here by our apostle. So Isoc. de Pace, *ἱκετηρίας πολλὰς καὶ δεήσεις ποιούμενος*, ‘using many deprecatory entreaties and supplications.’ So constantly the heathen called those prayers which they made solemnly to their gods, for the averting of impendent evils, supplicia and supplicationes. Liv. lib. 10, ‘Eo anno multa prodigia erant, quorum averruncandorum causa, supplicationes in biduum Senatus decrevit,’ that is, *Iræ Deūm averruncandæ*, as he speaks, lib. 8, ‘to turn away the wrath of their gods.’ And such a kind of prayer is that whose form is given in Cato de re Rustic., cap. 14, ‘Mars pater, te precor, quæsoque, ut calamitates intemperiasque prohibeas, defendas, averrunces.’ Hesychius explains *ἱκετηρία* by *παρακλήσις*, a word of a much larger signification; but *ἱκετώσυνα*, a word of the same original and force, by *καθαρτηρία*, *λυτηρία*, ‘expiations and purgations’ from guilt deserving punishment, *ἱκετηρία*, Gloss. Vet. Oratio, precatio supplicum, ‘the prayer of suppliants.’ The word being used only in this place in the Scripture, it was not unnecessary to inquire after the signification of it in other authors. It is a humble supplication for peace, or deprecation of evil, with the turning away of anger. And this sense singularly suits the scope of the place. For respect is had in it to the sufferings of Christ, and the fear which befel him in the apprehension of them as they were penal, as we shall see afterwards.

But it must also be here farther observed, that however this word might be used to express the naked supplication of some men in distress to others, yet whenever it is used in heathen authors, with respect to their gods, it was always accompanied with expiatory sacrifices, or was the peculiar name of those prayers and supplications which they made with those sacrifices. As I have shown before, that the solemn expiatory sacrifice of the high priest among the Jews, was accompanied with deprecatory supplications, a form whereof, according to the apprehensions of their masters, I gave out of the Mishna. And so he was appointed in the great sacrifice of expiation, to confess over the head of the scape-goat, all ‘the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins,’ Lev. xvi. 21, which he did not without prayers for the expiation of them, and deliverance from the curse of the law due to them. And they are not the mere supplications of our blessed Saviour that are here intended, but as they accompanied, and were a necessary adjunct of, the offering up of himself, his soul and body, a real propitiatory sacrifice to God. And therefore wherever our apostle elsewhere speaks of the offering of Christ, he calls it the offering of himself, or of his body, Eph. v. 2; Heb. ix. 14, 25, 28, x. 10. Here therefore he expresseth the whole sacrifice of Christ, by the prayers and supplications where-with it was accompanied, and therefore makes use of that word; which peculiarly denotes such supplications. And he describes the sacrifice or offering of Christ by this adjunct, for the reasons ensuing.

1. To evince what he before declared, that in the days of his flesh, when he offered up himself to God, he was encompassed with the weakness of our nature; which made prayers and supplications needful for him, as at all seasons, so especially in straits and distresses, when he cried from the lion’s mouth, and the horns of unicorns, Ps.

xxii. 21. He was in earnest and pressed to the utmost in the work that was before him. And this expression is used,

2. That we might seriously consider how great a work it was to expiate sin. As it was not to be done without suffering, so a mere and bare suffering would not effect it. Not only death, and a bloody death, was required thereunto, but such as was to be accompanied with prayers and supplications, that it might be effectual to the end designed, and that he who suffered it might not be overborne in his undertaking. The redemption of souls was precious, and must have ceased for ever, had not every thing been set on work which is acceptable and prevalent with God. And,

3. To show that the Lord Christ had now made this business his own, he had taken the whole work and the whole debt of sin on himself. He was now therefore to manage, as if he alone were the person concerned. And this rendered his prayers and supplications necessary in and to his sacrifice. And,

4. That we might be instructed how to make use of, and plead his sacrifice in our stead. If it was not, if it could not be offered by him but with prayers and supplications, and those for the averting of divine wrath, and making peace with God, we may not think to be interested therein whilst under the power of lazy and slothful unbelief. Let him that would go to Christ, consider well how Christ went to God for him, which is yet farther declared,

Thirdly. In the manner of his offering these prayers and supplications to God, whereby he offered up himself also to him. He did it *μετα κραυγης ισχυρας και δακρυων*, 'with strong crying,' or 'a strong cry and tears.' Chrysostome on the place observes that the story makes no mention of these things. And indeed of his tears in particular it doth not, which from this place alone we know to have accompanied his sacerdotal prayers. But his strong crying is expressly related. To acquaint ourselves fully with what is intended therein, we may consider, 1. How it was expressed in prophecy. 2. How it is related in the story. 3. How reported here by our apostle.

1. In prophecy, the supplications here intended are called his 'roaring.' Ps. xxii. 1, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me, and from דברי שאגתי the words of my roaring?' Rugitus, the proper cry of the lion is *κραυγη ισχυρα*, clamor validus, 'a strong and vehement outcry.' And it is used to express such a vehemency in supplications, as cannot be compressed or confined, but will ordinarily break out into a loud expression of itself, at least such an intention of mind and affection, as cannot be outwardly expressed without 'fervent outcries,' Ps. xxxii. 3. 'When I keep silence,' that is, whilst he was under his perplexities from the guilt of sin, before he came off to a full and clear acknowledgment of it, as ver 5, 'My bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.' The vehemency of his complainings consumed his natural strength. So Job iii. 24, 'My sighing cometh before I eat, ויתכו כמים, and my roarings are poured out like waters,' namely, that break out of any place with great noise and abundance. So is a sense of extreme pressures and distresses signified. 'I have roared by reason

of the disquietment of mine heart,' Ps. xxxviii. 8. This is *κραυγή ισχυρά*, 'a strong cry.' And if we well consider his prayer as recorded, Ps. xxii. especially from ver. 9, to 21, we shall find that every word almost, and sentence, hath in it the spirit of roaring and a strong cry, however it were uttered. For it is not merely the outward noise, but the inward earnest intention and engagement of heart and soul, with the greatness and depth of the occasion of them, that is principally intended.

2. We may consider the same matter as related in story by the evangelists. The prayers intended are those which he offered to God during his passion, both in the garden and on the cross, The first are declared Luke xxi. 44, 'And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was as great drops of blood falling on the earth.' The inward frame is here declared, which our apostle shadows out by the external expressions and signs of it, in strong cries and tears; *εν αγωνία γενομενος*, 'constitutus in agonia.' He was in, under the power of, wholly pressed by, an agony; that is, a strong and vehement conflict of mind, in and about things dreadful and terrible. *Αγωνία* is *φοβος διαπτωσεως*, saith Nemes. de Natur. Hom. 'A dread of utter ruin.' *Timor extrinsecus advenientis mali*, Aquin. 'A dread of evil to come on us from without.' It signifies, *Ita vehementi discriminis objecti metu angi ut quodammodo exanimis et attonitus sis*, saith Maldonat. on Matt. xxvi. 37. He prayed *εκτενεστρον*, 'with more vehement intention of mind, spirit, and body.' For the word denotes not a degree of the acting of grace in Christ, as some have imagined, but the highest degree of earnestness in the actings of his mind, soul, and body, another token of that wonderful conflict wherein he was engaged, which no tongue can express, nor heart conceive. This produced that preternatural sweat, wherein *θρομλοι αιματος*, 'thick drops of blood' ran from him to the ground. Concerning this he says, *כמים נשפתי*, Ps. xxii. 14, 'I am poured out like water,' that is, my blood is so, by an emanation from all parts of my body, descending to the ground. And they consult not the honour of Jesus Christ, but the maintenance of their own false suppositions, who assign any ordinary cause of this agony, with these consequents of it, or such as other men may have experience of. And this way go many of the expositors of the Roman church. So A Lapid. in loc. 'Nota secundò hunc Christi angorem, lacrymas et sudorem sanguineum, testem infirmitatis a Christo assumptæ, provenisse ex vivaci imaginatione, flagellationis, coronationis, mortis, dolorumque omnium quos mox subiturus erat; inde enim naturaliter manabat eorundem horror et angor.' He would place the whole cause of this agony, in those previous fancies, imaginations, or apprehensions, which he had of those corporeal sufferings which were to come on him. Where then is the glory of his spiritual strength and fortitude? Where is the beauty of the example which herein he set before us? His outward sufferings were indeed grievous; but yet considered merely as such, they were as to mere sense of pain, beneath what sundry of his martyrs have been called to undergo for his name's sake. And yet we know that many, yea through the power of his grace in them, the most of them

who have so suffered for him in all ages, have cheerfully, joyfully, and without the least consternation of spirit, undergone the exquisite tortures whereby they have given up themselves to death for him. And shall we imagine that the Son of God, who had advantages for his support and consolation, infinitely above what they had any interest in, should be given up to this dreadful trembling conflict, wherein his whole nature was almost dissolved, out of a mere apprehension of those corporeal sufferings which were coming on him? Was it the forethought of them only, and that as such, which dispelled the present sense of divine love and satisfaction from the indissoluble union of his person, that they should not influence his mind with refreshments and consolations? God forbid that we should have any such mean thoughts of what he was, of what he did, of what he suffered. There were other causes of these things, as we shall see immediately.

Again, on the cross itself it is said, *ανεβοησε φωνη μεγαλη*, Matt. xxvii. 46, that is plainly, he prayed *μετα κραυγης ισχυρας*, 'he cried out with a great outcry,' or 'loud voice,' with a strong cry. This was the manner of the sacerdotal prayers of Christ, which concerned his oblation, or the offering of himself as a sacrifice, as is reported in the Evangelist. The other part of his sacerdotal prayer, which expressed his intercession on a supposition of his oblation, he performed and offered with all calmness, quietness, and sedateness of mind, with all assurance and joyful glory, as if he were actually already in heaven, as we may see John xvii. But it was otherwise with him, when he was to offer himself a sin-offering in our stead. If, therefore, we do compare the 22nd Psalm, as applied and explained by the evangelists and our apostle, with the 17th of John, we shall find a double mediatory or sacerdotal prayer of our Saviour in behalf of the whole church. The first was that which accompanied his oblation, or the offering of himself an expiatory sacrifice for sin. And this having respect to the justice of God, the curse of the law, and the punishment due to sin, was made in an agony, distress, and conflict, with wrestlings, expressed by cries, tears, and most vehement intensions of soul. The other, which though in order of time, antecedent, yet in order of nature, was built on the former, and a supposition of the work perfected therein, as is evident ver. 4; and ver. 11, represents his intercession in heaven. The first was *μετα κραυγης ισχυρας και δακρυων*, the other *μετα πεποιθησεως και πληροφοριας*.

3. These are the things which are thus expressed by our apostle, 'he offered up prayers and supplications with strong cries and tears.' Such was the frame of his soul, such was his prayer and deportment in his sacrifice of himself. His tears indeed are not expressly mentioned in the story. But weeping was one of those infirmities of our nature which he was subject to, John xi. 35, 'Jesus wept.' He expressed his sorrow thereby. And being now in the greatest distress, conflict, and sorrow which reached to the soul, until that was sorrowful to death, as we may well judge that in his dealing with God, he poured out tears with his prayers, so it is here directly mentioned. So did he here offer up himself through the eternal Spirit.

Fourthly. The object of this offering of Christ. He to whom he

offered up prayers and supplications, is expressed and described. And this was *ὁ δυναμενος σωζειν αυτον εκ θανατου*, 'he that was able to save him from death,' that had power so to do. It is God who is intended, whom the apostle describes by this periphrasis, for the reasons that shall be mentioned. He calls him neither God, nor the Father of Christ, although the Lord Jesus in the prayers intended, calls on him by both those names. So in the garden he calls him Father, 'Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me,' Luke xxii. 42. And on the cross he called him God, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Matt. xxvii. 46. And Father, again, in the resignation of his life and soul into his hands, Luke xxiii. 46. But in the reporting of these things our apostle waveth these expressions, and only describeth God as 'he who was able to save him from death.' Now this he doth, to manifest the consideration that the Lord Christ at that time had of God, of death, and of the causes, consequents, and effects of it. For his design is to declare what was the reason of the frame of the soul of Christ, in his suffering and offering before described, and what were the causes thereof.

1. In general, God is proposed as the object of the actings of Christ's soul in this offering of himself, as he who had all power in his hand to order all his present concerns. 'To him who was able.' Ability or power is either natural or moral. Natural power is strength and active efficiency, in God omnipotency. Moral power is right and authority, in God absolute sovereignty. And the Lord Christ had respect to the ability or power of God in both these senses. In the first, as that which he relied on for deliverance. In the latter, as that which he submitted himself to. The former was the object of his faith, namely, that God by the greatness of his power could support and deliver him, in and under his trial. The latter was the object of his fear, as to the dreadful work which he had undertaken. Now because the apostle is on the description of that frame of heart, and those actings of soul, wherewith our high priest offered himself for us to God, which was with prayers and supplications, accompanied with strong cries and tears, I shall consider from these words three things, considering the power or ability of God principally in the latter way.

1. What were the general causes of the state and condition, wherein the Lord Christ is here described by our apostle, and of the actings ascribed to him therein.

2. What were the immediate effects of the sufferings of the Lord Christ in and on his own soul.

3. What limitations are to be assigned to them; from all which it will appear, why and wherefore he offered up his prayers and supplications to him who was 'able to save him from death,' wherein a fear of it is included, on the account of the righteous authority of God, as well as a faith of deliverance from it, on the account of his omnipotent power.

First. The general causes of his state and condition, with his actings therein, were included in that consideration and prospect which he then had of God, death, and himself, or the effects of death on him.

1. He considered God at that instant, as the supreme Rector and Judge of all; the author of the law, and the avenger of it; who had power of life and death, as the one was to be destroyed, and the other inflicted according to the curse and sentence of the law. Under this notion he now considered God, and that as actually putting the law in execution, having power and authority to give up to the sting of it, or to save from it. God represented himself to him first, as armed and attended with infinite holiness, righteousness, and severity, as one that would not pass by sin, nor acquit the guilty; and then as accompanied with supreme or sovereign authority over him, the law, life, and death. And it is of great importance under what notion we consider God, when we make our approaches to him. The whole frame of our souls, as to fear and confidence, will be regulated thereby.

2. He considered death not naturally, as a separation of soul and body, nor yet merely as a painful separation of them, such as was that death which in particular he was to undergo; but he looked on it as a curse of the law, due to sin, inflicted by God, as a just and righteous judge. Hence in and under it he himself is said to 'be made a curse,' Gal. iii. 13. This curse was now coming on him as the sponsor or surety of the new covenant. For although he considered himself, and the effects of things on himself, yet he offered up these prayers as our sponsor, that the work of mediation which he had undertaken, might have a good and blessed issue.

From hence may we take a view of that frame of soul which our Lord Jesus Christ was in when he offered up prayers and supplications with strong cries and tears, considering God as he who had authority over the law, and the sentence of it, that was to be inflicted on him. Some have thought that on the confidence of the indissolubleness of his person, and the actual assurance which they suppose he always had of the love of God, his sufferings could have no effect of fear, trouble, sorrow, or perplexity on his soul, but only what respected the natural enduring of pain and shame which he was exposed to. But the Scripture gives another account of these things. It informs us that he 'began to be afraid,' and 'sore amazed,' 'that his soul was heavy and sorrowful to death,' that he was 'in an agony,' and afterwards cried out, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' under a sense of divine dereliction. There was indeed a mighty acting of love in God towards us, in the giving up his Son to death for us, as to the gracious ends and purposes thereby to be accomplished. And his so doing is constantly in the Scripture reckoned on the score of love. And there was always in him a great love to the person of his Son, and an ineffable complacency in the obedience of Christ, especially that which he exercised in his suffering. But yet the curse and punishment which he underwent, was an effect of vindictive justice, and as such did he look on it, and conflict with it. I shall not enter into the debates of those expressions which have been controverted about the sufferings of Christ, as whether he underwent the death of the soul, the second death, the pains of hell. For it would cause a prolix digression, to show distinctly what is essential to

these things, or purely penal in them, which alone he was subject to, and what necessarily follows a state and condition of personal sin and guilt, in them who undergo them, which he was absolutely free from. But this alone I shall say, which I have proved elsewhere, whatever was due to us from the justice of God and sentence of the law, that he underwent and suffered. This then was the cause in general of the state and condition of Christ here described, and of his actings therein expressed.

Secondly. The effects of his sufferings on himself, or his sufferings themselves, on this account, may be reduced in general to these two heads.

1. His dereliction. He was under a suspension of the comforting influences of his relation to God. His relation to God as his God and Father, was the fountain of all his comforts and joys. The sense hereof was now suspended. Hence was that part of his cry, 'My God, why hast thou forsaken me?' The supporting influences of this relation were continued, but the comforting influences of it were suspended, see Ps. xxii. 1—3, &c. And from hence he was filled with 'heaviness and sorrow.' This the Evangelists fully express; he says of himself that his 'soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death,' Matt. xxvi. 38, which expressions are emphatical, and declare a sorrow that is absolutely inexpressible. And this sorrow was the effect of his penal desertion. For sorrow is that which was the life of the curse of the law. So when God declared the nature of that curse to Adam and Eve, he tells them that he will give them 'sorrow,' and 'multiply their sorrow,' Gen. iii. 16, 17. With this sorrow was Christ now filled, which put him on these strong cries and tears for relief. And this dereliction was possible, and proceeded from hence, in that all communications from the divine nature to the human, beyond subsistence, were voluntary.

2. He had an intimate sense of the wrath and displeasure of God, against the sin that was then imputed to him. All our sins were then caused by an act of divine and supreme authority to meet on him, 'God laid on him the iniquity of us all,' Isa. liii. 6. Even all our guilt was imputed to him, or none of the punishment due to our sins could have been justly inflicted on him. In this state of things, in that great hour and wonderful transaction of divine wisdom, grace, and righteousness, whereon the glory of God, the recovery of fallen man, with the utter condemnation of Satan depended, God was pleased for a while, as it were, to hold the scales of justice in æquilibrio, that the turning of them might be more conspicuous, eminent, and glorious. In the one scale, as it were, there was the weight of the first sin and apostasy from God, with all the consequents of it, covered with the sentence and curse of the law, with the exigence of vindictive justice; a weight that all the angels of heaven could not stand under one moment. In the other were the obedience, holiness, righteousness, and penal sufferings of the Son of God, all having weight and worth given to them by the dignity and worth of his divine person. Infinite justice kept these things for a season, as it were, at a poise, until the Son of God by his prayers, tears, and

supplications, prevailed to a glorious success in the delivery of himself and us.

Thirdly. Wherefore, as to the limitation of the effects of Christ's sufferings in and on himself we may conclude in general, 1. That they were such only as were consistent with absolute purity, holiness, and freedom from the least appearance of sin. 2. Not such as did in the least impeach the glorious union of his natures in the same person. Nor, 3. Such as took off from the dignity of his obedience, and merit of his sufferings, but were all necessary thereunto. But then, 4. As he underwent all that is or can be grievous, dolorous, afflictive, and penal in the wrath of God, and sentence of the law executed; so these things really wrought in him sorrow, amazement, anguish, fear, dread, with all the like penal effects of the pains of hell, from whence it was that he offered up 'prayers and supplications, with strong cries and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death,' the event whereof is described in the last clause of the verse.

Και εισακουσθεις απο της ευλαξειας; 'and was heard in that which he feared.' To be heard in Scripture signifies two things: 1. To be accepted in our requests, though the thing requested be not granted unto us. God will hear me, is as much as God will accept of me, is pleased with my supplication, Ps. lv. 17, xxii. 21. 2. To be answered in our request. To be heard is to be delivered. So is this expressed, Ps. xxii. 24. In the first way there is no doubt but that the Father always heard the Son, John xi. 42, always, in all things, accepted him, and was well pleased in him. But our inquiry is here, How far the Lord Christ was heard in the latter way, so heard as to be delivered from what he prayed against. Concerning this, observe, that the prayers of Christ in this matter were of two sorts.

1. Hypothetical or conditional; such was that prayer for the passing of the cup from him, Luke xxii. 42, 'Father, if thou wilt, let this cup pass from me.' And this prayer was nothing, but what was absolutely necessary unto the verity of human nature in that state and condition. Christ could not have been a man, and not have had an extreme aversation to the things that were coming upon him. Nor had it been otherwise with him, could he properly have been said to suffer. For nothing is suffering, nor can be penal unto us, but what is grievous unto our nature, and what it is abhorrent of. This acting of the inclination of nature, both in his mind, will, and affections, which in him were purely holy, our Saviour expresseth in that conditional prayer. And in this prayer he was thus answered. His mind was fortified against the dread and terror of nature so as to come unto a perfect composure in the will of God. 'Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done.' He was heard herein, so far as he desired to be heard. For although he could not but desire deliverance from the whole as he was a man; yet he desired it not absolutely, as he was wholly subjected to the will of God.

2. Absolute. The chief and principal supplications which he offered up to him who was able to save him from death were absolute, and in them he was absolutely heard and delivered. For upon the

presentation of death unto him, as attended with the wrath and curse of God, he had deep and dreadful apprehensions of it ; and of how unable the human nature was to undergo it, and prevail against it, if not mightily supported and carried through by the power of God. In this condition, it was part of his obedience, it was his duty to pray that he might be delivered from the absolute prevalency of it ; that he might not be cast in his trial, that he might not be confounded nor condemned. This he hoped, trusted, and believed, and therefore prayed absolutely for it, Isa. l. 7, 8. And herein he was heard absolutely. For so it is said, 'he was heard,' *απο της ευλαβειας*.

The word here used, *ευλαβεια*, is in a singular construction of speech, and is itself of various significations. Sometimes it is used for a religious reverence ; but such as hath fear joined with it, that is, the fear of evil. Frequently it signifies fear itself, but such a fear as is accompanied with a reverential care and holy circumspection. The word itself is but once more used in the New Testament, and that by our apostle, ch. xii. 28, where we will render it godly fear ; *ευλαξες*, the adjective, is used three times, Luke ii. 25 ; Acts ii. 5, viii. 2, everywhere denoting a religious fear. Heb. xi. 7, we render the verb *ευλαβηθηεις*, by 'moved with fear ;' that is, a reverence of God mixed with a dreadful apprehension of an approaching judgment. And the use of the preposition *απο*, added to *εισακουσθεις* is also singular ; *auditus ex metu*, 'heard from his fear.' Therefore is this passage variously interpreted by all sorts of expositors. Some read it, 'he was heard because of his reverence.' And in the exposition hereof they are again divided. Some take reverence actively, for the reverence he had of God ; that is, his reverential obedience. He was heard because of his reverence, or reverential obedience unto God. Some would have the reverence intended to relate to God ; the reverential respect that God had unto him. God heard him from that holy respect and regard which he had of him. But these things are fond, and suit not the design of the place ; neither the coherence of the words, nor their construction, nor their signification, nor the scope of the apostle will bear this sense. Others render it, *pro metu*, 'from fear,' or out of fear. And this also is two ways interpreted. 1. Because 'heard from fear,' is somewhat a harsh expression, they explain *auditus* by *liberatus*, delivered from fear ; and this is not improper. So Grotius, '*Cum mortem vehementer perhorresceret, in hoc exauditus fuit ut ab isto metu liberaretur.*' In this sense fear internal and subjective is intended. God relieved him against his fear, removing it, and taking it away by strengthening and comforting of him. Others by fear intend the thing feared, which sense our translators follow, and are therefore plentifully reviled and railed at by the Rhemists. He was heard ; that is, delivered from the things which he feared as coming upon him. And for the vindication of this sense and exposition, there is so much already offered by many learned expositors, as that I see not what can be added thereunto, and I shall not unnecessarily enlarge. And the opposition that is made hereunto, is managed rather with clamours and outcries, than Scripture reasons or testimonies. Suppose the object of the fear of Christ here, to have been

what he was delivered from, and then it must be his fainting, sinking, and perishing under the wrath of God, in the work he had undertaken. Yet, 1. The same thing is expressed elsewhere, unto a higher degree, and more emphatically; as where in this state he is said, *λυπείσθαι και ἀδημονεῖν*, and *ἐκθαμβείσθαι*, Matt. xxvi. 37; Mark xiv. 33; Luke xxii. 42—44, ‘to be sorrowful, perplexed, and amazed.’ 2. All this argues no more, but that the Lord Christ underwent an exercise in the opposition that was made unto his faith, and the mighty conflict he had with that opposition. That his faith or trust in God, was either overthrown or weakened by them, they prove not, nor do any plead them unto that purpose. And to deny that the soul of Christ was engaged in an ineffable conflict with the wrath of God, in the curse of the law, that his faith and trust in God were pressed and tried to the utmost by the opposition made unto them, by fear, dread, and a terrible apprehension of divine displeasure due to our sins, is to renounce the benefit of his passion, and turn the whole of it into a show, fit to be represented by pictures and images, or acted over in ludicrous scenes, as it is by the Papists.

It remains that we consider the observations which these words afford us for our instruction, wherein also their sense and importance will be farther explained. And the first thing that offers itself unto us is, that,

Obs. I. The Lord Jesus Christ himself had a time of infirmity in this world. A season he had wherein he was beset and encompassed with infirmities. So it was with him in the days of his flesh. It is true, his infirmities were all sinless, but all troublesome and grievous. By them was he exposed unto all sorts of temptations and sufferings, which are the two springs of all that is evil and dolorous unto our nature. And thus it was with him not a few days, nor a short season only, but during his whole course in this world. This the story of the gospel gives us an account of, and the instance of his offering up prayers with strong cries and tears, puts out of all question. These things were real, and not acted to make an appearance and representation of them. And hereof himself expresseth his sense, Ps. xxii. 6, 7, ‘I am a worm and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people: all that see me laugh me to scorn,’ ver. 14, 15. How can the infirmities of our nature, and a sense of them be more emphatically expressed. So Ps. lxxix. 20, ‘Reproach hath broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness; I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none.’ And Ps. xl. 12, ‘Innumerable evils have compassed me about.’ He had not only our infirmities, but he felt them, and was deeply sensible, both of them, and of the evils and troubles which through them he was exposed unto. Hence is that description of him, Isa. liii. 3.

Two things are herein by us duly to be considered. First. That it was out of infinite condescension and love unto our souls, that the Lord Christ took on himself this condition, Phil. ii. 6—8. This state was neither natural nor necessary unto him upon his own account. In himself he was in the ‘form of God, and counted it no robbery to be equal unto God;’ but this mind was in him, that for our sakes, he

would take on himself all these infirmities of our nature, and through them, expose himself unto evils innumerable. It was voluntary love, and not defect or necessity of nature, which brought him into this condition. Secondly. As he had other ends herein, for these things were indispensably required unto the discharge of the sacerdotal office, so he designed to set us an example, that we should not faint under our infirmities and sufferings on their account, Heb. xii. 2, 3; 1 Pet. iv. 1. And God knows such an example we stood in need of, both as a pattern to conform ourselves under our infirmities, and to encourage us in the expectation of a good issue, unto our present deplorable condition.

Let us not then think strange, if we have our season of weakness and infirmity in this world, whereby we are exposed unto temptation and suffering. Apt we are indeed to complain hereof; the whole nation of professors is full of complaints; one is in want, straits, and poverty; another in pain, under sickness, and variety of troubles; some are in distress for their relations, some from and by them; some are persecuted, some are tempted, some pressed with private, some with public concerns; some are sick, and some are weak, and some are fallen asleep. And these things are apt to make us faint, to despond, and be weary. I know not how others bear up their hearts and spirits; for my part, I have much ado to keep from continual longing, after the embraces of the dust, and shades of the grave, as a curtain drawn over the rest in another world. In the meantime, every momentary gourd, that interposeth between the vehemency of wind and sun, or our frail fainting natures and spirits, is too much valued by us.

But what would we have? Do we consider who, and what, and where we are, when we think strange of these things? These are the days of our flesh, wherein these things are due to us and unavoidable. 'Man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward,' Job. v. 7, necessarily and abundantly. All complaints, and all contrivances, whereby we endeavour to extricate ourselves from those innumerable evils which attend our weak, frail, infirm condition, will be altogether vain. And if any through the flatteries of youth, and health, and strength, and wealth, with other satisfactions of their affections, are not sensible of these things, they are but in a pleasant dream, which will quickly pass away. Our only relief in this condition, is a due regard unto our great example, and what he did, how he behaved himself in the days of his flesh, when he had more difficulties and miseries to conflict with, than we all. And in him we may do well to consider three things:

1. His patience, unconquerable and unmoveable in all things that befel him in the days of his flesh. 'He did not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets,' Isa. xlii. 2. Whatever befel him, he bore it quietly and patiently. Being buffeted, he threatened not; being reviled, he reviled not again. 'As a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.' 2. His trust in God. By this testimony that it is said of him, 'I will put my trust in God,' doth our apostle prove that he had the same nature with us, subject to the same weakness and infirmities, Heb. ii. 13. And this we are

taught thereby, that there is no management of our human nature, as now beset with infirmities, but by a constant trust in God. The whole life of Christ therein, was a life of submission, trust, and dependence on God. So that when he came to his last suffering, his enemies fixed on that to reproach him withal, as knowing how constant he was in the profession thereof, Ps. xxii. 8; Matt. xxvii. 43. 3. His earnest, fervent prayers and supplications, which are here expressed by our apostle, and accommodated unto the days of his flesh. Other instances of his holy, gracious deportment of himself, in that condition wherein he sets us an example, might be insisted on, but these may give us an entrance into the whole of our duty. Patience, faith, and prayer, will carry us comfortably and safely through the whole course of our frail and infirm lives in this world.

Obs. II. A life of glory may ensue after a life of infirmity. 'If,' saith our apostle, 'we have hope in this life only, then were we of all men the most miserable.' For besides that we are obnoxious to the same common infirmities within, and calamities without, with all other men, there is and ever will be a peculiar sort of distress that they are exposed unto, who will live godly in Christ Jesus. But there is nothing can befall us, but what may issue in eternal glory. We see that it hath done so with Jesus Christ. His season of infirmity issued in eternal glory. And nothing but unbelief and sin can hinder ours from doing so also.

Obs. III. The Lord Christ is no more now in a state of weakness and temptation; the days of his flesh are past and gone. As such, the apostle here makes mention of them. And the Scripture signally, in sundry places takes notice of it. This account he gives of himself, Rev. i. 18, 'I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore.' The state of infirmity and weakness, wherein he was obnoxious unto death, is now past, he now lives for evermore. Henceforth he dieth no more, death hath no more power over him, nor any thing else that can reach the least trouble unto him. With his death, ended the days of his flesh. His revival or return unto life, was into absolute, eternal, unchangeable glory. And this advancement is expressed by his sitting at the right hand of the Majesty on high, which we have before declared. He is therefore now no more on any account obnoxious, 1. Unto the law, the sentence or curse of it. As he was made of a woman, he was made under the law, and so he continued all the days of his flesh. Therein did he fulfil all the righteousness it required, and answered the whole penalty for sin that it exacted. But with the days of his flesh, ended the right of the law towards him, either as to require obedience of him, or exact suffering from him: hence, a little before his expiration on the cross, he said concerning it, 'It is finished.' And hereon doth our freedom from the curse of the law depend. The law can claim no more dominion over a believer, than it can over Christ himself. He lives now, out of the reach of all the power of the law, to plead his own obedience unto it, satisfaction of it, and triumph over it, in the behalf of them that believe on him. Nor, 2. Unto temptations. These were his constant attendants and companions, during the days of his flesh. What they

were, and of what sorts, we have in part before discoursed. He is now freed from them and above them, yet not so but that they have left a compassionate sense upon his holy soul, of the straits and distresses which his disciples and servants are daily brought into by them, which is the spring and foundation of the relief he communicates unto them. Nor, 3. Unto troubles, persecutions, or sufferings of any kind. He is not so in his own person. He is far above, out of the reach of all his enemies. Above them in power, in glory, in authority, and rule. There is none of them but he can crush at his pleasure, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. He is indeed still hated as much as ever, maligned as much as in the days of his flesh, and exposed unto the utmost power of hell and the world, in all his concerns on the earth. But he laughs all his enemies to scorn, he hath them in derision, and in the midst of their wise counsels and mighty designs, disposes of them and of all their undertakings, unto his ends and purposes, not their own. He is pleased, indeed, as yet, to suffer and to be persecuted in his saints and servants, but that is, from a gracious condescension, by virtue of a spiritual union, not from any necessity of state or condition. And some may hence learn how to fear him, as others may and do to put their trust in him.

Obs. IV. The Lord Christ filled up every season with duty, with the proper duty of it. The days of his flesh, were the only season wherein he could offer to God; and he missed it not, he did so accordingly. Some would not have Christ offer himself until he came to heaven. But then, the season of offering was past. Christ was to use no strong cries and tears in heaven, which yet were necessary concomitants of his oblation. It is true, in his glorified state, he continually represents in heaven, the offering that he made of himself on the earth, in an effectual application of it unto the advantage of the elect. But the offering itself was in the days of his flesh. This was the only season for that duty; for therein only was he meet unto this work, and had provision for it. Then was his body capable of pain, his soul of sorrow, his nature of dissolution, all which were necessary unto this duty. Then was he in a condition wherein faith, and trust, and prayers, and tears, were as necessary unto himself, as unto his offering. This was his season, and he missed it not. Neither did he so on any other occasion, during the days of his flesh, especially those of his public ministry, wherein we ought to make him our example.

Obs. V. The Lord Christ, in his offering up himself for us, laboured and travailed in soul, to bring the work unto a good and holy issue. A hard labour it was, and as such, it is here expressed. He went through it with fears, sorrows, tears, outcries, prayers, and humble supplications. This is called עֲמַל נַפְשׁוֹ, the pressing, wearying, laborious 'travail of his soul,' Isa. liii. 11. He laboured, was straitened, and pained to bring forth this glorious birth. And we may take a little prospect of this travail of the soul of Christ, as it is represented unto us. First. All the holy, natural affections of his soul were filled, taken up, and extended to the utmost capacity, in acting and suffering. The travail of our souls lie much in the engagement and actings of our affections. Who is there who hath been acquainted with

great fears, great sorrows, great desires, great and ardent love, who knows it not? All and every one of these had now their sails filled in Christ, and that about the highest, noblest, and most glorious objects that they are capable of. The sorrows of his holy mother, Luke ii. 35, the danger of his disciples, Zech. xiii. 7, the scandal of the cross, the shame of his suffering, Heb. xii. 2, the ruin of his people according to the flesh, for their sin, Luke xxiii. 28—30, with sundry other similar objects and considerations, filled and exercised all his natural affections. This put his soul into travail, and had an influence into the conflict wherein he was engaged. Secondly. All his graces, the gracious qualifications of his mind and affections, were in a like manner, in the height of their exercise. Both those whose immediate object was God himself, and those which respected the church, were all of them excited, drawn forth, and engaged. As, 1. Faith and trust in God. These himself expresseth, in his greatest trial, as those which he betook himself unto, Isa. l. 7, 8; Ps. xxii. 9, 10; Heb. ii. 13. These graces in him, were now tried to the utmost. All their strength, all their efficacy was exercised and proved. For he was to give in them, an instance of an excellency in faith, rising up above the instance of the provocation that was in the unbelief of our first parents, whereby they fell off from God. There is no object about which faith can be exercised, no duty which it worketh in and by, but what it was now applied unto, in and by Jesus Christ. 2. Love to mankind. As this in his divine nature was the peculiar spring of that infinite condescension, whereby he took our nature on him, for the work of mediation, Phil. ii. 6—8; so it wrought mightily and effectually in his human nature, in the whole course of his obedience, but especially in the offering of himself unto God for us. Hence, where there is mention made of his giving himself for us, which was in the sacrifice of himself, commonly the cause of it is expressed to have been his love. ‘The Son of God loved me, and gave himself for me,’ Gal. ii. 20. ‘Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it,’ Eph. v. 25, 26. ‘He loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,’ Rev. i. 5. With this love his soul now travailed, and laboured to bring forth the blessed fruits of it. The workings of this love in the heart of Christ, during the trial insisted on, whereby he balanced the sorrow and distress of his sufferings, no heart can conceive, nor tongue express. 3. Zeal to the glory of God. Zeal is the height of careful solicitous love. The love of Christ was great to the souls of men, but the life of it lay in his love to God, and zeal for his glory. This he now laboured in; namely, that God might be glorified in the salvation of the elect. This was committed unto him, and concerning this, he took care that it might not miscarry. 4. He was now in the highest exercise of obedience unto God, and that in such a peculiar manner, as before he had no occasion for. It is observed as the height of his condescension, that he was ‘obedient unto death, the death of the cross,’ Phil. ii. 8. This was the highest instance of obedience, that God ever had from a creature, because performed by him who was God also. And if the obedience of Abraham was so acceptable to God, and was so celebrated when he was ready

to offer up his son; how glorious was that of the Son of God, who actually offered up himself, and that in such a way and manner, as Isaac was not capable of being offered? And there was an eminent specialty in this part of his obedience. Hence, ver. 8, 'it is said, that he learned obedience by the things which he suffered; which we shall speak to afterwards. And in the exercise of this obedience, that it might be full, acceptable, meritorious, every way answering the terms of the covenant between God and him about the redemption of mankind, he laboured and travailed in soul. And by this his obedience was a compensation made for the disobedience of Adam, Rom. v. 19. So did he travail in the exercise of grace. Thirdly. He did so also with respect to that confluence of calamities, distresses, pains, and miseries, which was upon his whole nature. And that in these consisted no small part of his trials, wherein he underwent and suffered the utmost which human nature is capable to undergo, is evident from the description given of his dolorous sufferings both in prophecy, Ps. xxii.; Isa. liii., and in the story of what befel him in the evangelists. In that death of the body which he underwent, in the means and manner of it, much of the curse of the law was executed. Hence our apostle proves that he was made a curse for us, from that of Moses, 'Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree,' Gal. iii. 13; Deut. xxi. 22, 23. For that ignominy of being hanged on a tree, was peculiarly appointed to represent the execution of the curse of the law on Jesus Christ, who in his own body bore our sins on the tree, 1 Pet. ii. 24. And herein lies no small mystery of the wisdom of God. He would have a resemblance among them who suffered under the sentence of the law, of the suffering of Christ. But in the whole law, there was no appointment that any one should be put to death by being hanged. But whereas God foreknew, that at the time of the suffering of Christ the nation would be under the power of the Romans, and that the sentence of death would be inflicted after their manner, which was by being nailed unto, and hanging on a cross, he ordered for a prefiguration hereof, that some great transgressors, as blasphemers, and open idolaters, after they were stoned, should be hanged upon a tree, to make a declaration of the curse of the law inflicted on them. Hence it is peculiarly said of such a one, 'He that is hanged on the tree, is the curse of God;' because God did therein represent the suffering of him who underwent the whole curse of the law for us. And in this manner of his death, there were sundry things concurring. 1. A natural sign of his readiness to embrace all sinners that should come unto him, his arms being, as it were, stretched out to receive them, Isa. xlv. 22, lxxv. 1. 2. A moral token of his condition, being left as one rejected of all between heaven and earth for a season; but in himself interposing between heaven and earth the justice of God and sins of men, to make reconciliation and peace, Eph. ii. 16, 17. 3. The accomplishment of sundry types; as, 1st, Of that of him who was hanged on a tree, as cursed of the Lord, Deut. xxi. 22. 2d. Of the brazen serpent which was lifted up in the wilderness, John iii. 14, with respect whereunto he says, that when he is lifted up, he would draw all men to him, John xii. 32. 3d. Of the wave-offering,

which was moved, shaken, and turned several ways, to declare that the Lord Christ in this offering of himself, should have respect unto all parts of the world, and all sorts of men, *Exod. xxix. 26.* And in all the concerns of this death, all the means of it, especially as it was an effect of the curse of the law, or penal immediately from God himself, (for he that is hanged on a tree is accursed of God,) did he labour and travail in the work that lay before him. 4th. The conflict he had with Satan, and all the powers of darkness, was another part of his travail. This was the power of men, and power of darkness, *Luke xxii. 53,* the time when the prince of this world came, *John xvi.* to try the utmost of his skill, interest, horror, rage, and power, for his destruction. Then were all infernal principalities and powers engaged in a conflict with him, *Col. ii. 14, 15.* Whatever, malice, poison, darkness, dread, may be infused into diabolical suggestions, or be mixed with external representations of things to the sight, or imagination, he was now contending with. And herein he laboured for that victory and success which in the issue he did obtain, *Col. ii. 13, 14; Heb. ii. 14; 1 John iii. 18.* 5. His inward conflict, in the making his soul an offering for sin, in his apprehensions, and undergoing of the wrath of God due unto sin, hath been already spoken unto, so far as is necessary unto our present purpose. 6. In, and during all these things, there was in his eye continually that unspeakable glory that was set before him, of being the Repairer of the breaches of the creation, the Recoverer of mankind, the Captain of salvation unto all that obey him, the destruction of Satan, with his kingdom of sin and darkness, and in all the great Restorer of divine glory, to the eternal praise of God. Whilst all these things were in the height of their transaction, is it any wonder if the Lord Christ laboured and travailed in soul, according to the description here given of him?

Obs. VI. The Lord Christ, in the time of his offering and suffering, considering God with whom he had to do, as the sovereign Lord of life and death, as the supreme Rector and Judge of all, casts himself before him with most fervent prayers for deliverance, from the sentence of death and the curse of the law.—This gives the true account of the deportment of our Saviour in his trial here described. There are two great mistakes about the sufferings of Christ, and the condition of his soul therein. Some place in him that security, in that sense and enjoyment of divine love, that they leave neither room nor reason for the fears, cries, and wrestlings here mentioned; indeed, so as that there should be nothing real in all this transaction, but rather that all things were done for ostentation and show. For if the Lord Christ were always in a full comprehension of divine love, and that in the light of the beatific vision, what can these conflicts and complaints signify? Others grant that he was in real distress and anguish; but they say it was merely on the account of those outward sufferings which were coming on him, which, as we observed before, is an intolerable impeachment, of his holy fortitude and constancy of mind. For the like outward things have been undergone by others, without any tokens of such consternation of spirit. Wherefore, to discern aright the true frame of the spirit of Christ, with the intention of

his cries and supplications, the things before insisted on are duly to be considered.

1. How great a matter it was, to make peace with God for sinners, to make atonement and reconciliation for sin. This is the life and spirit of our religion, the centre wherein all the lines of it do meet, Phil. iii. 8—10; 1 Cor. ii. 2; Gal. vi. 14. And those by whom a due and constant consideration of it is neglected, are strangers unto the animating spirit of that religion, which they outwardly profess. And therefore Satan doth employ all his artifices to divert the minds of men from a due meditation hereon, and the exercise of faith about it. Much of the devotion of the Romanists is taken up in dumb shows, and painted representations of the sufferings of Christ. But as many of their scenical fancies are childishly ridiculous, and unworthy of men who have the least apprehension of the greatness and holiness of God, or that he is a Spirit, and will be worshiped in spirit and in truth; so they are none of them of any other use but to draw off the mind, not only from a spiritual contemplation of the excellency of the offering of Christ, and the glorious effects thereof, but also from the rational comprehension of the truth of the doctrine concerning what he did and suffered. For he that is instructed in, and by the taking, shutting up, and setting forth of a crucifix, with painted thorns, and nails, and blood, with Jews and thieves, and I know not what other company about it, is obliged to believe that he hath, if not all, yet the principal part at least of the obedience of Christ in his suffering represented unto him. And by this means, is his mind taken off from inquiring into the great transactions between God and the soul of Christ, about the finishing of sin, and the bringing in of everlasting righteousness; without which those other things which, by carnal means, they represent unto the carnal minds and imaginations of men, are of no value nor use. On the other hand, the Socinians please themselves, and deceive others, with a vain imagination, that there was no such work to be done now with God as we have declared. If we may believe them, there was no atonement to be made for sin, no expiatory sacrifice to be offered, no peace thereby to be made with God, no compensation to his justice, by answering the sentence and curse of the law due to sin. But certainly if this sort of men had not an unparalleled mixture of confidence and dexterity, they could not find out evasions unto so many express divine testimonies as lie directly opposite to their fond imagination, unto any tolerable satisfaction in their own minds, or to suppose that any men can with patience bear the account they must give of the agony, prayers, cries, tears, fears, wrestlings, and travail of the soul of Christ, on this supposition. But we may pass them over at present as express enemies of the cross of Christ; that is, of that cross whereby he made peace with God for sinners; as Eph. ii. 14—16. Others there are, who by no means approve of any diligent inquiry into these mysteries. The whole business and duty of ministers and others, is, in their mind, to be conversant in and about morality. For this fountain and spring of grace, this basis of eternal glory; this evidence and demonstration of divine wisdom, holiness, righteousness, and love; this great discovery of the

purity of the law, and vileness of sin; this first, great, principal subject of the gospel, and motive of faith and obedience; this root and cause of all peace with God, of all sincere and incorrupted love towards him, of all joy and consolation from him; they think it scarcely deserves a place in the objects of their contemplation, and are ready to guess that what men write and talk about it, is but phrases canting and fanatical. But such as are admitted into the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ, will not so easily part with their immortal interest and concern herein. Yea, I fear not to say, that he is likely to be the best, the most humble, the most holy and fruitful Christian, who is most sedulous and diligent in spiritual inquiries into this great mystery of the reconciliation of God unto sinners, by the blood of the cross, and in the exercise of the faith about it. Nor is there any such powerful means of preserving the soul in a constant abhorrence of sin, and watchfulness against it, as a due apprehension of what it cost to make atonement for it. And we may also learn hence,

2. That a sight and sense of the wrath of God due unto sin, will be full of dread and terror for the souls of men, and will put them to a great conflict with wrestling for deliverance. We find how it was with the Lord Christ in that condition. And such a view of the wrath of God, all men will be brought unto sooner or later. There is a view to be had of it in the curse of the law for the present; there will be a more terrible expression of it in the execution of that curse at the last day, and no way is there to obtain a deliverance from the distress and misery wherewith this prospect of wrath due to sin is attended, but by obtaining a spiritual view of it in the cross of Christ, and acquiescing by faith in that atonement.

Obs. VII. In all the pressures that were on the Lord Jesus Christ, in all the distresses he had to conflict withal in his suffering, his faith for deliverance and success was firm and unconquerable.—This was the ground he stood upon in all his prayers and supplications.

Obs. VIII. The success of our Lord Jesus Christ, in his trials, as our Head and Surety, is a pledge and assurance of success unto us in all our spiritual conflicts.

VER. 8.—The things discoursed in the foregoing verse, seem to have an inconsistency with the account given us concerning the person of Jesus Christ, at the entrance of this Epistle. For he is therein declared to be the Son of God, and that in such a glorious manner, as to be deservedly exalted above all the angels in heaven. He is so said to be the Son of God, as to be the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person, even partaker of the same nature with him, God, by whom the heavens were made, and the foundations of the earth were laid, ch. i. 8—10. Here he is represented in a low, distressed condition, humbly, as it were, begging for his life, and pleading with strong cries and tears, before him who was able to deliver him. These things might seem unto the Hebrews to have some kind of repugnancy unto one another; and indeed they are a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence unto many at this day; they are not able to reconcile them in their carnal minds and reasonings. Where-

fore, since it is by all acknowledged, that he was truly and really, in the low distressed condition here described, they will not allow that he was the Son of God, in the way declared by the apostle, but invent other reasons of their own, for which he should be so termed. Their pleas and pretences we have discussed elsewhere. The aim of the apostle in this place, is not to refel the objections of unbelievers, but to instruct the faith of them who do believe, in the truth and reason of these things. For he doth not only manifest that they were all possible, upon the account of his participation of flesh and blood, who was in himself the eternal Son of God, but also that the whole of the humiliation and distress thereon ascribed unto him, was necessary with respect unto the office which he had undertaken to discharge, and the work which was committed unto him. And this he doth in the next ensuing and following verses.

VER. 8.—*Καιπερ ὡν υἱος, ἐμαθεν ἀφ' ὧν ἐπαθε τὴν ὑπακοήν.*

I observed before that the Syriac translation hath transposed some words in these two verses; and thus reads this latter of them, ‘And although he were a Son, from the fear and sufferings which he underwent, he learned obedience.’ That concerning fear, is traduced out of the foregoing verse, where it is omitted. Some copies of the Vulgar read, *et quidem cum esset Filius Dei*; as do our old English translations, restoring it before its connexion, as also in other places. The Rhemists only, ‘And truly whereas he was the Son;’ no other translation acknowledgeth the addition of *God*. Arias, *Existens Filius*, which some other translations add some epithet unto to express the emphasis, ‘a faithful Son:’ Ethiop. ‘a Son always,’ Arab.

VER. 8.—*Although he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by (or from) the things which he suffered.*

Καιπερ, *Quamvis*, *tametsi*, ‘although;’ an adversative, with a concession. An exception may be supposed unto what was before delivered; namely, if he were a Son, how came he so to pray and cry, so to stand in need of help and relief? This is here tacitly inserted: saith the apostle, Although he were so, yet these other things were necessary. And this gives us a connexion of the words unto those foregoing. But according to the apostle’s usual way of reasoning in this Epistle, there is also a prospect in this word towards the necessity and advantage of his being brought into the condition described; which in our translation is supplied by the addition of *yet*.

Υἱος ὡν, ‘he were a Son; and yet being a Son;’ that is, such a Son as we have described; or, that Son of God. It was no great nor singular thing for a son or child of God by adoption, to be chastised, to suffer, and thereby to be instructed unto obedience. He therefore speaks not of him as a Son on any common account, or such as any mere creature can claim interest in. But he was God’s own Son, Rom. viii. 3, the only begotten of the Father, John i. 14, who was himself also in the form of God, Phil. ii. 7. That he should do the

thing here spoken of, is great and marvellous. Therefore is it said that he did thus, 'although he were a Son.' Two things are included herein; namely, in the introduction of Christ in this place under that title of the Son. 1. The necessity of doing what is here ascribed unto him, with respect unto the end aimed at. And this is more fully declared in the next verse. The things that were in themselves necessary, unto the great end of the glory of God in the salvation of the elect, were not to be waved by Christ, although he were the Son. 2. His love, that he would submit to this condition for our sake. On his own account no such thing was required of him, or any way needful unto him; but for our sakes (such was his love) he would do it, 'although he were a Son.'

Besides, whereas the apostle is comparing the Lord Christ as a high priest, with Aaron and those of his order, he intimates a double advantage which he had above them. 1. That he was a son, whereas they were servants only; as he had before expressed the same difference in comparing him with Moses, ch. iii. 4—6. 2. That he learned obedience by what he suffered; which few of them did, none of them in the same way and manner with him.

Εμαθεν, ἀφ' ὧν ἐπαθε, τὴν ὑπακοήν. As to the manner of the expression or phraseology ἀφ' ὧν seems to be put for ἐξ ὧν, *by, out of, from*, the things. And moreover there is an ellipsis, or a metaptosis in the words, being put for ἐμαθεν ἀπ' ἐκείνων ἃ ἐπαθε; and so we express the sense in our translation. Also the paronomasia which is in them, ἐμαθεν ἀφ' ὧν ἐπαθε, is observed by all. And there is some correspondence in the whole unto that common ancient saying, *τα παθήματα, μαθήματα*.

Three things we are to inquire into: 1. What is the obedience which is here intended. 2. How Christ is said to learn it. 3. By what means he did so.

1. Ὑπακοή, is an obediential attendance unto the commands of another; a due consideration of, a ready compliance with authoritative commands. For the word cometh from that which signifieth to hear-ken or hear. Hence, 'to hearken or hear,' is frequently in the Scripture used for 'to obey;' and 'to refuse to hear,' is to be stubborn and disobedient. Because obedience respects the commands of another, which we receive, and become acquainted withal by hearing; and a readiness, with diligence therein, is the great means to bring us unto obedience; ὑπακοή therefore, is an obediential compliance with the commands of another, when we hear and thereby know them. This obedience in Christ was twofold.

1. General in the whole course of his holy life in this world. Everything he did, was not only materially holy, but formally obediential. He did all things, because it was the will and law of God that so he should do. And this obedience to God, was the life and beauty of the holiness of Christ himself; yea, obedience unto God in any creature, is the formal reason constituting any act or duty to be good or holy. Where that consideration is excluded, whatever the matter of any work or duty may be, it is neither holy nor accepted with God. Wherefore the whole course of the life of Christ, was a course of obe-

dience unto God, whereon he so often professed that he kept the commands, and did the will of him that sent him, thereby fulfilling all righteousness. But yet this is not the obedience here peculiarly intended, although no part of it can be absolutely excluded from the present consideration. For whereas this obedience hath respect unto suffering, he learned it from the things that he suffered: his whole life was a life of suffering. One way or other, he suffered in all that he did, at least when and whilst he did it. His state in this world, was a state of humiliation and exinanition, which things have suffering in their nature. His outward condition in the world, was mean, low, and contemptible, from which sufferings are inseparable. And He was in all things continually exposed unto temptations, and all sorts of oppositions, from Satan and the world: this also added to his sufferings.

2. But yet moreover there was a peculiar obedience of Christ, which is intended here in an especial manner. This was his obedience in dying, and in all things that tended immediately thereunto. 'He became obedient to death, even the death of the cross;' for this commandment had he of his Father, that he should lay down his life, and therefore he did it in a way of obedience. And this especial obedience to the command of God for suffering and dying, the apostle here respects. With regard hereunto, he said of old, 'Lo, I come, in the volume of thy book it is written of me; I delight to do thy will, O my God,' Ps. xl. 7, 8, which was in the offering up of himself a sacrifice for us, as our apostle declares, Heb. x. 9, 10. And concerning the things that befel him herein, he says he 'was not rebellious, but gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair,' Isa. l. 6.

Concerning this obedience, it is said, that, *μαθήτε*, 'he learned it.' *Μαθητὰς*, is to learn as a disciple, with a humble willing subjection unto, and a ready reception of the instructions given. But of the Lord Christ it is said here, he learned obedience; not that he learned to obey, which will give us light into the meaning of the whole. For to learn obedience, may have a threefold sense. 1. To learn it materially, by coming to know that to be our duty, to be required of us, which before we knew not, or at least did not consider as we ought. So speaks the Psalmist, 'Before I was afflicted, I went astray; but now have I learned thy commandments.' God by his chastisements, and under them, taught him the duties he required of him, and what diligent attendance unto them was necessary for him. But thus our Lord Jesus learned not obedience, nor could so do. For he knew beforehand all that he was to do, or undergo, what was proposed unto him, what was to come upon him in the discharge of his office, and performance of the work he had undertaken. And the law of the whole of it was in his heart: no command of God was new to him, nor ever forgotten by him. 2. To learn it formally; that is, to be guided, instructed, directed, helped in the acts, and acting of the obedience required of him. This is properly to learn to obey; so is it with us, who are rude and unskilful in holy obedience, and are by supplies of light and grace gradually instructed in the knowledge and practice of

it. This wisdom do we learn, partly by the word, partly by afflictions, as God is pleased to make them effectual. But thus the Lord Christ neither did nor could learn obedience. He had a fulness of grace always in him, and with him, inclining, directing, guiding, and enabling him unto all acts of obedience that were required of him. Being full of grace, truth, and wisdom, he was never at a loss for what he had to do, nor wanted any thing of a perfect readiness of will or mind for its performance. Wherefore, 3. He can be said to learn obedience only on the account of having an experience of it in its exercise. So a man knoweth the taste and savour of meat by eating it; as our Saviour is said to taste of death, or to experience what was in it, by undergoing of it. And it was one especial kind of obedience that is here intended as was declared before; namely, a submission to undergo great, hard, and terrible things, accompanied with patience and quiet endurance under them, and faith for deliverance from them. This he could have no experience of, but by suffering the things he was to undergo, and the exercise of the graces mentioned therein. Thus learned he obedience, or experienced in himself what difficulty it is attended withal, especially in cases like his own. And this way of his learning obedience it is, that is so useful unto us and so full of consolation. For if he had only known obedience, though never so perfectly in the notion of it, what relief could have accrued unto us thereby? How could it have been a spring of pity or compassion towards us? But now whereas he himself took in his own person, a full experience of the nature of that especial obedience which is yielded to God in a suffering condition, what difficulty it is attended withal, what opposition is made unto it, how great an exercise of grace is required in it, he is constantly ready to give us relief, as the matter doth require.

The way or means of his learning obedience is lastly expressed, *αφ' ὧν ἐπαθε*, 'from the things that he suffered.' It is an usual saying, *παθήματα, μαθήματα*, 'Sufferings or corrections are instructions.' And we cannot exclude from hence any thing that Christ suffered, from first to last, in the days of his flesh. He suffered in his whole course, and that in great variety, as hath been shown elsewhere. And he had experience of obedience from them all in the sense declared. But seeing the apostle treats concerning him as a high priest, and with especial respect to the offering of himself to God; the suffering of death, and those things which immediately lead thereunto, is principally intended, 'he was obedient to death, the death of the cross,' Phil. ii. 7. 8. Now we may be said to learn from suffering, objectively and occasionally. In their own nature and formally, they are not instructive. All things that outwardly come on us, are *ἐκ τῶν μεσῶν*, and may be abused, or may be improved to a good end. But in them that believe, they give a necessity and especial occasion to the exercise of those graces, wherein our obedience in that season doth consist. So from them, or by them, did the Lord Christ himself learn obedience; for by reason of them he had occasion to exercise those graces of humility, self-denial, meekness, patience, faith, which were habitually resident in his holy nature, but were not capable of the peculiar exercise intended, but by reason of his sufferings. But moreover there was still somewhat pecu-

liar, in that obedience which the Son of God is said to learn from his own sufferings, namely, what it is for a sinless person to suffer for sinners, the just for the unjust. The obedience herein was peculiar to him, nor do we know, nor can we have an experience of the ways and paths of it.

The Lord Christ undertaking the work of our redemption, was not on the account of the dignity of his person, to be spared in any thing that was necessary thereunto. He was enabled by it to undertake and perform his work, but he was not for it spared any part of it. It is all one for that: although he were a Son, he must now learn obedience. And this we have sufficiently cleared on the former verses. And we may hence observe, that

Obs. I. Infinite love prevailed with the Son of God, to lay aside the privilege of his infinite dignity, that he might suffer for us and our redemption.—‘Although he was a Son, yet he learned,’ &c. 1. The name of ‘Son,’ carrieth with it infinite dignity, as our apostle proves at large, ch. i. 3. 4, &c. The Son, that is, ‘the Son of the living God,’ Matt. xvi. 16. ‘The only begotten of the Father,’ John i. 14. He who ‘in the beginning was with God and was God,’ John i. 1, 2. For as ‘he was God’s own Son,’ Rom. viii. 3, he ‘was in the form of God,’ equal to him, Phil. ii. 5, 6; one with him, John xiv. So that infinite glory and dignity were inseparable from him. And so long as he would make use of this privilege, it was impossible he should be exposed to the least suffering, nor could the whole creation divest him of the least appurtenance of it. But, 2. He voluntarily laid aside the consideration, advantage, and exercise of it, that he might suffer for us. This our apostle fully expresseth, Phil. ii. 5—8. ‘Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, the death of the cross.’ Concerning which we must observe, 1. That the Son of God could not absolutely and really part with his eternal glory. Whatever he did, he was the Son of God, and God still. Neither by any thing he did, nor any thing he suffered, nor any condition he underwent, did he really forego, nor was it possible he should so do, any thing of his divine glory. He was no less God when he died, than when he was declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead. But he is said to empty himself of his divine glory; *First*. With respect to the infinite condescension of his person. *Secondly*. With respect to the manifestations of it in this world.

First. Of his condescension, when he forewent the privilege of his eternal glory, the apostle observes sundry degrees. 1. In his taking of our nature on him. ‘He took on him the form of a servant,’ and therein made himself of no reputation; that is, comparatively to the glory which he had in the form of God, wherein he was equal with God, that is, the Father. Hence the ‘Word was made flesh,’ John i. 14, or ‘God was manifest in the flesh,’ 1 Tim. iii. 16. This was an infinite, unspeakable, unconceivable condescension of the Son of God; namely, to

take our nature into union with himself, whereby he who was God, like to the Father in all things, the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person, became a man like to us in all things, sin only excepted. 2. In his so becoming a man, as to take upon him the form of a servant. He did not immediately take the nature he had assumed into glory, but he first became a servant in it; a servant to God, to do his will, and that in the most difficult service that ever God had to do in this world. 3. In that in this service he made himself of no reputation. The work indeed he undertook, was great and honourable, as we have before declared. But the way and manner whereby he did accomplish it was such, as exposed him to scorn, reproach, and contempt in the world, Isa. liii. 1. 2; Ps. xxii. 6, 7. 4. In that in this work he became obedient to death. Had he staid at the former degrees, his condescension had been for ever to be admired and adored; this only remains to be added, that he should die, and that penally and painfully. And this also he submitted to. The prince, the author, the God of life became obedient to death. Which also, 5. Hath an aggravation added to it, it 'was the death of the cross,' a shameful ignominious cursed death. In all these things did he lay aside the privilege of his infinite dignity; all this he did 'although he were a Son.'

Secondly. As to manifestation, he did, as it were, hide and eclipse to the world, all the glory of his divine person, under the veil of flesh which he had taken on him. Hence at the close of this dispensation, when he was finishing the work committed to him, he prays, John xvii. 5, 'Glorify me with that glory which I had with thee before the world was.' Let that glory which was necessarily hid and eclipsed in my debasement, wherein I have been made low for the suffering of death, now shine forth again conspicuously. Now the reason why the Son of God did thus forego the privilege and dignity of his glory, was his infinite love. Because the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, Heb. ii. 14. The reason why he condescended to this condition, was, that he might redeem and save the children which God gave to him. And this out of his unspeakable love towards them, Gal. ii. 20; Rev. i. 5; Phil. ii. 5. This was that which engaged him into, and carried him through his great undertakings.

And here we may, as it were, 1. Lose ourselves in holy admiration, of this infinite love of Christ. Our apostle prays for the Ephesians, that they 'might be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge,' Eph. iii. 18, 19. This, it seems, is the work, the design, the endeavour of all saints, namely, to come to an acquaintance with, or to live in the contemplation of the love of Christ. The dimensions here assigned to it, are only to let us know, that which way soever we exercise our thoughts about it, there is still a suitable object for them. It wants nothing that may be a proper object for that prospect which a soul may take of it in a way of believing. And he so prays for the knowledge of it, as that he lets us know that absolutely it is incomprehensible, it passeth knowledge. Then do we in our measure know the love of Christ, when we know

that it passeth knowledge; when we comprehend so much of it, as to find we cannot comprehend it; and thereby we have the benefit and consolation of what we do not conceive, as well as of what we do. For as contemplation is an act of faith with respect to our measure of comprehension, so is admiration with respect to what exceeds it. And what way soever faith acts itself in Christ, it will bring in advantage and refreshment to the soul. And we are never nearer Christ, than when we find ourselves lost in a holy amazement at his unspeakable love. And indeed his love herein, that 'although he was a Son,' the eternal Son of God, yet he would condescend to the condition before described, for our deliverance and salvation, is that which fills the souls of believers with admiration, not only in this world, but to eternity. And 2. Here we may, as it were, find ourselves. The due consideration of this love of Christ, is that alone which will satisfy our souls and consciences, with the grounds of the acceptance of such poor unworthy sinners as we are, in the presence of the holy God. For what will not this love, and the effects of it prevail for? What can stand in the way of it? or what can hinder it from accomplishing whatever it is designed to?

Obs. II. In his sufferings, and notwithstanding them all, the Lord Christ was the Son still, the Son of God.—He was so both as to real relation, and as to suitable affection. He had in them all the state of a Son, and the love of a Son. It is true, during the time of his suffering, a common eye, an eye of sense and reason, could see no appearance of this Sonship of Christ. His outward circumstances were all of them such as rather eclipsed, than manifested, his glory, Isa. liii. 2, 3. This was that which the world being offended at, stumbled and fell, for he was to them a "stone of stumbling and rock of offence," Rom. ix. 33. The meanness of his condition, the poverty of his life, and shame of his death, proved an offence both to Jews and Gentiles. How could such a one be thought to be the Son of God? Besides God himself so dealt with him, as flesh and blood would not conceive him to deal with his only Son. For he laid his curse on him, as it is written, 'Cursed is he that is hanged on a tree.' And in all this state of things, he speaks of himself as one made so much beneath the condition of glory which was due to the Son of God, as that he was lower than any sort of men; whence he complains, 'I am a worm and no man, a reproach of men, and despised of the people,' Ps. xxii. 6. Yet during all this he was still the Son of God, and suffered as the Son of God. Hence it is said, that 'God spared not his own Son,' but delivered him up for us all, that is, to suffering and death, Rom. viii. 32. He sent his 'own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and condemned sin in the flesh,' ver. 3. It is true, he suffered only in his human nature, which alone was capable thereof. But he suffered who was the Son of God, and as he was the Son of God; or God could not have 'redeemed the church with his own blood,' Acts xx. 28. In all that he underwent, neither was the union of his natures dissolved, nor the love of the Father to him as his own Son in the least impeached.

Obs. III. A practical experience of obedience to God in some cases

will cost us dear;—we cannot learn it but through the suffering of those things which will assuredly befall us on the account thereof. So was it with the Lord Christ. I intend not here the difficulties we meet withal in mortifying the internal lusts and corruptions of nature, for these had no place in the example here proposed to us. Those only are respected which do, or will, or may, come on us from without. And it is an especial kind of obedience also, namely, that which holds some conformity to the obedience of Christ, that is intended. Wherefore, 1. It must be singular; it must have somewhat in it, that may, in an especial manner, turn the eyes of others towards it. A common course of obedience, clothed with a common passing profession, may escape at an easy rate in the world. There seems to be somewhat singular denoted in that expression, ‘He that will live godly in Christ Jesus,’ 2 Tim. iii. 12. To live in Christ Jesus, is to live and walk in the profession of the gospel, to be a professing branch in Christ, John xv. 2. But of these there are two sorts, some that live godly in him, some branches that bring forth fruit, that is, in an eminent and singular manner. Every branch in the true vine, hath that whereby he is distinguished from brambles and thorns. And every one that lives in the profession of the gospel, hath somewhat that differenceth him from the world and the ways of it. But there is a peculiar, a singular fruit-bearing in Christ; an especial living godly in him, which will turn an observation on itself. So our apostle says, that they were made ‘a spectacle to the world, to angels and men, by the especial ministry which was committed to them,’ 1 Cor. iv. 9. 2. It is required that this obedience be universal. If there be an allowance in any one instance, where there is a compliance with the world, or other enemies of our obedience, the trouble of it will be much abated. For men, by indulging any crooked steps to themselves, do compound for outward peace, and oftentimes thus obtain their aims, though greatly to their spiritual disadvantage. But the gospel obedience which we inquire into, is such as universally agrees in conformity with Christ in all things. And this will cost us dear. Sufferings will attend it. They that live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution. For this kind of obedience will be observed in the world. It cannot escape observation, because it is singular; and it provokes the world, because it is universal, and will admit of no compliance with it. And where the world is first awakened, and then enraged, trouble and suffering of one kind or another will ensue. If it do not bite and tear, it will bark and rage. And Satan will see enough to make such his especial mark, as to all the opposition and actings of enmity, which he puts forth against any in this world. Yea, and God himself oftentimes delighteth to give a trial to eminent graces, where he endows any with them. For he gives them not for the peculiar advantage of them on whom they are bestowed only, but that he himself may have a revenue of glory from their exercise.

Obs. IV. Sufferings undergone according to the will of God, are highly instructive.—Even Christ himself learned by the things which he suffered, and much more may we do so, who have so much more to learn. God designs our sufferings to this end, and to this end he

blesseth them. And this hath frequently been the issue of God's dealing with men; those who have suffered most, have been most afflicted, most chastised, have been the most humble, most holy, fruitful, and wise among them; and he that learneth such things, profiteth well under his instruction.

Obs. V. In all these things, both as to suffering, and learning, or profiting thereby, we have a great example in our Lord Jesus Christ.—As such is he proposed unto us in all his course of obedience, especially in his sufferings, 1 Pet. ii. 21. For he would leave nothing undone, which was any way needful, that his great work of sanctifying and saving his church to the utmost might be perfect.

Obs. VI. The love of God towards any, the relation of any unto God, hinders not but that they may undergo great sufferings and trials.—The Lord Christ did so, 'although he were a Son.' And this instance irrefragably confirms our position. For the love of God to Jesus Christ was singular and supereminent. He doth not love any with a love so much as of the same kind. The relation also of Christ unto God was singular; none ever standing in the same relation unto him, he being his only begotten Son. And yet his sufferings and trials were singular also. No sorrows, no pains, no distresses of soul and body, no sufferings like his. And in the whole course of the Scripture we may observe, that the nearer any have been unto God, the greater have been their trials. For, 1. There is not in such trials and exercises, any thing that is absolutely evil; but they are all such as may be rendered good, useful, yea, honourable and glorious to the sufferers, from God's conduct in them, and from the end of them. 2. The love of God, and the gracious emanations of it, can, and do abundantly compensate the temporary evils which any do undergo according to his will. 3. The glory of God, which is the end designed unto, and which shall infallibly ensue upon all the sufferings of the people of God, and that so much the greater as any of them, on any account, are nearer than others unto him, is such a good unto them which suffer, as that their sufferings neither are, nor are esteemed by them to be evil.

VER. 9.—THE words and design of this verse, have so great a coincidence with those of ch. ii. 10, that we shall the less need to insist upon them. Something only must be spoken to clear the context. The apostle having declared the sufferings of Christ as our high priest, in his offering of himself, with the necessity thereof, proceeded to declare both what was effected thereby, and what was the especial design of God therein. And this in general was, that the Lord Christ, considering our lost condition, might be every way fitted to be a perfect cause of eternal salvation unto all that do obey him. There are, therefore, two things in the words, both which God aimed at and accomplished in the sufferings of Christ. 1. On his own part, that he might be made perfect; not absolutely, but with respect unto the administration of his office, in the behalf of sinners. 2. With respect unto believers, that he might be unto them an author of eternal salva-

tion; unto both these ends, the sufferings of Christ were necessary, and designed of God.

VER. 9.—Και τελειωθεις εγενετο τοις υπακουουσιν αυτω πασιν αιτιος σωτηριας αιωνιου.

Τελειωθεις, perfectus, consummatus, consecratus, ‘perfect, consummated, fully consecrated.’ Syr. כִּנְנָה אֶתְּמַר, and ‘so being made perfect,’ perfectus redditus, as Erasmus. Εγενετο, factus est, fuit, ‘he became.’ Τοις υπακουουσιν αυτω, Vulg. sibi obtemperantibus. So Arias, Eras. Syr. And Beza, qui ipsi auscultant, keeping to the word, which in all the three languages, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, signifies originally to hearken, to hear, to attend unto, with a design to learn and obey. Αιτιος, Syr. סֵבֵא, causa, so most. Beza, auctor, whom we follow; ‘the author.’ Σωτηριας αιωνιου, salutis æternæ, Syr. עֲלֵי־חַיִּים, ‘of life (or lives) which are eternal.’ One learned Grammarian hath translated αιτιος by causa efficiens et exhibens. Ethiop. The ‘rewarder with life eternal, and the redeemer of the world.’

Τελειωθεις, being ‘perfected, consummated, fully consecrated;’ for the word is sacred, and expresseth sacred consecrations. As to the sense of it in this place, with respect unto the verses foregoing, it answers directly unto its use, ch. ii. 10, δια παθηματων τελειωσαι, ‘to perfect by sufferings.’ Only there it is used actively, with respect unto God the Father; it became him to make perfect the Captain of our salvation; here it is used passively, with respect unto the effect of that act of God on the person of Christ, who by his suffering was perfected. The signification of this word, and the constant use of it in this Epistle, the reader may find at large, in our Exposition on ch. ii. 10. The sum is, that it signifies to dedicate, to consecrate, to sanctify and set apart, and that by some kind of suffering or other. So the legal high priests were consecrated by the death and suffering of the beasts, that were offered in sacrifice at their consecration, Exod. xxix. But it belonged unto the perfection of the priesthood of Christ, to be consecrated in and by his own sufferings. I shall, therefore, only remove out of the way, the corrupt exposition given us of this word by Slichtingius.

Τελειωσις, ‘Ista, seu consummatio Christi, opponitur diebus carnis ejus; tum enim cum Christus infirmus esset, et ipse alieno auxilio indigeret, non potuerat aliis perfectum in omnibus auxilium ferre. Sed postquam consummatus est, id est, postquam immortalitatem, seu naturam incorruptibilem, supremamque in cœlo et terra protestatem est adeptus, sicut nihil illi desit amplius; seu postquam est adeo penitus consecratus, et plenè in Sacerdotem inauguratus, (quemadmodum aliqui hanc vocem explicandam putant) factus est causa salutis æternæ. Nempe causa perfectissima. Nam et in diebus carnis suæ erat causa salutis æternæ; sed consummatus, factus est causa perfectissima. Tunc causa erat nostræ salutis tanquam Dei maximus legatus et apostolus; nunc tanquam summus pontifex et Rex noster Cœlestis a Deo constitutus.’—There is also another expositor, who, although he grants that the τελειωσις, here mentioned, hath respect unto the מְלִאכָה,

or sacrifices at the consecration of priests, which was antecedent unto their right of offering anything in their own persons, yet so far complies with this interpretation, as to understand, I know not what, inauguration into a Melchisedecian priesthood, which consisted in a power of blessing after his resurrection; and so in the application of the word unto Christ, falls into a contradiction unto his own exposition of it, making it consist in his exaltation and endowment with power. But there is nothing sound in these discourses. For, 1. There is no opposition between this consecration of Christ, and the days of his flesh; for it was erected in and by his sufferings, which were only in the days of his flesh. And we have given the reason before, and that taken from the perfection of his person and his office, why he was himself consecrated for ever, in and by that sacrifice which he offered for us; for neither could he often offer himself, and it was destructive of his whole office, to have been consecrated by the offering of any other. 2. There is too much boldness in that expression, that Christ could not perfectly help others in the days of his flesh. For, set aside the consideration of his divine nature, wherein he wrought whatever the Father wrought, which this sort of men will not admit; he had declared openly, that 'all power, all things were given into his hand,' Matt. xi. 'Power over all flesh,' John xvii. Which surely extended unto an ability of relieving all them that were committed to him of God. It is true, he had not as yet absolutely perfected all the means of our salvation; but he was furnished with a fulness of power in their accomplishment, according to the method and order appointed of God unto them. 3. It is not said, that after he was consecrated or perfected, or made immortal, as though these things were of the same import. For he was consecrated in and by his sufferings, as is expressly affirmed, ch. ii. 10, which were antecedent unto, and issued in his death. 4. That the Lord Christ was not constituted and consecrated a high priest before his entrance into heaven, is a direct contradiction unto the whole design of the apostle in this place. His purpose is, as hath been evidenced, and is acknowledged by all, to compare the Lord Christ as a high priest, with the priests according to the law, and therein, he shows his preeminence above them. Among the things which to this purpose he makes mention of, are his sufferings, ver. 7, 8. Now, if he suffered not, when he was a priest, and as he was so, nothing could be less to his purpose. But, whereas he principally designed to magnify the priestly office of Christ or his person in the exercise of it, on the account of mercy and compassion, ver. 2; he proves his excellency unto that end, from his sufferings as he was a priest, whence, in the future discharge of his office, he is inclined to give out merciful assistance unto them that suffer. 5. The pretended distinction, that Christ in the days of his flesh was indeed the cause of salvation, but afterwards, a most perfect cause of salvation, is unscriptural. The Lord Christ, in every condition, was the most perfect cause of salvation, although he performed some acts and works belonging thereunto in one estate, and some in another, according as the nature of the works themselves, to be performed unto that end, did require. For, some things that were

necessary unto our perfect salvation, could not be accomplished, but in a state of humiliation, and some, on the other hand, depended on his exaltation. 6. What is affirmed concerning Christ's being the prophet of the church and the apostle of God, in the days of his flesh, but of his being a king and priest afterwards, is another invention of this sort of men. He was afterwards equally the king, priest, prophet of the church, though he exercises these offices and the several acts or duties of them variously, according as the nature of them doth require.

Τελειωθεις, then, is, 'consecrated, dedicated, consummated sacredly.' And it was necessary that Christ should be so, both from the nature of his office and work, which he was sacredly and solemnly to be set apart unto, and to answer the types of the Aaronical priesthood, which were so consecrated and set apart. And in this consecration of the Lord Christ unto his office of the priesthood, and his offering of sacrifice by virtue thereof, we may consider, 1. The sovereign disposing cause. 2. The formal cause, constitutive of it. 3. The external means. For the First. It was God, even the Father, who by his sovereign authority disposed, designed, called, and separated the Lord Christ unto his office, which we have spoken unto once, and must again consider it on the verse following. Secondly. The formal cause of it, was his own will, obedientially giving up himself unto the authority and will of his Father, and that out of love unto, and delight in the work itself, Ps. xl. 6—8. And in especial did he thereby dedicate, separate, and consecrate himself unto the principal work and duty of his office, or the offering of a sacrifice, John xvii. 19. Thirdly. The external means were his own sufferings, especially in the offering of himself. This alone hath any difficulty attending it; how the Lord Christ can be said to be consecrated by his own sufferings in his offering, when his offering was an act of that office which he was consecrated unto. But I answer, that seeing an external means of the consecration of Christ was necessary, it could be no other but only his own sufferings in the offering of himself. For, 1. It was impossible for him, unworthy of him, and beneath both the dignity of his person and excellency of his office, and inconsistent with the very nature of it, that he should be consecrated by any other sacrifice, as of beasts and the like, as were the priests of old. To suppose the suffering and offering of beasts to be useful to this purpose, is repugnant to the whole design of God, and destructive of the office of Christ itself, as is manifest. 2. He could not consecrate himself by an antecedent offering of himself. For he could not die often, nor suffer often, nor indeed had any need, or could righteously on the part of God, have so done. It was, therefore, indispensably necessary, that he should be consecrated, dedicated and perfected himself, in and by the sacrifice that he offered for us, and the suffering wherewith it was accompanied. But withal, this was only the external means of his consecration. Concerning which, we may observe two things. 1. That as to the main or substance of his office, he was consecrated by his sufferings, only in a way of evidence and manifestation. Really he was so, by the acts of God his Father

and himself, before mentioned; only hereby, he was openly declared to be the high priest of the church. 2. There were some acts and duties of his sacerdotal office, yet remaining to be performed, which he could not orderly engage into, until he had suffered, because they supposed and depended on the efficacy of his suffering. These he was now made meet and fit for, and consequently, unto the complete discharge of the whole course of his office.

Being thus consecrated, *εγενετο*, 'he was made, he became, or he was;' nothing was now wanting unto the great end aimed at in all these things, which is expressed in the next place.

Αιτιος σωτηριας αιωνιου. Where his consecration is before mentioned, ch. ii. 10, he is said to become, *αρχηγος σωτηριας*, a 'Captain of salvation.' And it is affirmed of him, with respect unto his actually conducting believers unto salvation, by the plentiful and powerful administration of his word and Spirit, supplying them with all fruits of grace and truth, needful unto that end. Somewhat more is here intended. *Αιτιος* is both a cause in general, and he who is in any kind, the cause of another thing. And sometimes an efficient cause, and sometimes a meritorious cause is expressed thereby. In the first sense it is used by Isocrates, ad : Phileb. *Θεους των αγαθων ημιν αιτιους οντας*, 'the gods are the authors or causes of good things unto us;' that is, they bestow them on, or work them in us. And Aristotle useth a phrase of speech, not unlike this; *η εν ουρανω δυναμις συμπασιν αιτιος γινεται σωτηριας*, 'the power that is in heaven, is the cause of safety to all things.' And sometimes it is taken for a meritorious or procuring cause, or him by whom any thing is procured; though most frequently in other authors, he who is guilty or deserves evil, is intended thereby. So he, *ουκ εγω αιτιος ειμι, αλλα ζεις και μοιρα*. So *αιτιος* is expounded by Eustathius, *κολασεως αξιος*; but it is of the same importance with respect unto what is good. The apostle, therefore, hath in this word, respect unto all the ways and means, whereby the Lord Christ either procured salvation for us, or doth actually bestow it upon us.

And here, also, it will be necessary, for the farther clearing of the import of this word, to examine the endeavour of the forementioned Expositor, to corrupt the sense of it.

Est vero, saith he, *perfectissima salutis causa, quia perfectissima ratione salutem affert; nihil illi deest, nec ad vires, ac facultatem, nec ad studium et voluntatem salutis nostræ perficiendæ. Nam et pœnas peccatorum omnes a nobis potentia sua arcet, et vitam æternam largitur; spiritus nostros in manus suas suscipit; succurrit nobis in afflictionibus et opem promptè fert ne in fide succumbamus, inque pœnas peccatis debitas ea ratione incidamus.*

This, indeed, is the voice of Jacob, but the hands of this doctrine are the hands of Esau. For whilst by these words, for the most part true, we have a description given us, how and on what account the Lord Jesus Christ, as our high priest, is the author and cause of our salvation, that which is indeed the principal reason hereof, and without which the other consideration would not be effectual, is omitted and excluded. For in the room of his satisfaction and expiation of sin, by

the propitiatory sacrifice of himself, we are supplied with a keeping off or driving from us, the punishment due to our sins. But this kind of deliverance from the punishment of sin, by Christ, is unscriptural, both name and thing. The true way was that whereby he delivereth us from the curse and penalty of the law, so saving us from the wrath to come. And this was, by his bearing our sins in his own body on the tree; by being made sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in him, see 2 Cor. v. 21; Rom. viii. 3; Gal. iii. 13; Eph. i. 7; Isa. liii. 6—8. The other things mentioned by this author, Christ doth indeed, in carrying on the work of our salvation, and many other things of the like nature, which he mentioneth not, all which are here included; but all with respect unto that foundation which was laid in his satisfactory oblation, which is by him here excluded.

We may, therefore, consider the Lord Christ as the author of eternal salvation, either with respect unto his own acts and works, whereby he wrought it or procured it; or with respect unto the effects of them, whereby it is actually communicated unto us: or, we may consider him, as the meritorious, procuring, purchasing cause, or, as the efficient cause of our salvation. And in both respects, the Lord Christ is said to be the author of our salvation, as the word doth signify him who is the cause of anything in either kind. And where he is said to be the author of our salvation, nothing is to be excluded whereby he is so. First. As the meritorious cause of our salvation, he is the author of it two ways. 1. By his oblation. 2. By his intercession. Both these belong unto the means whereby he procures our salvation. And these, in the first place, are respected, because the apostle treats immediately of our salvation, as arising from the priestly office of Christ. And in his oblation, which was the offering of himself as an expiatory sacrifice for our sins, accompanied with the highest acts of obedience, and the supplications mentioned, ver. 7. Two things may be considered unto this end. 1. The satisfaction he made therein for sins, with the expiation of our guilt, which is the foundation of our salvation, without which, it was impossible we should be partakers of it. 2. The merit of his obedience therein, by which, according to the tenor of the covenant between God and him, he purchased and procured this salvation for us. Heb. ix. 14. On these two accounts, was he in his oblation, the author or cause of our salvation. 2dly. He is so also, on the account of his intercession; for this is the name of that way, whereby, with respect unto God, he makes effectual unto us, what in his oblation, he had purchased and procured, Heb. vii. 25—27. And this he doth, as the meritorious cause hereof. Secondly. He is also the efficient cause of our salvation, inasmuch as he doth by his Spirit, his grace, and his glorious power, actually communicate it unto us, and collate it upon us. And this he doth in sundry instances, the principal whereof may be named. 1. He teacheth us the way of salvation, and leads us into it; which Socinus fondly imagined to be the only reason why he is called our Saviour. 2. He makes us meet for it, and saves us from the power of sin, quickening, enlightening, and sanctifying us, through the administration of his Spirit and grace.

3. He preserves and secures it unto us, in the assistance, deliverance, and victory he gives us against all oppositions, temptations, dangers, and troubles. 4. He both gives an entrance into it, and assurance of it, in our justification and peace with God. 5. He will actually, by his glorious power, bestow upon us, immortal life and glory, or give us the full possession of this salvation. In all these respects, with those many other streams of grace which flow from them, is the Lord Christ said to be the author of our salvation.

This salvation is said to be eternal, *αιωνιον*; whereof see our Exposition on ch. ii. 2. So the redemption purchased by this offering of Christ is said to be eternal, ch. ix. 12. And it is called so absolutely, comparatively, and emphatically. 1. Absolutely; it is eternal, endless, unchangeable, and permanent. We are made for an eternal duration. By sin we had made ourselves obnoxious to eternal damnation. If the salvation procured for us were not eternal, it would not be perfect, nor suited unto our condition. It is also said to be eternal in comparison with, and opposition unto that or those temporal deliverances or salvations, which the people under the law were made partakers of, by the interposition of their legal priests and their sacrifices. For there were temporary punishments, excisions by death threatened unto divers transgressions of the law, as it was the administration of a temporal covenant unto that people. From these they might be freed by the ministry of their priests and carnal atonements. But those who were delivered from these penalties, and saved from the sentence of the law, were not thereby absolutely secured of deliverance from the curse annexed unto the moral law, as a covenant of works. Their salvation therefore was not eternal. 2. And perhaps also respect may be had unto the deliverance of the people of old out of bondage, with their introduction into the land of Canaan, which was a temporary salvation only. But this is so absolutely. And 3. Emphatically. It takes off indeed all temporal punishments as effects of the curse of the law. It gives temporal deliverance from fear and bondage by reason thereof. It supplies us with mercy, grace, and peace with God in this world. But all these things issuing in eternal blessedness, that being the end of them, being all bestowed on us in a tendency thereunto, the whole is emphatically called eternal.

Lastly. There is a limitation of the subject of this salvation, unto whom the Lord Christ is the cause and author of it; it is 'to all them that obey him.' *Τοις υπακουουσιν αυτω πασιν*. The expression is emphatical. To all and every one of them that obey him; not any one of them shall be excepted from a share and interest in this salvation; nor shall any one of any other sort be admitted thereunto. He is the author of eternal salvation only unto them that obey him; whether there be any other author of salvation to those who neither know him nor obey him, they may do well to inquire, who suppose that such may be saved. A certain number then they are, and not all men universally, unto whom he is the author of salvation. And as these are described elsewhere by the antecedent cause hereof, namely, their election, and being given unto Christ by the Father, so here they are so by the effects of it in themselves, they are such as obey

him : *ὑπακουω*, is to ‘obey upon hearing.’ Dicto obedire ; originally it signifies only to hearken or hear, but with a readiness or subjection of mind unto what is heard to do accordingly. Hence, it is faith in the first place that is intended in this obedience. For it is that which in order unto our participation of Christ, first cometh by hearing, Rom. x. 17, and that partly, because the object of it, which is the promise, is proposed outwardly unto it in the word, where we hear of it, and hear it, and partly because the preaching of the word, which we receive by hearing, is the only ordinary means of engendering faith in our souls. Hence, to believe is expressed by *ὑπακουειν*, ‘to hear,’ so as to answer the ends of what is proposed unto us. The ensuing subjecting our souls unto Christ in the keeping of his commands, is the obedience of faith. We may now draw some observations from the words for our farther instruction ; as,

Obs. I. All that befel the Lord Christ, all that he did or suffered, was necessary to this end, that he might be the cause of eternal salvation to believers. Being consecrated or perfected, he became so. And what belonged unto that consecration we have declared. This was that which he was of God designed unto. And the disposal of all things concerning him to this end, was the fruit of infinite wisdom, goodness, and righteousness. No more was required of him that he might be the author of eternal salvation unto believers, but what was absolutely necessary thereunto ; nor was there an abatement made of any thing that was so necessary. Some have said that one drop of the blood of Christ was sufficient for the salvation of the whole world. And some have made use of that saying, pretending that the overplus of his satisfaction and merit is committed to their disposal, which they manage to their advantage. But the truth is, every drop of his blood, that is, all he did, and all he suffered, in matter and manner, in substance and circumstance, was indispensably necessary unto this end. For God did not afflict his only Son willingly, or without cause, in any thing, and his whole obedience was afflictive. He did not die nor suffer *δορεαν*, Gal. ii. 21, without an antecedent cause and reason. And nothing was wanting that was requisite hereunto. Some suppose that Christ was and is the author of salvation unto us, only by showing, teaching, declaring the will of God, and the way of faith, and obedience whereby we may be saved. But why then was he consecrated in the way before described ? Why did it become God to make him perfect through sufferings ? Why was he bruised and put to grief ? For what cause was he reduced unto the state and condition described in the verse foregoing ? Certainly such men have low thoughts of sin and its guilt, of the law and its curse, of the holiness and righteousness of God, of his love to Jesus Christ, yea, and of his wisdom, who suppose that the salvation of sinners could be obtained without the price and merit of all that he did and suffered ; or that God would have so dealt with his only Son, might it any other ways have been attained. I might show in particular from the Scripture how every thing that Christ did and suffered was not only useful, but necessary also to this purpose, allowing the wisdom and righteousness of God, to give the standard and measure of what is so. But I must not too

far digress. And hence it is evident, 1. How great a matter it is to have sinners made partakers of eternal redemption. 2. How great, how infinite, was that wisdom, that love and grace, which contrived it, and brought it about. 3. How great and terrible will be the ruin of them by whom this salvation is despised, when tendered according to the gospel, &c.

Obs. II. The Lord Christ was consecrated himself, in and by the sacrifice that he offered for us, and by what he suffered in so doing. This belonged to the perfection both of his office and his offering. He had none to offer for him but himself, and he had nothing to offer but himself.

Obs. III. The Lord Christ alone is the only principal cause of our eternal salvation, and that in every kind.—There are many instrumental causes of it in sundry kinds. So is faith, so is the word, and all the ordinances of the gospel; they are instrumental, helping, furthering causes of salvation, but all in subordination to Christ, who is the principal, and who alone gives use and efficacy to all others. How he is so by his oblation, and intercession, by his Spirit and grace, in his ruling and teaching, offices and power, it is the chief work of the ministry to declare. God hath appointed that in all things he should have the preeminence. There are both internal and external means of salvation that he hath appointed, whereby he communicates to us the virtue and benefit of his mediation. These it is our duty to make use of according to his appointment, so that we expect no relief or help from them, but only by them. So much as they have of Christ in them, so much as they convey of Christ to us, of so much use they are and no more. Not only therefore to set up any thing in competition against him, as the works of the law, or in conjunction with him, as the Papists do their penances, and pilgrimages, and pardons, and purgatory, is pernicious and ruinous to the souls of men, but also to expect any assistance by, or acceptance in such acts of religion or worship as he hath not appointed, and therefore doth not fill up with his grace, nor communicate from his own fulness by, is the highest folly imaginable. This therefore is the great wisdom of faith, to esteem of Christ, and to rest on him as that which he is indeed, namely, the only Author of salvation to them that believe. For,

Obs. IV. Salvation is confined to believers, and those who look for salvation by Christ must secure it to themselves by faith and obedience.—It is Christ alone who is the cause of our salvation, but he will save none but those that obey him. He came to save sinners, but not such as choose to continue in their sins; though the gospel be full of love, of grace, of mercy and pardon, yet herein the sentence of it is peremptory and decretory. ‘He that believeth not shall be damned.’

VER. 10.—IN the tenth verse the apostle returns to the improvement of the testimony given of the priesthood of Christ, taken from Ps. cx. And hereby he makes way to another necessary digression, without which he could not profitably pursue the instruction which he intended the Hebrews from that testimony, as we shall see in the fol-

lowing verses. He had drawn forth nothing out of that testimony of the Psalmist, but only that the Lord Christ was a Priest; and when he had done this in general, which it was necessary for him to do, he declares his sacerdotal actings, which he was enabled to by virtue of that office. For a priest he must be who so offered to God as he did. But he had yet a farther and peculiar intention in the production of that testimony. And this was not only to prove him to be a Priest in general, and so to have right to perform all sacerdotal offices and duties in behalf of the people, which he did accordingly, ver. 7—9; but withal to declare the especial nature and preeminence of his priesthood, as typified, or shadowed out by the priesthood of Melchisedec. The demonstration and declaration whereof is that which he now designs. But so soon as he hath laid down his general assertion in this verse, considering the greatness of the matter he had in hand, as also the difficulty of understanding it aright which he should find among the Hebrews, he diverts to a preparatory digression, wherein he continues the remainder of this, and the whole ensuing chapter, resuming his purpose here proposed in the beginning of the seventh chapter.

VER. 10.—*Προσαγορευθεις ὑπο του Θεου αρχιερεως κατα την ταξιν Μελχισεδεκ.*

Προσαγορευθεις, ‘called,’ he refers to the testimony produced, ver. 6. And it is here manifest who it was that is intended in those words, ‘as he saith in another place, Thou art a Priest;’ that is, God said so; for he was *προσαγορευθεις ὑπο του Θεου*: dictus, cognominatus, קָרָא, ‘called, pronounced.’ Salutat^{us}, as *salutare aliquem regem*, is to pronounce him so; and we may inquire into the reason of this peculiar expression. He had before declared that the Lord Christ, the Son of God, was a Priest after the order of Melchisedec. Now there may be more supposed herein than is indeed intended. When we say that Phineas, or Eli, or Zadok, were high priests of the order of Aaron, we intend that they had the very same priesthood that Aaron had. But that is not the meaning of the expression in this place and matter. The priesthood of Christ and Melchisedec were not the same. For that of Christ is such as no mere man could possibly sustain or exercise; only these two priesthoods, as expressed in the Scripture, had an especial agreement in sundry things, the particulars whereof the apostle enumerates and explains, chap. vii. For on the account of sundry things that were singular in the person of Melchisedec, (either absolutely, or as his story is related in the Scripture, which is the rule of our comprehension of sacred things) and suited to prefigure or shadow out the Lord Christ in his priesthood, above what was in Aaron or his office, he is said to be made a Priest after the order of Melchisedec, or according to the things spoken of Melchisedec. He is not said to be a Priest of the order, but על רִבְרִי, *κατα ταξιν* ‘according to the things spoken of Melchisedec,’ as he was a priest, after the manner of what is related concerning him. And this in my judgment is the reason of the use of this word *προσ-*

αγορευσεις, in this place, for it doth not signify a call to office, that is κλητος constantly; but it is the denomination of him who is so called, for some certain reason. Because, saith the apostle, of the especial resemblance that was between what Melchisedec was, and what Christ was to be, God called his priesthood Melchisedecian; whereon I must necessarily declare wherein that resemblance did consist, which he doth afterwards. So was his priesthood surnamed from his type, and not Aaronical.

Called of God, αρχιερευς, ver. 6. He renders the Hebrew כהן by ιερευς, only 'a priest.' And it signifies no more. For where the high priest in a note of distinction is intended, they call him, כהן הגדול, the 'great,' or 'high priest.' Sacerdos magnus, summus. Pontifex, pontifex summus. But the whole nature, right, and privilege of the office belonged to any one as a priest. Every high priest was a priest absolutely, but every priest was not a high priest also. Aaron and his sons were together separated to the same office of the priesthood, Exod. xxviii. 1. But some duties in the execution of this office, were peculiarly reserved to him who was chief and singular. But because he who was singular, had thus sundry preeminences above other priests, and also that the discharge of some duties, and offering of some sacrifices, as that of the great atonement, were committed to him alone, which were peculiarly typical of the sacerdotal actions of Christ, as he is called ιερευς, a 'priest absolutely,' as being invested in the real office of the priesthood; so is he termed αρχιερευς, by our apostle, the 'chief' or 'high priest,' not because there were any other in or of the same order with himself, but because all the preeminences of the priesthood were in him alone, and he really answered what was typified by the singular actings of the Aaronical high priest.

He was thus called an high priest κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισεδεκ, 'according to the order of Melchisedec.' This is not a limitation of his priesthood to a certain order, but a reference to that priesthood whereby his was most eminently prefigured. And there are two things intended herein by the apostle. First. A concession that he was not a high priest according to the constitution, law, and order of the Aaronical priesthood. And this he doth not only grant here, but elsewhere positively asserts, ch. viii. 4, yea, and proves at large, that it was impossible he should be so; and that if he had been so, his priesthood would not have been of advantage to the church, ch. vii. 11—14, &c. He was neither called as they were, nor came to his office as they did, nor was confirmed in it by the same means, nor had right unto it by the law, nor was his work the same with theirs. Secondly. That there was a priesthood antecedent unto, and diverse from that of Aaron, appointed of God to represent the way and manner how he would call the Lord Christ unto his office; as also the nature of his person in the discharge thereof, in what is affirmed, and what is concealed concerning him, who singly and alone was vested with that office, that is Melchisedec. Look in what manner, and by what means he became a priest; by the same with other peculiar excellencies and preeminences added thereunto, was Christ also called,

so as that he may be said, and is termed of God, a Priest after his order or manner of appointment. For as he, without ceremony, without sacrifice, without visible consecration, without the law of a carnal commandment, was constituted a high priest; so was Christ also by the immediate word of the Father, saying unto him, Thou art my Son, a Priest for ever, or after the power of an endless life. And in this sense is he called a Priest after the order of Melchisedec.

I have elsewhere evinced the corruption of the Targum on Ps. cx. 4, whence these words are taken, as also the malice of some of the late Jewish masters, who would have Melchisedec to be there called בן, 'a priest,' improperly, as David's sons were said to be כהנים, that is, 'princes.' So the Targum, 'Thou art a great prince.' But the expression here used by the Psalmist, is taken directly from Gen. xiv. 18, : יהוה כהן לאל עליון 'And he was a priest of, or unto the Most High God.' Here none of the Jews themselves are so profligate, as to pretend that a prince is intended; a prince to the High God. It is nothing therefore but that obstinacy which is the effect of their unbelief, which casts them on the shift of this evasion. Some observations do ensue.

Obs. I. God was pleased to put a signal honour upon the person and office of Melchisedec, that in him there should be an early and excellent representation made of the person and priesthood of Jesus Christ.—I am not here to inquire who this Melchisedec was, nor wherein the nature of his priesthood did consist. I shall do it elsewhere. Here he is reflected on as an eminent type of Christ in his office. And in how many particulars the resemblance between them did consist, our apostle doth afterwards declare. In the meantime we may observe, 1. In general, That all the real honour which God did unto any persons under the Old Testament, it was in order unto the prefiguring of Christ, that in all he might have the preeminence. Other reason of the great exaltation of Melchisedec in the church, even above Abraham, the father of the faithful, there was none. 2. He was the only type of the person of Christ, that ever was in the world. Others were types of the Lord Christ in the execution of his office, but none but he were ever types of his person. For being introduced without father, without mother, without beginning of days or end of life, he was made like to the Son of God, and represented his person, which none other did. 3. He was the first personal type of Christ in the world. After him there were others, as Isaac, and Aaron, Joshua, David, and Solomon; but he was the first, and therefore the most eminent. 4. He was a type of Christ, in these two great offices of king and priest, which none but he ever was. 5. The circumstances of his name, and the place of his reign, whence he was the king of righteousness and peace, do most gloriously represent the whole effect of the mediation of Christ; all which may be spoken to afterwards. Now, the exaltation of any one in the like kind, is a mere act of sovereign grace in God: he might so honour whom he pleased. Hence is Melchisedec introduced without the consideration of any circumstances of prerogative on his own part whatever, that all his dignity might be

owned to be of God's sovereign pleasure. God therefore having referred all to Christ, it is our wisdom to do likewise.

Obs. II. As the Lord Christ received all his honour as Mediator from God the Father, so the ground and measure of our giving glory and honour unto him, as such, depends on the revelation and declaration of it unto us.—He was termed, called, and declared of God, a high priest after the order of Melchisedec. He made him so, which was his honour; he declared him to be so, whence we ought to give all honour unto him. But this hath been spoken unto elsewhere.

Obs. III. And from the respect that these words have unto the preceding verse, we may observe, that it is an evidence and testimony that the Lord Christ was able to be, and is the author of eternal salvation unto all that do obey him, because he is a priest after the order of Melchisedec; that is, that his "priesthood is eternal.

VER. 11.—IN the eleventh verse the apostle enters upon his designed digression. And first he expresseth the occasion and reason of it, taken from the subject or matter which in this place it was necessary for him to insist upon; and the condition, with the former carriage, or rather miscarriage, of them unto whom he spake. Hence he evidenceth the necessity of his digression, which consists in such awakening admonitions, as they then stood, and we now stand in need of, when we are to be excited unto a due attendance unto spiritual and mysterious truths.

VER. 11.—Περι οὐ πολὺς ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος καὶ δυσερμηνευτός λεγείν, ἐπεὶ νῶθροὶ γεγόνατε ταῖς ἀκοαῖς.

Περὶ οὗ; De quo, 'Of whom.' The Syriac, ܩܪܝܬܝܢ ܕܥܝܢܝܢ, 'Of whom, even of the same Melchisedec,' which no other translation followeth. Πολὺς ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος: Vulg. Grandis nobis sermo. Rhem. 'Of whom we have great speech,' improperly and unintelligibly. Arias. Multus nobis sermo; 'We have much to say.' Eras. Multa nobis forent dicenda; 'Many things should be spoken by us;' intimating as if they were pretermitted, namely, what might have been spoken. Beza, Multa nobis sunt dicenda; 'We have many things to say.' Syr. : ܡܠܬܐ ܕܝܢ ܕܡܠܬܐ ܕܝܢ, Multa forent verba facienda: Translat. Polyglot. 'We might use many words.' Tremel. Multus est nobis sermo quem eloquamur; 'We have much discourse that we may utter or speak;' properly, 'We have many words to be spoken.' Καὶ δυσ-ερμηνευτος λεγειν. Vulg. Lat. Et interpretabilis ad dicendum. Valla corrected this translation. Erasmus first suspected that it was originally in the translation, in interpretabilis, which although a barbarous word, yet evidently intends the sense of the original. Hence it is rendered by the Rhemists, 'inexplicable to utter;' which expresseth neither the Latin nor the original. The expositors who follow that translation, contend, whilst the word doth signify negatively, 'that cannot be interpreted;' or affirmatively, 'that needs interpretation,' with wonderful vanity, as Erasmus manifests; if the word have any signification, it is, 'that which is easy to be interpreted,' contrary to

the original. Arias, *Difficilis interpretatio dicere*. Eras. *Difficilia explicatu*; 'things hard to be explained.' So Beza: Ours, 'hard to be uttered;' difficult to be expounded in speaking. Syr. *למשקרה למשקרה*, *Et labor ad exponendum*; or as Tremel. *Et occupatio ad exponendum illud*; 'and it is hard labour to expound it,'—a laborious work; of whom we have many things to say, and those difficult to be expounded. *Επει νωθροί γεγονατε*. Vul. *Quoniam imbecilles facti estis*; 'because you are become weak,' improperly. Arias, Segnes, 'slothful.' So Erasmus and Beza, 'dull.' Syr. *כרדא*, 'infirm, weak.' *Ταις ακοαις*. Vul. Lat. *ad audiendum*, 'weak to hear.' Arias, *auribus*: So Erasmus and Beza. But *ακοη* signifies the faculty of hearing, and the act of hearing, as well as the instrument of it:—'dull of hearing.'

VER. 11.—*Concerning whom we have many things to speak, and difficult to be explained, seeing you are become slothful in hearing, or dull of hearing.*

There are four things combined in this verse in the way of a summary of the discourse that is to ensue. 1. The subject whereof he would treat—Concerning whom. 2. The manner how he would treat concerning it—He had many things to say. 3. The nature of those things, not so much absolutely in themselves, as out of respect unto the Hebrews—They were difficult to be explained and understood. 4. The reason hereof; namely, because they were become dull of hearing.

Περι ου, 'Concerning whom;' that is, Melchisedec, not Christ; and so the Syriac translation expresseth it. But he intends not to treat of him absolutely, neither of his person, nor his office. These were things now past; and to search curiously into them was not for the edification of the church. And the apostle had no design to trouble the minds of believers with things unnecessary or curious. And it had not been amiss, if this had been well considered by them who have loaded us with so many needless speculations about his person and office, and some of them directly opposite to the scope and design of the apostle. But the purpose of the apostle is to treat of him, so far, and wherein he was a type of Christ, and as such is represented in the story concerning him. Hence, some render *περι ου*, by *de qua re*, 'of which matter;' that is, the similitude and conformity between Melchisedec and Christ, which was a great, necessary, and instructive truth.

Πολυς ημιν ο λογος, 'We have much to say,' many things to speak or treat of. But not the multitude of the things only which he had to speak, but the weight and importance also of them, is intended in this expression. So the *grandis sermo* of the Vulgar intends not loftiness of speech, but the weight of the things spoken of. And when the apostle comes to insist particularly on the things here intended, they appear rather to be mysterious and important, than many. However, I deny not but that the apostle intimates that there were sundry, yea many things of that importance to be declared and in-

sisted on, on this occasion. Some translations, as we have seen, supply the words by *forent*, some by *sunt*. The former seems to have apprehended, that the apostle intended wholly to forbear treating on this subject, and that because it was so deep and mysterious, that, considering their condition, it would not be profitable unto them, nor for their edification. Wherefore he lets them know, that although he could treat of many things concerning Melchisedec, and such as were necessary to be declared, yet because of their incapacity to receive them, he would forbear. And sundry interpreters do so apprehend his mind. But this is no way consistent with his express undertaking, to declare all those things unto them, ch. vii. Wherefore he only declares in general, that he hath many weighty mysteries to instruct them in, but would not immediately engage in that work, until he had spoken that unto them, which was needful to prepare them unto a due attention. And his ensuing discourses, before he return unto this subject again, are not reasons why he will totally intermit the handling of them, but a due admonition unto them for precedent negligences, whereby they might be excited to prepare themselves in a due manner for the receiving of what he had to declare.

The nature of the things treated of, with respect unto the capacity of the Hebrews, is next declared; *λογος δυσερμηνευτος λεγειν*. How variously these words are rendered, we have seen before. It may be, the things which Paul himself here calls *δυσερμηνευτα*, are those which Peter intends in this Epistle, calling them *δυσνοητα*, 2 Pet. iii. 16, 'things hard to be understood,' which is the same with what our apostle here intends. The phrase *δυσερμηνευτος λεγειν*, is somewhat unusual, and the sense of it not easy to be expressed to the full in our language. *Λεγειν* seems to be for *εν τω λεγειν*, in dicendo, in the speaking or uttering of it; or when it is spoken and uttered, it is hard to be interpreted, that is, to be understood. For the interpretation intended, is not that of the apostle in speaking, but that which is made in the understanding of them that hear it. For he that hears a thing uttered, and considers it, makes the interpretation of it unto himself, as Hierome observes, *Epist. ad Evagr*. The apostle doth not, therefore, intimate, 1. That it would be any hard or difficult matter unto him, to declare all things concerning the conformity between Melchisedec and Christ, which were necessary to be known unto the edification of the church. For what he had by revelation and inspiration, (as he had all that he wrote, as a part of the church's canon, or rule of faith and obedience,) was no matter of difficulty in him to find out and express. It is true, that being called to be an apostle in an especial manner, not having conversed with the Lord Christ in the flesh, he was in vision taken up into heaven, and there heard immediately from him, *αρρητα ρηματα, α ουκ εξον ανθρωπω λαλησαι*, 2 Cor. xii. 4, 'unspeakable words, that were not possible or lawful for a man to utter.' The things and manner of Christ's speech unto him, were accompanied with such a glory, as human nature unperfected cannot bear. But these things belonged unto his own particular confirmation in his office and work, and not to the edification of the church in general. For what he received by revelation unto that end, he freely

and fully declared, Acts xx. 20, 27. Nor, 2. That his manner of the declaration of it, would be obscure and hard to be understood; as some have blasphemously accused his writings of obscurity and intricacy. Nor can any pretence be taken hence against the clearness and perspicuity of the Scriptures in the declaration of divine truths and revelations. For it is of things themselves, and not of the manner of their declaration, that he speaks, as also doth Peter in the place mentioned. Two things, therefore, are intended by the apostle in this expression. First. That in what he had to speak on this subject, there were some things in their own nature sublime and mysterious. In divine revelations there are great differences in the matter of them. For the manner of their declaration in the Scripture they thus far agree, that every thing is declared absolutely as it ought to be, with respect unto the end of the Scripture; that is, the glory of God, and the edification of the church. But among the things themselves revealed, there is great difference. Some of them are nearer and more exposed unto our understandings and capacities; others of them are more sublime and mysterious, and more exceed our comprehension. And such are the things intended by the apostle. Wherefore, Secondly. He doth not speak of these things only with respect unto their own nature, but unto our understandings, which are weak and imperfect. It is a difficult matter for us in any tolerable measure to comprehend divine mysteries, when plainly propounded unto us. But yet neither are these things spoken positively in this place, with respect merely unto the understanding of them to whom they are delivered, but with respect unto a peculiar indisposition in the minds of some, hindering them in the discharge of their duty. This the apostle chargeth in particular upon these Hebrews in this verse, and then aggravates their fault from its causes, nature, circumstances, and consequents, in those that follow to the end of this chapter, and the midst of the next. And when he hath hereby prepared them to a more diligent attention, he returns to declare the things themselves which he here intends. And the Romanists do very weakly shield themselves from the force of an argument which ariseth up of its own accord against the great foundation of their superstition, from the nature of the apostle's discourse in this Epistle. For whereas he professedly treateth of the priesthood and sacrifice of Christ in all their concerns, and in their whole use in the church of God, whence is it, that he makes no mention in the least, nor gives the least intimation of their priesthood, mass, and sacrifice of it, by which alone, if you will believe them, the other things are communicated and made effectual to the church? I do not mention now what (God assisting) I shall prove afterwards; namely, that he declares those things which are utterly inconsistent with them, and destructive of them. But we only inquire at present whence it should come to pass, that in this discourse, which, if the things they pretend are true, is neither complete, nor useful, nor scarcely intelligible without them, he should make no mention of them at all? This, say our Rhemists on this place, was because the mass was too great a mystery for St. Paul to acquaint these Hebrews withal, and therefore he intimates that he would not acquaint them with it, or impart the doctrine

of it unto them. It seems, therefore, that the mass is a greater mystery than the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, or any thing that concerned his own personal priesthood. This seems to be a supposition of a competent boldness, wherein it is much if they should believe themselves. Besides, whereas the mass is one of the sacraments of the church, continually to be celebrated among the faithful, whence is it that the apostle should dread to speak of the nature of that to them which they were made partakers of, and which they were exercised in every day, if it were then known, or in use in the church? They would make Christianity a very strange religion, wherein it should be a thing dangerous and unlawful to instruct men in their duty. But as we have proved before, the things here intended by the apostle, are all of them resumed and handled by him in the ensuing chapters; which makes it sufficiently evident, that their mass and priesthood were none of them.

Lastly. The reason of the foregoing assertion is added;—‘Seeing you are slothful, slow, or dull in hearing,’ *νωθροὶ ταῖς ἀκοαῖς*. *Νωθροὶ*,—This word is nowhere used in the New Testament, but here, and ch. vii. 12, where we render it, ‘slothful.’ *Νωθρός* est, qui non facile potest *ωθεῖσθαι*, ‘one that is not easily stirred or moved, heavy, slothful, inactive, dull,’ opposed to him that is diligent in his business; as Prov. xxii. 29. *Ταῖς ἀκοαῖς*. *Ἀκοή* is used both for ‘the ear, the faculty of hearing, the act of hearing, and things heard.’ Wherefore, ‘slothful in hearing,’ whereby the apostle declares the fault of these Hebrews, is a metaphorical expression. You are, saith he, in hearing of the word, like slothful persons who do no work, accomplish no endeavours, attain no good end, because of their earthly, dull, inactive constitutions and inclinations. The conditions and qualities of such persons, Solomon paints to the life; Prov. xii. 27, xv. 19, xviii. 9, xix. 24, xxi. 25, xxii. 13, xxiv. 30, xxvi. 13—15. He abounds in the reproof of it, as being one of the most pernicious vices that our nature is subject to. And in the reproach that Christ will cast upon unfaithful ministers at the last day, there is nothing greater than that they were slothful, Matt. xxv. 26. Unto such persons, therefore, the apostle compares these Hebrews, not absolutely, but as to this one duty of hearing. The gospel, as preached, he calls, *λογὸν τῆς ἀκοῆς*, ‘the word of hearing,’ ch. iv. 2, the word that is communicated unto men by hearing, which they so receive, Rom. x. 17, which ought to be heard and diligently attended unto. This duty the Scripture expresseth by *προσεχεῖν*, Acts xvi. 14, which is ‘diligently to hearken and attend, so as to cleave unto the things heard.’ A neglect hereof the apostle chargeth the Hebrews withal. You stir not up, saith he, the faculties of your souls, your minds, and understandings, to conceive aright, and comprehend the things that are spoken unto you; you attend not unto them according to their importance, and your concernment in them; you do not treasure them up in your hearts, consciences, and memories, but let them slip out and forget them; for the apostle intends all faults and negligences that concur unto unprofitable hearing. It is not a natural imbecility of mind that he blames in them, nor such a weakness of understanding as they might be obnox-

ious unto, for want of improvement by education, nor a want of learning and subtilty to search into things deep and difficult. For these, although they are all defects and hindrances in hearing, yet are they not crimes. But it is a moral negligence and inadvertency, a want of the discharge of their duty according to their ability in attending unto the means of their instruction, that he chargeth them withal. The natural dulness of our minds in receiving spiritual things is, it may be, included; but it is our depraved affections, casting us on a neglect of our duty, that is condemned. And there are sundry things wherein we are hereby instructed. As,

Obs. I. There are revealed in the Scripture sundry deep and mysterious truths, which require a peculiar diligence in our attendance unto their declaration, that we may rightly understand them, or receive them in a due manner.—To evince this proposition, I shall lay down and confirm the ensuing observations.

1. There are some things or truths revealed in the Scripture, which have a peculiar remark put upon them, as those which are deep and mysterious. See 1 Tim. iii. 16; Eph. v. 32; 1 Cor. ii. 6—8; 1 Cor. xv. 51; Eph. iii. 4, 5.

2. The doctrines concerning these things are not dark and obscure, but clear, evident, and perspicuous. We may safely grant, that what is not clearly delivered in the Scripture, is of no indispensable necessity to be known and believed. And there are reasons innumerable, why God would not leave any important truth under an obscure revelation. And none pretend they are so, but those who first reject the things revealed; then all things spoken of them seem dark and obscure to them. There are two practices about these things that are equally pernicious. 1. A pretence of things mysterious, that are not clearly revealed. This the apostle calls a curious prying or intruding into things which we have not seen; they who do so, are 'vainly puffed up by their fleshly mind,' Col. ii. 18, and which he cautioneth us against, Rom. xii. 3. The mysteries that are clearly revealed in the Scripture, as to the doctrine of them, are sufficient to exercise the utmost of our sober inquiries, and humble speculations. To create heavenly mysteries, like the pretended Areopagite, in our own imaginations, to squeeze them out of single letters, words, or expressions, like the cabalistical Jews, to vent our own fancies for mysteries, or to cover plain and sober truths with raw and uncouth terms, that they may put on the vizard of being mysterious, is to forsake the word, and to give up ourselves to the conduct of our own imaginations. 2. A neglect and contempt of clear open revelations, because the things revealed are mysterious. And as this is the foundation of the most outrageous errors that at this day infest Christian religion, as in the Socinians and others, so it is that poison which secretly influenceth many amongst ourselves, to an open contempt of the most important truths of the gospel. They will not indeed declare them to be false, but they judge it meet that they should be let alone where they are, as things not by us to be understood.

3. The depths and mystery of the things intended, lie in themselves and their own nature. They are effects of divine wisdom, yea, the

greatest which ever God will either work or declare. Hence the doctrine of them is called 'his wisdom,' 1 Cor. ii. 7, 'his manifold wisdom,' Eph. iii. 10, as having put the most eminent characters of infinite wisdom upon them. We can see other things by the light of the sun, better than we can see the sun itself; not because the sun is less visible and discernible in itself, but because our visive faculty is too weak to bear its resplendent light. So is it with these mysterious things: they are great, glorious, true, evident in themselves; but our understandings are weak, and unable fully to comprehend them.

4. The principal of these mysteries concern the person, offices, and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. So as to his person, it is declared by our apostle, 1 Tim. iii. 16; as to his work and office, Phil. ii. 7—10; and as to his grace, Eph. iii. 8—11. And therefore,

5. Of all things which we are to learn in the dispensation of the word, these are we with most diligence to attend unto, Phil. iii. 8—10, as those wherein the glory of God, and our own obedience, are most concerned. Some suppose that we should wholly content ourselves with the plain lessons of morality, without any farther diligent inquiry into these mysteries; which is at once to reject, if not the whole, yet the principal part of the gospel, and that, without which, what remains will not be available. Sad indeed would be the condition of the church of God, if preachers and hearers should agree in the neglect and contempt of the mysteries of the gospel. These, I say, are the things which our utmost diligence in reading, hearing, and meditating on the word, in prayer and holy supplications for light and wisdom, that we may know them, and grow in the knowledge of them, is indispensably required of us.

Obs. II. It is necessary for the ministers of the gospel sometimes to insist on the most abstruse and difficult truths, that are revealed for our edification.—The apostle doth not only insist upon the sacerdotal office of Christ, the nature and exercise of it in his own person, but he judgeth it necessary to explain the mystical prefiguration of it in the priesthood of Melchisedec. Why might not that have been omitted, seeing he expressly acknowledgeth that the things concerning it were hard and difficult in the sense before explained, and the doctrine which he proposed in general, might be declared and taught without it? Is not this a needless curiosity, and such as tended rather to the amusing and perplexing of his disciples, than to their edification? No, saith he, there may be curiosity in the manner, but there can be none in the matter, when we declare and expound only what is revealed in the Scripture. It was not in vain that the Holy Ghost recorded these things concerning the person and office of Melchisedec. The faith and obedience of the church, are concerned in the due understanding of them, and therefore this explanation is not to be neglected. Wherefore, to clear and direct our duty in this matter, we may consider, 1. That it ought to be the design of every faithful minister in the course of his ministry, to withhold nothing from those committed unto his charge, that belongs unto their edification, as do all things that are written in the Scripture, but to declare unto them the whole counsel of God, so far as he himself hath attained, Acts

xx. 20, 27. To give times and seasons unto especial truths, doctrines, expositions, is committed unto his own prudence by him, by whom he is made an overseer to feed the church of God. But his design in general is, to keep back nothing that is profitable, as is the sense of all the Scripture, even in its most abstruse and difficult passages, 2 Tim. iii. 16. 2. That his duty is as much as in him lieth, to carry on his hearers unto perfection, ch. vi. 1. For the ministry itself being given to the church for the perfecting of the saints, Eph. iv. 12, 13, or for the bringing of them all unto a perfect man in Christ Jesus, every one who is faithful in that office, ought to make it his design and work. And hereunto doth their growth in light and knowledge, and that of the most mysterious truths, in an especial manner, belong. And whereas some, through the blessing of God on their holy diligence and endeavours, do thrive and grow in light and knowledge above others, they are not to be clogged in their progress, by being bound up always unto the lines and measures of them, who, it may be, are retarded through their own sloth and negligence. This we shall afterwards have occasion to speak unto. But, 3. Whereas the greatest part of our congregations, it may be, frequently are such as stand in need of milk, and are not skilful, as yet, in the word of righteousness; it is our duty also to insist on those plainer truths which are suited unto their edification. 4. Those who are called by the state of their flocks, to engage sometimes in the exposition of abstruse and mysterious passages of Scripture, may do well to observe the ensuing rules, all which may be evidently gathered from the way and manner of our apostle's treating concerning Melchisedec and his office. 1. That their interpretations be openly and evidently conformable to the analogy of faith. To search after new opinions in, or to found new or peculiar doctrines on, abstruse and mystical passages of Scripture, is a pestilent curiosity. 2. That the exposition of them be necessary from present circumstances, which are principally two. First. That the things contained in them, do belong unto some important truth, which is plainly declared for the substance of it in other places, although from them it may receive light and illustration. Thus, our apostle doth not designedly, and on set purpose for its own sake, choose out that abstruse and mysterious passage about Melchisedec. But, whereas he was engaged in the declaration of the priesthood of Christ, he taketh in the consideration thereof, as that which did belong thereunto, and which would add light and argument to the truth he had in hand. And herein consists the greatest wisdom in the treating of such places; namely, when we can reduce them to that proper head and seat of doctrine in other places, whereunto they do belong, which is our sure guide in their interpretation. To choose out such places for our subjects, to speak on separately, and to make them the sole basis of our discourse, may have somewhat of an unwarrantable curiosity. Secondly. When they offer themselves in the course of our work or ministry, where God gives light into the sense of the Holy Ghost in them, they are not to be waved, as we would be esteemed faithful in our work. 3. Always to remember, that what is so abstrusely expressed, is so on purpose, for the exercise as of our faith,

humility, and subjection of mind unto the authority of the Holy Ghost speaking in the Scripture; so of our diligence and dependence on him for instruction, which calls for an especial frame of spirit in the work we undertake. 4. That the difficulty and necessity of treating concerning such things, be intimated unto them who are to be instructed, that so they may be prepared to attend with diligence, and judge with sobriety of what is delivered. So deals our apostle with the Hebrews, on this occasion in this place. Under a due observance of these rules, it will be necessary sometimes for ministers of the gospel, to insist on the most abstruse and difficult truths that are revealed in the Scripture, and that, because their doing so is necessary unto the edification of the church.

Obs. III. There is a glorious light and evidence in all divine truths, but by reason of our darkness and weakness, we are not always able to comprehend them. Our want of that acquaintance with them, which it is our duty to have, and which is needful unto our edification, is from ourselves alone, and for the most part, from our sinful neglect of what is required thereunto.

Obs. IV. Many who receive the word at first with some readiness, do yet afterwards make but slow progress either in knowledge or grace. This, the apostle here chargeth on the Hebrews, which we must further afterwards consider.

Obs. V. It is men's slothfulness in hearing, that is the sole cause of their not improving the means of grace, or not thriving under the dispensation of the word. Or, all our miscarriages, with respect unto the gospel, are to be resolved into our own sloth, negligence, and depraved affections. For it is not any one particular vice, fault, or miscarriage in hearing, that the apostle intendeth and reproveth; but the want in general of such an attendance to the word, as to be edified thereby, proceeding from corrupt affection and neglect of duty. And whereas, this is a sin of so perilous a nature, as to deprive us of all benefit by the gospel, it will be necessary to give a summary account of the duty of hearing the word in a due manner, so to discover those defects and faults which constitute this sloth that we are thus warned of. Unto hearing, therefore, as intended and enjoined in the gospel, belong all things required on our part, to make the word useful, and to give it its proper effects upon our souls. 'Faith cometh by hearing,' Rom. x. 17. Whatever is required of us, that we may believe and obey the word, it belongs in general to this duty of hearing; and from a neglect of any thing material thereunto, we are denominated *ῥητοὶ τὰς ἀκοαῖς*, and do contract the guilt of the vice here reprov'd. Three things in this sense do concur to the duty intended. 1. What is preparatory thereunto 2. Actual hearing or attendance on the word preached. 3. What is afterwards required to render our hearing useful and effectual. Which I shall speak unto, in one or two instances under each head.

First. We may consider what is necessary hereunto in way of preparation, that we be not slothful hearers. There is a preparation due unto the right sanctification of the name of God in any obedience in general, which I do not now intend, and I have spoken unto it else-

where. Prayer, meditation, and a due reverence and regard to the authority and especial presence of God, with faith exercised on his promises, are necessary hereunto. These things, therefore, I here suppose, and shall only give one or two instances, of what peculiarly respects the duty of hearing, peculiarly in way of preparation. Scarce any sort of persons fall under such fatal miscarriages in this great concern of souls, as those whose hearts are inordinately influenced by the love, business, and cares of this world. For, besides that the matter of them, which being earthly, is diametrically opposite unto that of the word, which is heavenly, doth alienate and keep the mind at a distance from the proposals and reasonings of it; there are so many secret colourable pretences, whereby these things will insinuate themselves into the thoughts and affections so disposed, as that there is no contending against them, where they are habitually fixed. Wherefore, the Scripture doth not draw up so heavy a charge, against any one cause or occasion of unprofitable hearing, as it doth against these cares and love of the world. Where men are over diligent in and about these things, they do but certainly deceive themselves, if on any supposition they judge that they are not slothful in hearing. Either before, or under, or after this duty, they will discover themselves to have been predominant. ‘Covetousness,’ the apostle tells us, ‘is idolatry,’ Col. iii. 5. And the covetous hearts of men, do never worship the idol of this world with so much solemnity and devotion, as when they set it up in the ordinances of God, as under the preaching of the word; for then, they actually erect it in the room of God himself. Nay, they do it with a contempt of God, as flattering him with their outward appearance, which he despiseth, and giving up their inward affections to their endeared idol. And this is done, not only when the thoughts and affections of men are actually engaged and exercised about earthly things, during the dispensation of the word, but when their minds, through a love unto them and fulness of them, are previously indisposed unto that frame and temper, which the nature of this duty doth require. Unless, therefore, these cares and businesses of the world are effectually cast out, and our hearts be duly exonerated of them, we shall be *νοῦτοι ταῖς ἀκοαῖς*, and fall under the guilt of the sin here reprovèd.

2. Antecedent unto hearing, and in way of preparation for it, there is required in us, a desire after the word, ‘that we may grow thereby,’ 1 Pet. ii. 2. The end which we propose unto ourselves in hearing, hath a great influence into the regulation of the whole duty. Some hear, to satisfy their convictions; some, their curiosity and inquiry after notions; some, to please themselves; some, out of custom; some for company; and many know not why, or for no end at all. It is no wonder if such persons be slothful in, and unprofitable under hearing. Wherefore, in order unto a right discharge of this duty, it is required of us, that we consider what is our condition or stature in Christ; how short we come of that measure in faith, knowledge, light, and love, which we ought and hope to attain unto. To supply us with this growth and increase, the preaching of the word is appointed of God, as food for our souls. And we shall never receive it aright, un-

less we desire it and long for it to this end and purpose. When we know our weakness, imbecility, and manifold defects, and come to the word to obtain supplies of strength suited unto our condition, we are in the way of thriving under it. And as for them who have not this desire and appetite, who understand not a suitableness between the word and their spiritual condition, answerable to that of food to his natural state who is hungry, and desires growth and strength, they will be dull in hearing, as to all the blessed and beneficial ends of it.

3. It is required of us to free our minds, what lies in us, from being prepossessed with such corrupt affections as are apt to repel the word, and deny it an entrance into our hearts. *Intus existens prohibet alienum*; when the mind is filled with things of another nature, there is no room whereinto the seed of the word may have admission. And these things are of two sorts.

First. Corrupt lusts or sins indulged. The ejection of these is enjoined us, James i. 21, 'Lay apart all filthiness, and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the ingrafted word.' If the one be not done, the other will not. If filthiness and a superfluity of naughtiness be not cast away and thrust from us, the word will not be received, at least not with meekness. We must put away *πασαν ῥυπαρίαν*, all 'filthiness;' *ῥυπαρία*, sordes, belongs first to the body, as *ῥυπος* doth, 1 Pet. iii. 21. And from the *αποδειςς ῥυπου* there mentioned, 'the doing away the filth of the body,' by the washing of washing of water, is this *αποδεμενοι πασαν ῥυπαρίαν*, which, as applied unto the mind, answers unto the spiritual part of baptism, in the cleansing of the soul from spiritual filth and corruption, see Isa. iv. 4. *Και περισσειαν κακίας*, 'and the superfluity of naughtiness.' It should seem that some naughtiness may remain, only the superfluity of it must be cast away: no, but all naughtiness in the mind is as superfluous humour in the body, which corrupts and destroys it. It is the corrupting, depraving power and efficacy of prevailing lusts in the mind which is intended; and this is to be laid apart if we intend to receive *τον εμφυτον λογον*, the ingrafted, implanted word; that is, the word of the gospel, which was not designed of God to be written in tables of stone, but in the 'fleshy tables of our hearts, 2 Cor. iii. 3. Hence is that great promise of taking away the heart of stone, figured by the tables of stone, wherein the law was written, and giving a heart of flesh, wherein the word of the gospel should be written and engrafted; see this text farther interpreted, 1 Pet. ii. 2. He therefore that comes with his mind filled and prepossessed with noisome lusts, as they are all, will be dull and slothful in hearing, seeing his heart will be sure to wander after its idols. For men's minds filled with their lusts, are like Ezekiel's chambers of imagery, which are full of all manner of representations pourtrayed on the wall; which way soever they turned their eyes, they had idolatrous objects to entertain them, Heb. viii. 10, 12. Such pictures do the corrupt imaginations of sensual, earthly persons fill their minds withal, that every thought has an object ready for its entertainment, effectually diverting the soul from the entertainment of the ingrafted word. Without this, we may receive it as a notional word, as a truth in our understandings,

but we cannot receive it as an implanted word in our hearts to save our souls.

Secondly. Cares and businesses of the world having 'prepossessed the mind, produce in it the same indisposition in hearing. God himself giveth this reason why a professing people profited not by the dispensation of the word; namely, because their 'hearts went after their covetousness,' Ezek. xxxiii. 31. The prophet preached, and the people sat diligently before him as his hearers, but their minds being prepossessed with the love of the world, the word was unto them as wind, and of no use. Partly, it was kept out by the exercise of their minds about other things, and what was received was quickly choked, which is the proper effect of the cares of this world, Matt. xiii. 22.

Secondly. In the act or duty of hearing itself, there are sundry things required of them who would not incur the guilt of the crime reprov'd. As,

First. A due reverence of the word for its own sake. Spiritual reverence is our humble religious respect of any thing, on the account of its authority and holiness. So is it due unto every thing that God hath put his name upon, and to nothing else. Whereas, therefore, God hath magnified his word above all his name, Ps. cxxxviii. 2, or every other ordinance whereby he reveals himself to us, reverence is due to his word, in an especial manner. So is this duty expressed in the instance of the Thessalonians, 1 Thess. ii. 13, 'When ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh in you that believe.' The apostle commendeth their receiving of the word when preached unto them, from the manner of their attention unto it, with that respect and reverence which was due unto its relation to God, which also had a great influence into its efficacy on them. Ye have received *λογον ακοης παρ' ημων, Θεου*, *verbum auditus. דבר שמע*, 'the word of hearing;' because preaching and hearing, was the constant way that God had appointed for the communication and receiving of the gospel, the word itself was so denominated. To despise them, therefore, is formally to despise the gospel. And this word they are said to receive *παρ' ημων*, 'of us;' that is, as instruments of its promulgation and declaration. On this account he sometimes calls it 'our word,' and 'our gospel;' that word and gospel of God which we have preached; as it is added *Θεου*, 'of God;' not concerning God, but whereof God is the author, and which he hath appointed to be so preached and dispensed in his own name, 2 Cor. v. 18, 19. This, therefore, they attended unto not as the word of men, but according to the truth, as the word of God. The opposition may be either unto the original of the word, or unto the dispensation of it. If unto the original, then the sense is, not as unto a word that was devised or invented by men; as Peter declares that in the preaching of the gospel they did 'not follow cunningly devised fables,' 2 Pet. i. 16. Yet, this seems not here to be intended, though it may be included. But the opposition is unto the administrators or preachers of it. As if he had said, in your attention to the word, you did

not consider it merely as dispensed by us, but ascended in your minds to him whose word originally it is, by whom it was appointed, and in whose name it was preached unto you. And this gives us the just nature of that reverence which is required of us in hearing; namely, a humble respect unto the authority and holiness of the word, impressed upon it by him whose word it is.

It may be objected that this reverence is due only to the word as written, which is purely and wholly the word of God, but not unto it as preached by men, wherein there is, and must needs be a mixture of human infirmities. Hence some have been charged with arrogancy for expressing those words of the apostle in their prayers, that 'the word preached by them might be received, not as the word of man, but as it is indeed the word of God.' *Ans.* First. It is true, we have this 'treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of men,' 2 Cor. iv. 7. The ministry whereby the word is conveyed unto us, is but a vessel, and ministers are but earthen vessels, frail, weak, brittle, and it may be, sometimes defiled. But still, in and by them the word of God is a treasure, a heavenly treasure, enriching our souls. Secondly. We may consider how far the word, as preached, is the pure word of God; and so having his name upon it, is the object of our reverence. And 1. It is his originally, it proceeds from him, and not from the invention of men, as was shown before. 2. It is his word materially. The same things are preached that are declared in the Scripture, only they are explained and accommodated unto our understanding and use, which is needful for us. 3. The preaching of it is the ordinance of God, which his name is upon, in the same kind as on his word, and therein an especial reverence and respect unto the name and authority of God is due thereunto. 4. By virtue of this institution of God, the word preached, which is in itself only materially the word of God, becomes formally so; for it is the application of the word of God unto our souls, by virtue of his command and appointment. Wherefore, there is the same reverence due to God in the word as preached, as in the word as written; and a peculiar advantage attends it beyond reading of the word, because God hath himself ordained it for our benefit.

It may be farther objected, that we find by experience, that the preachers of it will sometimes intermix their own infirmities, and it may be, mistakes in judgment, with their preaching of the word. And this must needs abate of the regard which is proposed as our duty. *Ans.* First. God hath been pleased to ordain, that the word should be dispensed unto us, by weak, sinful men like ourselves, whence it unavoidably follows, that they may, and probably sometimes will, mix some of their infirmities with their work. To except, therefore, against this disposition of things, is to except against the wisdom of God, and that especial order which he hath designed unto his own glory, 2 Cor. iv. 7. Secondly. In a pipe which conveys water into a house, there may be such a flaw as will sometimes give entrance unto some dust or dirt to intermix itself with the water: will you therefore reject the water itself, and say, that if you may not have it, just as it riseth out of the fountain, you will not regard it, when

you live far from the fountain itself, and can have no water but such as is conveyed in pipes, liable to such flaws and defects. Your business is to separate the defilement, and use the water, unless you intend to perish with thirst. Thirdly. That such a thing may fall out, and that it doth ever so, gives us an opportunity of exercising sundry graces, and the performance of sundry duties whereby it turns to our advantage. For, 1. Here lies the proper exercise of our spiritual understanding in the gospel, whereby we are enabled to try all things, and hold fast that which is good. To this end, our apostle requires that we should have senses exercised to try and discern both good and evil. Hereby, according to our duty, we separate the chaff from the wheat; and no small exercise of grace and spiritual light to the great improvement of them, doth consist herein. 2. Tenderness towards men in the infirmities which we discern in their work, proceeding either from weakness or temptation. 3. The consideration hereof ought to keep us in a constant dependence on, and prayer unto, the Lord Christ, for the communication of his Spirit unto us, to lead us according to his promise into all truth; which is the great reserve he hath given us in this matter. And hence follows,

Secondly. An immediate subjection of soul and conscience to whatever is delivered in the dispensation of the word. A readiness hereunto Cornelius declared, when he was to hear Peter preach, Acts x. 33, 'Now are we all here present before thee, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God;' that is, so to hear, as to give up our souls in obedience to the word, because of the authority of God, whose word it is. And when we are not in this frame, we shall be unprofitable hearers. For the immediate end of our hearing is practice. And the Scripture doth so fully testify hereunto, that in sundry places it positively declares that no kind of hearing, whatever appearance of zeal or diligence it may be accompanied withal, which does not issue in practical obedience, is in the least to be esteemed of. But I intend not at present this practice, which is in order of nature consequential to the hearing of the word, but that practical subjection of the soul and conscience to the word which alone will make way for it. For even that practice or obedience which proceeds not from hence, is faulty and corrupt, as having certainly, a false foundation or a wrong end. Herein then lies the great wisdom of faith in hearing, namely, in delivering up the soul and conscience to the commanding authority of God in the word, Rom. vi. 17. And hereunto among other things it is required, First. That the heart hath no approved reserve for any lust or corruption, whose life it would save from the sword of the word. Secondly. That it be afraid of no duty, on the account of the difficulties and dangers with which it may be attended. For where these things are, the heart will close itself against the influences of God's authority in his word. 3. A diligent watchfulness against distractions and diversions, especially such as are growing to be habitual from temptations or sloth. This is much spoken to by others, and therefore is here dismissed without farther consideration. And where we are negligent in these things, or any of them, we shall be found dull in hearing.

Thirdly. There are duties also belonging hereunto which are consequential to actual hearing; the discharge of which is required to free us from the guilt of the evil reprov'd. As 1. A due examination of what is new or doubtful in the things delivered to us. When the gospel itself was first preached, and so was new to them to whom it was delivered, the Bereans are commended for examining by the Scriptures which they had before received, the doctrines which were delivered to them, Acts xvii. 11. And in case of things doubtful, we are commanded 'to try all things, and hold fast that which is good,' 1 Thess. v. 21, as also to try the spirits, 1 John iv. 1, or what is taught under pretence of any spiritual gift whatever. Not that any thing is spoken to encourage that cavilling humour which so abounds in some, as that they will be excepting and disputing against every thing that is delivered in the dispensation of the word, if not absolutely suited to their sentiments and conceptions, or because they think they could otherwise, and it may be better, have expressed what they have heard; which kind of persons well may be reckoned amongst the worst sort of unprofitable hearers, and such as are most remote from subjecting their consciences to the authority of God in his word, as they ought. We may therefore give some rules in this matter; as, First. Some things there are, which are such fundamental principles of our profession, that they ought to be so far from being exposed to a doubting examination, that they are part of that rule whereby all other doctrines are to be tried and examined, as those also by whom they are taught, 2 John 9—11. And Secondly. Other doctrines also there are, so evidently deduced from the Scripture, and so manifest in their own light, carrying the open conviction of their truth along with them, as that they ought not at any time to be made the matter of a doubtful trial. Only what is delivered concerning them may be compared with the Scriptures, to their farther illustration and confirmation. Thirdly. Neither ought what is delivered by any faithful approved minister of the gospel, whose way, and course, and doctrine, and zeal for the truth hath been known, be lightly called into question; nor without manifest evidence of some failing or mistake, be made the matter of doubtful disputations. For whereas every man is obnoxious to error, and some we have found, after a long course of their profession of the truth, to fall actually into such as are perilous to the souls of men, if not pernicious; it is not meet that any thing which they teach, should on just occasion be exempt from a sober trial, and examination. So whereas such ministers of the gospel as those mentioned, have the word of truth committed unto them by Christ himself, and have his promise of direction in the discharge of their duty, whilst they behave themselves as stewards and dispensers of the mysteries of God, what they declare in his name is not lightly to be solicited with every needless scruple. Wherefore this duty, which in some cases and seasons is of so great importance, may in other cases, and at other seasons, be less necessary; yea, a pretence of it may be greatly abused to the ruin of all profitable hearing. When errors and false teachers abound, and when by our best attendance to the rule, we cannot avoid the hearing of them sometimes; or when things new, uncouth,

or carrying an appearance of opposition to the analogy of faith, or those doctrines of the gospel wherein we have been before instructed and settled, are imposed on us, it is necessary we should stand on our guard, and bring what is taught to a due examination. But where there is a settled approved ministry, and the things delivered evidence in a good manner their own consonancy to the Scripture and analogy of faith, a disposition and inclination under pretence of trying and examining what is delivered, to except against it, and dispute about it, is the bane of all profitable hearing.

2. Let us be sure to learn what we are learning. The apostle complains of some who are 'always learning, but never come to the knowledge of the truth,' 2 Tim. iii. 7. Of this sort are many still amongst us. And hence it is, that after they have been long under the means of instruction in sound truth and knowledge, they are ready to hearken after, and greedily embrace any fancy that is contrary thereunto. The reason hereof is, because they did not learn what they were so long in learning. To learn any truth as we ought, is to learn it in its proper principles, true nature, and peculiar use; to learn it in the respect it hath to, and the place it holds in the system of gospel-truths; so to learn it, as to get an experience of its usefulness and necessity to a life of holy obedience. Unless we thus learn what we hear, in its compass and circumstances, it will not prove an ingrafted word to us, and we shall lose the things which we seem to have wrought. Our duty herein may be reduced to heads. 1. That we learn doctrinally what respect every truth hath to Christ the centre of them all. 2. Practically what influence they have to our obedience and holiness. 3. A diligent heedfulness to retain the things which we have heard, is also required hereunto. But this hath been sufficiently spoken to ch. iv. 1, where it is expressly enjoined us. The like also may be said concerning meditation and holy conference, whereof see ch. iii. 12. 4. A diligent care to avoid partiality in obedience to what we hear. All men, it is hoped, design to obey in some things, most in most things, but few in all. God blamed the priests of old that they were partial in the law, Mal. ii. 9. Either they taught not men the whole law, and therein the whole of their duty, but reserved such things from them, as if known and practised might turn to their own disadvantage, for they had learned in those days to eat up, and so to live on the sin of the people, Hos. iv. 8, or they taught them according as they knew they would be pleased to hear, therein accepting their persons, as the words seem to import. And for this God says he would 'make them contemptible and base before all the people.' It shall be no otherwise with them who are partial in their obedience. Such are persons who will do so much as consists in their own judgment with their interests, societies, inclinations, and the liberty they have fancied to themselves. For we are fallen into such days wherein some professors do judge it a great freedom and liberty to be exempted from obedience to sundry commands of Christ, and those such as they cannot but know to be so. Alas, for the pride and folly of the heart of man! to serve sin, to serve vanity and unbelief, which are the things alone that keep us off from an universal compliance with all the commands of the gospel, and sub-

mission to all the institutions of Christ, shall be accounted liberty and freedom, when it is a part of the vilest bondage in the world. What are such persons afraid of? Is it that they shall engage themselves too far in the way towards heaven, so as that they cannot retreat when they would? Is it that they shall have too many helps against their corruptions and temptations, and for the furtherance of their faith and obedience? Or is it lest they should give over themselves wholly to Christ, and not be at liberty, when a better master comes, to lay a claim to a share in them? How great is the misery of such poor souls! This is the generation of perishing professors in our days. Out of them proceed Quakers, worldlings, and at last scoffers. This is the field wherein all apostasy visibly grows. Those that are openly profane cannot apostatize or fall away; what should they fall from? Christ is pleased to secure his churches in some good measure, so as that we have not frequent instances in them of this fatal miscarriage. But from among the number of professors who will walk at large, and are partial in their obedience, we have multitudes of examples continually. Let not such persons think they shall profit under the dispensation of the word, for they will at last be found to have been slothful in hearing, and that in one of the worst instances of that sin.

Where there is a neglect of these things, which are all necessary and required to profitable hearing, it cannot be but that men will be *νωθροὶ ταῖς ἀκοαῖς*, and fall deservedly under the rebuke here given by the apostle to the Hebrews, as we see multitudes to do every day. And whereas all this proceedeth from the sinful and wilful carelessness of men, about their own eternal concerns, it is evident that all want of a due progress and improvement under the means of grace, must be resolved into their own sloth and depraved affections.

Obs. VI. It is a grievous matter to the dispensers of the gospel to find their hearers unapt to learn and thrive under their ministry through their negligence and sloth.—The apostle complaineth of it here as that which was a cause of sorrow and trouble to him. And so is it to all faithful ministers whose lot it is to have such hearers. As for others who are themselves negligent or slothful in their own work, it cannot be but that they will be regardless of the state of their flock.

VER. 12, 13, 14.—THE three ensuing verses, as they all treat of the same matter with that foregoing, so they have all the same design in themselves, and cannot be severed in their exposition. The reasons of the reproof entered on in the 11th verse, are here expressed, and the crime reproofed is laden with sundry aggravations. And these aggravations are taken from such circumstances of the persons, and such consequences and effects of their fault, as make evident that the reproof given was both just and necessary.

VER. 12, 13, 14.—*Καὶ γὰρ οφείλοντες εἶναι διδασκαλοὶ διὰ τὸν χρόνον, πάλιν χρεῖαν ἔχετε τοῦ διδάσκειν ὑμᾶς, τίνα τὰ στοιχεῖα τῆς ἀρχῆς τῶν λόγων τοῦ Θεοῦ· καὶ γεγόνατε χρεῖαν ἔχοντες γαλακτός, καὶ οὐ*

στερεας τροφης. Πας γαρ ὁ μετεχων γαλακτος, απειρος λογου δικαιοσυνης· (νηπιος γαρ εστι.) Τελειων δε εστιν ἡ στερεα τροφη, των δια την εξιν τα αισθητηρια γεγυμνασμενα εχοντων προς διακρισιν καλου τε και κακου.

Και γαρ οφειλοντες ειναι. Etenim debentes esse, Arias. Etenim cum deberetis esse, Vulg. Etenim cum debeatis, Eras. Vos enim quos oportuit, Beza. All to the same purpose. 'For when you ought,' or rather, 'for when as you ought to be.' דְּבִיבִין הָיִיתֶם, Syr. Debitores estis enim. The word denotes a debt of any kind, in things real or moral; whatever is due from us, or justly required of us, is so expressed. Διδασκαλοι. Magistri, Vulg. Lat. Rhem. 'Masters.' Doctores, Eras. Bez. Syr. מְלִמֵּי, 'Teachers,' instructors of others.

Δια τον χρονον. Vulg. Lat. Propter tempus. Rhem. 'For your time,' supplying 'your,' needlessly. Pro temporis ratione, Bez. Eras. 'considering the time,' 'for the time,' is proper in our language. The Syriac paraphraseth this expression, מַטְל דְּזִבְנָא לְכֹן בִּיִּלְמָא, 'Seeing you have had time in,' or 'under institution,' discipline, instruction, doctrine; for the time wherein you have been taught and instructed. Arab. 'For the length of the time,' which is intended but not expressed. One of late, jamdudum, 'now long ago.' You have been so long since taught, that you might have been teachers long ago.

Παλιν, Rursum. Syr. חֲשֵׁב דִּן חֵב, 'but now again.' Contra, 'on the other side.' Whereas you ought to have been teachers, on the other side.

Χρειαν εχετε, indigetis, Vulg. 'you need,' Rhem. Opus habetis, opus est ut, 'you have need, you stand in need,' it is necessary.

Του διδασκειν υμας, ut vos doceamini, 'that you shall be taught,' in the passive voice. Syr. דְּהִלֵּינִי, 'that you should learn.' Properly, 'to teach you;' that I should, that we should, that one should teach you.

Τινα τα στοιχεια της αρχης των λογιων του Θεου. Vulg. Lat. Quæ sint elementa exordii sermonum Dei. Rhem. 'What be the elements of the beginning of the words of God,' improperly and obscurely. Syr. אֵילִין אֲנִי כְּתִיבְתָּא קְדִמִּיתָא דְּרִישׁ מְלוּחֵי דְּאֵלֵּיָא, 'The very first writings of the beginning of the words of God.' Supposing στοιχεια, to intend the letters of the alphabet. Quæ sint elementa initii eloquiorum Dei, Erasmi. Beza. that is, oraculorum. Λογια, θεοσφατα. Ours, 'which be the first principles of the oracles of God.' Which are the fundamental principles of divine revelation.

Πας γαρ ὁ μετεχων γαλακτος, Qui lactis est particeps, Vulg. Lat. Rhem. 'that is partaker of milk.' Cui cum lacte res est, Bez. Which we render. 'that useth milk.' that is, for his food, as Syr. דְּמִאֲכֹלֶתָּה חֵלְבָא, 'whose food is milk,' who (as we speak) liveth on milk.

Απειρος λογου δικαιοσυνης. Expers est sermonis justitiæ, Vulg. Rhem. 'is unskilful of the word of justice.' Rudis est, is unskilful in, or rather hath no experience of the word of righteousness. The Syriac somewhat otherwise, לֹא מִפְּס בְּמִלְתָּא דְּכִאָּוֶהָ, 'is not taught,' persuaded, instructed 'in the word of righteousness.'

Νηπιος γαρ εστι. Parvulus enim est, Vulg. ‘For he is a little one.’ Rhem. ‘a child.’ Infans enim est. Syr. דשברא דו, ‘he is unskilful, unexperienced.’ For ‘he is a babe.’

Τελειων. Perfectorum, Vulg. ‘the perfect.’ Adulorum, Erasm. Beza. Those of full age. Syr. דגמירא, perfectorum; so ad verbum.

Ἡ στερεὰ τροφή, cibus solidus, solida alimonia, ‘strong meat, strong nourishment.’

Των δια την ἔξιν. Eorum qui pro ipsa consuetudine, Vulg. Lat. ‘them that by custom.’ Propter habitum, Bez. ‘by reason of an habit,’ properly; ‘of use,’ say ours, which is the way whereby an habit is obtained. Syr. דמדרשין, ‘who have much inquired,’ who are ready in inquiries.

Τα αἰσθητηρια γεγυμνασμενα εχοντων. Exercitatos habent sensus, sensuum organa. The organs or instruments of their senses. ‘Who have their senses ready and expedite.’

VER. 12, 13, 14.—*For whereas for the time ye ought to be teachers, you have need that one should teach you again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk, is unskilful in the work righteousness, for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth unto them that are of full age, even those, who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

The charge of a crime or fault intimated in the preceeding verse, is, as was said, improved and managed for a fuller and more unavoidable conviction in these two things; therefore doth the apostle design in these words, First. To give the reason of his general charge he had burdened them withal, and to prove the equity of it in particular instances. This he declareth in that causal conjunction, *καὶ γαρ*, ‘for whereas.’ Secondly. To enlarge and farther declare the nature of the fault charged on them, from its effects and consequents, with other circumstances. And this is done, 1. From an aggravating circumstance of time, or the duration of the season of instruction, and growing in knowledge which they had enjoyed. ‘Whereas for the time.’ 2. From the consideration of a duty which might justly be expected from them, with respect to that time and season, ‘you ought to have been teachers.’ 3. From a contrary event, or how things were indeed fallen out with them. ‘They had need to be taught what were the first principles of the oracles of God.’ And 4. The whole is enforced by an antithesis between two sorts of hearers of the word, expressed in an elegant similitude or metaphor. The instructive nature of this similitude, consists, 1. In that likeness or conformity which is between bodily food and the word of the gospel as preached. 2. In the variety of natural food, as suited to the various states and conditions of them that feed thereon, answered by the doctrines of truth in the gospel, which are of various kinds. And in the exemplification hereof, natural food is reduced to two kinds. First. Milk. Secondly. Strong meat; and those that feed thereon to two sorts, children, and men of ripe age; both which are applied to

the hearers of the word. Wherefore the apostle in the application of this similitude represents to us two sorts of professors of the gospel, or hearers of the word, and gives a description of them by their several qualities. For First. Some there are who are *νηπιοι*, 'babes,' and continue so; and some are *τελειοι*, such as are of full age, or perfect. Secondly. These *νηπιοι*, or babes, are described by a double property, for, 1. They are *νωθροι ταις ακοαις*, ver. 11, 'dull in hearing.' 2. They are *απειροι του λογου της δικαιοσυνης*, 'unskilful in the word of righteousness.' In opposition hereunto, *τελειοι*, those who are spiritually adult, are, 1. Supposed to be *εχοντες νουν*, such as have understanding, so as to be capable of instruction. 2. Are said to have *αισθητηρια γεγυμνασμενα*, senses exercised to discern good and evil. 2. The different means to be applied to these different sorts for their good, according to their respective conditions, is expressed in the terms of the metaphor. To the first, *γαλα*, 'milk,' to the other, *στερεα τροφη*, 'strong food,' or nourishment, all comprised in the ensuing scheme.

Auditores Evangelii,

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| <p>1. <i>Νηπιοι.</i>
<i>Suntque</i></p> <p>1. <i>Νωθροι ταις ακοαις,</i></p> <p>2. <i>Απειροι λογον δικαιοσυνης.</i>
<i>Opus habent</i></p> <p><i>Γαλακτος.</i></p> | <p>2. <i>Τελειοι.</i>
<i>Suntque</i></p> <p>1. <i>Φρονιμοι.</i></p> <p>2. <i>Τα αισθητηρια γεγυμνασμενα εχοντες.</i>
<i>Opus habent</i></p> <p><i>Στερεας τροφης.</i></p> |
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And the intention of the apostle is to represent to the Hebrews herein, their state and condition arising from their being dull in hearing. And this he doth both absolutely, considering what they themselves might and ought to have been, and comparatively with respect to what others were. For he shows that they were yet babes, 'unskilful in the word of righteousness,' and such as had need to be fed with milk.

The first thing considerable in these words, is an aggravation of the fault reprov'd in the Hebrews, from a circumstance of time. *Δια τον χρονον*, pro ratione temporis, considering the time and season you Hebrews have had, you might have been otherwise long ago, jamdudum, as one renders the words. Or *δια τον χρονον*, may not intend the space of time, but the nature of the season which they were under. The season is such, whether you consider the opportunities of it, or the danger of it, or the shortness of its continuance, as that you ought so diligently to have improved it, that yourselves might have been at work in the teaching of others, had you been zealous for the gospel as you ought to be, or careful about your own duty. Such times as were then come on, and passing over the Hebrews as to their profession of the gospel, called for more than ordinary diligence in their improvement. There is no inconvenience in this sense, and it hath good instruction in it. But I shall rather adhere to that which is more commonly received. *Δια τον χρονον*, 'for the time,' is as much, as with respect to the time past and gone, since their first calling to, and profession of the gospel. But men may have time enough,

and yet have no advantage by it for want of other necessary helps and assistances. A tree may have been planted a long time in a dry and barren wilderness, and yet it would be a vanity to expect any great growth or thriving from thence, as having the benefit neither of rain nor a fruitful soil. And where God expects fruit from his vineyard, he gives it not time only, but all other things necessary to its improvement, Isa. v. 1—5. Wherefore it is supposed, that during the time intended, these Hebrews wanted no necessary means of instruction. This the apostle had before declared, ch. ii. 1, 3. The word of the gospel was both preached and confirmed to them. And as they had for a season the ministry of all the apostles, and of sundry of them for a longer continuance, so it is justly supposed, they had yet one of them surviving and abiding among them. Moreover they had in common use the Scriptures of the Old Testament, which testified to all that they had been taught concerning Jesus Christ. And most of the writings of the New Testament were before this time communicated to them. Wherefore during the season intended, they enjoyed sufficient means of growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Without a supposition hereof, they could not have been justly reprov'd for a want of proficiency. Yea, in the very expression of their crime this is supposed. They were 'dull in hearing,' which they could not have been, had not the word been constantly preached to them. For without preaching there can be no hearing. And all this the apostle makes evident, ch. vi. 7, where he compares them to the earth, which hath frequent showers of rain falling on it, because of the abundant waterings which they had received by the constant preaching of the word to them.

For the duration of this season in particular, it was not equal to them all. Every one had only the time since his own conversion to account for. If we shall take the words with respect to the whole church at Jerusalem, then the date of this time is to be fixed on the day of Pentecost, when on the effusion of the Holy Ghost on the apostles, testified and evidenced by the miracle of tongues, with the sermon of Peter to them that ensued thereon, so many thousands of them were converted to the faith, Acts ii. And if this be allowed, the space of time intended was about thirty years. But not to bind up the expression to any especial epoch, it is enough that they had all and every one of them whom the apostle intends, more time than they had well used or improved. And we ought to observe, that,

Obs. I. The time wherein we enjoy the great mercy and privilege of the dispensation of the gospel, is a matter which must in particular be accounted for.—This time is variously dispensed, its measure being given by the sovereign will and wisdom of God. All who have time given them to this purpose, have not the same time. The day of the gospel is not of the same length to all nations, churches, persons, to whom it is granted. But all have time and light enough to do the work that is required of them. And it is a talent to be accounted for. Neither must we account for it only in general, but as to our improvement of it in particular duties. These Hebrews had such a time, and it was not enough, it did not answer the design of God in it, that they

professed the gospel, and did not renounce Jesus Christ, as some among them did; it was moreover expected from them, that they should grow and thrive in knowledge and holiness proportionable to their time and means: and not doing so, is charged on them as a great aggravation of their guilt. An evil it was that they had not profited under the dispensation of the gospel, but especially it was so, in that they had not answered the time that God had graciously entrusted them withal. And we all may do well to consider it, who have the like day of grace, mercy, and patience, with what they enjoyed. See our exposition on ch. iii. 13, 15.

Secondly. A duty is expressed, the want of the performance of which, is charged also as an aggravation of the sin insisted on. *Οφειλοντες ειναι διδασκαλοι*, 'you ought to have been teachers.' *Διδασκαλος* is the word whereby the writers of the New Testament express 'Rabbi,' which was the usual name of the public teachers of the law among the Jews. He is such a one, not only that is fit and meet to teach and instruct others occasionally, but also hath disciples committed to him, depending on him and learning from him. So is our Saviour himself called in the gospel, and so he termed himself with respect to his disciples, Mark iv. 38; John xiii. 13. And John tells us that it is the same name with the Hebrew Rabbi, and the Syriac Rabboni, John i. 38, xx. 16. And it is the name of the teaching officer given by Christ to the church, 1 Cor. xii. 28; Eph. iv. 11. Nor is it any where used but for a public teacher, preacher, or instructor of disciples in the knowledge of God.

Οφειλοντες ειναι, 'you ought to be.' He doth not only say, that they had enjoyed such a time and season of instruction, as that they might have been able to teach and instruct others; but this he declares was expected from them as their duty. And the right understanding hereof, depends on the consideration of the state and condition of the churches in those days. For this reproof would now seem uncouth and unreasonable. Our hearers do not look on it as their duty to learn to be teachers, at least not in the church, and by the means of knowledge to be attained therein. They think it enough for them, if at best they can hear with some profit to themselves. But this was not the state of things in primitive times. Every church was then a seminary, wherein provision and preparation was made, not only for the continuation of the preaching of the gospel in itself, but for the calling, gathering, and teaching of other churches also. When, therefore, a church was first planted by the ministry of the apostles, it was for a while continued under their own immediate care and inspection, and then usually committed by them to the ministry of some evangelists. By them were they instructed more and more in the mysteries of religion, and directed in the use of all means whereby they might grow in grace and knowledge. And in this state were they continued, until some were found meet among themselves to be made overseers and instructors of the rest, 2 Tim. ii. 2; Acts xiv. 23; Tit. i. 5. On their decease, others were to be called and chosen from among themselves to the same work by the church. And thus was the preservation and successive propagation of the churches pro-

vided for; it being suited to the nature and law of all societies, as also to the institution and love of Christ to his churches, that in compliance with his appointments, they should be able to continue and preserve their being and order. And this course, namely, that teachers of the church should be educated thereunto in the church, continued inviolate until the public school at Alexandria, which became a precedent to other places, for a mixed learning of philosophy and religion, which after a while corrupted both, and at length the whole church itself.

And this also was the manner before in the synagogues of the Jews. They had in them public teachers of the law, who were their Rabbins or *διδασκαλοι*. By these, others, their disciples sitting at their feet, whilst they taught and preached, were instructed in the knowledge thereof, as Paul giveth an instance in himself and his teacher Gamaliel, Acts xxii. 3. And among these disciples, those who profited above others in an especial manner, as Paul affirmeth he did above his equals, that is, those who had enjoyed the same time and means with him, Gal. i. 14, were afterwards themselves designed and called to be *διδασκαλοι*, or teachers.

And men in those days did not only learn in the church, that they might be able afterwards to teach in the same, but also that they might be instrumental in the work of the gospel in other places. For out of the churches went those who were made use of in the propagation of the gospel ordinarily, which cannot now well be imitated, unless the whole ancient order were restored, which we are not yet to expect. Wherefore, hearers in the church were not only taught those things which might be sufficient to their own edification, but every thing also that was necessary to the edification of others, an ability for whose instruction it was their duty to aim at.

I do not say that this was the duty of all hearers; every one was not to labour to profit by the word, that he might himself be a teacher. Many things might invincibly incapacitate sundry persons, from any such work or office. But yet in those days it might be the duty of many, especially in that church of the Hebrews. For this was the great seminary of preachers for the whole world, during all that time, wherein the law was to go forth from Zion, and healing waters from Jerusalem. And there were two reasons, why the ministry of the Jews was so necessary and useful to the world, whereby the Gentiles were made debtors to them, by a participation of their spiritual things, not only which were theirs originally, and possessed by them before the Gentiles had any interest in them, but also because by their ministry they were communicated to them, Rom. xv. 27. 1. Because, on their conversion to Christ, they immediately made a great progress in knowledge. For they had before received the seeds and foundations of all evangelical truths, in the Scriptures of the Old Testament. And so soon as the light of the gospel shined into their hearts, all things were cleared up to them, from the true sense of those principles wherein they had before been instructed, which was now made manifest to them. And our apostle immediately blames these Hebrews for the want of an acquaintance with those principles. But hence were

those who did really profit by the word, quickly ready for this work. On the other side the Gentile converts, setting aside the consideration of extraordinary illumination, revelation, and inspiration, by the Spirit of God, which many in those days were made partakers of, must needs require a longer time to be perfectly instructed in the mysteries of the gospel, whereunto they had been such utter strangers. 2. It was in the Jews' synagogues throughout their dispersions in the world, that the preachers of the gospel began to divulge their message. For God had so ordained, that in all places the accomplishment of the promise made to their fathers should first be declared to them, Acts xiii. 32, 33, 46. Now this could not be done but by those that were Jews, for the Gentile converts being uncircumcised, could neither have access to their synagogues, nor acceptance with them. On this account it was greatly incumbent on these Hebrews to thrive in knowledge, that they might be able to teach others, when God in his providence should call them thereunto. And hence it was, that when this church, not long after its first planting, was scattered by persecution, all the members of it went up and down preaching the gospel with great success, first to the Jews and then to the Grecians also, Acts viii. 4, xi. 19, 20. After this those that succeeded, as it seems, were remiss and negligent in learning, and so unfit for this work, which the apostle blames in them.

This I take to be the meaning of the place. But if you will suppose that the apostle useth the word *διδασκαλοι*, in a larger sense, for any that are able to instruct others, as their neighbours, families, or relations, as occasion should require; then it was the duty of all these Hebrews to have been such teachers, and their sin it was wherein they were not able so to be.

Obs. II. Churches are the schools of Christ, wherein his disciples are trained up to perfection, every one according to the measure appointed for him, and his usefulness in the body.—We may consider the church in general, and with respect to some particular members of it. In general, every one that belongs to it, ought to have a double aim: first, his own edification, and then his usefulness in respect of others. The first is the principal end, both of the ministry and the administration of all ordinances in the church, Eph. iv. 11—13. This, therefore, in the first place, is that which every one ought to attend diligently to; which also they are continually exhorted, encouraged, and persuaded to in the Scripture, as that which is indispensably required of them, 2 Pet. iii. 18. And those who are negligent herein, do frustrate all the ends of Christ's love and care towards them in his church, which they must answer for. And the want of it, in some good measure, is a dreadful symptom of approaching eternal ruin, as our apostle declares, ch. vi. 7, 8. The church is the garden of Christ, inclosed and watered, and every plant which continueth in a withering unthrifty condition, will at length be plucked up and cast out. Herein, therefore, ought all to be trying and examining themselves who have any care of their own souls, and who intend not to make use of the ordinances of the gospel, but only to countenance them in their security, and so to hasten and aggravate their destruction. And

there is nothing more lamentable in the present profession of Christian religion, than the woeful negligence of most herein. They hear the word for the most part, as company, or custom, or their lusts, or ease direct them, without any choice with respect to their edification. And they content themselves in hearing of it, without any endeavours for its improvement. So do many souls, under the best of means, come to the worst of ends. But this is not all. We are so to learn in the church, as that we may be useful to others, a matter which few think of, or trouble themselves about. But this Christ expects of all the members of his churches in an especial manner. For every church is 'the body of Christ, and members in particular,' 1 Cor. xii. 27, that is, of the whole body, and to one another. And the apostle there shows what a monstrous thing it is for a member to be useless in the body. Every one is to contribute to the growth of the whole, Eph. iv. 16; Col. ii. 19. He that doth not so is dead. One way or other every one may contribute to this building, cast into this sanctuary, some their talents, some their mites. Times, seasons, opportunities, advantages for usefulness, are in the hand of God; but our duty it is to be prepared for them, and then to lay hold on them. It is not every one's lot nor call to be public teachers of others. And the undertaking of that work without a due ability, and an orderly call, is forbidden, James iii. 1. But first, in general, every one may have occasion to make use of the utmost of that light and knowledge which is communicated to them, in the dispensation of the word. They who have not flocks to watch over, may yet have families, relations, children, servants, masters, whom, by their light and knowledge, they may benefit, and it is required of them that so they should do. It may not be the duty of every one at all times to convince gainsayers, and to stop the mouths of them that oppose the truth, but it is the duty of every one, to be 'always ready to give an answer unto every man that asketh a reason of the hope that is in them, with meekness and fear,' 1 Pet. iii. 15, and it will be so, to plead for and defend the truth, if they are called to suffer for it, like the martyrs in former days. In these and such like things, lies that usefulness in the body of Christ, which every member of it ought to aim at, under the means of instruction which he affords in his church. And those who do not, will have their portion with the unprofitable; see Phil. ii. 15, 16. It is a sad condition, when a person can return no tolerable answer unto that inquiry, Of what use are you in the church of Christ? Secondly, in particular, It were doubtless well, if some persons in every church might be trained up under instruction, with this very design, of being made meet to be teachers of others. The Lord Christ will indeed provide labourers for his harvest, but in his own way, and not in a compliance with our negligence.

Obs. III. It is the duty of ministers of the gospel, to endeavour to promote the increase of their hearers in knowledge, until they also are able to instruct others, according to their calls and opportunities.—So did those who taught these Hebrews, whence they are reprov'd for disappointing their expectation. Some, it may be, are apt to fear lest their hearers should know too much. Many corrupt lusts and affections may prompt them hereunto, which are all resolved into self,

with respect unto profit or reputation. And this hath proceeded so far in the degeneracy of the church of Rome, as to produce the commendations of blind obedience and ignorance, as the mother of devotion, than which nothing could be invented more contrary to the whole course and design of the gospel. And it is well if no others are tainted with the same disease. Even good men had need to watch against discomposures of mind, when they find on trial, it may be, some of their hearers to be like David, wiser in the things of God than their teachers. And Johua himself was earnest with Moses to forbid Eldad and Medad from prophesying; out of no good frame, as appeareth by the reply of Moses, 'Enviest thou for my sake?' Num. xi. 29. But this occasioned the prayer of that holy man, which is unto us a rule of duty: 'Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them.' And to a faithful minister, there is no greater crown nor cause of rejoicing, than when he can be instrumental so to carry on any of his hearers towards perfection, as that their gifts and abilities may outshine his own, especially if they are accompanied with humility and holiness. And for those who are either negligent in this work, or taking upon them the place and duty of teachers, are unable for it, they betray the souls of men, and shall bear their own judgment.

The second branch of the apostolical reproof, consists in a declaration of the consequent or effect of the negligence reprov'd: 'You have need that one should teach you again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God.'

Χρειαν εχετε, 'You have need;' there is need of it on your account: if you are not thus taught again, you will not know the principles of the oracles of God. We are said, *χρειαν εχειν*, to need those things naturally, without which we cannot well live, as Matt. vi. 8, and morally, without which we cannot perform our duty.

Του διδασκειν υμας. There is an antithesis herein, between their duty and the event, or unto what was before mentioned as expected from them. It was expected justly, that they should be *διδασκαλοι*, 'teachers;' but they had need, *του διδασκειν αυτους*, 'that one should teach them.' And so *παλιν*, which we render 'again,' may be well rendered, 'on the contrary,' or 'on the other side.' 'It is thus fallen out by your negligence, that instead of being teachers of others, of being masters of the assemblies, you, on the other hand, had need to be placed in the lowest form of those who learn, the highest evidence of your dulness and want of proficiency.' Του διδασκειν, that is, say we, 'that one should teach you;' *τινα*, that 'some one or other' should do it. Or *με* may be supplied, 'that I should teach you.' So he useth the same kind of expression, *ου χρειαν εχετε γραφειν υμιν*, 'You have no need to write unto you;' that is, 'that I should write unto you,' 1 Thess. iv. 9. As he expressly speaks, 1 Thess. i. 8. *ωστε μη χρειαν υμας εχειν λαλειν τι*, 'that we should not need to speak any thing.' But yet, whereas the apostle treats not about his own personal ministry towards them, but of their continued instruction by the constant means they enjoyed, it may be left indefinitely, that one, or some, should do that work: 'That you should be taught.'

Τινα τα στοιχεια, 'which be the first principles;' not only which they

are, but what they are, is intended. The words, as they lie in our translation, seem to intimate that this alone is aimed at; namely, that they should be taught to distinguish between the first principles of Christian religion, and the superstructions on them, or necessary deductions from them. But the very nature of the things themselves is intended. They were to be instructed in the principles of Christian religion in the sense to be explained.

Στοιχείων is used by our apostle indifferently, so as that it may be taken in a good or bad sense, according as its adjuncts require. Frequently he applies it to the principles and rudiments of the Jewish religion, or Mosaic institutions, Gal. iv. 3. Στοιχεία του κόσμου, 'the rudiments of the world;' earthly, carnal, worldly, as opposed to the spiritual heavenly principles of the gospel, ver. 9, ἀσθενή και πτωχα στοιχεια, 'weak and beggarly elements,' which could not enrich the souls of men with grace; see Col. ii. 8, 20. Nor doth he at any time make use of this word, but when he treated with the Jews, or those that did Judaize. By Peter, the word is used in another sense, either properly, or metaphorically, 2 Pet. iii. 10, 12. Στοιχεια are the first principles of any thing, natural or artificial, or the first ground of any science. As the letters of the alphabet are the στοιχεια of reading; the principles, rudiments, elements.

Στοιχεια της αρχης; that is, τα στοιχεια τα πρωτα, the first principles as in our translation, 'the principles of the beginning.'

Των λογιων του Θεου, 'Of the oracles of God; Eloquentiorum Dei. Λογια Θεου, are the Scriptures, usually in the New, applied unto those of the Old Testament, Acts vii. 38, ὃς ἐδέξατο λογια ζωντα δουναι ἡμιν, 'who received the living oracles to give unto us;' that is, the law, which, if a man do, he shall live therein. The Jews, ἐπιστευθησαν τα λογια του Θεου, 'were intrusted with the oracles of God, Rom. iii. 2, that is, all the Scriptures of the Old Testament, so that what was not committed unto them in the same way, is not to be reckoned among the oracles of God belonging unto the Old Testament. 1 Pet. iv. 11, Ει τις λαλει, ὡς λογια Θεου, 'If any man speak, as the oracles of God;' that is, let them that teach, speak with gravity and authority, and every way conformably to the Scriptures. And the Scriptures are thus called, because as oracles they were given out from God by inspiration, 2 Tim. iii. 16; 2 Pet. i. 21.

We may now therefore inquire what it is that the apostle intends by these first rudiments, or principles of the oracles of God. It is generally apprehended, that he designs the common catechetical principles of Christian religion, which also, as it is supposed, he reckons up in the beginning of the next chapter; such principles as converts or young children, are usually instructed or catechized in. And, it may be, he calls them principles, as the Jews call the principal heads of their religion fundamenta legis, 'the foundations of the law;' as he also calls these principles θεμελιον, 'the foundation,' ch. vi. 1. But yet, upon the consideration of the words, and his use of them in other places before declared, I judge that he hath another design. Στοιχεια he elsewhere declares to be the institutions of the law, and λογια του Θεου, peculiarly denote the Scriptures of the Old Testament. The use

and end of these institutions as appointed and declared in the oracles of God, were to typify Jesus Christ, as our apostle will more fully afterwards prove and confirm. This was the first thing that the Jews were to learn in them, by them, and from them; namely, that unto the Lord Christ, his person, his office, his death and sacrifice, testimony was given by Moses and the prophets; as also that these things alone were represented in the institutions of the law. These were the rudiments of the oracles of God committed to the Jews; and these, that is the meaning, sense, end and use of them, they had not learned, but had need to be taught them again. This made them incline to their old Judaism, make little progress in the perception of the mysteries of the gospel, and desire to mix the ceremonies of the law with the ordinances thereof. But as this was peculiar unto them, so I deny not but that by just analogy it may be extended unto the first necessary principles of Christian religion. And from the whole of this discourse we may observe,

Obs. IV. That the Holy Scriptures are to be looked on, consulted and submitted unto, as the oracles of God.—The consideration of their being so, adds to our duty, and directs us in its discharge. For we are called by it to weigh aright what is ascribed unto them, and what belongs to them as such. And this will influence us with that due regard and reverence which is required towards them. Thus, 1. We may consider their efficacy and power. Stephen calls them *τα λόγια ζωντα*, ‘the living oracles of God,’ Acts vii. 38. They are so in respect of their author, they are the oracles of the living God; whereas the oracles wherewith Satan infatuated the world, were most of them at the shrines and graves of dead men. Whence in their idolatries, the Israelites were charged to have eaten the sacrifices of the dead, Ps. cvi. 28. And they are so in respect of their use and efficacy; they are living, because life-giving oracles unto them that obey them. ‘Keep this word,’ saith Moses, ‘for it is your life,’ Deut. xxxii. 47. And God says, that he gave the people precepts, which, if a man do, he shall live in them, Ezek. xx. 11. And it hinders not that Stephen speaks of the law given by Moses, concerning which our apostle says, that it was the ministry of death, 2 Cor. iii. 7. For it was not so in itself, but by reason of the sin and inability of men to keep it. So the law could not give life, in that it was weak through sin, Rom. viii. 3. Besides, Paul speaks only of the preceptive part of the law, with the curse annexed unto its transgression. Stephen treats of the whole, as it had respect to Jesus Christ. They are words accompanied with divine power and efficacy, to quicken and give life unto them that obey them, which proceeds from their author, and his power in them, as ch. iv. 12. The Scriptures are not a dead letter, as some have blasphemed, but the living oracles of God, that is, life-giving, quickening; or they are accompanied with a living power, which they will put forth and exert toward the souls of men; for God still speaks in them unto us. So saith Stephen, ‘Moses received the living oracles of God, to give unto us;’ not to our fathers only, who lived in those days, but unto us also, now so many generations after. And in the same manner doth God by his prophets and apostles continue to speak to us,

which gives power and efficacy unto their word. 2. Authority. They are the oracles of God, who hath supreme authority over the souls and consciences of us all. So the Thessalonians are commended, that when they 'received the word, they received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God,' 1 Thess. ii. 13, that is, absolutely submitting their souls and consciences unto the authority of God, speaking therein, and thereby. And without this respect, we can never read nor hear the Scripture in a due manner. 3. Infallible truth and absolute certainty. They are the oracles of God, who is the first truth, whose being is truth, and who cannot lie. Every thing that may be false, hath an inconsistency with his being. To suppose that any thing which is not absolutely true can proceed from him, is to deny him to be God. Peter gives no other proof that in the preaching of the gospel they followed not cunningly devised fables, but that they were confirmed by the oracle of God, 2 Pet. i. 16—21. God is a God of truth, Deut. xxxii. 4, and all his words are words of truth, Eccl. xii. 10. Herein then alone the souls of men can find assured rest and peace. Whatever else they may lean upon, whatever appearance of truth it may have, yet falsehood and a lie may be in it. Before God gave his oracles unto men, that is, before he sent out his light and truth to lead and guide them, they did nothing but perpetually wander in ignorance, error, and darkness, unto destruction. And so far as any yet take any thing else but the oracles of truth for their guide, they must continually fluctuate; and though they are not always actually deceived, they are never certain but that they are so. I will show thee 'what is noted in the Scripture of truth,' Dan. x. 21, is the only guide we have for our souls. 4. Mysterious. Oracles have mysteries in them; and under this covert, Satan endeavoured to hide his delusions. For whereas the oracles of God were mysterious from the matter contained in them, which is sacred, holy, sublime, and incomprehensible, he delivered himself in dark, enigmatical, dubious expressions, that making an appearance of something mysterious, he might draw a cloud of darkness over his lies and falsehoods. And it is in opposition unto all the pretended mysteries of Gentile worship, that our apostle, summing up the principal doctrines concerning the person and mediation of Christ Jesus, says, that 'without controversy great is the mystery of godliness,' 1 Tim. iii. 16. The oracles of God are mysterious, from the depths and excellency of the things revealed, delivered in words of truth and soberness. And this will teach us how we ought to behave ourselves with respect unto the word, these oracles of God. It is generally owned to be our duty to read it, to study it, to meditate upon it, and to attend unto its dispensation in preaching. And those by whom these things are neglected, shall bear their own judgment. But as to the manner of the discharge of these duties, there may be a great failure among the best. That diligence, that reverence, that submission of mind and conscience, that dependence on God for the revelation of his mind and will, which ought constantly to accompany all them who consider and attend to the oracles of God, we are too often at a loss in.

Obs. V. God hath, in infinite love and wisdom, so disposed of his

word, as that there are first principles, plain and necessary, laid down in it, to facilitate the instruction he intends thereby.—Men have learned this wisdom in teaching of all arts and sciences. They first lay down general principles and theorems, which they make the basis and foundation of all their following instructive deductions. And so there are first principles of the oracles of God. And,

First. These are plain and easy to be learned. The things themselves contained in them, as hath been shown, are deep and mysterious. But they are all of them so plainly declared, as that he who runs may read them. It is an unquestionable truth, that what is not clearly and plainly revealed in the word, though it be true, and the knowledge of it very useful, yea necessary to some persons in some circumstances, yet it doth not belong unto those principles of the oracles of God, which it is the duty of all men expressly to know and believe. I could go over all the principles that are of this nature, and evince, that they are all of them so plainly, so fully, so clearly revealed, taught, and expressed, and that in words and terms so suited to the reason and understandings of men, that none unto whom the word of God comes, can be ignorant of them, without the guilt of supine negligence, and horrible sloth; nor will any err about them, unless their minds are prepossessed with invincible prejudices or carnal, corrupt and earthly affections. And this is necessarily required unto the nature of first principles. They must be maxims plainly and evidently declared and asserted, or they are very unmeet to be the first principles of knowledge in any kind.

Secondly. They are such as being learned, received, believed in a due manner, the way is plain for men towards perfection. They have such an influence into all other sacred truths, which indeed are but deductions from them, or lesser streams from that blessed fountain which is contained in them, and do so suit and prepare the mind for them, that they have an easy access unto it. The minds of men being duly inlaid with these first principles of the oracles of God, it is inconceivable how they may thrive in the knowledge of the deepest mysteries, and that in a due manner. If indeed, when men have been instructed in these principles, they grow careless and negligent, as though they had obtained enough, and need seek no farther, as is the manner of many, they will be of no advantage unto them. He that lays the foundation of a house, and neglects the carrying on of the building, will find it but a sorry shelter in a storm. And whereas God hath designed the knowledge of these principles as a means unto a farther growth and improvement, from whence they are so termed, where that end is neglected he will blast the other attainment, that it shall be utterly useless. But where this foundation is well laid, where these principles are duly learned and improved as they ought to be, they make the way smooth and easy unto greater degrees of knowledge, I mean, unto such as are industrious in the use of means. And this, as it makes evident what is our duty concerning them, so it gives great encouragement unto the discharge thereof. We ought to learn them because they are principles; and we are encouraged to learn them, because they open the way to farther improvements.

Thirdly. They are such, as, if they are not duly learned, rightly understood, and the mind be not possessed with them, all endeavours after higher attainments in light and knowledge, are preposterous, and will prove fruitless. Yet some men neglect this previous instruction, and sundry consequents, all of them dangerous, and some of them pernicious, do ensue on this neglect. For, 1. Some are apt to be reaching after speculations which are abstruse, both in themselves, and in the manner of their revelation, before they have any acquaintance with those first principles of the oracles of God. And constantly one of these events doth ensue; for either they are always learning, and never come to the knowledge of the truth, wearying themselves in the search of such things as they cannot comprehend, nor be led into a right understanding of; or else they are vainly puffed up in their fleshy minds, upon a presumption that they know some marvellous thing beyond the common rate of other men, when they know nothing as they ought, nothing with respect unto its proper principles. 2. This is the cause whence so many persons, using industry and diligence in the hearing of the word, do yet learn, thrive, and profit so little as they do. All preaching, at least for the most part, supposeth a knowledge of these first principles, without which, not one word that is spoken therein can well be understood. Many therefore being unacquainted with them, must of necessity lose that advantage by the preaching of the word, which otherwise they might attain. And this was the very case in hand between our apostle and the Hebrews, which put him to such a strait. He knew that it was his duty to declare to the church the whole counsel of God, and that in the deepest and most mysterious truths of the gospel, so carrying them on to perfection. But he also found that these things would prove unprofitable to many, because their minds were not as yet well inlaid with the first principles of the oracles of God. This put him to the strait he expresseth in the beginning of the sixth chapter. And so it falls out among ourselves. It is oftentimes a grief unto us to consider, how many of our hearers seem to have little advantage by the best of our endeavours, because of their ignorance in the supposed principles and foundations of what we deliver. Hence they hear, and go away altogether unconcerned in what they have heard; and, it may be, complain of the sermon or preacher, when the fault was solely in their own understandings. But as we ought, for the sake of some who are real beginners, to divert unto their instruction in those fundamental principles of religion; so we ought not, in a compliance with the sloth and negligence of them who have carelessly omitted the acquainting of themselves with these, cease our endeavour to carry on more diligent and thriving souls toward perfection, nor would Paul do so in this place. In the meantime, parents, masters, ministers, all in their several stations and capacities, ought to consider of how great importance it is to have all those committed to their care, or under their inspection, well instructed in those first principles of the oracles of God. 3. Hence it is that multitudes are so easily seduced into foolish and sottish errors, and such as overthrow the foundation of truth and faith in them who do entertain them. Things are proposed unto them under specious pretences, which at first seem

to have somewhat excellent and peculiar in them, and as far as they can discern, are of no evil tendency. But after they have embraced them, and are brought under their power, it is found, when it is too late, that they have virtually renounced the foundation of the gospel, but are now taken in the snare that cannot be broken, for it is for their life. 4. These principles are such, that if they alone are known, received, believed, obeyed, provided men's progress in knowledge be not obstructed by their own negligence, prejudices, or lusts, they may attain the end of faith and obedience in the salvation of their souls. They are such, as without the express knowledge whereof in those that are adult, the Scripture speaks nothing of any possibility of attaining unto life and immortality. And, as was declared before, the knowledge of them where they are not duly improved unto an increase in light, according to the means we do enjoy, is no way available. But upon a supposition, that a man is brought into an acquaintance with these principles of the oracles of God, in the want of means and advantages to carry him on towards perfection, in the knowledge of other principles of truth, useful and necessary in their places and circumstances, though he should be ignorant of them, or fall into errors about them, not inconsistent with, or destructive of the principles he hath received; they are sufficient in their own kind, to lead and conduct him unto rest with God. And as this consideration will not give the least countenance unto the sloth or negligence of any, who do or may enjoy the advantage of growing in the knowledge of God, and of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; so it is a relief with respect unto their condition, who by reason of the blindness of their pretended guides, or on any other occasion, are not supplied with the means of a farther improvement. And from what hath been discoursed it appears, both of what great importance it is unto our faith and obedience, to be well instructed in the chief principles of religion, as also what an inexcusable fault it is in those who for a season have enjoyed the means of instruction, to be found defective herein.

Obs. VI. They who live under the preaching of the gospel, are obnoxious to great and provoking sins, if they diligently watch not against them. Such was that of these Hebrews here mentioned. But hereof, as also of the danger of such sins, we must treat more afterwards.

It follows, as an illustration of what was before charged on the Hebrews, and to the same purpose; 'and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.' This allusion the apostle chose, to represent unto them the state or condition whereinto they were brought by their sinful negligence; as also, to give life and strength unto his reproof; and therefore, pursues it to the end of the chapter.

Γεγονατε, 'ye are become,' The word may be taken in a twofold sense. For, 1. It may signify, it appears what you are, and what you stand in need of. It may be, some have had other thoughts of you, by reason of your profession, and the time of instruction you enjoyed. You have had a name to live, and possibly to be in a very flourishing condition, as being the first church in the world, the mother in some sort of all other churches, and such as have had privileges which no other church ever had, or ever shall enjoy. But upon trial it is made manifest how dull and

slothful you have been, how ignorant you are, and how little you have improved your season. And it will, in like manner, be one day evident that many churches and persons who make a goodly appearance, on the account of their outward privileges and enjoyments, will be found when they are brought unto the balance of the sanctuary, to be light, empty, dead, and every way insufficient. But things are changed in the world. Churches are now esteemed of, or pretend unto an esteem, by their pleas of antiquity, outward order, solemnity of forms and a seemingly sacred grandeur, without the least respect unto the light, knowledge, and holiness of their members. In the days of the apostle, it was not so. Unless churches in their members did thrive in grace, knowledge, and holiness, they had no respect unto outward things though never so good in their place and order, but as aggravations of the sin and judgments of unprofitable professors. And this may be the sense of that expression, *γεγονατε*, ‘ye are become.’ For so are many things in the Scripture said then to be, when they are made manifest, or appear so to be.

2. It may be, the apostle by this expression, denotes a decay and declension in them. You are become; that is, now, what formerly you were not. So Chrysostome on the place; *ουκ ειπε χρειαν εχετε, αλλα γεγονατε χρειαν εχοντες· τουτεστι υμεις ηβηλησατε, υμεις εαντους εις τουτο κατεστησατε*, ‘this is that which you have now brought yourselves unto.’ They had been taught, and they had learned the things of the gospel. But now, through their carelessness, forgetfulness, and want of industry to grow in grace and knowledge, they were decayed into great darkness, ignorance, and confusion. And it is known, that this is no unusual thing among professors. Through their inadvertency, sinful negligence, worldly mindedness, they lose the knowledge which they had attained; and on a perverse continuance in such an evil course, through the righteous judgment of God, even all that they seemed to have, is taken from them. Knowledge may be lost as well as holiness, at least, as unto the degrees of it. And it is most probable, from the nature and tenor of his whole discourse, that this is the evil which the apostle chargeth them withal; which sufficiently manifests the greatness of their sin, and the danger of their condition. For it is worse with them who have, through their own default, lost what they attained in the ways of God, than with those who never attained what they ought to have attained. For the loss of light and knowledge proceeds from causes of a more enormous guilt, than a mere ignorance of them ordinarily doth, or indeed can do.

What they were thus become, as to their state and condition, the apostle in the same similitude expresses; 1. Positively they were such as had need, *γαλακτος*, ‘of milk.’ 2. Negatively, *και ου στερεας τροφης*, ‘and not of strong meat.’ *Χρειαν εχοντες*, in the same sense as *χρειαν εχετε* before, only as joined with *γεγονατε* it may intend their decay and declension into a worse estate than what they were in formerly; you are come to stand in need. In the similitude proposed, the word of God is compared to food, and the several sorts of it, both as to their nature and use. For it is the food of our souls. And natural food is distinguished by the apostle in this place into milk and

strong meat ; which gives us a distribution of the oracles of God, into two general heads also, answering in respect of use, unto those two sorts of food.

1. You have need of milk. *Γαλακτος*. The whole word of God is, it may be, sometimes compared absolutely unto milk, because of its purity and freedom from corrupt mixtures, whence it is fit for nourishment. 1 Pet. ii. 2, 'As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.' Nothing is of a more natural nourishment than milk, and it is never hurtful, but where the body is prepossessed with obstructions. These, in the mind, with respect to the word, the apostle in that place warns us to cast out. Ver. 1, 'Wherefore, laying aside all malice, and all guile, and envies, and evil speakings, as new born babes.' So James doth in like manner. ch. i. 21. In this place, I say, it is supposed that the whole gospel, the whole word of God, which is the food of our souls, is compared unto milk. But I rather judge, that even here, some especial part or doctrines of the word, suited to the condition of them to whom the apostle speaks, is intended. He calls them new born babes ; that is persons newly converted to Christ, and it may be, but weak in the faith. These, he adviseth to seek after suitable food in the word, for the nourishment of their souls, or for the strengthening them in faith and obedience. And that is those plain doctrines of truth, which were meet for them, who, as yet, were not capable of higher mysteries. It is, therefore, some parts of the word only, and some things taught therein, which are compared to milk, both with respect unto the nature and common use of it. It is a kind of food that is easy of digestion, needs no great strength of nature to turn it into nutriment, and is, therefore, the common nourishment of babes and children, and sick persons, not sufficing to maintain the health and strength of persons of full age and a healthy constitution. So our apostle useth the same similitude, 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2, 'And I brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat ; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are you able.' The same similitude, the same distribution of the parts of it is used, as in this place. The reason why babes are fed with milk, is, because they want strength of nature to digest stronger meat ; so he says, they were able to bear milk, but not strong meat spiritually. It is evident, therefore, what the apostle here understandeth by milk ; namely, such doctrines of truth, as he calls the first principles of the oracles of God. Plain and fundamental truths. Such, in some measure, they might be capable of, but not of the great and deep mysteries of the gospel. And he declares whom he intends by these babes ; even such as are carnal ; that is, such as by reason of their indulgence unto their carnal affections, had kept their souls in a weak and distempered condition, as unto spiritual things.

This condition of theirs, as it was a consequence of their own sin, so it was a grief and discouragement to him, who designed and earnestly desired to carry them unto perfection, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. And this

being the great end of the ministry towards the church, Eph. iv. 12, 13, it is no small trouble unto all that are faithful in the discharge of their office, when they find their hearers not so to thrive, as to be capable of receiving the highest mysteries of truth. It is grievous unto them, either always to dwell on the first rudiments of religion, or to treat of things which they fear to be above the capacity of their auditors. Their delight and satisfaction is, to be dispersing the mysteries of the gospel, and of the kingdom of God. Hereof, we have a most eminent instance in our apostle. His writing and his preaching to the churches were of the same kind, as in sundry places he doth declare. And we see that the greatest part of his epistles, is taken up with the declaration of the deepest mysteries of the will, wisdom, and counsel of God. And for this cause, he is now, by some, reflected on, as a person whose writings are obscure, and hardly to be understood. For men begin not to fear to cast the shame and guilt of their own ignorance, on a pretended obscurity in his writings. Thus these Hebrews had need of milk, and that not through the tenderness of their constitution, but by having contracted an ill habit of mind.

2. Negatively, he says, they had not need of ‘strong meat.’ That is, it was not expedient, in their present condition, to set it before them, unless they were first sufficiently excited out of their stupid negligence. *Στερεα τροφη*, is meat ‘yielding solid nourishment.’ Now, as in general all the principal mysteries of the gospel, that whole wisdom which he preached, *εν τοις τελειοις*, 1 Cor. ii. 6, ‘unto, or among them that were perfect’ or adult, and grown up unto some good measure in the stature of Christ, are intended hereby; so in especial, he hath respect unto the things which belong unto the priesthood and sacrifice of Christ. These are solid meat unto the souls of sound believers. And hereby Christians may take a due measure of their spiritual health, strength, and growth. If the solid doctrines concerning the offices of Christ, especially his priesthood and sacrifice, are suited to their minds and affections, if they find food and spiritual nourishment in them, it is a good evidence of their progress in the knowledge of Christ and the gospel. But if such things have neither taste nor relish in them, unto their spiritual appetite; if they do not readily digest them, nor find benefit by them, it is manifest they are but weak and feeble, as the apostle farther proves in the following verses. And we may observe, from the first sense of that expression, ‘you are become.’

Obs. VII. There will be a time, when false and unprofitable professors will be made manifest and discovered, either to their present conviction, or their eternal confusion. And from the second sense of it, it may be observed,

Obs. VIII. That men do oftentimes secretly wax worse and worse, under profession and means of grace. Of the causes and ways hereof, see our Exposition on ch. iv. 13.

Obs. IX. There are provisions of truth in the Scripture, suitable to the spiritual instruction and edification of all sorts of persons that belong to Jesus Christ. There is in it both milk and strong meat.

The disciples of Christ ever were, and ever will be in this world, of several sorts, sizes, and capacities. In the house of God, there are all sorts of vessels, of 'lesser and greater quantity, cups and flagons,' Isa. xxii. 24. There are in the church, 'babes, young men, and fathers,' 1 John ii. There are among the hearers of the gospel, persons sound, healthy, thriving, and those that are weak, sickly, and feeble. Their different ages and capacities, with their distinct measures of opportunities and diligence, their temptations and occasions of life, make this diversity necessary and unavoidable. As in the same flock of sheep, there are lambs and strong sheep, and ewes great with young. Now, in a house where there dwell together, old men and strong men, and children or babes, those that are healthy and those that are sick, if they should be all of them bound up unto the same diet or food, some of them must necessarily perish. But a wise householder will provide for them differently, according to their several states and capacities, that which shall be wholesome and convenient for them all; and the principal wisdom of the steward of the house, is to give out to every one a portion proper for him. So is it in the church of Christ, which is the family of God; and therefore, the great householder hath prepared his heavenly manna, according to the spiritual appetite and digestion of them all. As upon the receiving of manna, every one gathered, לֶפֶי אִכְלוֹ, Exod. xvi. 8, according to his appetite and need; so is the heavenly manna of the word disposed, that every one may have what suits him. There are in the word, as was said of old, fords where the lamb may wade, and depths where the elephant may swim. There are in it, plain doctrines and first principles, necessary unto all, and there are truths of a deeper search that are profitable to some. And concerning these things, we may observe, 1. That the Lord Christ hath an especial care of the weak, the young, the sick, and the diseased of his flock. There is indeed a difference to be put between those who are so invincibly by their natural infirmities, temptations, and tenderness in the ways of religion, and those who are so, through their own neglect and sloth, as it was with these Hebrews. The latter sort are severely to be admonished and rebuked. But to the former, Christ sheweth singular tenderness and compassion. So in the first place, he committeth unto Peter, the care and charge of his lambs, John xxi. 15. And the like affections he declareth in his own person, as he is the 'great shepherd of the sheep,' Isa. xl. 11. He will take care of the whole flock, according to the office and duty of a shepherd; but his especial care is concerning his lambs, and those that are with young. And in the severity which he threateneth against false and idle shepherds, he regards principally their neglect of the diseased, the sick, the broken, and that 'which is driven away,' Ezek. xxxiv. 4. These, therefore, in the dispensation of the gospel, must be carefully attended unto, and food convenient, or nourishment suitable to their state and condition, is carefully to be provided for them. And not only so, but they are in all things to be dealt withal, with the same gentleness, tenderness, and meekness, that Christ exerciseth towards them. He will one day call some to an account for rough and brutish usage of his lambs.

Whether they have hindered them from being fed, according to their necessity, or have driven them from their pasture, or have farther exercised severity against them, it must be all accounted for, unto the love and care of Christ. But, 2dly. The delight of Christ is in them that thrive and are strong in the faith, as those from whom he receives most of honour and glory. We, therefore, ought to aim that they may all be such, such as may take in and thrive upon solid food, the deeper mysteries of the gospel. To pretend, from Christ's care of the weak, that those other, more deep and mysterious truths, which the apostle compareth unto strong meat, are needless to be inquired into, is highly blasphemous. This some are come unto; they think we have no need to search into the principal mysteries of the gospel, but to take up with the plain lessons of morality, which are given us therein, and in other good books besides. But a higher reflection on the wisdom of God, men can scarcely contract the guilt of. To what end hath he revealed these things unto us? Why hath he recorded that revelation in his word? Why doth he appoint his whole counsel so revealed, to be declared and preached? Certainly never was any thing more unwisely contrived, than the giving the Scripture to the church, if it be not our duty to endeavour an acquaintance with the principal things contained in it. But these men seem not to know the design of God towards his church. They may learn it if they please from our apostle, Eph. iv. 7—14. It is not merely that men may have so much light and knowledge, faith and obedience, as will, as it were, serve their turn to bring them at last to heaven, though no pretended measures of these things, are sufficient for that end, where men rest in them to the neglect of farther attainments; but God aimeth to bring men unto clearer discoveries of his wisdom, grace, and love, than they have yet attained; into nearer communion with himself; to a fuller growth in light, knowledge, faith, and experience; that even in this world, he may more eminently communicate of himself unto them, which he doth, in and by the truths which they despise. These truths and doctrines, therefore, also, which the apostle calls strong meat for them that are of full age, are to be searched, inquired into, and preached. Wherefore, hence it will follow in general; 1. That it is the wisdom of the dispensers of the gospel, to consider what doctrines are most suitable unto the capacity and condition of their hearers. And in particular, 2. That it is a preposterous and unprofitable course, to instruct them in the greater mysteries of the gospel, who have not, as yet, well laid the foundation in understanding the more common and obvious principles of it, which the apostle confirms and illustrates.

VER. 13, 14.—*For every one that useth milk, is unskilful in the word of righteousness; for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth unto them that are of full age, even those who, by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

These verses contain a further illustration and confirmation of what was before asserted; and a reason is added with respect unto the He-

brews, why they stood in need of milk, and not of strong meat. To this end the apostle gives a description of the two sorts of hearers before mentioned. First. Of those that use milk, ver. 13, that is, who ought so to do. Secondly. Of those unto whom strong meat doth more properly appertain, ver. 14. Of the first he says, 'Every one that useth milk, is unskilful in the word of righteousness.' It may be the reasoning of the apostle would have seemed more perspicuous, if the subject and predicate of this proposition had been changed. As if he had said, Those who are unskilful in the word of righteousness, had need of milk. And so he speaks in the next verse; where those who are of full age, and have their senses exercised to discern good and evil, are said to have need, or use of strong meat. But all comes to the same purpose. Having told them in the verse foregoing that they were such as had need of milk, he describes in this what sort of persons they are, who are in that condition, even such as are unskilful in the word of righteousness; such are babes.

Πας ὁ μετεχων γαλακτος, quisquis lacte participatur. This is the subject spoken of. Every one who is of the number of them, who by reason of their infirm, weak state and condition ought to be fed and nourished with milk. What is this milk, what is intended by it, and what it is to be fed with it, hath been already declared. It is mentioned here only to repeat the subject spoken of, and which is farther to be described. For he is,

Απειρος λογου δικαιοσυνης. 'Unskilful,' say we. Rudis, inexpertus. Properly one that hath no experience, as in the margin of our translation. So any one is said to be inexpertus armorum, 'unexpert in arms.' So David put off Saul's armour, no doubt excellent in itself, because he had not been so exercised in such arms, as to be ready and expert in them. Απειρος is, he who is unacquainted with any thing, either as to its nature, or its use. And when this is referred unto the understanding, it is not amiss rendered, by want of skill, unskilful. And this is spoken of him, not who is utterly ignorant of any matter, but who having some general knowledge of it, is not able wisely to manage and improve it unto its proper end. And it is spoken with respect unto the word of righteousness.

Λογου δικαιοσυνης. One thinks that by δικαιοσυνη here, τελειοτης is intended. Λογος τελειοτητος; and this is put for τελειος; and λογος τελειος, is the same with that σοφια, 1 Cor. ii. 6, and γνωσις, Eph. iii. 10. But whatever we please of fancy, may be thus collected out of any word or text, by hopping from one thing to another, without any reason or consequence; this word of righteousness, is no other but the word or doctrine of the gospel. It is λογος σταυρου, the word of the cross from its principal subject, 1 Cor. i. And it is λογος δικαιοσυνης, from its nature, use, and end. Therein is the righteousness of God revealed unto us, Rom. i. 17, and the righteousness of Christ, or Christ, as he is the end of the law for righteousness to them that do believe, Rom. x. 4, and so alone declares the way of righteousness; what that is which God approves and accepts, and how we come to be interested therein, as we shall see afterwards more at large.

Now the Hebrews are not said to be ignorant, that is utterly of this

word of righteousness, for they owned and made profession of the gospel; but only to be unskilful in it, especially in the great mysteries of it, such as he was now communicating unto them. They had not attained unto a distinct and clear understanding of the truths of the gospel, so as to be able to improve them to their proper ends; or they had not experience in themselves of their power, efficacy, and reality.

Lastly. The apostle gives the general reason of this whole state and condition, whence it is thus with any one; *νηπιος γαρ εστι* 'it can be no otherwise with such a one, seeing he is but a babe.' He intends, therefore, in the former words, not such as use milk occasionally, but such as feed on milk only. Such are *νηπιοι*. The word is used to signify either the least sort of children, such as we call babes; or, such as are weak and foolish like them. The allusion is unto the first sort; such as live on milk alone. There are sundry qualities that are proper unto children; as, simplicity, innocency, submission, weakness, and ignorance. And because these are different, believers are sometimes, with respect unto some of those qualities, compared unto them, and sometimes are forbidden to be like them, with respect unto others of them. David says himself, that he was as a weaned child, because of his submission, and the resignation of his will unto the will of God, Ps. cxxxi. 2. And our Saviour requires us to receive the kingdom of God as little children, casting out those perverse and distempered affections and passions, which are apt to retard us in our duty, Matt. xviii. 3; Luke xviii. 17. And on the other side, with respect unto that weakness, ignorance, and inconstancy which they are under the power of, we are forbidden to be like them, 1 Cor. xiv. 20; Eph. iv. 14. Here the respect unto a babe is upon the account of these latter qualities. 'Such,' saith Chrysostome, 'as must be fed with milk; for, being left unto themselves, they will put dirt and straw into their mouths.' And it is plain what sort of persons the apostle intendeth in this description. They are such, as enjoying the dispensation of the word, or who have done so for some season, yet through their own sloth and negligence, have made little or no proficiency in spiritual knowledge. Such persons are babes, and have need of milk, and are not capable of instruction in the more heavenly mysteries of the gospel. And we may observe, that,

Obs. I. The gospel is the only word of righteousness in itself and unto us.—Utterly in vain will it be to seek for any material concernment of righteousness elsewhere. The law was originally a word of righteousness, both in itself, and unto us. As it was in our hearts, it was that effect of the righteousness of God in us, whereby we were made conformable, and like unto him, which was our righteousness, Eph. iv. 24; Col. iii. 10; Eccles. vii. 29. As written in tables of stone, it was a transcript of what was created in our hearts, representing the righteousness of God objectively, in the way of doctrine, as the other did subjectively, by the way of principle. The sum of its precepts and promises was, 'Do this and live;' or, 'the man that doth these things shall live by them,' Rom. x. 5, from Levit. xviii. 5; Ezek. xx. 11; Deut. xxx. 12. Hence it was every way a complete word of righteousness. And on all occasions it is in the Scripture pleaded as

just or righteous, holy, equal, good, such as God was glorified in, and man had no reason to complain of. But now, upon the entrance of sin, this law, although it continue eternally righteous in itself, yet it is no longer a word of righteousness unto us. Nay, it is become an occasion of more sin and more wrath, and on both accounts, of a greater distance between God and us, which are contrary to that righteousness which it was originally the word of, Rom. iv. 15; vii. 10—13. We were dead, and it could not give life, and after we were once sinners, it could do nothing at all towards the making of us righteous, Rom. viii. 3, 4. Wherefore, the gospel is now the only word of righteousness, both in itself and unto us. It is so declaratively, as the only means of its revelation; and it is so efficiently, as the only means of its communication unto us.

First. It is so declaratively,

First. Because therein is revealed the righteousness of God, Rom. i. 17. This at first was revealed by the law; but now as to our interest in it, and benefit by it, it is revealed only by the gospel. For that declaration of the righteousness of God, which remains in the law, although it is pure and holy in itself, tends not to beget righteousness in us, nor to give us peace with God. This therefore is done only by the gospel, and that on several accounts.

For, 1. Therein the righteousness and severity of God against sin is more fully revealed, than ever it was or could be by the law, in its sanction, or most severe execution. It is true our apostle tells us, that the knowledge of sin is by the law, that is, of what sin is, or what is sin; but the knowledge of what it deserves in the righteousness of God, is made more openly manifest by the gospel. Had God executed the sentence of the law on all offenders, he had thereby declared that he would not pardon sin; but in the gospel he declares that he could not do so, with the honour of his holiness, without an equivalent price and satisfaction. His righteousness and severity against sin, are more fully manifested in the suffering and sacrifice of Christ to make atonement for sin, which are the foundations of the gospel, than ever they could have been in or by the law, Rom. iii. 25, viii. 2, 3.

2. The faithfulness of God in the accomplishment of his promises, is frequently in the Scripture called his righteousness, and it is so. And the first express promise that God ever gave unto his creatures, was concerning Christ and his coming in the flesh, Gen. iii. 15. From this did all other promises of God arise, as from their spring and fountain, and upon the accomplishment thereof, doth all their accomplishments depend. For if this be not fulfilled, whatever appearance there may be of any such thing, yet indeed no one promise of God was yet ever fulfilled from the foundation of the world. Hereon then alone depended the declaration of the righteousness of God, as it consists in his faithfulness. And this is done in and by the gospel, which is a declaration of God's fidelity in the accomplishment of that ancient, that original promise, Rom. xv. 8; Luke i. 70; Acts iii. 18, 24—26.

3. The righteousness which God requireth, approveth, accepteth, is therein alone declared and revealed. And this is frequently also called the 'righteousness of God,' 2 Cor. v. 21; Rom. x. 3, or the 'righteousness of God,'

teousness which is of God by faith,' Phil. iii. 9. It is not now the righteousness revealed in the law that God doth require of us, as knowing it impossible unto us. But it is that righteousness only, wherein 'Christ is the end of the law for righteousness unto them that do believe,' Rom. viii. 3, 4; x. 3, 4. Hence,

Secondly. The gospel is the word of righteousness declaratively, because it alone reveals unto us, our own righteousness; that is, what God requireth in us, and will accept from us. This is the great inquiry of mankind not utterly hardened in sin; that is, who are not one half in hell already; namely, what they shall do for a righteousness wherewith to appear before God, to answer his justice and to be accepted with him; for these are the ends of our righteousness, that it must do, or it will not avail us. Here, mankind left unto themselves and unto the law, would wander everlastingly, until they were swallowed up in eternal ruin. And a thousand paths have they been tracing to this purpose. And after every thing within them, without them, about them, above them, hath said unto them, this is not the way, they must all, after they have walked a little while in the light of the fire, and the sparks they have kindled, receive this from the hand of God, that they shall lie down in sorrow, Isa. l. 11. See the loss they are brought unto, expressed, Micah vi. 6, 7. But here the gospel ariseth like the sun in its brightness, dispelling all darkness and mists, and evidently declares a righteousness satisfactory unto all the wants and whole design of the soul. A righteousness suited to the holiness of God, answering his justice, becoming ours in a way expressing the goodness, grace, and love of God, whereby all the holy properties of his nature are glorified, and our souls secured. And this is the righteousness of Christ, both in what he did and suffered for us, or in our stead, imputed unto us, or reckoned unto us for our righteousness, through faith in him. This is declared in the gospel alone, and indeed, the whole gospel is nothing but the declaration of it in its nature, causes, effects, and consequents. Hence, principally is the gospel called a word of righteousness, as being that blessed mystery and truth, wherein the righteousness of God, of Christ and man, do meet and centre to the eternal glory of God, the honour of Christ, and to our salvation.

Thirdly. It is a word of righteousness declaratively, because the doctrine thereof doth clearly and eminently teach and instruct us to be righteous, with that righteousness which consisteth in universal holiness, and fruitfulness in good works; that is, in the discharge of all duties towards God and man. This also, is called our righteousness, and therein are we commanded to be righteous, 1 John iii. 7. And although all duties of righteousness and holiness are taught and enjoined by the law, yet this is done more perfectly, fully, and clearly by the gospel. For therein, the nature of them is more explained, directions instructive for their due performance, are more full of light, plain and evident, and enforcements of them are administered, far more effectual than under the law. The doctrine of the gospel is universally a doctrine of holiness and righteousness, allowing not the least countenance, indulgence, or dispensation on any pretence, to the least

sin ; but condemning the inmost disorders of the heart, with the same severity that it doth, the outward perpetration of actual sin, nor allowing a discharge from any duty whatever. See Tit. ii. 11, 12. And there is no more required of us in this world, but that our conversation be such as becometh the gospel. And those who, upon any pretence do make it the ministry of sin and unrighteousness, shall bear their own judgment.

Secondly. It is the word of righteousness efficiently ; as it is the instrument of communicating righteousness unto us, or of making us righteous. For, 1. Take our righteousness for that wherewith we are righteous before God, the righteousness of God in Christ, and it is tendered unto, or communicated unto us, by the promises of the gospel alone, Acts ii. 38, 39. 2. Faith, whereby we receive those promises, and Christ in them, with righteousness unto life, is wrought in us by the preaching of the gospel, Rom. x. 17. And 3. Our sanctification and holiness is wrought in us thereby, John xvii. 17. Which things ought to be more largely explained, but that I must now contract my discourse. Wherefore, on all these accounts, and with respect unto all other real concernments of it, the gospel is in itself and unto us the word of righteousness. Therefore,

Obs. II. It is a great aggravation of the negligence of persons under the dispensation of the gospel, that it is a word of righteousness. To evince this, it is here so called by the apostle, that such persons may know what it is that they neglect and despise. To be regardless of any message from God, not to attend unto it diligently, not to use and pursue it unto its proper end, is a high affront to the divine Majesty. But, whereas this message from God is such a word of righteousness, wherein all the concerns of God's righteousness and our own are enwrapt, this is the highest aggravation that our disobedience is capable of. Consider also,

Obs. III. That God requires of all those who live under the dispensation of the gospel, that they should be skilful in the word of righteousness. These are blamed here, who, after the time they had enjoyed in hearing, were yet unskilful in it ; and this is part of that great and severe charge which the apostle, in this place, manageth against some of the Hebrews. Now, this skill in the gospel which is required of us, respecteth either doctrines or things. As the doctrine of the gospel is respected, so it is practical knowledge that is intended. As it respects things, so it is experience. And this, the word in the original casts a regard upon ; whence we place in the margin, as the true signification of it, 'hath no experience.' I shall not absolutely exclude either sense. And as to the first, or skill, as it is a practical knowledge, it is an ability, readiness, or dexterity, to use things unto their proper ends. It supposeth a notional knowledge of their nature, use, and end ; and asserteth an ability and dexterity to employ them accordingly. As he who was skilful in a trade or mystery, is able to manage the rules, tools, and instruments of it, unto their proper end. Wherefore in the duty proposed, it is supposed that a man have the knowledge of the doctrines of the gospel, and it is required that he be able readily to manage them to their proper ends. To know the

nature of this duty, we must consider what are these ends of the gospel, with respect whereunto, it is required of us, that we be able skilfully to use and improve the truths of it. I shall name only three of them.

First. The increase and establishment of our faith. There is nothing to us of greater concern, nor is it otherwise to be done, but by the word of the gospel. Thereby is faith first ingenerated, and thereby alone is it nourished, strengthened, and increased. It is the seed, it is the food, it is the life of faith. Wherein, then, consists the dexterity and ability of using the doctrine of the gospel, unto the strengthening and preserving of our faith, which is required of us? It may be reduced unto these three heads.

1. The clearing and due application of its proper object unto it. Christ is the peculiar, immediate, and proper object of faith, and through him do we believe in God, 1 Pet. i. 21. Now he is every way the proper object of faith, in his person, offices, work, righteousness, revealed, declared, and proposed unto us, in the doctrine and promises of the gospel. Herein, therefore, consists our skill in the word of righteousness, in having in a readiness and duly applying, by faith, the doctrine and promises concerning Christ and his mediation. These are the nourishment of faith, whereby it grows and gets strength, by the genuine and proper exercise of it, 2 Cor. iii. 18. And where this skill is wanting, where persons are not able, out of their own stores, to present their faith daily with suitable objects, as tendered in the doctrine and promises of the gospel, it will decay, and all the fruits of it will wither.

2. This skill in the word of righteousness, is exercised in the preservation of faith, by a resistance unto the temptations that rise up against it. The great way of preserving faith in the assaults of Satan, is to have in a readiness, some suitable and seasonable word out of the gospel whereby it may be assisted and excited. Then will faith be able to hold up its shield, whereby the fiery darts of Satan will be quenched. So dealt our Lord Jesus Christ himself in his temptation. No sooner did Satan make any assault upon him, but immediately he repelled his weapons, and secured his faith, by a suitable word out of the Scripture, all whose stores lay open to him, who was of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord. He, therefore, who is skilful in the gospel, will have in a readiness and be able dexterously to manage seasonable precepts, promises, warnings, instructions, and to oppose them unto all the suggestions of Satan, unto the preservation and security of his faith. Others will be at a loss, and not know what to do when temptations do befall them; yea, commonly they are bewildered in their own darkness, and by their own reasonings, until they are taken in the snares of the evil one. There is a peculiar antidote in the Scripture against the poison of every temptation, or suggestion of Satan. If we have them in a readiness, and are skilful in the application of them, it will be our safety, or our healing.

3. Hereby alone is faith secured against the cunning crafts of men that lie in wait to deceive. It is known, how variously and continu-

ally faith is assaulted by the crafts, violences, and sophisms of seducers; as, for instance, those who have 'erred concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is past already.' And what is the issue of it? They overthrow the faith of some; as 2 Tim. ii. 18. The like may be said of all other important doctrines of evangelical truth. And we see what havoc hath been made among professors by this means; how not only the faith of some, but of multitudes in our days, hath been overthrown hereby. And the reason is, because they have not been skilful in the word of righteousness, nor have known how to draw out from that magazine of sacred truths, that which was necessary for the defence of their faith. The Scripture was the tower of David, built for an armoury, wherein there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men. There are weapons prepared in abundance for the defence of faith, if we are but ready and dexterous in their management. It may be spoken with a confidence, which the truth will warrant, that the reasons why so many do fall from the faith of the gospel, unto Popery, Quakerism, or the like, may be reduced unto these two heads: 1. The satisfaction of some special lust, perverse humour, or inclination. And, 2. Want of skill in the word of righteousness, as it is such; all other pretences are but shades and coverings of these true reasons of apostasy. And so there are two sorts of persons that fall from the faith.

First. Such as principally seduce themselves by their own lusts and several interests. *Ἀνθρώποι κατεφθαρμένοι τον νουν, ἀδοκιμοὶ περὶ τὴν πίστιν*, 2 Tim. iii. 8; 1 Tim. vi. 5. Men of corrupt minds, that refuse and reject the truth for the love of their lusts and sins. And,

Secondly. Such as are deceived and seduced; and they are *ἀκακοί*, 'not perversely evil,' Rom. xvi. 18, but unstable, because unskilful in the word.

There are two ways whereby, or two cases wherein, we have need to secure our faith against the oppositions of men, and both of them depend on our skilfulness in the word.

1. When we are to prove and concern the truth against them. So it is said of Apollos, that 'he mightily convinced the Jews, showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ,' Acts xviii. 28. But how was he able so to do? Because he himself was mighty in the Scriptures, ver. 24, that is, he was ready and skilful in the word of righteousness, and this whilst he was only a private disciple.

2. When we are to defend it against the opposition of gainsayers. And their mouths can no otherwise be stopped. If men be but skilful and ready in the Scriptures, though destitute of all advantages of learning, it is inexpressible how able they will be, and such persons have been, in confounding all the sophistry of the most subtle adversaries of the truth; when, without this ability, men lie to be seized on as a prey by the next seducer. Wherefore, without the duty here enjoined, we may easily see what on all accounts our condition is, with respect unto our faith.

Secondly. The next end of the doctrines of the gospel, which we need this skill to manage them unto, is the guidance of us in the whole course of our duty, that we be not out of our way, nor at a loss

about it. The word is our rule, our guide, our light, in all our walking before God. But if we have not an acquaintance with it, if we are not ready to use and apply it, we shall never walk steadily nor uprightly.

1. This is our guide in the whole course of our lives. 'Thy statutes,' saith David, 'are the men of my counsel,' those with whom he advised on all occasions. They who are skilful in the word, in the precepts, directions, and instructions of it, have their rule in a readiness for all occasions of duty, and in the whole course of their affairs. The way wherein they should walk, will still be represented unto them, whilst others wander in the dark, and at best walk at peradventure or hazard with God; which we render, 'walking contrary unto him,' Lev. xxvi. 21.

2. In particular difficult cases, which often befall us in the course of our conversation in this world. Such as these, where men are unskilful in the word, do either entangle them, and fill them with perplexities, so as that they are at their wit's end, and know not what to do; or else they violently and presumptuously break through them, to the wounding of their consciences, and the hardening of their spirits against a sense of sin. But he who is thoroughly acquainted with the word, and is able dexterously to apply it to all occasions of duty, will extricate himself from these straits in a due manner. For there is no case of this nature can befall us, but there are rules and directions in the Scripture that will guide us safely through it, if we are skilful in their application.

3. The right discharge of all duties towards others depends hereon, and without it we fail more or less in them all. Hence are we enabled to admonish, exhort, instruct, comfort, and reprove, those in whom we are concerned; and that with such authority, as may have an influence on their minds and consciences. Without this, we know neither the true nature, grounds, nor reasons of any one duty which we perform towards others, nor can make use of those things which only will make what we say or do effectual. As therefore it is so, with respect to the increase and preservation of our faith, so also with regard to all our duties, during the whole course of our obedience, it is necessary that we should be skilful in the word of righteousness.

Thirdly. Consolation in distress depends hereon. Of this the Scripture is the only storehouse. Whatever is taken from any other stores and applied to that purpose, is but vanity and froth. Here all the springs, principles, causes, reasons, arguments for true consolation of mind in distresses, are treasured up. And on what various occasions, and how frequently these cases occur wherein we stand in need of especial consolation, we all know by experience. And in them all, it is unavoidable that we must either be left to darkness and sorrow, or betake ourselves to reliefs that are worse than our troubles, if we have not in a readiness those grounds of solid consolation with which the Scripture is stored. But whatever are our sorrows or troubles, however aggravated or heightened, whatever be their circumstances, from what cause soever they arise, of sins or suffering, our own, or others, in whom we are concerned, if we are skilful in the

word of righteousness, we may at all times and places, in prisons, dungeons, exiles, have in readiness wherewith to support and refresh our souls. And this I thought meet to add for the discovery of the importance of that duty, a defect whereof is here blamed in the Hebrews by our apostle.

Again, The word *απειρος*, signifies ‘want of experience,’ and so it respects the things of the gospel. With respect to them it is said, ‘they have not experience of the word of righteousness,’ that is, of the things contained in it, and of their power. And in this sense also it deserves our consideration. For the want of this experience, where we have had time and means for it, is both our great fault, and our great disadvantage. Now by this experience, I intend, a spiritual sense, taste or relish of the goodness, sweetness, useful excellency of the truths of the gospel, endearing our hearts to God, and causing us to adhere to him with delight and constancy. And this experience, which is of so great use and advantage, consists in three things.

1. A thorough mixture of the promises with faith. This I shall not enlarge on, because I have spoken to it expressly in the first verse of the fourth chapter. In brief, it is that lively acting of faith which the Scripture expresseth by tasting, eating, drinking, which gives a real incorporation of the things we are made partakers of. When faith is assiduously acted on the promises of God, so as that the mind or soul is filled with the matters of them, and virtue goes forth from them in all its actings, as they will be influenced by every object that it is filled withal, then the foundation is laid of their experience. This the apostle intends, Eph. iii. 17, ‘That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.’ Faith, by its frequent lively actings on Christ, brings him, as it were, to make a constant residence in the heart, where he always puts forth his power, and the efficacy of his grace.

2. In a spiritual sense of the excellency of the things believed, wherewith the affections are touched and filled. This is our taste, how that the Lord is gracious. And hence are we said to be filled with joy in believing, as also to have the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, which with sundry things of the same nature, belong to this experience. And no tongue can express that satisfaction which the soul receives in the gracious communication of a sense of divine goodness, grace, and love to it in Christ, whence it rejoiceth with joy unspeakable and full of glory. And this is different from the evanid joys of hypocrites. They are all from without, occasional, depending merely on something peculiar in the dispensation of the word, and on some circumstances of their own condition, which they are commensurate to, not engaging the heart to greater love, and more firm adherence to God, but issue absolutely in the present satisfaction of the affections. But that love, delight, and joy, which are a part or effect of spiritual experience, have their root within, namely, in those actings of faith we before described. They are the fruits and flowers of it, which may be excited by external occasions, but proceed not from them. And therefore are they abiding, though liable to depressions and interruptions. But to be sure they always increase our love of, and strengthen our adherence to God.

3. In experiments of the power of the word, on all occasions, especially as it is a word of righteousness. Sundry useful instances might here be insisted on, I shall mention two only.

1. There is in it a sense of the power of the word in giving peace with God. This is the difficultest thing in the world to be impressed on the mind of a man, really and seriously convinced of the guilt of sin. Many ways such a one cannot but try to find some rest and satisfaction, but all after some vain promises, do issue in disappointments. But when the soul doth really close with that way which it is directed to by the gospel; that is, when it mixeth it with faith as a word of righteousness, the authority of the word in the conscience doth secure it, that its peace is firm and stable. This is to have an experiment of the word, when we find our souls satisfied and fortified by the authority of it, against all oppositions, that through Christ we are accepted of God, and are at peace with him.

2. In satisfying the heart to choose and prefer spiritual, invisible, and eternal things, before those that are present, and offer us the security of their immediate enjoyment. When we are satisfied that it is good for us, that it is best for us to forego present earthly things, which we see and handle, and know full well the comfort, benefit, and advantage of, for those things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor can they by any reasonings of our own take place in the conceptions of our hearts, merely on the authority of the word, testifying to the excellency and certainty of these invisible things; then have we an experiment of the power of the word. Now as the experience intended consists in these things, so it is easy to discern of how great importance it is, and how much it is our duty to endeavour it.

In the fourteenth verse, which completes the antithesis proposed, and wherein the apostle issues his discourse on this matter, four things are expressed. 1. The persons concerning whom he speaks, in opposition to them whom he called *νηπιοι*, or 'babes,' and these are *οι τελειοι*, 'those that are full of age.' 2. The food that is proper for them, in opposition to the milk of babes, and that is *στερεα τροφη*, 'strong meat,' or sound solid nourishment. 3. A description of them, giving an account of what is said concerning the meetness of strong meat to them, and that is, because they are such as have *αισθητηρια γεγυμνασμενα*, 'their senses exercised to discern good and evil,' which belongs to the description of the subject of the proposition, 'those of full age.' 4. The means whereby they came into this condition: it was *δια την εξιν*, 'by reason of a habit,' use, or practice they had got. And these things must be explained.

1. *Τελειοι*, as opposed to *νηπιοι*, naturally are persons adult, grown up, come to full age. So our apostle makes the opposition, Eph. iv. 13, 14. He would have us come by the knowledge of God, *εις ανδρα τελειον*, 'to a perfect man,' that we should be no more *νηπιοι*, 'children,' tossed up and down, which things in both places are morally to be understood. As *νηπιοι*, therefore are persons weak, ignorant, and unstable in spiritual things, so *τελειοι* are those who have their understandings enlarged, and their minds settled in the knowledge of Christ, or the mysteries of the gospel.

Τελειος, also without respect to *νηπιος*, taken absolutely, is perfect and complete, one as to whom nothing is wanting. *עמם*, *integer*, *rectus*, 'upright, sincere, perfect.' In that sense were they said to be perfect under the Old Testament, who were upright and sincere in their obedience. But this, in general, is not the perfection here intended, for it only respects an especial qualification of the mind, with regard to the truths of the gospel. This our apostle mentions, 1 Cor. ii. 6, *σοφίαν λαλοῦμεν ἐν τελείοις*, 'we speak wisdom,' that is, declare the mysteries of the gospel, 'among them that are perfect,' that is, such whose minds being freed from corrupt prejudices, are enlightened by the Spirit of God, and themselves thereby initiated into the mysteries of Christ. And these he afterwards calls spiritual men, or such as have received the Spirit of Christ, whereby we know the things that are freely given us of God, ver. 12.

And there are also degrees in this perfection, seeing it is not absolute. For that which is so, the apostle denies to have been in himself, Phil. iii. 12. Much less is it in any of us, or attainable by us. But to every one of us, 'grace is given according to the measure of the gift of Christ.' An equal measure is not designed to all, Eph. iv. 13. Every one hath his distinct size, stature, or age, which he is to arrive to. So every one may grow up to be a perfect man, though one be taller and stronger than another. And to bring every man to perfection, according to his measure, is the design of the work of the ministry, Col. i. 28. So when any grace is raised to a constant sincere exercise, it is said to be perfect, 1 John iv. 18. Wherefore the *τελείοι* here, the perfect, or those of full age, are such as being instructed in the doctrine of the gospel, and using diligence in attending thereunto, have made a good progress, according to their means and capacities, in the knowledge of Christ and his will.

2. To this sort of hearers, *στερεα τροφή*, 'strong meat' doth belong, that is, it is to be provided for them, and proposed to them. This is useful for their state and condition. What is intended by this strong meat, food, or nourishment, hath been declared already.

3. The reason is subjoined whence it is that strong meat belongs to these persons, or rather, a further description of them is added, whence it will appear that it doth so. They have their senses exercised to discern good and evil. And we must inquire, 1. What are the senses intended. 2. How they are exercised. 3. What it is to discern both good and evil.

1. For the first,—The allusion is still continued between infants and those that are adult. Infants have all their senses. For *αἰσθητήρια*, are properly, *sensuum organa*, 'the organs of the external senses.' These infants have, even eyes, ears, and the like. And they have their internal sense in its principle. But they know not how to use them to any advantage. They cannot by their taste distinguish between food which is good and wholesome, and that which is noxious or pernicious. And the senses intended are the faculties of understanding and judging spiritual things; the abilities of the mind to discern, judge, and determine concerning them. And these in several degrees, are really in all sorts of hearers, babes, and those of full age.

But, 2. In those of full age, these senses are *γεγυμνασμενα*, ‘exercised.’ This makes the distinction. They are not so in babes. Hence they are not ready and expedite in their acts about their proper objects. They can neither make a right judgment about spiritual truths, nor duly apprehend the mysteries of the gospel when proposed to them; and that because the intellectual faculties of their minds are not exercised spiritually about them. And the word doth not denote an actual exercise, but that readiness, ability, and fitness for any thing which is attained by an assiduous exercise. As a soldier who is trained is ready for his duty, or a wrestler for prizes (whence the allusion is taken) to his strivings. Wherefore, to have our senses exercised in the way intended, is to have our understandings and minds, through a constant sedulous study, meditation, prayer, hearing of the word, and the like means of the increase of grace and knowledge, to become ready, fit, and able to receive spiritual truths, and to turn them into nourishment for our souls. For so it follows, they are thus exercised.

3. *Προς διακρισιν καλου τε και κακου*. ‘To the discerning of good and evil.’ *Διακρισις*, is an exact judgment, putting a difference between things proposed to us. A determination on a right discerning of the different natures of things. And that which this judging and determining faculty is here said to be exercised about, is good and evil. But whereas they are doctrines and propositions of truth that the apostle treats concerning, it might be expected that he should have said to the discerning or disjudication of what is true and false. But, 1. The allusion to food, which he still carries on, requires that it should be thus expressed. Of that which is or may be proposed as food to us, some is wholesome and nourishing, some hurtful and noxious;—the first is good, the latter evil. 2. Though the first consideration of doctrines be, whether they be true or false, yet on that supposition the principal consideration of them concerns their subject-matter, whether it be good or evil to our souls, whether it tend to our edification or destruction. But whereas it is the oracles of God that are the food proposed, and no evil can be supposed to be in them, what need this faculty of discerning in this case between good and evil? 1. The similitude required a respect to both, because food of both sorts may be proposed or set before us. 2. Though nothing but what is good be prepared for us in the Scripture,—in the oracles of God; yet this ability of judging or discerning between good and evil, is necessary to us in the dispensation of them. For, 1. That may, by some, be proposed unto us, as taken from the Scripture, which indeed is not so,—which is not wholesome food, but mere poison to the souls of men. Such are those hurtful and noisome opinions which men of corrupt minds do vent, pretending that they are derived from the Scripture, wherein indeed, they are condemned. Or, 2. Without this spiritual ability we may ourselves misapprehend, or misapply that which is true in its proposal, whereby it may become evil and noxious to us. To avoid these dangers, it is necessary that we have our senses exercised to the discerning both of good and evil. Wherefore, these persons of full age, are such as are meet to have the mysteries of the gospel, and those especially about the priesthood and sacrifice of

Christ preached to them, seeing their minds and understandings are so exercised about things evangelical, as that they are able to judge aright about the things proposed to them, discerning their goodness and suitableness to the nourishment of their souls, as also to discover what is evil, and to reject it.

4. This ability is attained, *δια την εξιν*, ‘by reason of use.’ *Ἐξιν*, is ‘a habit;’ and a habit is a firm rooted disposition, giving readiness to, and facility in acts about its proper object. Now, the apostle intends such a habit as is acquired by use and exercise; whence we render it *use*. The first principle or spring of spiritual light, is infused by the Holy Ghost. The improvement hereof into a fixed habit, is by constant and continual exercise. Now, this habit or use respects all the ways and means that are appointed for our increase in the knowledge of the mysteries of the gospel. For hereby the mind being accustomed unto the senses of the word of God, is enabled to make a right judgment of what is proposed unto it. The observations further clearing the sense of the words, wherewith we shall close our exposition of this chapter, are these that ensue.

Obs. I. The word of the gospel, in the dispensation of it, is food provided for the souls of men.—A supposition hereof runs through this whole discourse of the apostle, and hath been occasionally spoken unto before. But it being that which leads and determines the sense of this verse also, as to what is instructive in it, it must be touched on again. There is a new spiritual life wrought in all that believe,—the life by virtue whereof they live unto God. The only outward means used by God in the communication of this life unto us, is the word of the gospel, 1 Pet. i. 23; James i. 18. Of this life God takes the care, and preserves it. It is the new creature, that in us which is born of God, by virtue whereof we are admitted into his family. And God will not bring forth, and then suffer that which is born of him to be starved. Now, every-thing is increased and maintained by the same means whereby it is ingenerated or begun. Wherefore the provision that God makes for this new creature, the food he prepareth for it, is his word, 1 Peter ii. 1, 2, 3. Hereon the preservation of our spiritual life, our growth, increase, and strength, doth absolutely depend. Hence, wherever God will have a church, there he will preserve his word; and where he absolutely takes that away, he hath no more family, no more church. So when the woman, through the persecution of the dragon, was driven into the wilderness, into an obscure distressed condition, yet God took care that there she should be fed, Rev. xii. 6. She was never utterly deprived of the food of the word. It is true, the provision which he makes hereof, is sometimes more plentiful, and sometimes more strait; yet will he never suffer it to be so removed from any that are his, but that a diligent hand shall find bread enough. And without farther enlargement, we may learn hence sundry things.

1. No judgment is so to be feared and deprecated, as a deprivation of the dispensation of the word. No judgment is like famine. ‘They that are slain with the sword, are better than they that be slain with hunger; for these pine away, stricken through for want of the fruits of the field,’ Lam. iv. 9. And no famine like that of the word, which

God threateneth as the sorest of his judgments, Amos viii. 11. This is as much to be dreaded above the other, as the soul is to be preferred before the body, and spiritual life above natural. To be deprived of the food of our souls, is of all distresses the most dreadful. And we may do well to consider, that when Egypt was in the midst of its plenty, which no doubt was sufficiently abused, it was then that their consuming famine was at the door.

2. No temporal mercy is so liable to abuse, as fulness of bread. This, joined with pride and idleness, which usually accompany it in the world, produced the sins of Sodom, Ezek. xvi. 49. So is it with the fulness of this spiritual food. Spiritual pride, and spiritual sloth, are apt to grow up with it, to corrupt and abuse it. It requires much wisdom and heedfulness to manage ourselves aright under the plentiful dispensation of the word, such as at this time we enjoy. Some apparently are proud and delicate, waxing wanton under their enjoyment, so that wholesome food is despised by them, nothing will serve them but some poisonous dainties of fond and foolish imaginations. And some are slothful, thinking all pains and charge too much that they take, or are at, about the word. The curiosity and sloth of these days bode no good. I am almost persuaded, that the generality of the Egyptians derided Joseph, when they saw him make such diligent and vast preparations in the years of plenty, when for so long time together the earth brought forth by handfuls. If they did not think his labour altogether needless, why did they not do in like manner? why did they make no provision for themselves, which afterwards they so smarted for? Learn, therefore of him, as well as you are able, to lay in provisions of this spiritual food in a time of plenty, that you may have some stores for your use in an evil day that may be approaching.

3. They who by any means endeavour to obstruct the dispensation of the word, do their endeavour to famish the souls of men. They keep their food from them, without which they cannot live. Whether this be done by negligence, ignorance, or disability in those who take upon themselves to be God's stewards, but have none of his provision under their disposal; or whether it be done out of a real hatred to the word; the cruelty is dreadful, and the crime will be avenged. The people will curse him who hoardeth corn in a time of dearth; and God will curse them who at any time detain from others the bread of life.

4. The word is to be esteemed, valued, and sought after, as our daily food. Negligence and carelessness about the food of our souls, is too great an evidence that there is no principle of life in us. Think not too much of your pains.

Obs. II. Whereas the word is food, it is evident that it will not profit our souls until it be eaten and digested. It is called here τροφή, 'nourishment,' which food is not as it is prepared, but as it is received. When manna was gathered and laid up, and not eaten, it stank and bred worms. We see that some take great pains to come and hear the word. This is but the gathering of manna. What do you with it afterwards? If it lie by you, it will be of no use. But what is required unto this eating and digestion, was, as I remember, before declared.

Obs. III. It is an evidence of a thriving and healthy state of soul, to have an appetite unto the deepest mysteries of the gospel, or most solid doctrines of truth, and to be able profitably to digest them.— This is the substance of the character which the apostle here gives of such persons ; and he blames these Hebrews that such they were not, and therefore such we ought all to be who live under circumstances and advantages like to theirs. This is the property of a thriving soul, of a good proficient in the school of Christ. He is naturally inclined to desire the declaration of the most weighty and substantial truths of the gospel : in them is he peculiarly delighted, and by them is he profited ; whereas, if you take others beyond milk or first principles, ordinarily they are at a loss, and very little benefited by any provision you can make for them. But yet sometimes it falls out in these things spiritual, as it doth in things natural. Some persons under sicknesses and distempers, having their appetite corrupted, and their taste vitiated, do greatly desire, and impetuously long after strong food, which is no way meet for them, and which, when they have eaten it, doth but increase their disposition, and heighten their distemper. So some altogether unmeet for the right understanding, and improvement of the deep mysteries of the gospel, yet out of pride and curiosity, do neglect and despise the things which are suited unto their edification, and desire nothing, delight in nothing but what is above them, and indeed beyond their reach. That we may not be deceived, nor deceive ourselves herein, I shall give some differences between this property of sound, thriving, and healthy souls, desiring, delighting in, and profiting by the strong meat of gospel mysteries, and the inordinate longing of spiritually sick and distempered minds, after those things which are not meet for them.

1. The desires and appetite of the former are kept always within the bounds of what is written, and plainly revealed in the word ; for we have shown that the deepest mysteries have the plainest revelations. Offer them any thing that is not plainly attested by the word, and they turn from it as poison. They have learned in all things to think soberly, according to the analogy of faith, Rom. xii. 6. They would be wise, but unto sobriety, and not above what is written. But for the other sort, if any thing be new, curious, seemingly mystical, removed from the common sense and apprehensions of Christians, without any due consideration whether it be a truth of God or not ; that is it which they run greedily after, and catch at the empty cloud. Their principal business is, ‘to intrude themselves into the things which they have not seen, being vainly puffed up in their fleshly minds,’ Col. ii. 18.

2. The former sort, upon the declaration and discovery of any deep important mysteries of the gospel, are greatly taken up with a holy admiration and reverence of God, whose these things are. So our apostle having, in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters of his Epistle to the Romans, treated of the deep mysteries of electing grace, and the effects of it, he shuts up his whole discourse in an admiration of God, and an ascription of glory unto him, ch. xi. 33—36. So is it with all holy and humble souls, upon their instruction in, and view they

have of the mysteries of the gospel, in that marvellous light whereinto they are translated. The other sort satisfy themselves in their own speculation, without being much affected by the greatness or glory of God, in the things they imagine themselves to know.

3. The former sort do find real food and nourishment in this strong meat, so that their faith is strengthened, their love increased, and holiness promoted in their souls by them. They find by experience that such things do not only sound in their ears, or float in their minds, in the notion of them, but that really and truly their faith feeds upon them, and their whole souls being affected with them, they are encouraged and directed by them in the course of their obedience. Others, whose desires proceed from the distempers of pride and curiosity, find none of those things; and so their itching ears are suited, and their inquisitive minds are satisfied, they regard them not. Hence it is hard to see one of these notional persons, either fruitful or useful; neither can they bear those parts of the yoke of Christ, which would make necessary the constant exercise of faith and love.

2. The former sort are always more and more humbled, the latter more and more puffed up, by what they attain to. But I must not farther enlarge on these things. There yet remain two observations more, with the naming whereof, we shall shut up our discourses on this chapter.

Obs. IV. The assiduous exercise of our minds about spiritual things, in a spiritual manner, is the only means to make us to profit in hearing of the word.—When our spiritual senses are exercised by reason of constant use they are in a readiness to receive, embrace, and improve what is tendered unto them. Without this we shall be dull and slow of hearing, the vice here so severely reproved.

Obs. V. The spiritual sense of believers, well exercised in the word, is the best and most undeceiving help in judging of what is good or evil, what is true or false, that is proposed unto them.

PREFATORY REMARKS.

The following Prefatory Remarks are prefixed by the Author, to the Exposition of the sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth Chapters.

IN my former discourses on this subject, I have declared so fully the general design, scope, and end of this Epistle; the proper way and means of its interpretation; with the method of the present Exposition, which is the same throughout; that I shall not at all here detain the reader with a renewed declaration of any of them. Only some few things which immediately concern that part of the Exposition which is now presented unto him, and my labour therein, may be mentioned, as I suppose, unto some usefulness.

1. And it may not be amiss, in the first place, to take notice of an objection to which the present endeavour seems liable and obnoxious; and this is, the unseasonableness of it. We live in times that are fortified against the use of discourses of this nature, especially such as are so long and bulky. The world, and the minds of men therein, are filled with disorder and confusion, and the most are at their wit's end with looking after the things that are come, and coming, on the earth.

They have enough to do in hearing, telling, and reading real or pretended news of public affairs, so as to divert them from engaging their time, and industry, in the perusal and study of such discourses. Besides, there is not anything in this which is now published, to condite it unto the palate of the present age, by personal contests and reflections, by pleading for or against any party of men, or especial way in the profession of religion; only the fundamental truths of the gospel are occasionally contended for. These, and the like considerations, might possibly, in the judgment of some, have shut up this whole discourse in darkness, upon the account of its being unseasonable.

I shall briefly acquaint the reader with what relieved me against this objection, and gave me satisfaction in the publishing of this part of the Exposition, after it was finished. For I could not but remember, that the times and seasons wherein the former parts of it were published, were very little more settled and quiet, than are these which are now urgent on us; yet did not this hinder, but they have been of some use and benefit unto the church of God in this nation, and to others also. And who knows but this may have the same blessing accompanying of it? He who hath supplied seed to the sower, can multiply the seed sown, and increase the fruits of it. And although at present the most are really unconcerned in things of this nature, yet not a few from many parts, both at home and abroad, have earnestly

solicited the continuation of the Exposition, at least unto that period whereunto it is arrived.

Besides, in labours and endeavours of this nature, respect is not had merely unto the present generation, especially as many are filled with prejudices and causeless enmity against the author of them. We have ourselves more benefit and advantage by the writings of sundry persons in former ages, than they received by them who lived in their own days.

Pascitur in vivis livor, post fata quiescit.

It is therefore the duty of some in every age, to commit unto those that shall survive in the church of God, and profession of the truth, their knowledge in the mysteries of the gospel, whereby spiritual light may be more and more increased unto the perfect day.

On these, and the like considerations, I have wholly left these times and seasons in the hand of him who hath the sole disposal of them; and will not so far observe the present blustering wind and clouds, as not to sow this seed, or despair of reaping fruits thereby.

2. The reader will find no Exercitations prefixed unto this volume, as there are unto the former. And this has so fallen out, not because there were no things of weight or moment occurring in these chapters, deserving a separate peculiar handling and consideration, but for other reasons, which made the omission of them necessary and unavoidable. For indeed, continued infirmities, and weaknesses, in my near approach unto the grave, rendered me insufficient for that labour, especially considering what other duties have been, and yet are, incumbent on me. And yet also my choice was compliant with this necessity. For I found that this part of the Exposition, comprising so many chapters, and those all of them filled with glorious mysteries, and things of the highest importance unto our faith and obedience, would arise unto a greatness disproportionate unto the former, had it been accompanied with the like Exercitations. Whereas therefore I foresaw from the beginning that they must be omitted, I did treat somewhat more fully of those things which should have been the subject of them, than otherwise the nature of an exposition doth require. Such are the person and office of Melchisedec; the nature of the Aaronical priesthood, and of the priesthood of Christ as typified thereby; the framing of the tabernacle, with all its vessels and utensils, with their use and signification; the solemnity of the covenant made at Sinai, with the difference between the two covenants, the old and the new; the manner of the service of the high priest on the day of expiation, with his entrance into the most holy place; the cessation, expiration, or abrogation of the first covenant, with all the services thereunto belonging; with sundry other things of the like importance. Whereas therefore these must have been the subject of such Exercitations, as might have been prefixed unto this part of the Exposition, the reader will find them handled somewhat at large in the respective places wherein they do occur in the epistle itself.

3. Concerning the subject-matter of these chapters, I desire the reader to take notice,

First. That the whole substance of the doctrinal part of the Epistle is contained in them, so as that there is nothing of difficulty in the whole case managed by the apostle, but is largely treated of in these chapters.

Secondly. That they do contain a full declaration of that mystery which, from the beginning of the world, was hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ, to the intent that even unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God. In particular,

1. The wisdom and grace of God in the constitution and making of the covenant at Sinai ; in the institutions of all the worship and divine services thereunto belonging ; in the holy fabrics, offerings, and sacrifices of the priests and church of Israel, are declared and manifested therein. For all these things in themselves were carnal, and so used by the generality of the people, in a way unworthy of the wisdom and holiness of God.

But the apostle declares and makes it evident in these chapters, that in the design and intention of God, they had all of them an end and use far more glorious than what appeared in their outward administration. He also declares what intimations God made unto the church of this end of them, and of his intention in them.

2. There is therefore in these chapters an absolute, infallible interpretation of the whole law, without which it would be a sealed book, and of no use unto us. But as the intention and mind of God in those legal institutions is here declared, there is nothing in the whole Scripture that tends more to the illumination of our minds, and the strengthening of our faith, than doth the law of these institutions, as is manifested on all occasions in our Exposition. By virtue hereof, there is not the meanest Christian believer, but doth or may understand more of the books of Exodus and Leviticus, see more of the wisdom, holiness, and grace of God in them, and know more of the nature and use of these legal institutions, not only than all the present Jews, and their teachers, but than was ever distinctly known in the church of Israel of old.

3. The wisdom, righteousness, and faithfulness of God, in the removal of the old covenant, with all the services thereunto belonging, are herein abundantly vindicated. This is the stone of stumbling unto this day of all the Jews. This they quarrel and contend with God and man about ; seeming to be resolved, that if they may not enjoy their old institutions, they will part with and leave even God himself. Neither indeed is it God, but a shadow of their old carnal ordinances, which at present they cleave unto, worship, and adore. Wherefore the apostle, by all sorts of arguments, doth in these chapters manifest, that before them, under them, by them, and in them, God by various ways taught the church, that they were not to be continued ; that they were never appointed for their own sakes ; that they only fore-signified the introduction of a better, and more perfect church-state than what they could attain to, or be of use in ; as also that their very nature was such as rendered them obnoxious unto a removal in the appointed season. Yea, he demonstrates that without their abolition, God could

never have accomplished the design of his love and grace towards the church, which he had declared in his promises from the foundation of the world. And this absolutely determined the controversy between the two churches, that of the Old, and that of the New Testament, with their different worship and services, which was then a matter of fierce contention in the whole world. Wherefore,

4. The work of the apostle in these chapters, is to show the harmony between the law and the gospel, their different ends and uses; to take off all seeming repugnancy and contradiction between them; to declare the same grace, truth, and faithfulness of God in them both, notwithstanding their inconsistent institutions of divine worship. Nay he makes it evident, not only that there is a harmony between them, but also an utter impossibility that either of them should be true, or proceed from God, without the other.

5. Herein a glorious account is given, of the representation that was made of the person and incarnation of Christ, with the whole office of his mediation, according as it was granted unto the church in its infant state. Some have called it the infant state of Christ as unto his incarnation, and affirmed that the ceremonies of the law were as his swaddling bands. But things are quite otherwise. The glorious state of Christ and his office is represented unto the church in its infant state, when it had no apprehension of spiritual things, but such as children have of the objects of reason: in particular, how the ancient church was instructed in the nature and blessed efficacy of his sacrifice, the foundation of its salvation, is made gloriously to appear.

6. Directions are given herein unto all to whom the gospel is preached, or by whom it is professed, how to behave themselves as to what God requireth of them, expressed in clear instructions and pathetic exhortations, accompanied with glorious promises on the one hand, and severe threatenings on the other. Scarcely in the whole book of God, is there such an exact description of the nature and work of faith, the motives unto it, and advantages of it; of the deceitful actings of unbelief, with the ways of its prevalency in the minds, and over the souls of men; of the end of true believers on one hand, and of hypocrites and apostates on the other, as is in this discourse of the apostle. Such a graphical description and account of these things is given us in the sixth chapter, and the latter part of the tenth, as cannot but greatly affect the minds of all who are spiritually enlightened to behold things of this nature. A blessed glass is presented unto us, wherein we may see the true image and portraiture of believers and unbelievers, their different ways, actings, and ends.

In the whole, there is made a most holy revelation and representation of the wisdom of God; of the glory of Christ; of the mystery of grace in the recovery of fallen man, and the salvation of the church; with the future judgment; so as that they have a greater lustre, light, and glory in them, unto such as have the eyes of their understandings opened to behold spiritual things, than is in the sun shining in its strength and beauty to the eyes of flesh, to which it is sweet and pleasant to behold the light.

These are the holy sayings of God, the glorious discoveries of him-

self and his grace, the glass wherein we may behold the glory of Christ, until we are transformed into the same image from glory to glory.

What in the exposition of these things, and others of an alike nature, God hath enabled me to attain to, is left unto the use of the church, and the judgment of every learned, pious, and candid reader.

J. OWEN.

London, April 17, 1680.

CHAPTER VI.

THIS whole chapter is a continuation of the digression which the apostle had occasionally entered into, in the eleventh verse of the preceding chapter. For upon the consideration of the greatness of the mystery, and the difficulty of the doctrine in which he designed to instruct these Hebrews, and his fear of the disability or unpreparedness, at least of some of them, to receive it in a due manner unto their edification, he engageth in a new discourse, filled up with reasons and arguments, to excite them unto a diligent attendance. And this he so doth, as in the very last words of this chapter, to return, by an artificial connection of his discourse, unto what he had asserted in the tenth verse of that foregoing.

There are four general parts of this chapter. 1. The proposition of what he intended to do, or discourse concerning, with an opposition thereunto of what was by him to be omitted, ver. 1—3. 2. An excitation of the Hebrews unto singular diligence in attending unto the most perfect doctrines of Christianity, and making a progress in the knowledge of Christ. And this he doth from the consideration of the greatness of the sin, and inevitableness of the destruction of apostates. For this sort of persons do commonly arise from among such, as having received the truth and made a profession thereof, do not diligently endeavour a progress towards perfection, according to their duty, ver. 4—8. 3. A lenifying of the severity of this commination, in respect of its application unto these Hebrews. For he expresseth his hope that it did not so belong unto them, or that the sin condemned should not be found in them, or the punishment threatened fall on them. But the warning itself contained in the commination, was, as he shows, good, wholesome, and seasonable. And of this, his hope and judgment concerning the Hebrews, he expresseth his grounds taken from the righteousness of God, their own faith and love, in which he prays they may persevere, ver. 9—12. 4. An encouragement unto faith and perseverance, from the example of Abraham, who first received the promises; from the nature of the promises themselves, and their confirmation by the oath of God, with the assistance we may have by our hope in Christ thereby, ver. 13—20, which last discourse he issueth in the principal matter he intended to insist upon, whereunto he now returns again, having digressed necessarily into those exhortations and arguings,

from the first proposal of it in the eleventh verse of the foregoing chapter.

In the first part of the chapter, comprised in the three first verses, there are three things considerable. 1. A general proposition of the apostle's resolution to proceed unto the more perfect doctrines of the gospel, as also of his passing over the first principles of Christianity, ver. 1. 2. An amplification of this proposition, by an enumeration of those doctrines which he thought meet at present to pass by the handling of, ver. 1, 2. 3. A renovation of his resolution to pursue his proposition, with a submission to the will and good pleasure of God, as to the execution of his purpose; the expression whereof, the present state of these Hebrews peculiarly called him unto, ver. 3.

VER. 1.—*Διο αφεντες του της αρχης του Χριστου λογον, επι την τελειοτητα φερωμεθα μη παλιν Ξεμελιον καταβαλλομενοι.*

Διο, ideo, quapropter, propterea, 'wherefore;' *αφεντες*, intermittentes Arias. Vulg. Lat. Rhem. 'intermitting;' as though the apostle laid these things aside, only for the present, with a resolution to take them up again in this Epistle. But neither doth the word signify any such thing, nor doth he so do. Relinquentes, Bez. 'leaving.' Syr. נשברק, omittamus, or demittamus, 'dismissing;' properly. *Του της αρχης του Χριστου λογον*, Arias; Sermonem initii Christi. Vulg. inchoationis Christi, 'the word of the beginning of Christ,' as the Rhemists; very obscurely in Latin, and in our language. Eras. omisso qui in Christo rudes inchoat sermone, 'the word that entereth those that are unskilful, or beginners in Christ.' So also Beza. We, 'the principles of the doctrine of Christ.' Syr. 'the beginning of the word of Christ,' for 'the word of the beginning of Christ.' The word of, or that which concerns the principles of the doctrine of Christ. *Επι την τελειοτητα φερωμεθα*. *Φερωμεθα*, feramur, 'let us be carried on.' Syr. נאמא, 'let us come to;' Arab. 'let us lift up ourselves;' Rhem. 'let us proceed;' ours, 'let us go on to perfection.'

VER. 1.—*Wherefore, leaving the doctrine of the beginning of Christ, let us be carried on to perfection.*

Διο, 'wherefore,' This illative manifests that there is a dependence in what ensues, on what was discoursed of before. That which follows, may be either an inference from it, or be the effect of a resolution occasioned by it. 'Wherefore;' that is, either this duty will hence follow, or seeing it is so, I am thus resolved to do. And this connection is variously apprehended, on the account of the ambiguity of the expression in the plural number and first person. *Αφεντες, φερωμεθα*, 'we leaving, let us go on.' For in this kind of expression, there is a rhetorical communication. And the apostle either assumes the Hebrews unto himself, as to his work, or joins himself with them as to their duty. For, if the words be taken the first way, they declare his resolution in teaching; if in the latter, their duty in learning.

First. If we take the words in the first way, as expressing the apostle's

resolution as to his own work, the inference seems to have an immediate dependence on the twelfth verse of the preceeding chapter, passing by the discourse of the following verses, as a digression to be, as it were, included in a parenthesis. Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing you are dull in hearing ! I shall therefore for your future instruction, leave the principles of the doctrine of Christ, and go on unto more sublime mysteries, or the wisdom that we speak among them that are perfect. For, although he had blamed them for their dulness and backwardness in learning, yet he doth not declare them at least, not all of them, to be such as were incapable of these mysteries, so as that he ought not to communicate them unto them. This is the meaning of the words, if the apostle assume the Hebrews unto himself, and if it be his work that is intended,

Secondly. If in the latter way the apostle joins himself unto the Hebrews, and it is their duty which is intended ; namely, that they should not always dwell on the first principles or lessons of Christianity, but press on to perfection, then, 1. This illative *δὴ*, seems to have respect unto the time in the first place, during which these Hebrews had enjoyed the means of growth in the knowledge of Christ : on the account whereof, he affirms that it might be justly expected concerning them, that they should be teachers of others. Therefore, saith he, or on the consideration hereof, it is just and equal that you should go on towards perfection ; which, that they would do, he expresseth his hopes concerning them, ver. 9. 2. It respects also that negligence and sloth, and backwardness to learn, which he had reprov'd in them. As if he had said, Seeing, therefore, you have hitherto been so careless in the improvement of the means which you have enjoyed, which hath been no small fault or evil in you, but that which hath tended greatly to your disadvantage, now at last, stir up yourselves unto your duty, and go on to perfection.

We need not precisely determine this connection, so as to exclude either intention. Yea, it may be, the apostle having respect unto the preceeding discourse, and considering thereon both the present condition of the Hebrews, as also the necessity that there was of instructing them in the mystery of the priesthood of Christ, without the knowledge whereof, they could not be freed from their entanglements unto the Aaronical priesthood and ceremonies, which were yet in use and exercise among them, doth intend in this inference from thence, both his own duty and theirs ; that he should proceed unto their farther instruction, and that they should stir up themselves to learn and profit accordingly. This the duty of his office and care of them, and this their advantage and edification, required. For this alone was the great means and expedient to bring them off in a due manner, and upon right grounds, from that compliance with Judaism, which God would now no longer connive at, nor tolerate the practice of, as that which was inconsistent with the nature and design of the gospel : And it is apparent, that before the writing of this Epistle, they were not sufficiently convinced that there was an absolute end put unto all Mosaic institutions. For, notwithstanding their profession of the gospel, they still thought it their duty to abide in the observance of them. But now, the apostle

designs their instruction in that mystery, which particularly evinceth their inconsistency with faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and obedience unto him.

Ἀφεντες, omittentes, relinquentes ; we, 'leaving ;' *ἀφημι* is sometimes dimitto, to 'dismiss,' to 'discharge' or 'let go ;' sometimes omitto, missum facio, to 'omit,' to 'pass by ;' and it is used with respect unto speech of things that have been already mentioned, *τούτων ἀφεμενοι των λογων*, in Lucian, 'omitting these discourses,' laying aside farther, speech concerning these things. So is it here used by our apostle. But the signification of the word is to be limited unto the present occasion. For, consider the things here spoken of absolutely, and they are never to be left either by teachers or hearers. There is a necessity, that teachers should often insist on the rudiments, or first principles of religion. And this, not only with respect unto them who are continually to be trained up in knowledge from their infancy, or unto such as may be newly converted ; but also, they are occasionally to be inculcated on the minds of those, who have made a farther progress in knowledge. And this course we find our apostle to have steered in all his epistles. Nor are any hearers so to leave these principles, as to forget them, or not duly to make use of them. Cast aside a constant regard unto them in their proper place, and no progress can be made in knowledge, no more than a building can be carried on, when the foundation is taken away. But respect is had on both sides unto the present occasion. Let us not always dwell upon the teaching and learning of these things, but omitting them for a season, as things that you are, or might be well acquainted withal, let us proceed unto what is farther necessary for you.

Obs. I. It is the duty of ministers of the gospel to take care, not only that the doctrine which they preach be true, but also that it be seasonable with respect to the state and condition of their hearers.—Herein consists no small part of that wisdom which is required in the dispensation of the word. Truths unseasonable are like showers in harvest. It is a word spoken in season that is beautiful and useful, Prov. xxv. 11. Yea, 'every thing is beautiful in its own time,' and not else, Eccles. iii. 11. And two things are especially to be considered by him who would order his doctrine aright, that his words may be fit, meet; and seasonable. First. The condition of his hearers, as to their present knowledge and capacity. Suppose them to be persons, as the apostle speaks, of full age, such as can receive and digest strong meat, that have already attained some good acquaintance with the mysteries of the gospel. In preaching to such an auditory, if men through want of ability to do otherwise, or want of wisdom to know when they ought to do otherwise, shall constantly treat of first principles, or things common and obvious, it will not only be unuseful to their edification, but also at length make them weary of the ordinance itself. And there will be no better effect on the other side, where the hearers being mostly weak, the more abstruse mysteries of truth are insisted on, without a prudent accommodation of matters suited to their capacity. It is, therefore, the duty of stewards in the house of God, to give to his household their proper portion. This is the blessed ad-

vice our apostle gives to Timothy, 2 Tim. ii. 15. 'Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, *ορθοτομουντα τον λογον της αληθειας*, rightly cutting out the word of truth.' This is that whereby a minister may evince himself to be a workman that needeth not to be ashamed. If, as when the beasts that were sacrificed being cut into pieces, the priest according to the law, disposed of the parts of it to the altar, to himself, and to him that brought it, that each in the division might have his proper and legal portion; so he give out a due and proper part to his hearers, he is an approved workman. Others cast all things into confusion and disorder, which will at length redound to their own shame. Now, whereas in all churches, auditories, or congregations, there is so great a variety of hearers with respect to their present attainments, knowledge, and capacities, that it is impossible that any one should always, or indeed very frequently accommodate his matter, and way of instruction to them all, it were greatly to be desired that there might be, as there was in the primitive church, a distribution made of hearers, into several orders or ranks, according as their age, or means of knowledge do sort them, that so the edification of all might be distinctly provided for. So would it be, if it were the work of some, separately to instruct those who yet stand in need to be taught the first principles of the oracles of God; and of others to build up towards perfection those who have already made some progress in the knowledge of the gospel; or the same work may be done by the same persons at several seasons. Nor doth any thing hinder, but that those who are strong, may be occasionally present at the instructions of the weak, and the latter at the teachings of the former, both to their great advantage. In the meantime, until this can be attained, it is the duty and wisdom of a minister, to apply himself in the doctrine he preacheth, and the manner of his delivery, to the more general state of his hearers, as by him it is apprehended or known. And as it will be a trouble to him, who esteems it his duty to go forward in the declaration of the mysteries of the gospel, to fear that many stay behind, as being unable to receive and digest the food he hath provided; so it should be a shame to them, who can make no provision but of things trite, ordinary, and common, when many perhaps among their hearers, are capable of feeding on better or more solid provision. Again, 2. The circumstances of the present time, are duly to be considered by them who would preach doctrine that should be seasonable to their hearers. And these are many, not here to be particularly insisted on. But those especially of known public temptations, of prevalent errors and heresies, of especial opposition and hatred to any important truths, are always to be regarded. For I could easily manifest that the apostle in his epistles, hath continually an especial respect to them all. Neither was a due consideration hereof ever more necessary, than it is in the days wherein we live. And other things may be added of the like nature to this purpose.

Obs. II. Again,—Some important doctrines of truth may in the preaching of the gospel, be omitted for a season, but none must ever be forgotten or neglected. So deals the apostle in this place, and

light hath been sufficiently given us hereinto, by what hath already been discoursed.

2. That which is passed over here, he calls, *τον της αρχης του Χριστου λογον*. *Sermonem de Christo initiantem. Sermo exordii Christi. Sermo quo instituuntur rudes in Christo.* We say, 'the principles of the doctrine of Christ,' I fear somewhat improperly. For the principles of the doctrine of Christ indefinitely, must include all, at least the most principal of those which are so. *Ὁ λογος*, 'the word,' that is, the word preached; so *ὁ λογος*, is frequently used, 1 Cor. i. 18. And the name Christ, is not taken here personally, neither efficiently, as though 'of Christ,' should be 'whereof Christ is the author,' nor objectively concerning Christ; but it is taken metonymically for the doctrine of the gospel, and the profession of that religion which was taught by him. So that the word of Christ is no more but the doctrine of the gospel as preached and taught. *Της αρχης*, containeth a limitation of this doctrine with respect to some parts of it. That is, those which men usually and ordinarily were first instructed in, and which from their own nature it was necessary that so they should be. These are here called the 'word of the beginning of Christ.' And what these doctrines are, the apostle declares particularly in the end of this verse, and in the next, where we shall inquire into them. They are the same with the 'first principles of the oracles of God,' whereof mention was made before. Having declared what for the present he would omit and pass by, although there was some appearance of a necessity to the contrary, the apostle expresseth what his present design in general was, and what was the end which therein he aimed at. Now, this was that, not being retarded by the repetition or reinculcation of the things which he would therefore omit, they might, he in teaching, they in learning, go on to perfection. And two things must be considered. 1. The end intended. 2. The manner of pressing towards it.

The end is *εις την τελειότητα*, 'unto perfection.' *Τελειότης*, 'perfection,' that is, such a knowledge of the mysterious and sublime doctrines of the gospel, as those who were completely initiated, and thoroughly instructed, were partakers of. Of this he says, *σοφίαν λαλουμεν εν τοις τελειοις*, 1 Cor. ii. 6, 'we speak wisdom among the perfect,' or declare the deep mysteries of the gospel, the wisdom of God in a mystery, to them that are capable of them. It is then a perfection that the apostle aims at, but such as comes under a double limitation. 1. From the nature of the thing itself. It is only an intellectual perfection,—a perfection of the mind in knowledge, that is intended. And this may be where there is not a moral, gracious, sinless perfection. Yea, men may have great light in their minds, whilst their wills and affections are very much depraved, and their lives unreformed. 2. It is a comparative, and not an absolute perfection. An absolute perfection in the comprehension of the whole mystery of God in Christ, is not by us attainable in this life. The apostle denies it concerning himself, Phil. iii. 12. But such a degree and measure as God is pleased to communicate to believers in the ordinary use of means, is that which is intended. See Eph. iv. 12, 13. Take, therefore, the

perfection here aimed at, objectively, and it is the more sublime mysteries of the gospel which it expresseth; take it subjectively, it is such a clear perception of them, especially of those which concern the person and offices of Christ, and particularly his priesthood, as grown believers do usually attain to.

The manner of arriving at this end, he expresseth by *φερωμεθα*, and in this word is the rhetorical communication mentioned. For either he ascribes that to himself with them, which belonged only to them; or that to them which belonged only to him; or what belonged to them both, but in a different way; namely,—to him in teaching,—to them in learning. ‘Let us be carried on.’ The word is emphatical, intimating such a kind of progress as a ship makes when it is under sail. ‘Let us be carried on,’ that is, with the full bent of our minds and affections, with the utmost endeavours of our whole souls. We have abode long enough by the shore, let us now hoist our sails and launch forth into the deep. And we may hence learn,

Obs. III. That it is a necessary duty of the dispensers of the gospel, to excite their hearers, by all pressing considerations, to make a progress in the knowledge of the truth. Thus dealeth our apostle with these Hebrews. He would not have them always stand at the porch, but enter into the sanctuary, and behold the hidden glories of the house of God. Elsewhere he complains of them who are always learning, that is, in the way of it, under the means of it, but yet by reason of their negligence and carelessness in the application of their minds to them, do never come, *εις επιγνωσιν αληθειας*, 2 Tim. iii. 7, ‘to a clear knowledge, and acknowledgment of the truth.’ And in the same spirit he complains of his Corinthians, for their want of proficiency in spiritual things, so that he was forced in his dealing with them to dwell still on the rudiments of religion, 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2. In all his epistles, he is continually as it were pressing this on the churches, that they should labour to ‘grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,’ and that they might do so, was the principal matter of his prayers for them, Eph. iii. 14—19, i. 16—19; Col. ii. 1, 2. And they are utter strangers to his spirit and example who are careless in this matter, especially such as persuade, and even compel others so to be. Wherefore, this duty is necessary to dispensers of the gospel on sundry accounts.

1. Because their hearers do greatly need the exercise of it. They are apt to be slothful and weary;—many begin to run well, but are quickly ready to faint. There is no reckoning up the occasions hereof, they are so many and various. Weariness of the flesh; self-conceit of having attained what is sufficient, perhaps more than others; curiosity and itching ears in attending to novelties; dislike of that holiness and fruitfulness of life, which an increase of knowledge openly tends to; mispending time on the one hand, or covetousness of time for the occasions of life on the other; any prevailing corruption of mind or affections; the difficulty that is in coming to the knowledge of the truth in a due manner, making the sluggard cry, ‘There is a lion in the streets;’ with other things innumerable, are ready and able to retard, hinder, and discourage men in their progress. And if there

be none to excite, warn, and admonish them, to discover the variety of the pretences whereby men in this matter deceive themselves, to lay open the snares and dangers which hereby they cast themselves into, to remind them of the excellency of the things of the gospel, and of the knowledge of them, which are proposed before them, it cannot be but that by these means, their spiritual condition will be prejudiced, if not their souls ruined. Yea, sometimes men are so captivated under the power of these temptations and seductions, and are furnished with such pleas in the defence of their own sloth and negligence, as that they must be dealt wisely and gently withal, in admonitions concerning them, lest they be provoked or discouraged. Hence, our apostle having dealt effectually with these Hebrews about these things, shuts up his discourse with that blessed expression of love and condescension towards them, ch. xiii. 22, 'I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation,' ἀνεχέσθε. So bear with it, as that which, however it may be contrary to your present inclinations, yet proceeds out of tender love to your souls, and hath no other end but your spiritual advantage. Neither ought this to abate herein the endeavours of faithful ministers, but only give them farther occasion to stir up and exercise their prudence and diligence.

2. The advantages which professors have by a progress in the knowledge of spiritual things, makes it a necessary duty unto them who are obliged in all things to watch for the good of their souls, to stir them up and lead them on therein. And these advantages also present themselves in so much variety, that they cannot be here recounted. Mention may be made of some few in a way of instance. As, 1. Hereon in a way of an effectual means, depends the security of men from seduction into heresies, noisome and noxious errors. Of what sort are they whom we see seduced every day? Are they not persons who either are brutishly ignorant of the very nature of Christian religion, and the first principles of it, with which sort the Papists fill the rolls of their converts; or such as having obtained a little superficial knowledge and confidence therein, without ever laying a firm foundation, or carrying on an orderly superstruction thereon in wisdom and obedience; which sort of men fill up the assemblies of the Quakers? The foundation of God standeth sure at all times; God knoweth who are his, and he will so preserve his elect, as to render their total seduction impossible. But in an ordinary way, it will be very difficult in such a time as this, wherein seducers abound, false doctrines are divulged, and speciously obtruded, wherein there are so many wolves abroad in sheep's clothing; and so great an opposition is on all hands made to the truth of the gospel, for any to hold out firm and unshaken to the end, if their minds be not ingird and fortified with a sound, well-grounded knowledge of the mysteries of the gospel. It is the teaching of the Spirit, the unction of the Holy One, whereby we know all necessary truths, that must preserve us in such a season, 1 John ii. 27. 2. Proportionable to our growth in knowledge, will be our increase in holiness and obedience. If this at any time fall out otherwise, it is from the sins and wickedness of the persons in whom it is; in the nature of the things themselves, they thus depend on one

another. See Eph. iv. 21—24; Rom. xii. 2. That ignorance is the mother of devotion, is a maxim that came from hell to fetch the souls of men, and carried back multitudes with it, where let it abide. Now, the reason why the improvement of knowledge doth tend to the improvement of holiness and obedience, is because faith acts itself on Christ only in and by the things which we know, whereby spiritual strength is derived to us, and we are enabled unto them. 3. Usefulness in the church, to our families, and amongst all men, depends hereon. This needs no other confirmation than what the experience of every man will suggest to him. And if I should design to go over but the principal advantages which we attain, or may attain, in the growth of spiritual light and knowledge, there is not any thing wherein our faith or obedience is concerned, nothing that belongs to our graces, duties, or communion with God, in them or by them, nothing wherein we are concerned in temptations, afflictions, or consolations, but might justly be called in to give testimony thereunto. If, therefore, the ministers of the gospel have any care for, or any love to the souls of their hearers; if they understand any thing of the nature, of the office, and work which they have taken on themselves, or the account they must one day give of the discharge of it; they cannot but esteem it among the most necessary duties incumbent on them, to excite, provoke, persuade, and carry on those who are under their charge, towards the perfection before described.

There is, therefore, nothing in the whole combination against Christ and the gospel, which is found in the Papacy, of a more pernicious nature and tendency, than is the design of keeping the people in ignorance. So far are they from promoting the knowledge of Christ in the members of their communion, that they endeavour by all means to obstruct it. For not to mention their numerous errors and heresies, every one whereof is a diversion from the truth, and a hinderance from coming to an acquaintance with it, they do directly keep from them the use of those means whereby alone its knowledge may be attained. What else means their prohibition of the people from reading the Scripture in a language which they understand? The most expeditious course for the rendering all the streams unuseful, is by stopping of the fountain. And whereas all means of the increase of knowledge are but emanations from the Scripture, the prohibition of the use thereof doth effectually evacuate them all. Was this spirit in our apostle? Had he this design? It is evident to all how openly and frequently he expresseth himself to the contrary. And to his example ought we to conform ourselves. Whatever other occasion of writing he had, the principal subject of his epistles, is constantly the increase of light and knowledge in the churches, which he knew to be so necessary for them. We may, therefore, add,

Obs. IV. The case of that people is deplorable and dangerous, whose teachers are not able to carry them on in the knowledge of the mysteries of the gospel.—The key of knowledge may be taken away by ignorance as well as malice. And so it is with many. And when knowledge is perished from the lips of them who should preserve it, the people must perish for want of that knowledge, Hos. iv. 6, Matt. xv. 14.

Obs. V. In our progress towards an increase in knowledge, we ought to go on with diligence and the full bent of our wills and affections.—I intend hereby to express the sense of *φερωμεθα*. It is of a passive signification, denoting the effect; ‘let us be acted, carried on;’ but it includes the active use of means for the producing that effect. And the duties on our part intended may be reduced to these heads.

1. Diligence in an application to the use of the best means for this end, Hos. vi. 3. Those that would be carried on towards perfection, must not be careless, or regardless of opportunities of instruction, nor be detained from them by sloth or vanity, nor diverted by the businesses and occasions of this world. Both industry in their pursuit, and choice in the preferring of them before secular advantages and avocations, are required hereunto.

2. Intention of mind in the attending to them. Such persons are neither to be careless of them, nor careless under them. There are some who will take no small pains to enjoy the means of instruction, and will scarce miss an opportunity that they can reach to. But when they have so done, there they sit down and rest. It is a shame to consider how little they stir up their minds and understandings, to conceive aright, and apprehend the things wherein they are instructed. So do they continue to hear from day to day, and from year to year, but are not carried on one step towards perfection. If both heart and head be not set at work, and the utmost endeavours of our minds improved, in searching, weighing, pondering, learning, treasuring up the truths that we are taught by any means of divine appointment, we shall never make the progress intended.

3. There is required thereunto, that our wills and affections be sincerely inclined to, and fixed on the things themselves that we are taught. These are the principal wings or sails of our souls, whereby we are or may be carried on in our voyage. Without this, all that we do will amount to nothing, or that which is no better. To love the truth, the things proposed to us in the doctrine of it, to delight in them, to find a goodness, desirableness, excellency, and suitableness to the condition of our souls in them, and therefore to adhere and cleave to them, is that which will make us prosper in our progress. He that knows but a little and loves much, will quickly know and love more. And he that hath much knowledge but little love, will find that he labours in the fire, for the increase of the one or other. When in the diligent use of means, our wills and affections do adhere and cleave with delight to the things wherein we are instructed, then are we in our right course; then if the holy gales of the Spirit of God do breathe on us, are we in a blessed tendency towards perfection, 2 Thess. ii. 10.

4. The diligent practice of what we know, is no less necessary to the duty pressed on us. This is the next and immediate end of all teaching and all learning. This is that which renders our knowledge our happiness. ‘If you know these things, happy are ye if you do them.’ Doing what we know, is the great key to give us an entrance into knowing what we do not. If we do the will of Christ, we shall know of his word, John vii. 17.

5. All these are to be managed with a certain design, and prospect toward this end of growing in grace and knowledge, and that until we arrive at the measure of our perfection appointed to us in Jesus Christ. In these ways, and by these means, we may attain the effect directly expressed, of being carried on in the increase of spiritual light and knowledge, and not without them.

VER. 1, 2.—In the remainder of the first verse, and the next that follows, the apostle declares in particular instances, what were the things and doctrines, which in general he had called before, ‘the beginning of the doctrine of Christ,’ the farther handling of which, he thought meet at present to omit.

VER. 1, 2.—Μη παλιν θεμελιον καταβαλλομενοι μετανοιας απο νεκρων εργαων, και πιστεως επι Θεον, βαπτισμων διδαχης, επιθεσεως τε χειρων, αναστασεως τε νεκρων, και κριματος αιωνιου.

The Syriac translation proposeth these words in the way of an interrogation, ‘Will you again lay another foundation?’ And the Ethiopic, omitting the first clause, in the way of a precept, ‘Attend therefore again to the foundation, that you dispute not concerning repentance from dead works, in the faith of God.’ But neither the text nor scope of the apostle will bear either of these interpretations.

Μη παλιν, Syr. *אם למה עוד* an numquid rursum, ‘or whether again;’ all others, non rursum, non iterum. Arab. nec amplius, ‘not again, not any more.’ Θεμελιον καταβαλλομενοι. Syr. *שהאסתר אחריתא מרמיתן*, ‘will you lay another foundation?’ that term of ‘another,’ is both needless because of ‘again’ that went before, and corrupts the sense, as though a foundation different from what was formerly laid, were intended. Besides that is made an expostulation with the Hebrews, which is indeed expressive of the apostle’s intention, fundamentum jacentes, ‘laying the foundation.’ Μετανοιας απο νεκρων εργαων, Syr. ‘unto repentance from dead works,’ and so in all the following instances. There is no difference among translators about the rest of words. Only the Ethiopic reads ‘baptism,’ in the singular number, as the Syriac doth, and placeth ‘doctrine,’ distinctly by way of apposition. ‘Baptism, doctrine, and the imposition of hands.’ Αναστασεως τε νεκρων, the Syriac renders by an Hebraism, *קימתא דמן ביה מיתה*, ‘the resurrection that is from the house of the dead,’ that is the grave, the common dwelling place of the dead, as also *κριματος αιωνιου*, by *דינא דלעלם*, ‘the judgment which is for ever,’ the sentence whereof is eternally irrevocable, and whose execution endures always.

VER. 1. 2.—*Not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God, of baptisms, doctrine, and the laying on of hands, of the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.*

There are two things in these words added concerning the doctrine of the principles of Christ, or the first doctrines of Christianity. 1.

Their general nature with respect to the whole truth of the gospel, metaphorically expressed; they are the foundation. 2. Their nature in particular is declared in sundry instances, not that all of them are mentioned, but these instances are chosen out to show of what kind they were. In the first, two things are proposed. 1. The expression of the thing itself intended, which is the foundation. 2. The apostle's design with respect to it, 'not laying it again.'

Μη παλιν θεμελιον καταβαλλομενοι. *Θεμελιος* is, as was said, in this matter metaphorical, including an allusion to an architect, and his building. First he lays the foundation; and he is a most foolish builder who either doth not so, or who rests therein, or who is always setting it up and pulling it down, without making a progress. Indeed that foundation which is all the building, which hath not an edifice erected on it, is no foundation; for that which is materially so, becomes so formally only with respect to the building on it. And those who receive the doctrines of Christ, here called the foundation, if they build not on them, they will prove none to them, whatever they are in themselves.

There are two properties of a foundation. 1. That it is that which is first laid in every building. This the natural order of every building requires. 2. It is that which bears the whole weight of the superstructure, the whole and all the parts of it being laid on it, and firmly united to it. With respect to the one or other of these properties, or both, are the doctrines intended called the foundation. But in the latter sense they cannot be so. It is Christ himself, and he only, who is the foundation, so as to bear the weight and to support the whole building of the church of God, Isa. xxviii. 16; Matt. xvi. 18; 1 Cor. iii. 10, 11; Eph. ii. 20—22; 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5. He is so personally, the life and being of the church consisting in its spiritual union to his person, 1 Cor. xii. 12, and doctrinally, in that all truth is resolved into what is taught concerning him, 1 Cor. iii. 10—13. Wherefore it is in allusion to a foundation with respect to its first property, namely, that it is first laid in the building, that these doctrines are called the foundation. So the Jews term the general principles of their profession *יסודי תורה*, 'the foundations of the law,' or the principal doctrines taught therein. The first doctrines which are necessary to be received and professed at men's first entrance into Christianity. And the apostle intends the same things by the three-fold expression which he maketh use of. 1. *στοιχεια της αρχης λογικων του Θεου*, ch. v. 12, 'The first principles of the oracles of God.' 2. *ο της αρχης του Χριστου λογος*, ch. vi. 1, and, 3. *θεμελιος*, 'the beginning of the doctrine of Christ,' and 'the foundation.'

Concerning these things, he says, *μη παλιν καταβαλλομενοι*, 'not laying it again.' His saying that he would not lay it again, doth not infer that he himself had laid it before amongst them, but only, that it was so laid before by some or other. For it was not by him that they received their first instruction, nor doth he mention any such thing in the whole epistle. Whereas he frequently pleads it to those churches which were planted by himself, 1 Cor. iii. 5, 6, 10, iv. 15. And it is known from the story that his ministry was not used in their first con-

version. But he knew that they had faithful instructors, who would not leave them unacquainted with these necessary things, and that they would not have been initiated by baptism, nor admitted into the church, without a profession of them. Besides they were such, as in general they owned in their former church-state. He might therefore well say, that he would not lay this foundation again. These things, saith he, you have already been instructed in by others, and therefore (as also on other considerations) I will not go over them again. Wherefore, let the hearers of the gospel carefully look to it, that they learn those things whereof they have had sufficient instruction; for if any evil ensue from their ignorance of them, they must themselves answer for it. Such ignorance is their sin, as well as their disadvantage. Preachers may take it for granted, that what they have sedulously and sufficiently instructed their hearers in, they have also received and learned, because it is through their sinful negligence, if they have not so done. And they are not bound always to wait on some in their negligences to the disadvantage of others.

Secondly. The apostle declares in particular, what those doctrinal principles were, which he had in general so described, which were taught to them who were first initiated into Christianity, and which he will not now again insist on, ‘Repentance from dead works,’ &c.

We must first consider the order of these words, and then their sense, or the things themselves intended. Some here reckon up six principles, some make them seven, some but four, and by some they are reduced to three.

The two first are plain and distinct. ‘Repentance from dead works, and faith towards God.’ The next that follow are disputed as to their coherence and sense. 1. *Βαπτισμων διδαχης επιθεσεως τε χειρων*: some read these words with a note of distinction between them, *βαπτισμων, διδαχης*, both the genitive cases being regulated by *θεμελιον*, ‘the foundation of baptisms, and of doctrine,’ which are put together by apposition, not depending one on another. *Διδαχη*, is ‘the preaching of the word.’ And this was one of the first things wherein believers were to be instructed, namely, that they were to abide, *εν τη διδαχη*, Acts ii. 42, in a constant attendance to the doctrine of the gospel, when preached to them. And as I shall not assert this exposition, so I dare not positively reject it, as not seeing any reasons cogent to that purpose. But another sense is more probable.

Take the words in conjunction, so as that one of them should depend on, and be regulated by the other, and then 1. We may consider them in their order as they lie in the original. *Βαπτισμων διδαχης επιθεσεως τε χειρων*, supposing the first to be regulated by *θεμελιον*, and both the latter by it. ‘The baptisms of doctrine and imposition of hands.’ There were two things peculiar to the gospel, the doctrine of it, and the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost. Doctrine is compared to and called baptism, Deut. xxxii. 2. Hence the people were said to be baptised to Moses, when they were initiated into his doctrines, 1 Cor. x. 1, 2. The baptism of John was his doctrine,

Acts xix. 3. And the baptism of Christ was the doctrine of Christ, wherewith he was to sprinkle many nations, Isa. lii. 15. This is the first baptism of the gospel, even its doctrine. The other was the communication of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, Acts i. 5. That this, and this alone, is intended by the laying on of hands, I shall prove fully afterwards. And then the sense would be the ‘foundation of gospel baptisms,’ namely, preaching and the gifts of the Holy Ghost. And I know but one argument against this sense, namely, that it is new and singular. To avoid this, Secondly. The order of the words must be inverted in their exposition. Not the baptisms of doctrine, but the doctrine of baptisms, must be intended. But then two things must be observed. 1. That βαπτισμων, ‘baptisms,’ is not immediately regulated by θεμελιον, ‘the foundation,’ and so baptisms are not asserted absolutely to be a foundation, as is repentance from dead works, but only the doctrine about it is so. 2. It cannot be readily conceived why διδαχη, ‘doctrine,’ should be prefixed to baptisms alone, and not to repentance and faith, the doctrines whereof also are intended. For it is not the grace of repentance and faith, but the doctrine concerning them, which the apostle hath respect to. There is therefore some peculiar reason, why doctrine should be thus peculiarly prefixed to baptisms and the laying on of hands, and not to the other things mentioned. For that imposition of hands is placed in the same order with baptisms, the conjunctive particle doth manifest, επιθεσεως τε χειρων; the following instances are plain, only some would reduce them to one principle, namely, the resurrection of all to judgment.

There is therefore in these words, nothing peculiar nor difficult, but only what concerns baptisms, and the imposition of hands, the doctrine whereof is specified. Now I cannot discover any just reason hereof, unless it be, that by baptisms, and the imposition of hands, the apostle intendeth none of those rudiments of Christian religion wherein men were to be first instructed, but those rites, whereof they were made partakers, who were so instructed. As if the apostle had said, These principles of the doctrine of Christ, namely, repentance, faith the resurrection and judgment, are those doctrines wherein they are to be instructed, who are to be baptized, and to have hands laid on them. According to this sense, the words are to be read as in a parenthesis: ‘Not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God, (namely, the doctrine of baptisms, and of the imposition of hands,) of the resurrection from the dead, and eternal judgment.’ When men began to attend to the gospel, and thereon to give up their names to the church, there were certain doctrines that they were thoroughly to be instructed in, before they were admitted to baptism; see Gal. vi. 6. These being the catechetical rudiments of Christian religion, are called here διδαχη βαπτισμων επιθεσεως τε χειρων, or the doctrines that were to be taught in order to the administration of those rites.

Taking this for the design of the apostle in the words, as is most probable, there are four instances given of those principal rudiments of Christian religion, wherein all men were to be instructed before they were admitted to baptism, who came thereunto in their own per-

sonal right, having not been made partakers thereof by their covenant right, through the profession of their parents in their infancy. Persons were to be fully instructed in these, before their solemn initiation; the doctrine concerning them being thence called the doctrine of baptisms and of the imposition of hands, because previously necessary to the administration of these rites. There is a difficulty, I confess, that this exposition is pressed with, from the use of the word in the plural number, *βαπτισμων*, ‘of baptisms;’ but this equally concerns all other expositions, and shall be spoken to in its proper place. And this I take to be the sense of the words, which the design of the place, and the manner of expression, lead us to. But yet because sundry learned men are otherwise minded, I shall so explain the words, as that their meaning may be apprehended, supposing distinct heads of doctrine to be contained in them.

Our next work is to consider the particular instances in their order. And the first is, *μετανοιας απο νεκρων εργαων*, ‘repentance from dead works.’ This was taught, in the first place, to all those who would give up themselves to the discipline of Christ and the gospel. And in the teaching hereof, both the nature and necessity of the duty were regarded. And in the nature of it two things were declared, and are to be considered. 1. What were dead works; and 2. What is repentance from them.

This expression, *νεκρων εργαων*, ‘of dead works,’ is peculiar to our apostle, and to this Epistle. It is nowhere used but in this place, and ch. ix. 14. And he useth it in answer to what he elsewhere declares, concerning men’s being dead in sin by nature, Eph. ii. 1, 5, Col. ii. 13. That which he there ascribes to their persons, here he attributeth to their works. These Peter calls ‘men’s old sins,’ namely, which they lived in before their conversion, 2 Pet. i. 9, *ληθην λαβων του καθαρισμου των παλαι αυτου αμαρτιων*, ‘forgetting that he was purged from his old sins.’ He hath respect to what is here intended. They were before their initiation, instructed in the necessity of forsaking the sins wherein they lived before their conversion, which he calls their old, or former sins; which he hath also respect to, 1 Pet. iv. 3. ‘For the time past of our lives may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries.’ The necessity of repentance from these and the like sins, was taught them, and of this they made profession before they were admitted to baptism; wherein they received a token of their being purged from them. And a relapse into these sins, which men had openly professed their repentance and relinquishment of, was ever esteemed dangerous, and by some absolutely pernicious, whereon great contests in the church did ensue. For the controversy was not, whether men falling into any sin, yea, any open or known sin, after baptism, might repent, which none was ever so foolishly proud as to deny; but the question was about men’s open falling again into those sins, suppose idolatry, which they had made a public profession of their repentance from, before their baptism. And it came at last to this, not whether such men might savingly repent, obtain pardon of their sins, and be

saved ; but whether the church had power to admit them, a second time, to a public profession of their repentance of these sins, and so take them again into full communion. For some pleaded, that the profession of repentance for these sins, and the renunciation of them, being indispensably necessary, antecedently to baptism, in them that were adult ; the obligation not to live in them at all, being on them who were baptized in their infancy, baptism alone was the only pledge the church could give of the remission of such sins ; and, therefore, where men fell again into those sins, seeing baptism was not to be repeated, they were to be left to the mercy of God : the church could receive them no more. But whereas the numbers were very great, of those who in time of persecution, fell back into idolatry, who yet afterwards returned and professed their repentance, the major part, who always are for the many, agreed that they were to be received, and reflected with no small severity on those that were otherwise minded. But whereas both parties in this difference ran into extremes, the event was pernicious on both sides, the one in the issue losing the truth and peace, the other the purity of the church.

The sins of unregenerate persons, whereof repentance was to be expressed before baptism, are called ‘dead works,’ in respect to their nature and their end. For as to their nature, they proceed from a principle under the power of spiritual death, they are the works of persons dead in trespasses and sins. All the moral actings of such persons, with respect to a supernatural end, are dead works, being not enlivened by a vital principle of spiritual life. And a person must be spiritually living, before his works will be so. Our walking in holy obedience is called the life of God, Eph. iv. 18. That is the life which God requires, which, by his especial grace, he worketh in us, whose acts have him for their object and their end. Where this life is not, persons are dead, and so are their works, even all that they do, with respect to the living God. 2dly. They are called so with respect to their end : they are mortua, because mortifera, dead, because deadly, they procure death, and end in death. ‘Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death,’ James i. 15. They proceed from death spiritual, and end in death eternal. On the same account are they called ‘unfruitful works of darkness,’ Eph. v. 11. They proceed from a principle of spiritual darkness, and end in darkness everlasting. We may therefore know what was taught them concerning these dead works, namely, their nature and their merit. And this includes the whole doctrine of the law, with conviction of sin thereby. They were taught that they were sinners by nature, dead in sins, and thence ‘children of wrath,’ Eph. ii. 1—3. That, in that estate, the law of God condemned both them and their works, denouncing death and eternal destruction against them. And in this sense, with respect to the law of God, these dead works do comprise their whole course in this world, as they did, their best as well as their worst. But yet there is, no doubt, an especial respect to those great outward enormities in which they lived during their Judaism, even after the manner of the Gentiles. For such the apostle Peter, writing to these Hebrews, describes their conversation to have been, 1 Pet. iv. 3, as

we shown before. And from thence he describes what a blessed deliverance they had by the gospel, 1 Pet. i. 18, 20, 21. And when he declares the apostasy of some to their former courses, he shows it to be like the returning of a dog to his vomit, after they had escaped them that live in error, and the pollutions that are in the world through lust, 2 Pet. ii. 18—22. These were the works which converts were taught to abandon, and a profession of repentance for them, was required of all before their initiation into Christian religion, or before they were received into the church. For it was not then as now, that any one might be admitted into the society of the faithful, and yet continue to live in open sins unrepented of.

Secondly. That which is required, and which they were taught with respect to these dead works, is *μετανοια*, ‘repentance.’ Repentance from dead works, is the first thing required of them who take on them the profession of the gospel, and consequently the first principle of the doctrine of Christ, as it is here placed by the apostle. Without this, whatever is attempted or attained therein, is only a dishonour to Christ, and a disappointment to men. This is the method of preaching, confirmed by the example and command of Christ himself: ‘Repent and believe the gospel,’ Matt. iv. 17; Mark i. 15. And almost all the sermons that we find, not only of John the baptist, in a way of preparation for the declaration of the gospel, as Matt. iii. 2, but of the apostles also, in pressing the actual reception of it on the Jews and Gentiles, laid this as their first principle, namely, the necessity of repentance, Acts ii. 38, iii. 19, xiv. 15. Thence in the preaching of the gospel it is said, that God commanded all men to repent, Acts xvii. 30. And when the Gentiles had received the gospel, the church at Jerusalem glorified God, saying, ‘Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life,’ Acts xi. 18. Again, this is expressed as the first issue of grace and mercy from God towards men by Jesus Christ, which is therefore first to be proposed to them. ‘God exalted him, and made him a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel,’ Acts v. 31. And because it is the first, it is put synecdochically for the whole work of God’s grace by Christ. ‘God having raised up his Son Jesus, hath sent him to bless you, in turning every one of you from his iniquities, Acts iii. 26. It is therefore evident that this was the first doctrinal principle, as to their own duty, which was pressed on, and fixed in the minds of men, on their first instruction in the gospel.

And in the testimonies produced, both the causes of it, and its general nature, are expressed. For, 1. Its supreme original cause is the good-will, grace, and bounty of God. He grants, and gives it to whom he pleaseth of his own good pleasure, Acts xi. 18. 2. It is immediately collated on the souls of men by Jesus Christ, as a fruit of his death, and an effect of that all power in heaven and earth, which was bestowed on him by the Father. ‘He gives repentance to Israel,’ Acts v. 31. The sovereign disposal of it is from the will of the Father, and the actual collation of it, is an effect of the grace of the Son. And, 3. The nature of it is expressed in the conversion of the Gentiles. ‘It is to life,’ Acts xi. 18. The repentance required of

men in the first preaching of the gospel, and the necessity whereof was pressed on them, was to life, that is, such as had saving conversion to God accompanying of it. This kind of repentance is required to our initiation in the gospel state. Not an empty profession of any kind of repentance, but real conversion to God, is required of such persons.

But moreover we must consider this *μετανοια*, or repentance, in its own nature, at least in general, that we may the better understand this first principle of catechetical doctrine. In this sense it respects, 1. The mind and judgment. 2. The will and affections. And, 3. The life or conversation of men.

First. It respects the mind and judgment, according to the notation of the word, which signifies a change of mind, or an after consideration and judgment. Men, while they live in dead works, under the power of sin, do never make a right judgment, concerning either their nature, their guilt, or their end. Hence are they so often called to remember and consider things aright; to deal about them with the reason of men; and for want thereof they are said to be foolish, brutish, sottish, and to have no understanding. The mind is practically deceived about them. There are degrees in this deceit, but all sinners are actually more or less deceived. None, while the natural principle of conscience remains in them, can cast off all the convictions of sin, Rom. ii. 14, 15; that it is the judgment of God, that those who commit such things are worthy of death, Rom. i. 32. But yet some there are, who so far despise these convictions, as to give up themselves to all sin with delight and greediness. See Eph. iv. 17—19. Practically they call good evil, and evil good; and do judge either that there is not that evil in sin which is pretended, or however, that it is better to enjoy the pleasures of it for a season, than to relinquish or forego it on other considerations. Others there are who have some farther sense of those dead works. In particular they judge them evil, but they are so entangled in them, as that they see not the greatness of that evil, nor do make such a judgment concerning it, as whereon a relinquishment of them should necessarily ensue. To these two heads in various degrees may all impenitent sinners be reduced.

1. Such as despising their convictions, go on in an unbridled course of licentiousness, as not judging the voice, language, and mind of them, worth inquiring into. 2. Such as do in some measure attend to them, but yet practically they refuse them, and embrace motives to sin, turning the scale on that side, as occasion, opportunities, and temptations do occur. Wherefore the first thing in this repentance, is a thorough change of the mind and judgment concerning these dead works. The mind by the light and conviction of saving truth, determines clearly and steadily concerning the true nature of sin, and its demerit; that it is an evil thing and bitter to have forsaken God thereby. Casting out all prejudices, laying aside all pleas, excuses, and palliations, it finally concludes, that sin, that is, all and every sin, every thing that hath the nature of sin, is universally evil, evil in itself, evil to the sinner, evil in its present effects, and future consequences, evil in every kind, shamefully evil, incomparably evil, yea,

the only evil, or all that is evil in the world. And this judgment it makes with respect to the nature and law of God, to its own primitive and present depraved condition, to present duty, and future judgment. This is the first thing required to repentance, and where this is not, there is nothing of it.

Secondly. It respects the will and affections. It is our turning unto God: our turning from him being in the bent and inclination of our wills and affections unto sin. The change of the will, or the taking away of the will of sinning, is the principal part of repentance. It is with respect unto our wills that we are said to be dead in sin, and alienated from the life of God. And by this change of the will do we become dead unto sin, Rom. vi. 2, that is, whatever remainder of lust or corruption there may be in us, yet the will of sinning is taken away. And for the affections, it works that change in the soul, as that quite contrary affections shall be substituted and set at work with respect unto the same object. There are pleasures in sin, and also it hath its wages. With respect unto these, those that live in dead works, both delight in sin, and have complacency in the accomplishment of it. These are the affections which the soul exerciseth about sin committed, or to be committed. Instead of them, repentance, by which they are utterly banished, sets at work sorrow, grief, abhorrency, self-detestation, revenge, and the like afflictive passions of mind. Nothing stirs, but they affect the soul with respect unto sin.

Thirdly. It respects the course of life or conversation. It is a repentance from dead works, that is, in the relinquishment of them. Without this, no profession of repentance is of any worth or use. To profess a repentance of sin, and to live in sin, is to mock God, deride his law, and deceive our own souls. This is that change which alone doth or can evidence the other internal changes of the mind, will, and affections, to be real and sincere, Prov. xxviii. 13. Whatever without this, is pretended, is false and hypocritical; like the repentance of Judah, not with the whole heart, but feignedly, Jer. iii. 10. בשקר. There was a lie in it; for their works answered not their words. Neither is there any mention of repentance in the Scripture, wherein this change in an actual relinquishment of dead works is not expressly required. And hereunto three things are necessary.

First. A full purpose of heart for the relinquishment of every sin. This is cleaving unto the Lord with purpose of heart, Acts xi. 23; Ps. xvii. 3. To manifest the stability and steadfastness which is required herein, David confirmed it with an oath, Ps. cxix. 106. Every thing that will either live or thrive, must have a root, on which it grows, and whence it springs. Other things may occasionally bud and put forth, but they wither immediately. And such is a relinquishment of sin from occasional resolutions. Upon some smart of conviction, from danger, sickness, trouble, fear, affliction, there blooms in the minds of many a sudden resolution to forsake sin, and as suddenly for the most part it fades again. True repentance forms a steady and unshaken resolution in the heart, which respects the forsaking of all sin, and at all times or occasions.

Secondly. Constant endeavours to actuate and fulfil this purpose.

And these endeavours respect all the means, causes, occasions, temptations, leading unto **sin**, that they may be avoided, opposed, and deliverance obtained from them; as also all means, advantages, and furtherance of those graces and duties, which are opposed to these dead works, that they may be improved. A heartless inactive purpose, is that which many take up withal, and ruin their souls by. Where therefore there is not a sedulous endeavour, by watchfulness and diligence, in the constant use of all means, to avoid all dead works in all their concerns, from their first rise and principle, to their finishing or consummation, there is no true repentance from them.

Thirdly. An actual relinquishment of all sins, in the course of our walking before God. And hereunto is required, 1. Not an absolute freedom from all sin, for there is no man living who doth good and sinneth not. 2. Not an absolute and precise deliverance even from great sins, whereinto the soul may be surprised by the power of temptations. Examples to the contrary abound in the Scripture. But yet such sins, when any is overtaken with them, ought, first, To put the sinner upon a severe inquiry whether his repentance were sincere and saving; for where it is, usually the soul is preserved from such falls, 2 Pet. i. 10. And, secondly. To put him upon the renewing his repentance, with the same care, diligence, sorrow, and humiliation as at the first. But, 1. It is required that this property of repentance be prevalent against the common sins of the world, men's old sins which they lived in before their conversion. Those sins which are expressly declared in the gospel to be inconsistent with the profession, ends, and glory of it, it wholly excludes, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10; 2 Cor. vi. 16; 1 John iii. 14, 15. And, 2. Against a course in any sin or sins, either spiritual or fleshly, internal, or external, 1 John iii. 9; Rom. vi. 2. 3. For the most part against all outward sins in the course of our conversation in the world, in which things our sincerity or perfection is exercised. And these things were necessary to be touched on, to manifest the nature of this first principle wherein men are to be instructed.

Obs. 1. There is no interest in Christ, or Christian religion, to be obtained, without repentance from dead works; nor any orderly entrance into a gospel church-state, without a credible profession thereof. —This was one of the first things that was preached unto sinners, as was before declared; and without a compliance herewith, they were not further to be treated with; for,

First. The Lord Christ came, not only to save men from their sins, but to turn them from their sins; to turn them from their sins, that they may be saved from them. When he comes out of Sion as a Redeemer, a Deliverer, a Saviour, he turns away ungodliness from Jacob; that is, he turns Jacob from ungodliness, Rom. xi. 26, namely, by repentance. This was one principal end of the birth, life, death, and exaltation of Christ. His work, in all these, was to make peace and reconciliation between God and man. Hereunto belongeth the slaying, destruction, or removal of the enmity that was between them. This, with respect unto God, was done by the atonement he made, the sacrifice he offered, and the price of redemption that he paid, 2 Cor.

v. 21. But the whole work is not hereby completed. The enmity on our part also must be taken away, or reconciliation will not be finished. Now, we were enemies in our minds by wicked works, Col. i. 21, and thereby alienated from the life of God, Eph. iv. 18. The removal hereof consists in this repentance. For that is our turning to God, upon the terms of peace tendered unto us. They therefore do but deceive their own souls, who trust unto peace with God on the mediation of Christ, who are not at peace with God in their own souls by repentance; for the one is not without the other. As he who is at peace with God on his own part by repentance, shall never fail of peace from God by the atonement, for he that so lays hold on his arm and strength that he may have peace, shall be sure to obtain it, Isa. xxvii. 3, so without this, whatever notions men may have of reconciliation with God, they will find him in the issue as devouring fire, or everlasting burnings. All doctrines, notions, or persuasions, that tend to alleviate the necessity of that personal repentance which was before described, or would substitute any outward penance, or corporeal pecuniary penal satisfaction in the room thereof, are pernicious to the souls of men. And there is nothing so much to be dreaded or abhorred, as a pretence taken unto sin, unto any sin, without repentance, from the grace or doctrine of the gospel. 'Shall we continue in sin,' saith our apostle, that grace may abound? God forbid? Those who do so, and thereby turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, are among the number of them whose damnation sleepeth not.

Secondly. That any person living in sin without repentance, should have an interest in Christ or Christian religion, is inconsistent with the glory of God, the honour of Jesus Christ, and would render the gospel, if this were taught therein, a doctrine fit to be rejected by all men. For where is the glory of the righteousness or holiness of God, if impenitent sinners may be accepted with him? Besides that it is contrary unto the whole declaration made by himself, that he will not acquit the guilty, that he will not justify the wicked, nor accept the ungodly, it hath an absolute inconsistency with the especial righteousness of his nature, and which he exerciseth as the supreme Rector and Judge of all, that any such persons should approach before him, or stand in his sight, Ps. v. 4—6; Rom. i. 32. And for the Lord Jesus Christ, it would plainly make him the minister of sin, the thought whereof, our apostle so detests, Gal. ii. 17. Nay, a supposition hereof, would make the coming of Christ, to be the greatest means of letting in and increasing sin on the world, that ever was, since the fall of Adam. And the gospel must then be looked on as a doctrine meet to be abandoned by all wise and sober persons, as that which would tend unavoidably to the debauching of mankind, and to the ruin of human society. For, whereas it doth openly and avowedly propose and declare the pardon and remission of sin, of all sorts of sin, to all sorts of persons that shall believe and obey it, if it did this without annexing unto its promise the condition of repentance, never was there, nor can there be, so great an encouragement unto all sorts of sin and wickedness. There is much to that purpose in the doctrines of purgatory, penances, and satisfactions, whereby men are

taught that they may come off from their sins at a cheaper rate than eternal ruin, without that repentance which is necessary. But this is nothing, in comparison to the mischief which the gospel would produce, if it did not require repentance from dead works. For the gospel has innumerable advantages to evidence itself to be from God; whereas, these other pretences are such as wise and considering men may easily look through their daubing, and see their ground or falsehood. Moreover, the gospel doth certainly propose its pardon freely, without money and without price; and so, on this supposition, would lay the reins absolutely free on the neck of sin and wickedness; whereas, those fancies are burdened and charged with such inconveniences, as may lay some curb upon them in easy and carnal minds. Wherefore, I say, on such a false and cursed supposition, it would be the interest of wise and sober men, to oppose and reject the gospel, as the most effectual means of overflowing the world with sin and ungodliness. But it doth not more fully condemn idolatry, or the worship of the devil, than it doth any such notion or apprehension. It cannot be denied, but that some men may, and it is justly to be feared that some men do, abuse the doctrine of the gospel, to countenance themselves in a vain expectation of mercy and pardon, whilst they willingly live in a course of sin. But, as this in their management is the principal means of their ruin, so, in the righteous judgment of God, it will be the greatest aggravation of their condemnation. And, whereas some have charged the preachers of gospel grace, as those who thereby give countenance unto this presumption, it is an accusation that hath more of the hatred of grace in it, than of the love of holiness. For none do, nor can press the relinquishment of sin and repentance of it, upon such assured grounds, and with such cogent arguments, as those by whom the grace of Jesus Christ in the gospel, is fully opened and declared.

From what hath been discoursed, we may inquire after our own interest in this great and necessary duty; to assist us wherein, I shall yet add some farther directions. As,

1. Repentance is twofold. 1. Initial, 2. Continued in our whole course; and our inquiry is to be after our interest in both of them. The former is that whose general nature we have before described, which is the door of entrance into a gospel state, or a condition of acceptance with God, in and through Christ; and concerning it we may observe sundry things.

First. That as to the properties of initial repentance, it is,

First. Solemn; a duty that in all its circumstances is to be fixed and stated. It is not to be mixed only with other duties, but we are to set ourselves on purpose, and engage ourselves singularly unto it. I will not say this is so essential unto it, that he can in no sense be said sincerely to have repented, who hath not separately and distinctly been exercised herein for some season; yet I will say, that the repentance of such a one, will scarce be ever well cleared up unto his own soul. When the spirit of grace is poured out on men, they shall mourn apart, Zech. xii. 12—14. That is, they shall peculiarly and solemnly separate themselves to the right discharge of this duty, between God

and their souls. And those who have hitherto neglected it, or failed therein, may be advised solemnly to address themselves unto it, whatever hopes they may have, that they have been carried through it already. There is no loss of time, grace, nor comfort, in the solemn renovation of initial repentance.

Secondly. Universal, as to the object of it. It respects all sin, and every sin, every crooked path, and every step therein. It absolutely excludes all reserves for any sin. To profess repentance, and yet with an express reserve for any sin, approacheth very near the great sin of lying to the Holy Ghost. It is like Ananias, his keeping back part of the price, when the whole was devoted. And these soul-destroying reserves, which absolutely overthrow the whole nature of repentance, do commonly arise from one of these pretences or occasions.

1. That the sin reserved is small, and of no great importance. It is a little one. But true repentance respects the nature of sin, which is in every sin equally, the least as well as the greatest. The least reserve for vanity, pride, conformity to the world, inordinate desires or affections, utterly overthrows the truth of repentance and all the benefits of it.

2. That it is so useful as that, at least at present, it cannot be parted withal. So Naaman would reserve his bowing before the king in the house of Rimmon, because his honours and preferments depended thereon. So it is with many in their course of life, or trading in the world; some advantages by crooked ways, seem as useful to them as their right hand, which they cannot, as yet, cut off and cast from them. This, therefore, they have a secret reserve for; though it may not be expressed, yet it is real and effectual. But he, who in this case, will not part with a right eye or a right hand, must be content to go with them both into hell fire.

3. Secresy. That which is hidden from every eye, may be left behind. Some sweet morsel of this kind, may yet be rolled under the tongue. But this is an evidence of the grossest hypocrisy, and the highest contempt of God who seeth in secret.

4. Uncertainty of some things whether they are sins or no. It may be, some think such neglects of duty, such compliances with the world, are not sins; and whereas, they have not so full a conviction of their being sinful, as they have of other sins which are notorious and against the light of nature, only they have just reason to fear they are evil, this they will break through and indulge themselves in them. But this also impeacheth the truth of repentance. Where it is sincere, it engageth the soul against all appearance of evil. And one that is truly humbled, hath no more certain rule in his walking, than not to do what he hath just cause to doubt whether it be lawful or not. True repentance, therefore, is universal, and inconsistent with all these reserves.

Secondly. Unto the same end, that we may be acquainted with our own interest in this initiating repentance, we must consider the season when it is wrought. And this is,

1. Upon the first communication of gospel light unto us by the Holy Ghost. Christ sends him to convince us of sin and righteousness and judgment, John xvi. 8. And if, upon the first participation

of light and conviction by the Holy Ghost, this repentance is not wrought in us, it is to be feared that we have missed our season. And so it falls out with many. They receive light and convictions, but use them unto other ends. These put them, it may be, upon a profession and relinquishment of some ways and parties of men, but farther they use them not. Their first proper end is to work our own souls to saving repentance, and if we miss their first impressions, their power and efficacy for that end is hardly recoverable.

2. It never fails on the first saving view of Jesus Christ as crucified, Zech. xii. 10. It is impossible that any one should have a saving view of Christ crucified, and not be savingly humbled for sin. And there is no one single trial of our faith in Christ, whether it be genuine or not, that is more natural than this. What have been the effects of it, as to humiliation and repentance? Where these ensue not on what we account our believing there we have not had a saving view of Christ crucified.

Thirdly. Whereas we call this repentance initial, we must consider, that it differs not in nature and kind, from that which we ought to be exercised in, whilst we are in this world, whereof afterwards. That which we intend thereby, is the use of repentance in our first admission into an interest in a gospel state. And with respect hereunto its duration may be considered; concerning which we may observe,

1. That with some, especially in extraordinary cases, this work and duty may be over in a day as to its initiating use and efficacy. So was it with many primitive converts, who at the same time were savingly humbled and comforted by the promises of the gospel, Acts ii. 37—42; xvi. 31—34. Now although in such persons the things we have ascribed to this repentance, are not wrought formally and distinctly, yet are they all wrought virtually and radically, and do act themselves on all future occasions.

2. Some are held longer unto this duty as it is initiating. Not only did Paul continue three days and nights under his sore distress without relief, but others are kept days and weeks and months oftentimes, in the discharge of this duty, before they have a refreshing entrance given them thereby into an estate of spiritual rest in the gospel. There is therefore no measure of time to be allotted unto the solemn attendance unto this duty, but only this, that none faint under it, wax weary of it, or give it over, before there be thereby administered unto them an entrance into the kingdom of God.

And these considerations of the nature of repentance from dead works as it is initiating, may give us some direction in that necessary inquiry concerning our own personal interest in it.

Now there are several ways whereby men miss their duty with respect unto this first principle, and thereby ruin their souls eternally.

1. Some utterly despise it. Such are the presumptuous sinners mentioned, Deut. xxix. 19, 20. As they disregard the curse of the law, so they do also the promise of the gospel, as unto any repentance or relinquishment of sin with respect unto them. Such folly and brutish foolishness possesseth the minds of multitudes, that they will have some expectation of benefit by the gospel, and will give it an outward

compliance, but will not touch on the very first thing which it indispensably requireth of all that intend any concernment in it. It were easy to open and aggravate this deplorable folly ; but I must not stay on these things.

2. Some will repent in their dead works but not from them. That is, upon convictions, afflictions, dangers, they will be troubled for their sins, make confession of them, be grieved that they have contracted such guilt and danger, with resolutions to forego them. But yet they will abide in their sins and dead works still. So Pharaoh more than once repented him his sins, but never had repentance from them. And so it was expressly with the Israelites themselves, Ps. lxxviii. 34—37. And this kind of repentance ruins not fewer souls than the former total contempt of it. There are not a few unto whom this kind of repentance stands in the same stead all their days, as confession and absolution doth to the Papists ; it gives them present ease, that they may return to their former sins.

3. Some repent from dead works in some sense, but they repent not of them. They will come, through the power of their convictions, to a relinquishment of many of their old sins, as Herod did upon the preaching of John Baptist, but are never truly and savingly humbled for sin absolutely. Their lives are changed, but their hearts are not renewed. And their repunciation of sin is always partial, whereof before. There are many other ways whereby men deceive their souls in this matter, which I must not now insist upon.

Secondly. This repentance in the nature and kind of it, is a duty to be continued in the whole course of our lives. It ceaseth as unto those especial acts which belong unto our initiation into a gospel state, but it abides as to our orderly preservation therein. There must be no end of repentance, until there is a full end of sin. All tears will not be wiped from our eyes, until all sin is perfectly removed from our souls. Now repentance in this sense may be considered two ways.

1. As it is a stated constant duty of the gospel ; 2. As it is occasional.

First. As it is stated, it is our humble mournful walking with God under a sense of sin, continually manifesting itself in our natures and infirmities. And the acts of this repentance in us, are of two sorts ; First. Direct and immediate ; Secondly. Consequential and dependent. The former may be referred unto two heads. 1. Confession. 2. Humiliation. These a truly penitent soul will be continually exercised in. He whose heart is so lifted up on any pretence, as not to abide in the constant exercise of these acts of repentance, is one whom the soul of God hath no delight in. The other, which are immediate acts of faith, but inseparable from these, are, 1. Supplications for the pardon of sin ; 2. Diligent watchfulness against sin. It is evident how great a share of our walking with God consists in these things, which yet I must not enlarge upon.

Secondly. This continued repentance is occasional, when it is heightened unto a singular solemnity. And these occasions may be referred unto three heads.

1. A personal surprisal into any great actual sin. Such an occa-

sion is not to be passed over with the ordinary actings of repentance. David upon his fall, brings his renewed repentance into that solemnity as if it had been his first conversion to God. On that account he deduceth his personal sins from the sin of his nature, Ps. li. 5, besides many other circumstances whereby he gave it an extraordinary solemnity. So Peter upon the denial of his master, wept bitterly, which with his following humiliation and the renovation of his faith, our Saviour calls his conversion, Luke xxii. 23. A new conversion of him who was before really converted. There is nothing more dangerous unto our spiritual state, than to pass by particular instances of sin, with the general duties of repentance.

2. The sin or sins of the family or church whereunto we are related, calls unto us to give a solemnity unto this duty, 2 Cor. vii. 11. The church having failed in the business of the incestuous offender, when they were convinced by the apostle of their sinful miscarriage therein, most solemnly renew their repentance towards God.

3. Afflictions and sore trials call for this duty, as we may see in the issue of all things between God and Job, ch. xlii. 6.

And, lastly, We may observe that this repentance is a grace of the Spirit of Christ, a gospel grace, and therefore whatever unpleasantness there may be in its exercise unto the flesh, it is sweet, refreshing, satisfactory, and secretly pleasant unto the inner man. Let us not be deterred from abiding and abounding in this duty. It is not a morose, tetical, severe self-maceration, but a humble, gracious, mournful walking with God, wherein the soul finds rest, sweetness, joy, and peace, being rendered thereby compliant with the will of God, benign, useful, kind, compassionate towards men, as might be declared.

The necessity of a profession of this repentance from dead works, in order to an admission into the society of the church, that an evidence may be given of the power and efficacy of the doctrine of Christ in the souls of men; that his disciples may be visibly separated by their own profession from the world that lies in evil, and be fitted for communion among themselves in love, hath been elsewhere spoken unto.

The second instance of the doctrinal foundation supposed to be laid among the Hebrews, is *πιστεως επι Θεον*, 'of faith towards God.' And this principle is coupled with that foregoing, by the conjunctive particle *και*, 'of repentance and of faith.' Indeed, they neither ought to be, nor can they be severed. Where the one is, there is the other, and where either is not, there is neither, whatever be pretended. He repenteth not, who hath not faith towards God: and he hath no faith towards God, who repenteth not. And in this expression where repentance is placed first, and faith in God afterwards, only the distinction that is between them, but neither an order of nature in the things themselves, nor a necessary order in the teaching of them, is intended. For in order of nature, faith towards God must precede repentance from dead works. No man can use any argument to prevail with others unto repentance, but it must be taken from the word of the law or of the gospel, the precepts, promises, and threatenings of them. If there be no faith towards God with respect unto these things, whence

should repentance from dead works arise, or how can the necessity of it be demonstrated? Besides, that the order of nature among the things themselves is not here intended, is evident from hence, in that the very last principles mentioned concerning the resurrection from the dead and eternal judgment are the principal motives and arguments unto the very first of them, or the necessity of repentance, as our apostle declares fully, Acts xvii. 30, 31. But there is some kind of order between these things with respect unto profession, intended. For no man can, or ought to be esteemed to make a due profession of faith towards God, who doth not first declare his repentance from dead works. Nor can any other have the comfort of faith in God, but such as have in themselves some evidence of the sincerity of their repentance.

Wherefore, omitting any further consideration of the order of these things, we must inquire what is here intended by faith in God. Now this cannot be faith in the most general notion of it, because it is reckoned as a principle of the doctrine of Christ. But faith in God absolutely taken, is a duty of the law of nature. Upon an acknowledgment of the being of God, it is thereby required that we believe in him as the first eternal truth; that we submit unto him and trust in him, as the sovereign Lord, the judge and rewarder of all. And a defect herein was the beginning of Adam's transgression. Wherefore faith in this sense cannot be called a principle of the doctrine of Christ, which wholly consists in supernatural revelations. Nor can it be so termed with respect unto the Jews in particular; for in their Judaism they were sufficiently taught faith in God, and needed not to have been instructed therein as a part of the doctrine of Christ. And there is a distinction put by our Saviour himself between that faith in God which they had, and the peculiar faith in himself which he required, John xiv. 1, 'Ye believe in God, believe also in me.' Besides, where these two, repentance and faith, are elsewhere joined together, as they are frequently, it is an especial sort of faith in God that is intended. See Luke xxiv. 46, 47; Acts xix. 4, xx. 21.

It is therefore faith in God as accomplishing the promise unto Abraham, in sending Jesus Christ, and granting pardon or remission of sins by him, that is intended. The whole is expressed by, 'Repent and believe the gospel,' Mark i. 15; that is, the tidings of the accomplishment of the promise made to the fathers, for the deliverance of us from all our sins by Jesus Christ. This is that which was pressed on the Hebrews by Peter in his first sermon unto them, Acts ii. 30—39, iii. 25, 26. Hence these two principles are expressed, by 'Repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ,' Acts xx. 21. As repentance is here described by the terminus a quo; it is repentance from dead works: so there it is described by its terminus ad quem; it is repentance towards God, in our turning unto him. For those who live in their lusts and sins, do it not only against the command of God, but also they place them, as to their affections and expectation of satisfaction, in the stead of God. And this faith in God is there called by way of explication, faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ; that is, as he in whose giving and sending the truth of God was fulfilled,

and by whom we 'believe in God,' 1 Pet. i. 21. This therefore is the faith in God here intended; namely, that whereby we believe the accomplishment of his promise, in sending his Son Jesus Christ to die for us, and to save us from our sins. And this the Lord Christ testified unto in his own personal ministry. Hence our apostle says, that 'he was the minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers,' Rom. xv. 8. And this he testified unto them, John viii. 24, 'I said therefore unto you, that you shall die in your sins; for if you believe not that I am he, you shall die in your sins;' and that because they rejected the promise of God made unto the fathers, concerning him, which was the only foundation of salvation. And this was the first thing that ordinarily our apostle preached in his dispensation of the gospel, 1 Cor. xv. 3, 'For I delivered unto you first of all, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.' He taught the thing itself, and the relation it had unto the promise of God recorded in the Scripture. That this is the faith in God here intended, I prove by these reasons: 1. Because this indeed was that faith in particular which in the first preaching of the gospel unto these Hebrews they were taught and instructed in. And therefore with respect unto it our apostle says, that he would not lay again the foundation. The first calling of the church among them was by the sermons of Peter and the rest of the apostles, Acts ii. 3—5. Now consult those sermons, and you shall find the principal thing insisted on in them, was the accomplishment of the promises made to Abraham and David, which they exhorted them to believe. This therefore was that faith in God which was first taught them, and which our apostle hath respect unto. 2. Because it was the want of this faith which proved the ruin of that church. As in the wilderness, the unbelief for which they perished, respected the faithfulness of God in the accomplishment of his promise with respect to the land of Canaan; so the unbelief which the body of the people now perished for, dying in their sins and for them, respected the accomplishment of the great promise of sending Jesus Christ, which things the apostle compares at large ch. iii. This then was that which he hereof reminds the Hebrews, as the principal foundation of that profession of the gospel which they had taken on them. And we may observe, that,

Obs. II. Faith in God, as to the accomplishing of the great promise in sending his Son Jesus Christ to save us from our sins, is the great fundamental principle of our interest in and profession of the gospel. Faith in God under this formal consideration, not only that he hath sent and given Jesus Christ his Son, but that he did it in the accomplishment of his promise, is required of us. For whereas he hath chosen to glorify all the properties of his nature, in the person and mediation of Christ, he doth not only declare his grace in giving him, but also his truth in sending him according unto his word. And this was that which holy persons of old did glorify God in an especial manner upon the account of, Luke i. 54, 55, 68—75. And there is nothing in the gospel that God himself, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the holy apostles do more insist upon than this, that God had fulfilled his promise in sending his Son into the world. On this one thing

depends all religion, the truth of the Bible, and all our salvation. If it be not evident that God hath accomplished his promise, the whole Bible may pass for a fable; for it is all built on this supposition, that God gave this promise and hath accomplished it; the first being the foundation of the Old Testament, and the latter of the New. And there are sundry things that signalize our faith in God with respect hereunto. As,

1. This promise of sending Jesus Christ, was the first express engagement that God ever made, of his faithfulness and veracity unto any creatures. He is essentially faithful and true; but he had not engaged himself to act according unto those properties in his dealing with us in a way of love and grace, calling for trust and confidence in us, before he gave the promise concerning Christ, Gen. iii. 15. This therefore was the spring and measure of all other subsequent promises. They are all of them but new assurances thereof, and according as it fares with that, so it must do with all the rest. God gave out this promise, as that whereon he would rest the honour and glory of his fidelity, in all other promises that he should make. As we find him true or failing herein, so he expects our faith and trust in all his other promises should be. Hence this was the first and immediate object of faith in man after the fall.

The first thing proposed unto him, was to believe in God, with respect unto his faithfulness in the future accomplishment of this promise; and faith concerning its actual accomplishment, is the first thing required of us.

Besides this promise hung longest on the file before its accomplishment. There was not less than four thousand years between its giving and its performance. And many things happened during that season, whereby both the promise, and faith on God thereon, were greatly signalized. For, 1. More and greater objections against the truth of it, more temptations against it were raised and managed, than against all other promises whatever. This long suspension of its fulfilling, gave such advantages to Satan in his opposition unto it, that he prevailed against every expectation, but that of faith tried and more precious than gold. And the saints themselves had a great exercise in the disappointments which many of them fell into, as to the time of its accomplishment. It is not unlikely that most of them looked for it in their own days; great therefore were the trials of all sorts about it. 2. It was all that the true church of God had to live on during that long season, the sole foundation of its faith, obedience, and consolation. It is true, in progress of time God added other promises, precepts, and institutions, for the direction and instruction of the church, but they were all built on this one promise, and all resolved into it. This gave life and signification to them; therewith were they to stand and fall. 3. This was that the world broke off from God on, and by rejecting it, fell into all confusion and misery. The promise being given to Adam was indefinitely given to mankind. And it was suited to the reparation of their lost condition, yea their investiture into a better state. And this increased the wrath and malice of Satan. He saw that if they applied themselves to the faith hereof, his former success against

them was utterly frustrated. Wherefore he again attempts to turn them off from the relief provided against the misery he had cast them into. And as to the generality of mankind he prevailed in his attempt. By a relinquishment of this promise, not believing of it, not retaining it in their minds, they fell into a second apostasy from God. And what disorder, darkness, confusion, yea what a hell of horror and misery they cast themselves into, is known. And this consideration greatly signalizes faith in God, with respect to this promise. 4. The whole church of the Jews, rejecting the accomplishment of this promise, utterly perished thereon. This was the sin for which the church died, and indeed this is the foundation of the ruin of all unbelievers, who perished under the dispensation of the gospel.

It will be said, it may be, that this promise being now actually accomplished, and that taken for granted, we have not the like concern in it, as they had who lived before the said accomplishment. But there is a mistake herein. No man believes aright that the Son of God is come in the flesh, but he who believes that he came in the accomplishment of the promise of God, to the glory of his truth and faithfulness. And it is from hence that we know aright both the occasion, original cause, and end of his coming: which whoso considereth not, his pretended faith is in vain.

2. This is the greatest promise that God ever gave to the children of men, and therefore faith in him with respect hereunto, is both necessary to us, and greatly tends to his glory. Indeed all the concernments of God's glory in the church, and our eternal welfare are wrapped up herein. But I must not enlarge hereon.

Obs. III. Only we must add, that the consideration of the accomplishment of this promise is a great encouragement and support to faith, with respect to all other promises of God.—Never was any kept so long in abeyance, the state of the church and design of God requiring it. None ever had such opposition made to its accomplishment. Never was any more likely to be defeated by the unbelief of men; all faith in it being at length renounced by Jews and Gentiles, which if anything, or had it been suspended on any condition, might have disappointed its event. And shall we think that God will leave any other of his promises unaccomplished? That he will not in due time engage his omnipotent power and infinite wisdom in the discharge of his truth and faithfulness? Hath he sent his Son after four thousand years' expectation, and will he not in due time destroy antichrist, call again the Jews, set up the kingdom of Christ gloriously in the world, and finally save the souls of all that sincerely believe? This great instance of divine fidelity, leaves no room for the objections of unbelief as to any other promise under the same assurance.

Thirdly. The third principle, according to the order and sense of the words laid down before, is, *ἀναστάσεως τε νεκρῶν*, 'the resurrection of the dead.' And this was a fundamental principle of the Judaical church, indeed of all religions properly so called in the world. The twelve articles of the creed of the present Jews, is, *ימים משיח*, 'the days of the Messiah,' that is, the time will come when God will send the Messiah and restore all things by him. This under the Old Testament

respected that faith in God which we before discoursed concerning. But the present Jews, notwithstanding this profession, have no interest herein. For not to believe the accomplishment of a promise when it is fulfilled, as also sufficiently revealed and testified to, to be fulfilled, is to reject all faith in God concerning that promise. But this they still retain an appearance and profession of. And their thirteenth article is, *חַיַּית מֵתִים*, 'the revivification or resurrection from the dead.' And the faith hereof being explained, and confirmed in the gospel, as also sealed by the great seal of the resurrection of Christ, it was ever esteemed as a chief principle of Christianity, and that whose admittance is indispensably necessary to all religion whatever. And I shall first briefly show how it is a fundamental principle of all religion, and then evidence its especial relation to that taught by Jesus Christ, or declare how it is a fundamental principle of the gospel. And, as to the first, it is evident without its acknowledgment, all religion whatever would be abolished. For if it be once supposed or granted, that men were made only for a frail mortal life in this world, that they have no other continuance assigned to their being, but what is common to them with the beasts that perish, there would be no more religion amongst them than there is amongst the beasts themselves. For as they would never be able to solve the difficulties of present temporary dispensations of providence, which will not be reduced to any such known visible rule of righteousness, abstracting from the completement of them hereafter, as of themselves to give a firm apprehension of a divine, holy, righteous power in the government of the universe; so take away all consideration of future rewards and punishments, which are equally asserted in this and the ensuing principle, and the lusts of men would quickly obliterate all those notions of a Deity, as also of good and evil in their practice, which should preserve them from atheism and bestiality. Neither do we ever see any man giving himself up to the unbelief of these things, but that immediately he casts off all considerations of any public or private good, but what is centred in himself, and the satisfaction of his lusts.

But it will be asked, whether the belief of the immortality of the soul, be not sufficient to secure religion, without the addition of this article of the resurrection. Of this indeed some among the ancient heathens had faint apprehensions, without any guess at the resurrection of the body. And some of them also who were most steady in that persuasion, had some thoughts also of such a restoration of all things, as wherein the bodies of men should have their share. But as their thoughts of these things were fluctuating and uncertain, so was all their religion also, and so it must be on this principle. For there can be no reconciliation of the doctrine of future rewards and punishments to be righteously administered, to a supposition of the separate everlasting subsistence of the soul only. That is, eternal judgments cannot be on satisfactory grounds believed, without an antecedent acknowledgment of the resurrection of the dead. For what justice is it, that the whole of blessedness or misery should fall on the soul only, where the body hath had a great share in the procurement of the one, or the other? or that, whereas both concur to the doing of good or evil,

the soul only should be rewarded or punished? especially considering what influence the body hath into all that is evil, how the satisfaction of the flesh is the great inducement to sin on the one hand; and what it often undergoeth and suffereth for that which is good? Shall we think that God gave bodies to the holy martyrs, only to endure inexpressible tortures and miseries to death for the sake of Christ, and then to perish for ever? And this manifesteth the great degeneracy into which the Jewish church had now fallen. For a great number of them had apostatized into the atheism of denying the resurrection of the dead. And so confident were they in their infidelity, that they would needs argue and dispute with our Saviour about it, by whom they were confounded; but after the manner of obstinate infidels, not converted, Matt. xxii. 23, 24, &c. This was the principal heresy of the Sadducees, which drew along with it those other foolish opinions, of denying angels and spirits, or the subsistence of the souls of men in a separate condition, Acts xxiii. 8. For they concluded well enough, that the continuance of the souls of men would answer no design of providence or justice, if their bodies were not raised again. And whereas God had now given the most illustrious testimony to this truth, in the resurrection of Christ himself, the Sadducees became the most inveterate enemies to him and opposers of him. For they not only acted against him, and those who professed to believe in him, from that infidelity which was common to them with most of their countrymen, but also because their peculiar heresy was everted and condemned thereby. And it is usual with men of corrupt minds, to prefer such peculiar errors above all other concerns of religion whatever, and to have their lusts inflamed by them into the utmost intemperance. They therefore were the first stirrers up and fiercest pursuers of the primitive persecutions, Acts iv. 1, 2, 'The Sadducees came upon the apostles, being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.' The overthrow of their private heresy was that which enraged them, ch. v. 17, 18, 'Then the high priest rose up, and all that were with him, which is the sect of the Sadducees, and were filled with indignation, and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison,' And the Pharisees were put into a similar rage about their ceremonies, wherein they placed their especial interest and glory. And our apostle did wisely make an advantage of this difference about the resurrection, between those two great sects, to divide them in their counsels and actings, who were before agreed on his destruction on the common account of preaching Jesus Christ, Acts xxiii. 6—9.

This principle, therefore, both upon the account of its importance in itself, as also of the opposition made unto it among the Jews by the Sadducees, the apostle took care to settle and establish in the first place, as those truths are in an especial manner to be confirmed, which are at any time peculiarly opposed. And they had reason thus to do; for all they had to preach unto the world turned on this hinge, that Christ was raised from the dead, whereon our resurrection doth unavoidably follow, so as that they confessed, that without an eviction and acknowledgment hereof, all their preaching was in vain, and all

their faith who believed therein, was so also, 1 Cor. xv. 12—14. This, therefore, was always one of the first principles which our apostle insisted on in the preaching of the gospel; a signal instance whereof, we have in this discourse, at his first coming unto Athens. First. He reproves their sins and idolatries, declaring that God by him called them to repentance from those dead works. Then taught them faith in that God who so called them by Jesus Christ; confirming the necessity of both, by the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead, and future judgment, Acts xvii. 18, 23, 24, 30, 31. He seems, therefore, here, directly and summarily to lay down those principles in the order in which he constantly preached them, in his first declaration of the gospel. And this was necessary to be spoken concerning the nature and necessity of this principle.

Αναστασις νεκρων, the ‘resurrection of the dead.’ It is usually expressed by *αναστασις*, the ‘resurrection’ only, Mark xii. 18; Luke xx. 27, 33; John xi. 24; Matt. xxii. 23, 28. For by this single expression, the whole was sufficiently known and apprehended. And so we commonly call it the resurrection, without any addition. Sometimes it is termed *αναστασις εκ νεκρων*, Acts iv. 2, the ‘resurrection from the dead,’ that is, the state of the dead. Our apostle hath a peculiar expression, ch. xi. 35, *ελαβον εξ αναστασεως τους νεκρους αυτων*, ‘they received their dead from the resurrection;’ that is, by virtue thereof, they being raised to life again. And sometimes it is distinguished with respect unto its consequents, in different persons, the good and the bad. The resurrection of the former is called *αναστασις ζωης*, John v. 29, the ‘resurrection of life;’ that is, which is unto life eternal, the means of entrance into it. This is called *αναστασις δικαιων*, the ‘resurrection of the just,’ Luke xiv. 14. And so *חיים מתים*, the ‘life of the dead,’ or the ‘resurrection of the dead,’ was used to express the whole blessed estate which ensued thereon to believers. ‘If by any means I might attain, *ες την εξαναστασιν των νεκρων*, the resurrection of the dead,’ Phil. iii. 11. This is *αναβιωσις*, ‘a living again;’ as it is said of the Lord Christ distinctly, *ανεστη και ανεζησεν*, Rom. xiv. 9, ‘he rose and lived again,’ or he arose to life. With respect unto wicked men, it is called *αναστασις κρισεως*, the ‘resurrection of judgment,’ or unto judgment, John v. 29. Some shall be raised again to have judgment pronounced against them, to be sentenced unto punishment. ‘Reserve the unjust against the day of judgment to be punished, 2 Pet. ii. 9. And both these are put together, Dan. xii. 2, ‘And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth, shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.’

This truth being of so great importance, as that nothing in religion can subsist without it, the apostles very diligently confirmed it in the first churches. And for the same cause, it was early assaulted by Satan, denied and opposed by many. And this was done two ways. 1. By an open denial of any such thing, 1 Cor. xv. 12, ‘How say some among you, that there is no resurrection of the dead?’ They wholly denied it, as a thing improbable and impossible, as is evident from the whole ensuing disputation on that subject. 2. Others there were, who, not daring to oppose themselves directly unto a principle

so generally received in the church, they would still allow the expression, but put an allegorical exposition upon it, whereby they plainly overthrew the thing intended. They said, the 'resurrection was past already,' 2 Tim. ii. 18. It is generally thought that these men, Hy-menius and Philetus, placed the resurrection in conversion or reformation of life, as the Marcionites did afterwards. What some imagine about the Gnostics is vain. And that the reviving of a new light in us, is the resurrection intended in the Scripture, some begin to mutter among ourselves. But, that as death is a separation or sejunction of the soul and the body, so that the resurrection is a re-union of them, in and unto life, the Scripture is too express for any one to deny, and not virtually to reject it wholly. And it may be observed, that our apostle in both these cases, doth not only condemn these errors as false, but declares positively, that their admission overthrows the faith, and renders the preaching of the gospel vain and useless.

Now, this resurrection of the dead, is the restoration by the power of God, of the same numerical body which died, in all the essential and integral parts of it, rendering it, in a re-union of, or with the soul, immortal, or of an eternal duration in blessedness or misery. And,

Obs. IV. The doctrine of this resurrection is a fundamental principle of the gospel, the faith whereof, is indispensably necessary unto the obedience and consolation of all that profess it. I call it a principle of the gospel, not because it was first absolutely revealed therein. It was made known under the Old Testament, and was virtually included in the first promise. In the faith of it, the patriarchs lived and died, and it is testified unto, in the Psalms and prophets. With respect hereunto did the ancients confess that they were strangers and pilgrims in this world, seeking another city and country, wherein they should live with God for ever; they desired and looked for a heavenly country, wherein their persons should dwell, Heb. xi. 16. And this was with relation to God's covenant with them, wherein, as it follows, God was 'not ashamed to be called their God.' That is, their God in covenant, which relation could never be broken; and therefore, our Saviour proves the resurrection from thence, because, if the dead rise not again, the covenant relation between God and his people, must cease, Matt. xxii. 31, 32. Hence, also did they take especial care about their dead bodies and their burial, not merely out of respect unto natural order and decency, but to express their faith of the resurrection. So our apostle says, that 'by faith, Joseph gave commandment concerning his bones,' ch. xi. 12. And their disposal into a burying place is rehearsed by Stephen, as one fruit of their faith, Acts vii. 15, 16. Job gives testimony unto his faith herein, ch. xix. 25, 26. So doth David also, Ps. xvi. 9, 10, and in sundry other places. And Isaiah is express to the same purpose, ch. xxvi. 19, 'Thy dead shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise; awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.' This God proposeth for the comfort of the prophet, and of all those who were either persecuted or slain in those days for righteousness sake. Their resurrection is both directly

and emphatically expressed. And whereas, some would wrest the words, to signify no more but the deliverance and exaltation of those who were in great distress, yet they must acknowledge that it is expressed in allusion to the resurrection of the dead, which is, therefore, asserted in the words, and was believed in the church. The same also is taught in Ezekiel's vision of the vivification of dry bones, ch. xxxvii, which, although it declared the restoration of Israel from their distressed condition, yet it did so, with allusion to the resurrection at the last day, without a supposition of the faith whereof, the vision had not been instructive. And many other testimonies to the same purpose, might be insisted on. I do not, therefore, reckon this a principle of the doctrine of the gospel, absolutely and exclusively unto the revelations of the Old Testament, but on three other reasons.

1. Because it is most clearly, evidently, and fully taught and declared therein. It was, as sundry other important truths, made known under the Old Testament, sparingly and obscurely. But life and immortality, with this great means of them both, were brought to light by the gospel, 2 Tim. i. 10, all things concerning them being made plain, clear, and evident.

2. Because of that solemn confirmation and pledge of it which was given at the resurrection of Christ from the dead. This was wanting under the Old Testament, and therefore the faith of men might oft-times be greatly shaken about it. For whereas death seized on all men, and that penally in the execution of the sentence of the law, whence they were, for fear of it, obnoxious to bondage all their days, Heb. ii. 14, 15, they had not received any pledge or instance of a recovery from its power, or the taking off that sentence and penalty. But Christ dying for us, and that directly under the sentence and curse of the law, yet conquering both death and law, being raised again, the pains or bonds of death being loosed, hath given a full confirmation and absolute assurance of our resurrection. And thus it is said, that he brought life and immortality to light by abolishing of death, 2 Tim. i. 10, that is, the power of it, that it should not hold us for ever under its dominion, 1 Cor. xv. 54—57.

3. Because it hath a peculiar influence into our obedience under the gospel. Under the Old Testament, the church had sundry motives unto obedience taken from temporal things, namely, prosperity and peace in the land of Canaan, with deliverance out of troubles and distresses. Promises hereof made unto them, the Scripture abounds withal, and thereon presseth them unto obedience, and diligence in the worship of God. But we are now left unto promises of invisible and eternal things, which cannot be fully enjoyed but by virtue of the resurrection from the dead. And therefore these promises are made unspeakably more clear and evident, as also the things promised unto us, than they were unto them, and so our motives and encouragements unto obedience, are unspeakably advanced above theirs. This may well therefore be esteemed as an especial principle of the doctrine of the gospel. And,

1. It is an animating principle of gospel obedience, because we are

assured thereby that nothing we do therein shall be lost. In general, the apostle proposeth this as our great encouragement, that 'God is not unrighteous to forget our work and labour of love,' ver. 10, and shows us the especial way whereby it shall be remembered. Nothing is more fatal unto any endeavours, than an apprehension that men do in them spend their strength in vain, and their labour for nought. This makes the hands of men weak, their knees feeble, and their hearts fearful. Nor can any thing deliver us from a slothful despondency, but an assurance that the fruit of our endeavours shall be called over again. And this is given us alone by the faith of the resurrection of the dead, when they shall awake again and sing, who dwell in the dust: and then shall the righteous be had in everlasting remembrance. Let no man fear the loss of his work, unless it be such as the fire will consume, when it will be to his advantage to suffer that loss, and to have it so consumed. Not a good thought, word, or work, but shall have a new life given unto it, and have as it were a share in the resurrection.

2. We are assured hereby, that such things shall not only be remembered, but also rewarded. It is unto the righteous, as we have observed, not only a resurrection from the dead, but a resurrection unto life, that is eternal, as their reward. And this is that which either doth, or ought, to give life and diligence to our obedience. So Moses, in what he did and suffered for Christ, had respect unto the recompence of reward, Heb. xi. 26. God hath put the declaration hereof into the foundation of all our obedience in the covenant: 'I am thy exceeding great reward,' Gen. xv. 1. And at the close of it, the Lord Jesus doth not think it enough to declare that he will come himself, but also that his reward is with him, Rev. xxii. 12. Some have foolishly supposed, that this reward from God must needs infer merit in ourselves; whereas eternal life is the gift of God through Jesus Christ, and not the wages of our works, as sin is of death, Rom. vi. 23. It is such reward as is absolutely a free gift, a gift of grace; 'and if it be by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace; and if it be of works, then it is no more grace, otherwise work is no more work,' Rom. xi. 6. 'The same thing cannot be of works and grace also, of our own merit and of the free gift of God. And others, it is to be feared, under a mistaken pretence of grace, do keep off themselves from a due respect unto this gracious reward, which the Lord Christ hath appointed as the blessed issue and end of our obedience. But hereby they deprive themselves of one great motive and encouragement thereto, especially of an endeavour that their obedience may be such, and the fruits of it so abound, that the Lord Christ may be signally glorified, in giving out a gracious reward unto them at the last day. For whereas he hath designed, in his own grace and bounty, to give us such a glorious reward, and intendeth by the operation of his Spirit to make us fit to receive it, or meet for the inheritance of saints in light, Col. i. 12, our principal respect unto this reward is, that we may receive it with an advantage of glory and honour unto our Lord Jesus. And the consideration hereof, which is conveyed unto us through the faith of the resurrection, is a chief animating principle of our obedience.

2. It hath the same respect unto our consolation: 'For if in this life only we have hope in Christ, then are we of all men most miserable,' 1 Cor. xv. 19, that is, if we regard only outward things in this world; reproaches, scornings, revilings, troubles, persecutions, have been the lot of most of them who so hoped in Christ. But is this all which we shall have from him, or by him? Probably, as to outward things, it will prove so to most of us in this world, if it come not to greater extremities: 'Then are we of all men most miserable.' But stay awhile: these things will be all called over again at the resurrection, (and that is time enough,) and all things be put into another posture; see 2 Thess. i. 6—10. We have therefore no reason to despond for what may befall us in this life, nor at what distress this flesh we carry about us may be put to. We are, it may be, sometimes ready to faint, or to think much of the pains we put ourselves to in religious duties, especially when our bodies, being weak and crazy, would willingly be spared, or of what we may endure and undergo; but the day is coming that will recompense and make up all. This very flesh which we now thus employ under its weaknesses, in a constant course of the most difficult duties, shall be raised out of the dust, purified from all its infirmities, freed from all its weaknesses, made incorruptible and immortal, to enjoy rest and glory unto eternity. And we may comfort ourselves with these words, 1 Thess. iv. 18.

Fourthly. The fourth principle mentioned is *κρίμα αἰώνιον*, 'eternal judgment.' This is the immediate consequent of the resurrection of the dead. Men shall not be raised again to live another life in this world, and as it were therein to make a new adventure: but it is to give an account of what is past, and to receive what they have done in the body, whether it be good or evil. And because there are no outward visible transactions between God and the souls of men after their departure out of this world, nor any alteration to be made as to their eternal state and condition, this judgment is spoken of as that which immediately succeeds death itself, Heb. ix. 27, 'It is appointed to all men once to die, and after this the judgment.' This judgment is sure, and there is nothing between death and it, that it takes notice of. But as to some, there may be a very long space of time between the one and the other; neither shall judgment be administered, until after the resurrection from the dead, and by means thereof. And when all the race of mankind appointed thereunto, have lived and died according to their allotted seasons, then shall judgment ensue on them all. *Κρίμα* is commonly used for a condemnatory sentence. Therefore some think that it is only the judgment of wicked and ungodly men that is intended. And indeed the day of judgment is most frequently spoken of in the Scripture with respect thereunto; see 2 Thess. i. 7—10; Jude 14, 15; 2 Pet. ii. 4. And this is partly because the remembrance of it is suited to put an awe upon the fierceness, pride, and rage of the spirits of men, rushing into sin, as the horse into the battle; and partly that it might be a relief to the godly under all, either their persecutions from their cruelty, or temptations from their prosperity. But in reality the judgment is general, and all men, both good and bad, must stand in their lot therein. 'We shall all stand

before the judgment seat of Christ; as it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,' Rom. xiv. 10, 11, and this is that which is here intended. As the resurrection of the dead that precedes belongs to all, so doth the judgment that follows. And this our apostle expresseth by *κρισις*, a word of the same original and signification with *κριμα*.

This *κριμα* or 'judgment,' is said to be *αιωνιον*. דין עולמים, is the eleventh fundamental article of the present Jewish creed. Two of the Targums, as a supplement of that speech which they suppose defective, ויאמר קין אל הבל אחיו, Gen. iv. 8, 'And Cain said to his brother Abel,' add a disputation between the brothers, about eternal judgment, with rewards and punishments, which they suppose Cain to have denied, and Abel to have asserted. And as there is no doubt but that it was one principal article of the faith of the church before the flood, so it is probable that it was much opposed and derided by that corrupt, violent, and wicked generation, which afterwards perished in their sins. Hence Enoch's prophecy and preaching among them, was to confirm the faith of the church therein, Jude 14, 15. And probably the hard speeches which are specified as those which God would severely revenge, were their contemptuous mockings and despisings of God's coming to judgment, as Peter plainly intimates, 2 Pet. iii. 3—5. This seems to be the great controversy which the church before the flood had with that ungodly generation, namely, whether there were a future judgment or not; in the contempt whereof, the world fell into all profligacy of abominable wickednesses. And as God gave testimony to the truth in the prophecy of Enoch, so he visibly determined the whole matter on the side of the church in the flood which was an open pledge of eternal judgment. And hence those words, 'the Lord cometh,' became the appeal of the church in all ages, 1 Cor. xvi. 22. *Αιωνιον* respects not the duration of this judgment, but its end and effect. For it shall not be of a perpetual duration and continuance, which to fancy, is both absurd in nature, and inconsistent with the proper end of it, which is, to deliver men over into their everlasting lot and portion. And it is both curious, needless, and unwarrantable, to inquire of what continuance it shall be, seeing God hath given no revelation thereof. Neither is the mind of man capable of making any tolerable conjecture, concerning the process of the infinite wisdom of Christ in this matter. Neither do we know, as to time or continuance, what will be necessary therein, to the conviction and confusion of impenitent sinners, or as to the demonstration of his own righteousness and glory. It may be esteemed an easy, but will be found our safest wisdom, to silence even our thoughts and inquiries in all things of this nature, where we cannot trace the express footsteps of divine revelation. And this judgment is called eternal: 1. In opposition to the temporal judgments which are or have been passed on men in this world, which will be all then called over again and revised. Especially it is so with respect unto a threefold judgment. First. That which passed upon the Lord Christ himself, when he was condemned as a malefactor and blasphemer. He never suffered that sentence to take place quietly in the world,

but from the first he sent his Spirit to argue, reason, and plead his cause in the world, John xvi. 9—11. This he ever did, and ever will, maintain by his church. Yet is there no absolute determination of the case. But when this day shall come, then shall he condemn every tongue that was against him in judgment, and all his adversaries shall be confounded. Secondly. All those condemnatory sentences, whether unto death or other punishments, which almost in all ages have been given against his disciples or true believers. With the thoughts and prospect hereof, did they always relieve themselves under false judgments and cruel executions. For they have had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment; they have been stoned and sawn asunder, tempted and slain with the sword, have wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, not accepting deliverance (upon the world's terms,) that they might obtain a better resurrection; as Heb. xi. 35—37. In all these things they possessed their souls in patience, following the example of their Master, committing themselves unto him that judgeth righteously, 1 Pet. ii. 23. Thirdly. The false sentences which, under their provocations, professors have passed on one another; see 1 Cor. iv. 3—5. 2. Because it is *judicium inevitabile*, 'an unavoidable sentence,' which all men must stand or fall by. For it is appointed unto all men once to die, and after that is the judgment. This judgment is no more avoidable to any than death itself, from which the experience of some thousands of years leaves unto men no hope of escape. 3. Because in it, and by it, an unchangeable determination of all men's estate and condition is made for eternity. The judgment which disposeth of men unalterably into their eternal estate, whether of blessedness or of misery.

Two things must be yet farther spoken to, to clear this great principle of our faith. First. The general nature of this eternal judgment; and, secondly. The evidences we have of its truth and certainty.

First. The general concerns of this eternal judgment, are all of them plainly expressed in the Scripture, which declare the nature of it. 1. As to its time, there is a determined and unalterable day fixed for it: 'God hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness,' Acts xvii. 31. And this time is commonly called the day of judgment, Matt. x. 15, xi. 22, 24, xii. 36; Mark. vi. 11; 2 Pet. ii. 9; 1 John iv. 17. And this day being fixed in the foreknowledge and determinate counsel of God, can no more be either hastened or deferred than God himself can be changed. Until this appointed time comes whatever falls out, he will satisfy his wisdom and glory in his ordinary government of the world, interwoven with some occasional extraordinary judgments, and therein he calls all his own people to be satisfied. For this precise time, the knowledge of it is among the principal secrets of his sovereignty, which he hath, for reasons suited to his infinite wisdom laid up in his own eternal bosom. Hence is that of our Saviour, 'Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels that are in heaven, neither the Son,' that is, in and by the human nature, 'but the Father,' Mark xiii. 32, which is the highest expression of an unrevealable divine secret. God hath not only not revealed it, but he hath de-

creed not to reveal it. All inquiries about it, are not only sinfully curious, but foolish and impious. Then it is certain, when all things foretold in the Scripture are accomplished, when the obedience of all the elect is completed, and the measure allotted unto the wickedness of the world in the patience of God is filled up, then, and not before, the end shall be. In the meantime, when we see a man old, weak, diseased, nature being decayed and infirmities abounding, we may judge that his death is not far off, though we know not when he will die; so, seeing the world come to that state and condition, so weakened and decayed as unto its principal end, that it is scarce any longer able to bear the weight of its own wickedness, nor supply the sinful lusts of its inhabitants; seeing all sorts of sins, new and old, heard and unheard of, perpetrated every-where in the light of the sun, and countenanced with atheistical security; as also, considering that the gospel seems to have finished its work where it is preached, with all sorts of signs of the like nature, we may safely conclude that the end of all things is approaching.

2. There is the Judge, which is Jesus Christ. Originally and absolutely this is the judgment of God, of him who made the world. And therefore is it often said, that 'God shall judge the world,' Deut. xxxii. 35, 36; Eccles. xii. 14, 'God, the Judge of all,' Heb. xii. 23. But the actual administration of it, is committed unto Jesus Christ alone, to be exercised visibly in his human nature, Rom. xiv. 10; Dan. vii. 10—13; Matt. xvi. 27, xix. 28; John v. 22, 27; Acts xvii. 31; 2 Cor. v. 10; 1 Thess. iv. 16; 2 Thess. i. 7, and many other places. And herein, in the same individual person, he shall act the properties of both his natures. For, as he shall visibly and gloriously appear in his human nature, exalted in the supreme place of Judicature and invested with sovereign power and authority over all flesh, Dan. vii. 13; Matt. xxiv. 30; 1 Thess. iv. 16; Rom. xiv. 10, so he shall act the power and omniscience of his Deity, in upholding the whole state of the creation in judgment, and in the discovery of the hearts, and comprehension of the words, thoughts, and actions of all the children of men, from the beginning of the world, unto the end thereof. And herein, as all the holy angels shall accompany him, and attend upon him as ministers, assistants, and witnesses unto his righteous judgments, Matt. xxv. 31; Luke ix. 26; Jude 14, 15; Dan. vii. 10, so also, in the judgment of fallen angels and the reprobate world, the saints, acquitted, justified, glorified, in the first place, shall concur with him in this judgment, by applauding his righteousness and holiness, with their unanimous suffrage, Isa. iii. 14; Matt. xix. 28; 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3. For.

3. As to the outward manner of this judgment, it shall be with solemnity and great glory, 2 Thess. i. 7—10; Jude 14, 15; Dan. vii. 9; Rev. xx. 4, 5. And this shall be partly for the demonstration of the glory and honour of Jesus Christ, who hath been so despised, reproached, persecuted in the world, and partly, to fill the hearts of sinners with dread and terror, as Rev. vi. 16, 17, where this judgment is represented. And the order of this judgment will be, (1.) That all the elect shall first be acquitted and pronounced blessed. For they

join in with the Lord Christ in the judgment of the world, which they could not do, if themselves were not first freed and exalted. (2.) The devil and his angels, and that on three general heads. 1. Of their original apostasy. 2. Of the death of Christ. 3. Of persecution. (3.) The world of wicked men; probably, 1. Hypocrites in the church. 2. All others without. For,

4. The persons to be judged, are, 1. Fallen angels, 1 Cor. vi. 3; 2 Pet. ii. 4; Jude 6; Matt. xxv. 41. 2. All men universally, without exception, Isa. xlv. 23; Rom. xiv. 9, 10; Matt. xxv. 31. In especial, 1. All the godly, all such as have believed and obeyed the gospel, shall be judged, Luke xxi. 36; Rom. xiv. 12; 2 Tim. iv. 8; whether all their sins shall be then called over and made known to others, seeing they are known to him who is more in himself and unto us, than all the world besides, I question. 2. All the ungodly and impenitent sinners, Deut. xxxii. 35, 36; 2 Pet. ii. 3; Jude 15.

5. The rule whereby all men shall be judged, is the law of their obedience made known unto them. As, 1. The Gentiles, before the coming of Christ, shall be judged by the law of nature, which all of them openly transgressed, Rom. ii. 12—14. 2. The Jews of the same time, by the law, and the light into redemption from sin, superadded thereunto; that is, by the rule, doctrine, precepts, and promises of the law and prophets. 3. The gospel unto all men unto whom it hath been offered or preached, Rom. ii. 16. The rule of judgment at the last day, neither is nor shall be, any other but what is preached every day, in the dispensation of the gospel. No man shall be able to complain of a surprisal, or pretend ignorance of the law whereby he was to be judged. The sentence of it is proposed unto them continually. In the word of the gospel, is the eternal condition of all the sons of men, positively determined and declared. And all these things are at large insisted on by others.

Secondly. The evidence which God hath given concerning this future judgment, whereon the certainty of it as to us, doth depend, may also be considered. And, First. God hath planted a presumption and sense of it, on the minds and hearts of men by nature, from whence it is absolutely and eternally inseparable. Conscience is nothing but that judgment which men do make, and which they cannot but make, of their moral actions, with reference unto the supreme future judgment of God. Hence, the apostle treating of this future judgment, Rom. ii. 12, 16, diverts to show what evidence all mankind had in the meantime, that such a judgment there should be, ver. 14, 15. And this he declares to consist in their own unavoidable thoughts concerning their own actions, good or evil. This, in the meanwhile, accused them, and forced them to own a judgment to come. Yea, this is the proper language of conscience unto sinners on all occasions. And so effectual was this evidence in the minds of the heathen, that they generally consented into a persuasion, that by one or other, some where or other a future judgment would be exercised with respect unto things done in this world. Fabulous inventions and traditions, they mixed in abundance with this conviction, as Rom. i. 21, but yet, this made up the principal part of the notions, whereby a reverence for a divine being

was preserved in their minds. And those who were wise and sober among them, thought it sufficient to brand a person as impious and wicked, to deny an unseen judgment of men's actions out of this world, wherewith Cato reproached Cæsar in the business of Catiline. This sense being that which keeps mankind within some tolerable bounds in sin, the Psalmist prays that it may be increased in them, Ps. xix. 13, see Gen. xx. 11.

Secondly. The working of reason on the consideration of the state of all things in this world, complies with the innate principles and dictates of conscience in this testimony. We suppose those concerning whom we treat, do own the being of God, and his providence in the government of the world. Others deserve not the least of our consideration. Now those who are under the power of that acknowledgment and persuasion, must and do believe, that God is infinitely just and righteous, infinitely wise and holy, and that he cannot otherwise be. But yet, when they come to consider how these divine properties are exerted in the providential government of the world, which all ages, persons and places, must of necessity be subject unto, and disposed by, they are at a loss. The final impunity of flagitious sinners in this world; the unrelieved oppressions, afflictions and miseries of the best; the prosperity of wicked, devilish designs; the defeating and overthrow of holy, just, righteous undertakings and endeavours; promiscuous accidents to all sorts of persons, however differenced by piety and impiety; the prosperous course of men, proud and blasphemous, who oppose God in principles and conversation, as far as they are able; the secret, undiscovered murders of martyrs and innocents, in inquisitions and dungeons; the extreme confusion that seems to be in all things here below; with other things of the like kind innumerable, are ready to gravel and perplex the minds of men in this matter. They have greatly exercised the thoughts, even of the saints of God, and tried their faith, as is evident, Ps. lxxiii. 4—17; Jer. xii. 1, 2; Hab. i. 3, 4. 13; Job. xxi. 5—8, &c. And the consideration hereof, turned some of the wisest heathens into atheism or outrageous blasphemies at their dying hours. But in this state, even reason rightly exerted, will lead men to conclude, that upon the supposition of a divine being and providence, it must needs be, that all these things shall be called over again, and then receive a final decision and determination, whereof in this world, they are not capable. And among the heathens there were proverbial speeches which they uttered on occasion of great distresses, which signified no less. As, *Est profecto Deus qui hæc videt.* For,

1. Upon a due examination, it will quickly appear, that the moral actions of men with respect unto God, in the way of sin and obedience, are such as that it is utterly impossible, that judgment should be finally exercised towards them, in things visible and temporal, or that in this world, they should receive a just recompense of reward. For, whereas they have an aspect unto men's utmost end, which is eternal, they cannot be justly or rightly stated, but under punishments or rewards eternal, Rom i. 32; 2 Thess. i. 6. Seeing, therefore, no full judgment can possibly pass upon the sins of men in this world, because all that

can befall them is infinitely short of their demerit: even reason itself cannot but be satisfied, that God in his infinite wisdom and sovereignty, should put off the whole judgment unto that day, wherein all penalties shall be equalled to their crimes, and rewards unto obedience. So, when our apostle reasoned before Felix about righteousness and temperance, knowing how unavailable his arguments would be without it, against the contrary sins and evils, from the impunity and prosperity of such sinners in the world; to make them effectual, he adds the consideration of the judgment to come, Acts xxiv. 25. Here reason may relieve itself in the midst of all cross occurrences of providence, and such as are not only contrary to our desires, but directly opposite unto our judgments, as to what is suitable to infinite justice and wisdom. The final determination of things is not made here, nor is it possible it should so be, on the ground before assigned.

2. Should God take men off from a respect unto future eternal judgment, and constantly dispense rewards and punishments in this world, according unto what the wisest of men can apprehend just and equal, (which, if any thing, must satisfy without a regard to eternal judgment) as it would be most unequal and unrighteous, so it might be an occasion of greater wickedness than the world is yet pestered withal. Unrighteous and unequal it must be unavoidably, because the judgment supposed must pass according unto what men are able to discern and judge upon; that is, outward actions only. Now, this were unrighteous in God, who sees and knows the heart, and knows that actions have their good and evil, if not solely, yet principally from their respect thereunto. The 'Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed,' said Hannah, when Eli judged her drunk; but God saw that she prayed, 1 Sam. ii. 3. There is nothing more evident than that it is inconsistent with, and destructive of all divine perfections, that God should pass a decreetory sentence on the actions of men, according to what appears unto us to be just and equal. This, therefore, God declines; namely, to judge according to a rule that we can comprehend, Isa. xi. 3; Rom. ii. 2.

But, 3. Suppose that God should, in this world, distribute rewards and punishments constantly, according to what he sees in the hearts and inward dispositions of the minds of men, it is no less evident that it would fill all men with unspeakable confusion, and prevail with them to judge, that indeed there is no certain rule of judgment, no unmoveable bounds and limits of good and evil; seeing it would be absolutely impossible, that by them, the judgments of God should be reduced unto any such rules or bounds; the reasons of them being altogether unknown. This the Scripture plainly owns, Ps. lxxvii. 19, xxxvi. 6.

Wherefore, 4. Should God visibly and constantly have dispensed rewards and punishments in this world, according to the rule of men's knowledge, comprehension, and judgment, which alone hath an appearance of being satisfactory, it would have been a principle, or at least the occasion, of a worse kind of atheism, than any that the earth hath yet been pestered withal. For it could not have been, but that the most would have made the judgment of men, the only rule of all

that they did, which God must be obliged to comply withal, or be unrighteous; which is absolutely to dethrone him, and leave him only to be the executioner of the wills and reasons of men. But, from all these and the like perplexities, reason itself may quietly take sanctuary in submission unto sovereign wisdom, as to present dispensations, in a satisfaction that it is not only suitable unto, but necessary on the account of divine justice, that there should be a future eternal judgment, to pass according to truth, upon all the ways and actions of men. And hereby doth God keep up in the hearts of men, a testimony unto this great principle of our profession. Therefore, when our apostle reasoned before Felix, concerning such duties and sins as were discoverable by the light of nature, namely, righteousness and temperance; with respect to both which, he was openly and flagitiously guilty, he adds this principle concerning judgment to come, the truth whereof, the conscience and reason of the wretch himself could not but comply withal, Acts xxiv. 25.

Thirdly. God hath given testimony hereunto, in all the extraordinary judgments which he hath executed, since the foundation of the world. It is not for nothing, that he doth sometimes, that he doth so frequently, go out of or besides the common beaten tracks and paths of providence. He doth it to intimate unto the world, that things are not always to pass at their present rate, but are one day to be called to another account. In great judgments, the 'wrath of God is revealed from heaven against the ungodliness of men,' Rom. i. 18; and an intimation is given of what he will farther do hereafter. For, as he 'leaves not himself without witness,' in respect of his goodness and patience, in 'that he doth good, and giveth rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling men's hearts with food and gladness,' Acts xiv. 17, so he gives testimony to his righteousness and holiness, in the 'judgments that he executes,' Ps. ix. 16. For, whereas goodness and mercy are the works wherein God is, as it were, delighted, he gives testimony unto them, together with his patience and long-suffering in the ordinary course of his dispensations. But judgment in severity he calls his strange work, that which he proceeds not unto, but on great provocations, Isa. xxviii. 21, he satisfieth his holy wisdom, with some extraordinary necessary instances of it. And thus he hath himself singled out some particular instances, which he gave on purpose that they might be as pledges of the future judgment, and hath given us a rule in them, how we are to judge of all his extraordinary acts of the same kind. Such was the flood whereby the world was destroyed in the days of Noah, which Peter affirms expressly, was a type to shadow out the severity of God in the last final judgment, 2 Pet. ii. 5, iii. 5—7. Of the like nature was his 'turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemning them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly,' 2 Pet. ii. 6. He made them a terrifying example, that others should hear and fear, and do no more so presumptuously. But now, whereas God hath not in the space of four thousand years, brought any such judgment on any other places or persons, if this example had respect only unto this world, it must needs have lost all its force and efficacy upon the minds

of sinners. Wherefore, it did nearly respect the judgment to come, God giving therein an instance, what obstinate and profligate sinners are to look for at that great day. Wherefore, Jude says expressly, they 'are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire,' ver. 7. And this is the language of all God's extraordinary judgments, either on persons or places in the world. Let men's sins be what they will, God can endure in his long-suffering, the sins of one as well as another, among the vessels of wrath that are fitted for destruction, and so he doth ordinarily, or for the most part. But yet, he will sometimes reach out his hand from heaven in an extraordinary instance of vengeance, on purpose that men may know, that things shall not for ever be passed over in such a promiscuous manner, but that he hath 'appointed another day, wherein he will judge the world in righteousness.' And for this reason, such signal judgments as are evidences of the future eternal judgment of God, are in the Scripture expressed in words that seem to declare that judgment itself, rather than the types of it, Isa. xxxiv. 4; Rev. vi. 13, 14; Dan. vii. 9, 10; Matt. xxiv. 29, 30.

Fourthly. But God hath not absolutely intrusted the evidence and preservation of this important truth, which is the foundation of all religion, to the remainders of innate light in the minds and consciences of men, which may be variously obscured, until it be almost utterly extinguished; nor yet to the exercise of reason on the consideration of the present administration of providence in this world, which is oft-times corrupted, depraved, and rendered useless; nor yet to the influence which extraordinary judgments may have on the minds of men, which some fortify themselves against by their obstinacy in sin and security; but he hath abundantly testified to it by express revelation, from the beginning of the world, now recorded in his word, by which all men must be tried whether they will or not. It may not be doubted but that Adam was acquainted with this truth immediately from God himself. He was so indeed in the commination given against sin at first, especially as it was explained in the curse after he had actually sinned. And this was that which was taught him in the threatening, and which his eyes were open to see clearly after his fall, where he immediately became afraid of God as his Judge, Gen. iii. 10. Nor can it be doubted but that he communicated the knowledge of it to his posterity. But whereas they quickly, in their profligacy in all wickedness which they gave themselves to, had, together with all other sacred truths, lost the remembrance of it, or at least practically despised and scoffed at the instruction which they had received therein, God knowing the necessity of it, either to restrain them in their flagitious courses, or to give them a warning that might leave them without excuse, makes a new express revelation of it to Enoch, and by him to mankind, Jude 14, 15, 'For Enoch the seventh from Adam prophesied of these, saying, Behold the Lord cometh, with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment on all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodlily committed, and of all their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.' And this is the second new revelation

that is recorded before the flood. There were two revelations that were the foundation of the church, the one concerning future judgments in the threatening, the other concerning the recovery and restoration of mankind in the promise. Both seem to have been equally neglected by that cursed generation. But God solemnly revived them both, the first by Enoch, the latter by Noah, who was the preacher of righteousness, 2 Pet. ii. 5, in whom the spirit of Christ preached to them who are now in prison, 1 Pet. iii. 19, 20. And this old prophecy was revived by the Holy Ghost, partly that we might know, that God from the beginning of the world gave public testimony to, and warning of his future eternal judgment; and partly to acquaint us, that in the latter days men would break out into an excess and outrage in sin and wickedness, like that of those before the flood, wherein it would be necessary that they should be restrained, or terrified, or warned, by preaching to them this truth of the judgment to come. After this the testimonies given to it in the Scriptures both of the Old and New Testaments, do so abound and are so obvious to all, that it is no way needful particularly to produce them.

This principle being thus cleared and confirmed, it may not be amiss to show what practical improvement it doth require. And it is manifest that there is no duty in religion that is not, or ought not to be influenced by the consideration of it. I shall only name some of them whereunto it is in an especial manner applied by the Holy Ghost himself.

Obs. V. Ministers of the gospel ought to dwell greatly on the consideration of it, as it is represented in its terror and glory, that they may be excited and stirred up to deal effectually with the souls of men that they fall not under the vengeance of that day. So our apostle affirms that it was with himself; for having asserted the truth and certainty hereof, in those words, 'For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body according to that he hath done;' he adds thereunto, 'knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men,' 2 Cor. v. 10, 11. Duly considering what will be the state of things with all men in that day, how dreadful the Lord Christ will be therein to impenitent sinners, and what a fearful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God, I use all diligence to prevail with men to get such an interest in the peace and reconciliation tendered in the gospel, that they may be accounted worthy to stand in that day. See Col. i. 28. And without a continual due apprehension hereof, it cannot be but that men will grow cold, and dead, and formal, in their ministry. If the judgment-seat of Jesus Christ be not continually in our eye, whatever other motives we may have to diligence in our work, we shall have little regard to the souls of men, whether they live or die in their sins; without which, whatever we do is of no acceptance with God.

2. The consideration of it is peculiarly applied by the Holy Ghost against security in worldly enjoyments, and those evils wherewith it is usually accompanied. So it is made use of by our blessed Saviour, Luke xxi. 34—36. And so by our apostle, 1 Thess. v. 5—8. And this also is expressed in the type of it, or the flood in the days of

Noah ; nothing in it was more terrible to men than that they were surprised in the midst of their enjoyments and employments, Matt. xxiv. 38, 39.

3. It is in like manner frequently applied to the consolation of believers under the troubles, difficulties, and persecutions, which in this life they undergo, 2 Thess. i. 6—10, even the terror and the glory of it, with the vengeance which shall be executed in it, are proposed as the matter of highest consolation to believers, as indeed they are, on many accounts not here to be insisted on. See Isa. xxxv. 3, 4 ; Luke xxi. 28, 31 ; Rev. xix. 1—7 ; 2 Tim. iv. 8, xxii. 17. And, therefore, are we required to look for, long for, and what lies in us hasten to this day of the Lord, when on all accounts our joy shall be full.

4. It is in like manner every-where applied to the terror of ungodly and impenitent sinners, 1 Thess. v. 2, 3 ; 2 Thess. i. 6—8 ; Jude 14, 15, and in many other places not to be numbered. And to these ends in an especial manner, is the consideration of it to be by us improved.

These, therefore, (that we may return to the text) are those fundamental principles of Christian religion which the apostle calls ‘the doctrine of baptisms and the laying on of hands.’ This was a summary of that doctrine wherein they were to be instructed who were to be baptized, and to have imposition of hands thereon.

But there occurs no small difficulty from the use of the word βαπτισμων, ‘baptisms,’ in the plural number. For it is not any where else in the Scripture so used, when the baptism of the gospel is intended, and the Jewish washings are often so expressed. The Syriac interpreter, which is our most ancient translation, renders it in the singular number, ‘baptism.’ But because there is a full agreement in all original copies, and the ancient expositions also concur therein, none have yet ventured to leave the original, and follow that translation ; but all generally who have commented on the place, have considered how the word may be understood and explained. And herein they have fallen into such various conjectures, as I shall not spend time in the consideration and refutation of, but content myself with the naming of them, that the reader may use his own judgment about them. Some, then, suppose that mention is made of baptisms, because of the baptism of John and Christ, which as they judge were not only distinct but different. But the Jews were indifferently baptized by the one or the other ; and it was but one ordinance to them. Some, because of the many baptisms or washings among the Jews, into the room of all which the mystery of our baptism doth succeed. But this of all other conjectures is the least probable ; and if any respect could be had thereunto, it would have been necessary to have mentioned baptism in the singular number. Some think respect is had to the several sorts of gospel baptism, which are usually referred to three heads,—fluminis, flaminis, sanguinis, ‘of the water by external washing, of the Spirit by internal purifying, of afflictions unto blood by both.’ And thus the apostle should not only intend the baptism of water, but also the whole spiritual cleansing of the soul and conscience, which was required of men at their initiation into Christian religion,

called, *επερωτημα συνεδησεως αγαθης*, 1 Pet. iii. 21, with a purpose to seal their confession with their blood if called thereunto, and therein being baptized with the baptism wherewith the Lord Christ in his suffering was baptized, Matt. xx. 23. And this hath in it much of probability, and which, next to what I have fixed on, I should embrace. Some suppose, regard may be had to the stated times of baptism, which were fixed and observed in the primitive church, when they baptized persons publicly, but twice or thrice in the year. But it is certain that this custom was not then introduced. Some betake themselves to an enallage of number, which indeed is not unusual, but there is nothing here in the text to give countenance to a supposition of it.

Wherefore, the most general interpretation of the words, and meaning of the apostle is, that although baptism be but one and the same, never to be repeated or reiterated on the same subject, nor is there any other baptism or washing of the same kind; yet, because the subjects of it, or those who were baptized, were many, every one of them being made partakers of the same baptism in special, that of them all is called baptisms, or the baptism of the many. All persons who began to attend to the gospel, were diligently instructed in the forementioned principles, with others of a like nature, (for they are mentioned only as instances) before they were admitted to a participation of this ordinance, with imposition of hands that ensued thereon; these, therefore, are called the doctrine of baptisms, or the catechetical fundamental truths, wherein those to be baptized were instructed, as being the things whereof they were to make a solemn profession.

But if we shall follow the other interpretation, and suppose that this doctrine of baptisms is an expression of a distinct principle by itself, then cannot the word by any means be restrained to the baptism by water only. For although this be an important head of Christian doctrine, namely, the declaration, use, and end of our sacramental initiation into Christ and the profession of the gospel, yet no reason can be given why that should be called baptisms, seeing it hath respect only to the thing itself, and not to the persons who are made partakers of it.

Admit, therefore, of this sense, that it is the doctrine concerning baptisms which is intended, and then the whole of what is taught, or the substance of it concerning the sanctification and purification of the souls of men in their incision into, and union with Christ, outwardly expressed in the sign of baptism, and wrought inwardly by the Spirit and grace of God, through the efficacy of the doctrine of the gospel, in opposition to all the legal and carnal washings among the Jews, is intended hereby. So the Lord Christ 'loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,' Eph. v. 26. And indeed the doctrine hereof is among the rudiments of Christian religion.

But I yet adhere to the former exposition, and that also because to baptisms, imposition of hands, whose nature we must next inquire into, is added.

Some suppose this by the imposition of hands, *επιθεσεως τε χειρων*,

that rite in the church which was afterwards called confirmation, is intended. For whereas there were two sorts of persons that were baptized, namely, those that were adult at their first hearing of the gospel, and the infant children of believers who were admitted to be members of the church; the first sort were instructed in the principles mentioned before they were admitted to baptism, by the profession whereof they laid the foundation of their own personal right thereunto. But the other being received as a part and branches of a family, whereupon the blessing of Abraham was come, and to whom the promise of the covenant was extended, being thereon baptized in their infancy, were to be instructed in them, as they grew up to years of understanding. Afterwards when they were established in the knowledge of these necessary truths, and had resolved on personal obedience to the gospel, they were offered to the fellowship of the faithful. And hereon, giving the same account of their faith and repentance, which others had done before they were baptized, they were admitted into the communion of the church, the elders thereof laying their hands on them in token of their acceptance, and praying for their confirmation in the faith. Hence the same doctrines became previously necessary to both these rites, before baptism to them that were adult, and towards them that were baptized in infancy, before the imposition of hands. And I do acknowledge that this was the state of things in the apostolical churches, and that it ought to be so in all others. Persons baptized in their infancy, ought to be instructed in the fundamental principles of religion, and make profession of their own faith and repentance, before they are admitted into the society of the church. But that in those first days of the first churches, persons were ordinarily, after baptism, admitted into their societies by imposition of hands, is nowhere intimated in the Scripture. And the whole business of confirmation is of a much later date, so that it cannot be here intended. For it must have respect to, and express somewhat that was then in common use.

Now there is mention in the Scripture of a fourfold imposition of hands used by the Lord Christ and his apostles. The first was peculiar to his own person, in the way of authoritative benediction. Thus when he owned little children to belong to his covenant and kingdom, he 'laid his hands on them, and blessed them,' Mark x. 16. But this was peculiar to himself, who had all blessings in his power, and hereof this is the only instance. Secondly. This rite was used in the healing of diseases. They laid their hands on sick, weak, and impotent people, healing them in a miraculous manner, Luke iv. 40; Mark xvi. 18; Acts xxviii. 8. This was the sign of the communication of healing virtue from the Lord Christ by their ministry. Thirdly. Imposition of hands was used in the setting apart of persons to the office and work of the ministry, 1 Tim. iv. 14, v. 22; Acts vi. 6; the rite herein was derived from the Old Testament, Num. viii. 10, the whole congregation laid hands on the Levites in their consecration. And it was of old of common use among the Jews in the dedication of their rulers, rabbins, or teachers, being called by them סמיכה ריש. Fourthly. It was used by the apostles in the collation of the

supernatural spiritual gifts of the Holy Ghost to them who were baptized, Acts viii. 17, xix. 6. In no other duties of religion was this rite made use of, as to any mention that is made thereof in the New Testament, or records concerning the practice of the primitive churches. The first of these, as we observed, was only a personal action of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that in one single instance, so not here intended. The second was extraordinary also, and that wherein the generality of Christians was not concerned, nor can any reason be given, why the mention of a thing extraordinary, occasional, and temporary, should be here inserted. The third was a rite of standing use in the church, and that wherein church order is much concerned. But as to the use of it, one sort of persons only was concerned therein. And no just reason can be given why the apostle, from the doctrine of the first intrants of Christian religion, should proceed to the ordination of ministers, omitting all other rites of the church, especially that of the supper of the Lord, wherein so great a part of the worship of the church consisted. Besides there is no ground to give a probability that the apostle should insert the observance of this rite, or the doctrine concerning it, in the same order, and under the same necessity, with those great fundamentals, of faith, repentance, the resurrection, and eternal judgment.

Wherefore, the imposition of hands in the last sense mentioned, is that which most probably is intended by our apostle. For, 1. Adhering to our first interpretation as the most solid and firm, the imposition of hands intended, is a description of the persons that were to be instructed in the other fundamental principles, but is no principle itself. And this is not applicable to any other of the uses of this rite. For, 2. This laying on of hands did commonly, if not constantly, in those days, accompany or immediately follow baptism, Acts viii. 14—17, xix. 6. And a thing this was of singular present use, wherein the glory of the gospel and its propagation were highly concerned. This was the state of things in the world. When on the preaching of the gospel any were converted to Christ, and on their profession of faith and repentance were baptized, the apostles present (or if near to them they came on that purpose) laid their hands on them, whereon they received the Holy Ghost in a supernatural communication of evangelical gifts. And this, next to the preaching of the word, was the great means which the Lord Christ made use of in the propagation of the gospel. By the word he wrought internally on the minds and consciences of men, and by these miraculous gifts he turned the thoughts of men to the consideration of what was preached, by what in an extraordinary manner was objected to their external senses. And this was not confined to a few ministers of the word and the like, but as it appears from sundry places of Scripture, was common almost to all believers that were baptized, Gal. iii. 2; 1 Cor. xiv. 3. In the verse following, mention is made of those who were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, that is, of his miraculous gifts and operations which were communicated by this imposition of hands, which, therefore, refers to the same. After these times, this rite was made use of in other occasions of the church, in imitation,

no doubt, of this extraordinary action of the apostles, but there is no mention of it in the Scripture, nor was in use in those days, and therefore cannot be here intended. And this is the most genuine interpretation of this place. These mentioned were the principles of the doctrine of Christ, wherein, among others of the same importance, they were to be well instructed who were to be baptized, and thereon to have hands laid on them, whereby the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost were communicated to them.

But we shall allow room also, for that other exposition of the words which is more generally received, and in the exclusion whereof, because it complies with the analogy of faith, I dare not be peremptory. And this is, that the doctrine of laying on of hands, maketh one distinct principle of Christianity, by itself. But then, the thing signified is principally intended; namely, the communication of the Holy Ghost unto believers, in his gifts and graces, ordinary and extraordinary, whereof this rite was the external sign. And as this was peculiar to the gospel, so it contained the principal verification of it. And this it did sundry ways. 1. Because the promises of the Lord Christ for the sending of him, were eminently and visibly accomplished. It is known, that when he was leaving the world, he filled his disciples with an expectation of his sending the Holy Ghost unto them. And he did not only propose this promise as their great support during his absence, but also suspended on its accomplishment, all the duty which he required from them, in the office he had called them unto. Therefore, he commanded them to abide quietly at Jerusalem, without any public engagement into their work, until they had received the 'promise of the Spirit,' Acts i. 4, 8. And when this was done, it gave a full and glorious testimony, not only unto his truth in what he had told them in this world, but also unto his present exaltation and acceptation with God, as Peter declares, Acts ii. 33. 2. His gifts themselves were such, many of them, as consisted in miraculous operations, whereby God himself gave immediate testimony to the truth of the gospel, Heb. ii. 3, 4, God himself bearing witness (to the preachers of it) with signs and wonders, and with miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost.' This made the doctrine concerning them, of inconceivable importance unto believers of those days, as that whereby their faith and profession was eminently justified in the face of the world. 3. This dispensation of the Holy Ghost, was peculiar to the times of the gospel, and was, in itself, a sufficient proof of the cessation of all legal ordinances. For it was the principal prophecy and promise under the Old Testament, that in the days of the Messiah, the Holy Ghost should be so poured out, as I have at large elsewhere declared. And it was to be a consequent of his glorification, John vii. 38, 39. Hence, by the argument of their receiving the Spirit, our apostle proves to the Galatians, their freedom from the law, Gal. iii. 2. Wherefore, 4. The doctrine concerning this dispensation of the Spirit, was peculiar to the gospel, and so might be esteemed an especial principle of its doctrine. For, although the church of the Jews believed the Holy Ghost as one person in the Trinity, after their obscure manner of apprehension; yet they were strangers unto this

dispensation of him in his gifts, though promised under the Old Testament, because not to be accomplished but under the New. Yea, John the baptist, who in light into the mystery of the gospel, outwent all the prophets that were before him, yet had not the knowledge hereof communicated unto him. For those who were only baptized with his baptism, and initiated thereby into the doctrine of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, had not so much as heard whether there were a Holy Ghost; that is, as unto this dispensation of him, Acts xix. 2, 3. Hereupon, our apostle instructing them in the doctrine of the gospel, he made use of this rite of the imposition of hands, whereon the Holy Ghost came on them, and they 'spake with tongues and prophesied,' ver. 6. This, therefore, being so great and important a concern of the gospel, and this being the rite appointed to represent it by, the doctrine concerning it, namely, the promise of Christ to send the Holy Ghost, with the nature, use, and end of the gifts which he wrought in believers, is expressed and reckoned among the first principles of Christian religion. But the reader is at liberty to follow whether of these interpretations he pleaseth. And from the whole of what hath been discoursed, we may take the ensuing observations.

Obs. VI. Persons to be admitted into the church, and unto a participation of all the holy ordinances thereof, had need be well instructed in the important principles of the gospel. We have here the rule of the apostle and example of the primitive churches for the ground of this doctrine. And it is necessary that such persons should be so instructed on their own part, as also on the part of the church itself. On their own part, because without it, the ordinances themselves will be of little use unto them. For, what benefit can any receive from that whose nature and properties he is unacquainted withal? And neither the nature nor use of the ordinances of the church, can be understood without a previous comprehension of the fundamental principles of the gospel, as might be easily demonstrated. And it is so on the part of the church. For the neglect hereof was the chiefest occasion of the degeneracy of most churches in the world. By this means were the societies of them filled with ignorant, and consequently profane persons, by whom all their administrations were defiled, and themselves corrupted, as I have shown elsewhere. When once the care and diligence of the first churches, in the instruction of those whom they admitted into their communion, were laid aside, and an empty form taken up in the room of sedulous teaching, the churches themselves hastened into a fatal apostasy.

Obs. VII. It is not the outward sign, but the inward grace, that is principally to be considered in those ordinances or observances of the church, which visibly consist in rites and ceremonies, or have them accompanying of them. As in the rite of imposition of hands, the dispensation of the Holy Ghost was principally to be considered.

VER. 3.—*Και τουτο ποιησομεν, εανπερ επιτρεπη ο Θεος.*

VER. 3.—*And this will we do, if so be that God permit.*

These words contain two things. 1. The resolution of the apostle as to the matter and occasion before him. *Και τουτο ποιησομεν*, 'and this will we do.' 2. A limitation of that resolution by an express submission to the will and pleasure of God, 'if so be that God permit.'

As to the sense of the first, it is plain that the apostle in the foregoing verses had proposed or mentioned two things of very diverse natures. The first hereof is, going on to perfection, ver. 1, and the other, the laying again of the foundation, ver. 2. Hence it is doubted and inquired, whether of these it be that the apostle hath respect unto in these words, 'and this we will do.'

'This we will do,' that is, either we will go on to perfection, which was exhorted unto, ver. 1, and so is the more remote antecedent; or this will we do, laying again the foundation, which is the next antecedent, whereunto *τουτο* seems to relate. And this sundry expositors adhere to. But there are some things which make it evident, that respect is had herein to the former and more remote antecedent; namely, going on to perfection. And they are first, what the apostle saith, and then what he doth. 1. In what he saith, his manner of expressing these things is considerable; for, as to the latter, he twice intimates his intention to omit their farther handling. Therefore, leaving, or at present omitting the principles of the doctrine of Christ, and 'not laying again the foundation,' ver. 1. Hereunto if we refer these words, 'And this will we do, if God permit,' they rather signify the present leaving of them, than their farther handling. And he not only declares his resolution to omit them, but also gives a sufficient reason why he would do so. And this is expressed in the last verses of the chapter foregoing. They had already had both time and means sufficient for their instruction in these principles, so that to inculcate them on those by whom they were learned and received, was needless; and for those who had either not received them, or rejected them, it was to no purpose farther to treat with them about these things, which he confirms with a severe reason and dreadful consideration, ver. 4—8. But things are otherwise expressed concerning the other antecedent. He speaks of it positively as that which was in his purpose and design. 'Let us,' saith he, 'go on to perfection,' I in teaching, ye in learning, 'and this will we do, if God permit.' 2. His intention is no less evident from what he doth in this Epistle. There is, indeed, in this chapter and in the last chapter, mention made about repentance, faith, patience, obedience, the worship of God, and the like; but not as principles of doctrine, to be laid as foundation, but as graces to be practised in the course of their edification. But the main business he undertakes, and the work which he pursues, is the carrying on of these Hebrews to perfection, by the declaration of the most sublime mysteries of the gospel, especially that which is among the chief of them; namely, the priesthood of Christ and the prefiguration of it by that of Melchisedec. 3. The whole series of this discourse, depends on ch. v. 10, 11. Having declared unto them, that he had many things to instruct them concerning the priesthood of Christ, as shadowed out in the person and office of Melchisedec,

he lets them know, that he had also sundry discouragements in his design, which yet were not such, but that he would break through them and pursue his intention. Only to make his way as smooth and plain as conveniently he could, he deals with them awhile about the removal of those hinderances which lay in his way on their part, and then returneth directly to his first proposal, and the handling of it in the last verse of this chapter. This, therefore, is the sense of these words. 'For the reasons before insisted on, and afterwards to be added, I will proceed unto the declaration of the principal mysteries of the gospel, especially those which concern the priesthood of Christ, and thereby raise up the building of your faith and profession upon the foundation that hath been laid, whereby, through the grace of God, you may be carried on to perfection, and become skilful in the word of righteousness.'

Obs. I. No discouragements should deter the ministers of the gospel, to whom the dispensation of the mysteries of Christ is committed, from proceeding in the declaration of these, when they are called thereunto. Among the various discouragements they meet withal, the least is not what ariseth from the dulness of them that hear. This our apostle had now in his eye in a particular manner, yet resolved to break through the consideration of it, in the discharge of his duty; so it is with many still. Neither is any thing more irksome and grievous unto faithful preachers, than the incapacity of their hearers to receive gospel mysteries, through their own negligence and sloth. But in this condition, they have here an example for their guidance and direction.

And these things lie plain therein. 1. That they use all means, by warnings, persuasions, encouragements, and threatenings, to stir up their people out of their slothful, careless frame and temper. So doth our apostle with the Hebrews in this chapter, leaving nothing unsaid that might excite them unto diligence, and a due improvement of the means of knowledge which they enjoyed. So will they do with them that 'watch for their souls as those who must give an account,' and ministers of another sort have no concern in these matters. 2. As occasion offers itself, to proceed in their work. And that, 1. Because there are among their hearers, some concerning whom they are persuaded of better things, and such as accompany salvation, as our apostle speaks, ver. 9, whose edification is not to be neglected, for the sinful sloth and ignorance of others. 2. God is pleased, sometimes, to convey saving light to the minds of men, before very dark and ignorant, in and by the dispensation of the deepest mysteries of the gospel, without such preparatory instruction in the more obvious principles of it, as is ordinarily required. Not knowing, therefore, by what ways or means, how or when God will work upon the souls of men, it is their duty to proceed in the declaration of the whole counsel of God committed unto them, and leave the success of all, unto him by whom they are employed.

Secondly. The limitation of this resolution, is expressed in those words, *εανπερ ὁ Θεος επιτρεπη*, 'if God permit.' There may be a threefold occasion of these words, or a respect unto three things in

the will of God, and consequently, a threefold exposition of them. For,

1. Respect may be had merely and solely unto the unknown sovereign will and pleasure of God, and so no more is intended but that general limitation and expression of our absolute dependence on him, with which we ought to bound all our resolutions. This, our nature, and the nature of all our affairs, as they are in the hand of God, and at his disposal, do require of us. And therefore, also, it is expressly enjoined us as a duty, to be continually minded in all we undertake or do, James iv. 13—15. If this be intended, (as it is also, if not only) then it is as if he had said, ‘If he in whose hand is my life and breath, and all my ways, whose I am, whom I serve, and to whose disposal I willingly submit myself in all things, see good and be pleased to continue my life, opportunity, his assistance, and all other things necessary to this work, I will proceed with my design and purpose to acquaint you with, and instruct you in, the great mysteries of the priesthood and sacrifice of Christ.’ See 1 Cor. xvi. 7.

2. Respect may be had unto the condition of the Hebrews, whose sloth and negligence in hearing the word, he hath now under reproof, and the will or purpose of God concerning them. For he seems to intimate unto them, that there may be some fear lest God should be so provoked by their former miscarriages, as that he would not afford them the means of farther instruction. For this is a thing which God often threatens, and which falls out oftener than we are aware of; yea, most nations of the earth are examples of this severity of God. So a word of the same importance is used unto this purpose, as to the turning away of the gospel from any persons or people, Acts xvi. 7. ‘They essayed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not,’ he permitted it not; which is the same with forbidding them to preach the word in Asia, ver. 6. And so the sense of the expression amounts to this; ‘If God, whom I fear you have much provoked by your negligence and contempt of his word, will yet exercise patience and long-suffering towards you, and not cast you out of his care, by forbidding me to proceed in my design, or depriving me of my opportunity, if God hinder me not by reason of your unworthiness, but be graciously pleased to be with me in my designed work.

There is a *μενωσις* in the words, wherein a farther respect unto the will of God, is included than expressed. For it is not a mere naked permission in God, that the apostle intends, as if he should have said, ‘if God let me alone, and as it were, wink at what I am doing.’ But there is a supposition in it, of the continuance of God’s gracious assistance and especial presence with him, without which, he frequently declared that he could neither undertake nor accomplish any thing that lay before him. God can, in the beginning or middle of an epistle or a sermon, take us off when he pleaseth, if he do but withdraw his assistance from us. And all these respects unto the will of God, are not only consistent, so as that the closing with one, excludeth not another, but they are all of them plainly included in the apostle’s intention, and are necessary to be taken in, unto the right understanding of his words.

Obs. II. As it is our duty to submit ourselves in all our undertakings, unto the will of God, so especially in those wherein his glory is immediately concerned. In general, we have a rule given us as to the most ordinary occasions of life, James iv. 13—15. Not to do it, is to disavow our dependence on God; a fruit of carnal wisdom and security, which God greatly abhorreth. Neither is there any thing which will so fill our lives with disappointment and vexation. For in vain shall any man, be his condition at present what it will, seek for rest or peace in any thing but the will of God. But especially is this required of us in those things wherein the glory of God himself is immediately concerned. Such are those here, with respect whereunto our apostle makes this deference unto the sovereign pleasure of God. 'This will we do, if God permit;' namely, the things which concern the instruction and edification of the church, which regards the glory of God in an especial manner. For, 1. All these things are under the especial care of God, and are ordered by peculiar wisdom. Not to submit ourselves absolutely in these things unto him, is to take his own things out of his hand, and to exalt our wisdom against him, as though we knew better what belonged unto his affairs than himself. 2. We come not to have any concernment in the things of God, but upon his call, and hold it at his pleasure. That is, the rise and tenor of our ministry in the church, whatever it be. And is it not just and equal, that we should wholly submit in our work unto his will, and rest in his pleasure? It may be, we have many things in our view, that are desirable unto us, many things we would think meet to engage our endeavours in, as supposing them to have a great tendency to the glory of God, in all which, he hath determined contrary to our desires and aims. All our satisfaction lies in, and all our duty is to be bounded by this submission.

Obs. III. Let them who are entrusted with means of light, knowledge, and grace, improve them with diligence, lest upon their neglect, God suffer not his ministers farther to instruct them.

VER. 4—6. Ἀδυνατον γὰρ τοὺς ἀπαξ φωτισθέντας, γευσάμενους τῆς δωρεᾶς τῆς ἐπουρανίου, καὶ μετοχῶν γεννηθέντας Πνεύματος ἁγίου, καὶ καλὸν γευσάμενους Θεοῦ ῥῆμα, δυναμeis τε μέλλοντος αἰῶνος, καὶ παραπέσοντας, πάλιν ἀνακαίνιζειν εἰς μετάνοιαν, ἀνασταυροῦντας ἑαυτοὺς τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ παραδειγματίζοντας.

Ἀδυνατον γὰρ. Impossible enim, that is, est, 'it is impossible. Syr. אלא לא משכחן, 'but they cannot.' This respects the power of the persons themselves, and not the event of things, it may be not improperly as to the sense. Beza and Erasmus, fieri non potest, 'it cannot be;' the same with impossible. But the use of the word ἀδυνατον, in the New Testament, which signifies sometimes only what is very difficult, not what is absolutely denied, makes it useful to retain the same word, as in our translation; 'for it is impossible.'

Τοὺς ἀπαξ φωτισθέντας; וְהַיְהוּדִים וְהַנְּחִיבִים לְמַעֲמֻדָּהּ נָחַת. Syr. 'Those who one time, or once, descended unto baptism;' of which interpretation we must speak afterwards. All others, qui semel fue-

rint illuminati, 'who were once illuminated;' only the Ethiopic follows the Syriac. Some read illustrati to the same purpose.

Γευσαμενους τε της δωρεας επουρανιου. Vul. Lat. Gustaverant etiam donum cœleste: etiam for et. Others express the article by the pronoun, by reason of its reduplication. Et gustaverint donum illud cœleste; 'and have tasted of that heavenly gift.' Syr. 'The gift that is from heaven.' And this the emphasis in the original seems to require: 'And have tasted of that heavenly gift.'

Και μετοχους γενηθεντας Πνευματος αγιου. Et participes facti sunt Spiritus Sancti. Vul. Lat. 'And are made partakers of the Holy Ghost.' All others, facti fuerint, 'have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost.' Syr. נשתיק נקיר, 'the Spirit of holiness.'

Και καλον γευσταμενους Θεου ρημα. Vul. Lat. Et gustaverunt nihilominus bonum Dei verbum. Rhem. 'Have moreover tasted the good word of God.' But 'moreover' doth not express *nihilominus*; and have 'notwithstanding,' which hath no place here, καλον ρημα, verbum pulchrum.

Δυναμεις τε μελλοντος αιωνος. Virtutesque seculi futuri. Syr. נִלְוִי, virtutem, 'the power.' Vul. Seculi venturi. We cannot in our language distinguish between futurum and venturum, and so render it, 'the world to come.'

Και παραπεσοντας. Vul. Et prolapsi sunt. Rhem. 'And are fallen.' Others, si prolabantur, which the sense requires, 'if they fall,' that is, 'away,' as our translation, properly. Syr. דחב נדחב, 'That sin again,' somewhat dangerously; for it is one kind of sinning only that is included and expressed.

Παλιν ανακαινιζειν εις μετανοιαν. Vul. Rursus renovari ad pœnitentiam, 'to be renewed again to repentance,' rendering the active verb passively. So Beza also, ut denuo renouentur ad resipiscentiam, 'that they should again be renewed to repentance.' The word is active, as rendered by ours, 'to renew them again to repentance.'

Ανασταυρουντας εαυτοις τον υιον του Θεου. Rursum crucifigentes sibimetipsi filium Dei. Και παραδειγματιζοντας. Vul. Et ostentui habentes. Rhem. 'And making him a mockery.' Eras. Ludibrio habentes. Beza. Ignominia exponentes. One of late, Ad exemplum Judæorum excruciant, 'torment him as did the Jews'

VER. 4—6.—*For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they fall away, (for any) to renew them again to repentance; seeing they crucify again to themselves the Son of God, and put him unto open shame, (or treat him ignominiously.)*

That this passage in our apostle's discourse hath been looked upon as accompanied with great difficulties, is known to all. And many have the differences been about its interpretation; for both doctrinally and practically, sundry have here stumbled and miscarried. It is almost generally agreed upon, that from these words, and the colour-

able, but indeed perverse interpretation and application, made of them by some in the primitive times, occasioned by the then present circumstances of things, to be mentioned afterwards, the Latin church was so backward in receiving the epistle itself, that it had not absolutely prevailed therein in the days of Hierome, as we have elsewhere declared. Wherefore it is necessary that we should a little inquire into the occasion of the great contests, which have been in the church almost in all ages, about the sense of this place.

It is known that the primitive church, according to its duty, was carefully watchful about the holiness and upright walking of all that were admitted into the society and fellowship of it. Hence, upon every known and visible failing, they required an open repentance from the offenders, before they would admit them into a participation of the sacred mysteries. But upon flagitious and scandalous crimes, such as murder, adultery, or idolatry, in many churches, they would never admit those who had been guilty of them into their communion any more. Their greatest and most signal trial, was with respect to them who, through fear of death, complied with the Gentiles in their idolatrous worship, in the time of persecution. For they had fixed no certain general rules, whereby they should unanimously proceed, but every church exercised severity or lenity, according as they saw cause, upon the circumstances of particular instances. Hence Cyprian in his banishment would not positively determine concerning those of the church in Carthage, who had so sinned and fallen, but deferred his thoughts until his return, when he resolved to advise with the whole church, and settle all things according to the counsel that should be agreed on amongst them. Yea, many of his epistles are on this subject peculiarly; and in them all, if compared together, it is evident that there was no rule agreed upon herein, nor was he himself resolved in his own mind, though strictly on all occasions opposing Novatianus, wherein it had been well if his arguments had answered his zeal. Before this, the church of Rome in particular was esteemed more remiss in their discipline, and more lenient than other churches in their re-admission of notorious offenders unto communion. Hence Tertullian in his book, 'De Pœnitentia,' reflects on Zepherinus, the bishop of Rome, that he had admitted adulterers unto repentance, and thereby unto the communion of the church. But that church proceeding in her lenity, and every day enlarging her charity, Novatus and Novatianus taking offence thereat, advanced an opinion on the contrary extreme. For they denied all hope of church-pardon, or of a return to ecclesiastical communion, unto them who had fallen into open sin after baptism, and in especial peremptorily excluded all persons whatsoever, who had outwardly complied with idolatrous worship in time of persecution, without respect to any distinguishing circumstances. Yea, they seem to have excluded them from all expectation of forgiveness from God himself. But their followers, terrified with the uncharitableness and horror of this persuasion, tempered it so far, as leaving all persons absolutely to the mercy of God upon their repentance, they only denied to such as we mentioned before, a re-admission into church communion, as Acesius speaks expressly in

Socrates, lib. 1, cap. 7. Now, this opinion they endeavoured to confirm, as from the nature and use of baptism, which was not to be reiterated, whereon they judged that no pardon was to be granted unto them, who fell into those sins which they lived in before, and were cleansed from at their baptism; so principally from this place of our apostle, wherein they thought their whole opinion was taught and confirmed. And so usually doth it fall out very unhappily with men, who think they see some peculiar opinion or persuasion, in some singular text of Scripture, and will not bring their interpretations of it unto the analogy of faith, whereby they might see how contrary it is to the whole design and current of the word in other places. But the church of Rome, on the other side, judging rightly from other directions given in the Scripture, that the Novatians transgressed the rule of charity and gospel discipline in their severities, yet, as it should seem, and is very probable, knew not how to answer the objection from this place of our apostle, therefore did they rather choose for a season to suspend their assent unto the authority of the whole epistle, than to prejudice the church by its admission. And well was it that some learned men afterward, by their sober interpretations of the words, plainly evince that no countenance was given in them to the errors of the Novatians; for, without this, it is much to be feared, that they would have preferred their interest in the present controversy, before the authority of this Epistle, which would in the issue have proved ruinous to the truth itself. For the epistle being designed of God to the common edification of the church, would have at length prevailed, whatever sense men through their prejudices and ignorance should put upon any passages of it. But this controversy is long since buried, the generality of the churches in the world, being sufficiently remote from that which was truly the mistake of the Novatians, yea, the most of them do bear peaceably in their communion, without the least exercise of gospel discipline towards them, such persons as concerning whom the dispute was of old, whether they should ever in this world be admitted into the communion of the church, although upon their open and professed repentance. We shall not therefore at present need to labour in this controversy.

But the sense of these words hath been the subject of great contests, on other occasions also. For some do suppose and contend, that they are real and true believers, who are decyphered by the apostle, and that their character is given us in and by sundry inseparable adjuncts, and properties of such persons. Hence they conclude, that such believers may totally and finally fall from grace, and perish eternally. Yea, it is evident that this hypothesis of the final apostasy of true believers, is that which influenceth their minds and judgments to suppose that such are here intended. Wherefore others who will not admit that, according to the tenor of the covenant of grace in Christ Jesus, true believers can perish everlastingly, do say, that either they are not here intended, or if they are, the words are only comminatory, wherein, although the consequence in them in a way of arguing be true, namely, that on the supposition laid down, the inference is certain, yet the supposition is not asserted in order unto a

certain consequent, whence it should follow that true believers might so really fall away, and absolutely perish. And these things have been the matter of many contests among learned men.

Again. There have been sundry mistakes in the practical application of the intention of these words unto the consciences of men, mostly made by themselves who are concerned. For whereas by reason of sin, they have been surprised with terrors and troubles of conscience, they have withal, in their darkness and distress, supposed themselves to have fallen into the condition here described by our apostle, and consequently to be irrecoverably lost. And these apprehensions usually befall men on two occasions. For some having been overtaken with some great actual sin against the second table, after they have made a profession of the gospel, and having their consciences harassed with a sense of their guilt, as it will fall out where men are not greatly hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, they judge that they have fallen under the sentence denounced in this Scripture against such sinners as they suppose themselves to be, whereby their state is irrecoverable. Others do make the same judgment of themselves, because they have fallen from that constant compliance with their convictions, which formerly led them unto a strict performance of duties, and this in some course of long continuance. Now, whereas it is certain, that the apostle in this discourse gives no countenance unto the severity of the Novatians, whereby they excluded offenders everlastingly from the peace and communion of the church; nor to the final apostasy of true believers, which he testifieth against in this very chapter, in compliance with innumerable other testimonies of Scripture to the same purpose; nor doth he teach any thing whereby the conscience of any sinner, who desires to return to God, and to find acceptance with him, should be discouraged or disheartened; we must attend unto the exposition of the words in the first place, so as not to break in upon the boundaries of other truths, nor transgress against the analogy of faith. And we shall find that this whole discourse, compared with other Scriptures, and freed from the prejudices that men have brought unto it, is both remote from administering any just occasion to the mistakes before mentioned, and is a needful wholesome commination, duly to be considered by all professors of the gospel.

In the words, we consider, 1. The connexion of them unto those foregoing, intimating the occasion of the introduction of this whole discourse. 2. The subject described in them, or the persons spoken of, under sundry qualifications, which may be inquired into jointly and severally. 3. What is supposed concerning them. 4. What is affirmed of them on that supposition.

1. The connexion of the words is included in the causal connexion, γὰρ, 'for.' It respects the introduction of reason for what had been before discoursed, as also of the limitation which the apostle added expressly unto his purpose of making a progress in their farther instruction, 'if God permit.' And he doth not herein express his judgment, that they to whom he wrote were such as he describes, for he afterwards declares, that he hoped better things concerning them, only

it was necessary to give them this caution, that they might take due care not to be such. And whereas he had manifested, that they were slow as to the making of a progress in knowledge and a suitable practice, he lets them here know the danger that there was of continuing in that slothful condition. For not to proceed in the ways of the gospel, and obedience thereto, is an untoward entrance into a total relinquishment of the one and the other. That therefore they might be acquainted with the danger hereof, and be stirred up to avoid that danger, he gives them an account of those, who, after a profession of the gospel, beginning at a non-proficiency under it, do end in apostasy from it. And we may see, that the severest comminations are not only useful in the preaching of the gospel, but exceeding necessary towards persons that are observed to be slothful in their profession.

2. The description of the persons that are the subject spoken of, is given in five instances of the evangelical privileges whereof they were made partakers, notwithstanding all which, and against their obliging efficacy to the contrary, it is supposed that they may wholly desert the gospel itself. And some things we may observe concerning this description of them in general. As, 1. The apostle designing to express the fearful state and judgment of these persons, describes them by such things as may fully evidence them to be, as unavoidable, so righteous and equal. Those things must be some evident privileges and advantages, whereof they were made partakers by the gospel. These being despised in their apostasy, do proclaim their destruction from God to be rightly deserved. 2. That all these privileges do consist in certain especial operations of the Holy Ghost, which were peculiar unto the dispensation of the gospel, such as they neither were, nor could be made partakers of in their Judaism. For the Spirit, by this sense, was not received by the works of the law, but by the hearing of faith, Gal. iii. 2. And this was a testimony unto them, that they were delivered from the bondage of the law, namely, by a participation of that Spirit which was the great privilege of the gospel. 3. Here is no express mention of any covenant, grace, or mercy, in them or towards them, nor of any duty of faith or obedience which they had performed. Nothing of justification, sanctification, or adoption, is expressly assigned unto them. Afterwards, when he comes to declare his hopes and persuasion concerning these Hebrews, that they were not such as those whom he had before described, nor such as would so fall away unto perdition, he doth it upon three grounds, whereon they were differenced from them. As, 1. That they had such things as did accompany salvation, that is, such as salvation is inseparable from. None of these things therefore had he ascribed unto those whom he describeth in this place; for if he had so done, they would not have been unto him an argument and evidence of a contrary end, that these should not fall away and perish as well as those. Wherefore he ascribes nothing to these here in the text, that doth peculiarly accompany salvation, ver. 9. 2. He describes them by their duties of obedience and fruits of faith. This was their work and labour of love towards the name of God, ver. 10. And hereby

also doth he difference them from those in the text, concerning whom he supposeth that they may perish eternally : which these fruits of saving faith and sincere love cannot do. 3. He adds, that in the preservation of those there mentioned, the faithfulness of God was concerned ; ‘ God is not unrighteous to forget.’ For they of whom he thus speaks, were interested in the covenant of grace, with respect whereunto alone, there is any engagement on the faithfulness or righteousness of God to preserve men from apostasy and ruin ; and there is so with an equal respect unto all who are so taken into the covenant. But of these in the text, he supposeth no such thing, and thereupon doth not intimate that either the righteousness or faithfulness of God were any way engaged for their preservation, but rather the contrary. The whole description therefore refers unto some especial gospel privileges, which professors in those days were promiscuously made partakers of, and what they were in particular we must in the next place inquire.

The first thing in the description is, that they were *ἀπαξ φωτισθέντας*, ‘ once enlightened,’ saith the Syriac translation, as we observed, ‘ once baptized.’ It is very certain that early in the church, baptism was called *φωτισμος*, ‘ illumination ;’ and *φωτιζειν*, ‘ to enlighten,’ was used for ‘ to baptize.’ And the set times wherein they solemnly administered that ordinance, were called *ἡμέραι των φωτων*, ‘ the days of light.’ Hereunto the Syriac interpreter seems to have had respect. And the word *ἀπαξ*, ‘ once,’ may give countenance hereunto. Baptism was once only to be celebrated, according to the constant faith of the churches in all ages. And they called baptism, ‘ illumination,’ because it being one ordinance of the initiation of persons into a participation of all the mysteries of the church, they were thereby translated out of the kingdom of darkness, into that of grace and light. And it seems to give further countenance hereunto, in that baptism really was the beginning and foundation of a participation of all the other spiritual privileges, that are mentioned afterwards. For it was usual in those times, that upon the baptizing of persons, the Holy Ghost came upon them, and endowed them with extraordinary gifts peculiar to the days of the gospel, as we have shown in our consideration of the order between baptism and imposition of hands. And this opinion hath so much of probability in it, having nothing therewithal unsuited to the analogy of faith, or design of the place, that I should embrace it, if the word itself, as here used, did not require another interpretation. For it was a good while after the writing of this Epistle, and all other parts of the New Testament, at least an age or two, if not more, before this word was used mystically to express baptism. In the whole Scripture it hath another sense, denoting an inward operation of the Spirit, and not the outward administration of an ordinance. And it is too much boldness to take a word in a peculiar sense in one single place, diverse from its proper signification and constant use, if there be no circumstances in the text forcing us thereunto, as here are not. And for the word *ἀπαξ*, ‘ once,’ it is not to be restrained unto this particular but refers equally unto all the instances that follow, signifying no more but that those mentioned were really and truly partakers of them.

Φωτιζωμαι, is to give light or knowledge by teaching; the same with *πρ*, which therefore is so translated oftentimes by the Greeks; as by Aquila, Exod. iv. 12; Ps. cxix. 33; Prov. iv. 4; Isa. xxvii. 11, as Drustus observes. And it is so by the LXX. Judges xiii. 8; 2 Kings xii. 2, xvii. 27. Our apostle useth it to 'make manifest,' that is, 'bring to light,' 1 Cor. iv. 5; 2 Tim. i. 10; and the meaning of it, John i. 9, where we render it 'lighteth,' is 'to teach.' And *φωτισμος* is knowledge upon instruction, 2 Cor. iv. 4, *εις το μη ανασαι αυτοις τον φωτισμον του ευαγγελιου*, 'that the light of the gospel should not shine into them;' that is, the knowledge of it; so, ver. 6, *προς φωτισμον της γνωσεως*, 'the light of the knowledge.' Wherefore, 'to be enlightened,' in this place, is to be instructed in the doctrine of the gospel, so as to have a spiritual apprehension thereof. And this is so termed on a double account.

1. Of the object, or the things known and apprehended. For life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel, 2 Tim. i. 10. Hence it is called 'light'—'the inheritance of the saints in light.' And the state which men are hereby brought into, is so called in opposition to the darkness that is in the world without it, 1 Pet. ii. 9. The world, without the gospel, is the kingdom of Satan, *ο κοσμος ολος εν τω πονηρω κειται*, 1 John v. 19. The whole of the world and all that belongs to it, in distinction and opposition to the new creation, is under the power of the wicked one, the prince of the power of darkness, and so is full of darkness, it is *τοπος αυχμηρος*, 2 Pet. i. 19, 'a dark place,' wherein ignorance, folly, error, and superstition do dwell and reign. By the power and efficacy of this darkness are men kept at a distance from God, and know not whither they go. This is called 'walking in darkness,' 1 John i. 6, whereunto walking in the light, that is, the knowledge of Christ in God by the gospel, is opposed, ver. 7. On this account our instruction in the knowledge of the gospel is called illumination, because itself is light.

2. On the account of the subject, or the mind itself, whereby the gospel is apprehended. For the knowledge which is received thereby, expels that darkness, ignorance, and confusion, which the mind before was filled and possessed withal. The knowledge, I say, of the doctrine of the gospel, concerning the person of Christ; of God's being in him reconciling the world to himself; of his offices, work, and mediation, and the like heads of divine revelation; doth set up a spiritual light in the minds of men, enabling them to discern what before was utterly hid from them, whilst alienated from the life of God through their ignorance. Of this light and knowledge there are several degrees, according to the means of instruction which they do enjoy, the capacity which they have to receive it, and the diligence they use to that purpose. But a competent measure of the knowledge of the fundamental and most material principles or doctrines of the gospel, is required to all that may thence be said to be illuminated; that is, freed from the darkness and ignorance they once lived in, 2 Pet. i. 18—20. This is the first property whereby the persons intended are described; they are such as were illuminated by the instruction they had received in the doctrine of the gospel, and the impression made

thereby on their minds by the Holy Ghost, for this is a common work of his, and is here so reckoned. And the apostle would have us know, that,

Obs. I. It is a great mercy, a great privilege, to be enlightened with the doctrine of the gospel by the effectual working of the Holy Ghost. But,

Obs. II. It is such a privilege as may be lost, and end in the aggravation of the sin, and condemnation of those who were made partakers of it. And,

Obs. III. Where there is a total neglect of the due improvement of this privilege and mercy, the condition of such persons is hazardous, as inclining towards apostasy.

Thus much lies open and manifest in the text. But that we may more particularly discover the nature of this first part of the character of apostates, for their sakes who may look after their own concern therein, we may yet a little more distinctly express the nature of that illumination and knowledge which is ascribed to them; and how it is lost in apostasy will afterwards appear. And,

1. There is a knowledge of spiritual things, that is purely natural and disciplinary, attainable and attained without any especial aid or assistance of the Holy Ghost. As this is evident in common experience, so especially among such, as casting themselves on the study of spiritual things, are yet utter strangers to all spiritual gifts. Some knowledge of the Scripture, and the things contained in it, is attainable at the same rate of pains and study with that of any other art or science.

2. The illumination intended, being a gift of the Holy Ghost, differs from, and is exalted above this knowledge that is purely natural. For it makes nearer approaches to the light of spiritual things in their own nature, than the other doth. Notwithstanding the utmost improvements of scientific notions that are purely natural, the things of the gospel in their own nature, are not only unsuited to the wills and affections of persons endued with them, but are really foolishness to their minds. And as to that goodness and excellency which gives desirableness to spiritual things, this knowledge discovers so little of them, that most men hate the things which they profess to believe. But this spiritual illumination gives the mind some satisfaction, with delight and joy, in the things that are known. By that beam whereby it shines into darkness, although it be not fully comprehended, yet it represents the way of the gospel as a way of righteousness, 2 Pet. ii. 21, which reflects a peculiar regard of it on the mind.

Moreover, the knowledge that is merely natural hath little or no power on the soul, either to keep it from sin, or to constrain it to obedience. There is not a more secure and profligate generation of sinners in the world, than those who are under the sole conduct of it. But the illumination here intended, is attended with efficacy, doth effectually press in the conscience and whole soul, to an abstinence from sin, and the performance of all known duties. Hence persons under the power of it and its convictions, do oftentimes walk blamelessly and uprightly in the world, so as not with the other to contribute to the contempt of Christianity. Besides, there is such an alliance

between spiritual gifts, that where any one of them doth reside, it hath assuredly other accompanying of it, or one way or other belonging to its train, as is manifested in this place. Even a single talent is made up of many pounds. But the light and knowledge which is of a merely natural acquirement, is solitary, destitute of the society and continuance of any spiritual gift whatever. And these things are exemplified to common observation every day.

3. There is a saving, sanctifying light and knowledge, which this spiritual illumination riseth not up to. For though it transiently affect the mind with some glances of the beauty, glory, and excellency of spiritual things, yet it doth not give that direct, steady intuitive insight into them, which is obtained by grace. See 2 Cor. iii. 18, iv. 4, 6. Neither doth it renew, change, or transform the soul into a conformity to the things known, by planting them in the will and affections, as a gracious saving light doth, 2 Cor. iii. 18; Rom. vi. 17, xii. 1. These things I judge necessary to be added, to clear the nature of the first character of apostates.

The second thing asserted in the description of them is, that they have tasted of the heavenly gift; γευσταμενους τε της δωρεας της επουρανιου: the doubling of the article gives emphasis to the expression. And we must inquire, 1. What is meant by 'the heavenly gift.' And 2. What by 'tasting of it.'

First. The 'gift of God,' δωρεα, is either δοσις, donatio, or δωρημα, donum. Sometimes it is taken for the grant or giving itself, and sometimes for the thing given. In the first sense it is used, 2 Cor. ix. 15, 'Thanks be to God, επι τη ανεκδιγητη αυτου δωρεα, for his gift that cannot be declared,' that is, fully or sufficiently. Now this gift was his grant of a free, charitable, and bountiful spirit to the Corinthians, in ministering to the poor saints. The grant hereof is called 'God's gift.' So is the gift of Christ used also, Eph. iv. 7, 'according to the measure of the gift of Christ,' that is, according as he is pleased to give and grant of the fruits of the Spirit to men; see Rom. v. 15, 17; Eph. iii. 7. Sometimes it is taken for the thing given; properly δωρον or δωρημα, as James i. 17; so it is used, John iv. 10, 'If thou knewest the gift of God,' την δωρεαν του Θεου, 'the gift of God,' that is, the thing given by him, or to be given by him. It is, as many judge, the person of Christ himself in that place, which is intended. But the context makes it plain, that it is the Holy Ghost, for he is the living water which the Lord Jesus promiseth in that place to bestow. And so far as I can observe, δωρεα, 'the gift,' with respect to God as denoting the thing given, is nowhere used but only to signify the Holy Ghost. And if it be so, the sense of this place is determined, Acts ii. 38, 'Ye shall receive την δωρεαν του αγιου Πνευματος, the gift of the Holy Ghost,' not that which he gives, but that which he is. Ch. viii. 20, 'Thou hast thought δωρεαν του Θεου, that the gift of God may be purchased with money,' that is, the powers of the Holy Ghost in miraculous operations. So expressly, ch. x. 45, xi. 17. Elsewhere, δωρεα, so far as I can observe, when respecting God, doth not signify the thing given, but the grant itself. The Holy Spirit is signally the gift of God under the New Testament.

And he is said to be επουρανιος, 'heavenly,' or from heaven. This

may have respect to his work and effect, they are heavenly as opposed to carnal and earthly. But principally it regards his mission by Christ after his ascension into heaven, Acts ii. 33, 'Being exalted, and having received the promise of the Father, he sent the Spirit.' The promise of him was, that he should be sent from heaven, or from above, as God is said to be above, which is the same with heavenly, Deut. iv. 39; 2 Chron. vi. 21; Job xxxi. 2, 28; Isa. ii. 2, and xlv. 8. When he came upon the Lord Christ to anoint him for his work, the heavens were opened, and he came from above, Matt. iii. 16, as Acts ii. 2. At his first coming on the apostles, there came a sound from heaven. Hence he is said to be *επισταλθεις απ' ουρανου*, that is, to be *ἡ δωρεα του Θεου, ἡ επουρανιος*, 'sent from heaven,' 1 Pet. i. 12. Wherefore, although he may be said to be heavenly on other accounts also, which therefore are not absolutely to be excluded, yet his being sent from heaven by Christ, after his ascension thither, and exaltation there, is principally here regarded. He therefore is this *ἡ δωρεα ἡ επουρανιος*, the heavenly gift here intended, though not absolutely, but with respect to an especial work.

That which riseth up against this interpretation, is, that the Holy Ghost is expressly mentioned in the next clause, 'and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost.' It is not therefore probable that he should be here also intended.

Ans. 1. It is ordinary to have the same thing twice expressed in various words, to quicken the sense of them; and it is necessary it should be so, when there are divers respects to the same thing, as there are in this place.

2. The following clause may be exegetical of this, declaring more fully and plainly what is here intended, which is usual also in the Scriptures; so that nothing is cogent from this consideration, to disprove an interpretation so suited to the sense of the place, and which the constant use of the word makes necessary to be embraced. But,

3. The Holy Ghost is here mentioned as the great gift of the gospel times, as coming down from heaven, not absolutely, not as to his person, but with respect to an especial work, namely, the change of the whole state of religious worship in the church of God, whereas we shall see in the next words, he is spoken of only with respect to external actual operations. But he was the great, the promised heavenly gift, to be bestowed under the New Testament, by whom God will institute and ordain a new way, and new rites of worship, on the revelation of himself and will in Christ. To him was committed the reformation of all things in the church, whose time was now come, Heb. ix. 10. The Lord Christ when he ascended into heaven, left all things standing and continuing in religious worship, as they had done from the days of Moses, though he had virtually put an end to it. And he commanded his disciples that they should attempt no alteration therein, until 'the Holy Ghost were sent from heaven' to enable them thereunto, Acts i. 4, 5. But when he came as the great gift of God, promised under the New Testament, he removes all the carnal worship and ordinances of Moses, and that by the full revelation of the accomplishment of all that was signified by them, and appoints the new,

holy, spiritual worship of the gospel, that was to succeed in their room. The Spirit of God therefore, as bestowed for the introduction of the New gospel state, in truth and worship, is the heavenly gift here intended. Thus our apostle warneth these Hebrews, that they 'turn not away from him who speaketh from heaven,' ch. xii. 25, that is, Jesus Christ speaking in the dispensation of the gospel by the Holy Ghost sent from heaven. And there is an antithesis included herein, between the law and the gospel, the former being given on earth, the latter being immediately from heaven. God in the giving of the law made use of the ministry of angels, and that on the earth; but he gave the gospel church-state, by that Spirit, which although he worketh on men in earth, and is said in every act or work to be sent from heaven, yet is he still in heaven, and always speaking from hence; as our Saviour said of himself with respect to his divine nature, John iii. 13.

Secondly. We may inquire what is it to 'taste' of this heavenly gift. The expression of tasting is metaphorical, and signifies no more but to make a trial or experiment, for so we do by tasting, naturally and properly of that which is tendered to us to eat. We taste such things by the sense given us naturally to discern our food, and then either receive or refuse them as we find occasion. It doth not therefore include eating, much less digestion and turning into nourishment of what is so tasted. For its nature being only thereby discerned, it may be refused, yea, though we like its relish and savour on some other consideration. Some have observed that to taste is as much as to eat, as 2 Sam. iii. 35, 'I will not taste bread or ought else.' But the meaning is, I will not so much as taste it, whence it was impossible he should eat it. And when Jonathan says he only tasted a little of the honey, 1 Sam. xiv. 29, it was an excuse and extenuation of what he had done. But it is unquestionably used for some kind of experience of the nature of things, Prov. xxxi. 18, 'She tasteth that her merchandize is good,' or hath experience of it from its increase. Ps. xxxiv. 8, 'O taste and see that the Lord is good,' which Peter respects, 1 Pet. ii. 3, 'If so be that ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious,' or found it so by experience. It is therefore properly to make an experiment or trial of anything, whether it be received or refused; and is sometimes opposed to eating and digestion, as Matt. xxvii. 34. That therefore which is ascribed to these persons, is, that they had an experience of the power of the Holy Ghost, that gift of God in the dispensation of the gospel, the revelation of the truth, and institution of the spiritual worship of it; of this state and of the excellency of it, they had made some trial, and had some experience, a privilege which all men were not made partakers of. And by this taste they were convinced, that it was far more excellent than what they had been before accustomed to, although now they had a mind to leave the finest wheat for their old acorns. Wherefore, although tasting contain a diminution in it, if compared with that spiritual eating and drinking, with that digestion of gospel truths, turning them into nourishment, which are in true believers; yet absolutely considered, it denotes that apprehension and experience of the excellency of the gospel, as administered by the Spirit, which is a great privilege and

spiritual advantage, the contempt whereof will prove an unspeakable aggravation of the sin, and the remediless ruin of apostates. The meaning then of this character given concerning these apostates is, that they had some experience of the power and efficacy of the Holy Spirit from heaven, in gospel administrations and worship. For what some say of faith it hath here no place; and what others affirm of Christ, and his being the gift of God, comes in the issue to what we have proposed. And we may observe farther, to clear the design of the apostle in this commination,

Obs. IV. That all the gifts of God under the gospel are peculiarly heavenly, John iii. 12; Eph. i. 3,—and that in opposition, 1. To earthly things, Col. iii. 12. 2. To carnal ordinances, Heb. ix. 23. Let them beware by whom they are despised.

Obs. V. The Holy Ghost, for the revelation of the mysteries of the gospel, and the institution of the ordinances of spiritual worship, is the great gift of God under the New Testament.

Obs. VI. There is a goodness and excellency in this heavenly gift, which may be tasted or experienced in some measure by such as never receive him, in their life, power, and efficacy.—They may taste, 1. Of the word in its truth, not its power. 2. Of the worship of the church in its outward order, not its inward beauty. 3. Of the gifts of the church, not its graces.

Obs. VII. A rejection of the gospel, its truth and worship, after some experience had of their worth and excellency, is a high aggravation of sin, and a certain presage of destruction.

The third property whereby these persons are described is added in those words *καὶ μετοχούς γεννηθέντας Πνεύματος ἁγίου*, ‘and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost.’ This is placed in the middle or centre of the privileges enumerated, two preceding it, and two following after, as that which is the root and animating principle of them all. They all are effects of the Holy Ghost, in his gifts or his graces, and so do depend on the participation of him. Now men do so partake of the Holy Ghost, as they do receive him. And he may be received either as to personal inhabitation, or as to spiritual operations. In the first way the world cannot receive him, John xiv. 17, where the world is opposed to true believers, and therefore these here intended were not in that sense partakers of him. His operations respect his gifts. So to partake of him is to have a share, part, or portion in what he distributes by way of spiritual gifts; in answer to that expression, ‘all these worketh that one and self-same Spirit, dividing unto every one severally as he will,’ 1 Cor. xii. 11. So Peter told Simon the magician, that he had no part in spiritual gifts, he was not partaker of the Holy Ghost, Acts viii. 21. Wherefore to be partaker of the Holy Ghost, is to have a share in and benefit of his spiritual operations.

But whereas the other things mentioned are also gifts or operations of the Holy Ghost, on what ground, or for what reason, is this mentioned here in particular, that they were made partakers of him, which if his operations only be intended, seems to be expressed in the other instances?

Ans. 1. It is, as we observed before, no unusual thing in the Scripture, to express the same thing under various notions, the more effectually to impress a consideration and sense of it in our mind; especially where an expression hath a singular emphasis in it, as this hath here used. For it is an exceeding aggravation of the sins of these apostates, that in these things they were partakers of the Holy Ghost.

2. As was before intimated also, this participation of the Holy Ghost, is placed it may be in the midst of the several parts of this description, as that whereon they do all depend, and they are all but instances of it. They were partakers of the Holy Ghost, in that they were once enlightened, and so of the rest.

3. It expresseth their own personal interest in these things. They had an interest in the things mentioned, not only objectively, as they were proposed and presented to them in the church, but subjectively, they themselves in their own persons were made partakers of them. It is one thing for a man to have a share in, and benefit by the gifts of the church, another to be personally himself endowed with them.

4. To remind them in an especial manner of the privileges they enjoyed under the gospel, above what they had in their Judaism. For, whereas then they had not so much as heard that there was a Holy Ghost, that is a blessed dispensation of him in spiritual gifts, Acts xix. 2, now they themselves in their own persons were made partakers of him, than which there could be no greater aggravation of their apostasy. And we may observe in our way, that,

Obs. VIII. The Holy Ghost is present with many as to powerful operations, with whom he is not present as to gracious inhabitation.—Or, many are made partakers of him in his spiritual gifts, who are never made partakers of him in his saving graces, Matt. vii. 22, 23.

Fourthly. It is added in the description, that they had tasted *καλον Θεου ρημα*, ‘the good word of God.’ And we must inquire, 1. What is meant by ‘the word of God.’ 2. How it is said to be ‘good.’ And 3. In what sense they ‘taste’ of it.

1. *Ρημα*, is properly, *verbum dictum*, ‘a word spoken;’ and although it be sometimes used in another sense by our apostle, and by him alone, ch. i. 3, xi. 3, where it denotes the effectual active power of God; yet both the signification of the word, and its principal use elsewhere, denotes words spoken, and when applied to God, his word as preached and declared. See Rom. x. 17; John vi. 68. ‘The word of God,’ that is, the word of the gospel as preached, is that which they thus tasted of. But it may be said, that they enjoyed the word of God in their state of Judaism. They did so, as to the written word; for to them were committed the oracles of God, Rom. iii. 2. But it is the word of God as preached in the dispensation of the gospel that is eminently thus called, and concerning which, such excellent things are spoken, Rom. i. 16; Acts xx. 32; Jam. i. 21.

2. The word is said to be *καλον*, ‘good,’ desirable, amiable, as the word here used signifieth. Wherein it is so, we shall see immediately. But whereas the word of God preached under the dispensation of the gospel may be considered two ways, 1. In general, as to the whole

system of truths contained therein ; and 2. In especial for the declaration made of the accomplishment of the promise, in sending Jesus Christ for the redemption of the church ; it is here especially intended in this latter sense. This is emphatically called *ῥῆμα Κυρίου*, 1 Pet. i. 25. So the promise of God in particular is called his good word, Jer. xxix. 10, ‘After seventy years I will visit you and perform my good word towards you,’ as he calls it, the good thing that he had promised, ch. xxxiii. 14. The gospel is the good tidings of peace and salvation by Jesus Christ, Isa. lii. 7.

3. Hereof they are said ‘to taste,’ as they were before of the heavenly gift. The apostle as it were studiously keeps himself to this expression, on purpose to manifest that he intendeth not those, who by faith do readily receive food, and live on Jesus Christ, as tendered in the word of the gospel, John vi. 35, 49, 50, 51, 54, 55. It is, as if he had said, I speak not of those who have received and digested the spiritual food of their souls, and turned it to spiritual nourishment, but of such as have so far tasted of it, as that they ought to have desired it as sincere milk, to have grown thereby ; but they had received such an experiment of its divine truth and power, as that it had various effects on them. And for the further explication of these words and therein of the description of the state of these supposed apostates, we may consider the ensuing observations, which declare the sense of the words, or what is contained in them.

Obs. IX. There is a goodness and excellency in the word of God, able to attract and affect the minds of men, who yet never arrive at sincere obedience to it.

Obs. X. There is an especial goodness in the word of the promise concerning Jesus Christ, and the declaration of its accomplishment.

Lastly. It is added, *δυναμεις τε μελλοντος αιωνος*, ‘and the powers of the world to come.’ *Δυναμεις* are *גבורות*, the mighty, great, miraculous operations and works of the Holy Ghost. What they were, and how they were wrought among these Hebrews, hath been declared in our Exposition of ch. ii. 4, whither I refer the reader : and they are known from the Acts of the apostles, where sundry instances of them are recorded. I have also proved on that chapter, that by ‘the world to come,’ our apostle in this Epistle intends the days of the Messiah, that being the usual name of it in the church at that time, as the new world which God had promised to create. Wherefore these powers of the world to come, were the gifts whereby those signs, wonders, and mighty works were then wrought by the Holy Ghost, according as it was foretold by the prophets, that they should be so. See Joel ii. compared with Acts ii. These the persons spoken of, are supposed to have tasted, for the particle *τε* refers to *γευσσασμενους* foregoing. Either they had been wrought in and by themselves, or by others in their sight, whereby they had an experience of the glorious and powerful working of the Holy Ghost, in the confirmation of the gospel. Yea, I do judge, that they in their own persons were partakers of these powers in the gifts of tongues, and other miraculous operations, which was the highest aggravation possible of their apostasy, and that which peculiarly rendered their recovery impossible. For there is not

in the Scripture an impossibility put on the recovery of any, but such as peculiarly sin against the Holy Ghost; and although that guilt may be contracted in other ways, yet in none so signally, as in this of rejecting that truth which was confirmed by his mighty operations in them that rejected it, which could not be done without an ascription of his divine power to the devil. Yet would I not fix on those extraordinary gifts exclusively to those that are ordinary. They also are of the powers of the world to come. So is every thing that belongs to the erection or preservation of the new world, or the kingdom of Christ. To the first setting up of a kingdom, great and mighty power is required; but being set up, the ordinary dispensation of power will preserve it; so is it in this matter. The extraordinary miraculous gifts of the Spirit were used in the erection of Christ's kingdom, but it is continued by ordinary gifts, which therefore also belong to the powers of the world to come.

From the consideration of this description, in all the parts of it, we may understand what sort of persons it is, that is intended here by the apostle. And it appears, yea is evident,

1. That the persons here intended, are not true and sincere believers in the strict and proper sense of that name, at least they are not described here as such; so that from hence nothing can be concluded concerning them that are so, as to the possibility of their total and final apostasy. For, 1. There is in their full and large description no mention of faith or believing, either expressly or in terms equivalent. And in no other place in the Scripture are such intended, but they are mentioned by what belongs essentially to their state. And, 2. There is not any thing ascribed to these persons, that is peculiar to them as such, or discriminative of them, as taken either from their especial relation to God in Christ, or any such property of their own, as is not communicable to others. For instance, they are not said to be called according to God's purpose; to be born again, not of the will of man, nor of the will of flesh, but of God; not to be justified, or sanctified, or united to Christ, or to be the sons of God by adoption; nor have they any other characteristical note of true believers ascribed to them. 3. They are in the following verses compared to the ground, on which the rain often falls, and beareth nothing but thorns and briars. But this is not so with true believers. For faith itself is a herb peculiar to the inclosed garden of Christ, and meet for him by whom we are dressed. 4. The apostle afterwards discoursing of true believers, doth in many particulars distinguish them from such as may be apostates, which is supposed of the persons here intended, as was before declared. For, 1. He ascribeth to them in general better things, and such as accompany salvation, ver. 9. 2. He ascribes a work and labour of love, as it is true faith alone which worketh by love, ver. 10, whereof he speaks not one word concerning these. 3. He asserts their preservation, 1. On the account of the righteousness and faithfulness of God, ver. 11. 2. Of the immutability of his counsel concerning them, ver. 17, 18. In all these, and sundry other instances, doth he put a difference between these apostates and true believers. And whereas the apostle intends to declare the aggravation of their sin, in falling

away, by the principal privileges whereof they were made partakers, here is not one word in name or thing of those which he expressly assigns to be the chief privileges of true believers, Rom. viii. 27—30.

2. Our next inquiry is more particularly, whom he doth intend? And, 1. They were such who not long before were converted from Judaism unto Christianity, upon the evidence of the truth of its doctrine, and the miraculous operations wherewith its dispensation was accompanied. 2. He intends not the common sort of them, but such as had obtained especial privileges among them. For they had received extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, as speaking with tongues or working miracles. And, 3. They had found in themselves and others, convincing evidences, that the kingdom of God and the Messiah, which they called the world to come, was come unto them, and had satisfaction in the glories of it. 4. Such persons as these, as they have a work of light on their minds, so, according to the efficacy of their convictions, may have such a change wrought upon their affections and in their conversation, as that they may be of great esteem among professors; and such these here intended might be. Now, it must needs be some horrible frame of spirit, some malicious enmity against the truth and holiness of Christ and the gospel, some violent love of sin and the world, that could turn off such persons as these from the faith, and blot out all that light and conviction of truth which they had received. But the least grace is a better security for heaven than the greatest gifts and privileges whatever.

These are the persons concerning whom our apostle discourseth, and of whom it is supposed by him, that they may fall away, *καὶ παραπεσοντας*. The especial nature of the sin here intended, is afterwards declared in two instances, or aggravating circumstances. This word expresseth the respect it had to the state and condition of the sinners themselves: they 'fall away,' do that whereby they do so. I think we have well expressed the word, if they 'shall fall away.' Our old translations render it only, 'if they shall fall,' which expressed not the sense of the word, and was liable to a sense not at all intended. For he doth not say, if they shall fall into sin, this, or that, or any sin whatever that can be named, suppose the greatest sin imaginable, namely, the denial of Christ in the time of danger or persecution. This was that sin, as we intimated before, about which so many contests were raised of old, and so many canons were multiplied about the ordering of them who had contracted the guilt thereof. But one example, well considered, had been a better guide for them, than all their own arbitrary rules and imaginations: when Peter fell into this sin, and yet was renewed again to repentance, and that speedily. Wherefore we may lay down this, in the first place, as to the sense of the words: There is no particular sin that any man may fall into occasionally, through the power of temptation, that can cast the sinner under this commination, so that it should be impossible to renew him to repentance. It must therefore, secondly, be a course of sin, or sinning, that is intended. But there are various degrees herein also, yea there are divers kinds of such courses in sin. A man may so fall into a way of sin, as still to

retain in his mind such a principle of light and conviction, that may be suitable to his recovery. To exclude such from all hopes of repentance, is expressly contrary to Ezek. xviii. 21; Isa. lv. 7, yea, and the whole sense of the Scripture. Wherefore men, after some conviction and reformation of life, may fall into corrupt and wicked courses, and make a long abode or continuance in them. Examples hereof we have every day amongst us, although, it may be, none to parallel that of Manasseh. Consider the nature of his education under his father Hezekiah, the greatness of his sins, the length of his continuance in them, with his following recovery, and he is a great instance in this case. Whilst there is in such persons any seed of light, or conviction of truth, which is capable of an excitation or revival, so as to put forth its power and efficacy in their souls, they cannot be looked on to be in the condition intended, though their case be dangerous.

3. Our apostle makes a distinction between *πταιω* and *πιπτω*, Rom. xi. 11, between stumbling and falling, and would not allow that the unbelieving Jews of those days were come so far as *πιπτειν*, that is, 'to fall absolutely.' *Λεγω ουν' μη επιτρισαν ινα πεσωσι; μη γενοιτο:—* 'I say then, have they stumbled, that they should fall? God forbid;' that is, absolutely and irrecoverably. So, therefore, doth that word signify in this place. And *παραπιπτω* increaseth the signification, either as to perverseness in the manner of the fall, or as to violence in the fall itself.

From what hath been discoursed, it will appear what falling away it is that the apostle here intendeth. And,

1. It is not a falling into this or that actual sin, be it of what nature it will, which may be, and yet not be, a falling away.

2. It is not a falling upon temptation or surprisal, for concerning such fallings we have rules of another kind given us in sundry places, and those exemplified in especial instances; but it is that which is premeditated,—of deliberation and choice.

3. It is not a falling by a relinquishment or renunciation of some, though very material principles of Christian religion, by error or seduction, as the Corinthians fell, in denying the resurrection of the dead, and the Galatians by denying justification by faith in Christ alone. Wherefore,

4. It must consist in a total renunciation of all the constituent principles and doctrines of Christianity, whence it is denominated. Such was the sin of them who relinquished the gospel to return unto Judaism, as it was then stated, in opposition unto it, and hatred of it. This it was, and not any kind of actual sins, that the apostle manifestly discourseth concerning.

5. For the completing of this falling away, according to the intention of the apostle, it is required that this renunciation be avowed and professed; as, when a man forsaketh the profession of the gospel, and falls into Judaism, or Mahometanism, or Gentilism, in persuasion and practice. For the apostle discourseth concerning faith and obedience as professed, and so, therefore, also of their contraries. And this avowal of a relinquishment of the gospel, hath many provoking aggravations attending it. And yet, whereas some men may in their hearts

and minds utterly renounce the gospel, but upon some outward secular considerations, either dare not or will not profess that inward renunciation, their falling away is complete and total in the sight of God; and all they do to cover their apostasy in an external compliance with Christian religion, is in the sight of God but a mocking of him, and the highest aggravation of their sin.

This is the falling away intended by the apostle; a voluntary resolved relinquishment of, and apostasy from the gospel,—the faith, rule, and obedience thereof; which cannot be, without casting the highest reproach and contumely imaginable, upon the person of Christ himself, as is afterwards expressed.

Concerning these persons, and their thus falling away, two things are to be considered in the text. 1. What is affirmed of them. 2. The reason of that affirmation.

The first is, that it is impossible to renew them again to repentance. The thing intended is negative;—to renew them again to repentance, this is denied of them: but the modification of that negation, turns the proposition into an affirmation,—‘It is impossible so to do.’

Ἀδυνατον γὰρ. The import of the word is dubious; some think an absolute, and others a moral impossibility is intended thereby. This latter most fix upon, so that is a matter rare, difficult, and seldom to be expected, that is intended, and not that which is absolutely impossible. Considerable reasons and instances are produced for either interpretation. But we must look farther into the meaning of it.

First. All future events depend on God, who alone doth necessarily exist. Other things may be, or may not be, as they respect him or his will. And so things that are future, may be said to be impossible, or be so, either with respect unto the nature of God, or his decrees, or his moral rule, order, and law. Things are impossible with respect unto the nature of God, either absolutely, as being inconsistent with his being and essential properties; so it is impossible that God should lie; or, on some supposition, so it is impossible that God should forgive sin without satisfaction, on the supposition of his law, and the sanction of it. In this sense, the repentance of these apostates, it may be, is not impossible. I say, *it may be*. It may be, there is nothing in it contrary to any essential properties of the nature of God, either directly or reductively. But I will not be positive herein. For the things ascribed unto these apostates are such, namely, ‘their crucifying the Son of God afresh, and putting him unto open shame,’ as that I know not but that it may be contrary to the holiness, and righteousness, and glory of God, as the supreme Ruler of the world, to have any more mercy on them than on the devils themselves, or those that are in hell. But I will not assert this to be the meaning of the place.

Secondly. Things possible in themselves, and with respect to the nature of God, are rendered impossible by God’s decree and purpose; he hath absolutely determined that they shall never be. So it was impossible that Saul and his posterity should be preserved in the kingdom of Israel. It was not contrary to the nature of God, but God had decreed that so it should not be, 1 Sam. xv. 28, 29. But the decrees of God, respecting persons in particular, and not qualifica-

tions in the first place, cannot be here intended ; because they are free acts of his will, not revealed either in particular, or by virtue of any general rule, as they are sovereign, making differences between persons in the same condition, Rom. ix. 11, 12. What is possible or impossible with respect unto the nature of God, we may know in some good measure, from the certain knowledge we may have of his being and essential properties. But what is so one way or other, with respect unto his decrees or purposes, which are sovereign free acts of his will, knoweth no man, not the angels in heaven, Isa. xl. 13, 14 ; Rom. xi. 34.

Thirdly. Things are possible or impossible, with respect to the rule and order of all things that God hath appointed. In things of duty, when God hath neither expressly commanded them, nor appointed means for the performance of them, then are we to look upon them as impossible, and then with respect to us they are so absolutely, and so to be esteemed. And this is the impossibility here principally intended. It is a thing that God hath neither commanded us to endeavour, nor appointed means to attain it, nor promised to assist us in it. It is, therefore, that which we have no reason to look after, attempt, or expect, as being not possible by any law, rule, or constitution of God.

The apostle instructs us no farther in the nature of future events, but as our own duty is concerned in them. It is not for us either to look, or hope, or pray for, or endeavour the renewal of such persons unto repentance. God gives law unto us in these things, not unto himself. It may be possible with God, for aught we know, if there be not a contradiction in it to any of the holy properties of his nature ; only he will not have us to expect any such things from him, nor hath he appointed any means for us to endeavour it. What he shall do, we ought thankfully to accept ; but our own duty towards such persons, is absolutely at an end. And, indeed, they put themselves wholly out of our reach.

That which is said to be thus impossible with respect to these persons, is, *παλιν ανακαινιζειν εις μετανοιαν*, ‘to renew them again to repentance.’ *Μετανοια*, in the New Testament, with respect unto God, signifies a gracious change of mind on gospel principles and promises, leading the whole soul into conversion unto God. This is the beginning and entrance of our turning unto God, without which, neither the will nor the affections will be engaged unto him, nor is it possible for sinners to find acceptance with them.

It is impossible, *ανακαινιζειν*, ‘to renew.’ The construction of the word is defective, and must be supplied ; *σε* may be added, ‘to renew themselves.’ It is not possible they should do so ; or *τινας*, that some should, that any should renew them, and this I judge to be intended. For the impossibility mentioned respects the duty and endeavours of others. In vain shall any attempt their recovery by the use of any means whatever. And we must inquire what it is to be renewed, and what it is to be renewed again.

Now, our *ανακαινισμος*, is the renovation of the image of God in our natures, whereby we are dedicated, *παλιν*, ‘again,’ unto him. For as

we had lost the image of God by sin, and were separated from him as things profane, this *ανακαίνισμος* respects both the restoration of our nature, and the dedication of our persons to God. And it is twofold.

First. Real and internal in regeneration and effectual sanctification. ‘The washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost,’ Tit. iii. 5; 1 Thess. v. 23. But this is not that which is here intended. For this these apostates never had, and so cannot be said to be renewed again unto it. For no man can be renewed again unto that which he never had.

Secondly. It is outward in the profession and pledge of it. Wherefore, renovation in this sense consists in the solemn confession of faith and repentance by Jesus Christ, with the seal of baptism received thereon. For thus it was with all those who were converted unto the gospel. Upon their profession of repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, they received the baptismal pledge of an inward renovation, though really they were not partakers thereof. But this estate was their *ανακαίνισμος*, ‘their renovation.’ From this state they fell totally, renouncing him who is the author of it, his grace which is the cause of it, and the ordinance which is the pledge thereof.

Hence it appears what it is, *παλιν ανακαίνιζεν*, ‘to renew them again.’ It is to bring them again into this state of profession by a second renovation, and a second baptism as a pledge thereof. This is determined to be impossible, and so unwarrantable for any to attempt. And for the most part such persons do openly fall into such blasphemies against, and engage, if they have power, into such persecution of the truth, as that they themselves give sufficient direction how others should behave themselves towards them. So the ancient church was satisfied in the case of Julian. This is the sum concerning what is affirmed of these apostates, namely, that it is impossible to renew them unto repentance, that is, so to act towards them as to bring them to that repentance whereby they may be instated in their former condition.

Hence sundry things may be observed for the clearing the apostle’s design in this discourse. As,

1. Here is nothing said concerning the acceptance or refusal of any upon repentance, or the profession thereof after any sin, to be made by the church, whose judgment is to be determined by other rules and circumstances. And this perfectly excludes the pretence of the Novatians from any countenance in these words. For whereas they would have drawn their warrant from hence, for the utter exclusion from church communion of all those who had denied the faith in times of persecution, although they expressed a repentance, whose sincerity they could not evince; those only are intended, who neither do, nor can come to repentance itself, nor make a profession of it, with whom the church had no more to do. It is not said that men who ever thus fell away, shall not upon their repentance be admitted into their former state in the church; but that such is the severity of God against them, that he will not again give them repentance unto life.

2. Here is nothing that may be brought in bar against such as ha-

ving fallen into any great sin, or any course in sinning, and that after light, convictions, and gifts received and exercised, who desire to repent of their sins, and endeavour after sincerity therein. Yea, such a desire and endeavour exempts any one from the judgment here threatened.

There is, therefore, in it that which tends greatly to the encouragement of such sinners. For, whereas it is here declared concerning those who are thus rejected of God, that it is impossible to renew them, or to do any thing towards that which shall have a tendency to repentance; those who are not satisfied that they do yet savingly repent, but only are sincerely exercised how they may attain thereunto, have no concern in this commination, but evidently have the door of mercy still opened unto them. For it is shut against those who shall never endeavour to turn by repentance. And although persons so rejected of God, may fall under convictions of their sin attended with despair, which is unto them a foresight of their future condition, yet as unto the least attempt after repentance on the terms of the gospel, they do never rise up unto it. Wherefore, the impossibility intended, of what sort soever it be, respects the severity of God, not in refusing or rejecting the greatest sinners, which seek after and would be renewed unto repentance, which is contrary unto innumerable of his promises; but in the giving up such sinners as these here mentioned are, unto that obdurateness and obstinacy in sinning, that blindness of mind, and hardness of heart, as that they neither can, nor shall ever sincerely seek after repentance, nor may any means according to the mind of God be used to bring them thereunto. And the righteousness of the exercise of this severity is taken from the nature of this sin, or what is contained in it, which the apostle declares in the ensuing instances.

VER. 7, 8.—What the apostle had doctrinally instructed the Hebrews in before, in these verses he layeth before them under an apposite similitude. For his design herein is to represent the condition of all sorts of persons who profess the gospel, and live under the dispensation of its truths, with the various events that do befall them. He had before treated directly only of unfruitful and apostatizing professors, whom here he represents by unprofitable ground, and God's dealing with them as men do with such ground, when they have tilled it in vain. For the church is a vine or vineyard, and God is the husbandman, John xv. 1; Isa. v. 1—3. But here, moreover, for the greater illustration of what he affirms concerning such persons, he compriseth in his similitude, the contrary state of sound believers and fruitful professors, with the acceptance they have with, and blessing they receive from God. And contraries thus compared, do illustrate one another, as also the design of him who treateth concerning them. We need not, therefore, engage in a particular inquiry, what it is which the word *for*, whereby these verses are annexed and continued unto the preceding, doth peculiarly and immediately respect; concerning which, there is some difference among expositors. Some suppose it is the dealing of God with apostates before laid down, which

the apostle regards, and in these verses gives an account of the reason of it, or whence it is they come unto such a woeful end. Others, observing that in his whole ensuing discourse he insists principally, if not only, on the state of sound believers and their acceptance with God, suppose he hath immediate respect unto what he hath declared in the beginning of the chapter, ver. 1, 3, concerning his design to carry them on unto perfection. But there is no need that we should restrain his purpose to either of these intentions, exclusively of the other; yea, it is contrary to the plain scope of his discourse so to do. For he compriseth both sorts of professors, and gives a lively representation of their condition, of God's dealing with them, and the event thereof. The reason, therefore, that he gives is not to be confined to either sort exclusively, but extends itself equally to the whole subject treated of.

VER. 7, 8.—Γη γαρ ἡ πiousα τον επ' αυτης πολλακις ερχομενον υετον' και τικτουσα βοτανην ευθετον εκεινοις δι' ους και γεωργειται, μεταλαμβανει ευλογιας απο του Θεου. Εκφερουσα δε ακανθας και τριξολους, αδοκιμος και καταρας εγγυς, ἡς το τέλος εις κausιν.

There is not any thing material to be observed concerning these words in any translations, ancient or modern; they all agree unless one or two that openly depart from the text, and which, therefore, are of no consideration. Only δι' ους is by the Syriac rendered ܡܢ ܠܗܡܢܐ, propter quos, 'for whom:' all others read per quos, or a quibus, 'by whom;' only ours mark 'for whom' in the margin, which indeed is the more usual signification of δια with an accusative case. But that is not unfrequently put for the genitive. And although this be not usual in other authors, yet unquestionable instances of it may be given, and amongst them, that of Demost. Olint. 1, is eminent. Και θεωρει τον τροπον δι' ον μεγας γεγονεν ασθενης ων τοκαταρχας Φιλιππος, 'And seeth the way whereby (by which) Philip, who at first was weak, became so great.' But into the proper sense of this expression in this place, we must inquire afterwards.

VER. 7, 8.—*For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God. But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned.*

Some things must be observed concerning this similitude in general before we inquire into the particular parts of it. I. The αποδοσις, or application of it, is left included in the προτασις, or proposition of the similitude itself, and is not expressed. A description is given of the earth, by its culture, and by its fruit or barrenness; but nothing is especially added of the things signified hereby, although those are principally intended. And the way of reasoning herein, as it is compendious, so it is plain and instructive, because the analogy between

the things produced in the similitude, and the things signified, is plain and evident, both in itself and from the whole discourse of the apostle.

2. There is a common subject of the whole similitude branched out into distinct parts, with very different events ascribed unto them. We must, therefore, consider both what is that common subject, as also, wherein the distinct parts whereinto it is branched, do agree on the one hand, and differ on the other. 1. The common subject is the earth, of the nature whereof, both branches are equally participant. Originally and naturally, they differ not, they are both the earth. 2. On this common subject, in both branches of it, the rain equally falls; not upon one more, and the other less, not upon one sooner and the other later. 3. It is equally dressed, tilled, or manured, by or for the use of some. One part doth not lie neglected, whilst the other is cared for.

In these things there is an agreement, and all is equal in both branches of the common subject. But hereon a partition is made, or a distribution of this common subject into two parts or sorts, with a double difference between them; and that 1. On their own part, 2. Of God's dealing with them. For, 1. The one part brings forth herbs which are described by their usefulness, they are 'meet for them by whom they are dressed.' The other bare thorns and briers, things not only of no use or advantage, but moreover noxious and hurtful. 2. They differ in the consequent, on the part of God, for the first sort receiveth blessing from God, the other, in opposition unto this blessing from God, (whence we may also learn what is contained therein) is first rejected, then cursed, then burned.

Before I proceed to the particular explication of the words, inquiry must be made into the especial design of the apostle in them, with respect unto these Hebrews. For here is not only a threatening of what might come to pass, but a particular prediction of what would come to pass, and a declaration of what was already in part accomplished. For, by the earth, he understands in an especial manner, the church and nation of the Jews. This was God's vineyard, Isa. v. 7. 8. Hereunto he sent all his ministers, 'and last of all, his Son,' Matt. xxi. 35—37; Jer. ii. 21. And to them he calls, 'O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord,' Jer. xxii. 29. Upon this earth, the rain often fell, in the ministerial dispensation of the word unto that church and people. With respect hereunto, Christ says unto them, *ποσακις*, 'How often would I have gathered thy children,' Matt. xxiii. 37, as here the rain is said to fall *πολλακις*, 'often' upon it.

This was the earth, wherein were the plants of God's especial planting. And these were all now distributed into two parts. 1. Those, who believing and obeying the gospel, brought forth the fruits of repentance, faith, and new obedience. These being effectually wrought upon by the power of God in the new creation, our apostle compares to the earth in the old creation, when it was first made by God and blessed of him. Then, in the first place, it brought forth *σπυ*, that is, *βοτανην*, as the LXX. render the word, 'herb,' meet for him that made and blessed it, Gen. i. 11. And these were still to be continued the vineyard of God, a field which he cared for. This was that

gospel church gathered from among the Hebrews, which brought forth fruit to the glory of God, and was blessed of him. This was the 'remnant among them, according to the election of grace,' which obtained mercy when the rest were blinded, Rom. xi. 5, 7.

For, 2. The remainder of this people, the residue of this earth, it was made up of two sorts, which are both of them here cast under the same lot and condition. There were obstinate unbelievers on the one hand, who pertinaciously rejected Christ and the gospel, with hypocritical apostates on the other, who, having for a season embraced its profession fell off again unto their Judaism. All these, the apostle compares unto the earth, when the covenant of God with the creation, was broken by the sin of man, and it was put under the curse. Hereof it is said, קִץ ודָּרַר הַצִּמְצִי, Gen. iii. 18, *ακανθας και τριξολους ανατελει*, as the LXX. renders it, the very words here used by the apostle, 'it beareth thorns and briers.' Such was this church and people, now they had broken and rejected the covenant of God by their unbelief, earth that brought forth thorns and briers. 'The best of them was as a brier, and the most upright of them, as a thorn hedge;' then was the day of their prophets nigh, the day of their visitation foretold by the prophets their watchmen, Micah vii. 4. So God threatened, that when he rejected his vineyard, it should bring forth 'briers and thorns,' Isa. v. 6.

And of these unbelieving and apostate Hebrews of this barren earth the apostle affirmeth three things.

1. That it was *αδοκιμος*, 'rejected,' or not approved, that is of God. Hereof they boasted, and herein they continued yet to pride themselves that God owned them, that they were his people, and preferred them above all others. But although God was pleased yet to exercise patience towards them, yet he had pronounced concerning them in general, that they were not his people, that he owned them not. Thorns and briers were come upon their altars, so that both their persons and and worship were rejected of God.

2. It was nigh unto cursing. And this curse which it was now very nigh unto, had in it, 1. Barrenness; and 2. An unalterable and irrevocable destination unto destruction. 1. It had in it, barrenness. For this church of the Jews, made up now of infidels and apostates, was represented by the fig-tree cursed by our Saviour, Matt. xxi. 19, 'He said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee, henceforward for ever, and presently the fig-tree withered away.' After this time, the gospel having been sufficiently tendered unto them, and rejected by them, there was no more of saving faith, repentance, or obedience, nothing that was acceptable unto God, in holiness or worship, ever found amongst them to this day. Many Jews were after this converted, but the church of the Jews never bare any more fruits unto God. And 2. They were devoted unto destruction. The close of the Old Testament, and therein of the immediate solemn revelation of God unto that church, was, that if they received not the Lord Christ, after the coming and ministry of Elijah, that is, of John the baptist, that God would come and 'smite the whole earth with a curse,' Mal. iv. 6. He would make it a thing anathematized, or sacredly devoted unto destruction

When God first brought them into his land, which was to be the seat of his ordinances and solemn worship, the first town that they came unto was Jericho. This, therefore, God anathematized, or devoted to perpetual destruction, with a curse upon him that should attempt its re-edification, Josh. vi. 17. The whole land thereby was alienated from its former possessors, and devoted unto another use, and the place itself utterly destroyed. Jerusalem, and consequently the whole church, was now to be made as Jericho; and the curse denounced was now speedily to be put in execution, wherein the land was to be alienated from their right unto it, and be devoted to desolation.

3. The end of all this was, that this earth should be burned. An universal desolation, according to the prediction of our Saviour, by fire and sword, representing the eternal vengeance to which they were liable, and which was to come upon them. This was now approaching; namely, the end of their church and state, in the destruction of the city, temple, and nation.

This was the especial design of the apostle with respect unto these Hebrews; and he adds this scheme or delineation of the present and approaching condition of that apostatized church, to give terror unto the commination that he gave unto unprofitable professors. But whereas all things unto the very last, happened unto them in types, and the condition of the churches of the gospel, is represented in their sin and punishment; and whereas the things reflected on, are such as it is the common and constant concern of all professors heedfully to consider, I shall open the words in the whole latitude of their signification, as they are peculiarly instructive unto us.

1. The subject of the proposition in the similitude, is the earth, *ἡ γῆ*; and that which is represented thereby, is the hearts and minds of all those to whom the gospel is preached. So it is explained in that parable of our Saviour, wherein he expressed the word of the gospel as preached, by seed, and compares the hearers of it unto several sorts of ground whereinto that seed is cast. And the allusion is wonderfully apposite and instructive.

For, 1. Seed is the principle of all things living; of all things that, having any kind of natural life, are capable of natural increase, growth, and fruit. And whatever they arrive unto, it is but the actuating of the vital seed from whence they do proceed. So is the word of the gospel unto all spiritual life, 1 Pet. i. 23. And believers, because of their growth, increase, and fruit, from this vital principle or seed of the word, are called vines, plants of God's planting, and the like.

2. The earth is the only fit and proper subject for seed to be put into, and alone is capable of the culture or husbandry that is to be used about it. God hath made no other matter or subject to receive the seeds of things that may bring forth fruit; no man casts seed into the air or water. It was of the earth alone that God said, 'Let it bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit after its kind, whose seed is in itself upon the earth,' Gen. i. 11, 12. The earth alone hath a passive power to be made fruitful, it hath that matter in it, which being cultivated, disposed, excited, sowed, planted, blessed, may bring forth fruit. So it is with the souls of

men with respect unto the seed of the Word. Their minds, and they alone, are a subject capable of receiving of it, and improving it. They are the only meet object of divine care and culture. The faculties of our souls, our minds, wills, and affections are meet to entertain the gospel, and to bring forth the fruits of it, whereof nothing is found in any other creatures on the earth. Hence we are Θεου γεωργιον, 1 Cor. iii. 9, 'God's husbandry,' the ground or field that he tilleth. As Christ mystical, comprising all professors, is the vine, and his 'Father is the husbandman,' John xv. 1, by whom it is dressed and pruned.

3. The earth, by and of itself, in the state wherein it is, brings forth nothing that is good or useful. Upon its first creation, it was inlaid and impregnated by the blessing of God with all seeds of useful herbs and fruits. But after the entrance of sin, its womb was cursed with barrenness as to its first usefulness, and brings forth nothing of itself but thorns, briars, and noxious weeds, at least those in such abundance as to choke and corrupt all the remainders of useful seeds and plants in it. It is, like the field of the slothful, grown over with thorns, and nettles cover the face thereof. Especially, it is condemned to utter barrenness, if the rain fall not on it; whereof afterwards. And such are the hearts and minds of men by nature. They are dark, barren, unprofitable, and, without divine culture, will bring forth no fruits of righteousness that are acceptable unto God. All that of themselves they can bring forth, are noxious weeds. Among the weeds of unmanured earth, some are painted with alluring colours, but they are but weeds still; and among the fruits of unsanctified minds, some may carry a more specious appearance than others; but they are all, spiritually considered, sins and vices still. So then the common subject of the similitude is plain and instructive. And we may in our passage observe, that

Obs. I. The minds of all men by nature are universally and equally barren, with respect to fruits of righteousness and holiness, meet for and acceptable unto God.—They are all as the earth under the curse. There is a natural difference among men as unto their intellectual abilities. Some are of a far more piercing and sagacious understanding, and of a sounder judgment than others. Some have a natural temper and inclination disposing them unto gentleness, sobriety, and modesty; when others, from their constitution, are morose, passionate, and perverse. And hereon some make a good progress in morality, and usefulness in the world, whilst others lie immersed in all vicious abominations. There are, therefore, on these and the like accounts, great differences among men, wherein some are incomparably to be preferred above others. But as to the fruits of spiritual holiness and righteousness, all men by nature are equal and alike. For our nature, as unto a principle of living unto God, is equally corrupted in all. There are no more sparks or relics of grace in one than another. All spiritual differences between men, are from the power and grace of God in the dispensation of the word. But we must proceed.

Of this earth it is said, ἡ πiousα του επ' αυτης πολλακις ερχομενον υετον, that it 'drinks in the rain that comes often upon it.' Some-

thing is wanting, something must be done to this barren earth, to make it fruitful. And this is done by rain. And that is described by

1. Its communication or application unto the earth—it falls upon it.
2. An especial adjunct thereof in its frequency—it falls often on it.
3. By that reception which the earth is naturally fitted and suited to give unto it—it drinketh it in.

1. The thing itself is rain. This is that whereby alone the earth, otherwise dry and barren, is impregnated and made fruitful. For a communication of moisture is absolutely requisite to apply the nourishing virtue of the earth unto the radical principles of all fruits whatever; and therefore, before any rain did fall, God caused a vapour to arise, which supplied the use of it, and watered the earth, Gen. ii. 6. So the Poet expresseth it :

*Tum Pater omnipotens fecundis imbribus æther,
Conjugis in gremium late descendit et omnes,
Magnus alit, magno commistus corpore, fœtus.* — GEORG. 2.

And *ὑετος* is ‘a wetting shower,’ not a storm, not a violence of rain causing an inundation, which tends to barrenness and sterility, nor such as is unseasonable, and spoils the fruits of the earth, but a plentiful shower is intended; for *ὑετος* exceeds *ομβρος*, as Aristotle observes.

2. This rain falls on the ground. And, 3. It is said to fall often or frequently, *iteratis vicibus*. The land of Canaan is commended that it was not like the land of Egypt, where the seed was sown and watered with the foot; but that it was a land of ‘hills and valleys, and did drink water of the rain of heaven,’ Deut. xi. 10, 11. And they had commonly two seasons of it, the former whereof they called *יֵרֵךְ*, Joreh, and the latter, *מַלְקוֹשׁ*, Malcosh, Deut. xi. 14. The former fell about October, in the beginning of their year, when their seed was cast into the ground, and the earth as it were taught thereby, as the word signifies, to apply itself unto the seed, and to become fruitful. The other fell about March, when their corn was grown up, filling the straw and ear for the harvest, as the word probably signifies. Hence it is said that Jordan overfloweth all his banks at the time of harvest, Josh. iii. 15; 1 Chron. xii. 15, which was occasioned by the falling of Malcosh, or this latter rain. And that this was in the first month, or March, which was the entrance of their harvest, it is evident from hence, in that immediately after they had passed over Jordan, during the swelling of its waters, they kept the passover at Gilgal on the fourteenth of that first month, ch. v. 10. Whilst they had these rains in their proper seasons, the land was fruitful; and it was by withholding of them, that God punished them with the barrenness of the earth, and famine thereon ensuing. Besides these, in good seasons they had many other occasional showers; as mention is made of the showers on the mown grass. Hence it is here supposed that the rain falls, *πολλακις*, often on this earth.

3. Again. The earth is said to drink in the rain. The expression is metaphorical, but common: *ἡ γη μελαινα πινει*. And the allusion is taken from living creatures, who by drinking take in water into their

inward parts and bowels. To do thus is peculiar unto the earth. If the rain falls upon rocks or stones, it runs off from them, it hath no admission into them. But into the earth it soaks more or less, according as the condition of the ground is more or less receptive of it. And it is the nature of the earth to suck in, as it were, these moistening rains that fall upon it, until it be even inebriated, Ps. lxx. 10, 'Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly, thou settlest the furrows thereof.' תלמידה רוח, 'thou inebriatest or makest drunk the furrows thereof.'

This is the *προτασις* or proposition of the similitude. The *αποδοσις* is included in it, that is, the application of it unto the matter in hand. 1. That by the earth, the minds and consciences of men are intended, was before declared, and it is as evident what is meant by the rain. Yet some suppose that the gifts of the Holy Ghost before treated of, may be designed by the apostle. For in the communication of them, the Holy Spirit is frequently said to be poured out, that is, as water or rain. But this rain is said to fall often on the earth, yea upon that earth which continueth utterly barren, in one shower after another. And this can be no way accommodated to the dispensation of the gifts of the Spirit. For they being once communicated, if they be not exercised and improved, God gives no more showers on them. It is, therefore, the administration of the word that is intended. And in other places, the doctrine of the Scripture is frequently compared unto rain and watering, Deut. xxxii. 2, 'My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, as the showers upon the grass.' And where God denies his word unto any people, he says, 'upon them there shall be no rain,' Zech. xiv. 17. And hence, נטף, 'to drop,' as the rain doth, is an expression for prophesying or preaching, Ezek. xxi. 2; Amos vii. 16, the showers whereof are sometimes more soft and gentle, sometimes more earnest and pressing. And those words, גם ברכות יעטף מורה, Ps. lxxxiv. 7, because of the ambiguity of the words, and the proportion that is between the things, are rendered by some, 'the rain also filleth the pools,' and by others, 'the teachers shall be filled with blessings.' This is that whereby God watereth and refresheth the barren souls of men, that whereby he communicates unto them all things that may enable them to be fruitful; in brief, not to enlarge on the allegory, the word of the gospel is every way unto the souls of men, as the rain to the barren earth.

2. This rain is said to fall often on the earth. And this may be considered either with respect to the especial concern of these Hebrews, which was laid open before, or unto the ordinary dispensation of the gospel. In the first way, it regards and expresseth the frequent addresses made unto the people of the Jews, in the ministry of the word, for their healing and recovery from those ways of ruin wherein they were engaged. And so it may include the ministry of the prophets, with the close put unto it by that of Christ himself; concerning which, see our exposition of ch. i. 1. And concerning this whole ministry it is, that our Saviour so expostulates with them, Matt. xxiii. 37, 'How often would I have gathered your children!'

And this also he at large represents in the parable of the householder and his vineyard, with the servants that he sent unto it, from time to time, to seek for fruit, and last of all his Son, Matt. xxi. 33—36. Take it in the latter way for the dispensation of the word in general, and the manner of it, with frequency and urgency, is included in this expression. Where the Lord Christ sends the gospel to be preached, it is his will that it should be so, instantly, in season and out of season; that it may come as abundant showers of rain on the earth.

3. This rain is said to be drunk in—the earth drinketh in the rain. There is no more intended in this expression, but the outward hearing of the word, a naked assent to it. For it is ascribed unto them who continue utterly barren and unhealed, who are therefore left unto fire and destruction. But as it is the natural property of the earth to receive in the water that is poured on it; so men do in some sense drink in the doctrine of the gospel, when the natural faculties of their souls do apprehend it, and assent unto it, though it works not upon them, though it produce no effects in them. There are indeed in the earth, rocks and stones on which the rain makes no impression, but they are considered in common with the rest of the earth, and there needs no particular exception on their account. Some there are who, when the word is preached unto them, do obstinately refuse and reject it; but the hearers in common are said to drink it in, and the other sort shall not escape the judgment which is appointed for them. And thus far things are spoken in general, what is common unto both those sorts of hearers which he afterwards distinctly insists upon. The word of the gospel, in the preaching of it, being compared unto rain, we may observe that,

Obs. II. The dispensation of the word of the gospel unto men, is an effect of the sovereign power and pleasure of God, as is the giving of rain unto the earth.—There is nothing in nature that God assumeth more into his prerogative than this of giving rain. The first mention of it in the world, is in these words, ‘The Lord God hath not caused it to rain upon the earth,’ Gen. ii. 5. ‘All rain is from the Lord God, who causeth it to rain, or not to rain, at his pleasure. And the giving of it he pleads as a great pledge of his providence and goodness: ‘He left not himself of old without witness, in that he did good, and gave rain from heaven,’ Acts xiv. 17. Our Saviour also makes it an argument of his goodness, that he ‘causeth his rain to fall,’ Matt. v. 45. And whatever thoughts we have of the commonness of it, and whatever acquaintance men suppose they have with its causes, yet God distinguisheth himself as to his almighty power, from all the idols of the world, that none of them can give rain. He calls his people to say in their hearts, ‘Let us fear the Lord who giveth rain,’ Jer. v. 24. ‘Are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain, or can the heavens give showers?’ Jer. xiv. 22. And he exerciseth his sovereignty in the giving of it, Amos iv. 7, 8, ‘I caused it to rain upon one city, and not to rain upon another: one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not withered; so two or three cities wandered unto one city to drink water.’ And thus is it absolutely unto the dispensation of the gospel to nations, cities, places,

persons: it is God's disposal alone, and he useth a distinguishing sovereignty therein. He sendeth his word unto one people and not to another, to one city and not to another, at one time and not at another, and these are those matters of his whereof he giveth no account. Only some things we may consider, which give us a prospect into the glory of his wisdom and grace herein; and this I shall do in two instances: first, in the principle of his dispensation; secondly, in the outward means of it. As,

1. The principal end which he designeth in his disposal of the dispensation of the gospel in that great variety wherein we do behold it, is the conversion, edification, and salvation of his elect. This is that which he aimeth to accomplish thereby, and therefore his will and purpose herein, is that which gives rule and measure unto the actings of his providence concerning it. Wherever there are any of his elect to be called, or in what time soever, there and then will he cause the gospel to be preached; for the purpose of God, which is according to election, must stand, whatever difficulties lie in the way, Rom. ix. 11, and the election must obtain, ch. xi. 5, 6. So the Lord Christ prayed that his Father would take care of all those that he had given unto him, (who were his own by election, 'Thine they were, and thou gavest them unto me,') and sanctify them by his word, John xvii. 17. In pursuit of his own purpose, and in answer unto that prayer of our Lord Jesus, he will send his word to find them out wherever they are, that so not one grain of his chosen Israel shall be lost or fall to the ground. So he appointed our apostle to stay and preach at Corinth, notwithstanding the difficulties and oppositions he met withal, because he had much people in that city, Acts xviii. 9, 10. They were his people by eternal designation, antecedently unto their effectual vocation, and therefore he will have the word preached unto them. And in the hard work of his ministry, the same apostle, who knew the end of it, affirms that he endured all things for the elect's sake, 2 Tim. ii. 10. That they might be called and saved, was the work he was sent upon. For 'whom he doth predestinate, them he also calleth,' Rom. viii. 30. Predestination is the rule of effectual vocation: all, and only they, are so called by the word, who are predestinated. So speaks our Saviour also, 'I have other sheep which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice,' John x. 16. He had some sheep in that fold of the church of the Jews; to them therefore he preached the word, that they might be gathered unto him. But he had other sheep also, even all his elect among the Gentiles; and, saith he, 'them must I gather also.' There is a necessity of it upon the account of the purpose of God concerning them, and they are to be gathered by hearing of his voice, or the preaching of the word. In that sovereignty, therefore, which God useth in the disposal thereof, causing the rain of the doctrine of his word to fall upon one place, and not upon another, at one time and not at another, he hath still this certain end before him, and the actings of his providence are regulated by the purposes of his grace. In what place or nation soever, in what time or age soever, he hath any of his elect to be brought forth in the world, he will provide that the gospel of peace

be preached unto them. I will not say that in every individual place where the gospel is preached, there are always some of the elect to be saved. For the enjoyments of one place may be occasioned by the work that is to be done in another, wherewith it is in some kind of conjunction; or the word may be preached in a place for the sake of some that are there only accidentally. As when Paul first preached at Philippi, Lydia only was converted, who was a stranger in those parts, belonging to the city of Thyatira in Asia, Acts xvi. 14, 15. And a whole country may fare the better for one city, and a whole city for some part of it, as Micah v. 7. God concealeth this secret design under promiscuous outward dispensations. For he obligeth those by whom the word is preached, to declare his mind therein unto all men indefinitely, leaving the effectual work of his grace in the pursuit of his purpose unto himself; 'whence they believe who are ordained to eternal life, and those are added to the church that are to be saved,' Acts ii. 47; Acts xiii. 48. Besides God hath other ends also in the sending of his word, though this be the principal. For by it he puts a restraint unto sin in the world, gives a visible control to the kingdom of Satan, and relieves mankind by sending light into those dark places of the earth, which are filled with habitations of cruelty. And by the convictions that he brings thereby on the minds and consciences of men, he makes way for the manifestation of the glory of his justice in their condemnation. Coming and speaking to them, he leaves them without pretence or excuse, John xv. 22. Yet will I not say that God sends the word for any continuance for these ends and designs only. For a short time he may do so, as our Saviour, sending forth his disciples to preach, supposeth that in some place their message may be totally rejected; and thereon appointeth them to shake off the dust of their feet as a testimony against them, or their being left without excuse. But these are but secondary and accidental ends of the word, where it is constantly preached. Wherefore God doth not so send it for their sakes alone. But on the other side, I dare say, that where God doth not by any means, nor in any degree, send his word, there are none of his elect to be saved; for without the word, they can neither be called nor sanctified. And if any of them are in any such place, to which he will not grant his word, he will by one providence or other snatch them like brands out of the fire, and convey them under the showers of it. And this we find verified by experience every day. The gospel therefore doth not pass up and down the world by chance, as we know in how great variety it hath visited and left nations and people, ages and times; nor is the disposal of it regulated by the wisdom and contrivance of men, whatever their work and duty may be in the dispensation of it; but all this, like the falling of the rain, is regulated by the sovereign wisdom and pleasure of God, wherein he hath respect only unto the purpose of his own eternal grace.

2. He doth, according to his sovereign pleasure, call and send persons to the preaching of it, to those to whom he will grant the privilege thereof. Every man may not upon his own head, nor can any man upon his own abilities, undertake and discharge that

work. This is the eternal rule and law of the gospel: 'Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. But how shall men call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?' Rom. x. 13—15, that is, by God himself; for neither doth the apostle discourse, nor hath he any occasion in that place to discourse, concerning the ordinary call of persons unto an office in the church, whereunto the ministry of the church itself is required. But he treats of preaching the gospel in general unto all or any parts of the world, and of the love and care of God in sending of men to that purpose, whereby others coming to hear of him, may believe in him, call upon his name, and be saved. Hence he compares the work of God herein to that of his sending forth light and natural instructions unto all the world, by the luminaries of heaven, wherein the ministry of men hath no place, Rom. x. 18. Wherefore the preaching of the gospel depends absolutely on the sovereign pleasure of God in sending men unto that work; for how should they preach except they be sent? And he doth send them,

First. By endowing them with spiritual gifts, enabling them unto that work and duty. The gospel is the ministration of the Spirit; nor is it to be administered but by virtue of the gifts of the Spirit. These God gives unto them whom he sends by Jesus Christ, Eph. iv. 7, 8, &c., and these gifts are a sort of especial, peculiar, yea supernatural abilities, whereby men are fitted to, and enabled for the dispensation of the gospel. It is sad to consider what woeful work they make who undertake this duty, and yet unfurnished with these abilities, that is, such who are sent of men, but are not sent of God. They harness themselves with external order, ecclesiastical mission, according to some rules agreed upon among themselves, with some other implements and ornamental accoutrements, whereon they undertake to be preachers of the gospel, as it were, whether God will or not. But these vanities of the Gentiles cannot give rain; the preaching of the gospel, as unto its proper ends, depends only on God's sending. When they betake themselves to their work, they find themselves at a loss for God's mission, at least they do so unto whom they pretend to be sent. I speak it not, as though outward order, and a due call, were not necessary in a church unto the office of a teacher; but only to show that all order without a concurrence of the divine vocation, is of no validity or efficacy. Now the dispensation of these spiritual gifts, without which the rain of the doctrine of the gospel falleth not, depends solely on the sovereignty of God. 'The Spirit divideth unto every one as he pleaseth,' 1 Cor. xii. 11. And it is evident that he doth not herein follow the rule of any human preparation. For whereas it is most certain, that the improvement of men's intellectual abilities in wisdom, learning, oratory, and the like, are exceedingly subservient to the use and exercise of these spiritual gifts, yet it is evident that God doth not always and regularly communicate them unto those who are so prepared; no, though they were acquired in a rational way, in order unto the work of the ministry. For how many

may we see so qualified, and yet destitute of all relish of spiritual gifts, God preferring before them persons, it may be, behind and beneath them in those qualifications. As it was whilst all these affairs were transacted in an extraordinary manner at the first planting of the gospel. He did not choose out eminently the philosophers, the wise, the learned, the scribes, the disputers of this world, to communicate spiritual gifts unto, but generally fixed on persons of another condition and more ordinary capacity. Some of the wise and learned were chosen, that none might think themselves excluded because of their wisdom and learning, things excellent in themselves; but many of this sort, as our apostle informs us, were not called and chosen unto this work. So something in proportion hereunto may yet be observed in the distribution of the ordinary gifts of the Spirit. At least it is evident, that herein God obligeth himself to no rules of such preparations or qualifications on our part. Nay, which is yet farther, he walks not herein in the steps of his own sanctifying and saving grace. But as he worketh that grace in the hearts of many, on whom he bestows not those gifts which are needful to enable men unto the dispensation of the gospel, so he bestows those gifts on many, unto whom he will not vouchsafe his sanctifying grace. And these things make evident that sovereignty, which God is pleased to exercise in his sending of persons unto the work of preaching the gospel, manifesting that the whole of it depends, like the giving of rain, absolutely on his pleasure. And when men exclusively unto this part of God's call will keep up a ministry, and so make a preaching of the gospel, it is but a lifeless image of the true dispensation of it.

Secondly. This communication of gifts unto men, is ordinarily accompanied with a powerful and effectual inclination of the minds of men, to undertake the work and engage in it, against those objections, discouragements, oppositions, and difficulties, which present themselves unto them in their undertaking. There is so, I say, ordinarily, for there are more instances than one, of those who, having the word of prophecy committed unto them, instead of going to Nineveh, do consult their own reputation, ease, and advantage, and so tack about to Tarshish. And there are not a few, who hide and napkin up their talents, which are given them to trade withal, though represented unto us under one instance only. But these must one day answer for their disobedience unto the heavenly call. But ordinarily that inclination and disposition unto this work, which accompanies the communication of spiritual gifts, is prevalent and effectual, so that the minds of men are fortified by it against the lions that are in the way, or whatever may rise up to deter them from it. So our apostle affirms, that upon the revelation of Christ unto him, and his call thereby to preach the gospel, immediately he conferred not with flesh and blood, but went into Arabia about his work, Gal. i. 16, 17. He would not so much as attend or hearken unto cavils and exceptions against the work, whereunto he was inclined and disposed, which is the way of a well-grounded firm resolution. And something in proportion hereunto is wrought in the minds of them, who undertake this work upon an ordinary call of God. And where this is not,

much success is not to be expected in the work of any, nor any great blessing of God upon it. When men go out hereunto in their own strength, without a supply of spiritual gifts, and engage in their work merely upon external considerations, without this divine inclination of their hearts and minds, they may seem to cast out water as out of an engine by violent compression, they will never be like clouds to pour forth showers of rain. This therefore also is from the Lord. Again,

Obs. III. God so ordereth things in his sovereign unsearchable providence, that the gospel shall be sent unto, and in the administration of it shall find admittance into what places, and at what times, seems good unto himself, even as he orders the rain to fall on one place and not on another.—We have not wisdom to search into the causes, reasons, and ends of God's providential works in the world; and individual persons seldom live to see the issue of those which are on the wheel in their own days. But we have ground enough in the Scripture to conclude, that the principal works of divine providence in the world, and among the nations of the earth, do respect the dispensation of the gospel, either in the granting of it, or the taking of it away. It were an easy matter to evince by evident instances, that the principal national revolutions which have been in the earth, have been all of them subservient unto the counsel and purpose of God in this matter. And there are also examples, manifesting how small occasions he hath turned into great and signal use herein. But what hath been spoken may suffice to evince who is the Father and Author of this rain. And how this consideration may be improved unto the exercise of faith, prayer, and thankfulness, is manifest.

This rain is said to fall often upon the earth, which respects the actual dispensation of the word, by them to whom it is committed. And we may hence observe,

Obs. IV. That it is the duty of those unto whom the dispensation of the word is committed of God, to be diligent, watchful, instant in their work, that their doctrine may, as it were, continually drop and distil upon their hearers, that the rain may fall often on the earth.—So hath God provided, that 'the ridges of it may be watered abundantly, to make it soft (or dissolve it) with showers, and so he blesseth the springing thereof,' Ps. lxxv. 10. In a hot, parching, and dry season, one or two showers do but increase the vehemence of the heat and drought, giving matter of new exhalations which are accompanied with some of the remaining moisture of the earth. Of no other use is that dead and lazy kind of preaching, wherewith some satisfy themselves, and would force others to be contented.

The apostles, when this work was committed unto them, would not be diverted from a constant attendance unto it by any other duty, much less any other occasion of life, Acts. vi. 4. See what a charge our apostle gives unto Timothy to this purpose, 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2, 3. And a great example hereof we have in the account he gives concerning his own ministry in Asia, Acts xx. 1. He declares when he began his work and ministry, the first day he came into Asia, ver. 18, that is, on the first opportunity, he omitted no season that he could possibly lay hold upon, but engaged into his work, as his manner was in every place that he came unto. And, 2. In what manner did he

teach? He did it, 1. Publicly, in all assemblies of the church, and others also, where he might have a quiet opportunity of speaking. And, 2. Privately from house to house, ver. 20. All places were alike to him, and all assemblies small or great, so he might have advantage of communicating unto them the knowledge of God in Christ. And, 3. What did he so declare unto them, or instruct them in? It was the whole counsel of God, ver. 27, the gospel of the grace of God, ver. 24, all things that were profitable unto them, ver. 20, in sum, repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, ver. 21. And, 4. How did he dispense the word unto them? It was by a declaration of the will of God, ver. 27, by testifying the necessity of gospel duties, ver. 21, by constant warnings and admonitions to stir men up unto diligence in obedience, and to caution them of their dangers, ver. 31. And, 5. When, or at what season did he thus lay out himself in the discharge of this duty? He did it night and day, ver. 31, that is, continually upon all occasions and advantages. He was one by whom God watered his vineyard every moment. And, 6. In what outward condition was he, and with what frame of spirit did he attend his work? He was in many temptations which befel him by the laying in wait of the Jews, ver. 19, or in continual danger of his life by the persecutions they stirred up against him. And as to himself, and the frame of his heart in this work, he carried it on with all humility of mind, and with many tears, ver. 19—31. He was not lifted up with conceits of the glory, greatness, and power of his office, of the authority over all the churches committed unto him by Christ, but with lowliness of mind, and meekness, was as the servant of them all, with that love, tenderness, compassion and fervency, as he could not but testify by many tears. Here is the great example for dispensers of the gospel. We have not his grace, we have not his gifts, we have not his ability or assistance, and ~~so~~ are not able to come up unto him; but yet certainly it is our duty to follow him, though *haud passibus æquis*, and to conform ourselves unto him according to our opportunity and ability. I confess I cannot but admire to think, what some men conceive concerning him or themselves. Can they say, that from the first day of their coming into their dioceses, or dignities, or parishes, or places, they have thus behaved themselves? Have they so taught, so preached, so warned, and that with tears night and day, all sorts of persons, whom they supposed themselves to relate unto? Have they made it their work to declare the mysteries of the gospel, and the whole counsel of God, and this both publicly and privately, night and day, according to their opportunities? It will be said indeed, that these things belonged to the duty and office of the apostles, but those that succeed them as ordinary overseers of the church, may live in another manner, and have other work to do. If they should carry it with that humility of mind as he did, and use entreaties with tears as he did, and preach continually as he did, they should have little joy of their office, and besides they should be even despised of the people. These things therefore they suppose not to belong unto them. Yea, but our apostle gives this whole account concerning himself unto the ordinary bishops of

the house of Ephesus, ver. 17, 28. And in the close of it tells them, that he hath shown them all things how they ought to do, ver. 35. And what he apprehended to be the duty of all to whom the dispensation of the word is committed, he manifests in his last solemn charge that he left with his son Timothy, a little before his death, 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2, 'I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom, preach the word, be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine;' so ver. 5. He did no more himself, than what he requires in Timothy, according to the proportion of his abilities. And the discharge of this work is not to be measured by particular instances of the frequency of preaching, but by that purpose, design, and frame of heart, which ought to be in ministers, of laying out themselves to the utmost in the work of the ministry on all occasions, resolving to spend and to be spent therein. I could easily show on how many accounts frequency and urgency in preaching of the word, is indispensably required of those unto whom the work is committed, that therein the rain may fall oft upon the earth. But I must not too far digress. The command of God; the love and care of Christ towards his church; the ends of God's patience and long-suffering; the future manifestation of his glory in the salvation of believers, and the condemnation of those that are disobedient; the necessities of the souls of men; the nature and kind of the way whereby God gives spiritual supplies by the ministry of the word; the weakness of our natural faculties of the mind in receiving, Heb. iv. 11; Isa. xxviii. 9, 10, and of the memory in retaining spiritual things, Heb. ii. 1, xii. 5; the weakness of grace, Rev. iii. 2, requiring continual refreshments, Isa. xxvii. 3; the frequency and variety of temptations, interrupting our peace with God, not otherwise to be repelled, 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9; the design of Christ to bring us gradually unto perfection, might all be pleaded in this case. But the law of this duty is in some measure written in the hearts of all faithful ministers, and those who are otherwise shall bear their own burdens.

Again. It is common to the whole earth often to drink in the rain that falls upon it, though but some parts only of it prove fruitful, as it will appear in the following distribution of them. Whence we may observe, that,

Obs. V. Attendance unto the word preached, hearing of it with some diligence, and giving of it some kind of reception, make no great difference among men; for this is common unto them who never become fruitful.—This is so plainly exemplified by our Saviour, in the parable of the several sorts of ground that receive the seed of the word, yet on various occasions lose the power of it, and never come to fruit-bearing, that it needs no farther consideration. And I intend not those only who merely hear the word and no more. Such persons are like stones, which, when the rain falleth on them, it makes no impression into them, they drink it not in at all. It is no otherwise, I say, with many hearers, who seem not to have the least sense of what customarily they attend to. But those are intended in the text and proposition, who in some measure receive it, and drink it in. They

give it an entrance into their understandings, where they become doctrinally acquainted with the truth of the gospel. And they give it some entrance into their affections, whence they are said to receive the word with joy. And moreover they allow it some influence on their conversations, as even Herod did, who heard the preachings of John Baptist gladly, and did many things thereon. All these things men may do, and yet at length prove to be that part of the earth, which drinks in the rain, and yet is absolutely barren, and brings forth thorns and briers. There is yet wanting the receiving of it in a good and honest heart: what this includes, will afterwards appear. And again, we may observe, that,

Obs. VI. God is pleased to exercise much patience towards those to whom he once grants the mercy and the privilege of his word.—He doth not presently proceed against them for and on account of their barrenness, but stays until the rain hath often fallen on the ground. But there is an appointed season and period of time, beyond which we will not wait for them any more, as we shall see.

The distribution of this earth into several parts, with the different lots and events of them, is next to be considered. The first sort the apostle describes two ways. 1. By its fruitfulness. 2. By its acceptance with God. And this fruitfulness he farther manifests, 1. From the fruit itself which it bears, it is herb, or herbs. 2. From the nature and use of that fruit, it is meet for them by whom it is dressed. 3. The manner of it, it brings it forth. These things we must a little open in their order, as they be in the text.

1. *Τικτει*, ‘it bringeth forth.’ *Τικτουςα βοτανην*. This word properly signifies the bringing forth of a woman that hath conceived with child, *συλληψη εν γαστρι και τεξη υιον*, Luke i. 31. And so it is constantly used in the New Testament, and not otherwise but only in this place, and James i. 15, *η επιθυμια συλλαβουσα τικτει αμαρτιαν*, in an elegant similitude he compareth the work of lust in temptation, to an adulterous conception in the womb of the adulteress, when at length actual sin is brought forth. The seeds of it are cast into the mind and will by temptation, where after they are warmed, fomented, and cherished, sin, that ugly monster, comes forth in the world. So is this earth said to bring forth, as a womb that is naturally and kindly impregnated, in its appointed season. And, therefore, when the apostle speaks of the other sort, he changeth his expression for such a word as may suit a deformed and monstrous production. But the native power of the earth being cherished by the rain that falls on it, brings forth as from a teeming womb, the fruits of those seeds it is possessed withal.

2. It brings forth *βοτανην*, generans herbam; the Rhemists render it ‘grass,’ causelessly and amiss. The word signifies such green herbs as are usually produced by careful culture, tilling, or dressing; such as are for the proper and immediate use of men, and not of their cattle. The same with *שבד*, Gen. i. 11. All sorts of useful green herbs, whether medicinal or for food, or beauty and ornament.

3. The nature of this herbal fruit is, that it is *ευθεος*. Some render it by opportuna, and some by accommoda; ‘meet’ answers both.

Those that use the former word, seem to respect the season wherein it brings forth the fruit. And this is the commendation of it, that it makes no delays, but brings forth in its proper time and season, when its owners and tillers have just ground and reason to expect and look for it. And it is an especial commendation of any thing that beareth fruit; and what is out of season is despised, Ps. i. 3. The latter word intends the usefulness and profitableness of the fruit brought forth in what season soever it be. We may comprise both senses, and justly suppose both of them to be intended. The Syriac expresseth it by a general word, ܩܪܝܬܐ, 'which is or may be of use.' And the fruits of the earth are not profitable unless they are seasonable. So James calls it *τιμιον καρπον της γης*, 'the precious fruit of the earth,' which the husbandman waiteth for, until the earth hath received the former and latter rain, James i. 7.

Lastly. These herbs thus brought forth are 'meet, *ἐκείνοις δι' οὓς και γεωργείται*, to them by whom it is tilled,' or even by whom; or by whom it is also tilled. The particle *και*, is not superfluous or insignificant. It declares an addition of culture to the rain. For besides the falling of rain on the earth, there is likewise need of further culture that it may be made fruitful, or bring forth herbs seasonably, which shall be profitable to men. For if only the rain fall on it, it will bring forth many things indeed, but if it be not tilled withal, for one useful herb, it will bring forth many weeds. As Virgil speaks in the case of husbandry,

Quod nisi et assiduis terram insectabere rastris,
Et sonitu terrebis aves, et ruris opaci
Falce premes umbras, votisque vocaveris imbrem,
Heu magnum alterius frustra spectabis acervum.

The earth must be tilled from its nature and the law of its creation. And therefore Adam was to have tilled and wrought the ground in the garden even before the fall, Gen. ii. 16. And this is the principal concernment of him that intends to live on the field. The falling of rain on the earth is common to the whole. That which gives a field a peculiar relation to any, is, that he dresseth, and fenceth, and tilleth it. To these dressers the herbs that are brought forth are said to be meet; they belong to them, and are useful for them. *Δι' οὓς* may be rendered 'for whom,' or 'by whom.' In the first way, the chief owner of the ground, the lord of the field or vineyard, is signified. The ground is tilled or manured for his use, and he eats of the fruits of it. In the latter sense, those who immediately work about the ground in the tilling of it are intended. But there is no need to distinguish in this place between owner and dresser. For God, as he is the great Husbandman, is both. He is the Lord of the vineyard, it is his, and he dresseth and pruneth the vines, that they may bring forth fruit, John xv.

Thirdly. The ground thus made fruitful, *μεταλαμβάνει ευλογίας απο του Θεου*, 'receiveth blessing of God.' And the blessing of God with respect to a fruitful field is twofold. 1. Antecedent, in the communication of goodness, or fruit, causing virtue to it. 'The smell of my

son, is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed,' Gen. xxvii. 27. A field that abounds with blossoms, flowers, and fruits, yielding a sweet savour, being so made fruitful by the singular blessing of God. But this is not the blessing here intended. For it is supposed that this field is already made fruitful, so as to bring forth useful herbs, and therefore must be antecedently interested in this kind of blessing, without which nothing can thrive or prosper. Wherefore, 2. God's benediction is taken for a consequent acceptance, or approbation, with care and watchfulness for a further improvement. The blessing of God is at large described, Isa. xxvii. 2, 3. And there are three things included in this blessing of a fruitful field. 1. The owning, acceptance, or approbation of it. Such a field God owns, and is not ashamed that it should be looked on as his. And this is opposed to the rejection of the barren ground afterwards mentioned; 'is rejected.' 3. The care, watchfulness, and diligence, that is used about it. God watcheth over such a field or vineyard to 'keep it night and day, that none should hurt it,' watering it every moment, and purging the branches of its vines, to make them yet more fruitful; opposed to 'being nigh unto cursing,' that is wholly neglected or left to salt and barrenness. 3. A final preservation from all evil, opposed to the burning up of the barren earth with the thorns and briers that grow on it.

These things being spoken only of the ground whence the comparison is taken, the application of them, though not expressed, to the spiritual things intended, is plain and easy. For,

1. The ground thus dressed, thus bearing fruit and blessed of God, are true and sound believers. So our Saviour declares it to be in the interpretation of his own parable to this purpose, Matt. xiii. They are such as receive the word of God in good and honest hearts, and bring forth fruits of it in several degrees. Such as having been ministerially planted and watered, have an increase wrought in them by the grace of God, 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7.

2. There is included herein the manner how they bring forth the fruits intended. And that is, that they bring forth in their lives, what was before conceived and cherished in their hearts. They have the root in themselves of what they bring forth. So doth the word here used signify, namely, to bring forth the fruit of an inward conception. The doctrine of the gospel as cast into their hearts, is not only rain but seed also. This is cherished by grace, as precious seed, and as from a natural root or principle in the heart, brings forth precious fruit. And herein consists the difference between the fruit-bearing of true believers, and the works of hypocrites or false professors. These latter bring forth fruits like mushrooms, they come up suddenly, have oftentimes a great bulk and goodly appearance, but they are only a forced excrescency, they have no natural seed or root in the earth. They do not proceed from a living principle of them in their hearts. The other sort do first conceive, cherish, and foment them in their hearts and minds, whence they bring them forth as from a genuine and natural principle. This is on either side fully declared by our Saviour himself, Luke vi. 43—45.

3. There are the herbs or fruits intended. These are they which elsewhere in the Scripture are called the fruits of the Spirit, the fruits of righteousness, of holiness, and the like. All that we do in compliance with the will of God, in the course of our profession and obedience, is of this kind. All effects of faith and love, of mortification and sanctification, that are holy in themselves, and useful to others, whereby we express the truth and power of that doctrine of the gospel which we do profess, are the fruits and herbs intended. When our hearts are made holy, and our lives useful by the gospel, then are we fruitful.

4. These herbs are said to be meet for them by whom or for whom the earth is dressed. As it is neither useful nor safe to press similitudes beyond their principal scope and intention, and to bring in every minute circumstance into the comparison; so we must not neglect what is fairly instructive in them, especially if the application of things one to another, have countenance and guidance given it in other places of the Scripture, as it is in this case. Wherefore to clear the application of this part of the similitude, we may observe,

1. That God himself is the great Husbandman, John xv. 1. And all believers are God's husbandry, 1 Cor. iii. 9. He is so the husbandman as to be the sovereign Lord and Owner of this field or vineyard, and he puts workmen into it to dress it. This our Saviour sets out at large in his parable, Matt. xxi. 33, &c. Hence he calls his people his 'portion,' and 'the lot of his inheritance,' Deut. xxxii. 9. He speaks as though he had given up all the world besides into the possession of others, and kept his people only to himself. And so he hath as to the especial blessed relation which he intendeth.

2. It is God himself who taketh care for the watering and dressing of this field. He dealeth with it as a man doth with a field that is his own; this he expresseth, Isa. v. 2; Matt. xxi. 33, 34. The dispensation of the word, and the communication of the Spirit to the church, with all other means of light, grace, and growth depend all on his care, and are all supremely from him, as was shown before. To this end he employeth his servants to work and dress it under him, who are labourers together with God, 1 Cor. iii. 9, because they are employed by him to do his work, and have the same end with him.

3. This tilling or dressing of the earth, which is superadded to the rain, or the mere preaching of the gospel denoted thereby, may be referred to three heads. 1. The ministerial application of the word to the souls and consciences of men, in the dispensation of all the ordinances of the gospel. This is the second great end of the ministry, as the dispensation of the word in general, as the rain, is the first. 2. The administration of the censures and discipline of the church. This belongs to the dressing and purging of God's vineyard, and of singular use it is to that end, where it is rightly and duly attended to. And those who, under pretence hereof, instead of purging the vineyard, endeavour to dig up the vines, will have little thanks from him for their diligence and pains. 3. Afflictions and trials. By these he purgeth his vine that it may bring forth yet more fruit; that is, he trieth, exerciseth, and thereby improveth the faith and graces of believers, 1 Pet. i. 7; Rom. v. 3—5; Jam. i. 2—4.

4. God expecteth fruit from this field, which is so his own, and which he so careth for. 'I looked for grapes,' Isa. v. 2. He sends his servants to receive the fruits of it, Matt. xxi. 34. Though he stand in no need of us or our goodness, it extends not to him, we cannot profit him, as a man may profit his neighbour, nor will we grow rich with our substance, yet he is graciously pleased to esteem of the fruits of gospel obedience, the fruits of faith and love, of righteousness and holiness, and by them will he be glorified, 'Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit,' John xv. 8; Matt. v. 16.

5. These fruits, when they are brought forth, God approveth of, accepteth, and farther blesseth them that bear them, which is the last thing in the words. Some think there is no use of these fruits unless they are meritorious of grace and glory. But God's acceptation of them here, is called his benediction, his blessing of them that bring them forth. Now a blessing cannot be merited; it is an act of bounty and authority, and hath the nature of a free gift that cannot be deserved. What doth a field merit of him by whom it is watered and tilled, when it bringeth forth herbs meet for his use; they are all but the fruits of his own labour, cost, and pains. The field is only the subject that he hath wrought on, and it is his own. All the fruits of our obedience are but the effects of his grace in us. We are a subject that he is graciously pleased to work on. Only he is pleased in a way of infinite condescension, to own in us what is his own, and to pardon what is ours. Wherefore the blessing of God on fruit-bearing believers, consists in three things. 1. His approbation and gracious acceptance of them. So it is said that he had respect to Abel and his offering, Gen. iv. 4. He graciously accepted both of his person and of his sacrifice, owning and approving of him, when Cain and his were rejected. So he 'smelt a savour of rest,' from the sacrifice of Noah, Gen. viii. 21. And to testify his being well pleased therewith, he thence took occasion to renew and establish his covenant with him and his seed. 2. It is by increasing their fruitfulness; every branch in the vine that beareth fruit, 'he purgeth that it may bring forth more fruit,' John xv. 2. He multiplies the seed that is sown, and 'increaseth the fruits of their righteousness,' 2 Cor. ix. 10. This is the constant way of God in his covenant dealings, with thriving fruitful Christians; he so blesseth them as that their graces and fruits shall more and more abound, so as that they shall be flourishing even in age, and bringing forth more fruit to the end. 3. He blesseth them in the preparation he hath made for to give them an everlasting reward. A reward it is indeed of grace and bounty, but it is still a reward,—a recompense of reward. For, although it be no way merited or deserved, and although there be no proportion between our works, duties, or fruits, and it; yet, because they shall be owned in it, shall not be lost nor forgotten, and God therein testifies his acceptance of them, it is their reward.

Obs. VII. Where God grants means, there he expects fruit. Few men consider what is the state of things with them, whilst the gospel is preached to them. Some utterly disregard it any farther than as it is suited to their carnal interests and advantages. For the gospel is

at present so stated in the world, at least many parts of it, that great multitudes make more benefit by a pretence of it or what belongs to it, and have greater secular advancements and advantages thereby, than they could possibly by the utmost of their diligence and ability in any other way, honest or dishonest, attain to. These esteem it according to their worldly interests, and for the most part no otherwise; they are merchants of souls, Rev. xviii. 11—13; 2 Pet. ii. 3. Some look on it as that wherein they are really concerned, and they will both take on themselves the profession of it, and make use of it in their consciences as occasion doth require. But few there are who do seriously consider what is the errand that it comes on, and what the work is, God hath in hand thereby. In brief, he is by it watering, manuring, cultivating the souls of men, that they may bring forth fruit to his praise and glory. His business by it is to make men holy, humble, self-denying, righteous, useful, upright, pure in heart and life, to abound in good works, or to be like himself in all things. To effect these ends, is this holy means suited, and therefore God is justly said to expect these fruits where he grants this means. And if these be not found in us, all the ends of God's husbandry are lost towards us, which what a doleful issue it will have the next verse declares. This, therefore, ought to be always in our minds while God is treating with us by the dispensation of the gospel. It is fruit he aims at, it is fruit he looks for, and if we fail herein, the advantage of the whole, both as to our good and his glory, is utterly lost, which we must unavoidably account for. For this fruit God both expecteth, and will require. This is the work and effect of the gospel, Col. i. 6. And the fruit of it is threefold. 1. Of persons in their conversion to God, Rom. xv. 16. 2. Of real internal holiness in them, or the fruits of the Spirit, Gal. v. 22, 23. 3. The outward fruits of righteousness and charity, 2 Cor. ix. 10; Phil. i. 11. These God looketh to, Isa. v. 4; Luke xiii. 7. And he will not always bear with a frustration. A good husbandman will suffer thorns and other barren trees to grow in the field; but if a vine or fig-tree be barren in his garden, he will cut it down, and cast it into the fire. However, God will not always continue this husbandry, Isa. xxviii; Amos vi. 12.

Obs. VIII. Duties of gospel obedience are fruits meet for God, things that have a proper and especial tendency unto his glory. As the precious fruits of the earth which the husbandman waiteth for, are meet for his use; that is, such as supply his wants, satisfy his occasions, answer his labour and charge, nourish and enrich him; so do these duties of gospel obedience, answer all the ends of God's glory, which he hath designed unto it in the world. 'Hereby,' saith our Saviour, 'is my Father glorified, if ye bring forth much fruit.'

And we must inquire how these fruits are meet for God. For, 1. They are not so, as though he stood in any need of them unto his glory. Our 'goodness extendeth not unto him,' Ps. xvi. 2. It doth not so, as though he had need of it, or put any value on it for its own sake. Hence, he rejecteth all those multiplied outward services which men trusted unto, as if they obliged him by them, because without them or their services, he is the sovereign possessor of all created be-

ings and their effects, Ps. 1. 7—12. All thoughts hereof are to be rejected: see Job xxii. 2, 3, xxxv. 6—8. 2. They are not meet for God, as if they perfectly answered his law. For, with respect thereunto, all our 'righteousnesses are as filthy rags,' most unmeet to be presented unto him, Isa. lxiv. 6. And if he should mark what is amiss in us or them, 'who should stand?' Ps. cxxx. 3. Much less, 3. Are they so meet for him, as that by them we should merit any thing at his hand. This foolish presumption is contrary to the very nature of God and man, with that relation between them, which necessarily ensues on their very beings. For what can a poor worm of the earth, who is nothing, who hath nothing, who doth nothing that is good, but what it receives wholly from divine grace, favour, and bounty, merit of him, who from his being and nature, can be under no obligation thereunto, but what is merely from his own sovereign pleasure and goodness?

They are, therefore, no otherwise meet for God, but in and through Christ, according to the infinite condescension which he is pleased to exercise in the covenant of grace. Therein doth the Lord Christ, 1. Make our persons accepted, as was that of Abel, through faith in him, which was the foundation of the acceptance of his offering, Gen. iv. 4; Heb. xi. 4. And this is of grace also; it is to the praise of his glorious grace, wherein he makes us 'accepted in the beloved,' Eph. i. 6. And 2. He bears and takes away the iniquity that cleaves unto them as they proceed from us, which renders them unmeet for God. This was typified by the plate of gold, wherein was inscribed, 'Holiness to the Lord,' that was on the forehead of the high priest. It was that he might 'bear the iniquity of the holy things of the people,' Exod. xxviii. 36—38. He bare it in the expiation he made of all sin, and takes it away in the sight of God. And 3. He adds of the incense of his own mediation unto them, that they may have a sweet savour in their offering to God, Rev. viii. 3. On this foundation it is that God hath graciously designed them unto sundry ends of his glory, and accepts them accordingly.

For, 1. The will of his command is fulfilled thereby; and this tends to the glory of his rule and government, Matt. vii. 21. We are to pray that the 'will of God may be done on earth as it is in heaven.' The glory that God hath in heaven from the ministry of all his holy angels, consists in this, that they always, with all readiness and cheerfulness, do 'observe his commands and do his will,' esteeming their doing so, to be their honour and blessedness. For, hereby is the rule and authority of God owned, avouched, exalted; a neglect whereof was the sin and ruin of the apostate angels. In like manner, our fruits of obedience are the only acknowledgments that we do, or can make to the supreme authority and rule of God over us, as the one lawgiver, who hath power to kill and keep alive. The glory of an earthly king consists principally in the willing obedience which his subjects give unto his laws. For, hereby they expressly acknowledge that they esteem his laws wise, just, equal, useful to mankind, and also reverence his authority. And it is the glory of God, when the subjects of his kingdom do testify unto all, their willing, cheerful sub-

jection unto all his laws, as holy, righteous, and good, by the fruits of their obedience; as also, that it is their principal honour and happiness to be engaged in his service, John xv. 14. Hereby is our heavenly Father glorified, as he is our great king and lawgiver. 2. There is in the fruits of obedience, an expression of the nature, power, and efficacy of the grace of God, whereby also he is glorified, for 'he doth all things to the praise of the glory of his grace,' Eph. i. 6. In all the actings of lust and sin, in the drought and dust of barrenness, we represent an enmity against him, and contrariety unto him, acting over the principle of the first rebellion and apostasy from him. These things, in their own nature, tend greatly to his dishonour, Ezek. xxxvi. 20. But these fruits of obedience are all effects of his grace, wherein he 'worketh in us to will and to do of his own good pleasure.' And hereby are both the power and nature of that grace manifested and glorified. The power of it in making fruitful the barren soils of our hearts, which, as under the curse, would of themselves bring forth nothing but thorns and briers. Wherefore, to cause our hearts to abound in the fruits of faith, love, meekness, and all holy evangelical obedience, is that wherein the power of God's grace is both manifested and magnified, Isa. xi. 5—8. And they also declare the nature of God. For they are all of them things good, benign, beautiful, useful to mankind, such as give peace, quietness, and blessedness unto the souls of them in whom they are; as they tend to the restoration of all things to their proper order, and unto the relief of the universe labouring under its confusion and vanity, Phil. iv. 8. Such, I say, are all the fruits of holy obedience in believers; such is their nature and tendency, whereby they declare what that grace is, from which they do proceed, and whose effects they are, Tit. ii. 11, 12. And hereby is God greatly glorified in the world. 3. They are meet for God, and tend unto his glory, in that they express and manifest the efficacy of the mediation of the Lord Christ in the obedience of his life, and the sacrifice of his death. These he aimed at in them, Tit. ii. 14; Eph. v. 25—27. It is in Jesus Christ that God will be glorified. And this is manifested in the effects of his wisdom and love in his mediation. For hereby do we declare and show forth *τὰς ἀρετὰς*, the 'virtues of him who hath called us,' 1 Pet. ii. 9, or the efficacious power of the mediation of Christ, which these fruits are the effects and products of. We do not only declare the excellency and holiness of his doctrine, which teacheth these things, but also the power and efficacy of his blood and intercession, which procure them for us and work them in us. God is glorified hereby, in that some return is made unto his goodness and love. That a creature should make any return unto God, answerable or proportionable unto the effects of his goodness, love, and bounty towards it, is utterly impossible. And yet this men ought to take care about and satisfy, before they talk of a farther merit. For what can we properly merit at his hands, whose precedent bounty we come infinitely short of answering or satisfying, in all that we can do? But this of fruitfulness in obedience, is the way which God hath appointed, whereby we may testify our sense of divine love and goodness, and express our gratitude. And hereby do our fruits of

righteousness redound unto the glory of God. 4. God in and by them, doth extend his care, goodness, and love unto others. It is his will and pleasure, that many who belong unto himself in an especial way, and others also among the community of mankind, should sometimes be cast into, and it may be, always be in a condition of wants and straits in this world. To take care of them, to provide for them, to relieve them, so as they also may have an especial sense of his goodness, and he instrumental in setting forth his praise, is incumbent on him who is the great provider for all. Now, one signal way whereby he will do this, is by the fruits of obedience, brought forth in others. Their charity, their compassion, their love, their bounty shall help and relieve them that are in wants, straits, sorrows, poverty, imprisonment, exile, or the like. And so it is in all other cases; their meekness, their patience, their forbearance, which are of these fruits, shall be useful unto others under their weaknesses and temptations. Their zeal, their labour of love in teaching and instructing, or preaching the word, shall be the means of the conviction and conversion of others. So doth it please God, by these fruits of obedience in some, to communicate of his own goodness and love, unto the help, relief, succour, and redress of others. For those so relieved do, or at least, ought to look on all, as coming directly from God. For it is he who, not only commands those who are the means of their conveyance unto them, to do what they do, but he directly works it in them by his grace, without which it would not be. And all this redoundeth unto the glory of God. This, our apostle expresseth at large, 2 Cor. ix. 12—15. 'For the administration of this service,' that is, the charitable and bountiful contribution of the Corinthians unto the poor of the church at Jerusalem, 'not only supplieth the wants of the saints' themselves, the thought whereof might give great satisfaction to the minds of men, benign and compassionate, namely, that they have been able to relieve others, 'but it is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God.' It hath this effect upon the minds of all that are concerned in it, or do know of it, to cause them to abound in thanks and praise unto God. And he sheweth both the grounds whereon, and the way whereby this praise is so returned unto God. For, 1. They consider not merely what is done, but the principle from whence it doth proceed. 'Whilst, by the experience of this ministration, they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel.' This, in the first place, affects them greatly, that whereas, before they had only heard it may be a report, that you, or some of you were converted unto the faith of the gospel, they had now, by this ministration, that is, the relief of bounty communicated unto them, such an evidence and assurance, that with one consent they gave praise and glory to God for the work of his grace towards them. And indeed, this usually is the first thing which affects the minds of any of the saints of God, in any relief that God is pleased to hand out unto them, by the means of others. They admire and bless God in and for his grace towards them, by whose kindness and compassion they are relieved. So is God glorified by these fruits. And the second ground of their praises was, the liberal distribution unto themselves, as they found by experi-

ence, and unto all men, as they were informed and believed. The ministration itself, testified their faith and obedience unto the gospel, but the nature of it, that it was liberal and bountiful, evidenced the sincerity and fruitfulness of their faith, or the exceeding grace of God in them, ver. 14. They saw hereby, that there was not an ordinary or common work only of grace on these Corinthians, engaging them into a common profession, and the duties of it, which yet was a matter of great thankfulness unto God; but that indeed the grace of God exceedingly abounded in them, which produced these fruits of it in so plentiful a manner. And with respect hereunto also, was praise peculiarly rendered unto God. Hereunto, also, the apostle adds a double way whereby God was glorified, distinct from the direct attribution of praises unto him. And by 'their prayer for you, which long after you, for the exceeding grace of God in you;' that is, by both these ways they glorify God, both in their prayers for a supply of divine grace and bounty to them by whom they were relieved, and in their inflamed love towards them, and longing after them, which was occasioned only by their relief; but the real cause, motive, and object of it, was the exceeding grace of God in them, which was evidenced thereby. And by both these duties God is greatly glorified. Hence, the apostle concludes the whole with that *ἐπινικιον* of triumphant praises to God, 'Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift.' This, saith he, is a gift that cannot be sufficiently declared amongst men, and, therefore, God is more to be admired in it. And the apostle presseth the occasion of their joint thankfulness, in a word that may include both the grace of God given unto the Corinthians, enabling them to their duty, and the fruit of that grace in the bounty conferred on the poor saints; both of them were the gift of God, and in both of them was he glorified. And in this regard especially, are the fruits of our obedience unto the gospel, meet for him by whom we are dressed; that is, have an especial tendency unto the glory of God. Hence is that caution of the apostle, Heb. xiii. 16, 'But to do good and communicate, forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.' Our prayers and praises too, as he declares in the verse foregoing, are sacrifices unto God, and accepted with him, ver. 15. Our whole obedience is our reasonable sacrifice, is a sacrifice acceptable unto God, Rom. xii. 1; yea, but in these fruits of benignity, bounty, charity, doing good, and communicating largely and liberally, God is in a peculiar manner well pleased and satisfied, as smelling a savour of rest through Christ in such sacrifices.

And I might here justly take occasion at large to press men unto an abundant fruitfulness in this especial kind of fruit-bearing, but that the nature of our discourse will not admit it.

5. They are meet for God, because they are as the first-fruits unto him from the creation. When God took and rescued the land of Canaan, which he made his own in a peculiar manner, out of the hands of his adversaries, and gave it unto his own people to possess and inherit, he required of them, that on their first entrance thereunto, they should come and present him with the first of all the fruits of the earth, as an acknowledgment of his right to the land, and his bounty

unto them, Deut. xxvi. 1—8, &c. The whole creation did by sin, as it were, go out of the possession of God, not of his right and power, but of his love and favour : Satan became the God of this world, and the whole of it lay under the power of evil. By Jesus Christ he rescueth it again from its slavery and bondage unto Satan. But this he will not do all at once, only he will have some first-fruits offered unto him as an acknowledgment of his right, and as a pledge of his entering on the possession of the whole. And God is greatly glorified in the presenting of these first-fruits, at the recovery of the creation unto himself, which is a certain pledge of vindicating the whole from its present bondage ; and it is believers that are these fruits unto God, James i. 18, ‘Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures.’ But we are not so, but in our fruitfulness. Thereby it is, that there is a revenue of glory and praise returned unto God from this lower part of the creation, without which, it bears nothing but thorns and briers in his sight. In these, therefore, and the like things, consist the meetness of our fruits of obedience unto God or his glory. Again,

Obs. IX. Wherever there are any sincere fruits of faith and obedience, found in the hearts and lives of professors, God graciously accepts and blesseth them. Nothing is so small, but that if it be sincere, he will accept ; and nothing so great, but he hath an overflowing reward for it. Nothing shall be lost that is done for God,—a cup of cold water,—the least refreshment given unto any for his sake, shall be had in remembrance. All we have and are, is antecedently due to him, so as that there can be no merit in any thing we do. But we must take heed, lest while we deny the pride of merit, we lose not the comfort of faith, as to acceptance of our duties. It is a fruit of the mediation of Jesus Christ, that we may ‘serve God without fear, in righteousness and holiness all our days.’ But if we are always anxious and solicitous about what we do, whether it be accepted with God or not, how do we serve him without fear ? This is the worst kind of fear we are obnoxious unto, most dishonourable unto God, and discouraging unto our own souls, 1 John iv. 18. For how can we dishonour God more, than by judging, that when we do our utmost in sincerity in the way of his service, yet he is not well pleased with us, nor doth accept of our obedience ? Is not this to suppose him severe, angry, always displeased, ready to take advantage, one whom nothing will satisfy ? Such thoughts are the marks of the wicked servant in the parable, Luke xix. 20—22. Where, then, is that infinite goodness, grace, condescension, love, compassion, which are so essential to his nature, and which he hath declared himself so to abound in ? And if it be so, what use is there of the mediation and intercession of Jesus Christ ? what benefit in the promises of the covenant ? And what is there remaining that can encourage us in and unto duties of obedience ? Merely to perform them because we cannot, we dare not do otherwise, a servile compliance with our conviction, is neither acceptable unto God, nor any ways comfortable unto our own souls. Who would willingly lead such a life in this world, to be always labouring and endeavouring, without the least satisfaction that what he does,

will either please them by whom he is set on to work, or any way turn to his own account? Yet, such a life do men lead, who are not persuaded that God graciously accepts of what they sincerely perform. A suspicion to the contrary, riseth up in opposition unto the fundamental principle of all religion, 'He that cometh unto God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of all them that diligently seek him,' Heb. xi. 6.

This is the first principle and foundation of all religious worship, which, if it be not well and firmly laid in our hearts, all our supplication will be in vain. Now, unless we do believe, that he doth accept and bless our duties, we cannot believe that he is such a rewarder, or or as he expressed it in the covenant with Abraham, an 'exceeding great reward.' But he hath descended to the lowest instances of a little goats' hair to the tabernacle, a mite into the treasury, a cup of water to a disciple, to assure us that he despiseth not the meanest of our sincere services. But this must be spoken unto again, on ver. 9, and therefore, I shall not here farther confirm it.

Some, perhaps, will say, that their best fruits are so corrupted, their best duties so defiled, that they cannot see how they can find acceptance with so holy a God. Every thing that proceeds from them is so weak and infirm, that they fear they shall suffer loss in all. And this very apprehension deprives them of all that consolation in the Lord, which they might take in a course of holy obedience. I answer, 1. This consideration of the defilements of sin, that adhere to the best of our works or duties, excludes all merit whatever, and it is right it should do so. For indeed that cursed notion of the merits of good works, hath been the most pernicious engine for the ruin of men's souls, that ever Satan made use of; for, on the one hand, many have been so swollen and puffed up with it, as that they would not deign in any thing to be beholden to the grace of God, but have thought heaven and glory as due to them for their works, as hell is to other men for their sin; or the wages of a hireling to him for his labour, which cries to heaven against the injustice of them that detain it. Hence a total neglect of Christ hath ensued. Others convinced of the pride and folly of this presumption, and notwithstanding the encouragement unto fruitful obedience which lies in God's gracious acceptance and rewarding of our duties, have been discouraged in their attendance unto them. It is well, therefore, where this notion is utterly discarded by the consideration of the sinful imperfection of our best duties: so it is done by the church, Isa. lxiv. 6; Rom. vii. 21. 2. This consideration excludes all hopes or expectation of acceptance with God upon the ground of strict justice. If we consider God only as a judge pronouncing sentence concerning us and our duties according to the law, neither we, nor any thing we do, can either be accepted with him, or approved by him. For, as the Psalmist says concerning our persons, 'If thou, Lord, mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who can stand?' and prays, 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no flesh living be justified.' So it is with respect unto all our works and duties of obedience; not any one of them can endure the trial of God, as judging by the law, but would

appear as a filthy thing. Whilst, therefore, persons are only under the power of their convictions, and are not able, by faith, to take another view of God and his dealings with them, but by the law, it is impossible that they should have any comfortable expectation of the approbation of their obedience.

Wherefore, that we may be persuaded of the gracious acceptance of all our duties, even the least and meanest that we do in sincerity, and with a single eye to the glory of God, and that our labour in the Lord should not be lost, we are always to have two things in the eye and view of our faith. 1. The tenour of the covenant wherein we walk with God; God hath abolished and taken away the covenant of works, by substituting a new one in the room thereof, and the reason why he did so, was because of a double insufficiency in the law of that covenant, unto his great end of glorifying himself in the salvation of sinners. For, 1. It could not expiate and take away sin, which must be done indispensably, or that end could not be obtained:—this our apostle asserts as one reason of it, Rom. viii. 3, and proves at large in this Epistle afterwards. 2. Because it neither did nor could approve of such an obedience, as poor sanctified sinners were able to yield unto God; for it required perfection, when the best which they can attain unto in this life, is but sincerity. What then! do ‘we make void the law by faith?’ doth not God require perfect righteousness of us,—the righteousness which the law originally prescribed? Yes, he doth do, and without it, the curse of the law will come upon all men whatever. But this, also, being that which in ourselves we can never attain unto, is provided for in the new covenant, by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ unto them that do believe. So the apostle expressly states the matter, Rom. x. 3—6. On this supposition, God in this covenant hath provided for the acceptance of sincere, though imperfect obedience, which the law had no respect unto. The sum is, that his acceptance now, shall be suited unto the operation of his grace. He will crown and reward all the actings of his own grace in us; whatever duty, therefore, is principled by grace, and done in sincerity, is accepted with God, according to the tenour of this covenant. This, therefore, we are always to eye and consider as the bottom of the acceptance of our imperfect, weak, unworthy services. 2. Unto the same end is the mediation of Christ to be considered in an especial manner. Without respect unto him, neither we, nor any thing we do, is approved of God, and a double regard is in this matter, always to be had unto him and his mediation. 1. That by one sacrifice he takes away all that is evil or sinful in our duties; whatever is of real defilement, disorder, self in them, whereby any guilt might be contracted or is so, he hath borne it and taken it all away, as unto its legal guilt. Whatever, therefore, of guilt doth unavoidably adhere unto, or accompanieth our duties, we may, by faith, look upon it as so removed out of the way, by the sacrifice and mediation of Christ, as that it shall be no hinderance or obstruction to the gracious acceptance of them. 2. Whereas all that we do, when we have used our utmost endeavours by the assistance of grace, and setting aside the consideration of what is evil and sinful, from the principle of corrupted nature remaining in us,

is yet so weak and imperfect, and will be so whilst we are but dust and ashes, dwelling in tabernacles of clay, as that we cannot apprehend how the goodness which is in our obedience, should extend itself to God, reach unto the throne of his holiness, or be regarded by him, the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ doth so make way for them, put such a value on them in the sight of God, as that they receive approbation and blessing from him; for in Jesus Christ we are complete, and God makes both us and our duties accepted in the beloved. The consideration hereof, added to the former, may firmly assure the mind and conscience of every true believer, concerning the gracious acceptance of the least of their holy duties that are performed in sincerity. And this they have in such a way as, 1. To exclude merit and boasting. 2. To keep them in a holy admiration of God's grace and condescension. 3. To make them continually thankful for Christ and his mediation. 4. To yield unto themselves comfort in their duties, and encouragement unto them.

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

In the foregoing verse, the apostle showed how it would be and fall out with that part of the Judaical church which embraced the gospel, and brought forth the fruits of faith and obedience. God would accept of them, own them, preserve and bless them; and this blessing of God consisted in four things. 1. In his gracious acceptance of them in Christ, and the approbation of their obedience, ver. 9. 2. In delivering them from that dreadful curse and judgment which not long after consumed the whole remainder of that people. 3. In making use of multitudes of them, to be the means of communicating the knowledge and grace of the gospel unto other persons and nations; a greater blessing and honour than which, they could not in this world be made partakers of. 4. In their eternal salvation. This being laid down, he proceeds in his parable, to declare the state and condition of the othersort of them; namely, of unbelievers, apostates from, and opposers of the gospel: and this he doth, in compliance with the symbolical action of our Saviour in cursing the barren fig-tree, whereby the same thing was represented, Matt. xxi. 19. For it was the apostate, persecuting, unbelieving church of the Jews, whose estate, and what would become of them, which our Saviour intended to expose in that fig-tree. He had now almost finished his ministry among them, and seeing they brought no fruit thereon, he intimates that the curse was coming on them, whose principal effect would be perpetual barrenness. They would not bear any fruit, and they shall not hereafter, being hardened by the just judgment of God unto their everlasting ruin. So was fulfilled what was long before foretold, Isa. vi. 9, 10, as our apostle declares, Acts xxviii. 26, 27. In answer hereunto, our apostle in this verse gives this account of their barrenness, and description of their end through God's cursing and destroying of them. And herein also, the estate and condition of all apostates, unfruitful professors, hypocrites, and unbelievers, to whom the gospel hath been dispensed, is declared and expressed.

And, as it was necessary unto his design, the apostle pursues his former similitude, making an application of it unto this sort of men. And, 1. He supposeth them to be ‘earth,’ as the other sort are: *εκφερουσα*, that is, *ἡ γη ἡ εκφερουσα*, ‘that earth,’—that part of the earth. So it is and no more; it is neither better nor worse than that which proves fruitful and is blessed. All men to whom the gospel is preached, are every way by nature in the same state and condition; all the difference between them is made by the gospel itself. None of them have any reason to boast, nor do they in any thing make themselves differ from others. 2. It is supposed that the rain falls often on this ground also. Those who live unprofitably under the means of grace, have oftentimes the preaching of the word as plentifully and as long continued unto them, as they that are most thriving and fruitful in obedience. And herein lies no small evidence that these things will be called over again another day, to the glory of God’s grace and righteousness. On these suppositions two things are considerable in what is ascribed unto this earth: 1. What it brings forth: 2. How.

First. It bringeth forth, *ακανθας και τριξολους*, ‘thorns and briers:’ see the opening of the words before. In general, I doubt not but all sorts of sins are hereby intended,—all ‘unfruitful works of righteousness,’ Rom. vi. 21; Eph. v. 11. And the principal reason why they are here compared unto thorns and briers, is with respect unto the curse that came on the earth by sin. ‘Cursed be the ground, thorns and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee,’ Gen. iii. 17, 18, whereunto barrenness or unaptness for better fruits is added, Gen. iv. 12. From this curse, the earth of itself and untilled, would bring forth nothing but thorns and briers, at least, they would be absolutely prevalent in and over all the products of it; so the heart of man by nature, is wholly overrun with evil sinful imaginations, and his life with vicious sinful actions, Gen. vi. 5; Rom. iii. 10—13. 2. Wherefore, the bringing forth of thorns and briers, is abounding in such actings and works as proceed from the principle of corrupted nature under the curse. In opposition hereunto, all good actions, all acts of faith and obedience, are called herbs and fruits, because they are the fruits of the Spirit. Such sinful works are compared to, and called thorns and briers, from a community of properties with them. For, 1. They are in their kind unprofitable, things of no use, but meet to be cast out, that room may be made for better. When a man hath a field overgrown with thorns and briers, he finds he hath no benefit by them; wherefore, he resolves to dig them up or burn them. Of such, and no other use, are the sins of men in the world. All the ‘works of darkness are unfruitful,’ Eph. v. 11. The world is no way benefited by them, never was any man the better for his own or another man’s sin. 2. Because they are hurtful and noxious, choking and hindering good fruits, that otherwise would thrive in the field. So are thorns and briers represented in the Scripture as grieving, piercing, and hurtful, and things that are so called by their name, Ezek. xxviii. 24; Mic. iv. 4; Isa. vii. 25. Such are all the sins of men. All the confusion, disorders, devastations that are in the world, are from them alone. In general, therefore, it is all sorts of sins, works of darkness, works of

the flesh, that are intended by these thorns and briers. But yet, I presume that the apostle hath regard unto the sins which the obstinate Jews were then in an especial manner guilty of, and which would be the cause of their sudden destruction. Now, those, as it appeareth from this whole Epistle and matter of fact in the story, were unbelief, impenitency, and apostasy. The thorns and briers which were the fuel wherein was kindled the fire of God's indignation unto their consumption, were their sins against the gospel. Either they would not give their assent unto its truth, or would not amend their lives according to its doctrine, or would not abide with constancy in its profession. These are the especial sins which cast those Hebrews, and will cast all that are like unto them, into the condition of danger and perdition here described.

Secondly. The manner of bringing forth these thorns and briers, is expressed by *εκφερουσα*. Chrysostome puts a great remark upon the difference of the words used by the apostle; that which he applieth to the production of good fruit, is *τικτουσα*, which denotes a natural conception and production of any thing in due order, time, and season. But this *εκφερουσα*, applied to the barren cursed ground, denotes a casting of them out in abundance, not only without the use of means, but against it. The heart of man needs not to be impregnated with any adventitious seed, to make it thrust forth all sorts of sins, or to make it fruitful in unbelief and impenitency; the womb of sin will of its own accord be continually teeming with these things. Matters being thus stated with this ground, the apostle affirms three things concerning it.

First. It is *αδοκιμος*. That is said to be *αδοκιμον*, whereof trial hath been made, whether by the application of suitable means unto it, it will be made useful unto any certain end: *δοκιμαζω* is 'to try,' to make an experiment what any thing is, and of what use; especially it is applied to the trial that is made of gold and silver by fire. To *χρυσιον εν πυρι δοκιμαζομεν*, Isocrat. 'We try gold in the fire;' that is, whether it be true and pure. Fire is the great trier and discoverer of metals, of what sort they are, 1 Cor. iii. 13—15. And hence the Lord Christ, in the trial of his church, is compared to a refiner with fire, Matt. iii. 12; so faith is tried, 1 Pet. i. 7. And it is the word which our apostle useth, when he enjoins us to try and search ourselves as unto our sincerity in faith and obedience, 2 Cor. xiii. 5; Gal. vi. 4, as also to make a due inquiry into the true nature of spiritual things, Rom. xii. 2; Eph. v. 10, not contenting ourselves with a bare notion of them, but endeavouring after an experience of their power in our own hearts. *Δοκιμη* is often used by our apostle for an experience upon trial, Rom. v. 4; 2 Cor. ii. 9; Phil. ii. 22, as *δοκιμον* by Peter, 1 Pet. i. 7. Hence is *δοκιμος*, one that upon trial is approved, found sound, and therefore is accepted, 1 Cor. xi. 19; 2 Cor. x. 18; 2 Tim. ii. 15; James i. 12, *ευαρεστος τω Θεω, και δοκιμος τοις ανθρωποις*, Rom. xiv. 18, 'Accepted with God, and approved with men.' Hence *αδοκιμος* is one ejected, disapproved upon trial, reprobate, 1 Cor. ix. 27; 2 Cor. xiii. 5, 6; Tit. i. 16. The whole is expressed, Jer. vi. 29, 30, 'The bellows are burnt, the lead is consumed of the fire, the founder

melteth in vain; reprobate silver shall men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them.' All means were used to try to the utmost whether there were any true sincere metal in them. After all, they were found *αργυριον αδοκιμον*, 'refuse silver, mere dross,' which was therefore rejected as of no use. This ground, therefore, is supposed to have had a trial made of it, and all proper means to have been used for to make it fruitful; but whereas nothing succeeded, it is to be *αδοκιμος*, 'rejected, disapproved,' laid aside as to any further endeavours to make it successful. Such a piece of ground the husbandman leaves caring for; he will lay out no more charge about it, nor take any more pains with it, for he finds on trial that it is incurable.

Secondly. It is said to be *καταρας εγγυς*, 'nigh unto a curse.' The husbandman doth not presently destroy such a piece of ground, but neglecting of it, lets it lie, further to discover its own barrenness and unprofitableness. But this he doth so as to declare his resolution to lay it waste, and so to cast it out of the bounds of his possession; and he doth it three ways: 1. By gathering out of it all the good plants and herbs that yet remain in it, by transplanting them into a better soil. 2. By casting down its fences, and laying it waste, that all the beasts of the fields shall lodge in it, and prey upon it. 3. By withholding all means of doing it good, by watering or manuring of it. And hereby it becomes like to the barren wilderness, as it lies under the curse, which no man careth for. It is nigh to that condition wherein it shall not be known that it was ever owned by him, or did ever belong to his possession. So is it nigh unto cursing. For as blessing of any thing is an addition of good, so cursing implies the taking off all kindness, and all effects thereof, and therewithal the devoting of it to destruction.

Lastly. It is added, *ης το τελος εις καυσιν*, 'whose end is unto burning,' or to be burned. Fire makes a total and dreadful destruction of all combustible things whereunto it is applied. Thence such desolations are said to be firing or burning, by what means soever they are effected. Things are consumed, as if they were burned up with fire. There is a burning of ground which is used to make it fruitful, as the poet expresseth it in his Georgics,

Sæpe etiam steriles incendere profuit agros,
Atque levem stipulam crepitantibus urere flammis.

But it is a burning of another kind that is here intended, and this is an act of positive indignation. He will not only show his dissatisfaction with such barren ground by a neglect of it, but his vengeance in its destruction. And it is thus expressed, to intimate both the temporal destruction of the obstinate Jews, and the eternal destruction of all unbelievers, both by fire of several kinds. Thus therefore the apostle declares, that God the great husbandman and owner of the vineyard, would deal with the impenitent and incredulous Hebrews.

First. He tried them, and that for a long season, by the preaching of the gospel. The rain fell oft upon them, and that for the space now of thirty-six years or thereabouts. God did, as it were, essay by outward means, to make them fruitful, to bring them to faith, repentance,

and obedience; but after this long trial, it appeared that they multiplied, as it were under his hand, the thorns and briers of their unbelief, and all sorts of provoking sins. Wherefore God rejects them, declares that his soul had no pleasure in them, that he would be at no further cost about them. And twice did our apostle remind his countrymen in other places, that God would speedily so deal with them, Acts xiii. 40, 41, 46, xxviii. 25—28, as our Saviour had often threatened them, that the kingdom of God should be taken from them, they should no longer enjoy the means of saving knowledge or repentance. God laid them aside as a field no longer fit to be tilled. And this he did about the writing of this Epistle: for immediately hereon he began utterly to forsake them who were obstinate in their Judaism, and all those who apostatized thereunto from Christianity. And thus also in proportion he deals with all other unprofitable hearers and apostates. There is a time after which he casts them out of his care, will feed them no more, provide no more that they be rained on or dressed; and if they do any more enjoy the word, it is by accident, for the sake of some who are approved, but they shall receive no advantage by it, seeing they are no longer God's husbandry.

Secondly. On this rejection of them, they were nigh unto cursing; that is, they were so ordered and disposed of, as that the destroying curse of God might come upon them. God had now anathematized them, or devoted them to destruction; and hereupon he gave them up unto all those ways and means whereby it might be hastened and infallibly overtake them. For, 1. He gathered all the good plants from amongst them; he called out and separated from them all true believers, and planted them in the Christian church; so he deals with all apostate churches before their utter destruction, Rev. xviii. 4. 2. He took away their fences, casting them out of his protection, inasmuch that when they were destroyed, the general of the Roman army acknowledged that God had infatuated them, that their impregnable holds and forts were of no use to them. 3. He granted them no more use of means for their conversion. Thenceforwards they fell into all manner of sins, confusions, disorders, tumults, which occasioned their ruin. After the same manner will God deal with any other people whom he rejects for their rejection of the gospel. And the world hath no small reason to tremble at the apprehension of such a condition at this day.

Thirdly. In the end, this whole barren earth was burned up. In the first place, this respects the destruction of Jerusalem, which ensued not long after, when temple and city, and people and country, were all devoured by fire and sword, Matt. xxiv. 1, 2. But yet this, like the destruction of Sodom, was but an emblem of the future judgment. Hypocrites, unbelievers, apostates, are to have another end, than what they fall into in this world. An end they shall have, wherein their eternal condition shall be immutably stated. And this end that they must have, is, to the fire, the fire prepared for the devil and his angels; they shall be gathered together, and burned with a fire that shall never be quenched, John xv. 6. And this final destruction of all unprofitable hearers, unbelievers, and apostates, is that which is princi-

pally intended in the words. And we must not let this wholesome admonition pass without some observations from it.

Obs. I. Whilst the gospel is preached unto men, they are under their great trial for eternity.—The application that is made unto them, is for an experiment how they will prove. If they acquit themselves, in faith and obedience, they receive the blessing of eternal life from God. If they prove barren and unprofitable, they are rejected of God, and cursed by him. Nor shall they ever have any other trial, nor shall ever any other experiment be made of them, Heb. ix. 30, 31, 38. Their season of the enjoyment of the gospel is their day. When that is past, the night comes on them, wherein they cannot work. When these bellows are burnt, and the lead is consumed, the founder founding in vain, men are rejected as reprobate silver, never to be tried any more. Men do but deceive themselves in their reserve of a purgatory, when they are gone out of this world. If they are cast under their trial here, so they must abide to eternity. And we may do well to consider these things distinctly, because our concern in them is very great. To this purpose observe,

1. That we are all made for an eternal state and condition in blessedness or woe. Men may live like beasts, and therefore wish that they might die like them also; but we are all made with another design, and must all of us stand in our eternal lot at the end of the days, Dan. xii. 13.

2. That the unchangeable determination of our eternal state depends on what we do in this life. There is neither wisdom, nor knowledge, duty nor obedience, in the grave, whither we are going. ‘As the tree falls, so it must lie.’ ‘It is appointed for all men once to die, and after that is the judgment.’ Nothing interposeth to alter our state and condition between death and judgment. The contrivance of purgatory when we are gone hence, was an invention of Satan to delude the souls of men with hopes of relief, when all means and ways of it were past and irrecoverable.

3. The trial of our future state is made by the preaching of the gospel unto us, and our compliance with it, or rejection of it. This is that which the text declares on the one hand and the other: the barren ground is rejected on this trial.

4. It was a fruit of infinite grace, condescension, and mercy, to grant a new trial unto sinners, under the curse we had all cast ourselves into. There God might have left us. So he dealt with the sinning angels, whom he spared not. And had he dealt so with all mankind, who could say unto him, What dost thou? And it is that which we must all answer for, namely, that when we were lost and fallen under the sentence of the holy and righteous law, God would propose any terms of peace and reconciliation unto us, and give us a second trial thereon.

5. That the especial way of this trial, doth most eminently set out this grace and mercy. A way it is full of infinite wisdom, goodness, love, mercy, and grace. Such as wherein all the divine perfections will be eternally glorified, whether it be accepted or refused.

6. When the gospel is preached unto any, God telleth sinners, that

although they have destroyed themselves, and are ready every moment to sink into eternal misery, yet he will, out of infinite grace and compassion, try them once more, and that by the holy terms of the gospel. And in the preaching of the word he doth it accordingly. And although the season of this trial be determined with God, yet it is unto us uncertain on many accounts; for, 1. The continuance of our lives during which alone we are capable of enjoying it, is so. 2. We see that the preaching of the gospel is so also. The Lord Christ doth oftentimes remove the candlesticks, whilst they continue alive in the world among whom it was once fixed. And, 3. There is a time when a period is put unto the efficacy of the word for the conversion of some, although the outward dispensation be continued unto them, Isa. vi. 9—11. Wherefore, it is our duty to consider and improve the present season and present enjoyment of the gospel; for what is the work that therein God hath in hand towards us? Is it not to give us our trial in the use of means, as to what shall be our future condition? He hath therein taken us as his vineyard, as his husbandry, and causeth the rain to fall upon us, and hath done so often and long. And who almost doth consider aright how great his concern is herein? Would men be so careless, negligent, formal, slothful, as they are for the most part, under the hearing of the word, if they duly remembered that it is their trial for eternity? and they know not how soon it may be over. If we lose this season, we are gone for ever. It is therefore our wisdom to know whether our fruitfulness in faith, repentance, and obedience, do answer the rain and dressing we have had by the dispensation of the word. The axe is laid at the root of the tree: if we bring not forth good fruit, we shall ere long be hewn down and cast into the fire. It is true, there is none of us do answer as we ought the love and care of God towards us herein, nor can we so do. When we have done our utmost, we are but unprofitable servants. But there is a wide difference between a defect in degrees of obedience, and the neglect of the whole. Where the first is, we ought to walk humbly in the sense of it, and labour after more perfection. And if this defect be great and notable, such as is occasioned by our lusts indulged, or by sloth and negligence, as we can have no evidence of our being approved of God, so it is high time to recover ourselves by new diligence and holy endeavours, or we may be cast in our trial. But where the latter is, where men bring no fruit meet for repentance, what can they expect but to be finally and totally rejected of God. Whereas therefore we have been long most of us under this trial, it is assuredly high time that we call ourselves unto a strict account with respect unto it. And if upon inquiry we find ourselves at a loss which sort of ground we do belong unto, because of our barrenness and leanness, unless we are hardened by the deceitfulness of sin, we will give ourselves no rest until we have better evidences of our fruit-bearing. We may do well to remember, that though the earth on which the rain falls, is here distributed by the apostle into two sorts, like Jeremiah's figs, very good, and very bad, to one of which every one at last must be joined; yet, as to present effects and appearances, the ground whereinto the seed of the gospel is cast, is distributed by our Saviour into four sorts, whereof one only brings

forth fruit meet for him by whom it is dressed, Matt. xiii. There are several ways whereby we may miscarry under our trial, one only whereby we may be accepted, namely, fruitfulness of heart and life.

Obs. II. Barrenness under the dispensation of the gospel, is always accompanied with an increase of sin.—The ground which brings not forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, thrusts forth thorns and briers. Let it be observed that spiritual barrenness never goes alone. Abounding in sin will accompany it, and doth so. It may be it doth not so openly and visibly for a season, but all things will tend thereunto, and at last it will discover itself. Yea, there are no sinners like them, nor sin like theirs, by whom the means of grace are rejected, or not improved. The first generation of great provoking sinners, were those of the old world before the flood. Unto these, Noah had been a preacher of righteousness, 2 Pet. ii. 5. In his ministry did the Spirit of Christ strive with them, until God affirmed it should do so no more, Gen. vi. 3, but they were disobedient and barren, 1 Pet. iii. 19, 20. And this issued in those provoking sins, which God could not bear withal, but brought the flood upon the world of ungodly. The next was these Hebrews, unto whom the gospel had been preached; and they proved a generation no less wicked than that before the flood, insomuch as their own historian affirms, that he verily believed that if the Romans had not come and destroyed them, God would have poured fire and brimstone on them from heaven, as he did upon Sodom. And the third generation of the same kind, are the apostate Christian churches, whose condition and state is described in the Revelation. This is the issue of barrenness under God's culture and watering, and it will be so; for,

1. When men have rejected the last means of their spiritual healing and restraint of sin, what can be expected from them, but an outrage in sinning? There are three ways whereby God puts a restraint upon sin. The first is by the light of a natural conscience. This is born with men in the principle of it, and grows into exercise in the improvement of reason. And where the natural workings of it are not prevented and suffocated by the horrible example of parents and relations living in cursing, lying, and all manner of profaneness, it is very useful in youth to restrain persons from sundry sins. It is so, I say, until corruptions getting strength, and temptations abounding, custom in sinning takes away the edge of it, and weakens it in its operation.

Wherefore, 2. When this restraint is broken through, God sets up the hedge of the law before the minds of men, to deter them from sin. And this also hath a great efficacy with many unto this end, at least for a season. But neither will mere conviction from the law, always give bounds unto the lusts of men.

Wherefore, 3. The gospel comes with a different design from them both. The utmost of their aim and work is but to restrain sin, but the gospel comes to convert the sinner. Their work is to set a dam before the streams of sin, that of the gospel is to dry up the spring. But if this also, as it is in this case, be rejected and despised, what remains to set any bounds unto the lusts of men?

First. They will find themselves at liberty to act their own inclina-

tions to the utmost, as having cast off all regard to God in all the ways whereby he hath revealed himself. Hence you may find more honesty and uprightness, a more conscientious abstinence from sin, wrongs, and injuries, more effects of moral virtue among heathens and Mahometans, than among professed Christians, or persons who being unprofitable under the gospel, do thereby tacitly reject it. No fields in the world are fuller of thorns and briers, than those of people, nations, churches, who profess themselves to be Christians, and are not. Suppose two fields equally barren, let one of them be tilled and dressed, and the other be let alone, left unto its own state and condition: When the field that hath been tilled shall be forsaken for its barrenness, trash of all sorts, incomparably above that which was never tilled, will rise up in it. This is that which at this day is such a scandal to Christianity, which hath broken up the flood-gates of atheism, and let in a deluge of profaneness on the world. No sinners like unto barren Christians. Heathens would blush, and infidels stand astonished at the things they practise in the light of the sun. There was sleeping in the bed of uncleanness and drunkenness among the heathens. But our apostle, who well enough knew their course, affirms of them, that 'they who sleep, sleep in the night, and they who are drunken, are drunken in the night,' 1 Thess. v. 7. They did their shameful things in darkness and in secret, Eph. v. 11, 12. But, alas! among Christians who have directly and wilfully despised the healing power and virtue of the gospel; these are works of the day, proclaimed as in Sodom, and the perpetration of them, is the business of men's lives. If you would see the greatest representation of hell upon the earth, go into an apostate church or to persons that have had the word preached to them, or have heard of it sufficiently for their conviction, but are not healed. The face of all things in Christianity at this day is on this account dreadful and terrible, and bespeaks desolation to lie at the door: the ground whereunto the waters of the sanctuary do come, and it is not healed, is left unto salt and barrenness for ever.

Secondly. It is a righteous thing with God, judicially to give up such persons to all manner of filthy sins and wickedness, that it may be an aggravation of their condemnation at the last day. It is the way of God to do so, even when inferior manifestations of himself, his word and will, are rejected or not improved. So he dealt with the Gentiles for their abuse of the light of nature, with the revelation made of him by the works of creation and providence, Rom. i. 24, 26, 28. And shall not we think that he will, that he doth so deal with persons upon their unprofitableness under, and rejection of the highest and most glorious revelation of himself, that ever he did make, or ever will make, in this world unto any of the sons of men? It may be asked, How doth God thus judicially give up persons despising the gospel, unto their own hearts' lusts, to do the things that are not convenient? I answer, he doth it, 1. By leaving them wholly to themselves, taking off all effectual restraint from them. So spake our blessed Saviour of the Pharisees: 'Let them alone,' saith he, 'they are blind leaders of the blind,' Matt. xv. 14. Reprove them not, help them not, hinder them not, let them alone to take their own course. So saith

God of Israel, now given up to sin and ruin, 'Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone,' Hos. iv. 17; Ezek. iii. 27. And it is the same judgment which he denounceth against unprofitable hearers of the gospel, Rev. xxii. 11, 'He which is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still:' go on now in your sins and filthiness without restraint. Now when men are thus left to themselves, as there is a time when God will so leave gospel despisers, that he will lay no more restraint upon them, but withhold the influence of all consideration that should give them any effectual check or control; it were not to be conceived what an outrage and excess of sin, the cursed corrupted nature of man will run out into, but that the world is filled with the fruits and tokens of it. And God doth righteously thus withdraw himself more absolutely from gospel-despisers, than he doth from pagans and infidels, whom by various actings of his providence he keeps within bounds of sinning subservient unto his holy ends. 2. God pours out upon such persons a spirit of slumber, or gives them up to profound security, so as that they take notice of nothing in the works or word of God, that should stir them up to amendment, or restrain them from sin. So he dealt with these unbelieving Jews, Rom. xi. 8, 'God hath given them a spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see.' Although it be so come to pass, that many there are whom God's soul loatheth, and they abhor him also, as he speaks, Zech. xi. 8, so that he will have no more to do with them, yet he doth and will continue his word in the world, and the works of his providence in the government thereof. Now, as in the word there are several warnings, and dreadful threatenings against sinners, so in the works of God there are judgments full of evidences of God's displeasure against sin, Rom. i. 18. Both these in their own nature, are suited to awaken men, to bring them to a due consideration of themselves, and so to restrain them from sin. But as to this sort of persons, God sends a spirit of slumber upon them, that nothing shall rouse them up, or awaken them from their sins. Though it thunder over their heads, and the tempest of judgment falls so near them, as if they were personally concerned, yet do they cry, Peace, peace. When the word is preached to them, or they hear by any means the curse of the law, yet they bless themselves as those who are altogether unconcerned in it, God gives them up to all ways and means whereby they may be fortified in their security. Love of sin, contempt, and scorn of them by whom the word of God is declared, or the judgments of God are dreaded, carnal confidence carrying towards atheism, the society of other presumptuous sinners, strengthening their hands in their abominations; a present supply, for their lusts in the pleasant things of this world, I mean things which are so to the flesh, shall all of them contribute to their security. 3. God absolutely and irrecoverably gives them up to extreme obstinacy, to final hardness and impenitence, Isa. vi. 8—10. This is no place to treat of the nature of divine induration. It is enough to observe at present, that where provoking sinners do fall under it, they are totally blinded and hardened in sin to their eternal ruin. Now, when God doth thus deal with men who will not, and because they will not be healed and reformed by the preaching of the gospel, can any thing

else ensue, but that they will give up themselves unto all wickedness and filthiness with delight and greediness? And this wrath seems to be come upon multitudes in the world unto the utmost. So the apostle describes this condition in the Jews when they were under it, 1. Thess. ii. 15, 16, 'Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us, and they please not God, and are contrary to all men, forbidding us to speak unto the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway, for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.' And they are even blind themselves, who see not this to be the condition of many in the world at this day.

Thirdly. There are especial sins that are peculiar to this sort of barren persons, and so also aggravations of sins that others contract not the guilt of. Now, this state and condition, at least the utmost and highest danger of it, is so written on the foreheads of most that are called Christians in the world, that there is no need of making any application of it unto them. And although it be not for us to know times and seasons, or to set bounds and limits to the patience of Christ, yet have we just reason to dread the speedy breaking forth of his severity in judgment, spiritual or temporal, upon most nations and churches that are called by his name. But the duty it is of those who make profession of the gospel, in a peculiar manner to inquire diligently, whether there be not growing in their own hearts and ways, any such sins as are usually consequent unto barrenness under the word. If it prove so upon search, they may justly fear that God is beginning to revenge upon them the neglect of the gospel, and unprofitableness under it. There are degrees of this sin, and its consequents, as we shall show afterwards, that the evidences and effects of God's displeasure against it, are progressive and gradual also. From some of these, the sinner is recoverable by grace, from some of them he is not, at least ordinarily, but is inevitably bound over to the judgment of the great day. But the last degree is such as men ought to tremble at, who have the least care for, or love to, their immortal souls. For whatever issue of things God may have provided in the purpose of his grace, the danger unto us is inexpressible. And there neither is, nor can be, unto any, the least evidence, token, or hope, that God designs them any relief, whilst themselves are careless and negligent in the use of means for their own deliverance. It may therefore be inquired by what sort of sins this condition may be known in more strict professors than the common sort of Christians in the world, and how their barrenness under the gospel may be discovered thereby, as the cause, by its effects and inseparable consequents. I shall therefore name some of those sins and ways, with respect whereunto such persons ought to be exceedingly jealous over themselves. As, I. An indulgence unto some secret, pleasant, or profitable lust or sin, with an allowance of themselves therein. That this may befall such persons, we have too open evidence in the frequent eruptions and discoveries of such evils in sundry of them. Some, through a long continuance in a course of the practice of private sins, are either surprised into such acts and works of it as are made public, whether they will or not; or being hardened in them, do turn off to their avowed practice. Some

under terrors of mind from God, fierce reflections of conscience, especially in great afflictions and probabilities of death, do voluntarily acknowledge the secret evils of their hearts and lives. And some, by strange and unexpected providences, God brings to light, discovering the hidden works of darkness wherein men have taken delight. Such things, therefore, there may be amongst them who make a more than ordinary profession in the world. For there are or may be, hypocrites among them, 'vessels in the house of God of wood and stone.' And some who are sincere and upright, may yet be long captivated under the power of their corruptions and temptations. And for the sake of such, it is principally that this warning is designed. Take heed lest there be in any of you, a growing secret lust or sin wherein you indulge yourselves, or which you approve. If there be so, it may be, there is more in it than you are aware of; nor will your delivery from it, be so easy as you may imagine. God seldom gives up men unto such a way but it is an effect of his displeasure against their barrenness. He declares therein, that he doth not approve of their profession. Take heed lest it prove an entrance into the dreadful judgment ensuing. Whatever, therefore, it be, let it not seem small in your eyes. There is more evil in the least allowed sin of a professor, I mean that is willingly continued in, than in the loud and great provocations of open sinners. For, besides other aggravations, it includes a mocking of God. And this very caution I now insist upon, is frequently pressed on all professors by our apostle in this very Epistle, ch. iii. 10, 12, xii. 15, 16.

2. Constant neglect of private secret duties. This also may be justly feared lest it be an effect of the same cause. Now by this neglect I mean not that which is universal. For it is surely hard to meet with any one who hath so much light and conviction as to make profession of religion in any way, but that he will and doth pray, and perform other secret duties at one time or another. Even the worst of men will do so in afflictions, fears, dangers, with surprisals and the like. Nor do I intend interruptions of duties on unjustifiable occasions, which though a sin which men ought greatly to be humbled for, and which discovers a superfluity of naughtiness yet remaining in them, yet it is not of so destructive a nature as that which we treat about. I intend therefore such an omission of duties as is general; where men do seldom or never perform them but when they are excited and pressed by outward accidents or occasions. That this may befall professors the prophet declares, Isa. xliii. 22, 23. And it argues much hypocrisy in them; the principal character of an hypocrite being, that he will not pray always. Nor can there be any greater evidence of a personal barrenness than this neglect. A man may have a ministerial fruitfulness, and a personal barrenness, so he may have a family usefulness and a personal thriftlessness. And hereof negligence in private duties is the greatest evidence. Men also may know when those sins are consequences of their barrenness, and to be reckoned among the thorns and briers intended in the text. They may do it, I say, by the difficulty they will meet withal in their recovery, if it be so. Have their failings and negligence been occasional, merely from the impres-

sion of present temptations, a thorough watering of their minds and consciences from the word, will enable them to cast off their snares and to recover themselves to a due performance of their duties. But if these things proceed from God's dereliction of them because of their barrenness, whatever they may think and resolve, their recovery will not be so facile. God will make them sensible how foolish and evil a thing it is, to forsake him under the means of fruitful obedience. They may think like Samson, to go forth and do as at other times. But they will quickly find their locks cut, and their spiritual strength so decayed, as that they have no power for what they thought would prove so easy to them at any time. They will find their wills and affections so entangled and engaged, that without a fresh supply of grace, scarce less than that administered in their first conversion, they cannot be delivered. So is it with all lusts, sins, and negligences, that are the consequences of a provoking barrenness under the gospel.

3. A total want of some graces, both in their principle and exercise is a great evidence of such a condition. Where there is any true saving grace, there is the root and principle of all. Some graces may be more tried and exercised than others, and so be made more evident and conspicuous; for the occasions of their exercise may much more frequently occur. But yet where there is any true grace, at least where it is kept unrusty, vigorous, and active, as it ought to be in all profiting hearers of the word; there every grace of the Spirit is so far kept alive as to be in some readiness for exercise when occasion and opportunity do occur. But if in any there are some graces that are totally wanting, that no occasion doth excite or call forth to exercise, they have just reason to fear, that either those graces which they seem to have are not genuine and saving, but mere common effects of illumination; or that if they are true they are under a dangerous declension, on the account of their unanswerableness to the dispensation of the gospel. For instance, suppose a man to satisfy himself that he hath the graces of faith and prayer, and the like, but yet cannot find that he hath any grain of true zeal for the glory of God, nor any readiness for works of charity with an eye to God's glory, and love to his commands; he hath great reason to fear lest his other graces are false and perishing, or at least that he is signally fallen under the sin of barrenness. For in common grace, one single grace may appear very evident, and win great honour to the profession of them in whom it is, whilst there is a total want of all or many others; but in saving grace it is not so, for though different graces may exceedingly differ in their exercise, yet all of them are equal in their root and principle. By these and the like considerations, may professors try their own concernment in this commination.

Obs. III. Ordinarily God proceeds to the rejection and destruction of barren professors by degrees; although they are seldom sensible of it until they fall irrecoverably into ruin.—This ground here is first disapproved or rejected, then it is nigh to cursing, the curse ensues; after which it is burned. And God doth thus proceed with them,

1. In compliance with his own patience, goodness, and long suffering, whereby they ought to be led to repentance. This is the natural tendency of the goodness and patience of God towards sinners, though it be often abused, Rom. ii. 4, 5. Let men and their sin be what they will, God will not deal otherwise with them, than as becomes his own goodness and patience. And this is that property of God, without a due conception whereof, we can never understand aright his righteousness in the government of the world. Ignorance of the nature of it, and how essential it is to the divine Being, is the occasion of security in sinning and atheism to ungodly men, Eccl. viii. 11—13; 2 Pet. iii. 3, 4. And a great temptation it is oftentimes to them that are godly, Hab. i. 12, 13; Jer. xii. 1, 2; Ps. lxxiii, 11—16, 21, 22. Wherefore, to direct our minds to a due posture, herein we may consider, 1. That the patience of God never came to a general issue with mankind but once since the creation, and that was in the flood, 1 Pet. iii. 20. And this one example God will have to be a sufficient warning to all ungodly sinners, of the certainty and severity of his future judgment, so that men have no just reason to be secure in their sin, 2 Pet. iii. 5—7. And therefore he hath engaged himself by promise, that he will no more deal so with mankind, be their sins what they will, till the consummation of all things shall come, Gen. viii. 21, 22. While the earth remaineth there shall be no more such a curse. But there is a limited time contained therein. The earth itself shall at length cease, and then he will execute his judgments fully on the world of ungodly sinners. Blessed be God for that public record of his purpose and patience, without which, his continuance of mankind in the world, would be matter of astonishment. 2. The patience of God shall not come to an issue with any apostate church or nation, till he himself declares and determines that all due means have been used for their recovery, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15—17. And the judgment hereof, he will not leave to the best of men; he would not do so to Elijah himself, 1 Kings xix. 3. It is a difficult, glorious, and great fruit or effect of faith, not to repine at, but to glorify God in his patience towards a wicked, provoking generation of sinners. Even the souls of the saints in heaven seem to express a little too much haste in this matter, Rev. vi. 9—11. The thing which they desired was suited to the holiness, righteousness, and faithfulness of God, and wherein he had designed to glorify himself in his appointed season, Rev. xix. 1—3, but the time of it seemed long to them; wherefore to glorify God herein is a fruit of faith, Rev. xiii. 10. The faith and patience of the saints is most eminent in waiting quietly till the time of the destruction of the enemies of the church be fully come. And it is so, 1. Because it is accompanied with self-denial, as to all our interest in this world, and all the desires of nature. 2. Because the apprehension is most true and infallible, that the righteousness, holiness, and faithfulness of God will be exceedingly glorified in the destruction of apostate, provoking, and ungodly sinners; and this will be in particular in the ruin of Babylon and its whole interest in the world. And this may make our desires inordinate, if not regulated by faith. It is therefore an eminent act of faith to give glory to God in the exercise

of his patience towards apostate, barren professors, and that which alone can in these latter days of the world give rest and peace to our own souls.

2. God will do so to evince the righteousness of his judgments both in the hearts and consciences of them who shall be finally destroyed, whose end is to be burned; as also of all others who shall wisely consider of his ways. God endureth all things from the world that he may be justified in his sayings, and may overcome when he is judged, Rom. iii. 4, that is, not only all that he doth shall be righteous and holy, which is necessary from his own essential righteousness, whence he will not, whence he cannot do evil; but his works shall be so wrought, so accomplished, as that the righteousness of them shall be eminent and pleadable by his people against all sayings and reflections of ungodly men. Especially every thing shall be plain and visibly righteous that he doth in this way towards barren unprofitable churches, which he hath formerly owned and blessed. In his dealing with them, he will leave no colour of calling his goodness and faithfulness into question, but will as it were refer the righteousness of his proceedings to all, even to themselves. So he doth as to his dealing with the church of the Jews when it was grown utterly barren, Isa. v. 1—7. So did our Lord Jesus Christ in his parable compel the wicked Jews to subscribe to the righteousness of God in that miserable destruction which was coming on themselves, Matt. xxi. 33—40. And this God doth principally by his gradual procedure with them. His precedent warnings and first degrees of judgments, spiritual or temporal, shall bear witness to the righteousness of their total ruin. Men at present, through their blindness, hardness of heart, love of sin, do not, it may be, take notice of God's dealing with them, and are therefore apt to complain when they are surprised with the fatal evil. But the day will come, when their consciences shall be awakened to a dreadful remembrance of all the warnings God gave them, and how slowly he proceeded in his judgments; when their mouths shall be stopped, and their faces filled with confusion.

3. God's dealings with barren apostates being principally in spiritual judgments, the issue whereof is the total removal of the gospel from them, he will not do it at once, because others may be yet mixed among them to whom he will have the means of grace continued. This Abraham laid down in temporal judgments as an unquestionable maxim of divine right, that God would not destroy the righteous with the wicked, Gen. xviii. 23, 25, which rule yet, by the way, is confined to that kind of destruction which was to be a standing token, and pledge of the last final judgment and the damnation of all ungodly men. For in other cases, it will admit of some extraordinary exception, but this is the general way of God's procedure in all judgments, spiritual and temporal. Now, when men openly manifest their barrenness, and daily bring forth thorns and briers, if God should immediately remove the word, whilst there are among them a people also that are really fruitful unto his glory, it cannot be, but that in an ordinary course of his providence, they must suffer with the rest, and that before God hath fulfilled the whole works of his grace

towards them. This was that wherewith he satisfied and quieted the mind of Elijah, when in a transport of zeal, he complains of the horrible apostasy of the church of Israel, making as the apostle speaks, 'intercession against them;' and applieth it unto all other seasons of the church, Rom. xi. 2—5. And we are taught in that example, that when the patience of God towards a highly provoking people, seems to interfere with his threatening and the ordinary course of his providence, to believe that there are yet among them, many whose hearts are sincere, for God, though for many reasons they are unknown to us. And this should stir us up unto continual prayers for the whole world. When the long-suffering of God is abused by the most, and turned into an increase of their security, yet he hath a blessed end in it, towards his own among them, 2 Pet. iii. 3, 4, 9. And this was the state of God's present dispensation towards those Hebrews. The most of them were obstinate unbelievers, and many of them, barren apostates. But yet, God continued for awhile, to exercise patience towards them, and to tender the gospel unto them. And this he did, because there was a remnant amongst them, according to the election of grace, which were to obtain whilst the rest were hardened, as our apostle declares, Rom. xi. And this patience of God, the hardened wretches despised and scoffed at. But yet, still God went on in his way and method, because of those amongst them, whom, through that patience and long-suffering, he intended to bring to repentance, and to the acknowledgment of the truth.

Further, to clear up this whole matter, it may be inquired, what are those degrees in spiritual judgments, whereby God doth ordinarily proceed against barren professors, which are here intimated in general. And 1. In such cases, God doth usually restrain the influence of men's light upon their own consciences and affections. Their light and knowledge which they have attained, may in their notions remain with them, but they are not at all affected with what they know, or guided by it as unto their practice. There is a time, when light and knowledge not improved, do lose all their efficacy. God suffers such an interposition to be made between it and their consciences, by the acting and pride of their lusts, that it is of no use unto them. Whereas formerly, under their convictions, every thing they knew of the mind of God or the gospel, pressed on them to endeavour after some conformity unto it, now it hath no power upon them, but only floats in their fancies and memories. And this we see accomplished every day. Men, under a barren apostatizing state, do yet retain some of their light and notions of truth, which they are sensible of no power from, nor have any use of, unless it be, to enable them to be the greater scoffers and deriders of others. Now, although this comes to pass, through their own sin and lusts as the immediate cause of it, yet it is a spiritual judgment of God also upon them for their sins. For he withholdeth all the working of his Spirit, in and by that light, which alone renders it effectual. His Spirit shall not strive any more therein, and then it is easy for them to rebel against the light they have, as he speaks, Job xxiv. 13. And let men hence take heed, when they begin to find, that their light and convictions from the

word, have not the same power with them, and efficacy upon them, as formerly they have had. For it is greatly to be feared, lest it be a beginning of God's displeasure upon them : see Hos. ix. 12.

2. God deprives them of all the gifts which formerly they received. Gifts are an ability for the due exercise of gospel light and knowledge, in the duties of a public concern. These they may be made partakers of, who yet prove barren and apostates. But God will not suffer them to be long retained under a course of backsliding. As men neglect the exercise of their gifts, so God deprives them of these, and makes that very neglect a means of executing this judgment on them. The talent that was but laid up in a napkin was taken away. And this we see exemplified both in whole churches and in particular persons. They lose, or are deprived of the gifts which they had, or which were among them, and are commonly filled with enmity unto, and scorn of, them by whom they are reclaimed. And in these two things, consists the first act of God's judgment, in the rejection of the barren ground. Hereby he evidenceth that it is *αδοκιμος*, and such as he will regard no more.

The next is, that they make approaches towards the curse, and this is done two ways. First. God having evidenced his rejection of them, he gives them up unto the temptation of the world, and the society of ungodly men, whereunto they are engaged by their pleasures or profit. 'Men gather them,' saith our Saviour, John xv. 6. Their lusts being let loose from under the power of their light and convictions, especially their love unto the world, they cast themselves into the society of profane and wicked men. Among them they wax worse and worse every day, and learn, in an especial manner, to hate, despise, and blaspheme, the good ways of God, which before they had known, owned, and professed. And God will so order things in his providence, as that temptations, suited unto their most prevalent lusts, shall, on all occasions, be presented unto them, whereby they shall be further ensnared. Secondly. God casts them out of the hearts and prayers of his people. This, of all other things, they least value, yea, they most despise. But it is one of the greatest effects of God's severity towards them. So he commanded his prophets not to pray for the people when his heart would not be towards them, Jer. vii. 16, xi. 14, xiv. 11. And in like cases, though not by express command, yet by his secret providence, he takes off the hearts of his people from them whom he hath designed to ruin for their sins. And we may observe, that our apostle himself, who a long time laboured with unspeakable zeal and most fervent supplications to God for the incredulous Hebrews, as he expresseth himself, Rom. ix. 2, 3, x. 1, at length speaks of them as those whom he no more regarded, but looked on as enemies of Christ only, 1 Thess. ii. 14—16. And this sets them forward in their way towards the fatal curse. Thirdly. The curse itself ensues, which consists in three things. For, 1. God takes off their natural restraints from sin. The rebukes of a natural conscience, fear, shame, and the like afflictive affections, shall have no more power on them. So he dealt with them that sinned against the light of nature, Rom. i. 26, 27, and they became like those described,

Eph. iv. 18, 19. No men are so visibly under God's curse, as those who, having broken through the bonds of nature, modesty, fear, and shame, do give up themselves to open sinning in the face of the sun. 2. God judicially hardens them; which contains the life and power of the curse here intended; for hereby are men secured unto their final destruction and burning. 3. Ofttimes God signifies this curse in the world, by wholly casting out such persons from any interest in the dispensation of the word. He doth either utterly take away the preaching of the gospel from them, or give them up unto the conduct of those, who, under a pretence thereof, shall cause them to err with lies and delusions, which further seals them up unto their future ruin, 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12. And these are some of the ways whereby God dealeth with barren ground, with fruitless and provoking professors, even whilst they are in this world. It is true, these judgments being spiritual, and they being now become wholly carnal, they are for the most part little sensible of them. God, indeed, doth sometimes cause the dread and terror of his wrath so to fall upon the consciences of some of them, as that in this world, they are made a spectacle of divine vengeance. But for the most part, being filled with their lusts, and sins, and pleasures, they carry it out bravely to the end. Howbeit, few of them escape such reflections on themselves, as make them sometimes to shrink and groan. But suppose they should be able to carry it out stoutly in this world, so that themselves should neither much feel, nor others much observe, the curse of God upon them here, yet the day is hastening, wherein actual burning, and that for ever, will be their portion.

VER. 9—12.—EXPOSITORS generally agree in giving these verses as an instance of the great wisdom and prudence used by the apostle in his dealing with these Hebrews. Chrysostome in especial insists upon it, making observations unto that purpose on all the considerable passages in the context. What is really of that nature will occur unto us, and shall be observed in our progress. His design in general is two-fold. First. To mollify the severity of the preceding commination and prediction contained therein, that it might not have an effect on their minds beyond his intention. He knew that, all circumstances considered, it was necessary for him to make use of it. But withal, he was careful that none of them who were sincere, should be terrified or discouraged. For if men are disanimated in the way wherein they are engaged, by those on whose guidance they depend, and to whose judgment they are to submit, it makes them despond and give over thoughts of a cheerful progress. Wherefore, in all cases our apostle was exceedingly careful, not in any thing to make heavy or sorrowful, the hearts of his disciples, unless it were in case of extreme necessity. Hence is his apology or excuse, as it were, to the Corinthians, for having put them to sorrow by some severe reproofs in his former letter to them, 2 Cor. ii. 1, 2, 'But I determined this with myself, that I would not come again unto you in heaviness. For if I make you sorry, who is he then that maketh me glad, but the same which is made sorry by me.' He lets them know, that whatever sor-

row he had put them to, it was so unto himself, no less than unto them, seeing they were the chief causes of his joy and gladness. And thus dealeth he in this place with the Hebrews. Lest they should be amazed with the terror of the preceding commination, and the prediction therein contained, of the inevitable and dreadful ruin of slothful apostates and hypocrites, he lets them know that he did no way therein determine or pass a judgment on them, their state and condition. But having far other thoughts and hopes concerning them, and the end of their profession, he yet judged it necessary to excite them unto that diligence which some among them had neglected to use, by declaring the miserable end of those who always abide unfruitful under, or do apostatize from, the profession of the gospel. Herein doth he steer a direct and equal course between the extremes in admonition. For he neither useth so much lenity as to enervate his reproof and warning, nor so much severity as to discourage or provoke those who are warned by him. In a word, he layeth weight on things, and spareth persons, the contrary whereunto is the bane of all spiritual admonition. Secondly. He maketh use of this discourse for a transition unto the second part of his design. And this was to propose unto them who were true believers, such encouragements and grounds of consolation, as might confirm and establish them in their faith and obedience, which are the subjects of the remaining part of this chapter. Wherefore, as to make way for the severe threatenings which he hath used, it was necessary for him to describe the persons unto whom they did in an especial manner belong, so it was no less requisite that he should describe those also unto whom the ensuing promises and consolations do pertain, which he doth in these verses.

VER. 9.—Πεπεισμεθα δε περι υμων αγαπητοι, τα κρειττονα και εχομενα σωτηριας, ει και ουτω λαλουμεν.

Πεπεισμεθα, persuasi sumus, confidimus; Bez. persuasimus nobis, 'we are persuaded.' Αγαπητοι, Syr. ܝܬܝܬܝܢ, 'my brethren,' Vul. dilectissimi. Rhem. 'we confidently trust of you my best beloved.' Τα κρειττονα, meliora, Syr. ܕܝܬܝܬܝܢ ܕܝܬܝܬܝܢ, ea quæ sunt bona, pulchra, 'the things that are good or comely;' και εχομενα σωτηριας, Syr. ܕܝܬܝܬܝܢ ܕܝܬܝܬܝܢ, 'and such as draw near to life,' that is, eternal. Vulg. et viciniore salutis; Rhem. 'and nearer to salvation;' others generally, et cum salute conjuncta: ours, 'and such as accompany salvation;' very properly.

VER. 9.—*But we are persuaded of you, beloved, better things, and such as accompany salvation, although we thus speak.*

The especial design of the apostle, in this and the following verses, is to declare his good-will towards the Hebrews, his judgment of their state and condition, the reasons and grounds of that judgment, with the proper use and end of the commination before laid down, that neither that might be neglected, nor themselves discouraged. This verse contains, 1. An expression of his love and good-will towards

them. 2. His judgment of them. 3. The reasons of his present declaration of both these, with respect unto what he had spoken before unto them, namely, that although he had spoken it unto them, he did not speak it of them.

1. His love and good-will he testifies in his compellation, *αγαπητοι*, 'beloved.' It is an expression of most entire affection, and is never used in the gospel but to express the love of God the Father unto his Son Jesus Christ, Matt. iii. 17, xii. 18, xvii. 5; Mark i. 11, ix. 7, xii. 6; Luke iii. 22, ix. 35, xx. 13. By the apostles in their Epistles, it is frequently applied unto believers, especially by Paul, in all those written by him. We might therefore pass it over, as that word by which it was usual with him to express his sincere affections towards all saints. But there seems to be a twofold reason of its especial introduction in this place, both of them respected in the wisdom of our apostle. 1. Perhaps these Hebrews were ready enough to entertain jealousies concerning him, that he had not that affection for them which he had for others. For he had now spent a long time with and among the Gentiles, for their conversion and edification. Among them he had planted very many churches, and that in one point contrary to the judgment of most of these Hebrews, namely, in a liberty from the law and the ceremonies of Moses. In this long converse and work, they might suspect that he had lost his natural love to his countrymen, as is usual in such cases, and as he was much accused to have done. To root this evil surmise out of their minds, as he useth frequently other affectionate compellations in this Epistle, so he here calls them his *beloved*, than which he had used no expression of greater endearment towards any of his Gentile converts. And notwithstanding all the provocations and injuries he had received from them, he gave, on all occasions, the highest demonstration of the most intense affection towards them; never opposing them, nor reflecting on them with any severity, but only then and wherein they opposed the gospel, and the liberty thereof. This affection was such for them as his countrymen and kinsmen in the flesh, as that he could willingly have died that they might be saved, Rom. ix. 2, 3. And for this he prayed continually, ch. x. 1. And the addition of love that was made in him upon their conversion cannot be expressed. 2. He hath respect unto his preceding severe expressions, as is plain from the close of this verse, 'though we thus speak.' As if he had said, 'Notwithstanding this severe admonition which I have, upon the consideration of all circumstances, been forced to use, yet my heart stands no otherwise affected towards you, but as towards my countrymen, brethren, and saints of God.' And thus,

Obs. I. It is the duty of the dispensers of the gospel, to satisfy their hearers in and of their love in Jesus Christ to their souls and persons.

2. The apostle expresseth his judgment concerning these Hebrews, 'We are persuaded better things of you, and such as accompany salvation;' wherein we have, 1. The act of his mind in this matter: *Πεπεισμεθα*, 'we are persuaded.' Chrysostome insists much on the force of this word. The apostle, as he observes, doth not say we

think or we hope, but he was fully persuaded. He lets them know that he was fully satisfied in this matter. And he useth not this word any where in his epistles, as he useth it often, but he intends a full and prevalent persuasion. Now this a man may have in spiritual things on three grounds. 1. By especial revelation; so he was certain of the truth of the gospel that was revealed unto him, which he discourseth of, Gal. i. 7, 8. 2. By the evidence of faith, when any thing is believed on grounds infallible, namely, the revelation of the mind of God in the Scripture, or the promises of the gospel. So he useth this word, Rom. viii. 34, *πεπεισμεθα γαρ*, 'for I am persuaded that neither death nor life,' &c. This he believed, and had an infallible certainty thereof, because God hath so promised. So also, 2 Tim. i. 12, *οἶδα γαρ ὃ πεπιστευκα, και πεπεισμαι ὅτι δυνατος εστι την παραθηκην μου φυλαξαι*, 'I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him.' He useth the same expression in matter of faith, Rom. xiv. 14. 3. There is a certain persuasion of mind, that is founded on moral arguments, such as may bring a man to a full satisfaction in his mind, but yet so, as it is possible he may be deceived. Of this nature is that persuasion, that trust or confidence which we have of the good condition of other men. So our apostle speaks of Timothy and his faith, 2 Tim. i. 5, the 'faith that dwelt in thy mother Eunice, *πεπεισμαι δε ὅτι και εν σοι*, and I am persuaded in thee also.' He was not persuaded of any sincere faith in Timothy by especial revelation, nor was it the object of his faith from any express word of Scripture, but he was satisfied in it upon such unquestionable grounds and motives, as left no room for doubt about it. Some urge to the same purpose, Phil. i. 6, *πεποιθως αυτο τουτο*, 'being confident of this very thing, persuaded of it, that he who hath begun a good work in you, will perform it to the day of Christ.' But this persuasion being built on a supposition that a good work was begun in them was an act of faith infallible, built on the promises of God, and the unchangeableness of his covenant. His persuasion here concerning the Hebrews was of this latter kind, even that which he had satisfactory reasons and grounds for, which prevailed against all contrary objections. In like manner, he speaks of the Romans, ch. xv. 14, *πεπεισμαι δε, αδελφοι μου, και αυτος εγω, ὅτι και αυτοι μεστοι εστε αγαθωσυνης*, 'And I myself am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye are full of goodness.' The grounds of this persuasion, with respect unto the Hebrews, he expresseth in the next verse, where we shall consider them.

Obs. II. It is our duty to come unto the best satisfaction we may, in the spiritual condition of them with whom we are to have spiritual communion.—There is not any thing of our mutual duties, that the gospel more presseth, or more supposeth. And it is necessary both unto ministers and private Christians. For the former, they are concerned in the advice of the wise man, Prov. xxvii. 23, 'Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flock.' They are not only to provide good pasture, and feeding for them, but they must know their state and condition, that what they provide for them may be suitable and

seasonable. And unto this end there were at first some in the church, who had the immediate inspection of the state and walking of the members of it, and were thereby enabled, as Moses said to his father-in-law, Num. x. 31, to be instead of eyes unto the teachers, to look into the condition of all sorts of persons. Nor can they, without it, discharge any one duty of their office in a due manner. For ministers to walk towards their people at peradventure, and to fight uncertainly as men beating the air, without an acquaintance with their state, and especial consideration of their condition, and what therein is suited unto their edification, as is the manner of many, will leave them at a great uncertainty how to give up their account; see Heb. xiii. 17. Unless a man have some good satisfaction, concerning the spiritual condition of those that are committed unto his charge, he can never approve himself among them, 'a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth,' to give unto all their proportion. And the work of the ministry, is not by any means more evacuated and rendered ineffectual, than when men have not a certain design to deal with their hearers, according to what they are persuaded that their spiritual state doth require. How shall they instruct, how shall they warn, how shall they comfort any, but on a supposition of an acquaintance with the state and condition wherein they are? A general preaching at random, without a special scope directed by the persuasion mentioned, turns the whole work for the most part, both in preachers and hearers, into an useless formality. In brief, this persuasion principally regulates the whole work of the ministry. He that is a physician unto the bodies of men, must acquaint himself with the especial state and condition of his patients, as also of their distempers, wherein his skill and judgment is especially to be exercised. Without that, let him be furnished with the greatest store of good medicines, if he gives them out promiscuously unto all comers, all that he doth will be of little use. It may be his medicines being safe, they will do no harm; and it is probable they will do as little good. Nor will it be otherwise with the physicians of souls in the like case.

Four things are required to make the dispensation of the word proper and profitable—a good spring, a safe rule, a distinct design, and enlivening affections. 1. The first is, the dispenser's own light and experience. He is to see in his work with his own eyes, and not those of other men. And when he is by his own light as a scribe unto the kingdom of God, it is out of the good treasure of his own heart that he is to bring forth good things, new and old. 2. His safe rule is the infallible word of truth. This must be the touchstone of his light and experience. And it is suited unto his whole work, unto all the duties of it, 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. In nothing but what is regulated hereby are any to be attended unto, Isa. viii. 20. 3. His distinct design lies in the due consideration of the spiritual state and condition of them unto whom the word is to be dispensed. And herein consists the greatest part of the ministerial skill. This is that which secretly differenceth the constant ministerial dispensation of the word, from the occasional exercise of the gifts of any. And this doth God make use of, to con-

vey unexpected relief or repose unto the souls of men wherewith they are surprised and affected. If we have not this scope continually before us, we may run apace, but never know whether we are in or out of the way. 4. The enlivening affections that ought to accompany the dispensation of the word, are zeal for the glory of God, and compassion for the souls of men. But these things must not here be insisted on. And for private Christians among themselves, their mutual duties are referred unto love, and the fruits of it. That special love which ought to be among the disciples of Christ, as such, takes up, in the description, injunctions, and directions of it, a great part of the writings of the New Testament. Nothing doth the Lord Christ himself, nor his apostles, so urge upon them, as this of mutual love. Upon the right discharge of this duty, he frequently declares that his honour in them and by them in this world doth principally depend. And whatever we have besides this, our apostle declares that it is nothing, or of no use in the church of God, 1 Cor. xiii. And the greatest evidence of the degeneracy of Christianity in the world, consists in the open loss of this love amongst those who make profession thereof.

1. Now this love is founded in our persuasion concerning the spiritual state and condition of each other. I mean, that especial mutual love is so, which ought to be among the disciples of Christ as such. For although we are on other grounds obliged unto a love towards all mankind, whether friends or enemies, yet that peculiar love which the gospel so chargeth on the disciples of Christ is an effect of, and built upon their common and mutual interest in Christ. They are to love one another as members of the same mystical body, and united to the same spiritual Head. Whatever love there may be on other accounts among any of them, which doth not arise from this spring and fountain, it is not that gospel love which ought to be among believers. And how can this be in us, unless we have a good persuasion concerning our mutual interest and in-being in Christ? God forbid that any should press that peculiar intense love, that ought to be among the members of the body of Christ, to take off, or derogate from that general love and usefulness, which not only the law of our creation, but the gospel requireth of us, in an especial manner towards all men. Yea, he who professeth love unto the saints, that peculiar love which is required towards them, and doth not exercise love in general towards all men, much more if he make the pretence of brotherly love, the ground of alienating his affection from the residue of mankind, can have no assurance that the love he so professeth is sincere, incorrupt, genuine, and without dissimulation. But this special love is the special duty of us all, if we believe the gospel, and without which foundation well laid, we can rightly discharge no other mutual duty whatever. Now this, as is evident, we cannot have, unless we have a persuasion of the only ground of this love, which is our mutual relation unto Jesus Christ. And to act this love aright as to its object, as grounded on this persuasion, take heed of 'evil surmises;' these are the bane of evangelical love, though some seem to make them their duties. Those concerning whom we hear that they make pro-

fession of faith and obedience towards our Lord Jesus Christ, and know not that they any way contradict their profession by wicked works, we are obliged to bear the same love towards, as if we knew them sincere; for charity hopeth all things, namely, that are good, if we have no certain evidence to the contrary. And thus in general, we may have this persuasion concerning all that in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours. We have no obligation indeed hereunto, towards such as visibly and evidently walk unworthy of that high calling whereby we are called. For concerning such our apostle assures us, that whatever they profess, they are 'enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is their shame, who mind earthly things,' Phil. iii. 18, 19. It is a dishonour, a reproach to Christ and the gospel, that we should persuade ourselves that they are his disciples, and members of his mystical body, whom we see to walk after the manner of the world, and to have their conversation in the lusts of the flesh. These we are still to love as those who once had, and are yet capable of the renovation of, the image of God upon them. But they proclaim themselves destitute of all those qualifications which are the formal object and reason of this peculiar love.

2. The Lord Christ hath, by his institution, secured us as to a certain rule of this persuasion and love, by the disposal of his disciples into church societies, upon such grounds as are a sufficient warrant for it. Thus our apostle, in all his epistles unto the churches, salutes, esteems, judgeth them all to be saints and called in Christ Jesus. For although some of them might not be so really, and in the sight of God, yet his persuasion, and his love being directed according to the rule, were acceptable unto Christ. And whereas our Lord Jesus hath commanded that all his disciples should join themselves unto, and walk in such societies, were there not great confusion brought into the world in and about gospel institutions, we should not be at a loss about this persuasion and love; for we should be obliged to them towards all that are called Christians, until they had openly declared themselves to be enemies of the cross of Christ. But we are yet suffering under the confusion of a fatal apostasy, which God in his good time will deliver his churches from.

3. As we cannot direct our love aright without this persuasion, no more can we exercise any of the duties or fruits of it in a due manner. The fruits of mutual love among Christians are either in things spiritual which concern edification, or in things temporal which concern outward relief. Of the first sort, are admonition, exhortation, instructions, and consolations, mutually administered. Now, how can any man order or make use of these in a right manner, unless he have some directive persuasion of the spiritual condition of them to whom he doth administer? It is true he may sometimes be therein mistaken, yet it is far better so to be, than never to consider what is meet and requisite with respect thereunto. And as for the fruits of the same love in outward things, although they ought to be brought forth in the temporal supplies of all according to our opportunities and abilities, yet without this persuasion they will want the quickening

form and soul of them, which is a design to place our love in them ultimately on Jesus Christ.

Obs. III. We may, as occasions require, publicly testify that good persuasion which we have concerning the spiritual condition of others, and that unto themselves.—Our apostle here acquaints these Hebrews with his good persuasion concerning them; and likewise in all his epistles he still declares his hopes and confidence of their blessed interest in Christ, to whom he wrote; and spares not to give them all the titles which really belong only to elect believers. Now, as this is not to be done lightly, not in a way of flattering compliance, but upon just and firm grounds from Scripture, least of all to give countenance unto any to continue in an evil way or practice; yet in three cases it is warrantable and requisite. 1. When it is done for their due encouragement. Gracious persons through their temptations, fears, and sense of sin, yea whole churches upon occasion of trials, distresses, and backslidings among them, may so be cast down and despond, as to be discouraged in their duties and progress. In this case, it is not only lawful, but expedient, yea necessary, that we should testify to them that good persuasion which we have concerning their state and condition, with the grounds thereof, as the apostle doth in this place. So in like case testified our Saviour himself concerning, and unto the church of Smyrna: ‘I know thy poverty,’ what thou complainest of, and art ready to sink under, ‘but thou art rich,’ Rev. ii. 9. 2. It may and ought to be done for their just vindication. The disciples and churches of Christ may be falsely accused and charged, and yet it may be, with so much probability, or at least appearance of evil, as that they may greatly suffer in their just reputation, whereby the holy name of the Lord Christ is also dishonoured. He who falsely accuseth all the brethren before God continually, wants not instruments to fix calumnies upon them among men here below. In such a case, it is our indispensable duty to testify our good persuasion concerning them, be they persons or churches who are so traduced. And if we do it not, we have a copartnership in the guilt of their enemies’ false accusations. 3. When we have any necessary duty to discharge towards them, which this testification of our persuasion concerning them may render more effectual, or prevent it having another end than what we aim at, or remove any prejudice out of its way. This was the very case wherein the apostle testifieth his persuasion concerning them unto these Hebrews. His design was to admonish them of some faults, sins, and miscarriages, that had already been among them; and moreover to charge them with a care about apostasy from the gospel, which the way wherein some of them were, seemed to have a tendency to. But lest this his dealing with them, which had an appearance of much severity, should have begotten prejudices in their minds against his person and ministry on the one hand, or too much dejected and cast them down on the other, he secures his procedure on both sides with this testification of his confidence concerning their spiritual condition, thereby at once assuring them of his love, and evidencing the necessity of his admonition. And herein hath he, in the example of the wisdom bestowed on him for this end, given us an inviolable rule of our proceeding in like cases.

Obs. IV. The best persuasion we can arrive unto concerning the spiritual condition of any, leaves yet room, yea makes way for the gospel threatenings, warnings, exhortations, and encouragements.—There is nothing more common than to charge the ways of some, than that by persuading men of their regeneration and saintship, they render them secure, and the threatenings of the gospel in an especial manner unuseful unto them. Neither is there any question but that this, as all other ways of God and his grace, may be abused. But those who manage the charge in general, may do well to fix it in the first place on the apostles. For there is not any of them, but testify the same persuasion concerning all them to whom they wrote, and there is no doubt but that their way of preaching and writing was the same. But yet this hindered them not from the use of all sorts of evangelical comminations, exhortations, and encouragements, from whence we are to take our example and warrant for the same practice. This therefore lies evident in their procedure, which is our instruction and rule, namely, that looking on men as believers, or being persuaded of their good spiritual condition, we yet ought to apply unto them all the means appointed by Christ for the begetting, increase, and continuance of grace in them. And the reasons hereof are evident; for, 1. Although that persuasion which men have of their spiritual condition, or which others may have or declare concerning them, may strengthen their peace, yet it neither doth nor ought to incline them unto security. ‘Thou standest by faith,’ saith the apostle, ‘be not high minded, but fear,’ Rom. xi. 20. Take the peace and comfort of thy faith, but be neither proud nor secure. Where there is any such effect hereof towards a Laodicean security, there is a just ground to suspect, that the persuasion itself is a pernicious mistake. And it is the duty of all professors, to give heed diligently, lest any such root of bitterness spring up amongst them and defile them. If once a persuasion of this good condition begins to influence towards security, and a neglect of duty, then ought they to be in the highest jealousy concerning their condition itself. 2. Whatever men’s state and condition be under the gospel, they are still obliged unto the means appointed for their edification and preservation. Amongst all the vain imaginations about religious things, vented in these latter days, there is none savours more rankly of Satanical pride and human folly, than that of such a state of perfection attainable in this life, wherein, as it is phrased, men should be above ordinances, that is, should be vainly puffed up in their fleshly minds, above the authority, and wisdom, and truth of God. Whilst we are in the way under the conduct of the gospel, we need all the advantages it affords in our progress. Of this sort are all the threatenings, promises, exhortations, encouragements contained in it. And the proper use of gospel threatenings, in particular, such as that here insisted on by our apostle, I have declared at large on the first and second verses of the fourth chapter, and shall not here again insist thereon.

It followeth hence, 1. That whatever be the state and condition of them unto whom we dispense the word, or whatever we may conceive it to be, that we are not with respect thereunto, to baulk or wave the delivery and pressing of any evangelical warning, or the severest

threatening contained in the gospel, much less, encouragements and motives unto faith and obedience, though we are persuaded they both believe and obey. For, as it is not impossible but that both they and we may be mistaken in their condition, and that the severest menaces may be their proper portion in the world ; so, be their condition what it will, all these things have not only their proper use towards them, but are necessary for them in their several kinds. For although they, every one of them as singly laid down, are of the same signification in themselves, yet in their application unto men, they have a sense suited unto their condition : for instance the same threatening as applied unto unbelievers, tends to beget dread, terror, and fear of wrath in them, to fill them with evidences of God's displeasure. As applied unto unbelievers, it tends only to fill them with reverential fear of God, care to avoid the sin threatened, and to excite diligence in the use of means for its avoidance. All of them are good for all. As therefore, if we should always in the dispensation of the word, insist on the threatenings of the law and gospel, whose denunciation, multitudes do certainly stand in need of, we might weaken and discourage those whom God would not have to be discouraged : so, on the other hand, if out of an apprehension that our people or congregations are made up of believers, we should continually insist on the promises of the gospel, with the like springs of consolation, seldom or never pressing on them the threatenings and severe menaces thereof, we should certainly defraud them of a blessed means which God hath ordained for their edification and preservation in faith. The holy intermixture of all these things in the Scripture itself, is to be our rule, and not any imagination of our own.

2. That others should not think themselves severely dealt with, when they are pressed on and urged with the severest threatenings of the gospel. Let them not say or think in their hearts, this preacher looks upon us as persons unregenerate, or hypocrites, perhaps out of ill-will unto us. It is certain that on such occasions, men are apt to give place to such surmises. For an apprehension thereof is the reason why the apostle maketh, as it were, this apology for the use of the severe foregoing commination. As if he had said, 'Do not you entertain any hard thoughts or evil surmises concerning me or my dealing with you in this matter. There are other reasons of my thus dealing with you ; for as unto your personal interest in the grace of Christ, I have as yet a good persuasion, although I thus speak.' And let others take heed lest they fall into any such apprehension, which will certainly defeat them of the wholesome fruit of the word. Sharp frosts are needful to make the ground fruitful, as well as the clearest sunshine. And if a tree be not sometimes pressed on by the wind, it will never well firm its roots in the ground. Sharp reproofs, and earnestness in pressing gospel comminations, are sometimes as needful for the best of us, as the administration of the richest and most precious promises, Hos. x. 11.

Having considered in general the good persuasion of the apostle concerning those Hebrews, we may consider in especial, his expression of the things which he was so persuaded to be in them. And this is

double, 1. Τα κρείττονα, 'better things.' 2. Εχομενα σωτηριας, 'such as accompany salvation.'

1. He was persuaded concerning them, τα κρείττονα, 'better things.' There seems to be a comparison included in this expression, and not only an opposition unto what was spoken. If so, then there is a supposition of some good things granted unto those treated of. This therefore cannot refer unto the verses immediately before, which express only their barrenness and destruction, but it must relate unto ver. 4, 5, 6, where the spiritual gifts collated on them are enumerated. They are good things in themselves, but yet such good things as may perish, and they also on whom they are bestowed. Those who enjoy them may yet be barren ground, and so cursed and burned. But the apostle is persuaded better things of those to whom he speaks, namely, such things as accompany salvation, such as whosoever is made partaker of shall never perish eternally. Or τα κρείττονα may be put for τα χρηστα, 'good things,' as Chrysostome supposeth. But yet neither is there any need of supposing an impropriety in the expression. For it is usual to express excellent things in words of the comparative degree, although no comparison be included; especially when they are made mention of with respect unto others who have no interest in them.

However here is certainly an opposition unto what was before affirmed concerning others; and that may be reduced unto two heads. 1. That they were barren and destitute of all saving grace and fruits. 2. That they should in the end be destroyed. These better things must be opposed to the one or other of these, or unto them both. If they are opposed unto the first, then especial saving grace and fruit-bearing, such as are peculiar unto God's elect proceeding from the real sanctification of the Spirit, such as no perishing gifted hypocrites can be partakers of, are intended. If unto this latter, then those better things respect not their qualification but their condition; that is freedom from the curse and wrath of God, and from perishing under them. I am persuaded it will go better with you, than with such apostates. It may be both are included; but the first is certainly intended, namely, that these Hebrews were not barren, but such as brought forth the saving fruits of the Spirit of grace. For of these things it is added, και εχομενα σωτηριας, 'such as accompany salvation;' literally, 'such as have salvation,' that is, such as have saving grace in them, and eternal salvation infallibly annexed unto them. Things that are not bestowed on any, such as are not wrought in any but those that shall be saved; that is, in brief, true faith and sincere obedience. For in whomsoever these are found, they shall be saved by virtue of the faithfulness of God in the covenant of grace. And we may observe hence,

Obs. V. That among professors of the gospel, some are partakers of better things than others.—They were all professors concerning whom the apostle discourseth in this and the preceding verses. And yet, notwithstanding any good things that some might have had, or might be supposed to have had, others of them had better things than they. And this difference may be observed, first, in the degrees, and secondly, in the kinds of the things intended.

First. Spiritual gifts are of one kind. For although there are several sorts of them, yet they have all the same general nature, they are all gifts and no more. The difference therefore that is amongst them being not to be taken from their own especial nature, but their use and tendency unto the common end of them all, I take it only to be gradual. For instance, to speak with tongues and to prophesy, are two gifts of different sorts; but whereas they are both gifts of the Spirit, and are designed unto the furtherance of the gospel and edification of the church, the true difference between them is to be taken from their usefulness unto this end. Those therefore who have only gifts in the church, as they have different gifts, so they have some of them better gifts than others, some as to the especial kinds of gifts, but mostly as to the degrees of their usefulness unto their proper end. Hence our apostle, having reckoned up the various and manifold gifts of the Spirit, adds this advice to the Corinthians upon the consideration of them, *ζηλουτε δε τα χαρισματα τα κρειττονα*, 1 Cor. xii. 31, 'Covet earnestly the best gifts,' those that tend most to the edification of the church. Thus ever it was, and ever it will be, in the church of God, some have had, and some have better gifts than others. And as the whole church is hence to learn to acquiesce in, and submit to the sovereignty of the Spirit of God, who divideth unto every man severally as he will; so those who have received these better and differing gifts, either in their especial nature or degrees of usefulness, have some duties singularly incumbent on them, and whose discharge will be required at their hands. As,

1. To walk humbly, with a constant care that a sense of their gifts and abilities do not in their minds puff them up, fill them with conceits of themselves as though they were somewhat, and so make them exalt themselves above their brethren. In the apostolical and primitive church, when there was nothing of that secular grandeur and promotion, of those perferments and dignities amongst the ministers of the church, as now-a-days fill the world with pride and domination, all the danger of a hurtful elation of mind in one above another, was from the eminence of gifts which some had received above others. And it cannot be denied, but that the abuse hereof laid the foundation of all that swelling secular pride, and cursed domination or lordly rule, which afterwards pestered the church. The two things which the apostle Peter in one place cautions and chargeth the elders and guides of the church against, became their ruin, namely, filthy lucre, and love of domination over the Lord's heritage, 1 Pet. v. 2, 3. And indeed it is a very hard and difficult matter, for men totally to suppress those insinuations of a good conceit of themselves, and preferring themselves before others, which gifts singular in their use and kind will suggest. Neither will it be effected without a constant exercise of grace. For this cause the apostle would not have a novice called to the ministry, or public exercise of spiritual gifts, namely, lest he be puffed up with pride, and fall into the condemnation of the devil, 1 Tim. iii. 6. Afflictions and temptations, for the most part, are a needful balance for eminent gifts. This therefore the Scripture hath provided against, both warning us that knowledge, which is the matter of all spiritual gifts,

will puff up, and forbidding us to boast in them, because they are things which are freely bestowed on us, without respect unto anything of good or worth in ourselves, 1 Cor. iv. 7. And if we reckon aright those of us whose gifts are inferior unto those of other men, provided we use and improve what we have received unto the best advantage we are able, have no reason to envy them whose gifts outshine ours. For if they are gracious, they have work enough cut out for them to keep them watchful over themselves unto humility, where yet it is to be feared that things do not always so well succeed, but that by sinful surprisals of self-elating imaginations, there is work made for repentance and trouble. Yea, he who is eminently gifted, if he be not eminently humble, hath but an unquiet life within doors. And if such a person be not truly gracious, he is in the ready way to fall into the condemnation of the devil. Such a person is a prey to every temptation, and will also seduce himself into all evil.

2. It is required of such persons, as to be humble, so in an especial manner to be thankful. The things whereof they are partakers are gifts; and not to be thankful for gifts, is the most proper ingratitude.

3. A fruitfulness proportionable unto the excellence of their gifts. He who had received five talents, was not only obliged to trade with them, but to get five talents more. The increase of one or two talents would not have served his turn. To whom much is given, of him not somewhat, but much is required. The hiding of many talents is a sin whereof there is no instance in the Scripture: it is a sin that hath a greatness in it not to be supposed; and those who may be concerned in it, ought to tremble with the apprehensions of it. Our Lord is coming, and, alas! there is none of us who have traded with his talents as we ought to have done. We hope that in his infinite mercy and compassion he will spare and pardon, and accept of that little which we have endeavoured after in sincerity; but in the meantime we ought always to consider that labour and fruitfulness ought to be proportioned unto what we have received. But yet these are not the better things here directly intended. For from them, or anything that is in the best of them, no such conclusions can be made as that here by our apostle, seeing he had shown before that they might all perish and be lost.

Secondly. There are spiritual things which differ in their whole kind and nature from other things, and are better than they as to their essence and being. Such is all saving grace, with all the fruits of it. I shall not stay to prove, that true saving grace differs specifically from all common grace, however advanced in its exercise by the company and help of spiritual gifts, much less to wrangle about what doth formally constitute a specifical difference between things. But this I say plainly, which I can prove assuredly, that true gospel faith and sincere obedience are better things, than the most glorious hypocrite or most reformed unregenerate person was ever made partaker of. In the visible professing church, all things outwardly seem to be equal. There are the same ordinances administered unto all, the same profession of faith is made by all, the same outward duties are attended unto, and scandalous offences are by all avoided. But yet things are

not internally equal. 'Many are called, but few are chosen.' In a great house, there are vessels of wood and stone, as well as of gold and silver. All that eat outwardly in ordinances of the bread of life, do not feed on the hidden manna. All that have their names enrolled in the church's book, may not yet have them written in the Lamb's book. There are yet better things than gifts, profession, participation of ordinances, and whatever is of the like nature. And the use hereof in one word is to warn all sorts of persons, that they rest not in, that they take not up with an interest in, or participation of the privileges of the church, with a common profession, which may give them a name to live; seeing they may be dead or in a perishing condition in the meantime.

Obs. VI. There are according to the tenor of the covenant of grace, such things bestowed on some persons, as salvation doth infallibly accompany and ensue upon—better things, and such as have salvation accompanying of them. This assertion is founded on the nature of the covenant of grace: in the first covenant it was not so. The best things bestowed by virtue of it might perish, and did so. Many excellent things were bestowed on us when we were created in the image of God. But they were all such things as we might lose, and did lose, and thereby came short of that glory of God, which we were created for. But in the covenant of grace, there is such a disposal and concatenation of spiritual things, that a real participation of some of them, doth infallibly conclude unto an indefeasible interest in them all. Of this did the apostle assure us in an express enumeration of them, Rom. viii. 29, 30. For instance, there is a saving faith of this nature. For, 1. It is an effect of God's immutable purpose of election. If that therefore cannot be changed, this cannot utterly fail and be lost. Whom he predestinates them he calls; that is, to saving faith by Jesus Christ. Faith is of God's elect, and they only believe truly, who are ordained to eternal life. 2. The Lord Christ intercedeth that this faith may never fail, or be utterly lost, John xvii. 8, 11, 15, &c. 3. The power of God is engaged in the preservation of it, 2 Pet. i. 3; 1 Pet. i. 5; Eph. i. 19, 20. 4. The promises of the covenant are expressly multiplied unto this purpose, Jer. xxxi. 32, 33, xxxii. 38—40. And the like may be said of all other saving graces. And on this ground doth the apostle call those better things that these Hebrews were made partakers of, 'such as accompany salvation.'

Obs. VII. It is the duty of all professors strictly to examine themselves, concerning their participation of those better things, which accompany salvation.—Their condition is deplorable, who under an outward profession do satisfy themselves with those common gifts, graces, and duties, which are separable from salvation. Yet that it is so with many in the world, who thereon cry, Peace, peace, whilst sudden destruction is coming upon them, is openly manifest. See the advice of the apostle express to this purpose, 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

We may yet farther observe how variously the apostle treats these Hebrews. Sometimes he styles them holy brethren, affirming them to be partakers of the heavenly calling; so also that they had those better things in them which accompany salvation. Sometime he tells

them that they were dull and slothful, and had need to be taught again what are the principles of the oracles of God; and sets before them the final destruction of apostates to ingenerate a fear and apprehension of the terror of the Lord in them. Now this variety in the apostle's treating of them proceeds not from present commotions, not from any rhetorical artifice, but from a regular and steady judgment concerning the condition of the whole church. For, 1. There were indeed several sorts of professors among them, answering the several descriptions he gives of them. He spake therefore to the whole community indefinitely, leaving the especial application of what he speaks unto themselves in particular, according as the different conditions did require. And this is the only safe and prudent way for ministers to deal with their flocks. For when any conceive themselves by other circumstances to be singled out for reproof and threatening, they commonly draw forth disadvantage to themselves thereby. 2. The best of the hearers of the gospel may have much to be blamed in them, although their sincerity in general ought to be highly approved. 3. Severe threatenings in the dispensation of the gospel, are usually proposed unto them, who yet are not absolutely liable to the penalty threatened. They do not predict what will come to pass, but warn what is to be avoided.

VER. 10.—Οὐ γὰρ ἀδικὸς ὁ Θεὸς, ἐπιλαθεσθαι τοῦ ἔργου ὑμῶν, καὶ τοῦ κοποῦ τῆς ἀγαπῆς ἧς ἐνεδειξάσθε εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, διακονήσαντες τοῖς ἁγίοις, καὶ διακονοῦντες.

The Syriac renders ἀδικὸς by ܠܥܝ, perversus, iniquus: it omitteth κοποῦ also, as doth the vulgar Latin, but expresseth τῆς ἀγαπῆς emphatically, ܘܚܒܚܝܬܝ, 'and that your love.' Other material difference among translators there is not.

VER. 10.—*For God is not unrighteous to forget your work, and the labour of that love which you have (evidently) shown towards his name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.*

The expositors of the Roman church do greatly perplex themselves and others in their comments on this text. They generally agree in an endeavour from hence to prove the merit of works against Protestants, because the council of Trent applies this text to that purpose. And none are more confident herein than our Rhemists, who after their usual reproaches of Protestants, affirm, That good works are meritorious and the very cause of salvation, so that God should be unjust if he rendered not heaven for the same. But they are greatly divided among themselves, about the state of the persons and kind of the works here intended. Some contend that the apostle speaks to, and of such as were fallen out of a state of justification into a state of deadly sin. And the works which it is said that God will not forget, are those which were wrought in that estate from whence they were now supposed to be fallen. For on the account of those former works, God will spare them and not destroy them. And although there be no present merit in these works, whilst those who wrought them are

in a state of deadly sin, yet when they shall be recovered by penance, these works which were before mortified by their falling from grace, and so became of no use as to present merit, shall recover their former meritorious virtue, as if they had never been forfeited by deadly sin. This therefore is the sense which these persons would affix unto these words. Where any have been in a state of justification, and have wrought good works therein, meritorious of eternal life, if they fall into deadly sin, they immediately lose all the merit and benefit of those works. But notwithstanding God in his righteousness keeps the remembrance of these works, so that when such sinners return again by penance unto their first estate, these works shall revive into a condition of merit. This sense is opposed by others. For they think those mentioned are justified persons, and the apostle expresseth the merit of their present works, with respect unto the righteousness of God. The reader who desires to see such chaff tossed up and down, may find these things debated in Aquinas, Adamus, Estius, A Lapide, Ribera, Maldonat, de Tena, and others of them on the place.

1. How foreign these discourses are to the text and context, is evident to every impartial considerer of it. They are only chimeras hatched out of the proud imaginations of the merit of their works, that these men's minds are prepossessed withal. For, 1. Our apostle treats of those whom he supposeth and judgeth to be in a present good spiritual condition. For with respect thereunto he ascribeth unto them things that accompany salvation, and prescribeth no other duty unto them for the actual enjoyment of it, but only those of faith and love and ministration unto the saints, which at present he commendeth in them. What they did formerly, that he affirms them to continue in the performance of. 'You have ministered, and you do minister.' 2. The apostle expressly distinguisheth them concerning whom he now speaks, from those who were now fallen off from the profession of the gospel, or that state of justification which the Romanists suppose. 3. He doth not direct these persons to seek after a recovery out of the condition wherein they were, but encourageth them unto a continuance therein, and to show the same diligence unto that purpose, as formerly, to the end, ver. 12. Nothing therefore is more fond than to suppose that anything is here taught concerning the mortification of good works as to their merit by deadly sin, and their recovery hereof by penance, a fiction which these men dream of to no purpose.

2dly. Neither is countenance given unto the other imagination in general, concerning the merit of works in these words. For, 1. The design of the apostle is only to let them know that their labour in the work of the Lord, that their obedience unto the gospel, should not be lost or be in vain. And hereof he gives them assurance from the nature of God with whom they had to do, with respect unto that covenant whereinto he takes them that do believe. They had been sedulous in the discharge of the great duty of ministering unto the saints, in particular upon the account of the name of Jesus Christ that was upon them. These duties had been attended with trouble, danger, and charge. And it was needful to confirm them in a persuasion that they should not be lost. This they might be two ways. 1. If themselves

should fall away and not persist in their course unto the end. 2. If God should overlook, or forget as it were all that they had done. Against both these apprehensions the apostle secures them. From the first, in that the works mentioned having been truly gracious works, proceeding from faith and love, they evidence their persons to be in that state of grace, wherein they should be effectually preserved unto the end, by virtue of God's faithfulness in covenant, which he further pursues towards the end of the chapter. Nor, secondly, had they the least reason to doubt of their future reward. For who was it that called them to these duties, and on what account? Is it not God, and that according unto the tenour of the covenant of grace? and hath he not herein promised to accept their persons and their duties by Jesus Christ? If now he should not do so, would he not be unrighteous, must he not deny himself, and not remember his promise? Wherefore the righteousness of God here intended, is his faithfulness in the promises of the covenant. And he is not said to be righteous in rewarding or not rewarding, but in not forgetting. He is not unrighteous to forget. Now to forget anything doth not reflect immediately on distributive justice, but upon fidelity in making good of some engagement. But not to engage into disputations in this place, let men acknowledge that the new covenant is a covenant of grace; that the constitution of a reward unto the obedience required therein is of grace; that this obedience is not accepted on its own account, but on account of the mediation of Christ; that all men's good works will not make a compensation for one sin; that we are to place our trust and confidence in Christ alone for life and salvation, because he is 'the end of the law for righteousness unto them that do believe;' and let them please themselves for a while, in the fancy of the merit of their works, at least of the high and necessary place which they hold in their justification before God; after all their wrangling disputes, it will be Christ and grace alone which they will betake themselves unto, or their case will be deplorable. These things I have premised that we may have no cause to divert unto them, in the ensuing exposition of the words.

The apostle in this verse gives an account of the grounds of his persuasion concerning the Hebrews, expressed in the verse foregoing. And these he declares unto them, partly for encouragement, and partly that they might be satisfied in his sincerity, and that he did not give them fair words to entice or allure them by. And the reasons he gives to this purpose may be reduced unto two heads.

1. The observation which he had made concerning their faith and love, with the fruits of them.
2. The faithfulness of God in covenant, whereon the final preservation of all true believers doth depend.

These are the grounds of that persuasion concerning their state and condition, which he expresseth in the foregoing words. Hence that persuasion of his was of a mixed nature, and had something in it of a divine faith, and somewhat only of a moral certainty. As he drew his conclusion from, or built his persuasion on God's faithfulness or righteousness, so there was in it an infallible assurance of faith that could not deceive him. For what we believe concerning God as he

hath revealed himself, is infallible. But as his persuasion had respect unto the faith, love, and obedience which he had observed in them, so it was only a moral assurance, and such as in its own nature might fail. For God only is καρδιογνωστης; and we who judge by the outward evidences of invisible things may be deceived. The proposition from God's faithfulness is of infallible truth; the application of it unto these Hebrews of moral evidence only. Such a persuasion we may have in this case, which is prevalent against all objections, a certain rule for the performance of all duties on our parts towards others; and such had the apostle concerning these Hebrews.

That which in the first place he confirms his persuasion with is το εργον, 'their work.' 'God is not unrighteous, επιλαθесθαι του εργου υμων, to forget your work.' It is not any singular work, but a course in working which he intends. And what that work is, is declared in that parallel place of the same apostle, 1 Thess. i. 3, Μνημονευοντες υμων του εργου της πιστεως, και του κοπου της αγαπης; the same expressions with those in this place, which may be reckoned unto the multitude of other instances of coincidences of expressions in this and other epistles of the same writer, all peculiar unto himself, arguing him to be the author of this also. 'Remembering your work of faith and labour of love.' The work here intended is the work of faith; the whole work of obedience to God, whereof faith is the principle, and that which moves us thereunto. Hence it is called the obedience of faith, Rom. i. 5.

And this obedience of faith, according to the gospel, is called there, το εργον, 'their work.' 1. Because it was their chief employment, their calling lay in it. They did not attend unto it occasionally, or when they had nothing else to do, as is the manner of some. Religion was their business, and gospel obedience their daily work. This was their whole, even to fear God and keep his commandments, as it is expressed under the Old Testament. 2. Because there is work and labour in it, or great pains to be taken about it. For hereunto our apostle in the next verse requires their diligence, ver. 11, as Peter doth all diligence, 2 Pet. i. 10. And we may observe in our way,

Obs. I. That faith, if it be a living faith, will be a working faith. It is the work of faith which the apostle here commends. This case is so stated by James that it needs no farther confirmation, ch. ii. 20. Wilt thou know, or knowest thou not, O vain man, 'that faith without works is dead?' He is a most vain man who thinks otherwise, who hopes for any benefit by that faith which doth not work by love. Satan hath no greater design in the world than to abuse gospel truths. When the doctrine of free justification by faith, through the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, was first fully revealed and declared, his great design then was to persuade men that there was no need of obedience: that if they could attain any manner of persuasion of the truth of the gospel, or make profession thereof, they might live in sin as they pleased, and neglect all good works and duties of obedience. And although this be now condemned by all, yet indeed is it no more but what upon the matter most do practise according unto. For they suppose, that by being of this or that religion, Papists or Protestants, or the like, they shall be saved, whatever their ways and works are.

So Papists, for instance, are indeed the greatest Solifidians in the world. For to own the faith of the church, is enough with them to secure the salvation of any. This abomination having been early started, was seasonably suppressed by the writings of James and John. For the former directly and plainly lays open the vanity of this pretence, declaring, that that faith which they professed and boasted of was not the faith whereby any should be justified before God, nor of the same kind with it. For this faith is living, operative, and fruitful, and evidenceth itself unto all, by its works and fruits. Whereas that faith, whereof vain men living in their sins did boast, was so far from being a grace of the Spirit of God, that it was no other but what was in the devils themselves, and which they could not rid themselves of if they would. The latter, without expressing the occasion of it, spends his epistle in declaring the necessity of love and obedience, or keeping the commandments of Christ. Wherefore, the enemy of our salvation being defeated in this attempt, he betook himself unto the other extreme; contending that the works of faith had the same place in our justification, with faith itself. And why should they not? are not faith, and they, equally acts of obedience in us? are not faith, and they, equally required by the gospel? why may they not be supposed to have an equal influence into our justification? at least in the same kind, though faith on some considerations may have the pre-eminence? I say, these things are speciously pleaded; but in short, the design is not to advance works into an equality with faith, but to advance them into the room of Christ and his righteousness. For, when we say, we are justified by faith only, we do not say that faith is our righteousness, but as it apprehends the righteousness of Christ, as he is the end of the law for righteousness unto them that do believe. And this is the use that God hath designed faith unto, and which in its own nature it is suited for. But, bring in the works of obedience into the same place, and they are of no use but to be imputed unto us for righteousness, and so to possess the place of Christ and his righteousness in our justification, unto their exclusion. But all this trouble might have been spared, if men had not been too ready and prone to receive impressions from the crafty actings of Satan, against the purity and simplicity of the gospel. For nothing is more evidently expressed and taught therein, than are these two things. 1. That we are justified freely by faith, through the redemption that is in the blood of Christ, and so the imputation of his righteousness unto us. 2. That the faith which hath this effect, which is of this use, is living, operative, fruitful, and will evidence itself by works, in obedience unto the commands of God. And this is that which here we contend for, namely, that a living faith will be a working faith. And he is a vain man that deceives himself with any thing else in the room thereof. And yet, this is the course of multitudes. But yet, men do not deceive themselves herein notionally, but practically. I never yet in my life, met with any man who professed it as his judgment, that so he believed aright, he might live as he pleased, follow his lusts, and neglect all good works, or holy duties of obedience. For this implies a contradiction. So to believe, is so far from believing aright, as that it contains in it, a total rejection

of the gospel. But practically we see that the generality of men content themselves with that knowledge which they have of religion, and that faith which they suppose they have in Christ, without once endeavouring after amendment of life, or fruitfulness in good works. Now, this is not from any conclusions that they draw from any doctrines which they profess to believe, but from the power of darkness, and the deceitfulness of sin that ruleth in them. And it is no otherwise among them who are taught to believe that they are justified by their works. For there is not a race of greater and more flagitious sinners, than, for the most part, are the men of that persuasion. Only for their relief, their leaders have provided them with a commutation of some other things, instead of their good works, which shall do the deed for them, as penances, pardons, purgatory, confessions, pilgrimages, and the like. But be men's persuasion what it will, right or wrong, where sin is predominant, they will be wicked, and whatever be the object of their faith, if it be not living in the subject, it cannot work nor be fruitful.

Obs. II. We ought to look on obedience as our work ; which will admit neither of sloth nor negligence. Here lies the occasion of the ruin of the souls of men who profess the gospel. The duties of profession are a thing of course unto them, and that which lies without the compass of their principal work and business in the world. This makes their profession serve to no other end, but to make them secure in a perishing condition. Now that our obedience may indeed be our work, it is required,

First. That the carrying of it on, the attendance unto it, and furtherance of it in order unto the glory of God, be our principal design in the world. That is a man's *ιδιον εργον*, his 'proper work,' which is so. God severely threateneth those which walk with him at peradventures, Lev. xxvi. 21, *וְאִם חִלְכֵּי עִמִּי קָרִי*, 'if you should walk with me fortuito, at hap-hazard,' that is, without making it your principal design, and using your utmost diligence and care to proceed in it in a right manner ; *וְהִלַּכְתִּי גִם־אִנִּי עִמָּכֶם בָּקָרִי*, ver. 24, 'then will even I myself walk with you at all adventures ; though I continue with you as one walking with you in my outward ordinances and institutions ; yet will I have no regard unto you, as to do you any good, yea I will sorely punish you notwithstanding the appearance of our walking together, as it follows in the place. Yet this is the course of many who please themselves in their condition. They walk with God in outward appearance, by the performance of duties in their times, course, and order ; but they walk at all adventures, as unto any especial design of their minds about it. Barnabas exhorted the disciples at Antioch, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord, Acts xi. 23, *τῇ προθέσει τῆς καρδίας*, that is, with a firm resolution to abide in, and pursue the obedience they were called unto. So Paul telis Timothy, that he knew his doctrine, manner of life, and purpose, 2 Tim. iii. 10, namely, how his principal aim, design, and resolution, was to abide in and carry on his course of faith and obedience. And then, is any thing the object of our purpose and principal design, 1. When we subordinate all other things and occasions unto it, that they may

not justle nor interfere, nor stand in competition with it, when to us to live is Christ, or he is the chief end of our life. When men do usually and ordinarily suffer other things to divert them from duties of obedience in their season, obedience is not their principal design.

2. When it possesseth the chiefest place in our valuation and esteem. And this it doth absolutely where we attain that frame, that whilst the work of faith and obedience thrives in our hearts and lives, we are not much moved with whatever else befalls us in this world. This was the frame of our apostle, Acts xxi. 13; Phil. iii. 7, 8. But because of the weakness, and engagement of our natural affections unto the lawful comforts of this life, some are not able to rise unto that height of the undervaluation and contempt of these things, whilst the work of our obedience goes on, which we ought all to aim at; yet we must say, that if there be any sincerity in making our obedience the principal design of our lives, there will be a constant preference of it unto all other things. As when a man hath many particular losses, he may be allowed to be sensible of them, yet if he have that still remaining, wherein his main stock and wealth doth consist, he will not only be relieved or refreshed, but satisfied therewith. But if a man who pretends much unto a great stock and trade in another country, gives up all for lost upon some damages he receiveth at home in his house or shop, it is plain he hath no great confidence in the other treasure that he pretended unto. No more have men any especial interest in the work of obedience, which, whilst they suppose it to be safe, do yet lose all their comforts in the loss of other things.

3. When any thing is the object of our chief design, the principal contrivances of our minds will be concerning it. And this makes the great difference in profession and duties. Men may multiply duties in a course of them, and yet their spirits not be engaged in and about them as their business. Consider how most men are conversant about their secular affairs. They do not only do the things that are to be done, but they beat, as we say, their heads and minds about them. And it is observed, that however industrious in their way many men may be, yet if they have not a good contrivance and projection about their affairs, they seldom prosper in them. It is so also in things spiritual. The fear of the Lord is our wisdom; it is our wisdom to keep his commandments and walk in his ways. Now the principal work of wisdom, is, 1. In contriving and disposing the ways and methods whereby any end we aim at, may be obtained. And where this is not exercised, there obedience is not our work. How temptations may be avoided, how corruptions may be subdued, how graces may be increased and strengthened, how opportunities may be improved how duties may be performed to the glory of God, how spiritual life may be strengthened, peace with God maintained, and acquaintance with Jesus Christ increased, are the daily thoughts and contrivances of him who makes obedience his work.

2. Actual diligence and watchfulness is required in our obedience, if we do make it our work. And

3. A due consideration of what doth and will rise up in opposition unto it, or unto us in it; which things, being commonly spoken unto, I shall not here enlarge upon them.

The second thing whereon the apostle grounds his confidence concerning these Hebrews, is their labour of love, *και του κοπου της αγαπης*. For the words express a distinct grace and its exercise, and are not exegetical of the preceding expressions. It is not your work, that is, your labour of love. But this labour of love is distinguished from their work in general, as an eminent part or instance of it. This the copulative conjunction after *υμων* evinceth. *Του εργου υμων, και του κοπου της αγαπης*; of 'your work,' that is, of obedience in general, the work of faith and of your labour of love, namely, in particular and eminently. *Κοποι*, as we observed, is passed by in some translations, but without cause; the original copies are uniform in it, and the parallel place doth expressly require it, 1 Thess. i. 3.

There is, in the remaining part of this verse, which depends on these words,

1. What the apostle ascribes unto these Hebrews, which is the 'labour of love.'

2. The way whereby they evidenced this labour of love; they 'showed it.'

3. The object of it, and that is 'the saints.'

4. The formal reason and principal motive unto it, which is the name of God; 'for his name's sake.'

5. The way of its exercise; it was by ministration, both past and present; in that you have 'ministered and do minister.'

In the first of these, the apostle observes the grace itself, and its exercise, their love and its labour.

This grace or duty being excellent and rare, and its exercise in labour being highly necessary and greatly neglected, and both in conjunction being a principal evidence of a good spiritual condition, of an interest in those better things which accompany salvation, I shall a little divert unto the especial consideration of them.

Αγαπη, love, is the second great duty of the life of God, which is brought to light by the gospel. It is faith that gives glory to God on high, and love that brings peace on the earth, wherein the angels comprised the substance of our deliverance by Jesus Christ, Luke ii. 14. Neither is there any thing of it in the whole world, but what is derived from the gospel.

All things were at first made in a state of love. That rectitude, order, peace, and harmony which was in the whole creation, was an impression from and an expression of the love of God. And our love towards him was the bond of that perfection, and the stability of that state and condition. The whole beauty of the creation below, consisted in this; namely, in man's loving God above all, and all other things in him and for him, according as they did participate of and express his glory and properties. This represented that love which was in God towards all his creatures, which he testified by declaring them to be all very good.

When man by sin had broken the first link of this chain of love, when thereby we lost the love of God to us, and renounced our own love to him, all things fell into disorder and confusion in the whole creation; all things were filled with mutual enmity and hatred. The

first instance of mutual love among the creatures, was that between angels and men, as those which were in the nearest alliance, and made for the same end of the glory of God. For as the angels rejoiced in the whole creation of God, when those ‘morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy,’ Job xxxviii. 7, so man, being the most capable object of their love, was their especial delight. And man being made to love God above all, and all other things in him and for him, his principal love must be fixed on those who had most of the image, and made the most glorious representation of God. But the bond of love being dissolved, mutual enmity succeeded in the room thereof. And the first act of angelic obedience we read of, was their keeping man from a return into Eden, and eating of the tree of life, Gen. iii. 24, and man could look on them only as flaming swords, ready to execute the wrath of God and the curse upon him. And this state would have continued unto eternity, had not ‘God gathered all things again into one, both which are in heaven and which are in earth, even in Christ Jesus,’ Eph. i. 10. There could never more have been any love, nor any duties of love, between angels and men, had not God restored all things by Jesus Christ. This is the only foundation of the whole ministry of angels in love, Heb. i. 14. For men themselves, mutual enmity and hatred possessed them. And he who first acted in that frame and spirit which came upon them, was a murderer, and slew his brother. And this the apostle proposeth as the instance and example of that hatred and enmity, which is among men under the curse, 1 John iii. 11, 12. And there is no greater evidence of any person’s being uninterested in the restoration of all things by Christ, than the want of that love which was again introduced thereby. So the apostle, describing the condition of men in their unregenerate condition, affirms that they ‘live in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another,’ Tit. iii. 3. There ensued also an enmity between man and all the creation here below. The sin of man had brought all things into a condition of vanity and bondage, which they groan to be delivered from, Rom. viii. 20—22. And the earth, the common mother of them all, as if it were to revenge itself on men, brings forth nothing but thorns and thistles, Gen. iii. 18, and yields not her strength to his labour, Gen. iv. 12. Hence is all that vanity, vexation, and sore travail with which the life of man is filled. After the entrance of this disorder and confusion, there was nothing of true original love in the world, nor was it by any means attainable. For it all arose from the love of God, and was animated by our love unto him. But now all things were filled with tokens and evidences of the anger, displeasure, and curse of God for sin. And men were wholly alienated from the life of God. No new spring or life can be given unto love, but by a new discovery, that God was love, and had a love for us. For so the apostle tells us, ‘Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation of our sins,’ 1 John iv. 10. ‘But if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another,’ ver. 11. No love could there be until a fresh revelation was made that ‘God is love;’ for the first which he had made in the creation, was utterly lost. And this was done by Jesus Christ.

There was some step made unto that confusion which ensued on the loss of this universal love by the first promise; without which, the whole lower creation would have been a hell, and nothing else. This was the spring of all that love which was in the Old Testament, because it was a new discovery that there was yet love in God towards fallen mankind. And whatever in the world may pretend thereunto, yet if it proceed not from the new revelation and discovery, that God is love, it is nothing of that divine love which is required of us. And this is only in Christ; in him alone, the *χρηστοτης* and *φιλανθρωπια*, the 'benignity and love of God unto mankind appeared,' Tit. iii. 4. And here is a foundation laid, and a spring opened, of a love far more excellent than that which our nature was furnished and adorned withal in the first creation. For the love of God being the cause and fountain of ours, which is a compliance with the manifestation of it, the more eminently the love of God is manifested, the more eminent is that love which is the fruit thereof. And God's love is far more gloriously displayed in Christ, than it was in all the works of his hands. In him alone we know not only that God hath love, but that he is love; that he hath love for sinners, and that such a love, as in the spring, means, and effects of it, is every way ineffable and incomprehensible.

The whole of what I intend, is expressed by the apostle John, 1 John iv. 7—12, 'Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God; he that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.' All that we have before affirmed, and much more, is here declared by the apostle. It is God's being love himself, which is the eternal spring of all love in us. Neither could we have any thing of it, or interest in it, without some glorious effect and manifestation of the love of God, which he also gave in sending 'his Son to be a propitiation for our sins.' And the love which proceeds from hence, hath all the glorious properties here ascribed unto it. Wherefore, there is no such way and means whereby we may express the distinguishing light, grace, and power of the gospel, no such evidence of the reality of our interest in God, as love; or in the love of God by Christ, as by and in our own love to him and his.

The mystical body of Christ, is the second great mystery of the gospel. The first is his person, that great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh. In this mystical body, we have communion with the Head, and with all the members; with the Head by faith, and with the members by love. Neither will the first complete our interest in that body, without the latter. Hence are they frequently conjoined by our apostle, not only as those which are necessary unto, but as those which essentially constitute the union of the whole mystical

body and communion therein, Gal. v. 6; Eph. vi. 23; 1 Thess. i. 3; 1 Tim. i. 14, vi. 11; 2 Tim. i. 13, ii. 22. Wherefore, without love, we do no more belong to the body of Christ, than without faith itself. And in one place, he so transposeth them in his expression, to manifest their inseparable connection and use unto the union and communion of the whole body, as that it requires some care in their distribution unto their peculiar objects, Philem. 5. 'Hearing of thy love and faith which thou hast towards the Lord Jesus, and towards all saints.' Both these graces are spoken of, as if they were exercised in the same manner towards both their objects, Christ and the saints. But although Christ be the object of our love also, and not of our faith only, yet are not the saints so the object of our love, as to be the object of our faith also. We believe a communion with them, but place not our trust in them. There is, therefore, a variation in the prepositions prefixed unto the respective objects of these graces. *Προς τον Κυριον Ιησουν*, and *εις παντας αγιους*. And this directs us unto a distribution of these graces, in their operations unto their distinct objects, faith towards the Lord Jesus, and love to the saints. But they are so mixed here, to declare the infallible connection that is between them, in the constitution of the mystical body of Christ. This, therefore, is the form, life and soul of all mutual duties between the members of Christ's mystical body. Whatever passeth between them in outward works, wherein they may be useful and beneficial unto one another, if it spring not from this principle of love, if it be not quickened and animated thereby, there is nothing of evangelical communion in it.

Whereas, therefore, this grace and duty is the peculiar effect and glory of the gospel, the form and life of the mystical body of Christ, the pledge and evidence of our interest in those better things which accompany salvation, I shall briefly declare the nature of it, and show the reason of the necessity of its diligent exercise.

Mutual love among believers, is a fruit of the Spirit of holiness, and effect of faith, whereby being knit together in the bond of entire spiritual affection on the account of their joint interest in Christ, and participation of the same new, divine, spiritual nature from God, they do value, delight and rejoice in one another, and are mutually helpful in a constant discharge of all those duties, whereby their eternal, spiritual and temporal good may be promoted.

1. It is a fruit of the Spirit of holiness, of the Spirit of Christ, Gal. v. 22. It is no more of ourselves than faith is, it is the gift of God. Natural affections are inlaid in the constitution of our beings. Carnal affections are grown inseparable from our nature as corrupted. Both, excited by various objects, relations, occasions, and interests, do exert themselves in many outward effects of love. But this love hath no root in ourselves, until it be planted in us by the Holy Ghost. And as it is so, it is the principal part of the renovation of our natures into the image of God who is love. 'This love is of God; and every one that loveth, is born of God,' 1 John iv. 7. You are taught of God to love another.

2. It is an effect of faith. 'Faith worketh by love,' Gal. v. 6.

Hence, as we observed before, love to the saints is so frequently added unto faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, as the effect and pledge of it. And although it proceeds in general from faith as it respects the commands and promises of God, yet it derives immediately from faith as acted on the Lord Jesus Christ. For he, being the Head of the whole mystical body, it is faith in him that acts itself by love towards all the members. Holding him the Head by faith, the whole body edifies itself in love, Eph. iv. 15, 18. And the more sincere, active, and firm our faith in Christ is, the more abundant will our love be towards all his saints. For faith in Christ doth first excite love unto him, from whom, as it were, it descends unto all that it finds of him in any others. And our love of the saints, is but the love of Christ represented and exhibited unto us in them. The Papists tell us that love or charity is the form of life or faith, without which it is dead. It is so far true, that according to the apostle James, where it is not, there faith is dead. Not that it is the life of faith, but that faith, wherever it is living, will work by love. Faith, therefore, is the life, the quickening, animating principle of love, and not on the contrary. And that love which proceedeth not from, which is not the effect of, which is not enlivened by faith, is not that which the gospel requireth.

3. Believers are knit together in an entire affection. This is that cement whereby the whole mystical body of Christ is fitly joined together and compacted, Eph. iv. 16. This mutual adherence is by the uniting, cementing efflux of love. It is but an image of the body, or a dead carcase that men set up, where they would make a bond for professors of Christianity, consisting of outward order, rules, and methods of duties. A church without it, is a heap of dead stones, and not living stones, fitly compacted and built up, a temple unto God. Break this bond of perfection, and all spiritual church order ceaseth; for what remains, is carnal and worldly. There may be churches constituted in an outward human order, on supposed prudential principles of union, and external duties of communion, which may continue in their order, such as it is, where there is no spiritual evangelical love in exercise among the members of them. But where churches have no other order nor bond of communion, but what is appointed by Christ, wherever this love faileth, their whole order will dissolve.

4. This mutual love among believers, springs from, and is animated by their mutual interest in Christ, with their participation of the same divine nature thereby. It is from their union in Christ the Head, that all the members of the body, do mutually contribute what they derive from him unto the edification of the whole, in the exercise of love. Hereby are they all brought into the nearest relation to one another, which is the most effectual motive and powerful attractive unto love. For, as the Lord Christ saith of every one that doeth the will of God, 'the same is my brother, and sister, and mother,' Matt. xii. 50, he is dearly beloved by him, as standing in the nearest relation unto him; so are all believers, by virtue of their common interest in Christ their Head, as brothers, sisters, and mothers to each other; as members of the same body, which is yet nearer, whence the most intense affection must arise. And they have thereby the same new,

spiritual nature in them all. In love natural, he that doth most love and prize himself, commonly doth least love and prize others. And the reason is, because he loves not himself for any thing which is common unto him with others, but his self-love is the ordering and centering of all things unto his own satisfaction. But with this spiritual love, he that loves himself most, that is, doth most prize and value the image of God in himself, doth most love others in whom it is. And we may know whether we cherish and improve grace in our own hearts, by that love which we have unto them in whom it doth manifest itself, 1 John v. 1.

5. This love, in the first place, acts itself by valuation, esteem and delight. So the Psalmist affirms, that all his delight was in the saints, and in the excellent in the earth, Ps. xvi. 3. The apostle carries this unto the height in that instance, wherein we ought to 'lay down our lives for the brethren,' 1 John iii. 16. For where life is comprehensive of all that is dear or useful unto us in this world, what we ought, if called thereunto, to part with our lives for, we value and esteem above them all. It is true, the cases wherein this is actually required in us, do not frequently occur; and they are such alone, wherein the glory and interest of Christ, are in an especial manner concerned. But such a love as will always dispose, and when we are called, enable us unto this duty, is required to be in us, if we are the disciples of Christ. So are we to prize and value them, as at least to be ready to share with them in all their conditions. For,

6. This love acts itself by all means, in all ways and duties whereby the eternal, spiritual, and temporal good of others may be promoted. And it would require a long discourse to go over but the principal heads, of those ways and duties which are required unto this end. Something will be spoken afterwards to that purpose. At present I have aimed only at such a description of this love, as may distinguish it from that cold, formal pretence of it in some outward duties, which the most satisfy themselves withal.

This is that love, which the gospel so earnestly commendeth unto, and so indispensably requireth, in all the disciples of Christ. This, with its exercise and effects, its labour and fruits, is the glory, life, and honour of our profession, without which, no other duties are accepted with God.

And the reason is manifest from what hath been spoken, why the apostle giveth this as a ground of his good persuasion concerning these Hebrews, as that they had an especial interest in those better things from which salvation is inseparable. For if this love in general be so a grace of the gospel, if it so spring and arise from the love of God in Christ, as that there neither ever was, nor can be the least of it in the world, which is not an emanation from that love; and if in its especial nature it so particularly relates to the Spirit of Christ, and our union with him, it must needs be among the principal evidences of a good spiritual condition. And the same will yet farther appear if we consider the grounds whereon it is enforced in the gospel, which are principally these that follow :

1. As the head of all other considerations, the Lord Christ expresseth it as that which was to be the great evidence unto the world of the truth and power of the gospel, as also of his own being sent of God : John xvii. 21, ' That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.' It is true there is another especial principle of the union of believers, as they are one in God and Christ. This is that one Spirit whereby they all are united unto him as their mystical head. But this alone is not here intended, as being that which the world can no way discern, nor consequently be convinced by. He intends therefore their unity among themselves, the life, and spirit, and bond whereof is this love, as hath been declared. There is no other kind of unity which may be among Christians, that carrieth the least conviction with it, of the divine mission, truth, and power of Christ. For they may be all carnal, from carnal principles, and for carnal ends, wherein the world can see nothing extraordinary, as having many such unities of its own. Herein, therefore, doth the testimony consist, which we give to the world, that Jesus Christ was sent of God. And if we fail herein, we do what we can to harden the world in its impenitency and unbelief. To see believers live in love, according to the nature, and acting the duties of it before-mentioned, was, in ancient times, a great means of the conviction of the world, concerning the truth and power of the gospel, and will be so again, when God shall afresh pour down abundantly that Spirit of light and love which we pray for. And, in some measure, it doth so at present. For whosoever shall consider the true church of Christ aright, will find the evidences of a divine power in this matter. For it doth, and ever did consist, of all sorts of persons, in all nations and languages whatever. High and low, rich and poor, Jews, Greeks, barbarians, Scythians, men of all interests, humours, oppositions, dividing circumstances, at distances as far as the east from the west, do constitute this body, this society. Yet is there among all these, known to each other or unknown, an ineffable love, ready to work and exercise itself on all occasions, in all the ways before insisted on. And this can be from no other principle but the Spirit and divine power of God, giving testimony thereby unto the Lord Christ, whose disciples they are.

2. Our right unto, our privilege in, and evidence of our being the disciples of Christ, depends on our mutual love, John xiii. 34, 35, ' A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another ; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another.' This especial commandment of Christ concerning mutual love among his disciples, is here and elsewhere called a new commandment. When mankind by sin fell off from the love of God, and out of it, from loving him and being loved of him, they fell into all manner of discord and enmity among themselves, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another, Tit. iii. 3. And from the same root still springs all contention. ' From whence come wars and fightings ? come they not hence, even from your lusts ?' James iv. 1. In the

former revelations of the will of God, as in the law, there was mutual love commanded, envy, hatred, and revenge, being forbidden. But yet there was a great defect and weakness in this matter, partly in the obscurity of the law, partly out of some forbearances which God was pleased to exercise towards that carnal people, by reason of the hardness of their hearts; and partly out of their darkness that they did not understand the spirituality and holiness of the commands. But the principal imperfection of the law in this matter was, that it gave no example of that love, which is necessary to restore us into that condition of the love of God and one another, from which we fell. This was reserved for Christ, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. Until he set us the example of it in his inexpressible love to us, which is so frequently proposed unto our imitation, we could not know what kind of love it was wherewith we ought to love one another. So saith he here, 'that you love one another as I have loved you;' see John xiii. 34. Hence the commandment of love becomes a new commandment; not only because it was newly revived by Christ in an especial manner, when the doctrine of the duties of it was cast under Pharisaical corruptions, Matt. v. and the practice of it in the wickedness of the world; nor only because it was more plainly and clearly given by him than it had been under the law; nor only because he had revealed the love of God unto us; but principally because it was now founded, established, and animated, by the example of the love of Christ himself, which gave it a new life and nature, making it a new commandment. And the first observance of it is the first evidence of the renovation of all things by Jesus Christ. He came to restore and renew all things; but the work whereby he doth it, is for the most part secret and invisible in the souls of men. What evidence and token of this great work is there given to the world? It is principally this, the bringing forth of the practice of that love, which is in a manner the fulfilling of that original law of our creation, which we broke, and from which we fell. For so he adds, 'By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another.' The great example which I have set you, being that of love; the new commandment which I have given you, being that of love; the design I have to accomplish in and by you being the renovation of love; how shall or can men otherwise know you to be my disciples but by your mutual love? Without this, therefore, we can no way evidence ourselves to be the disciples of Christ. And this one consideration is of more weight with me, than a thousand wrangling disputes, that would furiously drive men into such outward forms and compliances, which they call love.

3. This mutual love is that wherein the communion of saints doth consist. How great a thing that communion is, appears from the place which the acknowledgment of it hath always had in the ancient creeds of the church. I do not say this communion doth consist solely therein. There belongs unto it a common participation of the same sanctifying Spirit; and a common interest in the same spiritual Head, Christ Jesus, as to its principles; and common participation of the same ordinances, as to its exercise. But herein doth this communion

among themselves principally consist. That it hath no concern in an outward compliance with certain rites and ceremonies, that are invented, not for the life of unity, but for a show of uniformity, I suppose all men are well enough satisfied. But this is the order of the communion of saints. The foundation of it is laid in a joint participation of the same quickening Spirit, and union with Christ thereby. It is acted and exercised by love arising from this spring; and it is expressed in our joint participation of the same ordinances of worship. Hence it is apparent that where this love is not, there is no communion of saints, nor any thing belonging thereto. For our participation together in the same ordinances is no part thereof, unless the influences of our original communion in the participation of the same Spirit, be conveyed thereunto by love, by which alone it is acted. This the apostle fully expresseth, Eph. iv. 15, 16, 'But speaking the truth in love, we may grow up into him in all things which is the Head, even Christ; from whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.' There is not a more eminent description of the communion of saints, especially as united in church order, in the whole Scripture. And we see that it begins and ends in love, and so is carried on from first unto last. The spring and fountain of it lies in our relation unto, and union with Christ, the Head. And we are said to grow up into him in all things, when we expressly derive all from him, and direct all to him; when, in the increase of every grace, our union with him is more express and confirmed, and our likeness and nearness to him is enlarged. From him, as from the Head, the whole body, and every member thereof, hath all those spiritual supplies, whereby their union with him is expressed, and their communion among themselves is acted and carried on. For the union and communion of the church doth not consist in things of outward order, and supposed decency, but in the fit joining and compacting of all the members in the same body, by an effectual communication of spiritual supplies from Christ the Head, which do naturally cast every part of the body into that place and use which is designed unto them. But what do the saints themselves as members of this body? Why, every joint, every principal person on the account of gifts, grace, or office, yea, every part, every member, contributes to the edification of the whole, and the increase of grace in it, which is the end of all this communion. But how is this done, how is their part acted? Saith the apostle, It is done by love. The foundation of it lies in their 'speaking the truth in love,' *αληθευοντες εν αγαπη*, holding, believing, professing the truth, so as to exercise mutual love thereby. In whatsoever we manage the truth, in all that we have to do in the profession of it, in speaking, preaching, conference, instruction, it is all to be managed in love to the whole body, or we had as good let it alone. And the end of all is edification in love; that is, either by love, *εν* for *δια*, which is frequent; or in love, seeing, in the increase or enlargement thereof doth our edification principally consist. For as love edifieth, 1 Cor. viii. 1, is the principal

means of the edification of the church, so it is itself in its increase a principal part of edification. A church abounding in love, is a church well built up in its faith. And this also farther evinceth the necessity of this duty and grace. The communion of saints in any thing else without this, is a deceitful figment.

4. Without this love, we are of no use in the church of God. Some men seem to be very useful by their gifts, and I wish that none do pride themselves in them, or bear themselves high on them. For of themselves they are apt to puff us up. But the very truth is, that without this love, and the constant exercise of it, they are of little or no use unto the true spiritual edification of the church. This our apostle doth not only plainly affirm, but also so largely argue, as we need not further insist on it, 1 Cor. xiii. For he doth not only compare the most excellent gifts of the Spirit with it, preferring it above them all; but also declares that without it no man by virtue of those gifts is of any better use in the church, than a little sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal, ver. 1—3. Wherefore we may consider,

5. That whatever grace any man may seem to have, whatever profession he may make, of whatever use he may appear to be, if he have not this love, if he live not in the exercise of it, he hath indeed no grace in truth, nor any real interest in the benefits of the gospel. Faith, where it is sincere, worketh by love, Gal. v. 6, and that which doth not so is vain, dead, and useless, James ii. 14—16. If we love one another, we are born of God, and know God; if we do not, we know not God, whatever we pretend, for God is love, 1 John iv. 7, 8. And many other considerations of the like nature might be called over, from whence it is manifest what ground the apostle had to lay so great weight as he doth on that love which he had observed among the Hebrews.

I cannot pass by this subject wholly without a little farther pressing the necessity of the obtaining and due exercise of this grace. I know not how it comes to pass, but so it is, that men are harassed continually about want of love, with writings keen and invective, yet little fruits do we see to come thereof. And the plain reason of it is, because the love which men so contend for, is confined to that practice in and of ecclesiastical communion, whose measures they have fixed to themselves. If you will do thus and thus, go in such or such ways so or so far, leave off such ways of fellowship in the gospel as you have embraced, and think according unto the mind of God, then you have love, else you have none at all. How little either unity or love hath been promoted by such principles and practices, is now evident yea how much divisions, animosities, and mutual alienations of minds and affections, have been increased by them. For my part, I should be sorry that any man living should outgo me in earnest desires that all the people of God were agreed and united, as in faith and love, so also in the same way of worship, in all things. However, I know my desires unto that end are sincere. But that there can be no love or no due exercise of it, until that be accomplished, I am not persuaded, I do not believe; yea I judge that if ever it be, it will rather be the effect and fruit of love, than the cause of it. Let us therefore

all lay hold on the present season, and not lose the exercise of love whilst we contend about it. I know no way wherein I judge that any who fear God in the world do walk at this day, that is in and of itself inconsistent with gospel love, or a real obstruction to the exercise of it. If any such there be, it is really to be abhorred. And the more semblance there is of such an evil in any opinion, way, or practice, the more it is to be suspected. But to charge this upon the gathering of the professors of the gospel and obedience unto Christ, into particular congregations, or especial societies for church administrations, hath an appearance at least of envy, ill-will, and ignorance. For none of the institutions of Christ, such as this is, can either directly, or by any just consequences, obstruct that love which he requireth of his disciples, and which indeed they are all suited to promote. And this of particular churches, is an effect of the wisdom of Christ, providing a way for the constant and due exercise of that love towards some, which is to be extended unto all as opportunities are offered. And those who would persuade us to forsake these assemblies, and to break up these societies, that returning into the larger communion of the many, we may have and exercise love, do but persuade us to cast away our food that we may be strong, and to throw away our clothes that we may be warm.

Let us therefore not wait for other seasons, nor think any outward thing previously necessary unto the due discharge of this great duty of the gospel. We are in our way, let us go about our work. And I shall only at present give a few cautions against the common hindrances of it, because it must yet be spoken to again immediately.

1. Take heed of a froward natural temper. Wherever this is predominant, it either weakens love, or sullies the glory of its exercise. Some good persons have naturally so much of the Nabal in them, that a man scarce knows how to converse with them. They mingle all the sweet fruits of love with so much harshness and sourness, as makes them ungrateful to those who most need them. I think it is a mistake, that grace only subdues our sinful corruptions: it will, if cared for and used as it ought, cure our natural dispositions, so far as any evil, or occasion of evil, is as it were incorporated with them. If it maketh not the froward meek, the angry patient, the peevish and morose sweet and compliant, how doth it make the leopard lie down with the kid, and the wolf dwell with the lamb? Isa. xi. 6. And it is not enough considered how great a lustre is put upon the exercise of love, when it is accompanied with a natural condescension, compliance, and benignity.

2. Watch against the disadvantages of an outward condition. Those of high degree are usually encompassed with so many circumstances of distance, that they know not how to break through them, unto that familiarity of love that ought to be among believers. But as the gospel, on all civil or secular accounts, leaves unto men all their advantages of birth, education, offices, power, manner of converse, free and entire, so with respect unto things purely spiritual, it lays all level among believers. In Jesus Christ, there is neither Jew nor Greek, barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free, but all are one in Christ, and

it is the new creature alone that makes the difference. Hence in all affairs of the church, we are forbidden to have any respect unto the outward state and condition of men, James ii. 1—5. We all serve the same common Lord and Master, who, when he was rich, for our sakes became poor. And if we for his sake lay not aside the consideration of all our riches, with that distance of mind and conversation from the poorest saints, we do not act as becometh his disciples. I speak not now of the laying out of men's wealth for the use of the poor, but of lowliness of mind, in condescending unto a brotherly communion in love with the meanest of them. Let therefore the greatest know, that there is no duty of spiritual love that unbecomes them. And if their state and condition keep them from that communion of love which is required of all believers, it is their snare and temptation. If they converse not familiarly with the lowest of them as they have occasion, if they visit them not when it is requisite, if they bear them not in their hearts and minds as their especial church relation requires, they sin against the law of this holy love.

3. Watch against provocations. Whilst we and others are encompassed with the body of our infirmities, we shall meet with what we may be prone so to esteem. Where men are apt to turn every infirmity, every failing, every neglect, and it may be every mistake, into a provocation, and to take offence thereat, never expect any thing of love from such persons. For as their frame is a fruit of pride and self conceit, so it is diametrically opposite unto all the principal actings of love described by our apostle, 1 Cor. xiii. 4—7.

4. Take heed of resting satisfied in the outward duties of love, without the inward workings of it, as also in an apprehension of inward affections, without outward fruits. Men may have a conviction, that all the outward duties of love, in warning, admonishing, comforting, relieving with outward supplies, are to be attended unto, and may accordingly be exercised in them, and yet exercise little real love in them all. Hence our apostle supposeth that a man may give all his goods to feed the poor, and yet have no charity, 1 Cor. xiii. 2. All fruit partakes of the nature of the root. If the good we do in these kinds proceed only from conviction of duty, and not from fervent love, they will prove but hay and stubble that will burn in their trial.

Secondly. With this love, as an eminent adjunct of it, the apostle expresseth the labour of it, 'the labour of love,' *κοπος της αγαπης*: laboriosa charitas, 'laborious love,' saith Beza. Laboris ex charitate suscepti, Eras. 'the labour undergone on the account of love,' that is, in the exercise of it. *Κοπος* is such a kind of labour as is attended with much difficulty and trouble, a painful labour. A lazy love, like that described by the apostle, James ii. 15, 16, and which most men satisfy themselves withal, is no evidence of a saving faith. But we are here taught that love, if it be true, is laborious and diligent; or great and difficult labour is required unto love in its due exercise. It is not unto love itself absolutely, but unto its exercise, that this labour is required; yet this exercise is such as is inseparable from the grace itself. And this is necessary upon the account of the difficulties that lie in its way, and the opposition that it meets withal.

These make a work laborious and painful. Faith and love are generally looked on as easy and common things; but it is by them who have them not. As they are the only springs of all obedience towards God, and usefulness towards men, so they meet with the greatest oppositions from within and from without. I shall name some few of those which are most effectual, and least taken notice of. As,

1. Self-love. This is diametrically opposed unto it. Self-love is the making a man's self his own centre, the beginning and ending of all that he doth. It makes men grudge every drop of good that falls besides themselves; and whoever is under the power of it, will not willingly and cheerfully do that for another, which he thinks he can do for himself. This is the measure of self: whatever is added unto it, it doth not satisfy, it would still have more; and whatever goeth from it, on one account or other, it is too much, it doth not please. Unless this be in some good measure subdued, mortified, and cast out, there can be no exercise of love. And hereunto labour is required. For man being turned off from God, is wholly turned into himself. And without a holy violence unto all our affections as naturally depraved, we can never be freed from an inclination to centre all in self. And these things are directly contradictory. Self-love, and love of the saints, are like two buckets; proportionably unto the rising of the one, the other goeth down. Look unto what degree soever we arise in self-love, whatever else we do, and whatever our works may be, to the same proportion do we sink in Christian love.

2. Evil surmises rise up with no small efficacy against the exercise of love. And they are apt on various accounts to insinuate themselves into the minds of men, when they are called unto the discharge of this duty. One thing or other from this depraved affection which our nature is obnoxious to, shall be suggested to weaken our hearts and hands in what we are about. And it requires no small spiritual labour to cast out all such surmises, and to give up ourselves to the conduct of that charity which 'suffereth long and is kind, which beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things,' 1 Cor. xiii. 7.

3. Distrust of God's promises as to supplies for ourselves. Men are afraid that if they should enlarge themselves in a way of bounty towards others, which is one duty of love, they may in time be brought even to want themselves, at least, as unto that proportion of supplies which they judge necessary. It were endless to recount the sacred promises which give assurance of the contrary. Nor can any one instance in the whole world be produced unto this purpose. But these are looked upon as good words by the most, but are not really believed. Yea men are apt to deceive their souls in supposing they believe the free promises of God concerning grace and mercy, whilst they believe not those which are annexed unto duty. For he who believeth not any promises of the gospel, believeth none. Faith doth as equally respect all God's promises, as obedience doth all his commands. And it was a good design in a reverend person, who wrote a discourse to prove from the Scripture and experience, that largeness in charity is the best and safest way of thriving in this world.

4. Where the objects of this exercise of love are multiplied, weariness is apt to befall us, and insensibly to take us off from the whole. The wisdom and providence of God do multiply objects of love and charity, to excite us to more acts of duty; and the corruption of our hearts with self-love useth the consideration of them, to make us weary of all. Men would be glad to see an end of the trouble and charge of their love, when that only is true which is endless. Hence our apostle in the next verse expresseth his desire, that these Hebrews should not faint in their work, but show the same diligence unto the full assurance of hope unto the end; see Gal. vi. 9. And if we faint in spiritual duties because of the increase of their occasions, it is a sign that what we have done already, did not spring from the proper root of faith and love. What is done in the strength of nature and conviction, howsoever vigorous it may be for a season, in process of time will decay and expire. And this is the reason why so many fail in the course of their profession. All springs of obedience that lie in convictions, and the improvement of natural abilities under them, will at one time or other fade and dry up. And where we find ourselves to faint or decay in any duties, our first inquiry should be after the nature of their spring and principle. Only the Spirit of God is living water that never fails. So the prophet tells us, 'that even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fail,' Isa. xl. 30. They who seem to be the strongest and most vigorous in the performance of any duties, yet if they have nothing but their own strength, the ability of nature under convictions to trust unto, they will and shall faint and utterly fail. For that such are intended is manifest from the opposition in the next words; but 'they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint,' ver. 31. If our strength and duties be derived by faith from God, the more we engage in them, the more it will be increased. 'The way of the Lord is strength to the upright,' Prov. x. 29. Where we are upright in the way of God, the very way itself will supply us with new strength continually; and we shall go from strength unto strength, Ps. lxxxiv. 7, from one strengthening duty unto another, and not be weary. But hereunto diligence and labour also is required. From these and the like considerations it is, that the apostle here mentioneth the industrious labour of love that was in the Hebrews, as an evidence of their saving faith and sincerity.

The next thing expressed in these words, is the evidence they gave of this labour of love, and the means whereby the apostle came to know it. They showed it, *επεδείξατε*, 'ye have shown or manifested it.' The same word that James useth in the same case, *δείξον μοι*, ch. ii. 18, 'show me thy faith by thy works,' declare it, make it manifest. And a man may show a thing two ways: 1. By the doing of it. 2. By declaring what he hath done. He that works visibly in his calling, shows his work by what he doth. And he who works in secret may declare it as he hath occasion. It is in the first sense that the Hebrews showed their labour of love, and that James requires us to show our faith and works. The things themselves are intended, which

cannot but be manifest in their due performance. To show the labour of love, is to labour in the duties of it, as that it shall be evident. Yet this self-evidencing power of the works of love, is a peculiar property of those that are some way eminent. When we abound in them, and when the duties of them are above the ordinary sort and rate, then are we said to show them, that is, they become conspicuous and eminent. To that purpose is the command of our Saviour, Matt. v. 16, 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.' Not only let it shine, but let it so shine, which respects the measure and degree of our obedience; and herein are we required so to abound that our works may be evident unto all. If they will take no notice of them for their good, if they will revile us and reproach us for our good works, as though they were evil works, which is the way of the world towards most duties of gospel obedience, they themselves must answer for their blindness: our duty it is so to abound in them, as that they may be discerned and seen of all who do not either shut their eyes out of prejudice against what we are, or turn their faces from them out of dislike of what we do. Nothing is to be done by us that it may be seen: but what may be seen is to be done that God may be glorified. Wherefore these Hebrews showed the work of faith and the labour of love, by a diligent attendance unto, and an abundant performance of the one and the other.

3. The end, or reason, or cause of their performance of these duties, which gives them spirit and life, rendering them truly Christian and acceptable unto God, is added, *εις το ονομα αυτου*, 'towards his name.' Some would have *εις το ονομα*, to be put for *εν τη ονοματι*, 'in his name;' which also may bear the sense here intended. But 'towards his name,' is more emphatical. And we may observe, 1. That in this place it respects not the whole work of these Hebrews, the work of faith before mentioned, but it is peculiarly annexed unto the labour of love, the labour of love towards his name. 2. That it was the saints that were the immediate object of that love; as is declared in the words ensuing, 'in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.' Wherefore it is a love unto the saints on the account of the name of God, that is intended. And this love unto the saints is towards the name of God on three accounts. 1. Objectively, because the name of God is upon them; they are the family that is called after his name. Of him the whole family of them in heaven and earth is named, Eph. iii. 15. They are the family of God, or household of God, ch. ii. 19, the saints of the Most High, Dan. vii. 27. The name of God is upon them, and therefore what is done unto them is done towards the name of God, whether it be good or evil. 2. Formally, because their relation unto God is the reason why they laboured in love towards them. This is that which gives this love its especial nature, when it is exercised towards any, merely on the account of their relation unto God, because they are his, because his name is called on them. 3. Efficiently. The name of God is his authority and will: God requires this labour of love of us: it is his will and command; and, therefore, whatever we do in the discharge of it, we do it towards

his name, that is, with a reverence of, and regard unto his will and authority. The whole, therefore, of this duty rightly performed, begins and ends with the name of God. Hence, we may observe, that,

Obs. III. It is a due regard unto the name of God that gives life, spirituality, and acceptance unto all the duties of love which we perform towards others. Great things have been done in the world, with a great appearance of love, which yet have been all lost as to the glory of God, and the spiritual advantage of them by whom they have been done. Some have been lost from a principle of superstition, some from a design of merit, some from vain glory, or a desire of reputation, by being seen of men. And many other ways there are whereby men may lose the benefit of what they have wrought. Now, whereas this labour of love is a duty which hath so many difficulties attending it, as we have before declared, it is of the highest concernment unto us to take care that what we do therein be not lost. Unless it be done with respect unto the command of God, and so be a part of the obedience of faith, unless it be influenced with a regard of their relation unto God, and his peculiar concernment in them towards whom our love is exercised, it will not endure the trial, when the fire of it shall consume all hay and stubble. What we do in this kind, is so to be done as that the Lord Christ may own it as done to himself in the first place.

Again. There is the object of this love in its exercise, and they are οἱ ἅγιοι, 'the saints.' And they are considered either as to their general condition and qualification, which is expressed, 'they are saints;' or as unto their particular state and circumstances, they are such as stand in need to be ministered unto.

1. They are saints. There is nothing more evident than that all true believers, and all those who upon their profession are presumed so to be, are in the New Testament styled saints. For ἅγιοι are the same with κλητοι, Rom. i. 7, ἁγιαζόμενοι, Heb. ii. 11, ἡγιασμένοι ἐν Χριστῷ, 1 Cor. i. 2. Saints are the same with 'called and sanctified in Jesus Christ.' Every believer is sanctified; and every one who is not sanctified, is no true believer; so that believers and saints are the same. But the atheism of this age hath made it a reproach among many once to use the name; and with some this appellation is restrained unto such as are canonized or deified by themselves. Chrysostome is express to our purpose on this place. Ταῦτα ἀκονόντες παρακαλῶ, διακονῶμεν τοῖς ἁγίοις. Πας γὰρ πιστός ἅγιος, καθ' ὃ πιστός ἐστὶ. Καὶ κοσμικὸς ἢ τις, ἅγιος ἐστίν. 'Hearing these things, I beseech you let us minister unto the saints. For every believer, inasmuch as he is a believer, is a saint. Although he be a secular person,' (which he mentions in opposition to their imagination who confined saintship unto monks,) 'he is a saint;' which he proves by testimonies that they are sanctified. These saints, therefore, were the disciples of Christ, professors of the gospel, presumed in charity to be true believers, and therefore real saints.

2. They are supposed to be in such an outward condition as to stand in need of being administered unto; they were in some kind of wants

or distresses. And such was in an especial manner the condition of the saints at that time among the Hebrews. Their poverty was such as that our apostle in many places, perhaps in all where the gospel had success, made collections for them. And as he pressed the Gentile believers to a contribution unto this purpose, with weighty arguments, Rom. xv. 25—27, so he looked on his duty herein of so great importance, that he earnestly requests that his discharge of it might be accepted with God, and by the poor saints themselves, ver. 30, 31. And where any churches had largely ministered in this kind, he rejoiceth in it, as that which would tend to the unspeakable advancement of the glory of God's grace, 2 Cor. ix. 11—15. And this duty was the apostle most careful in, as that wherein he gave a testimony to the change of the church estate of the Old Testament. All the Jews before, all the world over, did send their oblations in things dedicated—silver and gold, unto the temple. And if they made any proselytes among the Gentiles, the first thing they did was to cause them to acknowledge their obedience, by sending gifts to the treasury of the temple; and that this was done from all parts of the Roman empire, was known and complained of. Wherefore, our apostle declares that the old church state was now changed, and that the believing saints were become the only temple of God. And, therefore, from all those whom he made proselytes of, or won to the faith of Christ, he calleth a benevolence for that temple, or the poor saints in Judea. This, therefore, was an eminent duty in that place and at that season. For this poverty and these exigencies they were cast under on many accounts. For at that time they were under great oppressions and devastations by the covetousness and rapine of their rulers, the Roman governors. And the whole nation was every day vexed by seditious persons, and prevailing multitudes of robbers. And these things were common unto them with others. But, moreover, they were exposed in particular for the profession of the gospel unto great persecution, wherein in an especial manner their goods were spoiled, and their persons brought under various distressing calamities, as our apostle declares, ch. x. 32—34. Besides, generally those who gave up their names to Christ were of the lower sort of the people,—the poor among them receiving the gospel. All these things declare their wants to have been great, besides other incidents of life that might befall them unto their distress. These were they unto whom the Hebrews ministered, whose condition put an eminence on that duty.

But it may be said, that if this were their state, how could any of them, or how could the church in general, thus labour in love, by administering unto the wants of others, when they themselves were even overwhelmed with their own? I answer, 1. We do not, I fear, sufficiently understand what was the frame and spirit of those first believers; and out of how very little of their own they would administer unto the greater necessities of others, that there might be no lack in the body. So the apostle tells us that in the church of Macedonia, when they were under trials, afflictions, persecutions, their deep poverty abounded with the riches of liberality, 2 Cor. viii. 2. In their own great poverty, and under persecution, they contributed largely

unto the necessity of others. For us who are apt to think that there are so many things necessary, that we may minister unto the poor saints, as so much wealth at least, so much provision for our own families, peace and some kind of quietness in what we enjoy, it is no wonder if we cannot so easily understand what is affirmed of that labour of love which was among the primitive believers. They gave freely and liberally out of their poverty, and amidst their troubles;—we can scarce part with superfluities in peace. 2. It is not improbable but that there might be some in the church, who, escaping the common calamities of the most, were able to contribute bountifully to the necessity of others; and their discharge of duty is reckoned by the apostle unto the whole church, whilst in the rest there was a willing mind, whence they were judged and accepted according to what they had, and not according to what they had not. And those who have ability in any church, should do well to consider that the honour and reputation of the whole church, in the sight of God and man, depends much on their diligence and bounty in the discharge of this duty. Hence is that peculiar direction of our apostle unto Timothy with respect unto this sort of persons: ‘Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, or trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy, that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate,’ 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18, 3. The contribution of outward things is but one way of ministration unto the saints, but one part of this duty. There are spiritual aids and assistances in visiting, exhorting, comforting that belong thereto. And herein all may be sedulously conversant, though poor and low in the world. 4. It is very probable that the whole church was very careful and diligent in looking out for help and assistance where it was needed, beyond what they had ability to supply. And hereby did they no less exercise their love, than in what they did personally themselves. For it is an ordinance of Christ, that where churches are, through persecution or poverty, rendered unable to minister unto the necessities of the poor among them, they should seek for relief from other persons or churches, walking in the same profession of the faith and order of the gospel with themselves. Wherefore, 5. The intendment of this expression is, that they industriously exercised love towards all the saints, every one according to his ability and capacity, and more is not required.

Lastly. The especial manner of the exercise of this labour of love is called ministration, and the especial object thereof is the saints, of whom we have spoken already. And concerning this ministration, the apostle ascribes it unto them with respect unto what was past, and what they did at present, both which were necessary to found the judgment on which he made concerning them: ‘You have ministered, and you do minister.’

Διακονία, is a laborious and industrious ministry. And this in the church is twofold. 1. Of especial office. 2. Of common love and charity. The rise, occasion, and institution of an especial office or ministry towards the poor, is at large declared, Acts vi, and mentioned afterwards by our apostle as an abiding ordinance, Rom. xii. 7; 1 Tim.

iii. 8—13. And this ministration is comprised herein, though not solely intended. For what is done by these deacons, being done in the name, and by the appointment, and out of the charity of the church, is to be esteemed the ministration of the church itself. And though there be a peculiar faithfulness and diligence required in the persons called unto this ministration, yet the ministration itself will abound or be straitened according as the whole church dischargeth its duty. But the common ministration of brotherly love, what every one doth or ought to do in his own person, is here intended. And therein six things may be considered not here to be insisted on. As, 1. The root, spring, and cause of it, which is love. 2. The manner of its performance, which is with labour and diligence. 3. The object of it, or the saints in wants, troubles, straits, or necessities. 4. The acts of it, which are many and various; the chief whereof are, First. Visiting of them. Secondly. Advice and counsel. Thirdly. Consolation. Fourthly. Supplies of their wants by outward things. 5. Endeavours in the use of means for their full relief. 1st. With God, in continual prayers and supplications. 2d. With men according unto our interests and advantages, not being ashamed or afraid to own them in their poverty, distresses, and sufferings. 6. The rule of this ministration is every man's (1.) opportunity, (2.) ability, (3.) especial call by objective circumstances. But these things I must not here enlarge upon.

This is that on the observation whereof the apostle grounds his persuasion concerning these Hebrews expressed in the verse foregoing. And herein he gives us the true character of a church of sound believers. They are such a society, as being called into the fellowship and order of the gospel, do walk in faith, expressing it in fruits of obedience, carefully and diligently exercising love towards one another, on the account of the name of God, especially with a continual regard unto them who suffer or are in any distress. These are things indeed which accompany salvation. And we may observe in our passage,

Obs. IV. That it is the will and pleasure of God, that many of his saints be in a condition in this world, wherein they stand in need of being ministered unto. Hereof, as to the distinction of persons, why these shall be poor, afflicted, tempted, tried in the fire, and not others, no direct reason can be given but the sovereignty of God, which is to be submitted unto. And those whose especial lot it is to be thus exercised, may do well to consider always, 1. That this will and pleasure of God is accompanied with infinite wisdom and holiness, so as that there is no unrighteousness therein. 2. That they shall not be final losers by their poor afflicted condition. God will make all up unto them, both here and to eternity. And if there were no more in it but this, that they are brought thereby to a clearer foresight of, and more earnest longings after eternal rest and glory, they have a sufficient recompense in their hands for all their sufferings. 3. That God might have put them with others into such pastures here, only to have been fatted against the day of slaughter. Let them but consider how much spiritual and eternal mercies, wherein they are interested, do exceed things temporal, they will find they have no cause to complain. 4. Whereas it is for the glory of God, and the benefit of the church, that

some should be peculiarly in an afflicted condition, they ought even to rejoice that God hath chosen them to use them as he pleaseth unto those ends. But for the thing itself, the reasons of it are revealed and manifest. For, 1. God hereby gives testimony unto all, that the good things, as they are esteemed, of this world, are no tokens or pledges of his love, and that he hath better things in store for them whom he careth for. He doth hereby cast contempt on the desirable things of the world, and testifieth that there are better things to be received, even in this life, than whatever is of the number of them. For had not God better things to bestow on his saints in this world than any the world can afford, he would not withhold these from them, so far at least as that they should be straitened in their want. Wherefore, in this dispensation of his providence, he doth testify unto all, that internal spiritual mercies, such as his saints enjoy, are incomparably to be preferred above all things of that kind wherein he keeps them short, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. 2. He maketh way hereby for the vigorous fruitful exercise of all the graces of his Spirit, namely, in the various conditions whereinto the members of the church are cast. And let every one look to it and know, that according unto his outward condition in the world, whether it be of want or abundance, there is a peculiar exercise of grace unto the glory of God required of him. It is expected from all that are high or low, rich or poor, free or in distress, not only that they live in the exercise of all grace in general, but also that they diligently endeavour an abounding fruitfulness in those graces, whose exercise their special condition calleth for. And, secondly, we are here taught that,

Obs. V. The great trial of our love consists in our regard to the saints that are in distress.—That is the foundation of the commendation of the love of these Hebrews—they ministered unto them. Either love, or at least an appearance of love, will be easily preserved, where we have little or no need of one another. But when the exercise of it proves costly, when it puts us unto charge or trouble, or into danger, as it doth more or less when it is exercised towards them that are in distress, then is it brought unto its trial. And in such a season we have experience, that the love of many is so far from bringing forth more fruit, as that the very leaves of it fall off, and they give over its profession. Wherefore,

Obs. VI. It is the glory and honour of a church, the principal evidence of its spiritual life, when it is diligent and abounds in those duties of faith and love, which are attended with the greatest difficulties.—From hence doth the apostle commend these Hebrews, and firmly persuades himself that they were endued with those better things which accompany salvation. For hereby, as we might show, 1. God is singularly glorified; 2. The gospel is peculiarly promoted; 3. An especial lustre is put upon the graces of the Spirit, and 4. All the ends of Satan and the world in their persecutions, are utterly frustrated.

All these things have we spoken concerning the first ground of the apostle's persuasion of the good spiritual estate at present of these Hebrews, and their future eternal safety, namely, that work of faith and labour of love which he had observed in them.

The other ground of his persuasion is taken from the righteousness of God: 'God is not unrighteous to forget your work;' *οὐ γὰρ ἀδίκος ὁ Θεός*. I intimated before that the word used by the apostle to express the frame of his mind in this matter, *πεπεισμεθα*, 'we are persuaded,' ver. 9, is applied sometimes to denote the infallible certainty of faith, and sometimes the moral certainty of charity. In this place it hath respect to a double object or reason. 1. What was in the professing Hebrews, their faith and love. Hereof he could have no assurance or certainty beyond a moral persuasion, or the satisfaction of a charitable judgment. But on this supposition, his persuasion had another object, namely, the righteousness of God in the stability of his promises, whence he had infallible assurance, or did conclude infallibly unto what he was persuaded of.

The righteousness of God sometimes denotes the absolute rectitude, and perfect goodness of his nature; and hereunto all other acceptations of the word as applied unto God are to be reduced. Sometimes the equity of the holy dispensations of his justice, whereby he renders unto every one what is their due, according unto the nature of things and his holy appointments, is so called. And sometimes particularly his vindictive justice, whereby he avengeth sin, and punisheth sinners, is so expressed. Sometimes, yea frequently, the fidelity of God in keeping and accomplishing his promises, is called his righteousness. For it belongeth unto the absolute rectitude of his nature so to do. So saith the apostle, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins,' 1 John i. 9. The forgiveness of sins is, on all accounts, an act of mercy which is contradistinguished unto righteousness in judgment strictly so called, James ii. 13. Wherefore that righteousness which is exercised in the pardon of sin, is no other but the faithfulness of God in the promises of the covenant; he hath promised, that he who confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall find mercy. Hence it is just with God to forgive their sins who do so. And this is the righteousness that is here principally intended. For the righteousness whereby God rewardeth the works that are wrought in men by his own grace, is the same with that whereby he forgiveth their sins, equally respecting the covenant and the promises thereof. For without the consideration hereof, strict or exact righteousness, could he neither pardon sin, nor reward our works, which being imperfect, do no way answer the rule which it doth or can proceed by. In this sense is God here said, not to be unrighteous to forget their work, that is, to be righteous so as not to forget it. He will have that respect to it which he hath graciously promised in the covenant, because he is righteous, that is, faithful in his promises. And that no other righteousness can be here intended, is evident from hence, because no work of ours doth answer the rule of any other righteousness in God.

Again. We must inquire what it is, not to forget their work, *ἐπιλαθεσθαι του εργου*. And this may respect either the preserving of it for the present, or the future rewarding of it.

1. It is not an unfrequent temptation unto believers, that God so far disregards them as not to take care of graces or duties in them, to cherish and preserve them. See the complaints of the church to this

purpose, Isa. xl. 27, 28, xlix. 14, 'God hath forgotten me.' This is here denied: God is not unrighteous to forget us or our work, so as not to cherish and preserve it. So the apostle expresseth the same persuasion concerning the Philippians, as he doth here of the Hebrews, Phil. i. 6, 'Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will preserve it until the day of Jesus Christ.' He is not unrighteous to forget it. God hath in the covenant of grace promised to preserve the faith and love of his people, that they should not perish nor be lost. Wherefore having begun a good work, and your having made some good progress in compliance with his grace, he is not unrighteous so as to forget his covenant engagement, but will preserve you, and your graces in you, unto the end; which is the sum of that great prayer of the apostle for all believers, 1 Pet. v. 10.

2. Respect may be had herein to the future and final reward of the faith, love, and works of believers. For this also belongs unto God's covenant. And it is so of grace, as that the righteousness of God wherein it is due unto us, can be no other but that of his faithfulness in his promises. For neither we nor our works are capable of an eternal reward by the way of merit, *i. e.* that the reward should be reckoned unto us not of grace but of debt, Rom. iv. 4. And that which utterly overthrows such an apprehension is, that God himself is our eternal reward, Gen. xv. 1. And I leave it unto others to consider how they can deserve that reward. Whether of these senses he will embrace, the reader is left to determine for himself. The former seems to me more suited to the design of the apostle, and scope of the place. For he is satisfying these Hebrews that he made another judgment of them, than of those apostates whose condition he had before described. And this he doth on two grounds. First. That they were actually made partakers of sincere saving grace, and therein things that accompany salvation; and then that God in his faithfulness would preserve and secure that grace in them, against all oppositions unto the end. Following this sense of the words, we may learn that,

Obs. VII. Our perseverance in faith and obedience, though it require our duty and constancy therein, yet it depends not on them absolutely, but on the righteousness of God in his promises.—Or if we had rather embrace the other sense of the words, then are we sufficiently instructed, that,

Obs. VIII. Nothing shall be lost that is done for God, or in obedience unto him.—He is not unjust to forget our labour of love. And,

Obs. IX. The certainty of our future reward depending on the righteousness of God, is a great encouragement unto present obedience.

VER. 11.—*Επιθυμουμεν δε έκαστον ύμων την αυτην ενδεικνυσθαι σπουδην προς την πληροφοριαν της ελπίδος αχρι τελους.*

There is not much difficulty as to the signification of these words, and therefore, both ancient and modern translations generally are agreed in the interpretation of them. The Vulg. Lat. renders *ενδεικνυσθαι σπουδην*, by *ostentare sollicitudinem*. But *ostentare* is

most frequently used for ostendere gloriandi causa, as Festus saith, though properly it seems to be a frequentative, to 'show often,' and is improper in this place. Nor doth sollicitudinem well answer σπουδην, which the Syriac renders by ܣܬܝܒܬܐ, 'sedulity, diligence, industry.' Studium ostendere, say most, and most properly. Την πληροφοριαν της ελπιδος. Syr. ܐܕܬܡܝܢܐ, ad complementum, to the completing or perfection of hope. Vul. Lat. ad expletionem spei, which our Rhemists render by, 'the accomplishing of hope;' the fulfilling of hope. Bez. ad certam spei persuasionem, whereunto answers our translation, 'to the full assurance of hope.' Others, ad plenam spei certitudinem, most properly.

Επιθυμουμεν. Επιθυμew is, 'earnestly to desire;' whence is επιθυμια, 'concupiscence,' libido, an 'earnest,' and mostly, an 'impetuous desire.' So the philosopher defined οργη, that it was επιθυμια τιμωριας, which Cicero renders, ira, libido puniendi, both from the original derivation of it; a 'desire that invades the mind,' an 'earnest vehement desire.'

Δε, we render and: 'and we desire;' 'but yet,' or 'moreover.' The same with what is more largely expressed, 2 Pet. i. 5, και αυτο τουτο δε, 'and besides all this,' besides what is past.

Ενδεικνυσθαι, to 'manifest,' that is, evince it unto all, by the same performance of duties, that do not decay in faith or love might be observed in them, or suspected of them.

Σπουδη is rendered 'study, diligence, endeavour.' But it is such a diligence as hath an earnestness accompanying it: that is, as it were, making haste in pressing towards the end and accomplishment of anything or business. And it doth always denote great and earnest diligence, with study and desire. It is used to this purpose, 2 Pet. i. 5.

Προς την πληροφοριαν. Πληροφορια, is, saith Hesychius, βεβαιωσις, firmitas, certitudo, 'stability.' It is plena fides, plena persuasio, certa fides, 'a sure, stable, firm, certain faith, or persuasion.' The Vulgar Latin constantly renders this word, as also the verb, πληροφορεω, by some word denoting filling or completing, taking its signification from the first part in the composition. But whatever be the native signification of the single words whereof it is compounded, or with respect unto what allusion soever the signification was first fixed, it is certain, that in the best authors, as in the Scripture, it expresseth a full satisfactory persuasion of mind, or the highest assurance in anything, which, from the nature of it, we are capable of.

VER. 11.—*And we (earnestly) desire, that every one of you do manifest the same diligence, unto the full assurance of hope unto the end.*

Although the apostle, in these words and those ensuing, as is usual with him, taketh a prospect towards his further progress, making way, by them and in them, unto his discourse concerning Melchisedec, which he hath intermitted, whence some would here begin the third part of the chapter; yet he plainly pursues his former argument, and gives an express account of his whole design therein. For first, he manifests directly, what was his intention in proposing unto them, that

terrible commination and prediction concerning apostates, ver. 4—8. Although for certain ends he spake those things unto them, yet he lets them know, that he spake them not of them. He thought not that they were such at present as he had described, nor that that would be their future lot or portion, which he had threatened and foretold. As he had freed them from any fears or apprehensions of that nature in the two verses foregoing, so in these he declareth what was his certain purpose and intention in the use of that commination. Now, this was solely thereby to excite and provoke them unto a diligent persevering continuance in faith and love, with their fruits and effects, which is the first and principal end whereunto the proposal of such threatenings is designed and sanctified of God. All that I have said, is unto this end.

Again. He had newly given an account of his real thoughts and judgment, concerning them and their spiritual condition. And upon his satisfaction therein, as that which was attended with things which accompany salvation, he had given them assurance of a blessed issue of their faith and profession, from the faithfulness of God, making therein an application of the promises of the gospel unto them. Hereon he lets them know, what by the appointment of God, and the law of our obedience, is required of them, that they might answer the judgment which he had made concerning them, and bring them unto the enjoyment of the promises proposed unto them. And this was that diligent progress in faith and obedience unto the end, which he describes in this and the next verse.

And herein the apostle, with great wisdom, acquaints these Hebrews with the proper end and use of gospel threatenings and promises, wherein men are apt to be mistaken, and so to abuse the one and the other. For threatenings have been looked on as if they had no other end or use, but to terrify the minds of men, and to cause them to despond, as if the things threatened, must unavoidably come upon them. Hence, some have fancied that they belong not unto the dispensation of the gospel, as it is to be preached unto believers; and few have known how to make a due application of them unto their consciences. And it is to be feared, that the end and use of God's promises hath been so far mistaken, as some have suffered themselves to be imposed on by the deceitfulness of sin, and to be influenced by the consideration of them, into carelessness and security, as though, do what they would, no evil could befall them. But our apostle here discovereth the joint end of them, both towards believers or professors of the gospel, which is to stir up and encourage them, unto their utmost constant persevering diligence in all duties of obedience. And it is no small part of the duty and wisdom of the ministers of the gospel, to instruct their hearers in, and press upon them, the proper use and due improvement of the promises and threatenings of God.

In this verse, or the words of it which are an exhortation to duty we may observe. 1. The connexion of it with the former discourse. 2. The duty exhorted unto, the same diligence. 3. The manner of its performance; that they would manifest or show it. 4. The end aimed at in that duty, 'the full assurance of hope.' 5. The continuation of

it, 'unto the end.' 6. The manner of his exhortation unto it, 'we desire.' But though the words may be thus resolved, I shall open the parts of them in that order wherein they lie in the text.

1. For the connexion of these words with the foregoing, and therein the occasion of this discourse, in the particle *δε*, it hath been spoken unto already. It is not here adversative, but rather illative, as we before declared.

2. The next thing occurring in the words, is the manner of the exhortation, *ἐπιθυμουμεν*, 'we desire.' Chrysostome is large in this place, in the consideration of this word, and the wisdom of the apostle in the use of it. From him, *Æcumenius* observes a difference between *ἐπιθυμουμεν* and *βουλομεθα*. For they suppose that the word here used, includeth both intense affections, and earnest, diligent, actual desire. And that it doth intend an earnest desire, we showed in the consideration of the word foregoing. And the word is never used in the New Testament, but either in a bad sense, to express the impetuous acting of lust, as Matt. v. 28; Gal. v. 17, or a most fervent desiring of any thing that is good, Luke xv. 16, xvi. 21, xvii. 22, xvii. 15. And such ought to be the desire of ministers towards the profiting of their people. There will be a dead, cold, lifeless administration of the word, where ministers have not ardent desires after the profiting and stability of the hearers. How were it to be wished, that all who are called unto the care and charge of the souls of men, would continually propose unto themselves, the example of this apostle! Do we think that the care, solicitude, watchfulness, tender love and affections, earnest and fervent desires of their good, expressed in prayers, tears, travails, and dangers, which he every-where testifieth towards all the churches under his care, were duties prescribed unto him alone, or graces necessary for him only? Do we not think that they are all of them required of us according unto our measure, and the extent of our employment? The Lord help men, and open their eyes before it be too late; for either the gospel is not true, or there are few who in a due manner, discharge that ministry which they take upon them.

I say, without this earnest and fervent desire after the profiting and salvation of our people, we shall have a cold and ineffectual ministry among them. Neither is it our sedulity or earnestness in preaching, that will relieve us, if that be absent. And this desire proceeds from three principles, and that which pretends thereto, and doth not so, is but an image and counterfeit of it. And these are, 1. Zeal for the glory of God in Christ. 2. Real compassion for the souls of men. 3. An especial conscientious regard unto our duty and office, with respect unto its nature, trust, end, and reward. These are the principles that both kindle and supply fuel unto those fervent desires for the good of our people, which oil the wheels of all other duties, and speed them in their course. According as these principles flourish or decay in our minds, so will be the acceptable exercise of our ministry in the sight of Christ, and the profitable discharge of it towards the church. And we have as much need to labour for this frame in our hearts, as for any thing in the outward discharge of our duty. We must, in the first place, take heed unto ourselves, if we intend to take heed to the

flock as we ought, Acts xx. 28. And herein especially do we as we are charged, take heed to the ministry we have received, that we do fulfil it,' Col. iv. 17.

3. The persons exhorted unto the duty following, are expressed by *ἐκαστος ὑμῶν*, 'every one of you.' He had so a care of the whole flock, as to be solicitous for the good of every individual person among them. As our Lord Jesus Christ gives an account unto his Father, that of all those who were committed unto his personal ministry in this world, he had not lost any one; only the son of perdition, he who was designed to destruction: so our apostle laboured, that if it were possible, not one of those whom he watched over, should miscarry. And it is of great advantage when we can so manage our ministry, that no one of those that are committed unto us, may have any just cause to think themselves disregarded. And moreover, he shows hereby that the argument here insisted on, concerned them all. For he doth not suppose that any one of them were in such a condition of security and perfection, as not to stand in need of the utmost diligence for their preservation and progress; nor any to have so fallen under decays, but that in the use of diligence, they might be recovered. So should the love and care of ministers be extended unto all the individuals of their flocks, with an especial regard unto their respective conditions, that none on the one hand grow secure, nor any on the other hand despond or be discouraged.

4. The duty exhorted unto, wherewith we must take,

5. The manner of its performance, is that they should show the same diligence. *Ενδεικνυσθαι*, ostentare, Vulg. Lat. that is, to 'make show of,' ostendere, 'to show forth,' to manifest. *Præstare*, Eras. 'to act,' to perform; so the word is sometimes used, John x. 32, *Πολλά καλά ἔργα ἐδείξα ὑμῖν*, 'many good things have I shown you;' that is wrought and performed among you. 2 Tim. iv. 14, *Ἀλεξάνδρος ὁ χαλκεὺς πολλὰ μοι κακὰ ἐνδείξατο*, 'Alexander the copper-smith, showed me many evils,' did me much evil. It is so to do any thing, as that the doing of it may be evident and manifest. And the apostle respects not only the duty itself, but the evidence of its performance, whereon his judgment and persuasion of them was grounded. Continue in the performance of these duties, to give the same evidence of your state and condition as formerly.

And the duty itself, he expresseth by *ἐκείνην σπουδὴν*, idem studium, 'the same diligent endeavour.' Chrysostome much insists on the apostle's wisdom in this expression, the 'same diligence:' for by it, he both insinuates his approbation of what they had done already, and manifests that he required nothing of them to secure their future condition, but what they had already experience of. You have used diligence in this matter, continue so to do, which yet is not so to be interpreted, as though the apostle limited them unto their former measures. But warning them to remit in nothing which before they had engaged into, he encouraged them to proceed and grow therein. That indeed which the apostle approves in them, and exhorts them unto a continuance in, is the work of faith and labour of love in ministering unto the saints. But here he expresseth the manner wherein they had at-

tended unto those duties, and which they must continue in, unless they intended to desert the duties themselves; namely with diligence and alacrity of mind. For such were the oppositions and difficulties that they would assuredly meet withal, as we have before declared, that unless they used all diligence and watchfulness, they would more or less faint in their duty. And we may observe, that,

Obs. I. Our profession will not be preserved, nor the work of faith and love carried on, unto the glory of God and our own salvation, without a constant studious diligence, in the preservation of the one, and the exercise of the other. The reasons hereof are manifest from what hath been discoursed before, concerning the greatness and difficulty of this work, and the opposition that is made unto it. Our apostle knew nothing of that lazy kind of profession which satisfies the generality of Christians at this day. They can show all diligence in their trades, in their callings, in their studies, it may be in their pleasures, and sometimes, in the pursuit of their lusts: but for a watchful diligence, an earnest, studious endeavour in and about the duties of religion, the work of faith and love, they are strangers unto it, yea, cannot be persuaded that any such thing is required of them, or expected from them. For the duties of divine worship, they will attend unto them out of custom or conviction. For some acts of charity they may, perhaps, be sometimes drawn unto, or for their reputation they may do like others of their quality in the world. But, to project and design in their minds, how they may glorify God in the duties of faith and love, as the liberal man deviseth liberal things, to keep up an earnest bent and warmth of spirit in them, to lay hold on, and rejoice in all opportunities for them, all which are required unto this diligence, they utterly reject all such thoughts. But what do we imagine? Is there another way for us to go to heaven, than what was prescribed unto the primitive believers? Will God deal with us on more easy terms, or such as have a farther compliance with carnal ease and the flesh, than those that were given to them of old? We shall but foolishly deceive ourselves with such imaginations. But let no man mistake; these two principles are as certain and as sacred as any thing in the gospel. 1. Unless there be in us a work of faith in personal holiness, and a labour of love towards others, there is nothing in us that accompanies salvation, or will ever bring us thereunto. Let profane persons deride it whilst they please, and worldlings neglect it, and careless professors fancy to themselves an easier way unto a blessed eternity, this will be found to be the rule whereby they must all stand or fall for ever. 2. That this work of faith and labour of love will not be persisted in, nor carried on, without studious diligence and earnest endeavours. Now, unto this diligence is required; 1. The exercise of our minds with respect unto the duties of faith and love. First. In studying the rule of them, which is the word of God, wherein alone the matter of them all, and the manner of their performance are declared. Secondly. In studying and observing the occasions and opportunities for their exercise. 2. Watchfulness against oppositions, difficulties, and temptations, is also a part of this duty; for the reasons whereof, our observations on the preceding verse may be considered. 3. Readiness to

conflict with, and to go through the dangers and troubles which we may meet withal in the discharge of these duties. And, as it is evident, all these argue a frame of mind continually intent upon a design to glorify God, and to come unto the end of our course, in rest with him. That nominal Christianity which despiseth these things, will perish with the real author of it, which is the devil.

Again, the apostle exhorts them to show the same diligence which they had done, and which they continued in the exercise of; whence it appears that,

Obs. II. Ministerial exhortation unto duty, is needful even unto them who are sincere in the practice of it, that they may abide and continue therein. It is not easy to be apprehended, how God's institutions are despised by some, neglected by others, and by how few, duly improved; all for want of taking right measures of them. Some there are, who being profoundly ignorant, are yet ready to say, that they know as much as the minister can teach them, and therefore, it is to no purpose to attend unto preaching. These are the thoughts, and this is too often the language, of persons profane and profligate, who know little, and practise nothing of Christianity. Some think that exhortations unto duties, belong only unto them who are negligent and careless in their performance; and unto them, indeed, they do belong, but not unto them only, as the whole Scripture testifieth. And some, it may be, like well to be exhorted unto what they do, and do find satisfaction therein. But how few are there who look upon it as an ordinance of God whereby they are enabled for, and kept up unto their duty, wherein, indeed, their use and benefit doth consist. They do not only direct unto duty, but through the appointment of God, they are means of communicating grace unto us, for the due performance of duties.

4. The immediate end of the exercise of this diligence is, that we may attain *εις πληροφοριαν της ελπιδος*, to 'the full assurance of hope.' And three things we must consider to come into the mind of the apostle in these words. 1. What is that hope which he intends. 2. What is the full assurance of this hope. 3. How it is attainable in the exercise of this diligence.

1. The hope here intended, is a certain assured expectation of good things promised, through the accomplishment of those promises, accompanied with a love, desire, and valuation of them. Faith respects the promise, hope the thing promised; wherefore, it is a fruit and effect of faith; it being the proper acting of the soul towards things believed as good, absent, and certain. Wherefore, where our faith begets no hope, it is to be feared it is not genuine; and where our hope exceeds the evidence or assurance of our faith, it is but presumption. Now this hope concerns things absent and future, for, as our apostle saith, Rom. viii. 24, 'if we already enjoy any thing, why do we hope for it.' And this is the order of these things. God hath, in his promises, declared his goodness, purpose, and grace, in the great things he will do unto all eternity, for believers; namely, that they shall be perfectly delivered from every thing that is grievous or evil, in sin or trouble, and be brought into the full enjoyment of everlasting glory

with himself. In these promises, faith resteth on the veracity and power of God. Hereon the soul considereth those good things which are so promised, and now secured by faith, as yet absent and unenjoyed. And the actings of the soul towards them in desire, love, valuation, and a certain expectation of them as believed, is this hope. There may be a pretence of great hope where there is no faith, as it is with the most. And there may be a profession of great faith, where there is no true hope, as it is with many. But in themselves, these things are inseparable and proportionable. It is impossible we should believe the promises aright, but that we shall hope for the things promised. Nor can we hope for the things promised, unless we believe the promises. And this discards most of that pretended hope that is in the world. It doth not proceed from, it is not resolved into faith in the promises, and therefore is presumption. Yea, none have greater hopes for the most part, than such as have no faith at all.

The great use, benefit, and advantage which believers have by this grace, is the supporting of their souls under the troubles and difficulties which they meet withal upon the account of the profession of what they do believe, Rom. v. 4, 5; 1 Cor. xv. 19; 1 Thess. i. 3. Hence, in our Christian armour, it is called the 'helmet,' Eph. vi. 17. The helmet of salvation, that is, the hope of salvation, as it is expounded, 1 Thess. v. 8, 'And for an helmet, the hope of salvation.' And this is, because it bears off and keeps us from being wounded with the sharpness and weight of those strokes, which do and will befall us in troubles, persecutions, and afflictions. And hence it is manifest, that a valuation and esteem of things hoped for, are of the essence of hope. For whatever expectation we have of them, if we do not so value them, as to find a satisfactory relief in them in all our troubles, and that which may out-balance our present sufferings, hope is not genuine and truly evangelical. And this was not the condition of the Hebrews. They were exposed unto much tribulation upon the account of the profession of the gospel. And the apostle foresaw that they were yet to be exercised with things more grievous and terrible. That which they had to relieve themselves in this condition, to lay in the balance against all the evils they suffered or had to conflict withal, were the things that were promised by Christ unto them that believe and obey him. Wherefore, an assured expectation of these things, so infinitely above and beyond what they lost or underwent at present, was absolutely necessary as to their support, so unto their encouragement unto a continuance in their profession. This alone was able to preserve them from fainting and despondencies under a confluence of evils, which also God himself directs unto, Isa. xxxv. 3, 4. Wherefore, this duty our apostle frequently exhorts the Hebrews unto, in this Epistle, as that which was peculiarly suited unto them, and necessary for them in their present condition. And he lets them know, that in its due exercise, it would not only relieve and support them, but enable them, in the midst of all their troubles, to rejoice and glory; as hath been declared on ch. iii. 6.

2. There is the *πληροφορία* of this hope. The full assurance of it. Hope hath its degrees as faith hath also. There is a weak, or a little

faith, and a strong or great faith. So there is an imperfect and a more perfect hope. This full assurance is not of the nature or essence of it, but an especial degree of it in its improvement. A weak imperfect relief under trouble. But that which riseth up unto the full assurance, will complete our relief. Wherefore, as hope itself is necessary, so is this degree of it, especially where trials do abound. Yet, neither is hope in this degree absolute, or absolutely perfect. Our minds in this world, are not capable of such a degree of assurance in spiritual things, as to free us from assaults to the contrary, and impressions of fear, sometimes, from those assaults. But there is such a degree attainable, as is always victorious, which will give the soul peace at all times, and sometimes fill it with joy. This, therefore, is the assurance of hope here intended. Such a fixed, constant, prevailing persuasion, proceeding from faith in the promises, concerning the good things promised, our interest in them, and certain enjoyment of them, as will support us, and carry us comfortably through all the difficulties and troubles we have to conflict withal. And without this it is not possible that we should carry on our profession to the glory of God and the gospel, in the times of affliction and persecution. For although the least degree of sincere hope will preserve from utter apostasy, yet, unless it be confirmed and fortified, and so wrought up unto this full assurance, it cannot be, but that great and sore trials, temptations, and persecutions, will at one time or other, make such impressions on our minds, as to cause a manifold failing in the duties of profession, either as to matter or manner; as it hath fallen out with not a few sincere believers in all ages.

3. It is to be inquired how the diligence before described, tends unto this assurance of hope. And it doth so, three ways. 1. It hath its efficacy unto this purpose, from God's institution. God hath appointed this as the way and means whereby we shall come to this assurance. So is his will declared, 2 Pet. i. 10, 11, 'Give diligence to make your calling and election sure, for if you do these things, you shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be administered unto you abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.' It is the same diligence with that here in the text, which is intended, as is evident by the verses foregoing. And this hath God appointed as the means to secure unto ourselves, our calling and election, which the good things we hope for do infallibly accompany. And hereby we shall be carried through all difficulties, into the kingdom of God and of glory. 2. It hath a proper and natural tendency unto this end. For by the use of this diligence, grace is increased in us, whereby our evidences of an interest in the promises of the gospel, are cleared and strengthened. And herein doth our assurance of hope consist. 3. By our diligent attendance unto the duties of faith and love, every sin will be prevented, whereby our hope would be weakened or impaired.

5. The last thing expressed in the words is the continuance in this duty, which is required of us: and that is *αχρι τελους*, 'unto the end.' For these words belong not unto them that go immediately before, namely, the assurance of hope, which some supposing, have

rendered them harshly and improperly, 'unto its perfection.' The assurance of hope unto perfection, or until it be perfected. But the words plainly belong unto the precept itself, 'showing the same diligence unto the end.' There is no time nor season wherein we may be discharged from this duty; no condition to be attained in this life, wherein this diligence will not be necessary for us. We must, therefore, attend unto it, until we are absolutely discharged of this whole warfare. And he who is discouraged because he cannot have a dispensation from this duty in this world, he hath a heart that draweth back, and his soul is not upright in him. And we may observe,

Obs. III. Whereas there are degrees in spiritual, saving graces and their operations, we ought continually to press towards the most perfect of them. Not only are we to have hope, but we are to labour for the assurance of hope. It is one of the best evidences, that any grace is true and saving in its nature and kind, when we labour to thrive and grow in it, or to have it do so in us. This, the nature of the new creature, whereof it is a part, inclineth unto; this is the end of all the ordinances and institutions of the gospel, Eph. iv. 13. Hereby alone do we bring glory to God, adorn the gospel, grow up into conformity with Christ, and secure our own eternal welfare.

Obs. IV. Hope, being improved by the due exercise of faith and love, will grow up into such an assurance of rest, life, immortality, and glory, as shall outweigh all the troubles and persecutions that in this world may befall us, on the account of our profession or otherwise. There is nothing in the world so vain, as that common hope whereby men living in their sins do make a reserve of heaven, when they can continue here no longer. The more it thrives in the minds of any, the more desperate is their condition, it being only an endless spring of encouragements unto sin. Its beginnings are usually, indeed, but small and weak; but when it hath been so far cherished as to be able to defeat the power of convictions, it quickly grows up into presumption and security. But this hope, which is the daughter, sister, and companion of faith, the more it grows up and is strengthened, the more useful is it unto the soul, as being a living spring of encouragements unto stability in obedience. For it being once fully confirmed, it will, on every occasion of trial or temptation, give such a present existence in the mind unto future certain glories, as shall deliver it from snares and fears, and confirm it in its duty. But this also must be spoken unto afterwards.

VER. 12.—'ἵνα μὴ νωθροὶ γενησθε, μιμηταὶ δὲ τῶν διὰ πίστεως καὶ μακροθυμίας κληρονομοῦντων τὰς ἐπαγγελίας.

Νωθροὶ, segnes, 'slothful, dull;' γενησθε, sitis, efficiamini, 'be,' or 'become,' or be made. Syr. *ܘܬܐܝܬܝܢܝܢ*, ut non præcidatur, ut non abscindatur, 'that it be not cut off;' which interpreters refer unto the diligence before mentioned. The translation in the Polyglott, renders it, neque, torpescatis, as following the translation in the Jayan bibles, without choice or alteration. Indeed *ܘܬܐܝܬܝܢܝܢ* is used sometimes in the same sense with *ܘܬܐܝܬܝܢܝܢ*, to be 'weary,' to 'loath,' to be affected with

trouble, Hab. ii. 3, whence sloth and neglect of diligence ensues. But its proper and usual signification is, to 'cut off;' the same with the Hebrew גָּדַע, that you be 'not slothful.' Μιμηται δε, imitatores; and so the Rhemists render it 'imitators;' which being a word not much in use among us, and when it is used commonly taken in an ill sense, 'followers' doth better, as yet, with us express what is intended. 'Who by faith,' και μακροθυμιας; Syr. בבנידות רוחא, 'in length of spirit;' longanimitatem, patientiam, patientem animum, lenitatem, 'longanimity, patience, a patient mind, forbearance;' it is plain that the same grace is intended in all these various expressions, whose nature we shall inquire into. Κληρονομουντων τας επαγγελιας. Syr. הווי ירחא דמולכנא, fuerunt hæredes promissionis, 'were heirs of the promise;' referring it to believers under the Old Testament. Vul. Lat. hæreditabunt promissiones, 'who shall inherit the promises,' which must respect present, sincere, persevering believers. Beza, 'hæreditario jure obtinent promissionem.' Others, 'obtainent promissam hæreditatem, and hæreditatem accipiunt promissionis,' which Schmidius chooseth as most exact, though without reason. That of Beza is proper, for κληρονομειν is, jure hæreditario obtinere; see our exposition of ch. i. 4. We 'inherit the promises.'

VER. 12.—*That you be not slothful, but followers of them, (their example) who through faith and patient long-suffering, inherit the promises.*

This verse puts a full close to the former exhortation, built on the description given of unprofitable and apostate professors. And here is, withal, an entrance made into a discourse of somewhat another nature, but intended and applied unto the same end and purpose. We may, therefore, consider it as a continuation of the former exhortation, enforced with a new argument of great importance. For,

1. The apostle gives a caution against an evil or vice, directly opposite unto the duty he had been pressing unto, and which, if admitted, would obstruct its discharge, that 'you be not slothful.' And therein the series of that discourse hath its connection with the beginning of ver. 11, 'We desire that you be diligent, and that you be not slothful;' diligence and sloth being the opposite virtue and vice, which are the matter of his exhortation.

2. He gives a new direction and encouragement unto them for the performance of the duty exhorted unto, which also guides them in the manner of its performance. And herein he coucheth an introduction to a discourse of another nature, which immediately ensues, as was observed. 'But be ye followers.'

3. This direction and encouragement consists in the proposal of an example of others unto them, who performed the duty which he exhorts them unto. And as for their direction he declares unto them how they did it, even by faith and patience; so for their encouragement he minds them of what they who so do, obtained thereby; they inherited the promises of God.

First. The apostle cautions the Hebrews against that which would,

if admitted, frustrate his exhortation, and effectually keep them off from the duty exhorted unto. *ἵνα μὴ γενήσῃτε νωθροί*, 'that you be not segnes, molles, ignavi, heavy and slothful.' He had before charged them that they were *νωθροὶ ταῖς ἀκοαῖς*, ch. v. 11, 'dull or slothful in hearing,' not absolutely, but comparatively, they were not so diligent or industrious therein, as they ought to have been; or the reproof concerned some of them only. Here he warns them not to be *νωθροὶ τοῖς πρᾶγμασι*, 'slothful in works' or working in practical duties. We are slothful in hearing, when we do not learn the truths of the gospel with diligence and industry, when we do not take them into our minds and understandings, by the diligent use of the means appointed unto that end. And we are slothful in practice, when we do not stir up ourselves unto the due exercise of those graces, and discharge of those duties, which the truth wherein we are instructed, directs unto and requires of us. And this sloth is opposed *τῇ σπουδῇ*, ver. 11, to a 'diligent and sedulous endeavour in the performance of our duty.' Show diligence, and be not slothful. And this vice, our holy apostle, according to his great wisdom and care, frequently warns the apostle against in this Epistle. For he knew that the utmost intention of our spirits, the utmost diligence of our minds, and endeavours of our whole souls, are required unto a useful continuance in our profession and obedience. This, God requireth of us; this, the nature of the things themselves about which we are conversant, deserveth; and necessary it is, unto the end which we aim at. If we faint or grow negligent in our duty, if careless or slothful, we shall never hold out unto the end; or if we do continue in such a formal course as will consist with this sloth, we shall never come unto the blessed end which we expect or look for. The oppositions and difficulties which we shall assuredly meet withal, from within and without, will not give way unto faint and languid endeavours. Nor will the holy God prostitute eternal rewards unto those who have no more regard unto them, but to give up themselves unto sloth in their pursuit. Our course of obedience is called running in a race, and fighting as in a battle, and those who are *νωθροί* on such occasions, will never be crowned with victory. Wherefore, upon a due compliance with this caution, depends our present perseverance, and our future salvation. For.

Obs. I. Spiritual sloth is ruinous of any profession, though otherwise never so hopeful. The apostle was persuaded of good things and such as accompany salvation, concerning these Hebrews; but yet, he lets them know, that if they intended to enjoy them they must not be slothful. Sloth is a vicious affection, and one of the worst that the mind of man is subject unto. For where it takes place and is prevalent, there is no good principle or habit abiding. There is not any thing, any vice amongst men, that the heathen, who built their directions on the light of nature, and the observation of the ways of men in the world, do more severely give in cautions against. And indeed, it were easy to manifest, that nothing more increaseth the degeneracy of mankind, than this depraved affection, as being an inlet unto all sordid vices, and a perfect obstruction unto all virtuous

and laudable enterprises. But what shall he say, who comes after the king? Solomon hath so graphically described this affection, with its vile nature and ruinous effects, in sundry passages of the Proverbs, that nothing need or can be added thereunto. Besides, it is spiritual sloth only that we have occasion to speak unto.

First. 'Spiritual sloth is a habitual indisposition of mind to spiritual duties, in their proper time and season, arising from unbelief and carnal affections, producing a neglect of duties and dangers, remissness, carelessness, or formality in attendance unto them, or the performance of them.' The beginning of it is prejudicing negligence, and the end of it is ruining security.

1. It is in general an indisposition and unreadiness of mind, and so opposed unto the entire principle of our spiritual warfare. Fervency in spirit, alacrity of mind, preparation with the whole armour of God; and therein, girding up the loins of our minds, endeavouring to cast off every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us; are required to be in us constantly in the course of our obedience. But this sloth is that which gives us an indisposition of mind in direct opposition unto them all. So it is described, Prov. xxvi. 15. A person under the power of this vicious distemper of mind, is indisposed to every duty, which makes them grievous unto him.

2. When it comes to the height of it, it is habitual. There is no man but may be occasionally indisposed unto spiritual duties. The most healthy and athletic constitution is subject to the incursion of some distempers. Sometimes bodily infirmities may indispose us, sometimes present temptations may do so. Such was the indisposition which befel the disciples in the mount, Matt. xxvi. 40, 41, which yet was not without their sin, for which they were reproved by our Saviour. But where these things are occasional, when those occasions are endeavoured to be prevented or removed, persons overtaken with them may not be said to be absolutely slothful. There may be many actual faults, where there is not a habitual vice.

3. But there is this sloth in a dangerous degree.

1. When this is generally the frame of the mind, when it hath such an unreadiness unto holy duties, as that it either neglects them, or is cold and formal in the performance of them. This was the temper of Laodicea, Rev. iii. 15. She did enough outwardly to satisfy herself; but in such a way and manner as all that she did was disapproved by Christ. Lukewarmness is the soul and form of sloth.

2. When persons are generally uncompliant with such outward means, as they cannot but acknowledge do contain warning from this, and invitation unto another frame. So the spouse acknowledgeth, that it was 'the voice of her beloved that knocked, saying, Open to me my spouse, my love, my dove, my undefiled, for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night,' Cant. v. 2. Both the voice, and the love, and the long waiting of Christ were manifest unto her, and she complies not with him, but makes her excuses, ver. 2, 3. And the sloth of persons will be reckoned in proportion unto the means of diligence which they do enjoy. Some may not be sleepy, worldly, careless, slothful, at as cheap a rate of guilt as others, though it be great in all.

3. When persons are as it were glad of such occasions as may justify and satisfy their minds, in the omissions of duties or opportunities for them. This casts off the duty prescribed unto us, Heb. xii. 1, which yet is indispensably necessary unto the attaining of the end of our faith. When men will not only readily embrace occasions offered unto them to divert them from duty, but will be apt to seek out and invent shifts, whereby they may, as they suppose, be excused from it, which corrupt nature is exceedingly prone to, they are under the power of this vicious habit. Especially is this so, when men are apt to approve of such reasons to this end, which being examined by the rules of duty, with the tenders of the love of Christ, are lighter than vanity. So it is added of the slothful person who hides his hand in his bosom, that he 'is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason,' Prov. xxvi. 15, 16. He pleaseth himself with his foolish pretences for his sloth, above all the reasons that can be given him to the contrary. And such is the reason pleaded by the spouse when overtaken with this frame for a season, Cant. v. 3.

4. When there is a great neglect of our own prayers, when at any time we have been enabled to make them. So the spouse, in whom we have an instance of a surprisal into this evil, prays earnestly for the coming and approach of Christ unto her, Cant. iv. 16, in the holy dispensations of his Spirit. But when he tenders himself unto her desire, she puts off the entertainment of him. So do men pray for grace and mercy sometimes. But when the seasons of the communication of them do come, they are wholly regardless in looking after them. They put off things unto another season, and meet oftentimes with the success mentioned, Cant. v. 6.

5. When in conflicts about duties, the scale is often turned on the side of the flesh and unbelief. Sometimes it is so when duties are considered as future, and sometimes as present. When duties are considered as future, difficulties and objections against them, as for matter or manner, time or season, or degree, one thing or other will be suggested by the flesh. Grace in believers will move for an absolute compliance. If the contrary reasons, insinuations, and objections prevail, the soul consults with flesh and blood, and is under the power of spiritual sloth. And so are men by frivolous pretences and arguings from self and the world, kept off from the most important duties. And sometimes there is a conflict in the entrance of the duties of God's worship, as praying, hearing the word, and the like. Grace stirs up the soul to diligence, spirituality, and vigour of spirit. The flesh in all things is contrary unto it. Usually to give place unto the flesh, so as to be brought under the power of a cold formality, is an evidence of a prevalent sloth.

Secondly. Although this sloth may have causes and occasions, yet the principal of them are those which I have mentioned, namely, unbelief and carnal affections.

1. Unbelief is the principal cause of it, as faith is of that diligence and watchfulness which are opposed unto it. Yea, by faith alone are we excited unto the acting of all other graces and the performance of all other duties. As it is in its nature to quicken us unto them, so it

alone takes in all other motives unto vigorous obedience. Wherefore, all indispositions to duty arise from unbelief. This weakens the efficacy of every thing that should excite us unto it, and increaseth every difficulty that lies in the way of it. As faith will remove mountains out of our way, or help us to conquer the greatest oppositions, so unbelief will make mountains of mole-hills, it will make every hinderance like an unconquerable difficulty. The soul made slothful by it, cries, 'There is a lion in the way, a lion in the street,' Prov. xxvi. 13. And its whole way is as 'an hedge of thorns,' ch. xv. 19, that is, so grievous and troublesome, that he cares not to take one step in it. Hence in the opposition in these words, that 'ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith,' &c. If we grow slothful, it is an assured evidence of the decay of faith.

2. Carnal affections do variously promote this evil frame of mind. Love of ease, wealth, profit, pleasure, will quickly make men spiritually slothful. Where these are prevalent, every thing in the way of holiness and obedience is difficult and irksome. Strange representations will be made unto the mind of all duties, if not in general, yet in all instances that offer themselves. They are difficult, or tedious, or unreasonable, or needless, or the loss we make at present may be retrieved at another time. Every prevalent carnal affection will be heard in the case, and hath something to offer to deter the mind from its duty. And the secret aversion of the flesh from communion with Christ in duties, works in all of them. Wherefore, if we see a man slothful, negligent, careless in the duties of religion, we may be sure that one carnal affection or other is powerful in him.

Thirdly. As to the general effects of this spiritual sloth, they may be reduced unto these three heads.

1. A neglect of known duties in matter or manner. Known duties of professors are either public or private. And I call them known, because they are both acknowledged by all so to be, and themselves are under the conviction of their so being. But where this sloth is predominant, clear duties will be debated. What more clear duty, than that we should open our hearts unto Christ when he knocketh; or diligently receive those intimations of his love and his mind which he tendereth in his ordinances? Yet this will a soul dispute about and debate on, when it is under the power of sloth, Cant. v. 2, 3. And it doth so actually when it doth not take diligent heed to the dispensation of the word. Wherefore, omission of duties in their seasons and opportunities, whether public or private, whether of piety or charity, of faith or love, or the performance of them without life and delight, merely to comply with custom, or satisfy convictions, is an evidence of a soul growing up under a sinful sloth, unto a ruining security.

2. Regardlessness of temptations and dangers by them, is another general effect hereof. These beset us on every hand; especially they do so with reference to all duties of obedience. In watchfulness against them, a conflict with them, and prevalency over them, doth our warfare principally consist. And without a due regard unto them, we can neither preserve the life, nor bring forth the fruits of faith.

Herein spiritual sloth will make us careless. When men begin to walk as if they had no enemies, as if in their course of life, their converse, their callings and occasions, there were no snares nor temptations, spiritual sloth hath possessed their minds.

3. Weariness and heartless despondencies in a time of troubles and difficulties, is another effect hereof. And unto these heads may all its particular pernicious effects and consequences be reduced.

And this brief description of spiritual sloth in its nature, causes, and effects, is a sufficient evicition of our assertion, so that I need no farther confirmation.

Secondly. In the positive directions given, and the encouragement adjoined, there is an example proposed, and a duty enjoined with respect thereunto. The persons whose example is prescribed, are mentioned here only indefinitely, 'be followers of them,' *μιμηται*, which, in the ensuing verse, he brings down to the instance of Abraham. For dealing with them who greatly gloried in having Abraham for their father, no example more pertinent and cogent could be proposed unto them, to let them know that Abraham himself obtained not the promises any other way, than what he now proposeth unto them. And as our Saviour had told them, that if they would be the children of Abraham, they must do the works of Abraham, otherwise their boast of his being their father would stand them in no stead; so our apostle shows them the like necessity of his faith and patience in particular. Besides, he was in the next chapter, of necessity to prefer Melchisedec as a type of Christ, before Abraham and above him. And therefore, as he had in a similar case before dealt with Moses, he would take the advantage hereof, giving him his due commendation, that he might not seem to derogate any thing from him. And this he doth in that instance wherein he came to have his greatest honour, or to become the father of the faithful.

The persons, therefore, included in the particle *των, των κληρονομουντων*, are the patriarchs of the Old Testament. It is true, it is so expressed as that those who were at present real, sincere, sound believers, might be intended, or those who had fallen asleep in the faith of the gospel. But as he deals on all occasions with these Hebrews, with instances and examples out of the Old Testament, as we have seen and considered it at large in the third chapter, so his immediate expressing of Abraham as the principal of those which he intended, confines his design to those under that dispensation. Plainly he designs them, whom unto the same purpose he enumerates afterwards in particular, with the instances of their faith, ch. xi. Nor is there any difficulty in the variety of his expressions concerning them. Of those in the eleventh chapter, he says, that all 'died in faith, and obtained a good report on the account thereof, but received not the promises,' ch. xi. 13, 39. Of those in this place, 'that through faith and patience they inherited the promises.' But it is one thing to receive the promises, and another to inherit the promises. By receiving the promises, ch. xi. 13, the apostle respects the actual accomplishment of the great promise, concerning the exhibition of Christ in the flesh. This they neither did nor could receive, who died before his incarnation. But the inheriting of the promises here intended, is a real participation

of the grace and mercy proposed in them with eternal glory. This they all received, being saved by faith even as we, Acts xv. 10, 11; Heb. iv. 2.

Concerning these persons, he proposeth to them the way that they took, and the end that they attained. The way they took was by faith and patience, or long-suffering. Some think that here is an *ἐν δια δυναι*, and that a constant enduring faith, *δια πιστεως*, is only intended. But there faith, and the constant exercise of it against oppositions, is rather proposed to them under the name of faith. For that by *μακροθυμια* a distinct grace or duty is intended, is manifest from ver. 15, where Abraham's carriage upon his believing and receiving the blessing, is expressed by *οὕτω μακροθυμηςας*. 'after he had patiently endured.'

What was that faith, or of what kind, which is here ascribed unto the patriarchs, is evident from the context. For it was that faith which had the especial promise of God in Christ for its object. Not a general, not a common faith, but that which respected the promise given from the foundation of the world, and expressly renewed to Abraham. Some amongst us wholly deny this kind of faith, and beyond the belief of the truth or veracity of God in general, will not allow an especial faith with respect unto the covenant and the promise of grace in Christ Jesus, whereas indeed there is no other faith true, useful, saving, and properly so called, in the world. It is true, this especial faith in the promise, supposeth faith in general with respect unto the truth and veracity of God, nor can be without it. But this may be, and is in many where the other is not, yea, where it is despised. This, therefore, was the faith which was here recommended and proposed unto us. The especial object of it was the Messiah, or Christ himself as a Saviour from sin, with this especial limitation, as to come afterwards. The formal reason of it was the truth of God in his promises, with his unchangeableness and infinite power to give them an accomplishment. And the means of engendering this faith in them, was the promise itself. By this faith were they justified and saved, Gen. xv. 6. But it may be inquired how this faith could be proposed unto us for an example, seeing it respected the future exhibition of Christ, and we are to respect him as long since come in the flesh. But this circumstance changeth nothing in the nature of the things themselves; for although as to the actual exhibition of the Messiah, they looked on it as future, yet as to the benefits of his mediation, they were made present and effectual unto them by the promise. And the faith required of us doth in like manner respect the Lord Christ, and the benefits of his mediation; and by his actual exhibition in the flesh, is not changed in its nature from what theirs was, though it be exceedingly advantaged as to its light.

The next thing ascribed unto them is *μακροθυμια*. 'Patience,' say we, that is, *ὑπομονη*; but these graces are expressly distinguished, 2 Tim. iii. 10, *τη πιστει, τη μακροθυμια, τη ὑπομονη*, 'faith, long-suffering, patience;' so plainly, Col. i. 11, *εις πασαν ὑπομονην και μακροθυμian*, 'unto all patience and long-suffering.' And in very many places it is recommended as a special grace and duty, 2 Cor. vi. 6; Gal. v. 22; Eph. iv. 2; Col. iii. 12. And it is often also ascribed unto God,

Rom. ii. 4, ix. 22, to Christ, 1 Tim. i. 16. *Μακροθυμος* is properly ארך אפס, longanimis; or, as James speaks, *Ἐραδὺς εἰς ὀργήν*, ch. i. 19, 'slow to anger,' opposed unto *ὀξύθυμος*, 'hasty, soon angry, bitter in spirit.' It is a gracious, sedate [frame of soul, a tranquillity of mind on holy, spiritual grounds of faith, not subject to take provocations, not to be wearied with opposition. Wherefore, although the apostle saith in like manner in another place, that we 'have need of patience,' that after we have done the will of God, we may receive the promise,' ch. x. 36, yet the longanimity here intended is distinct from it. For as patience is a gracious submissive quietness of mind in undergoing present troubles and miseries; so this *μακροθυμία*, or longanimity, forbearance, tolerance, or long suffering, is a sedate, gracious disposition of mind, to encounter a series of difficulties and provocations, without being exasperated by them, so as to desert or cease from the course wherein we are engaged. So, where it is ascribed unto God, it signifies that goodness of his nature, and purpose of his will, that, notwithstanding their manifold provocations, and, as it were, daily new surprisals, yet he will bear with sinners, and not divert from his course of goodness and mercy towards them. And with us it hath a twofold object. For, 1. In the course of our faith and profession we shall meet with many difficulties and oppositions, with many scandals and offences. These men are apt to take distaste at, to dislike, and so to be provoked, as to leave the way wherein they meet with them. Upon various surprising occasions, they fret themselves to do evil, Ps. xxxvii. 8. So David was *ὀξύθυμος*, very short spirited when upon the breach that God righteously made on Uzzah, it is said that the thing which God had done displeased David. But this is that grace whereby the soul of a believer is kept from taking offence, or admitting sinful provocations from cross accidents, oppositions, injuries, scandals, disappointments. So is the duty of it prescribed unto us in particular with respect unto one another, Eph. iv. 2. Besides, 2. There are sundry things in the promises of God whereof believers earnestly desire, if it were possible, a present accomplishment, or a greater degree of evidence in their accomplishment, or a greater speed towards it. Such are the full subduing of their corruptions, success against, or freedom from temptations, deliverance of the church from troubles, and the like. Now, when these things are delayed, when the heart is ready to be made sick by the deferring of its hopes, the soul is apt to despond, to give over its expectations, and if it do so, it will quickly also forsake its duties. The grace which keeps us up in a quiet waiting upon God for the fulfilling of all that concerns us in his own time and season, that preserves us from fainting and sinful despondencies, is this *μακροθυμία*, this long-suffering or forbearance.

These were the ways whereby they came to inherit the promises. The heathen of old fancied that their heroes, or patriarchs, by great, and as they were called, heroic actions, by valour, courage, the slaughter and conquest of their enemies, usually attended with pride, cruelty, and oppression, made their way into heaven. The way of God's heroes, of the patriarchs of his church and people unto their rest and glory, unto the enjoyment of the divine promises, was by faith, patience,

long-suffering, humility, enduring persecution, self-denial, and the spiritual virtues generally reckoned in the world unto pusillanimity, and so despised. So contrary are the judgments and ways of God and men even about what is good and praiseworthy. Observe as we pass on, that,

Obs. II. Faith and patient long-suffering, are the only way whereby professors of the gospel may attain rest with God, in the accomplishment of the promises.—It is a sad consideration which way and by what means some men think to come to heaven, or carry themselves as if they did so. They are but few, who think so much as a naked profession of these things to be necessary thereunto. But living avowedly in all sorts of sins, they yet suppose they shall inherit the promises of God. But this was not the way of the holy men of old, whose example is proposed to us. Some think faith at least to be necessary hereunto. But by faith they understand little more than that they profess the true religion, about which there are so many contests in the world.

This was not the faith of Abraham, that is, this alone was not so. Wherein it consisted, and how it was acted, we shall have occasion afterwards to declare. But what do men think of the long-suffering before described? Their relief against it, is to trust in such a faith as stands in no need of it. For that common faith which most men content themselves withal, seldom or never puts them upon the exercise of patient long-suffering. It is against the actings of a lively faith that those oppositions arise, which the exercise of that other grace is needful to conflict withal. And I shall give some few instances of it wherein the necessity of it will be made to appear. For if I should handle it at large, all the difficulties that lie in the way of our profession would fall under consideration. Of faith we shall treat afterwards And,

1. It is necessary with respect unto those reproaches which the profession of a saving faith will expose men to. It hath done so always, and will do so whilst this world continues. And they are usually cast on believers in so great variety on all sorts of occasions, as that it would be a long work to call over the principal of them. For they are the chief effects of the endeavours of Satan, as he is the accuser of the brethren. I shall instance only in those of one kind. And they are those which on their straits, difficulties, and temptations, the world reflects upon, as if their profession of faith in God were vain, false, and hypocritical. When men said unto David, 'Where is now thy God?' or what is become of thy religion and profession, thy pretended trust in God? he says, it was as a killing sword in his bones, it pierced deep, and pained greatly, Ps. xlii. 10. And it is spoken in the person of our Saviour, 'Reproaches have broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness,' Ps. lxix. 20. And this was the reproach that was cast upon him on the cross, as the next words manifest, 'They gave me gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink,' ver. 21. And this reproach was that which we instance in, 'They shook the head at him, saying, He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him, let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him,'

Ps. xxii. 8; Matt. xxvii. 43. And what befel the Lord Christ on the cross, teacheth the church what it is to expect under it. In this condition, patient long-suffering is our only relief. If that be not in exercise, we shall either faint and despond, or fret ourselves to do evil, or say in our hearts, we will do unto others what they have done unto us. But hereby is the soul delivered. It is not made stupid and senseless of the sharpness and evil of them: David was not so, nor was Christ himself; nor is it the will of God that we should put them off with a careless regardlessness. The glory and honour of God and the gospel are so far concerned in them, and God so designs them for the exercise of our faith, as that they are not to be despised. But it will give a quietness and evenness of spirit under them, so that no duty shall be obstructed, nor that satisfaction which we have in the ways of God be any way impeded. And in this case, this patient long-suffering worketh three ways. 1. By committing our whole cause to God; as it did in Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 23. 2. By patient waiting for the pleading of our cause under a sense of our own sin, and an acknowledgment of the righteousness of God, Mic. vii. 9, 10. 3. By supporting the soul with a testimony of its own sincerity, 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

2. With respect unto violence and persecutions. These also, that faith which tends to the enjoyment of the promises, will expose men unto. And they prove great trials, sometimes from their violence, and sometimes from their continuance. Some come with the fury of a storm, as if they would bear down all before them: such were the primitive persecutions, and that at this day in many places under the papal power. Others, by their long duration in wasting, vexing, consuming troubles, are designed gradually to wear out the saints of the Most High, Dan. vii. 25. And what havoc hath been made in all ages by them of the one sort and of the other, is known unto all. The number of apostates, in such seasons, hath, for the most part, exceeded that of martyrs. And many have insensibly withered and grown utterly weary under troubles of a long duration, when they could apprehend no end of them. Here we have need of patient long-suffering, if we intend to inherit the promises. This is that grace which calmeth and supporteth the soul under all these pressures. 1. By keeping and preserving it from darkening, disturbing affections, and passions of anger, worldly sorrow, carnal fear, and the inordinate love of present things. Hereby in patience we possess our souls, Luke xxi. 19, which, if disorderly affections do as it were once carry out of our power, and possess the conduct of them, we shall quickly be at a loss in our profession. 2. By enabling us to take a sedate prospect of eternal things, of the good things promised, and their glorious excellency in comparison to what here we suffer in, 2 Cor. iv. 16—18. 3. By preserving of us from all irregular ways and attempts for deliverance. For without this grace, we shall choose either not to suffer, and so disinherit ourselves of the promises; or shall not suffer in a due manner unto the glory of God or our own advantage; or shall turn aside unto unlawful reliefs.

3. It is necessary with respect unto our waiting for the accomplish-

ment of many great promises concerning the kingdom of Christ, and interest of the gospel in this world. That there are such promises on record in the Scripture, and as yet unfulfilled, is, I suppose, generally granted. However I speak of them who are satisfied in their minds beyond all hesitation, that such there are; and of such as lived before the accomplishment of some of them, who are proposed for our example. For so did the fathers under the Old Testament, who lived before the coming of Christ in the flesh. In these promises and their accomplishment, believers find themselves greatly concerned; and those who are not so, do disavow an interest in the spiritual body of Christ and his glory in the world. Now, because their accomplishment is deferred beyond the desires and expectations of men, as was of old the promise of the coming of Christ, many temptations do ensue thereon. And not a few have there been on the one hand, who have in sad instances made haste and antedated the accomplishment in unwarrantable practices; pretending unto faith, they have renounced patient long-suffering: and not fewer have cast away all expectation of them on the other hand, as though they would never be fulfilled. Herein therefore we have also need of patient long-suffering. Without it we shall fall into one of the extremes mentioned, both of which are attended with dangers ruinous unto profession; see Hab. ii. 1—4. With respect unto these things, the days of the gospel are the time of the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, Rev. i. 9. He hath begun to set up his kingdom, and it shall never be prevailed against, Dan. vii. 27. But yet many things that belong thereto, especially unto its tranquillity and extent, are as yet unfulfilled, and whilst they are so, many outrages are committed in the world against his rule and interest. Wherefore it is at present the time of his patience as well as of his reign. And therefore are we required to keep the word of his patience, Rev. iii. 10, or to abide in the faith of those things concerning which he exerciseth patience in the world. So is it said with respect unto the judgments which God in his own time will execute on the antichristian persecuting world. ‘He that leadeth into captivity, shall go into captivity; he that killeth with the sword, must be killed with the sword: here is the patience and faith of the saints,’ Rev. xiii. 10. While these things are accomplishing, and until they are accomplished, during that large season, until their end be, the saints must exercise patient long-suffering, added unto faith in the promises, or they will not see the end of them. And this patient long-suffering with respect unto the accomplishment of these promises produceth these four effects. 1. A quiet resignation of all times and seasons unto the sovereignty of God. The soul possessed of it, quiets itself with this,—It is not for me to know the times and seasons which God hath put in his own hand, Deut. xxix. 29. 2. A due valuation of present enjoyments, which is especially required since the coming of Christ in the flesh. 3. A ready application of mind unto present duties, John xxi. 22. 4. Waiting in prayer for what we have not yet received.

4. It is necessary also with respect to our own personal obedience and all the principal concerns of it. There are three things which be-

lievers principally aim at in the course of their obedience. 1. That their corruptions may be thoroughly subdued. 2. That their graces may be quickened and strengthened to all fruitfulness. 3. That temptations being removed, their spiritual consolations may abound. These are the things which they are continually pressing after, longing for, and endeavouring. And sometimes in some, if not all of them, they seem to have made so great a progress as to be ready for an entrance into perfect rest. But yet again they find new storms arise, corruptions grow strong, and grace is under decays, temptations abound, and consolations are far away. Yea and it may be they are frequently exercised with these changes and disappointments. This fills them with many perplexities and ofttimes makes them ready to faint. Unless this patient long-suffering accompany us in our whole course, we shall not finish it with glory to God, or comfort to our own souls.

But it may be inquired on what grounds, and for what reasons the apostle doth propose to these Hebrews the example of their predecessors in this matter. Wherefore, he doth it, or he might do it for these ends. 1. That they might know that he exhorted them to nothing but what was found in them who went before them, whom they so loved and admired. And this he afterwards to the same end confirms with many instances. 2. To nothing but what was needful to all who were to inherit the promises. For if these things were required of their progenitors, persons so high in the love and favour of God, to that end, how could they imagine that they might be dispensed withal as to their observance? 3. To nothing but what was practicable, which others had done, and which was therefore possible, yea easy for them through the grace of Christ to comply withal.

Thirdly. The apostle, for their encouragement to the duties mentioned, expresseth the end which those others attained in the practice of them. *Κληρονομουντων τας επαγγελιας*, 'who inherit the promises.' He speaks in the present tense, but principally intends those who lived before, as we have declared. And the apostle here expresseth the way whereby in the use of the means we come to the enjoyment of the promises. And this is by inheritance. We neither merit it, nor purchase it, but inherit it. And how come we to inherit it? By the same way as any other comes to an inheritance, namely, by being the true heirs to it. And how do we become heirs of this inheritance? merely by God's gratuitous adoption; so our apostle declareth fully this whole matter, Rom. viii. 15—17, 'Ye have received the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry Abba, Father; the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. And if children then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.' God by free and gratuitous adoption makes us his children. All God's children are heirs; he hath an inheritance for them all. This inheritance is promised to them, and therefore their enjoyment of it is called inheriting of the promises. Wherefore the grace of adoption is the foundation, cause, and way of our receiving promised grace and glory. And with respect hereunto it is, that God is said not to be 'unrighteous in our reward,' ver. 10. For having freely adopted us

and made us heirs, it belongs to his faithfulness and righteousness to preserve us to our inheritance. Only we are such heirs as have means assigned to us for the attaining of our inheritance, which it is our duty to apply ourselves to.

They inherited *επαγγελιας*, 'the promises.' Camero and Grotius on this text observe, that where the fathers under the Old Testament are spoken of in this matter, there the promises are mentioned; but where believers under the New Testament are spoken of, there it is called the promise in the singular number. I shall not give their reasons why it is so, because they are certainly mistaken in their observation. For both is the promise on the one hand mentioned with respect to them, as Heb. xi. 39, and the promises frequently with respect to us, 2 Cor. vii. 1; 2 Pet. i. 4. Wherefore those expressions are used promiscuously, as is evident by our apostle, ch. xi. 13, 39. Because they all sprang from one original promise, and all centred in him, in whom and by whom they were to be accomplished and made effectual, being all yea and amen in him; and because that one which concerned his person and mediation did virtually include all the rest, they are all of them frequently intended and included under the name of the promise in the singular number. But because God was pleased to let out as it were sundry rivulets of grace and bounty, originally stored in the first great promise, by several particular grants and instances, partly for the representation of that fulness of grace which he intended to exhibit thereby; partly for the encouragement of our faith, and its direction in the application of the grace promised, on various particular occasions; and because he was pleased frequently to renew the same great original promise, as to Abraham and David; there are many of them, and they are called the promises; and by reason of their union in the same covenant, whoever is really interested in any one of them, is so in all.

By the promises here, the things promised are intended. To inherit the promises, is to be made partaker of the things promised. And the matter of these promises, was all grace and glory. That which is here specially regarded, is their full complement in everlasting glorious rest with God by Christ. This is proposed unto the Hebrews, and they are encouraged to expect it by the examples of those who went before them in faith and patience. Wherefore, he requires,

Lastly. That they should be *μιμηται*, imitatores eorum. Imitators when used in our language, rather signifies mimics, or contains some reflection of blame or weakness, than what it is here applied unto. Wherefore, we render it followers, that is, in doing what they did, treading and walking in their steps, as our apostle expresseth it, Rom. iv. 12, as we are to follow the steps of Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 21. It is to think we hear them saying unto us what Abimelech did to his soldiers, Judges ix. 48, 'What you have seen me do, make haste and do as I have done.'

Obs. III. All believers, all the children of God have a right unto an inheritance. How they came by this right, was before declared: it is by that adoption whereby they are made children of God, and all God's children are heirs, as the apostle affirms. And this inherit-

ance is the best and the greatest on the account of security and value. 1. Let an inheritance be never so excellent and valuable, yet if it be not secure, if a man's title unto it be not firm and unquestionable, if he may be defeated of it by fraud or force, which things all earthly right and titles are obnoxious unto, it takes off the worth of it. But this inheritance is conveyed, settled, and secured by the promise, covenant, and oath of God, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5; Rom. iv. 16. These secure this inheritance from all possibility of our being defeated of it. 2. The value of it is inexpressible. It is a kingdom, Matt. xxv. 34; James ii. 5. Salvation, Heb. i. 14. The grace of life, 1 Pet. iii. 7. Eternal life, Tit. iii. 7. God himself, who hath promised to be our reward, Rom. viii. 17.

Obs. IV. The providing of examples for us in the Scripture, which we ought to imitate and follow, is an effectual way of teaching, and a great fruit of the care and kindness of God towards us. The use of examples to be avoided in sin and punishment, the apostle declared and insisted on in the third chapter, which we have also improved as we are able. Here he proposeth those which we are to comply with, and conform ourselves unto, which afterwards, ch. xi. he farther presseth in very many particular instances. And as there is a great efficacy in examples in general, which hath been spoken unto on ch. iii. so there are many advantages in those which are proposed unto our imitation in the wisdom of the Holy Spirit. For, 1. The things and duties which we are exhorted unto, are represented unto us as possible, and that on terms not uneasy or grievous. Considering all the difficulties and oppositions from within and without, that we have to conflict withal, we may be ready to think it impossible that we should successfully go through with them, and come off safely at the last. To obviate this despondency, is the design of the apostle in that long series of examples which he gives us, ch. xi. For he undeniably demonstrates, by instances of all sorts, that faith will infallibly carry men through the greatest difficulties they can possibly meet with, in the profession and obedience of it. There is no more required of us, than such and such persons by the testimony of God himself, have successfully passed through. And if we follow them not, it is nothing but spiritual sloth, or the love of the world and sin, that retards us. 2. Great examples do naturally stir up and animate the minds of men, who have any thing of the same spirit with them by whom they were performed, to do like them, yea, to out-do them if it be possible. So Themistocles said that Miltiades' victory against the Persians, would not let him sleep. Being a person of the same kind of courage with him, it stirred up in him a noble emulation, to equal him in a hazardous and successful defence of his country.

But then it is required, that there be the same spirit in us, as was in them whose examples are proposed unto us. Let the examples of persons valiant and heroical in their great and noble actions, be set before men of a weak and pusillanimous nature or temper, and you will amaze or affright, but not at all encourage them. Now, the spirit and principle wherewith the worthies of God, whose example is set before us were acted, was that of faith. In vain should we encourage

any unto a following or imitation of them, who hath not the same spirit and principle. This, the apostle requireth hereunto, 2 Cor. iv. 13, 'We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak.' Had we not the same spirit of faith with them, we could not do as they did. And we may take a trial hereby, whether our faith be genuine or not. For if their examples move us not, excite us not, unto the like duties of obedience with them, it is an evidence that we have not the same spirit of faith with them. As the courage of a valiant man is inflamed by a noble example, when a coward shrinks back and trembles at it. On this supposition there is great force in that direction, James v. 10, 'Take my brethren the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and patience.' Let a minister of the gospel, who is made partaker in his measure of the same Spirit, consider how Elijah, Jeremiah, Peter, Paul, and the rest of those holy souls who spake in the name of the Lord, carried themselves under their afflictions and trials, and it will inflame his heart to engage cheerfully in the like conflicts. 3. These examples are so represented unto us, as plainly to discover and point out where our dangers lie on the one hand, and where our assistance and relief lie on the other. These two, rightly considered and understood in all our duties, will give us the best directions we can possibly receive. When we know our dangers and our reliefs aright, we are half way through our difficulties. When these are out of mind, when we know them not, on every occasion we fall under surprisals and troubles. Now, in the examples proposed unto us, there is withal, through the wisdom and care of the Spirit of God, represented unto us, the temptations which befel those who are thus our patterns, the occasions of these temptations, their advantages, power, or prevalency; wherein they were misled, or failed, exposing themselves unto the power of their spiritual enemies; and on the other hand, what course they took for relief, what application they made unto God in their difficulties and distresses, and wherein alone they reposed their confidence of success. These things might be confirmed by manifold instances. 4. There is in them also made known, what interveniences and disturbances in our course of obedience, may befall us, which yet, ought not to make us utterly despond, and give over our profession as fruitless and hopeless. I confess, great wisdom and caution is to be used in the consideration of the sins and falls of the saints under the Old Testament, that they be no way abused to give countenance unto sin, either before or after its commission. We know not their circumstances, their light, their grace, their temptations, their repentance, nor what was the indulgence of God towards sinners, before the fulness of the dispensation of grace came by Jesus Christ. But this is certain in general, that if every great sin or fall, when any is overtaken therein by the overpowering of temptations, were absolutely inconsistent with that course of obedience which leads to the inheritance of the promises, the Holy Ghost would not, without any particular exception as to their persons, have recorded such things in the lives of them whom he proposeth for our example. 5. The certain end of a course of holy

obedience is in them proposed unto us. All those holy souls that are now at rest with God in glory, as having inherited the promises, were sometimes, as we are, conflicting with corruptions and temptations, undergoing reproaches and persecutions, labouring in duties and a constant course of obedience unto God. If, therefore, we follow them in their work, we shall not fail to partake with them in their reward.

VER. 13—16.—IN the close of the foregoing verse, the apostle expresseth the end of all his exhortations, what they tended unto, and what would be the advantage of all that complied with them in faith and obedience. And this was the inheriting of the promises, or the enjoyment of the things promised by God, unto them that believe and obey. Of all that intercourse that is between God and sinners, the promise, on the part of God, is the sole foundation. Thereby doth God express his goodness, grace, truth, and sovereign power unto men. Herein all supernatural religion, and all our concernments therein, are founded, and not on any thing in us. And on our part, the inheritance of the promises in the effects of those holy properties of God towards us, is the end of what we look for and aim at in all our obedience. Wherefore, the apostle having arrived in the series of his discourse, unto the mention of this great period of his whole design, he stays a while to consider and explain it in these verses.

VER. 13—16.—Τῷ γὰρ Ἀβρααμ ἐπαγγελιαμενος ὁ Θεος, ἐπει κατ' οὐδενος εἶχε μείζονος ὁμοσε καθ' ἑαυτον, λεγων· Ἡ μὴν εὐλογων εὐλογησω σε, καὶ πληθυνων πληθυνω σε. Καὶ οὕτω μακροθυμησας ἐπέτυχε τῆς ἐπαγγελίας. Ἀνθρωποι μὲν γὰρ κατὰ τοῦ μείζονος ὁμνουνσι, καὶ πάσης αὐτοῖς ἀντιλογίας περὰς εἰς βεβαιωσιν ὁ ὅρκος.

Τῷ γὰρ ἐπαγγελιαμενος. Syr. כִּי מֵלֵךְ בְּרַ, 'when he promised unto him.' Vul. Lat. Abrahæ namque promittens, 'for promising to Abraham.' Most, Deus enim pollicitus Abrahæ, 'for God promising unto Abraham,' which expresseth the sense intended; and that word *when*, which we add, is included in ἐπαγγελιαμενος.

Ἐπει κατ' οὐδενος εἶχε μείζονος ὁμοσαι, ad verbum; quoniam per neminem habuit majorem jurare, 'seeing by none he had a greater to swear.' Vul. Lat. quoniam neminem habuit, per quem juraret majorem. Rhem. 'because he had none greater by whom he might swear.' Eras. Bez. cum non possit per quemquam majorem jurare. Ours, 'Because he could swear by no greater:' ἐπει is rather quum than quoniam. To make up the sense, so may be added, 'none greater than himself.' And so the Syriac reads, מִלֵּךְ דְּלִיָּהּ הָיָה לֵךְ דְּרַב מִנָּה דְנִאמָא, quoniam non erat ipsi qui major præ se ut juraret per illum; or, in the neuter gender, majus and illud. 'Seeing there was nothing to him greater than himself that he might swear by it.' All to the same purpose.

Ὡμοσε καθ' ἑαυτον, juravit per semetipsum. Syr. מֵא בִנְפְשֵׁא, 'he swore by his soul;' which, though it may be a Hebraism, yet we shall find that God sometimes in his oath, makes mention of his soul.

Ἡ μὴν εὐλογῶν, the Syriac omits the particles *ἡ μὴν*, which yet are the only note of asseveration in the words. The Vul. Lat. renders it by *nisi*, ‘unless,’ which is retained by Erasmus, the sense whereof we shall afterwards inquire into. Certe, ‘surely;’ Arab. ‘I have sworn assuredly.’ Benedicens, or benedicendo benedicam, ‘blessing, I will bless thee.’

Μακροθυμησας. Syr. ארר רוחו, ‘he restrained his spirit,’ preserved himself by faith from being hasty, or making haste.

Ἐπετυχε τῆς επαγγελίας, adeptus est, nactus est, assecutus est, obtinuit, consecutus est; all which words are used by interpreters. Syr. קבל, ‘he received.’ Promissum, promissionem, repromissionem, ‘he obtained the promise.’

Ἀνθρωποι, Syr. בני נשא, ‘the sons of men;’ men of all sorts. Κατα τοῦ μείζονος. Vul. Lat. per majorem sui. Sui is added, if not needlessly, yet barbarously.

Ἀντιλογίας, contradictionis, controversiæ, litis, contentionis, ‘strife;’ πειρας, finis, rather as Bez. terminus. Εἰς βεβαιωσιν ὁ ὅρκος, ad confirmationem; Eras. ad confirmandum, juramentum, jusjurandum, adhibitum. Syr. שולמה שרירא במומתה הוא לה, ‘the true solution of every contention between them, is by an oath.’ Arab. ‘a lawful oath is the decision of every controversy between them.’

VER. 13—16.—*For when God made promise to Abraham; (God promising unto Abraham) because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself, saying, Surely, blessing, I will bless thee, and multiplying, I will multiply thee; and so after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.*

Γαρ, ‘for;’ expositors agree that this causal connexion doth not infer a reason or enforcement of the preceding exhortation unto faith; but it gives an account wherefore he proposed to them the examples of their forefathers, as those who through faith and patience inherited the promises. For that they did so really and truly, he proves by an instance above all exception, producing the example of one which he knew would be most forcible and prevalent with them. It is evident that they by faith and patience obtained the promise, for so did Abraham, the grounds whereof he particularly declares.

But this, in my judgment, compriseth not the whole scope and design of the apostle, in the introduction of this example. He hath yet a farther aim in it, which we must inquire into. Wherefore, 1. Having carried on his parænetical discourse concerning fruitfulness in profession, with constancy in faith and patience, unto a declaration of the end of all graces and duties, which is the enjoyment of the promise, he takes occasion thence to declare unto them the nature of the gospel, and the mediation of Christ therein proposed unto them, unto constancy in the faith and profession whereof, he had so exhorted them. To this end he lets them know, that they were nothing but the accomplishment of the great promise made unto Abraham, which, as

themselves acknowledged to be the foundation of all their hopes and expectations, so also, that it had not been before perfectly fulfilled. In that promise, both the great blessing of Christ himself, and the whole work of his mediation, were included. Wherefore, on this account doth he insist so largely on this promise and the confirmation of it, and issueth his discourse in the introduction of Christ according unto it. 2. He further designs to manifest, that the promise, as to the substance of it, belongs no less to all believers than it did to Abraham, and that all the benefits contained therein, are by the oath of God secured unto them all.

There is in these words, observing as nearly as we can their order in the text, in the distribution, 1. The person to whom the promises were made, and who is proposed for the example of the Hebrews, which is Abraham. 2. The promise made to him, which is that of Christ himself and the benefits of his mediation. 3. The confirmation of that promise by oath of God—God sware. 4. The especial nature of that oath—God sware by himself. 5. The reason hereof—because he had none greater by whom he might swear. 6. The end of the whole on the part of Abraham—he obtained the promise by patient waiting or enduring. 7. The assurance of the promise on the part of God as confirmed by his oath, by a general maxim of things among men, grounded on the light of nature, and received in their universal practice—‘For verily men swear by the greater,’ &c.

1. The person to whom the promise was made, is Abraham, *אברהם*. He was originally called Abram, *אברם*, pater excelsus, ‘a high or exalted father.’ God changed his name on the most signal renovation of the covenant with him, into *אברהם*, ‘Abraham,’ Gen. xvii. 5. The reason and added signification whereof, is given in the next words, ‘For a father of many nations have I made thee.’ *כי אב החרך* *המון* *המון* is a ‘multitude,’ and God now declaring that Abraham should not only be the father of all the nations that should proceed naturally from his loins, but of all the nations of the world that should afterwards embrace and imitate his faith, inserts the first letter of Hamon, a ‘multitude’ into his name; that it might be unto him a perpetual memorial of the grace and favour of God, as also a continual confirmation of his faith in the promises, the truth and power of God being always suggested unto him by the name that he had given him.

Now, Abraham was the most meet, on many accounts, to be proposed as an example unto this people. For, 1. Naturally he was the head of their families,—their first, peculiar, famous progenitor, in whose person that distinction from the rest of the world began, which they continued in throughout all their generations; and all men are wont to pay a great reverence and respect to such persons. 2. It was he who, as it were, got for them their inheritance, which was first conveyed unto him, and they came in upon his right. 3. Because the promise now accomplished, was first signally given unto him, and therein the gospel declared, in the faith whereof they are now exhorted to persevere. 4. The promise was not given him merely on his own account, or for his own sake; but he was singled out as a pattern and

example for all believers. And hence, he became the 'father of the faithful, and heir of the world.'

2. That which is affirmed concerning this person is, that 'God made promise unto him,' *επαγγελιαμενος ο Θεος*. Of the nature of divine promises, I have treated on ch. iv. 1, 2. In general, they are express declarations of the grace, goodness, pleasure, and purpose of God towards men for their good and advantage. That here intended, was that for the substance of it God made unto Abraham, Gen. xii. 2, 3. 'I will bless thee and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.' And this same promise was confirmed unto him by the way of a covenant, ch. xv. 3—5. And more solemnly, ch. xvii. 1—6. For in ch. xv. it is only promised that he should have a natural seed of his own, and that a stranger should not be his heir. But here his name is changed into Abraham, he is made heir of the world, and many nations are given in to be his spiritual posterity. But because, together with the promise, our apostle designs to give an account and commendation, both of the faith and obedience of Abraham, he calls not out that grant of this promise which was preventing, renewing, and calling, antecedent unto all his faith and obedience, and communicative of all the grace whereby he was enabled thereunto, as expressed, ch. xii. but he takes it from that place where it was renewed and established unto him after he had given the last and greatest evidence of his faith, love, and obedience, ch. xxii. 16—18, *בִּי נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי*, 'By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son; *כִּי־בֵרַךְ אֲבִרְכַךְ וְהִרְבָּה אֲרִבְּהָ אִתְּךָ וְרַעַךְ*; that in blessing, I will bless thee; and in multiplying, I will multiply thy seed.' Thus God gave out unto him the fulness of the promise by degrees. First. He mentions only his own person, without any declaration how the promise should be fulfilled in his seed, ch. xii. 2, 3. Then he expressly adds the mention of his seed in the way whereby the promise should be accomplished, but no more, ch. xv. 5. And at length, he lets him know the extent of his seed unto believers of all nations, ch. xvii. 5. 'To all which, a farther confirmation by the oath of God, and the extent of the promise, is added, ch. xxii. 15—18. So are we to embrace, and improve as he did, the first dawnings of divine love and grace. It is not full assurance that we are first to look after, but wait for the confirmation of our faith in compliance with what we have received; if we either value not, or improve not in thankful obedience, the first intimations of grace, we shall make no progress towards greater enjoyments. And in the apostle's expression of this promise, we may consider,

1. The manner of the expression. 2. The nature and concernments of the promise itself.

In the manner of the expression there are the affirmative particles, *η μὲν*, certe 'truly.' They answer only directly unto *כִּי* in the Hebrew; but the apostle includes a respect unto what was said before, *בִּי נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי*, 'in myself have I sworn.' And *כִּי* is sometimes used for *אֲכִן*, that is, 'truly;' in way of an asseveration, Job xxxiv. 31.

כִּי אֶל־אֵל הָאֵמֶר נִשְׁתָּאֵר לֹא אֶחָד, which we render, ‘Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne, I will not offend,’ and that properly. And *ἡ μὲν* was of common use in the Greek tongue, in assertory oaths. So Demosthenes, *ομνυει ἡ μὲν ἀπολωλεναι Φιλίππον*, ‘he sware *ἡ μὲν* that he would destroy Philip.’ The Vulgar Latin renders it by *nisi*, that is, *εἰ μὴ*, contrary to the sense of the ancients, Chrysostome, Œcumenius, and Theophylact, as some of the expositors of the Roman church do acknowledge. But yet that manner of expression, denotes a sense not unusual in the Scripture. For there is an intimation in it. of a reserved condition rendering the saying ensuing, a most sacred oath. Unless I bless thee, let me not be trusted in as God, or the like. But the formality of the oath of God, is neither in Genesis, nor here expressed; only respect is had unto what he affirms, ‘by myself have I sworn.’ ‘Surely, undoubtedly.’

The promise itself is expressed in those words, *εὐλογῶν εὐλογήσω σε*, &c. ‘Blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.’ Our apostle renders the words of Moses exactly, Gen. xxii. 17. Only where it is said there, ‘I will multiply thy seed,’ he expresseth it by, ‘I will multiply thee,’ which is all one, or to the same purpose; for he could be no way multiplied, but in his seed: and he proceedeth no farther with the words of the promise, as being not concerned in what followeth. For although his seed was actually multiplied, yet it was Abraham himself who was blessed therein. The Vulgar Latin in this place reads, *benedicens benedicam*, ‘blessing I will bless;’ but in Genesis hath only *benedicam* and *multiplicabo*. Hence divers of the Roman expositors, as Ribera, Tena, and others, give sundry reasons why the apostle changed the expression from what was used in Moses, where it is only said, ‘I will bless thee,’ into ‘blessing I will bless thee.’ And, which I cannot but observe, Slichtingius, who followeth in this place the exposition of Ribera, complies with him also in that observation: *aliis quidem verbis* (saith he) *promissionem hanc apud Mosem extulit*; but all this is but the mistake of the vulgar interpreter on Gen. xxii. For the words in the original have the reduplication rendered by the apostle, which the LXX. also observe. And this reduplication is a pure Hebraism, vehemently affirming the thing promised, and hath in it the nature of an oath. It also intends and extends the matter promised: ‘Blessing I will bless thee.’ I will do so without fail, I will do so greatly without measure, and eternally without end. And this kind of asseveration is common in the Hebrew, Gen. ii. 17, *ביום אכלך ממנו מות המוֹת*, ‘In the day thou eatest thereof, dying thou shalt die:’ thou shalt assuredly die, be certainly obnoxious unto death. It may be also, that the double death, temporal and eternal, is included therein; see Gen. xxxvii. 33; 2 Kings ii. 23; 1 Sam. xxiii. 22; Josh. xxiv. 10; Jer. xxiii. 17; Dan. xi. 10.

Obs. I. We have need of every thing that any way evidenceth the stability of God’s promises to be represented unto us, for the encouragement and confirmation of our faith.—As God redoubled the word at the first giving out of the promise unto Abraham, for the strengthening of his faith, so is the same here expressed by the apostle, that it might have the same effect upon us. And two things especially God seems to impress on our minds in this vehemency of expression. I.

The sincerity of his intentions without reserve. 2. The stability of his purposes without alteration and change. It is to signify both these, that such emphatical, vehement expressions are used even among men, and both these unbelief is apt to question in God. 'He that believeth not, maketh God a liar,' I John v. 10. He is a liar, who in his promises intendeth not what his words signify, but hath other reserves in his mind; and he who having promised, changeth without cause. Both these doth unbelief impute to God, which makes it a sin of so heinous nature. The first time God used this kind of reduplication, it was in his threatening of death unto the transgression of the command, Gen. ii. 17, 'In the day thou eatest thereof dying thou shalt die.' And that which Satan deluded our first parents by, was in persuading them that there was not sincerity in what God had said, but that he had reserved to himself that it should be otherwise. The serpent said unto the woman, *לֹא מוֹת הַמּוֹתָן*, 'dying ye shall not die,' Gen. iii. 4. But this being directly contrary to what God had expressly affirmed, how could Satan imagine that the woman would immediately consent unto him against the express words of God? Wherefore he useth this artifice to prevail with her, that although God had spoken those words, yet he had a reserve to himself that it should not be to them indeed as he had spoken, ver. 5. By these means, unbelief entered into the world, and hath ever since wrought effectually in the same kind. There is no promise of God so plainly expressed, but unbelief is ready to suggest innumerable exceptions why it should have such reserves accompanying of it, as that it doth not belong unto us. Most of these exceptions we gather from ourselves, and were it not for them, we suppose we could believe the promise well enough. But the truth is, when we are called to believe, when it is our duty so to do, when we pretend that we are willing and desirous to do so, were it not for such and such things in ourselves, it is the sincerity of God in his promises we call in question; and we think that although he proposeth the promise unto us, and commandeth us to believe, yet it is not his intention and purpose that we should do so, or that we should be made partakers of the good things promised. By the purpose of God, I do not here intend the eternal purpose of his will concerning the effects and events of things, about which we are called to exercise neither faith nor unbelief, until they are manifested. But the whole rule of our duty is in God's command, and the faith required of us consists in this, that if we comply with what God prescribeth, we shall enjoy what he promiseth: if we believe, we shall be saved. And herein to question the truth or sincerity of God, is a high effect of unbelief. This distrust therefore God removes by the reduplication of the word of promise, that we might know he was in good earnest in what he expressed. The like may be spoken concerning the stability of the promises, with respect unto change, which, because it must be particularly afterwards spoken to, shall be here omitted. And these things we have need of. If we think otherwise, we know little of the nature of faith or unbelief, of our own weakness, the efficacy of the deceits of Satan, or the manifold oppositions which rise up against believing.

2. For the promise itself here intended, or the matter of it, it

may be considered two ways. 1. As it was personal unto Abraham, or as the person of Abraham was peculiarly concerned therein. 2. As it regards all the elect of God, and their interest in it; of whom he was the representative.

First. As this promise was made personally unto Abraham, it may be considered, 1. With respect unto what was carnal, temporal and typical. 2. Unto what was spiritual and eternal, typified out by those other things.

First. As unto what was carnal and typical, the things in it may be referred unto two heads. 1. His own temporal prosperity in this world. God's blessing is always ברכה טובה, an addition of good unto him that is blessed. So it is said, Gen. xxiv. 1, 'God hath blessed Abraham in all things;' which is explained, ver. 35, in the words of his servant, 'The Lord hath greatly blessed my master, and he is become great, and he hath given him flocks and herds, silver and gold.' God increased him in wealth, riches, and power, until he was esteemed as a mighty prince by the people among whom he dwelt, Gen. xxiii. 6. And this in the blessing was a type and pledge of that full administration of grace and spiritual things, which was principally intended. 2. What concerned his posterity wherein he was blessed. And herein two things were in the promise both expressed at large.

1. The greatness of their number: they were to be as the stars of heaven, or as the sand by the seashore; that is, innumerable.

2. Their success and prosperity: that they should possess the gates of their enemies, which principally respected the mighty successes which they had, and conquests which they made under the conduct of Joshua, and afterwards of David.

In both these things were they typical of the more numerous subjects of the kingdom of Christ, and of his spiritual conquest for them and in them, of all their spiritual adversaries; see Luke i. 70—75.

In these two branches of the promise, the faith of Abraham was greatly exercised as unto the accomplishment of them. For as unto the first, or multiplication of his posterity, though he lived after this about seventy years, yet he never saw any more than two persons, Isaac and Jacob, that were interested in this promise. For although he had other children and posterity by them, yet in Isaac only was his seed to be called, as to this promise. He had therefore, during his own days, no outward visible pledge or appearance of its accomplishment; and yet however he lived and died in the faith thereof. And as to the latter, of their prosperity and success, he was told before, that they should be in affliction and bondage for 400 years. Yet looking by faith through all these difficulties, in its proper season he inherited the promise.

And he was a great example herein unto all believers under the New Testament; for there are many promises remaining as yet unaccomplished, and which at present, as in other ages, seem not only to be remote from, but as to all outward means, to be cast under an impossibility of accomplishment. Such are those as concerning the calling of

the Jews, the coming in of the fulness of the Gentiles, with the enlargement and establishment of the kingdom of Christ in this world. Concerning all these things, some are apt to despond, some irregularly to make haste, and some to reject and despise them. But the faith of Abraham would give us present satisfaction in these things, and assured expectation of their accomplishment in their proper season.

Secondly. The peculiar interest of Abraham in this promise, as to the spiritual part of it, may also be considered; and hereof, in like manner, there were two parts.

1. That the Lord Christ should come of his seed according to the flesh. And he was the first person in the world, after our first parents, to whom in the order of nature it was necessary, to whom the promise of the Messiah to spring from them was confirmed. It was afterwards once more so confirmed to David, whence, in his genealogy, he is said in a peculiar manner to be the son of David, the son of Abraham. For unto these two persons alone was the promise confirmed. And therefore is he said in one place to be the seed of David according to the flesh, Rom. i. 3, and in another, to have taken on him the seed of Abraham, Heb. ii. 16. Herein lay Abraham's peculiar interest in the spiritual part of this promise: he was the first who had this privilege granted to him by especial grace, that the promised Seed should spring from his loins. In the faith hereof, he saw the day of Christ and rejoiced. This made him famous and honourable throughout all generations.

2. As he was thus to be the natural father of Christ according to the flesh, whence all nations were to be blessed in him or his seed; so being the first that received or embraced this promise, he became the spiritual father of all that do believe, and in them the heir of the world in a spiritual interest, as he was in his carnal seed the heir of Canaan in a political interest. None come to be accepted with God, but upon the account of their faith in that promise, which was made unto Abraham, that is, in him who was promised unto him. And we may observe, that,

Obs. II. The grant and communication of spiritual privileges is a mere act or effect of sovereign grace.—Even this Abraham, who was so exalted by spiritual privileges, seems originally to have been tainted with the common idolatry which was then in the world. This account we have, Josh. xxiv. 2, 3, 'Your father dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor, and they served other gods. And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood.' It is true, the charge is express against Terah only; but it lying against their fathers in general on the other side of the flood, and being added that God took Abraham from the other side of the flood, he seems to have been involved in the guilt of the same sin, whilst he was in his father's house and before his call. Nor is there any account given of the least preparation or disposition in him, to the state and duties which he was afterwards brought into. In this condition, God, of his sovereign grace, first calls him to the saving knowledge of himself, and by degrees accumulates upon him all the favours and privileges before mentioned. Hence, in the close

of his whole course, he had no cause to glory in himself, neither before God nor men, Rom. iv. 2, for he had nothing but what he gratuitously received. Indeed there were distances of time in the collation of several distinct mercies and blessings on him. And he still, through the supplies of grace which he received under every mercy, so deputed himself, as that he might not be unmeet to receive the succeeding mercies whereof he was to be made partaker. And this is the method of God's communicating his grace unto sinners. His first call and conversion of them is absolutely gratuitous. He hath no consideration of any thing in them that should induce him thereunto. Neither is there any thing required unto a condecency herein. God takes men as he pleaseth, some in one condition and posture of mind, some in another ; some in an open course of sin, and some in the execution of a particular sin, as Paul. And he indeed, at the instant of his call, was under the active power of two of the greatest hinderances unto conversion, that the heart of man is obnoxious to. For first, he was zealous above measure of the righteousness of the law, seeking earnestly for life and salvation by it ; and then he was actually engaged in the persecution of the saints of God. These two qualifications, constant resting in legal righteousness, with rage and madness in persecution, than which there are not out of hell principles more adverse to it, were all the preparations of that apostle unto converting grace. But after that this grace, which is absolutely free and sovereign, is received, there is an order in God's covenant which for the most part he observeth in the communication of ensuing graces and privileges ; namely, that faith and obedience shall precede the increase and enlargement of them. Thus was it with Abraham who received his last great signal promise and privilege, Gen. xxii. on that signal act of his faith and obedience in offering up his son upon God's command. As it was with Abraham, so is it with all those who in any age are made partakers of grace or spiritual privileges.

Secondly. The promise here intended, as to the spiritual part of it, may be considered with respect to all believers, of whom Abraham was the representative. And two things are contained therein.

1. The giving and sending of the Son of God to take on him the seed of Abraham. This was the life and soul of the promise ; the ancient and first expressed regard of divine grace unto sinners. ' In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed ; ' that is, the seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head. The incarnation of the Son of God, promised from the foundation of the world, shall be fulfilled in thy seed, he shall take on him the seed of Abraham. So our apostle argues, Gal. iii. 16, ' Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made : he saith not unto seeds, as of many, but as of one, and thy Seed which is Christ.' For the promise which is made concerning Christ in one sense, is made to him in another. As to the benefit and effects of the coming of Christ, it was made concerning him unto Abraham and all his seed, but as unto the first grant, intention, and stability of the promise, it is made unto Christ himself, with respect unto that everlasting covenant which was between the Father and him, in his undertaking the work of mediation. Or the Lord

Christ may be considered either as the undertaker of the covenant with God, and so the promise was made unto him; or as the accomplishment of the terms of it for us, so the promise was concerning him.

2. The nature of the benefit which is to be received by Christ thus promised; and that in general is a blessing; in thy seed shall they be blessed. And two things are comprised in this blessing, as the springs of other mercies innumerable. The promise of Christ himself was the fountain, and all other promises were particular streams from it, especial explications and applications of that promise. 1. The removal of the curse of the law which was come on all men by reason of sin. The curse could not be removed but by a blessing; and that which doth it is the greatest of blessings, as that was the greatest of curses and miseries. 2. The bringing in of a blessed righteousness, on the account whereof we might be accepted with God, see Gal. iii. 13—15.

Before we proceed, we may observe two things in general concerning this promise. 1. That this was the life of the church of the Old Testament, the spring of its continuance unto its appointed season, which could never be dried up. How many times were that whole people, the posterity of Abraham, at the very brink of destruction! For sometimes they fell generally into such terrible provoking sins, as that their utter casting off might have been justly expected by angels and men; sometimes they were, in the just judgment of God, given up unto such wasting desolations in their captivities, as that they were wholly like dry bones on the face of the earth, without hopes of a resurrection. Yet mercy, patience, and power, wrought through all, and preserved them in a church-state, until this promise was accomplished. This it was alone, or the faithfulness of God therein, whence all their healing and recoveries did proceed. And when this promise was once fulfilled, it was beyond the power of all the world to keep them unto their former condition. All depended on the issue of this promise, in whose fulfilling all things were to be cast into a new mould and order. 2. This was that which preserved the spirits of true believers among them, from ruining despondencies in the times of the greatest apostasies, calamities, and desolations of the people. They had this promise still to plead, and rested therein, notwithstanding all the interveniencies which ofttimes seemed to render the case of that people very desperate. See their faith expressed, Micah vii. 18, 19, 20; Isa. vii. 13—15, li. 3; Luke i. 70—73. And I would hope that mercy lies treasured in the bowels of this promise, not yet brought forth, toward the remainders of the posterity of Abraham according to the flesh. Who knows but that by virtue of the engaged love and faithfulness of God, declared in this promise, these withered branches may revive, and these dead bones revive again? Our apostle placeth the hopes of it on this ground alone, that as touching the election they were beloved for the fathers' sake, Rom. xi. 28. As to profession, they were then visibly falling off; but as to election, as to God's purpose concerning them, the love which he bare to their fathers, engaged unto Abraham in this promise, will one day find them out, and bring them in unto a plentiful share in this blessing.

Wherefore, on all accounts, the instance chosen by the apostle was of singular use unto the Hebrews, and singularly suited unto their present condition. For as they received many advantages, from the personal privileges of him who was their father according to the flesh, so they succeeded unto him in the spiritual part of the promise; and therefore, as the like duties of faith, and obedience, and perseverance, were required of them as of him, so they, in the performance of them, had assurance given them in his success that they also should inherit the promise. So the apostle applies his discourse, ver. 17, 18.

Obs. III. Where the promise of God is absolutely engaged, it will break through all difficulties and oppositions, to a perfect accomplishment.—No promise of God shall ever fail, or be of none effect. We may fail, or come short of the promise by our unbelief; but the promises themselves shall never fail. There have, in many ages, been great seasons of trial, wherein the faith of believers hath been exercised to the utmost about the accomplishment of the promises; but the faithfulness of God in them all hath hitherto been ever victorious, and it will be so for ever. And this trial hath arisen partly from difficulties and oppositions, with all improbabilities of their accomplishment on rational accounts, or with respect unto visible means; partly from a misunderstanding of the nature of the promises, or of the season of their accomplishment. Thus, in the first great promise given to our parents after the fall, how soon was their faith exercised about it. When they had but two sons, the one of them slew the other, and the survivor was rejected and cursed of God. From whom should now the promised Seed be expected to proceed and spring? Is it not probable that they were oftentimes ready to say, Where is the promise of his coming? And yet indeed this, which seemed to overthrow and disannul the promise, was only a means of its farther confirmation. For the death of Abel on his offering his acceptable sacrifice, was a type of Christ and his suffering in his mystical body, 1 John iii. 12. When the wickedness of the world was come unto that height and fulness that God would not spare, but destroyed all the inhabitants of it except eight persons, the very destruction of the whole race of mankind seemed to threaten an annihilation of the promise. But this also proved unto its confirmation. For after the flood, God established it unto Noah, accompanied it with a covenant, and gave a visible pledge of his faithfulness therein to abide for ever, Gen. ix. 11, 12. For although that covenant in the first place respected temporal things, yet as it was annexed unto the first promise, it represented and assured the spiritual things thereof, Isa. liv. 8—10. This great promise was after limited unto the person of Abraham, namely, that from him should spring the blessed Seed. Yet after it was given unto him, many and many a year passed over him, before he saw the least hope of its accomplishment. Yea, he lived to see all natural ways and means of fulfilling it utterly to fail, Sarah's womb being dead, and his body also; so that he was past and beyond all hope of having it fulfilled in the ordinary course of nature. And the faith which he had in hope was against hope, Rom. iv. 18, 19. Hence he complained, that after all his long and wearisome pilgrimage, he went childless,

Gen. xv. 2, and fell into no small mistakes in the matter of Hagar and Ishmael. Yet after all the promise made its way unto its own accomplishment. And by the signal victory it had herein against all oppositions, assured itself unto the faith of all succeeding generations, as is here expressed by the apostle. Afterwards, when the promise was confined unto Isaac by that word, 'In Isaac shall thy seed be called,' and Abraham now drawing apace towards the grave, he is commanded to slay this Isaac, and offer him in sacrifice unto God. This indeed was the greatest appearance under the Old Testament of the absolute disannulling and frustration of the promise. And Abraham had no relief for his faith under this trial, but only the omnipotency of God, which could produce effects that he could no way apprehend, as raising of him up again from the dead, or the like. But this also proved in the issue so great a confirmation of the promise, as that it never received any thing of the like nature, before nor after, until its actual accomplishment. For hereon was it confirmed by the oath of God, whereof we shall treat immediately; the sacrifice of Christ was illustriously represented, and an instance given of the infallible victorious success of faith, whilst against all difficulties it adheres to the truth of the promise. What was the condition with the faith of the best of men, when the Lord Christ was in the grave? At how great a loss they were, and how their faith was shaken to the utmost, the two disciples expressed to the Lord Christ himself as they went to Emmaus, Luke xxiv. 21, 'We trusted that it had been he who should have redeemed Israel;' and for what they heard then reported of his resurrection, they said they were astonished at it, but could not arrive at any positive actings of faith about it. And this befel them when they were speaking to Christ himself, in whom the promise had received its full accomplishment. After this also, when the gospel began to be preached in the world, it appeared that it was rejected by the generality of the Jews, and that they also thereon were rejected from being the people of God. This made a great hesitation in many, about the promise made unto Abraham concerning his seed and posterity, as though it were of none effect. For now, when the full accomplishment was declared, and innumerable persons came in to a participation of it, those unto whom it was peculiarly made, neither would be, nor were sharers of it. This great objection against the truth of the promise, our apostle lays down, Rom. ix. 6, 'Not as though the word of God had taken none effect,' in answer whereunto he spends the three ensuing chapters. And he doth by letting us to know, that the objection was grounded on a mistake of the persons to whom the promise did belong; who were not the whole carnal seed of Abraham, but only the elect of them, and all nations whatever. And there are promises of God on record in the Scripture not yet fulfilled, that will and do exercise the faith of the strongest and most experienced believers, concerning whose accomplishment our Lord Jesus Christ says, 'When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith in the earth?' The faith, hope, and expectation of most, will be at an end, before they are fulfilled; and that because of the insuperable difficulties that seem to lie in the way of their accomplishment. Such are those which concern

the destruction of antichrist, the calling of the Jews, the spreading of the gospel unto all nations, and the flourishing of the church in peace and purity. These things, as to all outward appearance, seem as remote from accomplishment, as they were the first day the promise was given, and the difficulties against it increase continually. And yet notwithstanding the promise shall break through all difficulties; at the end it shall speak and not lie. 'The Lord will hasten it in its time,' Isa. lx. 22. Before its proper time, its appointed season, it will not be; but then the Lord will hasten it, that no opposition shall be able to stand before it.

From this state of the promises, three things have fallen out. 1. That in all ages the faith of true believers hath been greatly and peculiarly exercised, which hath been to the singular advantage of the church. For the exercise of faith, is that whereon the flourishing of all other graces doth depend. And from hence hath there been a treasure of fervent prayers laid up from the beginning, which shall in their proper season have a fruitful return. In that faith and patience, in those supplications and expectations, wherein, in every age of the church, the faithful have abounded with respect unto the difficulties that have lain in the way of the promise, hath God been exceedingly glorified; as they were also the means of drawing forth new encouragements and assurances, as the comfort of the church did require. 2. Hence it was that in most ages of the church, 'there have been mockers and scoffers, saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as from the beginning of the creation,' 2 Pet. iii. 4. The fathers were they who received the promises, especially that of the coming of Christ. These they preached and declared, testifying that they would be accomplished, and that great alterations should be wrought in the world thereby. The sum of what they so declared was, that the elect of God should be delivered, and that judgment should be executed on ungodly men, by the coming of the Lord, Jude 14, 15. But what now is become of these fathers, with all their great promises and preachments upon them? Things go on in the same course as they did in the beginning, and are like to do so to the end of the world: What, we pray, is this promise of his coming you have so talked of? Such scoffers have most ages abounded withal, and I think none more than that wherein our lot is fallen. Observing that all things are in a most unlikely posture to an eye of carnal reason, for the accomplishment of the great promises of God that are upon record in the word, they scoff at all who dare to own an expectation therof. 3. Some, through haste and precipitation, have fallen into manifold mistakes of the promise on the same account. Some have feigned to themselves other things than God ever promised; as the generality of the Jews looked for a carnal rule, glory, and dominion at the coming of the Messiah, which proved their temporal and eternal ruin. And it is to be feared that some are still sick of the same or like imaginations. And some have put themselves on irregular courses for the accomplishment of promises, walking in the spirit of Jacob and not of Israel. But whatever of this or any other kind may fall out by the unbelief of men, all the promises

of God are yea and amen, and will make their way through all difficulties, unto an assured accomplishment in their proper season.

Thus it is also with respect to our faith in the promises of God, as to our own especial and personal interest in them. We find so many difficulties, so many oppositions, as that we are continually ready to call in question the accomplishment of them; and indeed few there are, that live in a comfortable and confident assurance thereof. In the time of temptations, or when perplexities arise from a deep sense of the guilt and power of sin, and on many other occasions, we are ready to say with Sion, 'The Lord hath forsaken us; our way is passed over from him; as for our part, we are cut off.'

In all these cases, it were easy to demonstrate whence it is that the promise hath its insuperable efficacy, and shall have its infallible accomplishment; but it must be spoken to under the particular wherein the confirmation of the promise by the oath of God is declared. Again,

Obs. IV. Although there may be privileges attending some promises, that may be peculiarly appropriated to some certain persons, yet the grace of all promises is equal to all believers.—So Abraham had sundry personal privileges and advantages communicated to him in and by his promise, which we have before recounted. Yet there is not the meanest believer in the world, but he is equally partaker of the spiritual grace and mercy of the promise with Abraham himself. They are all by virtue hereof made heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, whose is the inheritance.

The next thing considerable in the words, is the especial confirmation of the promise made to Abraham by the oath of God. 'For God—when he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself.' And sundry things we must inquire into in this peculiar dispensation of God to men, namely, in swearing to them.

1. The person swearing is said to be God, ὁ Θεός, 'God sware by himself.' And ver. 17, in the application of the grace of this promise to believers, it is said, that God interposed himself by an oath. But the words here repeated are expressly ascribed to the angel of the Lord, Gen. xxii. 15, 16, 'And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, By myself have I sworn saith the Lord.' So it is said before, ver. 11, 'The angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham,' and adds in the close of ver. 12, 'thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.' He is called an angel that speaks, but he still speaks, in the name of God. These things are insisted on to assail this difficulty. 1. Some say that he spake as a messenger and ambassador of God in his name, and so assumed his titles, although he was merely a created angel: for so a legate may do, and use the name of him that sends him. But I do not see a sufficient foundation of this supposition. An ambassador having first declared that he was sent, and from whom, may act in the name and authority of his master, but not speak as if he were the same person. But here is no such declaration made, and so no provision laid in against idolatry. For when one speaks in the name of God, not as from God, but as God,

who would judge but divine honour and religious worship were due to them, which yet are not to angels, however gloriously sent or employed, Rev. xix. 19, xxii. 9. Wherefore, 2. It is said that this angel doth only repeat the words of God to Abraham, as the prophets were wont to do. And those of this mind countenance their opinion with those words used by him, ver. 16, *נאם יי* 'saith the Lord,' the words whereby the prophets solemnly ushered in their messages. But yet neither will this solve the difficulty. For these words, 'saith the Lord,' are often used in the third person, to express him to us whom in all our duties we regard, when God himself is introduced speaking. See Gen. xix. 24; Zech. ii. 8, 9. And he who called unto Abraham the second time, ver. 15, is the same with him who first called to him, ver. 11, 12, and he speaks expressly in the name of God, 'thou hast not withheld thy Son from me.' Besides in each place this angel is said to speak from heaven, which expresseth the glory of the person that spake. Wherever God makes use of created angels in messages to the children of men, he sends them to the earth; but this speaking from heaven is a description of God himself, Heb. xii. 25. Therefore, 3. By this angel no other angel is to be understood, but the great Angel of the covenant, the second person of the Trinity, who thus appeared to the fathers under the Old Testament. See this proved at large in our tenth exercitation in the first volume of our exposition of this Epistle. He it was that spake and swore by himself. For when a mere angel sweareth he swears always by one greater than himself, according to the rule of our apostle in this place, Dan. xii. 7; Rev. x. 5, 6.

Secondly. It may be inquired when God did thus swear: *επαγγελιαμενος ωμοσε*, 'promising he swore.' He did not first promise, and afterwards confirm it with his oath. He gave his promise and oath together; or gave his promise in the way of an oath. Yet are they distinctly considered, nor is it the mere vehemency of the promise that is intended. For in the next verse the apostle calls the promise and the oath two things, that is, distinct from one another, *δυο πραγματα*, 'two acts of God.' But although he hath respect principally to that especial promise which was given with an oath, yet by the same oath were all the promises of this kind given before to Abraham, equally confirmed; whence it may be applied to all the promises of God as it is in the following verses. That which is directly intended is that whereof the story is expressed, Gen. xxii. 15—18, upon his obedience in offering up his Son. And this was the last time that God immediately and solemnly made promise to him after he had gone through all sorts of trials and temptations (whereof the Jews give ten particular instances) and had acquitted himself by faith and obedience in them all. Thus did God in his infinite goodness and wisdom see good to give him the utmost assurance of the accomplishment of the promise, whereof in this life he was capable; and although it was an act of sovereign grace, yet had it also the nature of a reward, whence it is so expressed, 'Because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son.' Of the same nature are all those assurances of divine love and grace, with the peace and joy that ac-

company them, which believers do receive in and on the course of their obedience.

Thirdly. The expression of this oath may be also considered. The apostle only mentions the oath itself, with respect to the ancient record of it, but expresseth not the formal terms of it. 'He sware by himself, saying;' the expression of it, Gen. xxii. 16, is *בִּי נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי*, 'By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord.' And we may consider two things concerning the oath of God. 1. Why he sware. 2. How he swears.

For the first of these, whereas all the oaths of God are in the confirmation of his promises or his threatenings, the reason and nature of those which respect his threatenings have been declared at large on ch. iii. And that which concerns the promises will return to us, ver. 17, where it must be spoken to.

2. How he swears: wherein also two things are comprised. 1. The manner of his swearing, and 2. The nature of his oath.

First. The manner of swearing is twofold. 1. That which positively expresseth and engageth what is sworn by, and 2. That wherein an imprecation or execration is implied or expressed. The first the Latins express by *per*, *per Deum*, the Greeks by *μα* and *νη*, to the same purpose; the Hebrews prepose the letter *ב*, to the things sworn by. So here *בִּי*, that is, by myself. Sometimes there is no expression to that purpose, only God affirms that he hath sworn, for he is every way his own witness, 1 Sam. iii. 14, 'I have sworn unto the house of Eli.' So Ps. cxxxii. 11; Isa. xiv. 24. Sometimes he expresseth some of the properties of his nature, as Ps. lxxxix. 35, *נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי בְּקֹדֶשִׁי*, *juravi per sanctitatem meam*, 'I have sworn by my holiness.' So Amos. iv. 2. 'By myself,' Isa. xlv. 23; Jer. xxii. 5, xlix. 13, 'By his right hand and the arm of his strength,' Isa. lxii. 8. 'By his great name,' Jer. xlv. 26. 'By his soul,' Jer. li. 14, and 'by the excellency of Jacob,' Amos. viii. 7, that is himself only. For all the holy properties of God are the same with his nature and being. For that form of an oath wherein an imprecation is used, the expression of it is always elliptical in the Hebrew tongue, whereas other languages abound with cursed and profane imprecations. And this elliptical form of expression by *אם*, *si*, is often used by God himself, 1 Sam. iii. 14, 'I have sworn to the house of Eli; *אם יחכר עין בית עלי* if the iniquity of the house of Eli be purged.' Ps. lxxxix. 35, 'I have sworn unto David by my holiness, *אם לִדָּוִד אֶכֹּזֵב*, if I lie unto David.' So also, Ps. xcv. 11. cxxxii. 2, 3; Isa. xiv. 24. And this kind of expression is retained by our apostle, ch. iii. 12, 'To whom I sware in my wrath, *εἰ εἰσελεύσονται εἰς τὴν καταπαύσιν μου*, if they shall enter into my rest.' As also it is made use of by our Saviour, Mark viii. 12, *Ἀμην λέγω ὑμῖν, εἰ δοθησεται τῇ γενεᾷ ταύτῃ σημεῖον*, 'Verily I say unto you, if a sign shall be given unto this generation.' There is herein, a rhetorical *αποσιωπησις*, where something for honour's or reverence' sake is restrained, silenced, and not uttered. As, if it be so, then let me not be trusted, believed, or obeyed.

Secondly. For the nature of this oath of God, it consists in an express engagement of those holy properties whereby he is known to be God, unto the accomplishment of what he promiseth or threateneth.

By his being, his life, his holiness, his power, is he known to be God ; and therefore, by them is he said to swear, when they are all engaged unto the fulfilling of his word.

Fourthly. There is a reason added why God thus swore by himself. —It was because he had none greater whereby he might swear. And this reason is built upon this maxim ; that the nature of an oath consisteth in the invocation of a superior, in whose power we are. For two things we design in that invocation of another. 1. A testimony to be given unto the truth we assert. 2. Vengeance or punishment of the contrary upon us. Wherefore, we do ascribe two things unto him whom we invoke in an oath. 1. An absolute omniscieny, or infallible knowledge of the truth, or falsehood of what we assert. 2. A sovereign power over us, whence we expect protection in case of right and truth, or punishment in case we deal falsely and treacherously. And this respect unto punishment, is that alone which gives force and efficacy unto oaths among mankind. There is a principle ingrafted in the minds of men by nature, that God is the supreme Rector, Ruler, and Judge of all men and their actions ; as also, that the holiness of his nature, with his righteousness as a Ruler and Judge, doth require that evil and sin be punished in them who are under his government. Of his omnipotent power also, to punish all sorts of transgressors, the highest, greatest, and most exempt from human cognizance, there is an alike conception and presumption. According as the minds of men are actually influenced by these principles, so are their oaths valid and useful, and no otherwise. And therefore, it hath been provided that men of profligate lives, who manifest that they have no regard unto God nor his government of the world, should not be admitted to give testimony by oath. And if, instead of driving all sorts of persons, the worst, the vilest of men, on slight or light, or no occasions, unto swearing, none might be in any case admitted thereunto, but such as evidence in their conversations, such a regard unto the divine rule and government of the world, as is required to give the least credibility unto an oath, it would be much better with human society. And that inroad which Atheism hath made on the world in these latter ages, hath weakened and brought in a laxation of all the nerves and bonds of human society. These things belong unto the nature of an oath amongst men, and without them it is nothing. But wherefore, then, is God said to swear, who, as the apostle speaks, can have no greater to swear by, no superior unto whom in swearing he should have respect ? It is because as to infinite omniscience, power, and righteousness, the thing respected in an oath, God is that essentially in and unto himself, which he is in a way of external government unto his creatures. Wherefore, when he will condescend to give us the utmost security and assurance of any thing which our nature is capable of, antecedent unto actual enjoyment, in and by the express engagement of his holiness, veracity, and immutability, he is said to swear or to confirm his word with his oath,

The end and use of this oath of God is so fully expressed, ver. 17, that I must thither refer the consideration of it.

Ver. 15. The event of this promise giving, and oath of God on the

part of Abraham, is declared. ‘And so after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.’

Και οὕτω, ‘and so;’ this was the way and manner of God’s dealing with him, and this was the way on the other side how he carried it towards God. And the manner of his deportment, or the way whereby he attained the end proposed, was μακροθυμίας, ‘he patiently endured;’ ‘after he had patiently endured,’ or rather ‘patiently enduring.’ The word hath been spoken unto before. Μακροθυμος, מַקְרוֹתִימוֹס, longanimis, lentus, tardus ad iram. One that is not quickly provoked, not easily excited unto anger, hasty resolutions, or any dis-tempered passion of mind. And sundry things are intimated in this word.

1. That Abraham was exposed to trials and temptations about the truth and accomplishment of this promise. If there be not difficulties, provocations, and delays in a business, it cannot be known whether a man be μακροθυμος or not, he hath no occasion to exercise this longanimity.

2. That he was not discomposed or exasperated by them so as to wax weary, or to fall off from a dependence on God. The apostle explains fully the meaning of this word, Rom. iv. 18—21, ‘Against hope he believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according unto that which was spoken, so shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah’s womb; he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God. And being fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was able also to perform.’ Continuing in a way of believing, as trusting to the veracity and power of God against all difficulties and oppositions, was his μακροθυμία or ‘patient endurance.’

3. That he abode a long season in this state and condition, waiting on God and trusting unto his power. It is not a thing quickly tried whether a man be μακροθυμος, one that will patiently endure or not. It is not from his deportment under one or two trials, that a man can be so denominated. The whole space of time from his first call to the day of his death, which was just a hundred years, are here included. Wherefore, this word expresseth the life and spirit of that faith of Abraham, which is here proposed to the Hebrews as their example.

The end of the whole was, that ἐπετυχῇ τῆς ἐπαγγελίας, compos factus est promissionis; obtinuit promissionem, ‘he obtained or enjoyed the promise.’ Sundry expositors refer this obtaining of the promise to the birth of Isaac, a son by Sarah, which he so long waited for and at length enjoyed; for this was the principal hinge whereon all other privileges of the promises did depend. But Isaac was upwards of twenty years old, at that time when the promise was confirmed by the oath of God, which the apostle hath respect unto. It cannot, therefore, be, that his birth should be the thing promised. Besides, he twice informs us, ch. xi. 13, 39, that the ancient patriarchs, among whom he reckoneth Abraham as one, received not the promises. That which he there intends, is their full accomplishment

in the actual exhibition of the promised seed. It is not therefore, a full actual enjoyment of the thing promised, that is here intended, as it would be, if it respected only the birth of Isaac. Wherefore, Abraham's obtaining the promise, was no more but his enjoyment of the mercy, benefit, and privilege of it, in every state and condition, whereof in that state and condition he was capable.

If, therefore, we take a view of the promise as it was before explained, we shall see evidently how Abraham obtained it, that is, how it was every way made good unto him, according as the nature of the thing itself would bear. For as unto his own personal blessing, whether in things typical or spiritual, he obtained or enjoyed it. As things were disposed in the type, he was blessed and multiplied in that increase of goods and children which God gave unto him. Spiritually he was justified in his own person, and therein actually enjoyed all the mercy and grace which, by the promised seed, when actually exhibited, we can be made partakers of. He who is freely justified in Christ, and therewithal made partaker of adoption and sanctification, may well be said to have obtained the promise. And hereon dependeth eternal glory also, which our apostle testifieth that Abraham obtained. For that part of the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, and the father of all that believe, it could not be actually accomplished in his own days; wherefore, therein he obtained the promise, in the assurance he had of it, with the comfort and honour which depended thereon. As a pledge of all these things, he saw the posterity of Isaac, in whom they were all to be fulfilled. Some things, therefore, there were in the promises, which could not be actually accomplished in his days; such were the birth of the blessing seed, the numerousness and prosperity of his children according to the flesh, the coming in of a multitude of nations to be his children by faith. These things he obtained in that assurance and comfortable prospect which he had of them through believing. They were infallibly and unchangeably made sure unto him, and had their accomplishment in their proper season, Isa. lx. 22. And we may observe that,

Obs. V. Whatever difficulty and opposition may lie in the way, patient endurance in faith and obedience will infallibly bring us unto the full enjoyment of the promises.

Obs. VI. Faith gives such an interest unto believers in all the promises of God, as that they obtain even those promises, that is, the benefit and comfort of them, whose actual accomplishment in this world, they do not behold.

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

The apostle in these words confirms one part of his intention, of the stability of a divine promise confirmed with an oath, by a general maxim concerning the nature and use of an oath among men; and withal, makes a transition into the second part of his discourse; or the application of the whole unto the use of them that believe. Therefore sundry things are to be considered, that we may perceive the sense and explication of this passage. As,

1. The reason why God, in his gracious condescension unto our infirmities, is pleased to confirm his promise with an oath, is introduced by the particle *γαρ*, 'for,' which gives an account of what was spoken, ver. 13; and the reason intended consists herein, that by the light of nature, witnessed unto by the common consent and usage of mankind, the ultimate, supreme, and most satisfactory way of giving assurance unto, or confirming what is spoken or promised, is by an oath. And the apostle argueth not merely from what men do by common consent as it were, among themselves, but what the law and order of all things in subjection to God, doth require. For whereas men do or ought to acknowledge his supreme rule and government over all, when their own rights and concerns cannot be determined and peaceably fixed by reason or testimony, or any other instrument whereof they have the use, it is necessary that an appeal be made to God for his interposition, wherein all must acquiesce. This, therefore, being amongst men, the highest assurance and ultimate determination of their thoughts, the holy God intending the like assurance in spiritual things, confirms his promise by his oath, that we may know from what we centre in as to our own occasions, that there can be no accession of security made thereunto.

2. There is in the words, the internal manner and form of swearing amongst men, *κατα του μειζονος ομνουνσι*, 'they swear by a greater,' a nature above them, superior unto them, in whose power and at whose disposal they are: which hath been spoken unto.

3. The use of an oath among men is declared, *αντιλογιας περας*; and therein, 1. The subject-matter of it, or what is the occasion and subject which it respects. And this is *αντιλογια*, which we have rendered 'strife;' contradiction between two or more. When one party avers one thing, and another, another, and no evidence ariseth from the matter controverted about, nor from any of its circumstances, there must of necessity be amongst them *αντιλογια απειρατος*, an 'endless strife,' and mutual contradiction, which would quickly bring all things to violence and confusion. For if in matters of great concernment and especial interest, one man positively asserts one thing, and another, another, and no evidence arise from circumstances, to state aright the matter in difference, it must come to force and war, if there be no other way of bringing all parties unto an acquiescency; for he who hath peremptorily asserted his right, will not afterwards voluntarily forego it, not only because of the loss of his just claim as he apprehends, but also of his reputation, in making an unjust claim thereunto. In such cases an oath is necessary unto the government and peace of mankind, as that without which, strifes must be perpetuated, or ended by force and violence. This, the apostle respects when he saith—an oath amongst men is an end of strife. There is, therefore, unto a lawful oath required, 1. A just occasion, or a strife amongst men otherwise undeterminable. 2. A lawful rule, or government, with power to propose and to judge about the difference on the evidence thereof; or a mutual consent of persons concerned. 3. A solemn invocation of God, as the supreme governor of the world, for the interposition of his omniscience and power, to supply the

defects and weaknesses that are in the rules and rulers of human society.

4. This brings in the end of an oath among men, and that is to be *παρας αντιλογιας*; that is, to put bounds and limits to the contentions and mutual contradictions of men, about right and truth not otherwise determinable, to make an end of their strife.

5. The way whereby this is done, is by interposing the oath, *εἰ βεβαιωσιν*, for 'the avowing of the truth,' rendering it firm and stable in the minds of men, which did before fluctuate about it.

If this be the nature, use, and end of an oath amongst men, if under the conduct of natural light, they thus issue all their differences and acquiesce therein, certainly the oath of God wherewith his promise is confirmed, must of necessity be the most effectual means to issue all differences between him and believers, and to establish their souls in the faith of his promises, against all oppositions, difficulties, and temptations whatever, as the apostle manifests in the next verses.

As these words are applied to, or used to illustrate the state of things between God and our souls, we may observe from them,

Obs. VII. That there is, as we are in a state of nature, a strife and difference between God and us.

Obs. VIII. The promises of God are gracious proposals of the only way and means for the ending of that strife.

Obs. IX. The oath of God interposed for the confirmation of these promises, is every way sufficient to secure believers against all objections and temptations, in all straits and trials, about peace with God through Jesus Christ.

But there is that in the words absolutely considered, which requires our farther inquiry into, and confirmation of the truth therein. There is an assertion in them, that men used to swear by the greater, and thereby put an end unto strife and contentions between them. But it may yet be inquired whether this respect matter of fact only, and declare what is the common usage among men; or whether it respect right also, and so expresseth an approbation of what they do. And moreover, whether, upon a supposition of such an approbation, this be to be extended to Christians, so that their swearing in the cases supposed be also approved. This being that which I affirm, with its due limitation, I shall premise some things unto the understanding of it, and then confirm its truth.

An oath in the Hebrew is called שבוע, and there are two things observable about it: 1. That the verb to swear, is never used but in Niphal, a passive conjugation; נשבע. And as some think this doth intimate that we should be passive in swearing, that is, not do it unless called, at least from circumstances compelled thereunto; so moreover it doth, that he who swears hath taken a burden on himself, or binds himself to the matter of his oath. And it is derived from שבע, which signifies 'seven;' because, as some think, an oath ought to be before many witnesses. But seven being the sacred, complete, or perfect number, the name of an oath may be derived from it, because it is appointed to put a present end unto differences. The Greek calls it ὄρκος, most probably from ὀργαν, as it signifies to bind

or strengthen. For by an oath, a man takes a bond on his soul and conscience that cannot be loosed ordinarily. And the Latin words, *juro* and *jusjurandum*, are plainly derived from *jus*; that is, 'right and law.' It is an assertion for the confirmation of that which is right, and therefore loseth its nature, and becometh a mere profanation, when it is used in any other case but the confirmation of what is just and right.

And the nature of an oath consists in a solemn confirmation of what we affirm or deny by a religious invocation of the name of God, as one that knoweth and owneth the truth which we affirm. As far as God is thus invocated in an oath, it is part of his worship, both as required by him, and as ascribing glory to him. For when a man is admitted unto an oath, he is, as it were, so far discharged from an earthly tribunal, and by common consent betakes himself to God, as the sole Judge in the case. By what particular expression this appeal to God, and invocation of him is made, is not absolutely necessary unto the nature of an oath to determine. It sufficeth that such expressions be used, as are approved and received signs of such an invocation and appeal among them that are concerned in the oath; only it must be observed, that these signs themselves are natural and not religious, unless they are approved of God himself. Where any thing pretends to be of that nature, the authority of it is diligently to be examined. And therefore that custom which is in use amongst ourselves, of laying the hand on the book in swearing, and afterwards kissing of it, if it be any more but an outward sign, which custom and common consent hath authorized to signify the real taking of an oath, it is not to be allowed. But in that sense, though it seem very inconvenient, it may be used until somewhat more proper, and suited to the nature of the duty, may be agreed upon, which the Scripture would easily suggest unto any who had a mind to learn.

The necessary qualifications of a lawful and a solemn oath, are so expressed by the prophet, as nothing need to be added to them, nothing can be taken from them, Jer. iv. 2, 'Thou shalt swear the Lord liveth,' that is, interpose the name of the living God, 'when thou swearest, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness.' 1. Truth is required in it, in opposition unto falsehood and guile. Where this is otherwise, God is called to be a witness unto a lie; which is to deny his being. For he whom we serve is the God of truth, yea truth itself essentially. 2. It must be in judgment also that we swear; not lightly, not rashly, not without a just cause, that which is so in itself, and which appears unto us so to be; or by judgment the contest itself unto whose determination an oath is interposed, may be intended. Thou shalt swear in such a case only, as wherein something of weight comes to be determined in judgment. Without this qualification, swearing is accompanied with irreverence and contempt of God, as though his name was to be invocated on every slight and common occasion. 3. In righteousness we must also swear, which respects the matter and end of the oath, namely, that it be right and equity which we intend to confirm; or else we avouch God as giving countenance unto our wickedness and injustice.

These things being premised, I do affirm, that where matters are in strife or controversy among men, the peace and tranquillity of human society in general, or particular, depending on the right determination of them, it is lawful for a Christian, or a believer, being lawfully called, to confirm the truth which he knows by the interposition or invocation of the name of God in an oath, with this design to put an end unto strife. For our apostle in this place doth not only urge the common usage of mankind, but he layeth down a certain maxim and principle of the law of nature, whose exercise was to be approved amongst all. And if the practice hereof had not been lawful unto them to whom he wrote, that is, Christians who obeyed the gospel, he had exceedingly weakened all that he had designed from his discourse, concerning the oath of God, by shutting it up with this instance, which could be of no force unto them, because in that which was unlawful for them to practise, or to have an experience of its efficacy. Wherefore, I shall manifest these two things, 1. That a solemn oath is a part of the natural worship of God, which the light of nature leads unto, and is not only lawful, but in some cases a necessary duty unto Christians, and positively approved by God in his word. 2. That there is nothing in the gospel that doth contradict or control this light of nature and divine institution, but there is that whereby they are confirmed. For the first we have the example of God himself, who as we have seen is said sundry times to swear, and his oath is of signal use to our faith and obedience. Now if men had not had from the light of nature, a sense and understanding of the nature, lawfulness, and obligation of an oath, this would have been of no use or signification to them. It is true, that God did expressly institute the rite and use of swearing in judgment, among his people at the giving of the law, and gave directions about the causes, manner, and form of an oath, Deut. vi. 13, x. 20; Exod. xxii. 8, from whence the use of an oath and consequentially of the oath of God might be known. But the most solemn swearing of God was before the law, as in that instance which our apostle insists on of his oath to Abraham. The nature and force hereof could no otherwise be discovered but by the light of nature, wherein God farther enlightened and instructed men by his own example.

2. In compliance herewith, holy men, and such as walked with God before the giving of the law, did solemnly swear when occasion did require it, and they were lawfully called. So Abraham sware to Abimelech, Gen. xxi. 23, 24, and gave an oath to his servant, Gen. xxiv. 3, 9. So Jacob sware with Laban, Gen. xxxi. 53. And Joseph sware to his father, Gen. xlvii. 31. And these had no respect to any legal institution, so that their practice should be thought to be re-proved in those passages of the gospel, which shall be mentioned afterwards.

3. That oaths were in use and approved of under the old law and the administration thereof, is not by any denied, and they are commended who did solemnly practise according to the command, Isa. lxxv. 16; Ps. lxxiii. 11, which of itself doth sufficiently evidence, that there is no evil in the nature of it; for God did never permit, much less approve any thing of that kind. And those who judge an oath

to be unlawful under the New Testament, do suppose that the Lord Christ hath taken away the principal instrument of human society, the great means of preserving peace, tranquillity, and right, though in its own nature good, and every way suited to the nature of God and man.

4. There is in the New Testament nothing against this practice, yea there is much to confirm it, although considering the foundations whereon it is built, it is sufficient that there is not any thing in the gospel contrary to it, as it was a positive institution, nor can be any thing in the gospel contrary to it, as it is a dictate of the light of nature. But,

1. That prophecy, Isa. xlv. 23, doth belong and is expressly applied to believers under the New Testament. 'I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.' See Rom. xiv. 11. This hath respect to what God had of old prescribed, Deut. vi. 13, 'Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.' This now, saith the prophet, shall in the days of the gospel be observed throughout the world, which it could not be in case it were not lawful for Christians in any case to swear by that holy name. And that in like manner is a promise concerning the calling and conversion of the Gentiles under the New Testament, Jer. xii. 16, 'And it shall come to pass, if they will diligently learn the ways of my people, to swear by my name, the Lord liveth, (as they, caused my people to swear by Baal) then shall they be built in the midst of my people.' Now this can be no direction, no encouragement to the converts of the Gentiles, if it be not lawful for them so to swear, if it be not their duty when lawfully called thereunto. Yea if God promiseth that they shall swear by his name, and the gospel should forbid them so to do, where should they find rest and assurance to their obedience?

2. The apostle Paul doth solemnly swear to the truth of his own affirmations concerning himself, and his sincerity in them, Rom. ix. 1; 2 Cor. i. 23. It was not concerning any doctrines he taught that he did swear. They needed no confirmation by his oath; as deriving all their authority and assurance from divine revelation. But it was concerning his own heart and purpose, whereof there might be much doubt and hesitation, yea presumption contrary to the truth; when yet it was of great concernment to the church, to have them truly known and stated. And in this case, he confirms his assertion by an oath, which wholly takes off all pretence of a general rule, that an oath is unlawful under the New Testament, with those who will not make the apostle a transgressor.

3. Had an oath been unlawful under the New Testament, God would not have continued the use of it in any kind, lest Christians should thereby be drawn to act against the rule and his command. But this he did in that of the angel, who 'lifted up his hand unto heaven, and swear by him who liveth for ever and ever,' Rom. x. 5, 6. To give a great and an approved example of that which in no case we may imitate, doth not become the wisdom of God, and his care towards his church.

Add to all these considerations, the express approbation given to this place by our apostle to the practice of solemn swearing among men to confirm the truth, and to put an end to strife, and the lawfulness of an oath, will be found sufficiently confirmed in the New Testament as well as the Old.

There are two places in the New Testament which are usually pleaded in opposition to this liberty and duty. The first is in the words of our Saviour, Matt. v. 33—37, 'Ye have heard that it hath been said of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but thou shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths. But I say unto you, swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King; neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black: but let your communication be yea, yea, nay, nay, for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.' And unto these words of our Saviour the apostle James hath respect, ch. v. 12, 'But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by earth, neither by any other oath, but let your yea be yea, and your nay be nay, lest you fall into condemnation.'

Ans. It is evident that this place of James is derived from, and hath respect to the words of our Saviour; it being an express inculcation of his precept and direction on the same reason. The same answer therefore will serve both places, which will not be difficult, from the observation of the reasons and circumstances of our Saviour's discourse. And to this end we may observe,

1. That all things prohibited by our Saviour in that sermon to the Jews, were in themselves, and by virtue of the law of God, antecedently unlawful. Only whereas the Pharisees by their traditions and false interpretations of the Scripture, in a compliance with their own wickedness and covetousness, had persuaded the body of the church, and brought them into the practice of much lewdness and many sins; and by their ignorance of the true spiritual nature of the law, had led men to an indulgence of their internal lusts and corruptions, so they break not forth into open practice; our Saviour rends the veil of their hypocrisy, discovers the corruption of their traditions and interpretations of the law, declares the true nature of sin, and in sundry instances shows how and wherein by these false glosses, the body of the people had been drawn into soul-ruining sins, whereby he restored the law, as the Jews speak, to its pristine crown. Let any of the particulars mentioned by our Saviour be considered, and it will be found that it was before unlawful in itself, or declared so in the positive law of God. Was it not evil to be angry with a brother without a cause, and to call him *raca* and *fool*? ver. 22; was it not so to look on a woman to lust after her? or were such unclean desires ever innocent? That therefore which is here prohibited by our Saviour, 'Swear not at all,' was somewhat that was even then unlawful, but practised on the false glosses of the Pharisees on the law. Now this was not solemn swearing in judgment and righteousness, which we have proved before not only to have been lawful, but appointed expressly by God himself.

2. Our Saviour expressly limiteth his precept to our communication, 'Let your communication be yea, yea, nay, nay,' ver. 37. There was then amongst men, and that countenanced by the Pharisees, a cursed way of mixing oaths with men's ordinary communication. This blasphemous wickedness, as it was a direct violation of the third commandment, so it was frequently rebuked by the prophets. But as other public sins, it grew and increased among the people, until their corrupt leaders in compliance with them, began to distinguish what oaths in common communication were lawful, and what were unlawful, what were obligatory and what were not. To eradicate this cursed practice, our Saviour gives this general prohibition to all that would be his disciples, 'Swear not at all,' that is, in communication, which is the first design of the third commandment. And as there is nothing which more openly proclaims a contempt of Christ and his authority, among many who would be esteemed Christians, than their ordinary customary swearing and cursing by the name of God, and other hellish imprecations which they have invented in their daily communications; so possibly the observation of the greatness of that evil, its extent and incurableness, hath cast some on the other extreme. But it is no property of a wise man, by avoiding one extreme to run into another.

3. The direction and precept of our Saviour, is given in direct opposition to the corrupt glosses and interpretations of the law introduced by tradition, and made authentic by the authority of the Pharisees. This is evident from the express antithesis in the words, 'You have heard what hath been said of old time, but I say unto you.' Now these were two, 1. That there was no evil in an oath at any time, but only in swearing falsely. This they gathered, (as they fathered their most absurd apprehensions on some pretext of Scripture,) from Levit. xix. 12, 'Ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God.' From hence they concluded that God's name was not profaned in swearing, unless a man swear falsely, that is, forswear himself. And this also they restrained principally to promises by oaths or vows to be performed to God, which turned to their advantage who had the disposal of things sacred and devoted. This they judged to comprise the whole of the prohibition in the third commandment, but most falsely, and to the hazard of the souls of men. For not only the using or interposition of the name of God in a false matter, which is perjury, but also the using of it in vain, that is, without just cause, or reason, or call, lightly and vainly, is expressly forbidden. Herein our Saviour interposeth his divine interpretation, and in opposition to the corrupt exposition of the Pharisees, declares that not only false swearing by the name of God, in judgment, or otherwise, is forbidden in the command; but also that vain interposition of the name of God in our communication is utterly prohibited. And it is hence evident to me, that no man ought voluntarily to take an oath, unless the matter in controversy be undeterminable without it and the authority be lawful that requires it. 2. Aiming to comply with the lusts and corruptions of men, (as the great artifice of all false teachers consists in the accommodation of doctrines to the blind-

ness and prevalent sins of men,) they had found out a way how they might swear, and swear on, without the guilt of perjury, though they swore never so falsely; and this was not to swear by the name of God himself, which if they did, and swore falsely, they were perjured, but by the heavens, or by the earth, or Jerusalem, or the temple, or the altar, or their own heads; for such kind of oaths and execrations were then, as also now in use, in the ordinary communication of men. But herein, also, the filthy hypocrites had a further reach, and had insinuated another pestilent opinion into the minds of men, tending to their own advantage. For they had instructed them, that they might freely swear by the temple, but not by the gold of it, and by the altar, but not by the gift that was on it, Matt. xxiii. 16—19. For from the gold offered in the temple, and the gift brought to the altar, did advantage arise to these covetous hypocrites, who would therefore beget a greater veneration in the minds of men towards them, than to the express institutions of God themselves. In opposition to this corruption our Saviour declares, that in all these things there is a tacit respect to God himself; and that his name is no less profaned in them, than if it were expressly made use of. These are the things alone which our Saviour intendeth in this prohibition, namely, the interposition of the name of God in our ordinary communication, without cause, call, warrant, or authority, when no necessity requireth us thereunto; where there is no strife otherwise not to be determined, or which by consent is to be ended; and the usage of the names of creatures sacred or common in our oaths, without mentioning of the name of God. And there are two rules in the interpretation of the Scripture which we must in such cases always carry along with us. 1. That universal affirmations and negations are not always to be universally understood, but are to be limited by their occasions, circumstances, and subject-matter treated of. So, where our apostle affirms, that he became all things to all men; if you restrain not the assertion to things indifferent, false conclusions may be drawn from it, and of evil consequence. So is the prohibition of our Saviour here to be limited to rash and temerarious swearing, or it would be contrary to the light of nature, the appointment of God, and the good of human society. 2. It is a rule also of use in the interpretation of the Scripture, that where any thing is prohibited in one place, and allowed in another, that not the thing itself absolutely considered, is spoken unto, but the different modes, causes, ends, and reasons of it are intended. So here, in one place swearing is forbidden, in others it is allowed, and examples thereof are proposed unto us; wherefore, it cannot be swearing absolutely, that is intended in either place; but rash causeless swearing is condemned in one, and swearing in weighty causes for just ends, with the properties of an oath before insisted on, is recommended and approved in the other. I shall shut up the discourse with three corollaries from it.

Obs. X. That the custom of using oaths, swearing, cursing, or imprecation in common communication, is not only an open transgression of the third commandment which God hath threatened to revenge, but it is a practical renunciation also of all the authority of Jesus Christ, who hath so expressly interdicted it.

Obs. XI. Whereas, swearing by the name of God in truth, righteousness and judgment, is an ordinance of God for the end of strife amongst men; perjury is justly reckoned amongst the worst and highest of sins, and is that which reflects the greatest dishonour on God, and tendeth to the ruin of human society.

Obs. XII. Readiness in some to swear on slight occasions, and the ordinary impositions of oaths on all sorts of persons, without a due consideration on either hand of the nature, ends, and properties of lawful swearing, are evils greatly to be lamented, and in God's good time among Christians, will be reformed.

VER. 17—20.—IN this last part of the chapter, two things are further designed by the apostle. 1. An explication of the purpose and end of God in his promise, as it was confirmed by his oath; and therewithal and from thence, he makes application of the whole unto all believers, seeing the mind and will of God was the same towards them all, as they were towards Abraham, to whom the promise so confirmed was made in particular. 2. A confirmation of the whole privilege intended by the introduction of the interposition of Christ in this matter; and this is expressed in a transition and return unto his former discourse concerning the priesthood of Christ.

VER. 17—20. *Εν ᾧ περισσοτερον βουλομενος ὁ Θεος επιδειξει τοις κληρονομοις της επαγγελιας το αμεταθετον της βουλης αὐτου εμεσι τευσεν ὀρκῳ· Ἵνα δια δυο πραγματα αμεταθετων, εν οἷς αδυνατον ψευσασθαι Θεον, ισχυραν παρακλησιν εχωμεν οἱ καταφυγοντες κρατησαι της προκειμενης ελπιδος· Ἦν ὡς αγκυραν εχομεν της ψυχης ασφαλη τε και βεβαιαν, και εισερχομενην εις το εσωτερον του καταπετασματος· Ὅπου προδρομος ὑπερ ἡμων εισηλθεν Ἰησους, κατα την ταξιν Μελχισηδεκ αρχιερευς γενομενος εις τον αιωνα.*

Εν ᾧ in quo, *qua in re*, Syr. *ܐܢ ܕܡܐ*, propter hoc, *qua propter*. Some have respect unto the thing itself spoken of, some to the reasons of things spoken.

Περισσοτερον βουλομενος, Abundantius volens; volens ex abundanti, Syr. *ܒܒܪ ܕܝܪܝܗ*, maxime voluit, abunde voluit, 'would abundantly.'

Επιδειξει. M. S. *επιδειξασθαι*, ostendere, 'manifestly to set forth.'

Το αμεταθετον της βουλης, Immutabilitatem consilii, Bez. Immutabilitatem, An. V. Lat. Rhem. 'the stability;' which answers neither of the words used, which are more emphatical. Syr. *ܕܠܐ ܝܬܝܪܝܬ ܕܝܚܝܬܐ*, 'that his promise should not be changed. *Αμεταθετον* is that which cannot be altered nor transposed into any other state.

Εμεσιτευσεν ὀρκῳ, intervenit juramento, An. fide jussit jurejurando. Bez. Interpositionem fecit jurejurando; interposuit jusjurandum, Vul. Lat. Rhem. 'He interposed an oath;' not properly, for *εμεσιτευσεν* is, 'he himself came between, or in the midst; he interposed himself, and gave his oath.' For *μεσος* is *μεσιτης*, intervector, fidejussor, interpres, *ειρηνοποιος*, pacificator. Thence is *μεσιτενω*, mediatorem ago, pacificatoris partes ago, 'to interpose a man's self

by any means, to confirm and establish peace,' which was here done, *δοκω*, with 'an oath.' The word is used in this place only in the New Testament, as *μεσιτης* is nowhere used but by Paul, Gal. iii. 19, 20; 1 Tim. ii. 5; Heb. viii. 6, ix. 15, xii. 24.

Δια δυο πραγμάτων αμεταθετων, ut per duas res immutabiles, or immobiles: Rhem. 'that by two things unmoveable;' Syr. 'which are not changed,' or ought not to be. 'By two immutable things.' *Ισχυραν παρακλησιν εχωμεν*, fortem consolationem habeamus; fortissimum solatium; validam consolationem, habeamus haberemus. *בְּיָאָרָא רַבָּא לָנוּ*: Syr. 'that great consolation should be to us.' *Ισχυρα* denotes such a power and strength in that which is denominated by it, as is prevalent against oppositions and difficulties, which is most proper in this place.

Οἱ καταφυγοντες, confugientes, qui confugimus, qui cursum eo corripimus, Bez. 'who have hastened our course or flight.' Qui huc confugimus: Ours, 'who have fled for refuge.' And indeed *καταφευγω* with *επι*, *εις* or *προς*, is not used but 'for to flee to a shelter, refuge, or protection.' Hence *καταφυγη* is refugium, a refuge that any one betakes himself unto in time of danger.

Κρατησαι της προκειμενης ελπιδος, ad tenendum propositam spem, 'to hold the proposed hope.' Obtinere, 'to obtain.' Syr. *וְנִצְחֵהּ*, 'that we may hold.' Ut spem propositam retineamus; Bez. ad obtinendam spem propositam. Ours most properly, 'to lay hold upon;' for *κρατησαι* is, injecta manu fortiter tenere or retinere.

Ἦν ὡς αγκυραν εχωμεν της ψυχης ασφαλη τε και βεβαιαν, 'safe and firm, firm and stable.' Syr. *דְּלִבְיָךְ בִּנְפֶשְׁךָ דְּלֹא הָתוּעָה*, 'which holds our soul that it be not moved,' expressing the effect, and not the nature or adjuncts of the means spoken of.

Εισερχομενην εις το εσωτερον του καταπετασματος. Et incedentem, ingredientem, introeuntem, usque ad interiora velaminis. Vulg. ad interius velaminis, usque in ea quæ sunt intra velum. Bez. Some respect the place only, some the things within the place, 'which entereth into that within the veil.' Syr. *וְנִעַל לָנוּ מִן אַפֵּי הָרָעָה*, 'and entereth into the faces of the gate;' so that interpreters always call 'the veil,' the 'faces of the gate, port, or entrance of the temple,' namely, the most holy place, because it was a face or frontispiece unto them that were to enter, See Matt. xxvii. 51.

Ὁπου προδρομος ὑπερ ἡμῶν εισηλθεν: Ubi præcursor pro nobis introivit. But quo is better not 'where,' but 'whither.' Rhem. 'the precursor for us.' Syr. *בְּרִדְקָם עַל הַלְפֵּן*, 'where before Jesus is entered for us,' which determines the ambiguity of *ὑπερ ἡμῶν*, not 'our forerunner is entered,' but 'the forerunner is entered for us.'

Ver. 17—20.—Wherein God, willing more abundantly to manifest unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, interposed himself by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to deceive, we might have strong (prevailing) consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us; which we have as an anchor of the soul both safe and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil, whither the

forerunner is for us entered, Jesus, made an high-priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

Sundry things are observable in these words. 1. The introduction unto the application of the foregoing discourse to the use of all believers. Wherein, 2. The design of God in the confirmation of his promise by his oath, which was to manifest the immutability of his counsel. And this is amplified, 1. By the frame, purpose, or mind of God therein, he was willing. 2. By the manner how he would declare his mind herein, more abundantly; namely, than could be done by a single promise. It gave not a further stability unto his word, but manifested his willingness to have it believed. 3. The persons are described to whom God was thus willing to show the immutability of his counsels, who are the heirs of promise; that is, all and only those who are so. 4. The way is expressed whereby God would thus manifest the immutability of his counsel, namely, by two immutable things; that is, his promise and his oath. Which, 5. are proved to be sufficient evidences thereof from the nature of him by whom they are made and given, it was impossible that God should lie. 6. The especial end of this whole design of God with respect unto all the heirs of promise, is said to be that they might have strong consolation. And thereon, they are, 7. further described by the way and means they use to obtain the promise, and the consolation designed unto them therein, they flee for refuge to the hope set before them. The efficacy whereof is, 8. declared from the nature of it, in comparison to an anchor—which we have as an anchor; further amplified, 1st. from its properties it is sure, or safe, and steadfast; and also, 2d. from its use, it enters into that within the veil. And this use, 9. is so expressed, that occasion may be thence taken to return to that from which he had digressed, ch. v. 12, namely, the priesthood of Christ. And 10. The mention thereof he so introduceth according to his usual manner, as also to manifest the great benefit and advantage of our entering by hope into that within the veil, namely, 1st. Because Christ is there. 2d. Because he has entered thither as our forerunner. 3d. From the office wherewith he is there vested, called a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec, as he had declared, ch. v. 12, all which must be opened as they occur in the text.

Εν ᾧ, that is, say many, ἐφ' ᾧ, 'for which cause,' respect may be had unto the words immediately foregoing, 'an oath among men is unto them an end of strife;' so a reason is thence inferred why God should interpose himself by an oath in this matter. And the words are rendered by some as we have seen, propter quod, or propterea; *in* for *propter* is not unusual. And this then is the coherence; whereas mankind doth consent herein, that an oath in things capable of no other proof or demonstration, shall end controversies, satisfy doubts, and put an issue to contradictions, differences, and strife; God took the same way in an infinite, gracious condescension, to give full satisfaction in this matter unto the heirs of promise. For what could they require further? Will they not rest in the oath of God, who in doubtful cases do and will acquiesce in the oaths of men? What way

could be more suited to their peace and consolation? And such is God's love and grace, that he would omit nothing that might tend thereto, though in such way of condescension as no creature would, or could, or ought to have expected, before infinite wisdom and mercy had declared themselves therein. Or this expression may respect the whole subject-matter treated of; and so the words are rendered in quo, or in qua re, 'in which case or matter.' And this our translation seems to respect, rendering it 'wherein.' Then the words direct unto the introduction of the end of God's oath, expressed in the words following, 'In this matter, God sware by himself, that thereby the heirs of promise might not only be settled in faith, but moreover, receive therewithal strong consolations.' And this import of the words we shall adhere to.

Θεος βουλομενος, 'God willing.' Hereunto all that follows is resolved: it is all founded in the will of God. And two things may be denoted hereby: 1. The inclination and disposition of the mind of God; he was free, he was not averse from it. This is that which is generally intended, when we say we are willing unto any thing that is proposed unto us; that is, we are free, and not averse unto it; so may God be said to be willing, to have an inclination and an affection unto the work, or to be ready for it, as he speaks in another place, with his whole heart, and with his whole soul, Jer. xxxii. 41. But although there be a truth herein, as to the mind and will of God towards believers and their consolations, yet it is not what is here peculiarly intended. Wherefore, 2. A determinate act and purpose of the will of God is designed therein. Θεος βουλομενος, is 'God purposing or determining.' So is the same act of God expressed by θελων ὁ Θεος, Rom. ix. 22, 'what if God willing to show his wrath;' that is, purposing or determining so to do. And this Θεος βουλομενος, as it respects το αμεταθετον της βουλης, is the same with κατα την βουλην του θεληματος, Eph. i. 11. Wherefore, 'God willing,' is God in sovereign grace and from especial love, freely purposing and determining in himself, to do the thing expressed, unto the relief and comfort of believers.

Obs. I. The sovereign will of God is the sole spring and cause of all the grace, mercy, and consolation, that believers are made partakers of in this world. So it is here proposed; thereinto alone is all grace and consolation resolved. God wills it should be so. Man having fallen off from the grace and love of God, and having every way come short of his glory, had no ways left in nor by himself, to obtain any grace, any relief, any mercy, any consolation. Neither was there any the least obligation on God, in point of justice, promise, or covenant, to give any grace unto, to bestow any mercy or favour upon apostatized sinners; wherefore, those things could have no rise, spring, or cause, but in a free gracious act of the sovereign will and pleasure of God. And thereunto in the Scripture are they constantly assigned, whether absolutely, that grace is bestowed on any, or comparatively, on one and not another, it is all from the will of God. 'For herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us first, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins,' 1 John iv. 10. Christ himself,

with all the grace and mercy we have by him, is from the free love and will of God. So is our election, Eph. i. 4, 5; our vocation, 1 Cor. i. 26, 27; our regeneration, John i. 13; James i. 18; our recovery from sin, Hos. xiv. 4. So is our peace and all our consolation, whence he is called the God of all grace, 1 Pet. v. 10, and the God of patience and consolation, Rom. xv. 5, the Author and sovereign Disposer of them all.

So is it also with respect unto grace and mercy considered comparatively as collated on one and not another, Rom. ix. 15, 16; 1 Cor. iv. 7. There is no other spring or fountain of any grace or mercy. It may be some may hope to educe grace out of their own wills and endeavours, and to obtain mercy by their own duties and obedience. But the Scripture knows no such thing, nor do believers find it in their experience.

Let them who have received the least of grace and mercy know from whence they have received it, and whereunto they are beholden for it. A due consideration of this sovereign spring of all grace and consolation, will greatly influence our minds in and unto all the principal duties of obedience; such as thankfulness to God, Eph. i. 3—5; humility in ourselves, 1 Cor. iv. 7; compassion towards others, 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26.

Let those who stand in need of grace and mercy, (as who doth not) expect them wholly from the sovereign will and pleasure of God, who 'is gracious unto whom he will be gracious,' James i. 5. Our own endeavours are means in this kind for obtaining grace in the measures and degrees of it; but it is the will of God alone that is the cause of it all, 2 Tim. i. 9.

2. What God was thus willing unto is expressed, and that was more abundantly to declare the immutability of his counsel. And we may inquire concerning it, 1. What is meant by the counsel of God. 2. How that counsel of God was, and is immutable. 3. How it was declared so to be. 4. How it was abundantly so declared.

First. To *αμεταθετον της βουλης*. The counsel of God is the eternal purpose of his will, called his counsel, because of the infinite wisdom wherewith it is always accompanied. So that which is called, 'the good pleasure which he had purposed in himself,' Eph. i. 9, is termed 'the counsel of his will,' ver. 11. Counsel among men, is a rational deliberation about causes, means, effects, and ends, according to the nature of things advised about, and the proper interests of them who do deliberate. In this sense, counsel is not to be attributed unto God. For as the infinite sovereign wisdom of his being admits not of his taking counsel with any other; so the infinite simplicity of his nature and understanding comprehending all things in one single act of his mind, allows not of formal counsel or deliberation. The first therefore of these the Scripture explodes, Isa xl. 13; Rom. xi. 34; and although in the latter way, God be frequently introduced as one deliberating or taking counsel with himself, it is not the manner of doing, but the effect, or the thing done, which is intended. So it is in like manner where God is said to hearken, to hear, to see, whereby his infinite knowledge and understanding of all things are intended, those being

the mediums whereby we who are to be instructed do come to know and understand, what so we do. Whereas therefore the end of counsel or all rational deliberation, is to find out the true and stable directions of wisdom, the acts of the will of God being accompanied with infinite wisdom, are called his counsel. For we are not to look upon the purposes and decrees of God as mere acts of will and pleasure, but as those which are the effects of infinite wisdom, and therefore most reasonable, although the reasons of them be sometimes unknown unto us. Hence the apostle issueth his discourse of God's eternal decrees of election and reprobation in an admiration of the infinite wisdom of God whence they proceeded, and wherewith they were accompanied, Rom. xi. 33—36.

In particular, the counsel of God in this place, is the holy, wise purpose of his will, to give his Son Jesus Christ to be of the seed of Abraham, for the salvation of the elect, or heirs of promise; and that in such a way, and accompanied with all such good things, as might secure their faith and consolation. This is the counsel of God, which contained all the grace and mercy of the promise, with the securing them unto believers.

Secondly. Of this counsel it is affirmed that it was immutable, not subject to change. To *μεταθετον*, is quod *μετατιθεσθαι* nequit, 'that cannot be altered.' But the design of God here was not to make his counsel unchangeable, but to declare it so to be. For all the purposes of God, all the eternal acts of his will considered in themselves, are immutable. See Isa. xli. 10; Ps. xxxiii. 11; Prov. xix. 21, xxi. 30, and their immutability is a necessary consequent of the immutability of the nature of God, with 'with whom is no variableness or shadow of turning,' James i. 17. 'The strength of Israel is not a man, that he should repent,' 1 Sam. xv. 29. And in opposition unto all change or mutability, it is said of God, *יהוה הוא*, Ps. cii. 27, which the apostle renders by *συ ὁ αὐτός ἐστι*, 'thou art he always,' in all respect one and the same. Hence among the Jews *יהוה*, 'He,' is a name of God, expressing his immutable self-subsistence. But it will be said that there are in the Scriptures many declarations of God's altering his purpose and his counsels, and repenting him of what he had before determined, being grieved at what he had done, Gen. vi. 6; 1 Sam. ii. 30.

It is agreed by all, that those expressions of repenting, grieving, and the like, are figurative, wherein no such affections are intended as those words signify in created natures, but only an event of things like that, which proceedeth from such affections.

And as to the changes themselves expressed, the schoolmen say not amiss, *Vult Deus mutationem, non mutat voluntatem*, 'he willeth a change, he changeth not his will.'

But fully to remove these difficulties, the purpose of God and the counsels of his will, may be considered either in themselves, or in the declaration that is made concerning their execution. In themselves they are absolutely immutable, no more subject unto change than is the divine nature itself. The declarations which God makes concerning their execution or accomplishments are of two sorts.

1. There are some of them wherein there is necessarily included a

respect unto some antecedent moral rule, which puts an express condition into the declarations, although it be not expressed, and is always in like cases to be understood. Thus God commands the prophet to declare, that yet 'forty days and Nineveh should perish,' John iii. 4. Here seems to be an absolute declaration of the purpose of God without any condition annexed, a positive prediction of what he would do, and should come to pass. Either God must change his purpose, or Nineveh must be overthrown. But whereas this destruction was foretold for sin, and impenitency therein, there was an antecedent moral rule in the case, which gives it as complete a condition as if it had been expressed in words. And that is, that repentance from sin will free from the punishment of sin; so that the prediction had this limitation by an antecedent rule—unless they repent. And God declares that this rule puts a condition into all his threatenings, Jer. xviii. 7, 8. And this was the course of God's dealing with the house of Eli, 1 Sam. ii. 30. God doth neither suspend his purpose on what men will do, nor take up conditional resolutions with respect thereunto. He doth not purpose one thing, and then change his resolutions on contingent emergencies? for he 'is of one mind, and who can turn him?' Job xxiii. 13. Nor doth he determine, that if men do so on the one hand, that he will do so; and if otherwise, that he will do otherwise. For instance, there was no such decree or purpose of God, that if Nineveh did repent it should not be destroyed, and if it did not repent it should perish. For he could not so purpose unless he did not foresee what Nineveh would do; which to affirm is to deny his very Being and Godhead. But in order to accomplish his purpose, that Nineveh should not perish at that time, he threatens it with destruction in a way of prediction, which turned the minds of the inhabitants to attend to that antecedent moral rule, which put a condition into the prediction, whereby they were saved.

2. In the declaration of some of God's counsels and purposes, as to the execution and accomplishment, there is no respect unto any such antecedent moral rule, as should give them either limitation or condition. God takes the whole in such cases absolutely on himself, both as to the ordering and disposing of all things and means unto the end intended. Such was the counsel of God concerning the sending of his Son to be of the seed of Abraham, and the blessing that should ensue thereon. No alteration could possibly, on any account, be made herein neither by the sin nor unbelief of them concerned, nor by any thing that might befall them in this world. Such was the counsel of God, and such the immutability of it here intended; as it was absolutely unchangeable in itself, so as to man's concerns and interest in it, it was attended with no condition or reserve.

Thirdly. This immutability God was willing, *επιδείξαι*, 'to show, manifest, declare, make known.' It is not his counsel absolutely, but the immutability of his counsel, that God designed to evidence. His counsel he made known in his promise. All the gracious actings of God towards us, are the executing of his holy immutable purposes, Eph. i. 11, and all the promises of God are the declarations of those purposes. And they also in themselves are immutable, for they depend

on the essential truth of God. Tit. i. 2, ‘In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.’ God’s essential veracity is engaged in his promises. And they are so expressly the declaration of his purposes, that when God had only purposed to give us eternal life in Christ, he is said to have promised it; namely, before the world began. And this declareth the nature of unbelief, ‘He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar,’ 1 John v. 10, because his essential truth is engaged in his promise. And to make God a liar, is to deny his being, which every unbeliever doth as he is able. But whereas God intended not only the confirmation of the faith of the heirs of promise, but also their consolation under all their difficulties and temptations, he would give a particular evidence of the immutability of that counsel which they embraced by faith as tendered in the promise. For what was done did not satisfy the fulness of grace and love which he would declare in this matter, no, though it were done so abundantly; but,

Fourthly. He would do it, *περισσότερον*, ‘more abundantly;’ that is, beyond what was absolutely necessary in this case. The promise of God, who is the God of truth, is sufficient to give us security. Nor could it be by us discovered how the goodness of God himself should require a further procedure. Yet because something further might be useful, for the reasons and ends before declared, he would add a further confirmation unto his word. And herein, as the divine goodness and condescension are evidently manifested, so it likewise appears what weight God lays, upon the assuring of our faith and confidence. For in this case he swears by himself, who hath taught us not so to use his name, but in things of great consequence and moment. This is the sense of the word if it respect the assurance given, which is more abundant than it could be in or by a single promise. But *περισσότερον* may refer unto God himself, who gives this assurance; and then it is as much as *ex abundanti*, when God, who is truth itself, might justly have required faith of us on his single promise, yet *ex abundanti*, from a superabounding love and care, he would confirm it by his oath. Either sense suits the apostle’s design.

It is declared who they were to whom God intended to give this evidence of the immutability of his counsel, and that is, *τοῖς κληρονομοῖς τῆς ἐπαγγελίας*, ‘to the heirs of promise,’ that is, believers, all believers, both under the Old and New Testament. It may be, indeed, that those of the Hebrews were in the first place intended. For unto them did the promise belong in the first place, as they were the natural seed of Abraham, and unto them was it first to be declared and proposed on its accomplishment, Acts ii. 29, iii. 25, xiii. 46. But it is not they alone who are intended. All the children of the faith of Abraham are heirs also, Gal. iv. 27, 28. It is, therefore, with respect unto all believers absolutely, that God confirmed his promise with his oath, though the natural seed of Abraham was respected in the first place, until they cut off themselves by their unbelief. See Luke i. 72; Micah vii. 20.

Believers are called heirs of the promise on a double account. 1. With respect unto the promise itself. 2. With respect unto the matter

of the promise, or the thing promised. This distinction is evidently founded on Heb. xi. 13, 17, 39, compared. For look in what sense they are said to be heirs of the promise, therein they are not actually possessed of it. For an heir is only in expectancy of that whereof he is an heir. Wherefore, take the promise in the first sense formally, and it is the elect of God, as such, who are the heirs of it. God hath designed them unto an interest therein, and a participation thereof; and he confirmed it with his oath, that they might be induced and encouraged to believe it, to mix it with faith, and so come to inherit it, or to be made actual partakers of it. To this purpose our apostle disputeth at large, Rom. ix. 6—12. In the latter sense, taking the promise materially for the thing promised, they are heirs of it who have an actual interest in it by faith; and partaking of the present grace and mercy wherewith it is accompanied, as pledges of future glory, have a right unto the whole inheritance. Thus all believers, and they only, are heirs of the promise, Rom. viii. 17, heirs of God, that is, of the whole inheritance that he hath provided for his children. And I take the words in this latter sense; for it is not the first believing of these heirs of the promise that they might be justified which is intended, but their establishment in faith, whereby they may be comforted, or have strong consolation. But whereas this declaration of the immutability of God's counsel, is made in the promise of the gospel, which is universal, or at least indefinitely proposed to all, how it comes here to be cast under this limitation, that it is made to elect believers, or the heirs of promise only, shall be immediately declared.

What God did in this matter for the ends mentioned, is summarily expressed: *εμεσιτευσεν ὄρκῳ*, 'he interposed himself by an oath,' fidejussit jurejurando. He that confirmeth any thing by an oath, is fidejussor, one that gives security to faith. And fidejussor in the law, is interventor, one who interposeth or cometh between, and engageth himself to give security. This state of things is, therefore, here supposed. God had given out that promise, whose nature we have before declared. Hereon he required the faith of them unto whom it was given, and that justly. For what could any reasonably require further to give them sufficient ground of assurance? But although all things were clear and satisfactory on the part of God, yet many fears, doubts, and objections, would be ready to arise on the part of believers themselves, as there did in Abraham, unto whom the promise was first made, with respect unto that signal pledge of its accomplishment in the birth of Isaac. In this case, though God was no way obliged to give them further caution or security, yet out of his infinite love and condescension, he will give them a higher pledge and evidence of his faithfulness, and interposeth himself by an oath. He mediated by an oath, he interposed himself between the promise and the faith of believers, to undertake under that solemnity for the accomplishment of it; and swearing by himself, he takes it on his life, his holiness, his being, his truth to make it good. The truths which from these words thus opened we are instructed in, are these that follow.

Obs. I. The purpose of God for the saving of the elect by Jesus Christ, is an act of infinite wisdom, as well as of sovereign grace.

Hence it is called the counsel of his will, or an act of his will accompanied with infinite wisdom, which is the counsel of God. And among all the holy properties of his nature, the manifestation of whose glory he designed therein, there is none more expressly and frequently mentioned than his wisdom. And it is declared,

1. As that which no created understanding of men or angels is able perfectly to comprehend, neither in the counsel, nor in the effects of it. Hence our apostle shutteth up his contemplation of the ways, paths, and effects of this wisdom, with that rapture of admiration, Rom. xi. 33—36, ‘O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor, or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things, to whom be glory for ever, Amen.’ The whole issue of our contemplation of the wisdom of God, in the eternal projection of our salvation by Jesus Christ, is only an admiration of that abyss which we cannot dive into, with a humble ascription of glory to God thereon. And as to the special effects of this wisdom, the angels themselves desire to bow down, with a humble diligence, in their inquiry into them, 1 Pet. i. 12. And on these considerations, our apostle concludes, that without all controversy the work hereof is a great mystery, 1 Tim. iii. 16, which we may adore, but cannot comprehend. See the name of Christ, Isa. ix. 6.

2. As that wherein God hath expressly designed to glorify himself unto eternity. This is the end of all the free acts and purposes of the will of God, neither can they have any other, though all other things may be subordinate thereunto. Now, no property of the divine nature is so conspicuous in the disposal of things unto their proper end, as that of wisdom, whose peculiar work and effect it is. Wherefore, the great end which God will ultimately effect, being his own glory in Christ, and the salvation of the elect by him, the wisdom whereby it was contrived must needs be eminent and glorious. So the apostle tells us, then is the end when Christ shall have delivered up the kingdom unto God, even the Father, and he also in his human nature subjects himself unto him, that God may be all in all, 1 Cor. xv. 24, 28, that is, when the Lord Christ hath finished the whole work of his mediation, and brought all his elect unto the enjoyment of God, then shall God be all in all; or therein, or thereby, he will be for ever exalted and glorified, when it shall be manifest how all this great work came forth from him, and is issued in him, Jude 25; 1 Tim. i. 17.

3. The whole work is therefore expressly called the wisdom of God, because of those characters and impressions thereof that are upon it, and because it is a peculiar effect thereof. So our apostle tells us, that ‘Christ crucified is the power of God and wisdom of God,’ 1 Cor. i. 24, and that the gospel whereby it is declared, is ‘the Wisdom of God in a mystery,’ 1 Cor. ii. 7, and the whole intended is both expressly and fully laid down, Eph. iii. 8—11, ‘Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all

men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God who created all things by Jesus Christ. To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.⁵ The purpose mentioned in the close of these words, is the same with the counsel of God's will in this place. And this purpose was the fountain, spring, and cause of all those glorious and admirable things, whose declaration was committed unto the apostle, as the great publisher of the gospel unto the Gentiles; by the effects whereof such mysteries were unfolded, as the angels themselves in heaven did not before understand. And what was it, saith the apostle, that was declared, manifested, and known thereby? It was *πολυποικίλος σοφία του Θεου*, 'the manifold wisdom of God,' or the infinite wisdom of God, exerting itself in such wonderful variety of holy, wise operations, as no mind of men nor angels can comprehend. And,

4. On this account are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge said to be hid in Jesus Christ, Col. ii. 3. There is not only in him, and the work of his mediation, the wisdom of God, that is, both exerted and manifested, but all the treasures of it; that is, God will not produce any effects out of the stores of his infinite wisdom, but what is suitable and subservient unto what he hath designed in and by Jesus Christ. And may we not,

First. Hence see the horrible depravation of nature which by sin is befallen the minds, reasons, and understandings of men. For from hence alone it is that this purpose of God, which was an act of infinite wisdom, that the work which he hath wrought pursuant thereof, whereon are impressed the characters of his manifold wisdom, are esteemed folly, or foolish things unto them. So far are men by nature from seeing an excellency of divine wisdom in them, that they cannot suffer them to pass as things tolerably rational, but brand them as foolish, or folly itself. This our apostle declares and at large insisteth on, 1 Cor. i. Had the mind of man fixed on any other reason for the rejection of this counsel of God, some excuse might be pretended for it; but to reject that as folly, which God sets forth and declares as the principal instance of his infinite wisdom, this discovers the horror of its depravation. And those in whom this blindness is prevalent, may be referred unto three sorts.

1. Such as by whom the gospel is absolutely rejected as a foolish thing, unbecoming the wisdom of God to propose, and their own wisdom to receive. As this was the state of the Jews, and of the Pagan world of old, and as it is the condition of the Mahometans and relics of the heathens at this day, so I wish that the poison and contagion of this wickedness were not further diffused. But, alas! we see many every day, who, on the account of their outward circumstances, live in some kind of compliance with the name and profession of the gospel, who yet discover themselves sufficiently to hate, despise, and condemn the mystery of it, and the wisdom of God therein.

2. Such as own the gospel in the letter of it, but look on the mys-

tery of it, or the counsel of God therein, as foolishness. Hence, all the principal parts of it, as the incarnation of Christ, the hypostatical union of his person, his sacrifice and oblation, the atonement and satisfaction made by his death, the imputation of his righteousness, the election of grace, with the power and efficacy of it in our conversion, are all of them either directly exploded as foolish, or wrested unto senses suited unto their own low and carnal apprehensions. And this sort of men do swarm amongst us at this day, like to locusts, when a north-east wind hath filled every place with them.

3. There are multitudes whose choice of their outward conditions being prevented by the providence of God, so that they are brought forth and fixed where the gospel passeth current in the world, without any open control, who do see no reason why, with the first sort, they should openly reject it, nor will be at the pains, with the second sort, to corrupt it, but yet practically esteem it a foolish thing to give place unto its power on their hearts, and do really esteem them foolish who labour so to do. And this is openly the condition of the generality of those who live under the dispensation of the gospel in the world.

I have named these things only to reflect thereby on that horrible depravation which, by corruption of nature, is come upon the minds and reason of mankind. And it is in none more evident than in those who most boast of the contrary. And,

Secondly. We may learn from hence, that there is no greater evidence of thriving in spiritual light and understanding, than when we find our souls affected with, and raised to a holy admiration of the wisdom and counsel of God, which are declared in the gospel.

Obs. II. The life and assurance of our present comforts and future glory, depend on the immutability of God's counsel. To secure those things unto us, God shows us that immutability. Our own endeavours are to be used to the same end, for we are to give 'all diligence to make our calling and election sure.' But all depends on the unchangeable purpose of the will of God, which alone is able to bear the charge of so great a work. But this must be further spoken to on the next verse.

Obs. III. The purpose of God concerning the salvation of the elect by Jesus Christ, became immutable from hence, that the determination of his will was accompanied with infinite wisdom:—it was his counsel. All the certainty that is amongst men, as to the accomplishment of any end designed by them, depends on the exercise of wisdom in finding out and applying suitable means thereunto. And because their wisdom is weak in all things, and in most no better than folly, whence generally they fix first on ends unprofitable, and then make use of means weak and unsuited to their purpose, it is, that all their affairs are wrapped up in uncertainties, and most of them end in disappointments and confusion. But as God fixeth on those ends which perfectly comply with his own infinite holiness and sovereignty, whence they are necessarily good and holy: so he doth not first do so, and then make choice of various means that proffer themselves unto those ends. But in his infinite wisdom, ends and means lie before him in one vein, and fall together under his unalterable determination.

Two things, therefore, may be considered in the wisdom of God, giving immutability to his counsel concerning the salvation of the elect by Jesus Christ.

1. Thereby he saw at once not only whatever was needful for the accomplishing of it, but that which would infallibly effect it. He chose not probable and likely means for it, and such as might do it, unless some great obstruction did arise, such as whose efficacy might be suspended on any conditions and emergencies; but such as should infallibly and inevitably reach the end intended. In the first covenant, wherein God had not immutably decreed to preserve mankind absolutely in their primitive estate, he made use of such means for their preservation, as might effect it, in case they were not wanting to themselves, or that obedience which they were enabled to perform. This man neglecting, the means appointed of God as to their success depending thereon, by God's own appointment, that end which in their own nature they tended unto was not attained, and that because God had not immutably determined it. But now, whereas God engaged himself in an unchangeable purpose, in his infinite wisdom he fixeth on such means for its accomplishment, as shall not depend on any thing, whereby their efficacy might be frustrated. Such was his sending of his Son to be incarnate, and the dispensation of grace of the new covenant, which is in its nature infallibly effectual unto the end whereunto it is designed.

2. God, in his infinite wisdom, foresaw all the interveniencies on our part that might obstruct the certain accomplishment of the promise. The promise was first given indefinitely unto all mankind in our first parents. But soon after the wickedness of the whole world, with their absolute contempt of the grace of the promise was such, as that any creature would conceive that it would be of none effect, being so visibly, so universally rejected and despised. But a perfect view hereof lying under the wisdom of God, he provided against it for the immutability of his purpose and infallibility of his promise, by singling out first one, then another, and at last the whole posterity of Abraham, towards whom the promise should be accomplished. But yet, after a long season, there came the last and uttermost trial of the whole matter. For the generality of the seed of Abraham rejected the promise also, whereby it appeared really to have been frustrated, and to be of none effect, as our apostle declares in his answer to that objection, Rom. ix. 6. But instead of changing his purpose, God then more fully discovered wherein the immutability of his counsel did consist, and whereon it did depend, as Gal. iii. 8. And this was, that all along, and under all those apostasies, he ever had, and ever will have in the world, an elect people, chosen by him before the foundation of the world, in, and towards whom, his purpose was immutable, and his promise infallible. No interveniency can possibly shake or alter what hath been settled by infinite wisdom. There is not a particular believer but is made so sensible of his own unworthiness, that at one time or another, he cannot but be almost brought to a loss how it should be, that such an one as he should ever inherit the promise. But God foresaw all that hath befallen us, or will do so; and hath in his

infinite wisdom provided against all interveniencies, that his purpose might not be changed, nor his promise frustrated.

Obs. IV. Infinite goodness, as acting itself in Christ, was not satisfied in providing and preparing good things for believers, but it would also show and declare it unto them for their present consolation.—God was willing to show to the heirs of promise; and the end was, that they might have strong consolation. As it is with a good wise father and an obedient son; the father is possessed of a large and profitable estate, and as the son hath a present allowance suitable to his condition, so, being obedient, he hath a just expectation, that in due time he shall enjoy the whole inheritance, this being usual amongst men, and that which the law of nature directs unto; for parents are to lay up for their children, and not children for their parents. But the whole being yet absolutely in the father's power, it is possible he may otherwise dispose of it, and it may not come to the right heir. But now, if his father seeth his son on some occasion to want encouragement, or he be to put him on any difficult service where he may meet with storms and dangers, he will show unto him his deeds of settlement, wherein he had irrevocably confirmed unto him the whole inheritance. So God deals with believers, with his children, in this case. He is rich in grace, mercy, and glory, and all his children are heirs of it, co-heirs with Christ and heirs of God, Rom. viii. 17, that is, of the whole inheritance that God hath provided for his children. This they have an expectation of by the promise, according to the law of the new covenant. But although their state be thus secured by their being heirs of the promise, yet God knowing that they have a difficult work and warfare to go through withal, and what it is to serve him in temptations, for their encouragement and consolation, he produceth and showeth them his irrevocable deed of settlement, namely, his promise confirmed by his oath, whereby the whole inheritance is infallibly secured unto them; he was free and willing to show it unto the heirs of promise. At first, God gave out a mere precept as the declaration of his will, and a promise couched in a threatening. This was that which divine goodness, acting in a way of nature, did require, and whereof man had no cause to complain. For as the mind of God was sufficiently declared therein, so man in himself had no grounds of discouragements from a compliance therewith. And God might so deal with us all, giving out the whole revelation of his will in a system of precepts, as some seem to suppose that he hath done. But things are now changed on two accounts; for,

1. It was herein the peculiar design of God to glorify his goodness, love, grace, and mercy, by Jesus Christ, and he will do it in an abundant manner. He had before glorified his eternal power and infinite wisdom in the creation of the world, and all things therein contained, Ps. xix. 1—3; Rom. i. 21. And he had glorified his holiness and righteousness, in giving of the law, accompanied with eternal rewards and punishments. But grace and truth, in the provision of it, and the accomplishment of the promise, came by Jesus Christ, John i. 18. And therefore, that the Lord Christ in all this may have the preeminence, he will do it in an abundant and inconceivable manner,

above the former declarations of his glory in any other of his attributes. Hence, in the Scripture, the communication of grace is expressed in words that may intimate its exceeding, and passing all understanding, Rom. v. 20, *ὑπερεπερίσσευσεν ἡ χάρις*, 'grace did by Christ more than abound.' To abound, expresseth the largest comprehensible measures and degrees; but that which doth more than abound, who can conceive? 1 Tim. i. 14, *ὑπερεπλεονάσε δε ἡ χάρις τοῦ Κυρίου*, 'the grace of our Lord did more than abound;' it exceeded all comprehension. So that glory which is the effect of this grace, is said to be given, *καθ' ὑπερβολὴν εἰς ὑπερβολὴν*, 2 Cor. iv. 17, that is, in an excellency and exceeding greatness no way to be conceived. So plainly the apostle calls the grace of God in Christ, *ὑπερβαλλόντα πλουτον*, Eph. ii. 7, 'excelling riches.' That we may know his meaning, he calls it again, ch. iii. 8, *τον ἀνέξιχνιαστον πλουτον*, 'riches whereof there is no investigation.' In the pursuit of this design, to exercise and manifest the infinite fulness of his love and goodness, he will not satisfy himself with a mere declaration of his will, but he will have those concerned in it to know it, to understand it, to have the present comfort of it; and because they could not do that without satisfaction in the immutability of his counsel, he evidenceth that unto them by all means possible. And thereby he sufficiently manifests how willing he is, how well pleasing it is unto him, that our faith in him should be firm and steadfast.

2. Man is now fallen into a condition of sin and misery. And herein is he filled with so many fears, discouragements, and despondencies, that it is the most difficult thing in the world to raise him unto any hopes of mercy or favour from God. In this lost forlorn estate, divine goodness, by an infinite condescension, accommodates itself unto our weakness and our distresses. He doth not therefore only propose his mind and will unto us, as unto grace and glory, but useth all ways possible, to ingenerate in us a confidence of his willingness to bring us unto a participation of them. He doth every thing that may direct and encourage us, to take a steadfast view of the excellency and immutability of his counsel in this matter. Hence a great part of the Scripture, the revelation of God's will, is taken up in promises, exhortations, invitations, discourses, and expressions of love, kindness, and compassion. And in particular, although the promise itself was an abundant security for faith to rest on, as to the immutability of God's counsel, yet, to obviate all pretences and cast out all excuses, he confirms it with his oath. And although he did this in particular and expressly unto Abraham, yet he takes all believers, who are his seed, into a participation of the same privilege with him, and manifests how that in swearing unto him, he sware also unto them all. And two things do hence naturally issue.

1. The unspeakable encouragement unto believing, which is given unto all unto whom this counsel of God and its immutability is proposed. The essential truth of God and his oath, are openly and manifestly engaged to these two things. 1. That nothing but unbelief shall keep off any from the enjoyment of the promise. 2. That all believers, whatever difficulties they may meet withal in themselves, or

objections against themselves, shall certainly and infallibly enjoy the promise and be saved. And the immutability of God's counsel herein he hath made so evident, that there is no room for any objection against it. This is tendered unto you to whom the gospel is proposed. Greater encouragement unto believing, and more certainty of the event, you shall never have in this world, you cannot have, God will not, God cannot give. All persons not yet come up to believing, unto whom this peace with God is preached, are distinguished into two sorts—them that are nigh, and them that are far off, Eph. ii. 17. This, in the first place, expresseth the Jews and Gentiles; but in a parity of reason must be extended unto others. Some are comparatively nigh, such as have been affected with the word, and brought into inquiries whether they should believe or not; and there are some afar off, who as yet have taken little notice of these things. Herein is both a call and encouragement unto both. To the first, to determine their wills in the choice of Christ in the promise; unto the other, to look up unto him, though from the ends of the earth. But I must not enlarge.

2. It discovers the heinous nature of unbelief. The gospel, which is a message of love, peace, mercy, and grace, yet never makes mention of unbelief but it annexeth damnation unto it; 'He that believeth not shall be damned.' And although they shall also perish unto whom the gospel is not preached, Rom. ii. 12, yet the gospel, though it speaks not exclusively unto others, yet principally it declares the inevitable destruction, the everlasting damnation of them, who believe not when the promise is declared unto them, 2 Thess. i. 6—10. However, it declares that they shall fall under a sorer death and destruction than any others, 2 Cor. ii. 16. And the reason of this severity is taken partly from the nature of unbelief, and partly from the aggravation of it. The nature of unbelief consists in a refusal of the testimony of God, so making him a liar, 1 John v. 10, and in esteeming that which he proposeth as his power and wisdom to be weakness and folly. Hence there is no way of sin or rebellion against God whatever, that casts such scorn and indignity upon him. So that it is in itself the greatest of sins, as well as the root and cause of them. Yet such is the blindness of corrupted nature, that many who will boggle at other sins, especially such as look with a severe threatening aspect on a natural conscience, as adultery, theft, and murder, yet concern themselves not at all in this unbelief, but rather approve themselves in their infidelity. Yet is there not one unto whom the gospel is preached, but if he do not really receive the Lord Christ as tendered in the promise, he doth what lies in him to declare God to be a liar, foolish in his counsels, and weak in his operations. And what account this will come to, it is not hard to discern. Moreover, it is from the aggravations that it is accompanied withal, from the nature of the thing itself, and the way whereby it is proposed unto us: 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?' Heb. ii. 3. We may look only on that which lies before us; namely, the infinite condescension of divine goodness in showing, manifesting, and declaring the immutability of his counsel by oath. Whereas therefore he hath done all to

this end that was possible to be done, and more than ever would have entered into the heart of any creature to desire or expect, the woeful condition of unbelievers, both as to this sin, and misery which will follow thereon, is inexpressible. For those that will despise all that God will do, yea all that he can do, to give them assurance of the truth and stability of his promises given in a way of grace, have no reason to expect, nor shall receive any thing, but what he will do, and can do, in a way of justice and vengeance.

Obs. V. It is not all mankind universally, but a certain number of persons under certain qualifications, to whom God designs to manifest the immutability of his counsel, and to communicate the effects thereof. It is only the heirs of promise whom God intendeth. But herein two things are to be considered. 1. The outward revelation or administration of these things; and, 2. God's purpose therein. The former is made promiscuously and indefinitely unto all to whom the gospel is preached. For therein is contained a declaration of the immutability of God's counsel, and his willingness to have it known. But if God did design the communication of the effect of it, in the same latitude with the outward administration of it, then must he be thought to fail in his purpose towards the greatest part of them who receive it not. This is that which the apostle disputes upon, Rom. ix. Having supposed that the generality of the Jews, of the posterity of Abraham according to the flesh, were cut off from the promise by unbelief, and declared his sense thereon, ver. 1, he raiseth an objection against that supposition, ver. 6, that if it were so, the promise of God was of none effect; for unto them all it was given and declared. Hereunto the apostle answers and replies, in that and the following verses, 7—11. And the substance of his answer is, that although the promise was promiscuously proposed unto all, yet the grace of it was intended only unto the elect, as he also farther declares, ch. xi. 7. But why then doth God thus cause the declaration to be made promiscuously and indefinitely unto all, if it be some only whom he designs unto a participation of the effects of his counsel and good things promised? I answer,

Let us always remember, that in these things we have to do with him who is greater than we, and who giveth no account of his matters. What if God will take this way of procedure, and give no reason of it? who are we, that we should dispute against God? Wherefore, our apostle having at large discoursed this whole matter, and pleaded the absolute freedom of God to do whatever he pleaseth, winds up the whole in a resignation of all unto his sovereignty, with a deep admiration of his unsearchable wisdom, wherein it is our duty to acquiesce, Rom. xi. 33—35. But yet I may add,

That the nature of the thing itself doth require this dispensation of the promise indefinitely to all, though the benefit of it be designed to some only. For the way whereby God will give a participation or the promise unto the heirs of it, being by the administration of his word, and such means as are meet to work on the minds of men, to persuade and prevail with them unto faith and obedience, he would not do it by immediate revelation or inspiration, and the like extraordinary

operations of his Spirit alone, but by such ways as are suited to glorify himself and his grace in the rational minds of his creatures capable thereof. Now this could no way be done, nor can unto this day, but by the declaration and preaching of the promise, with commands, motives, and encouragements to believing. In this work, all those whom he employs, are utterly ignorant who they are who are heirs of the promise, until they are discovered by their actual believing: wherefore, they have no other work, but, in the first place, to propose the promise promiscuously unto all that will attend unto it, leaving the singling out of its proper heirs unto the sovereign grace of God. So the word is preached unto all indefinitely, and the election obtains, whilst the rest are hardened.

Obs. VI. God alone knows the due measures of divine condescension, or what becomes the divine nature therein. Who could have once apprehended, who durst have done so, that the holy God should swear by himself to confirm his word and truth unto such worthless creatures as we are? Indeed there is yet a more transcendant act of divine condescension, namely, the incarnation of the Son of God, the glory whereof, will be the object of the admiration of men and angels unto eternity. For, alas! what created understanding could ever have raised itself unto a thought, that the Eternal Word should be made flesh? God alone, who is infinitely wise, only wise, knew what became the holiness of his being, and his goodness therein. And so is it in its measure in this of his oath. And as we are with holy confidence to make use of what he hath done in this kind, seeing not to do so, is to despise the highest expression of his goodness; so we are not in any thing to draw divine condescension beyond divine expressions.

Obs. VII. So unspeakable is the weakness of our faith, that we stand in need of inconceivable divine condescension for its confirmation. The immutability of God's counsel, is the foundation of our faith; until this be manifest, it is impossible that ever faith should be sure and steadfast. But who would not think that God's declaration thereof, by the way of promise, were every way sufficient thereunto? But God knew that we yet stood in need of more; not that there was want of sufficient evidence in his promise, but such a want of stability in us, as stood in need of a superabundant confirmation, as we shall see in the next verse.

VER. 18.—*That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.*

Two things in general, the apostle further designs in this verse.

1. That the declaration which God had made of the immutability of his counsel in this matter, was every way sufficient and satisfactory.
2. What was the especial end and design which he had therein, towards the heirs of promise?

For the first, he doth it by declaring the evidence given, and the nature of it, which consisted in two immutable things. *Δια δυο πραγ-*

ματων αμεταθετων. Πραγμα is an 'act or deed,' such as we make and deliver, when we convey any thing from one to another: an instrument of an assurance. This is the promise and the oath of God. Security is given by them, both from their own nature, and also because they are two; two witnesses whereby the thing intended is established. But what need was there of two such things? Is it because one of these was weak, infirm, alterable, such as may be justly challenged, or excepted against; that the other is added to strengthen and confirm it? No, saith the apostle, both of them are equally immutable. Wherefore, we must still carry along with us, the infinite and inconceivable condescension of God in this matter, who, to obviate our temptations, and relieve us under our weaknesses, is pleased to give this variety unto his divine testimony, which he did ex abundanti; not only beyond what he was any way obliged unto, but whatever we could desire or expect.

For, 2. This makes the evidence absolute and uncontrollable, that as they are two things which are produced to make it good, so they are both of them equally immutable; such as neither in their own nature, nor in their execution, were any way exposed or liable unto alteration. For the promise itself was absolute, and the thing promised depended on no condition in us, on nothing without God himself. For there was in the promise itself, all the springs of all that is good, and of deliverance from all that is evil, so that on every side it brings along with it, the condition of its own accomplishment. But whereas God in the covenant of works, did give no promise to mankind but what was conditional, and suspended on such things on our part, as might, or might not be, whence it came to pass, that we sinned and came short of it; God in the giving out of this promise, which is the foundation of the covenant of grace, to assure us that it is utterly of another nature, and such as on no occurrence is liable to change, confirms it with his oath.

Moreover, the apostle confirmeth this testimony yet further, from the nature of him by whom it was given. *Εν οἷς αδυνατον ψευσασθαι Θεον*, 'in,' or by which 'it was impossible that God should lie,' or deceive. *Ψευσασθαι* is not absolutely to lie, but by any means to deceive him who hath cause to trust what we say or do. The highest security among men, consists in a promise confirmed with an oath; and this is, and must be unto them an end of strife, for higher they cannot go. But yet it is possible there may be a lie and deceit in their testimony, and he who trusts in them may be deceived, as it often falls out in the world. For although the things themselves are good, and such as would secure the interest of truth only, yet men that use them are changeable, yea liars. But it is God that makes use of them in our case, and therefore, it is impossible that he should lie. God having made this double engagement of his truth and faithfulness, it is utterly impossible that he should deceive any one thereby.

But why doth the apostle put an emphasis upon this, that 'by these things' it was impossible that God should lie or deceive? For it is necessary unto God from his own being, that it should in all things be impossible for him to lie. He cannot lie, he cannot deceive, he

cannot deny himself or his word : these things are repugnant unto his being. I answer, that the apostle speaks not of the nature of the things themselves, but of their manifestation with respect unto us. Nothing was added to the promise of God to render it more certain, firm, and stable ; but an addition was made unto it, to give our minds greater security. God's immutability in promising, and impossibility in deceiving, are both equally from his nature, but the distinct proposition of them, is needful unto our encouragement and establishment.

Obs. VIII. Fallen sinful man stands in need of the utmost encouragement that divine condescension can extend unto, to prevail with him to receive and lay hold of the promise of grace and mercy by Jesus Christ.

There is nothing that we are so prone unto, as to distrust the promises of God. Nothing that we are with more difficulty won over unto, than to mix them with faith. To evidence this, we may consider,

First. That the first entrance of sin into the world, was by a disbelief of the truth of God ; yea, that very sin formally consisted in an apprehension, that God in his promises and threatenings had a mind to deceive us, Gen. iii. 4—6. And as sin thus laid its foundation by the craft of Satan, so it endeavours to carry on its building. It continually suggests to the hearts and minds of men, that they shall certainly be deceived in trusting to God's promises.

For, 1. Secret thoughts there are in the hearts of men (which are deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked) that neither the promises nor threatenings of God are true, in the terms and sense wherein they are proposed unto them. They neither think that it shall be so bad with any, as he threateneth, nor so well as he promiseth. Did men believe the threatenings of God as to the fearful and eternal ruin of sinners, it were not possible they should live in sin as they do, without any endeavour of amendments, so to fly from the wrath to come. Nor do they think in their hearts, that it shall be with them that believe, according as God hath promised. They say in their hearts, 'The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil,' Zeph. i. 12, namely, as he hath either promised or threatened.

2. Men think that there are still some reserves and latent conditions in the promises and threatenings of God, and that God knows that it shall be otherwise than they seem to pretend. By this imagination, Satan deceived our first parents as to the truth of God in his threatening. He persuaded them that there was a reserve therein, that was directly contrary unto what the words of it declared ; and that by transgressing of his commands, they should not die, but be wise and like himself. And still men suppose that the promises propose a fair ground indeed ; but that if they should go to build upon it, there is a mine under it, which would be sprung at one time or another, unto their ruin. They cannot apprehend that it shall be with them according unto, and as the promise doth declare. If they should attempt to believe, yet one latent condition or other, would defeat them of obtaining it ; whereas, indeed, the whole and entire condition of enjoying the promise, is faith alone.

3. Whatever may be the truth of the promise, yet they cannot conceive that God intends them therein; whereas yet, there is no declaration or intention of God, whereby our duty is to be regulated, and whereon we shall be judged, but what is contained and expressed in the proposal of the promise itself.

On these, and the like grounds, the great contest in the world between God and man, is, whether God be true or a liar in his promise. It is not thus directly stated in the minds of men, for they have many other pretences why they do not believe; but this is that which it is resolved into. For 'he that receives not the testimony of God, maketh him a liar.' So was it with the people in the wilderness, whose carcasses fell therein because of their unbelief. The reasons they pretended and pleaded, why they would not attempt to enter the land of Canaan, were, that the people were strong, and the cities walled, and giants among them, Num. xiii. 28—33. But the true reason was, their unbelief of God's promise: wherefore, God expresseth the sense of his indignation against them, with that scheme of reproach, 'Ye shall bear your iniquities, and you shall know my breach of promise,' ch. xiv. 34, or see what your unbelief hath brought you unto. And no otherwise is it with all unbelievers at present, as our apostle at large declares, ch. iii. of this Epistle. Other things are pretended as the causes of their unbelief, but it is their dissatisfaction in the truth of God, that is the true and only cause of it. And as this sufficiently manifests the heinousness of unbelief, so it glorifies the righteousness of God, in the condemnation of unbelievers.

Secondly. The curse of the law having, by the guilt of sin, been admitted unto a dominion over the whole soul, it is a great thing to receive and admit of a testimony to the contrary, such as the promise is. What the law speaks, it speaks unto them that are under it, as all men are by nature. And it speaks in the heart of every man, that the sinner must die. Conscience complies also, and adds its suffrage thereunto. This fixeth a conclusion in the mind, that so it will be, whatever may be offered unto the contrary. But so is the testimony of God in the promise, namely, that there is a way of life and salvation for sinners, and that God offereth this way and an interest therein unto us. Nothing but the exceeding greatness of the power of grace, can enable a guilty sinner in this case, to set his seal that God is true.

Thirdly. When the promise comes, and is proposed unto us, for the most part it finds us deeply engaged into, and as to ourselves, immutably fixed on other things that are inconsistent with faith in the promises. Some are interested in divers lusts and pleasures; some are filled with inveterate prejudices through a vain conversation received by tradition from their fathers; and some have good hopes in themselves, that in the way wherein they are, by the religion which they profess, and the duties which they perform, they may, in time, arrive unto what they aim at. When the promise is proposed, the first thing included therein, is an utter relinquishment of all these things. As it is a promise of grace, so it excludes every thing but grace. Wherefore, when it is proposed unto any, it doth not only

require that it be believed, or God be believed therein, but also, that in order thereunto, we part with, and utterly renounce all hopes and confidences in ourselves, from what we are or expect to be, and betake ourselves for life and salvation, unto the promise alone. Some imagine that it is a very easy thing to believe; and that the souls of men are but deceived, when they are called off from the duties that light and conviction put them upon, to the way of faith in the promise. But the truth is, that what from its own nature, and from what is required thereunto, or comprised therein, it is as the most important, so the highest and greatest duty that we are called unto, and which men would of their own choice, rather grind in a mill of the most burdensome duties, than once apply their minds unto.

Fourthly. The guilt of sin hath filled the mind of every sinner with innumerable fears, doubts, and confusions, that are very difficultly satisfied or removed. Yea, the remainders of them do abide in believers themselves, and oftentimes fill them with great perplexities. And these, when the promise is proposed unto them, arise and follow one another like waves of the sea, James i. 6. No sooner is one of them answered or waved, but immediately another supplies its room. And in them all doth unbelief put forth its power.

And on these grounds it is, that poor sinners have such need of the reduplication of divine assurances, that notwithstanding all pretences unto the contrary, the promise of grace in Christ shall be made good and be accomplished unto them.

4. The especial design of God in this dispensation and condescension, is, *ἵνα ἐχωμεν ἰσχυρὰν παρακλήσιν*, &c. ‘that we might have a strong consolation.’ Being engaged in the application of his instance, in the promise and faith of God given unto Abraham, the apostle here plainly dismisseth the consideration of things past under the Old Testament, in those blessings and temporal things which were typical of things spiritual, and applies the whole unto present believers, and therein unto all those of future ages, ‘that we might have.’ And herein he builds on this principle; that whatever God promised, designed, swore unto Abraham, that he did so promise unto all believers whatever; so that every promise of the covenant, belongeth equally unto them with him or any other. And two things the apostle lays down concerning such believers. 1. What God designs unto them: 2. Such a description of them as contains the qualifications necessary unto a participation of what is so designed.

The first is *παρακλησις*. It sometimes signifies ‘exhortation,’ an encouraging persuasive exhortation. And in that sense it is here taken by some expositors, as Theophylact and Œcumenius; that we might have thereby a prevalent exhortation unto faith and patience in believing. But comfort or consolation is the most usual signification of the word in the New Testament, as I have shown elsewhere; and that sense of the word alone can be here intended. A consolation it is that ariseth from the assurance of faith, and of our interest thereby in the promises of God. This is that which relieves our souls against all fears, doubts, and troubles; for it either obviates and prevents them, or it outbalanceth them, and bears up our souls against them.

For comfort is the relief of the mind, whatever it be, against sorrow and trouble.

And this consolation which God intends and designs believers, is *ισχυρα*, solamen fortissimum, forte, validum, potens, 'strong, powerful, prevalent.' Strong, so as to be prevalent against opposition, is that which is intended. There are comforts to be taken, or which are often taken from earthly things. But they are weak, languid, and such as fade and die upon the first appearance of a vigorous opposition. But this consolation is strong and prevalent against all creature oppositions whatever. 'Strong,' that is, such as will abide against all opposition, a strong tower, an impregnable fortress, munition of rocks. For it is not the abounding of consolation in us, but the prevalency of the causes of it against opposition, that is intended.

5. There is the description of the persons unto whom God designs this consolation by the promise confirmed with his oath, *οἱ καταφυγοντες κρατησαι της προκειμενης ελπιδος*. There are three things in this description of believers, or the heirs of the promise. 1. The way whereby they seek for relief—they flee for refuge. 2. The relief itself which they seek after, which is—the hope set before them. 3. The way whereby they are made partakers of it—they lay hold upon it.

First. They are *οἱ καταφυγοντες*, say we, 'that flee for refuge,' qui cursum corripiant. It is the judgment of many that here is an allusion unto him who had slain a man unawares under the law, whose safety and life depended on his speedy flight unto one of the cities of refuge, Num. xxxv. 11, 12. And hereto our translators had undoubtedly respect, whereon they rendered the word, 'fleeing for refuge.' And indeed the word itself signifies such an action as is there ascribed unto the man-slayer. For *καταφυγειν* properly, cursum corripere, hath respect unto two things. 1. An apprehension of danger, or a real surprisal with it, whereon a man takes his flight for deliverance. And so it was with the man-slayer: his apprehension of the approach of the avenger of blood, to take away his life, stirred him up, *καταφυγειν*, to flee from the place and condition wherein he was, lest evil should overtake him. 2. Speed and diligence in an endeavour to attain that place, or company, or end, which a man proposeth unto himself, as the means of his deliverance, and whereby he hopes to find safety. He that doth so flee, casts off all tergiversation, stirs up himself, gives no place to sloth or vain hopes, and useth his utmost diligence in the pursuit of his safety. And hereby doth the Holy Ghost in a lively manner express the state and condition of all the heirs of promise in this matter. In themselves, by nature, as they are children of the first Adam, they are all exposed upon the guilt of sin, original and actual, unto the sentence of the law. God, by various means, is pleased to awaken them unto the consideration of the danger wherein they are, the execution of that curse which they are obnoxious unto being independent over them. In this condition, they see a necessity of seeking out for relief, as knowing that if it be not obtained they must perish, and that eternally. Love of sin, compliance with the world, hopes of righteousness of their own, do all endeavour variously to retard and hinder them in their design. But when God

proceeds to shut them up, to sharpen their convictions, and continually to represent their condition unto them, giving them to conclude that there is no hope in their present condition, at length they stir up themselves unto a speedy flight to the hope set before them in the promise. And,

Secondly. That is the second thing to be inquired into, namely, What is this *της προκειμενης ελπιδος*, 'hope that is set before us,' and how it is so. 1. Most expositors take hope here by a metonymy of the subject for the thing hoped for; that is, grace and glory, justification and salvation by Jesus Christ. These things are the subject-matter of the promises, which we desire and hope after. And unto these we may be said to flee for relief or refuge, when in our expectation of them we are supported and comforted. 2. Some take hope subjectively for the grace of hope itself. And this we are said to flee unto, that is, speedily to betake ourselves unto the exercise of it, as founded in the promises of God, foregoing all other expectations, wherein we shall find assured consolation. 3. Hope, by a metonymy of the effect for the cause, may express the promise itself, which is the cause and means of ingenerating hope in us. And this I take to be the proper meaning of the place, and which is not exclusive of the other senses mentioned. The promise being proposed unto us, is the cause and object of our faith, on the account of the faithfulness of God therein. Faith brings forth hope, whose object is the same promise, or the good things thereof, as proposed from the same faithfulness. Thence is itself called the hope, as that without which we could have none, there being neither cause of it, nor object for it. And this hope is said to be set before us, or to be proposed unto us, which it is in the declaration of the promise, or the dispensation of the gospel. Therein it is proposed as the object of our faith and hope, as the means of the strong consolation, which God is so abundantly willing that we should receive. And this renders the whole metaphor plain and easy. For it is evident how the promise, and all that we hope for thereby, is set before us, and proposed unto us in the gospel, as also how we flee or betake ourselves thereunto in all distresses for relief. And it is more natural to allow of this metonymical expression in the word hope, than to admit of so rough a catachresis in the other part of the words, wherein the grace of hope within us should be said to be set before us.

Thirdly. With respect hereunto we are said to flee, *κρατησαι*; that is, *εις το κρατησαι*, 'to lay hold on,' fortiter apprehendere, constanter retinere. The signification of this word, frequently used by our apostle, I have on sundry occasions before declared. It is, *injecta manu, totis viribus retinere*, 'to hold fast what we lay hold on, with all our might and power.' There will be many endeavours to strike off the hand of faith from laying hold on the promise, and many more to loosen its hold when it hath taken it. But it is in its nature, and it is a part of our duty, strongly to lay hold upon, and firmly to retain the promise when we have reached unto it. And there seems, in the old metaphor, to be an allusion unto those who run in a race. For whereas they have a prize, or *βραχειον*, set before them, they first stir up themselves, with all their strength, to speed towards the mark, which when they have attained,

they both lay fast hold on, and bear it away with them as their own. So is it with believers as to the promise proposed unto them, or set before them. They reach out after it, lay hold upon it, reserve it as to their interest in it, as the only means of their deliverance and salvation, and of that consolation which in every condition they stand in need of. And from the words so opened, we may observe that,

Obs. IX. Sense of danger and ruin from sin, is the first thing which occasions a soul to look out after Christ in the promise. It is implied in the word *καταφυγειν*, which includes a respect unto danger to be avoided, whence we render it, 'flee for refuge.' As the Lord Christ, came to seek and save that which was lost, to call not the righteous, but sinners to repentance, to be a physician to the sick, and not to the whole; so if men are not sensible of their lost condition, of the sin and sickness of their souls, they will never in good earnest look out after him. And therefore, as they by whom conviction of sin, and humiliation for it are despised, as these are by many, do also despise Christ himself, who is the end of the law and all its convictions for righteousness; so the profession of Christ and hopes of salvation by him, is in vain in all those who were never truly made sensible of sin, and the danger of eternal ruin thereby.

Obs. X. A full conviction of sin, in a great and shaking surprisal unto a guilty soul. Hence is such a one here tacitly compared unto him who had killed a man at unawares. He was just before in a condition of peace and safety, fearing no man, but with quietness and assurance attending his own occasions. But having now slain a man at unawares, he finds all things on a sudden changed round about him. Fear within, and danger from without, do beset him on every hand. If he seeth any man, he supposeth him the avenger of blood; and if he seeth no man, solitude is dreadful unto him. No otherwise is it with them who are thoroughly convinced of sin. They were alive as the apostle speaks, Rom vii., and at peace, fearing no more evil than they felt; perhaps persuading themselves that all things were well between God and their souls, or not much solicitous whether they were or not. In this state, the commandment comes and discovers their guilt and danger thereon, and unveils the curse which until now was hidden from them, as the avenger of blood ready to execute the sentence of the law. This being a thing which they never expected nor feared, fills them with great surprisals. Hence are those cries of such persons, What shall we do to be saved? that argue a great distress, and no small amazement. And those who know nothing of these things, are utterly ignorant both of sin and grace.

Obs. XI. The revelation or discovery of the promise or of Christ in the promise, is that alone which directs convinced sinners into their proper course and way.—This is the setting of a hope before them, wherein they are called to 'look unto their strong tower, as prisoners of hope, that they may be brought out of the pit through the blood of the everlasting covenant.' The man-slayer probably might have many contrivances suggested in his mind, how he might escape the danger whereunto he was exposed. To leave his present habitation, to lie hid, to betake himself into woods or deserts, and the like vain hopes might

present themselves unto him. But all these things did but keep him out of his way, and divert him from his duty; and the longer he entertained them in his thoughts, the more his danger was increased, and his life hazarded. It was the remembrance alone of the city of refuge, set before him in the law, that directed him to his proper duty, and set him in his way unto safety. It is no otherwise with persons under the convictions of sin. Many things present themselves unto their minds, with hopes of relief attending them. Sin itself, with a continuance therein, will do so, so also will sloth, and the procrastination of present duty; but especially some duties themselves, a righteousness by the works of the law will do so, and with many is effectual unto their ruin. Whilst these, or any of them, are attended to, the way of duty and safety is hidden from the eyes of sinners. But when the promise, Christ in the promise, is proposed unto them, is set before them, so soon as they direct their eyes that way, they see their course plain before them, and what it is they must betake themselves unto, if they intend a deliverance out of the condition wherein they are.

Obs. XII. Where there is the least of saving faith, upon the first discovery of Christ in the promise, it will stir up the whole soul to make out towards him, and a participation of him.—As faith is begotten in the soul by the promise, so the first natural genuine act of it tends to a farther interest in, and participation of that promise. In going to Christ upon his call and invitation, in laying hold upon him in the promise, consists the nature, life, and being of the duty, obedience, and grace of that faith which is in the heirs of promise.

Obs. XIII. It is the duty and wisdom of all those, unto whom Christ in the promise is once discovered, by any gospel means or ordinance once set before them, to admit of no delay, of a thorough closing with him.—Many things, yea things innumerable, will offer themselves with subtlety and violence unto that end; yea all the craft and power of the gates of hell, will engage to the same purpose; but as faith being really set on work will prevail against them all, so it is our duty to avoid them, as those which under specious pretences strike at the life and eternal welfare of our souls.

Obs. XIV. There is a spiritual strength and vigour required unto the securing of our interest in the promise, *κρατησαι*, ‘to lay fast and firm hold upon it.’—The greatness of our concern therein, the opposition that will be made thereunto, the love wherewith our faith ought to be accompanied, do require the utmost of our strength and diligence herein.

Obs. XV. The promise is an assured refuge unto all sin-distressed souls who betake themselves thereunto.

Obs. XVI. Where any souls convinced of sin by the charge of the law, and their own lost condition thereon, do betake themselves unto the promise for relief, God is abundantly willing that they should receive strong consolation.—For herein doth the nature of that faith consist, which hath the promise of pardon, justification and salvation, given unto it. And hereon I might enlarge, to manifest the true nature of that faith which hath the promises, but I must not too far digress.

VER. 19.—*Which (hope) we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.*

Having made mention of our hope, with respect unto the promise of God, he adds an account of the use of that hope in the course of our faith and obedience. And he leaves herein the metonymical signification of the word, returning unto that which is proper, namely, the grace of hope in us. But this he doth not absolutely, but as it includes its object, or the promise laid hold upon by faith. For he doth not expressly mention hope itself, but includes it in the relative article, and so respects not itself alone, but its object also, which he had mentioned before, hope as arising from, or caused by and fixed on the promise of God. Wherefore the use of hope, as fixed on, and mixed with that promise, securing our interest therein, is that which he declares in this verse. And three things are to be briefly spoken unto in the opening of these words. 1. The nature of this hope. 2. Its use and properties. 3. Its operation and effects. The first is included, the second expressed under a natural, and the third under a typical similitude.

First. The grace of hope being not expressly mentioned, but only included in the words, and that not with respect unto its essence and nature, but its use and operation, here is no occasion given to insist upon it. Only whereas it is supposed as the principal subject of the proposition, it may briefly be spoken unto.

This hope elsewhere he calls our confidence, and ascribes a *καυχημα*, 'a glorying or boasting unto it, ch. iii. 6, and a *πληροφορια*, or 'full assurance,' ch. vi. 11. Wherefore it is that grace whereon our assurance, or that full persuasion of faith, which gives confidence and glory, doth depend. And there is nothing more adverse unto it, than the common notion of hope. For it is generally conceived as a dubious, uncertain, fluctuating expectation of that which may be, or may not be, for the future. Now, although such expectations of all sorts, may be included in the general notion of hope, yet are they excluded from the nature and use of that grace of hope, which is recommended unto us in the Scripture. For this is a firm trust in God, for the enjoyment of the good things contained in his promises, at the appointed season, raising in the soul an earnest desire after them, and expectation of them. And for want of the knowledge of the nature of this grace, many live without any benefit of its exercise. Let two things concerning it be observed, and they will give light unto its nature and use. 1. That it springs from faith, in that it fixeth all its expectation on the good things in the promise, and that as promised. But it is faith alone that receives the promise, and giveth an interest therein. 2. That its nature and essence consists in trust in God, which, if it be not the foundation of all its exercise, whatever may be so called, is but a deceiving presumption, Ps. xxxiii. 18, xlii. 5, cxxx. 5, &c. Wherefore it is the fiduciary act of faith on God in the promises, as it respects the good things of it, as yet absent, future, unenjoyed.

Secondly. The use and operation of this hope, the apostle expresseth by a double metaphor, the one taken from things natural, the other from things instituted and typical. Its use he sets forth by a metaphor taken from things natural; it is the anchor of the soul, firm and stable; and its operation by a metaphor taken from things typical—it entereth into that within the veil.

First. In itself, as unto its use, he compareth it unto an anchor : *ὡς ἀγκυραν τῆς ψυχῆς*, it is 'the anchor of the soul.' For the souls of believers, it seems, have need of an anchor, and there is much instructive efficacy in such similitudes. They are the only lawful images in things sacred ; for that which in itself is invisible, is by a suitable representation proposed unto the reason of the mind, and even objected unto sense itself. Hence, as used in the Scripture, they are eminently communicative of spiritual light and experience unto the soul. And this instructive allusion is to be taken from the principal ends of the things compared, and ought not to be extended to other circumstances which belong not thereto ; yea, dissimilitude is allowed in them all. Wherefore our hope, as before described, is compared unto an anchor. First. With respect unto its use. Secondly. With respect unto its adjuncts and properties ; as the nature and use of an anchor is to hold fast the ship whereunto it doth belong, and to keep it steady. And it is principally of use at two seasons. 1. In storms and tempests, when the art and skill of the mariners are overcome by the fierceness of the wind and sea, that they cannot steer the ship in its right course, nor preserve it from rocks or shelves. Then is an anchor cast out, which, if it have the properties here mentioned, will hold fast and retain the ship in safety against all outward violence. 2. When ships are in their harbour, that they may not be tossed up and down at uncertainty, that men may attend their occasions, and not be driven to and fro with every wind, which our apostle alludes unto, Eph. iv. 13, 14, an anchor is cast to keep the vessel steady to its posture. There are therefore two things supposed in this allusion. First. That the souls of believers are sometimes exposed unto storms ; and a stress of spiritual dangers, persecutions, afflictions, temptations, fears, sin, death, and the law, do make up these storms that oftentimes beat upon them. And they are compared here unto storms : 1. Because of their violence. There are degrees in them, and some are far more urgent than others, as storms are of various sorts ; but generally all of them have one degree or other of fierceness and violence. 2. Because of their tendency : they tend in their own nature unto ruin and destruction. It falls out indeed sometimes that a storm at sea, although it terrify the passengers, and discompose the ship, yet accidentally falling in with its course for a season, doth speed it in its voyage. But in their own nature all storms tend unto ruin and destruction. So likewise do all the ways and means whereby the state of believers with their interest in the promise are assaulted. They all tend unto the ruin of their souls. It is true, through the holy, wise disposal of all things, by the Lord Jesus Christ, they do for the most part issue in the growth of their faith, and furtherance of their salvation. But this they have not of themselves, their work and tendency is of another nature. Our apostle gives us a description of these storms, with the use of this anchor in them, and the success thereof in the safety of the souls of believers, Rom. viii. 33, 36, 38, &c. Secondly. The ordinary occasions of this life, and our duties towards God and men therein, are like the trading of ships in their harbour. For therein also a good and sure anchor is necessary for them, the

neglect of the use whereof hath proved ruinous to many. And without that which spiritually answers thereunto, we shall fluctuate up and down in all that we do, and be in continual hazard of ruin. In these seasons hope, as before described, is the anchor of the soul; and as that is let down through the waves and darkness of the ocean, by its cable, until it comes to fix itself in the bottom, so our hope let out as it were, by the sure word of God, entereth into that wherein it fasteneth itself, and fixeth the soul.

Secondly. The allusion respects the properties of an anchor, which as here expressed, are two, the one respecting its nature, the other its use. 1. It is *ασφαλής*, 'sure;' that will not fail, it may be safely trusted unto. The substance of it is firm, the proportion of it is suited unto the burden of the ship; and it is no fair promising and yet deceitful engine. 2. In its use it is *βεβαια*, 'firm and steadfast,' which no violence of winds or storms can either break or move from its hold. Such is hope unto the soul. 1. In its nature it is *ασφαλής*, 'sure,' and not a deceiving imagination. 'It maketh not ashamed,' Rom. v. 5, by any failure or disappointment. Groundless presumptions are the deceitful engines whereby the souls of multitudes are ruined every day; of no more use than if the mariners should cast out a log, or a burden of straw, to stay their vessel in a storm. But hope proceeding on, and built on faith, is infallible, and will not deceive. 2. In its use it is *βεβαια*, 'firm and invincible,' against all oppositions, not indeed from itself, but from the ground which it fixeth upon, namely, Christ in the promise, as the next words declare. For,

The way or means whereby this spiritual anchor secures our souls, is expressed in the words following, *εισερχομενην εις το εσωτερον του καταπετασματος*, 'and which entereth into that within the veil.' And herein there is a dissimilitude in the comparates. For an anchor is cast downwards, and fixeth itself in the earth at the bottom of the sea; but hope ascendeth upwards, and fixeth itself in heaven, or in that which is therein. And we must inquire, 1. What is this veil? 2. How hope entereth it? 3. What is that within it, that hope entereth into?

First. For the veil itself, the apostle unto that natural allusion which he insists upon, adds also one that is typical, which renders the whole context figurative, as we showed before. The veil, therefore, here alluded unto, was that which parted the most holy place from the sanctuary or body of the temple. This, our apostle calls the 'second veil,' ch. ix. 3, and here 'the veil' absolutely. For the body of the temple whereinto the priests only entered to offer incense, was separated from the people by the first veil, as the most holy place was from that by the second veil. Through the former, the ordinary priests passed every day to offer incense; through the latter, the high priest passed, and that once a year. Now, that which was denoted hereby with respect unto Christ and his priesthood, were these aspectable heavens, through which he passed in his ascension into the glorious presence of God. See our exposition on ch. iv. ver. 14. Within the veil, therefore, is within and above these visible heavens, the place of God's glorious residence, the holy tabernacle not made

with hands, where the Lord Christ continueth to administer for his church.

Secondly. This, hope entereth into, or passeth through. The heavens are as a veil unto the sense and reason of man; there, their sight and their thoughts are bounded; they can neither discern nor judge of any thing that is above or within that veil. But faith with hope pierceth through it; no created thing can keep them at a distance from God himself. As an anchor stays not in the waves of the sea, as it cannot fix itself in the waters, but pierceth through them until it come unto solid earth in the bottom; no more doth or can the hope of a believer fix itself on any thing under these heavens, but it pierceth through all till it come within the veil. And this it doth, 1. under the conduct of faith, which goes before it, and presents unto it the things hoped for, Heb. xi. 1. 2. By the rule and line of the word, which on no occasion it will vary from. And,

Thirdly. This it doth, *εις το εσωτερον*, 'to that which is within.' And what is it that is within this veil? Not an ark and a mercy-seat, not tables of stone and cherubim, the work of men's hands but the things signified by them: God himself on a throne of grace, and the Lord Christ, as the high priest of the church, standing at his right hand. God the Father as the author of the promise of grace, Christ as the purchaser of all mercy, the counsel of peace being between them both. Here hope fixeth itself, to hold the soul steadfast in all the storms and tempests that may befall it. Wherefore, that which hope fixeth on within the veil, is, 1. The Father as the author. 2. The Lord Christ as the purchaser. 3. The covenant as the conveyance of all grace, which were all typically represented by the things within the veil of old. And the apostle makes use of this expression for two reasons. 1. Because our hope and faith are not now fixed and bounded on types, shadows, and obscure representations of the good things of the promise, as things were under the Old Testament. All these things are now passed away, and we have immediately to deal with God and Christ Jesus. 2. To instruct the Hebrews in the nature and use of the old tabernacle institutions, and from thence in the true nature of the priesthood of Christ, which he is now returning to. And we may observe from these words,

Obs. XVII. That all true believers are exposed to storms and tempests in this world. This makes anchors so necessary for them. The wise God would not have provided an anchor for them, and enjoined its use, if he had not known they would be exposed unto storms. He that dwells at peace in his house, of all things thinks least of an anchor. But we are to look for storms. Suppose we might pass our time of sojourning here, without outward troubles, (and he is exceedingly unwise who promiseth unto himself any such thing, whilst we are in the flesh, and accompanied with so many occasions of distress on every hand,) yet who can escape from those inward trials, exercises, and troubles, from temptations, darkness, sin, and the law, wherewith we are often tossed and afflicted, and it may be for a season, not comforted? For,

Obs. XVIII. These storms would prove ruinous unto the souls of

believers, were they not indefeasibly interested by faith and hope in the promise of the gospel. Every storm almost will be too hard for ships without cables or anchors. And as little security have we in a time of trial from any thing in ourselves, if hope hold not fast on the promise, which is the anchor of the soul. And this it will do if it be genuine. For,

Obs. XIX. No distance of place, no interposition of difficulties, can hinder the hope of believers from entering into the presence of, and fixing itself on God in Christ. It pierceth through the clouds, passeth through the heavens, stops not at their glorious veil, until it comes unto the eternal Fountain and Spring of all grace and mercy. And therefore,

Obs. XX. The strength and assurance of the faith and hope of believers is invisible unto the world. They enter in within the veil, where no eye of reason can pursue them. There all their concerns are hid, and the secret influence which unto all purposes they have from thence, is sometimes admired, sometimes derided by the blind and wicked world. However, it is effectual to their good; for,

Obs. XXI. Hope firmly fixed on God in Christ by the promise, will hold steady, and preserve the soul in all the storms and trials that may befall it. It is an anchor both sure and steadfast. Wherefore,

Obs. XXII. It is our wisdom at all times, but especially in times of trial, to be sure that our anchor have a good hold-fast in heaven. This alone will be our preservation and security, if we are fixed on that within the veil.

VER. 20.--*Whither the forerunner is for us entered, Jesus, made an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.*

The apostle issueth this long digression, as he doth all his other discourses, in the person of Christ; who, being the Author and Finisher of our faith, with him he begins, and in him he ends continually. And three things he aims at in this verse.

1. To give new assurance unto the efficacy and prevalency of hope fixed on the promise, as it enters in unto that within the veil; namely, because Christ our high priest is there. It enters there, *ὅπου*, 'whither' Christ is gone. Even heaven itself would be no safe place for us to fix the anchor of our trust and hope in, if Christ were not there. For without him, there would be no throne of grace in heaven, as there could have been no typical throne in the sanctuary, without the mercy-seat. And this contains the relation between the two verses; wherein we see that,

Obs. XXIII. After the most sincere performance of the best of our duties, our comforts, and securities are centered in Christ alone. Our hope entering within the veil, is a safe anchor, because Christ is there.

2. *Ἀρχιερεὺς γενομενός*. The apostle in these words, by an artificial transition, lands us on that coast which he all this while steered towards; and this is the priesthood of Christ, as represented in that of Melchisedec. That he had asserted, ch. v. 12. But upon the con-

sideration of the depth of this mystery, the importance of the subject-matter of it, with the present state of the most of these Hebrews, he engageth into that long digression for their due preparation unto the hearing and receiving of it, which we have now passed through. Wherefore, having discharged his conscience and duty towards them, in various admonitions, he returns again in these words unto that design and discourse, which there he had broken off. And from the nature of his digression, we may learn that,

Obs. XXIV. As the minds of men are greatly to be prepared for the communication of spiritual mysteries unto them, so the best preparation is by the cure of their sinful and corrupt affections, with the removal of their barrenness under what they have before learned, and been instructed in. It is to no purpose, yea it is but the putting of new wine into old bottles to the loss of all, to be daily leading men into the knowledge of higher mysteries, whilst they live in a neglect of the practice of what they have been taught already.

3. He gives an account of the Lord Christ, unto whom he hath now reduced his discourse, in sundry particulars; as,

First. He expresseth him by his name, *Ἰησοῦς*, 'Jesus.' And by the interposition of this name here, the apostle may design two things.

1. To mind us of the signification of it, whence the reason of his assumption of it was taken. Jesus signifies a Saviour; and he was called Jesus, 'because he was to save his people from their sins,' Matt. i. 21. He, therefore, concerning whom all these things are affirmed, is to be considered as our Saviour, who had the name of a Saviour given him by God himself, with respect unto the work which he was to do, 1 Thess. i. 10, and he is Jesus still, 'able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him.'

2. To reflect on the common use of that name in the world. This was the name under which he was reproached, reviled, crucified, and slain as a malefactor: they crucified Jesus. Wherefore, the apostle treating here of the glorious exaltation of the Son of God, that none might pretend or fancy to themselves that it was any other thing or person that he intended, he expresseth him by that name whereby he was known in the world, under which he was reproached and suffered. And this, all the apostles were careful to inculcate in the first preaching of the gospel; 'Jesus of Nazareth,' Acts ii. 22. 'This Jesus hath God denied up,' ver. 32. 'His Son Jesus, whom ye delivered up, and denied in the presence of Pilate,' ch. iii. 13. 'Jesus of Nazareth, whom ye crucified,' ch. iv. 10. 'Jesus whom ye slew and hanged on a tree,' ch. v. 30. For as they testified hereby, that they were not ashamed of his cross, so they laid in security for faith, against all those fond imaginations which have been since vented, that Christ in heaven and in us, is somewhat else than that Jesus who was crucified on the earth. This is that which by the use of this name, he calls our faith unto, namely, that it is one and the same Jesus, who was humbled and is exalted, who died ignominiously, and lives for ever in glory.

Obs. XXV. This same Jesus is our Saviour in every state and con-

dition, the same on the cross, and the same at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Hence, he is still represented in heaven as a 'lamb slain,' Rev. v. 6. And all apprehensions unto the contrary, are destructive unto the whole foundation of the gospel.

Secondly. He describes him by that office and action, whence our hope receives its great encouragement to enter within the veil; namely, that he is *προδρομος ὑπερ ἡμῶν*, 'a forerunner for us,' and as such, is entered in thither. In this place alone is this title assigned unto the Lord Christ, though the things intended in it, are elsewhere expressed. And so it must be said concerning the name of a surety, which our apostle makes use of in the next chapter, ver. 22. Great mysterious truths may often be comprised in one word, used and employed by the Holy Ghost for our instruction; and therefore, every word of the Scripture is diligently to be searched into. It is indifferent whether we render the words, 'the forerunner for us,' that is, our forerunner is entered, or the 'forerunner is entered for us.' In the first way, the qualification of his person, a 'forerunner for us;' in the latter, the design of his action, the 'forerunner acting for us,' is intended. Both come to the same purpose, and our translators so place the words, as if they inclined unto the latter sense. Two things we are to inquire into. 1. What is a forerunner? 2. What the Holy Ghost would instruct us in, by this ascription unto Christ—he is a forerunner entering within the veil for us?

1. *Προδρομος*, *præcursor*, is one who in an affair of public concern, makes speed by himself unto the place whereunto the affair belongs, to give an account of it, and to dispose of all things needful and suited unto the disposal of the affair that he reports. Commonly, indeed, such a public harbinger is inferior unto those who come after, under whose conduct, the main of the affair doth abide. But this is only where he who is the forerunner or harbinger is so, and no more. But now, although the Lord Christ be a forerunner also, yet he is more; he is the person in whose hand lieth the whole affair and his conduct. And he was himself, the forerunner, because of the greatness of the matter he had in hand, not manageable by any other. And we may consider the words distinctly. 1. His being a forerunner. 2. For us. 3. Where he is so, within the veil.

First. He is in his entrance into heaven, or the holy place, *προδρομος*, a 'forerunner.' This, the high priest of old, when he entered once a year into the holy place, was not. He entered therein himself, but he made no way for any to follow after. He did not go before the people to give them an entrance into the holy place; but both by his entrance and his return, signified their exclusion for ever. We have then, herein, another instance of the excellency of our high priest and his office. When he entered into the holy place, he did it not merely for himself, but to go before, to lead and conduct the whole church into the same glory.

Secondly. He is a forerunner, *ὑπερ ἡμῶν*, 'for us;' that is, for all believers, for the whole church in all times, ages, and places. And this he is, three ways.

First. By way of declaration. It belongs unto a forerunner to carry

tidings, and to declare what is the success that hath been obtained in the affair which he giveth an account of. The Lord Christ, entering into heaven, makes an open declaration, that he hath led captivity captive, spoiled principalities and powers, triumphed over them, that he hath obtained his portion, and divided the spoil with the strong, Isa. iii. 12, that he hath rescued his church from the power of sin, Satan, death, and law. And there were two parts of the triumphant declaration made by this forerunner of the church. 1. That he had discharged his original engagement for the salvation of believers under the Old Testament, on the faith whereof, they were accepted with God and saved. Hence, upon his entrance within the veil, they also join in that doxology, Rev. v. 9—12. And he was their forerunner also. For, although I have no apprehension of the limbus patrum fancied by the papists, yet I think the fathers that died under the Old Testament, had a nearer admission into the presence of God, upon the ascension of Christ, than what they enjoyed before. They were in heaven before, the sanctuary of God; but were not admitted within the veil, into the most holy place, where all the counsels of God in Christ are displayed and represented. There was no entrance before, either as to grace or glory within the veil, Heb. ix. 8. For, as I said, within the veil are all the counsels of God in Christ laid open, as they were typified in the holy place. This, none could or were to behold, before his own entrance thither. Wherefore, he was their forerunner also. 2. To declare the redemption of all the elect that were to follow him in their several generations. This is triumphantly declared in heaven, Ps. xlvii. 5—7, lxviii. 18, 24—26.

Secondly. By way of preparation. And this is twofold.

1. With respect unto our present gracious entrance into the holiest, by faith and prayer. This way was not made for us, whilst the old tabernacle was standing, ch. ix. 8. But this way is now prepared for us by our forerunner, ch. x. 19—22. We have an entrance into heaven, even whilst we are here on the earth. An entrance is made for our faith, for our hope, for our prayer; wherever they enter, our souls do enter, and are present. And this entrance we make daily, and that with boldness and assurance, on the account of our forerunner.

2. As unto our future entrance into glory. Under this capacity as a forerunner, it belongs unto him to prepare mansions for us in his Father's house, whither he is gone, and which he hath promised to do, John xiv. 2, 3. He prepares mansions for us, and he prepares us for those mansions, suiting grace and glory unto each other. Heaven, indeed, is ready for us, whenever we are meet and ready for heaven.

Thirdly. By the way of possession. He had now obtained for the church, eternal redemption, and purchased for them, and in their name, an everlasting inheritance, Acts xxvi. 18. This he went, for them, and in their name, to take possession of, and to reserve it in the heavens for them, 1 Pet. i. 4. Hereon, being by adoption made heirs of God, they become to be co-heirs with Christ, Rom. viii. 17, and are at last admitted into the same glory with him. So is he a forerunner for us.

Thirdly. As a forerunner, he has entered within the veil; that is,

into heaven itself, the place of the glorious presence of God. And this also may be considered two ways.

1. With respect unto what he hath already done for us; and two things are included therein. 1. That he had completely finished the work he had to do upon the earth. He had absolutely won the victory, and secured the church from all its spiritual adversaries. Without this, a triumphant entrance into heaven had not been granted unto him. 2. God's blessed approbation of all that he had done here below, Isa. liii. 11, 12; Phil. ii. 7—11.

2. With respect unto what he hath yet to do for us. Hence it is that he is not said absolutely to enter into his glory, but to enter as a priest, as through a veil, as into the holy place, where he continues as our forerunner in the exercise of that office, as the apostle declares in the close of the verse: 'made a high priest after the order of Melchisedec,' whereof we must treat in the next chapter.

Obs. XXVI. Now the Lord Jesus having thus entered into heaven as our forerunner, gives us manifold security of our entrance thither also, in the appointed season. This he assures us of, John xiv. 3, 19. For, 1. He passed through all the storms of trials, temptations, persecutions, and death itself, that we are exposed unto, and yet is landed safely in eternal glory. His anchor was trust and hope, in all his storms, ch. ii. 13; Isa. l. 7—9. And it was tried to the utmost, Ps. xxii. 8—10. It preserved him in them all, and will be no less faithful unto the whole church. As he hath thus gone before us, he is able to succour us, and hath given us in himself a pledge of success. 2. He is now where our hope is fixed, namely, within the veil, where he takes care of it and will preserve it to the end.

Obs. XXVII. Again, if the Lord Christ be entered into heaven as our forerunner, it is our duty to be following him with all the speed we can. And it is required hereunto, First. That we be willing to follow him in the way wherein he went, as well as to the place whither he is gone. And the way he went was, 1. The way of obedience, ch. v. 8, 9. 2. The way of suffering, ch. xii. 2. Holiness and the cross, are the two essential parts of the way whereby our forerunner entered into glory. Secondly. That we burden not ourselves with any thing that will retard us, ch. xii. 1.

Obs. XXVIII. And we may see whereon the security of the church doth depend, as to the trials and storms which it undergoes in the world. He that can consider the opposition that is made unto it in the world, the counsel, the power, and the malice which are engaged unto its ruin on the one hand, and its own weakness, solitariness, helplessness on the other, cannot but admire whence it is that it is preserved one moment from destruction.

There is no proportion between its visible defence, and the visible opposition that is made unto it. It is Jesus our forerunner who is within the veil, taking care of all our concerns, that is alone our security.

Obs. XXIX. And what will he not do for us, who, in the height of his glory is not ashamed to be esteemed our forerunner? What love, what grace, what mercy, may we not expect from him? And,

Obs. XXX. When our hope and trust enter within the veil, it is

Christ as our forerunner, that in a peculiar manner they are to fix and fasten themselves upon.

CHAPTER VII.

VERSES 1—3.

THERE are almost as many different analyses given of this chapter, as there are commentators upon it. And sometimes the same person proposeth sundry of them, without a determination of what he principally adheres unto. All of them endeavour to reduce the whole discourse of the apostle, unto such a method as they judge most artificial and argumentative. But, as I have elsewhere observed, the force of the apostle's reasonings doth not absolutely depend on any such method of arguing, as we have framed unto ourselves. There is something in it more heavenly and sublime, suited to convey the efficacy of spiritual truth, as to the understanding, so to the will and affections also. For this reason, I shall not insist on the reducing of this discourse unto any precise logical analysis, which none of the ancients do attempt. But whereas, those methods which are proposed by learned men, whereunto, in their judgment, the apostle's arguing is reducible, are only diverse, and not contradictory unto one another; the consideration of all, or any of them, may be of good use to give light unto sundry passages in the context. Those who have laboured herein with most appearance of accuracy, are Piscator and Gomarus. My design being to examine and consider all the apostle's arguings, and their connections particularly, I shall content myself with a plain and obvious account of the whole in general.

The design of the apostle in this chapter, is not to declare the nature, or the exercise of the priesthood of Christ, though the mention of them be occasionally inserted in some passages of it. For the nature of it he had spoken unto, ch. v. and treats of its use at large, ch. ix. But it is of its excellency and dignity that he discourseth in this place, and that not absolutely neither, but in comparison with the Levitical priesthood of the church under the Old Testament. As this was directly conducing unto his end, so it was incumbent on him in the first place, to confirm: for if it were not so excellent, it was to no purpose to persuade them to embrace it, who were actually in the enjoyment of another. This, therefore, he designeth to prove, and that upon principles avowed by themselves, with light and evidence taken from what was received and acknowledged in the church of the Hebrews, from the first foundation of it. After this, he manifests abundantly the excellency of this priesthood, from its nature and use also. But he was, in the first place, to evince it from the faith and principles in the ancient church of Israel, which he doth in this chapter: for he declares how God had in many ways instructed them to expect an alteration of the Levitical priesthood, by the introduction of another

more useful, efficacious, and glorious; the continuance of them both in the church, at the same time, being inconsistent.

Herein was the authority and infinite wisdom of God, made manifest in his dealing with the church of old. By his authority he obliged them unto a religious observance of all those institutions which he had then appointed; this he did unto the last day of the continuance of that state of the church, Mal. iv. 4—6. But in his infinite wisdom, he had before them, in them, and with them, inlaid instructions for the church, whereby they might see, know, and believe, that they were all to cease and issue in something better, afterwards to be introduced. So Moses himself, in all that he did in the house of God, 'gave testimony unto what was to be spoken and declared afterwards,' ch. iii. 5.

And with respect unto both of these, did that church greatly miscarry. For first, in many ages it could not be brought with any constancy to submit unto the authority of God, in obedience unto his ordinances and institutions, as the whole story of the Old Testament doth declare. And now, when the time was come, wherein they were all to cease, under a pretence of adhering to the authority of God, they rebelled against his wisdom, and refused to consider the instructions which he had inlaid from first to last, concerning their ceasing and alteration; whereon the generality of the church fell and utterly perished. This therefore the apostle designs here to enlighten them in.

And this should teach us with what diligence, with what reverence, with what subjection of soul, and resignation of our understandings unto the will and wisdom of God, all divine revelations are to be inquired into. So dealt in this matter the holy men and prophets of old, 1 Pet. i. 10, 11. And as for want hereof, the whole church of the Jews perished at this season; so in all ages sundry particular persons did woefully miscarry: see Lev. x. 1—3; 2 Sam. vi. 6, 7; 1 Chron. xiii. 11. And the want hereof is the bane of most churches in the world at this day.

In order unto the end mentioned, the apostle in the first place declares, that antecedently unto the giving of the law, and the institution of the Levitical priesthood thereby, God had, without any respect thereunto, given a typical prefiguration of this priesthood of Christ, in one who was on all accounts superior unto the Levitical priests, when they were afterwards introduced. This sacred truth, which had been hid for so many ages in the church, and which undeniably manifests the certain future introduction of another and a better priesthood, is here brought to light, and improved by the apostle. As life and immortality, so all spiritual truth, was brought to light by the gospel, 2 Tim. i. 10. Truth was stored up in the prophecies, promises, and institutions of the Old Testament; but so stored up, as it was in a great measure hidden also, but was brought forth to light, and made manifest in the gospel. For whereas it is said, that the great mystery of the manifold wisdom of God was hidden in him from the beginning of the world, Eph. iii. 9, 10, the meaning is not, that it was so hid in the will and purpose of God, as that he had made no intimation of it;

for he had done so variously from the foundation of the world, or the giving of the first promise. But he had so laid it up, and stored it in his sacred revelation, as it was much hid from the understanding of the best of men in all ages, until it was displayed and brought forth to light by the gospel, Ps. xlix. 4, lxxviii. 2. And all that glorious evidence of the grace of God, which now appears unto us in the writings of the Old Testament, is from a reflection of light upon them from the New Testament, or the revelation of God by Jesus Christ. And, therefore, the whole church of the Jews, although they were in the entire possession of those writings of the Old Testament for so many ages, never understood so much of the mystery of the will and grace of God declared in them, as every ordinary believer under the gospel, is enabled to do. And if we have the privilege and advantage of those oracles of God which were committed to them, incomparably above what they attained unto, certainly greater measures of holiness, and greater fruitfulness in obedience, are expected from us than from them. These things, the instance here insisted on by our apostle, will manifest.

He in whom this prefiguration of the priesthood of Christ was made, is Melchisedec, concerning whom and his priesthood, an account is given in the first part of the chapter unto ver. 11. And the description given of him, consisteth of two parts: 1. The proposition of his story, or what is recorded concerning him, ver. 1—3. 2. The application of it unto the present purpose and design of the apostle, ver. 5—10. And this closeth the first general part of the chapter.

The second part of it, from ver. 10, unto ver. 24, consisteth in a double inference, with their improvements taken from that discourse, as respecting Christ in his office.

1. He infers the removal, abolition, or taking away out of the church, the whole Aaronical priesthood, with all the worship of the tabernacle and temple, which depended thereon. This he evidently proves to ensue from the respect that was had unto the Lord Christ in the priesthood of Melchisedec, whereof he had given an account. Hereunto do all arguings belong, ver. 11—17.

2. He infers the excellency of the priesthood of Christ in itself, above that of the tabernacle even during its continuance, which follows no less evidently from what he had proved before, ver. 18—24.

3. Having laid this foundation in his demonstration of the necessary removal of the Aaronical priesthood, and the preeminence of that of Christ above it, even whilst it did continue, he further declares the nature of it, from the dignity and qualifications of his person, with the manner of the discharge of his office on this account, ver. 24—28. For the design of the apostle in this Epistle, especially in this chapter and the three that ensue, is open unto us, or turn aside a double veil; the one here below, the other above: that below is the veil that was on all the ordinances, institutions, ceremonies, and types of the law. This is the veil that is unto this day upon the Jews, that they cannot see unto the end of things that were to be done away. This he removes by giving a clear and full account of the mind of God in them, of their use and signification. The other above, is the veil of the

heavenly sanctuary : this he opens unto us in a declaration of the ministry of Christ our High Priest therein, as we shall see. And under these heads, as the apostle plainly convinceth the Hebrews of the ceasing of their priesthood and worship, and that unto the unspeakable advantage of the church : so to us he doth unfold the principal design and end of all the Mosaical types of the Old Testament, with the institution of God in them.

This may suffice as a plain view and prospect of the general scope of the apostle in these discourses. The especial coherence of one thing with another, the nature of his instances, the accuracy and force of his arguings, the perspicuity of his deductions, with the like concernments of the argument in hand, shall be observed and spoken unto, as they particularly occur in our progress.

VER. 1—3.—Οὗτος γὰρ ὁ Μελχισεδεκ, βασιλεὺς Σαλημ, ἱερεὺς τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου, ὁ συναντήσας Ἀβραὰμ ὑποστρεφόντι ἀπο τῆς κοπῆς τῶν βασιλεῶν, καὶ εὐλογήσας αὐτον· ὃ καὶ δεκάτην ἀπο πάντων ἐμερίσεν Ἀβραὰμ· πρῶτον μὲν ἑρμηνευόμενος βασιλεὺς δικαιοσύνης, ἐπεὶτα δὲ καὶ βασιλεὺς Σαλημ· ὁ ἐστὶ βασιλεὺς εἰρηνῆς· ἀπατρὸς, ἀμητρὸς, ἀγενεαλογητὸς· μὴτε ἀρχὴν ἡμερῶν, μὴτε ζωῆς τέλος ἔχων· ἀφωμοιωμένος δὲ τῷ υἱῷ τοῦ Θεοῦ, μένει ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸ διηνεκές.

There is little variety in the translation of these verses, Θεοῦ ὑψίστου, Vul. Lat. Dei summi, for altissimi, ‘the most high God.’ Ἀπο πάντων, Syr. מן כל, ‘of all;’ but adds in a new way of exposition, מכל מה שהיה עמו, ‘every thing that was with him;’ that is, of the spoils, as it is afterwards expounded. Ἐμερίσε, Vul. Lat. divisit; properly, Syr. פָּרַשׁ, ‘separated,’ laid aside, Bez. impartitus est, ‘imparted, gave.’ Ἀγενεαλογητος, Vul. Lat. sine genealogiâ; Bez. sine genere, ‘without stock;’ sine serie generis, ‘without pedigree.’ The Syriac gives us an exposition of this passage, ‘whose father and mother are not written in the generations or genealogies, neither the beginning of his days, nor the end of his life;’ which manifests how ancient this exposition of these words was in the church. Μένει ἱερεὺς, Syr. מְקַיֵּי כַמּוֹדָתָא, ‘his priesthood remaineth.’

VER. 1—3.—*For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; to whom also Abraham divided out a tenth part of all: first, being by interpretation, king of righteousness; and after that also, king of Salem, which is king of peace: without father, without mother, without pedigree; having neither beginning of days, nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually.*

The words are an entire proposition, consisting of a subject, and a predicate, or what is affirmed of it. Unto the subject spoken of, which is Melchisedec, there is adjoined a large description, by its properties and adjuncts in sundry particulars. That which is affirmed

of him, as so described, which is the predicate of the proposition, is contained in the last words, or the close of the third verse: but being 'made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest for ever.'

The introduction of the whole discourse, and therein its connection unto what went before, is contained in the causal particle *γὰρ*, 'for;' and this may respect the reason why the apostle affirmed, and insisted so much on it, that the Lord Christ was a priest after the order of Melchisedec. For, both the truth, saith he, of my assertion, and the necessity of insisting thereon, will be sufficiently manifest, if you will but consider who this Melchisedec was, how he is represented in the Scripture, and what is affirmed of him. Or respect may be had in this word unto the whole preceding discourse, from ch. v. 11. There he lays the foundation of it, affirming, that he had many things to say of this Melchisedec; and those such, as they would not easily understand, unless they diligently applied their minds unto the knowledge of divine mysteries; hereof he now designs to give them an account. 'For this Melchisedec,' &c. But the connection is most natural unto the words immediately preceding; and a reason is given of what was affirmed in them, namely, that 'Jesus was made an high priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec,' ch. vi. 20, for it was thus with this Melchisedec.

Obs. 1. When truths in themselves mysterious, and of great importance unto the church, are asserted or declared, it is very necessary that clear evidence and demonstration, be given unto them; that the minds of men be left neither in the dark about their meaning, nor in suspense about their truth. So dealeth our apostle in the large ensuing confirmation, with which he establisheth his foregoing assertion.

The mention of Melchisedec is introduced with the demonstrative pronoun *οὗτος*, 'this:' it always hath an emphasis, and denotes somewhat eminent in the subject spoken of, mostly in a way of commendation; so ver. 4, *θεωρεῖτε πηλικὸς οὗτος*; 'consider how great a man this was.' This man of whom is our discourse.

The person spoken of is variously described. 1. By his name—Melchisedec. 2. By his original office—he was a king. 3. The place of his rule or dominion, which was Salem; king of Salem. 4. By another office added to the former, which principally belongs unto the design of the apostle; which is described, First. By the nature of it, the priesthood—a priest. Secondly. By its object and author—of the Most High God. Thirdly. By his actings as a priest—he blessed Abraham: illustrated, 1. By the manner of it—he met him. 2. By the time of it and its circumstances—when he returned from the slaughter of kings. 6. By the acknowledgment of his office made by Abraham—he divided unto him the tenth part of all. 7. By the interpretation of his name—the king of righteousness. 8. Of the place of his reign—king of Peace. 9. By sundry properties of his person, gathered out of the relation of his history in the Scripture—without father, without mother, without pedigree, without beginning of days, or end of life. These descriptions in all these particulars being given of him, there are two things concerning him. First. That he 'was made like unto the Son of God.' Secondly. That he abideth a priest continually; all which things must be spoken unto.

1. For the person spoken of, and described by his name, Melchisedec, I shall in this place say no more of him but what is necessary for the understanding of the text. For I shall not here examine those opinions and disputes concerning him, which, for the most part, have been raised by needless curiosity. The fond and impious imagination of them who would have him, some of them, to be the Holy Ghost, and some of them God, even the Father himself, have been long since exploded. That he was an angel in human appearance, is so contrary to the design of the apostle, that not many have given countenance to that opinion. But that he was the Son of God himself, in a prelibation of his incarnation, taking upon him the form of a man, as he did afterwards the internal form and being in the personal union, some learned men have conjectured and contended. Howbeit, this also is directly contrary to the text, wherein he is said to be 'made like unto the Son of God.' And indeed, all such opinions as make him more than man, are wholly inconsistent with the design of the apostle, which is to prove, that even among men, there was a priest and priesthood, representative of Christ and his priesthood, superior to that of the law; which hath nothing of argument in it, if he were more than a man. Besides, he lays it down for a certain principle, 'that every high priest is taken from among men,' ch. v. 1. And therefore, if Melchisedec were a high priest, he was also thus taken from among men.

Among those who grant that he was a mere man, very many, following the opinion of the Jews, contend that he was Shem, the son of Noah, who was certainly then alive, and of great authority in the world by virtue of his primogeniture. But this also riseth up in contradiction unto our apostle, beyond all possibility of reconciliation. The Jews, who are no further concerned in him but as to what is declared by Moses, may safely, as to their own principles, though not truly, conjecture him to be Shem. But whereas our apostle affirms, that he was 'without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life,' we are not allowed to interpret these things of him, concerning whom most of them are expressly recorded. Nor will it suffice to say, that these things indeed are written of him under the name of Shem, but not under the name of Melchisedec: for this were to make the apostle to lay the weight of so important an argument as that in hand, and from whence he infers the removal of all the ancient legal institutions out of the church, upon a nicety, and to catch, as it were, at an advantage for it. Besides, let him be called as he will, it is his person in the discharge of his office, which the apostle speaks of, and the things affirmed of him, are not true concerning, or not truly applicable unto, Shem. And we may observe by the way, what a blessed effect it is of the care and wisdom of God towards the church, that there are so few things in the Scripture that seem to administer occasion unto the curiosities and conjectures of men, and of those, not any of them needful unto our faith and obedience, so as that these should receive the least prejudice, by our ignorance of the precise sense of those places. The whole is filled with such depths of wisdom and truth, as require our humble, diligent, reverend, careful search into them, all the days of our lives. But particular passages, historical or mystical, such as seem to leave

room for variety of conjectures, are very few; had they been multiplied, especially in matters of any importance, it could not have been avoided, but that religion would have been filled with fruitless notions and speculations. And thus it hath fallen out in this matter of Melchisedec, which being veiled or hidden in the Old Testament, and that on purpose that we should know no more of him nor any of his concerns, but what is expressly written, all ages have been fruitlessly exercised, yea, pestered with such curious inquiries about him, as rise up in direct opposition unto the scope of the Holy Ghost, in the account given concerning him.

These things, therefore, are certain, and belong unto faith in this matter.

First. That he was a mere man, and no more but a man. For, 1. Every high priest was to be taken from among men, ch. v. 1. So that the Son of God himself, could not have been a priest, had he not assumed our nature. 2. If he were more than a man, there were no mystery in his being introduced in the Scripture, without father, without mother, without pedigree, for none but men have so. 3. Without this conception of him, there is no force in the apostle's argument against the Jews.

Secondly. That he came not to his office by the right of primogeniture (which includes a genealogy) or by any other successive way, but was raised up and immediately called of God thereunto. For in that respect, Christ is said to be a priest after his order.

Thirdly. That he had no successor on the earth, nor could have; for there was no law to constitute an order of succession, and he was a priest only after an extraordinary call. These things belong unto faith in this matter, and no more.

Two things, every way consistent with the scope and purpose of the apostle, yea, eminently subservient thereunto, I shall take leave to add; the one as my judgment, the other as a probable conjecture only. And the first is, that although he lived and dwelt in Canaan, then and afterwards principally possessed by the posterity of the son of Ham, so called, yet he was none of the seven nations or people therein, that were in the curse of Noah, devoted unto bondage and destruction. For, whereas they were therein by a spirit of prophecy anathematized and cast out of the church, as also devoted unto destruction, God would not raise up among them, that is, of their accursed seed, the most glorious ministry that ever was in the world, with respect unto typical signification, which was all that could be in the world until the Son of God came in his own person. This I take to be true, and do somewhat wonder that no expositors did ever take any notice of it, seeing it is necessary to be granted from the analogy of sacred truth.

My conjecture is, that he was a person of the posterity of Japheth, who was principally to be regarded as the father of the Gentiles that were to be called. Noah had prophesied that God should enlarge the heart of Japheth, or persuade him so, as that he should return to dwell in the tents of Shem, Gen. ix. 27. Unto Shem he had before granted the present blessing of the covenant, in those words, 'Blessed be the

Lord God of Shem,' ver. 26, and thereby, the bringing forth of the promised seed, was confined unto his posterity. Hereon, among them was the church of God to be continued and upon the matter confined, until the Shiloh came, unto whom the gathering of the Gentiles was to be, in the enlargement of Japheth, and his return to dwell in the tents of Shem. And whereas, the land of Canaan was designed of God for the seat of the church in his posterity, he suffered it to be possessed first by the seed of cursed Canaan, that in their dispossessing and destruction, he might give a representation and security of the victory and final success of the Lord Christ and his church over all their adversaries. Before this came to pass, God, as I suppose, brought this Melchisedec and some others of the posterity of Japheth, into the land of Canaan, even before Abraham himself (in pursuit of the promise made unto Shem) had possession of it, and placed him there in a condition of office superior unto Abraham himself. And this might be done for two ends. 1. That a claim might be put in on the behalf of Japheth, unto an interest in the tents of Shem, in the type of the privilege for a while confined unto his family. This right and rule of Melchisedec in those places, which were to be the seat of the church enjoying the promise made to Shem, took, as it were, livery and seisin for the Gentile posterity of Japheth, which was in due time to be brought into the full possession of all the rights and privileges of it. 2. That he might manifest that the state of Gentile converts, in the enjoyment of the promise and spiritual privileges of the church, should be far more excellent and better, than was the state and privileges of the posterity of Shem, whilst in their separate condition, God having provided some better things for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. But these things are submitted to the judgment of every candid reader.

I shall only add what is certain and indubitable, namely, that we have herein a signal instance of the sovereignty and wisdom of God. All the world had, at that time, generally fallen into idolatry and false worship. The progenitors of Abraham, though a principal branch of the posterity of Shem, (as it is like, in the line of primogeniture,) 'dwelt beyond the river, and served other gods,' Josh. xxiv. 2. Probably Abraham himself was not free from the guilt of that apostasy before his call. Canaan was inhabited by the Amorites, with the rest of the devoted nations on the one hand, and the Sodomites on the other. In the midst of these sinners above others, was this man raised up, the great type of Christ, with all the illustrious qualifications to be afterwards declared. And we may learn,

Obs. II. That God can raise the greatest light in the midst of the greatest darkness; as, Matt. iv. 16.

Obs. III. He can raise up instruments for his service, and unto his glory, when, where, and how he pleaseth.

Obs. IV. This signal prefiguration of Christ in the nations of the world, at the same time when Abraham received the promises for himself and his posterity, gave a pledge and assurance of the certain future call of the Gentiles, unto an interest in him, and participation of him.

II. This is the person spoken of; and the first thing in the description of him is his office, that he was βασιλευς, ‘a king.’ So he is reported in the first mention of him, Gen. xiv. 18, ‘Melchisedec, king of Salem.’ Now, whereas this doth not belong unto that wherein he was principally to be a type of Christ, nor is the Lord Christ any where said to be a king after the order of Melchisedec, nor doth the apostle make any use of the consideration of this office in him; we may inquire wherefore God placed him in that state and condition. And there seem to have been two ends thereof.

1. To make his typical ministry the more eminent and conspicuous. For, placing him in the condition of regal power and authority, what he was and did, would necessarily be more conspicuous and more regarded, than if he had been only a private man. And moreover, by those possessions and wealth which he had as a king, he was enabled unto the solemn and costly discharge of his office of priesthood, in sacrifices and other solemnities. God therefore made him a king, that he might be known and observed as he was a priest, and be able to bear the burden of that office. And these things were then not only consistent, but some preparation seems to be made for the conjunction of these offices, by the privilege and rights of primogeniture, whereof I have discoursed elsewhere. Now although nothing can be concluded from hence, concerning the preeminence of the priestly office among men above the regal, which the Romanists plead for, from mere vain and empty pretences; yet it doth follow, that the greatest temporal dignities and enjoyments ought to be subservient unto spiritual things, and the concerns of Christ.

2. Although he was not in his kingly office directly typical of Christ, yet he was, by being a king, the more meet to represent him as a priest, seeing he was to be the only king and priest of the church also. And it may be observed, that although Moses in Genesis makes mention of the acts of both his offices, yet our apostle takes notice of those of one sort only. For Moses informs us, in the first place, that when he went to meet Abraham, he brought forth bread and wine, that is, for the refreshment of him and his army. Now, this was an act of regal power and munificence. This the apostle takes no notice of, but only of his receiving tithes, and blessing Abraham, which were both of them acts of sacerdotal power. Wherefore, although it was convenient he should be a king, yet as a king, and in what he did as a king, he was no type of Christ, though there might be a moral resemblance between them. For as Melchisedec refreshed Abraham, the father of the faithful, and his army, when they were weary after their conflict with their enemies, and in the discharge of their duty; so doth the Lord Christ, as king of his church, take care to support, relieve, and refresh all the children of Abraham, all believers in all their duties, and in the whole course of obedience. So hath the wisdom of God disposed of things in the Scripture unto a fitness to give instruction, even beyond what they are first and principally designed to. And although this and the like considerations, should give no countenance unto men’s curiosity in the exposition and application of any passages in the Scripture, beyond the severest rules of interpreta-

tion, yet may it encourage us to a diligent search into them, whilst we are duly steered by the analogy of faith. And I see no reason why we may not hence collect these two things.

Obs. V. 1. The Lord Christ, as king of the church, is plentifully stored with all spiritual provisions for the relief, support, and refreshment of all believers in and under their duties, and will give it out unto them as their occasions do require.—For as Melchisedec represented the Lord Christ in what he did, so Abraham, in his battle and victory, was a type of all believers, in their warfare and conflict with all their spiritual adversaries. Wherefore, as he and all his were refreshed by the kingly bounty of Melchisedec, so shall they be from the munificence and unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ.

Obs. VI. 2. Those who go to Christ, merely on the account of his priestly office and the benefits thereof, shall also receive the blessings of his kingly power, in abundant supplies of mercy and grace.—Abraham designed nothing with Melchisedec, but the owning of his sacerdotal office, in giving him the tithes of all, and receiving his blessing. But when he met him, he was refreshed also with his kingly bounty. Many poor sinners go unto Christ principally, if not only at the first, upon the account of his sacerdotal office, to have an interest in his sacrifice and oblation, to be made partaker of the mercy and pardon procured thereby. But when they come to him in a way of believing, they find that he is a king also, ready, able, powerful to relieve them, and unto whom they owe all holy obedience. And this answers the experience of many, it may be the most of them that do believe.

III. This kingly office of Melchisedec is farther asserted by the specification of the place where he was king and reigned—he was king of (Σαλημ) Salem. There hath been great inquiry about, and much uncertainty there is concerning, this place or city. Two opinions, all sorts of those who have inquired into these things with any sobriety, do incline unto. For as for one who hath not long since affirmed, that this Salem is Jerusalem that is above, the mother of us all, he hath thought meet to give other instances also, how little he understands the things he undertakes to treat about. But some think it was that city, and no other, which was afterwards called Jerusalem, and became in David's time, and so for a long continuance, the principal seat of the church and solemn worship of God. This place, they say, was first called Salem, and afterwards, it may be presently after the reign of this Melchisedec, and on the occasion thereof, by the addition of ירא or יראו, 'a vision,' or 'they shall see' Peace, called Jerusalem. Others think that Salem was a city or town not far from Shechem, which was afterwards destroyed: and there are reasons for both opinions.

Of this latter opinion Hierome is the principal author and maintainer in his Epistle to Evagrius. And there are three reasons for it, whereon he much insists. 1. That there was a city near Shechem that was called Salem, and no otherwise. And this is plainly affirmed in the Scripture, Gen. xxxiii. 18, 'And Jacob came to Shalem, a city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan. For those who render

the words, *וַיָּבֹא יַעֲקֹב שָׁלֵם עִיר שֶׁחֶם*, 'Et venit Jacob pacificus, or incolumis ad urbem Shechem,' so making the word appellative, and not the name of a place, are undoubtedly mistaken. For the same place is mentioned again in the New Testament by the same name, John iii. 23, 'John was baptizing in Ænon near to Salim.' For, that Salim and Salem are the same, Hierome well shows, with the reason of the variation. 2. He affirms, that at that time were seen at Shechem the ruins of the palace of Melchisedec, which manifested it to have been a munificent structure. 3. It is pleaded that the circumstances of the story make it necessary to judge that it was this Salem. For Abraham was passing by the place where Melchisedec reigned, who thereon went out to meet him. Now, whereas he was returning from Hobah, which was on the left hand, or north side of Damascus, Gen. xiv. 15. Jerusalem was not in the way of his return, but Salem was.

On the other side, it is pleaded with more probability, that Jerusalem was the seat of his kingdom. For, 1. It was anciently called Salem, which name is afterwards occasionally applied unto it, as that whereby it was known, Ps. lxxvi. 2, 'In Salem is God's tabernacle, and his dwelling-place in Sion,' where Jerusalem only can be intended. Afterwards some think that when it was possessed by the Jebusites, it began at first to be called Jebus-Salem, that is, Salem of the Jebusites, which by custom was transformed into Jerusalem. But the approved etymology from *שָׁלֵם* and *יְרֵאָה*, so that the names should signify, 'a sight or vision of peace,' is certainly true, and probably given by God himself. 2. In the days of Joshua, the king of Jerusalem was called Adonizedec, a name of the same signification with Melchisedec, which possibly from him was the name of the kings who afterwards reigned in that city. And that man, as it should seem, was in some reputation for righteousness among the Canaanites, whence he managed their common cause in their danger, Josh. x. 1—4. 3. Abraham dwelt at this time at Hebron, in the plain of Mamre; and in his return from Hobah or Damascus, the way lay near unto Jerusalem, as all charts yet declare; and Shechem was more to the north than that he should conveniently pass that way. 4. Jerusalem being designed to be the place where the Lord Christ was to begin and exercise his priestly office, it may well be supposed that there this his illustrious type was to appear and be manifested; especially considering that it was to be the place where the seat of the church was to be fixed, until the signification of the type was to be effected.

And these reasons do prevail with me to judge that Jerusalem was the place of the habitation and reign of Melchisedec. As for what is affirmed by Hierome concerning the ruins of his palace at Shechem, it is notoriously known how little credit such traditions do deserve. Besides Josephus, who lived 400 years before him, makes no mention of any such thing. And it is probable that the ruins which Hierome saw were those of the palace of Jeroboam, who there fixed the seat of the kingdom of Israel, 1 Kings xii. 25, as king of the place where he obtained the crown, ver. 1. But credulous and superstitious posterity chose to consider it as the memorial of Melchisedec, rather than of him, who being the bane and ruin of the na-

tion, his memory was accursed. And to inquire how this city came afterwards into the hands of the Jebusites, is directly contrary to the design of the Holy Ghost, which was to hide from us the end of his life and offices, as our apostle declares. And herein also possession was taken of the seat of the church in the tents of Shem, on the behalf and in the name of the Gentiles descended from Japheth. And may we not observe, that,

Obs. VII. God, in his sovereign pleasure, gives various intervals unto places, as to the enjoyment of his worship and ordinances.—This Jerusalem, which was at first ennobled by the priesthood of Melchisedec, was afterwards left for a long season unto the idolatrous Jebusites. In process of time it was visited again, and made the fixed station of all solemn divine worship, as it is now left unto salt and barrenness. So hath he dealt with many other places, and in particular, notwithstanding their boasting, with the city of Rome, some time a seat of the gospel, now the throne of antichrist. ‘Go to my place which was in Shiloh,’ Jer. vii. 12, 14, xxvi. 6.

By the way, we must here give an account of somewhat that the apostle doth not say, as well as of what he doth. After the mention of Melchisedec, and his being king of Salem, in the story, Gen. xiv. it is added, that ‘he met Abraham, and brought forth bread and wine,’ ver. 17, 18. Of his meeting Abraham the apostle takes notice, but of his bringing forth bread and wine, not at all. Hereof undoubtedly no reason can be given, but only that that particular action or passage belonged not at all unto his purpose. For he who takes notice of all other circumstances, arguing as well from what was not said of him, as from what was, would not have omitted anything which is so expressly affirmed as this is, had it any way belonged unto his purpose. But the importunity of the Papists, who with a strange kind of confidence do hence seek countenance to their missatical sacrifice, makes it necessary that we should inquire a little farther into it.

Melchisedec, they tell us, as a priest and type of Christ, did offer this bread and wine in sacrifice to God. Herein, they add, alone was he typical of Christ, who offered himself unto God under the appearance of bread and wine. And he also instituted the sacrifice of the mass, wherein he should be so offered continually unto the end of the world. And on that account alone, they say, he continueth a priest for ever. For if he had not appointed priests here in his room to offer him unto God, that office of his would have ceased, as Bellarmine disputes at large.

It were easy to make naked the fondness of these imaginations, would our present design permit. Some few things may be remarked on their assertions. As, 1. The apostle in this whole discourse wherein Melchisedec is introduced and concerned, treateth not at all of the sacrifice of Christ, nor intimates any resemblance between the offering of Melchisedec and that of Christ; but it is the office alone, and its dignity, which he insists upon, designing to treat afterwards at large about his sacrifice. And when he doth so, he doth not in the least compare it with the sacrifice of Melchisedec, but with those of Aaron according to the law; so that here was no occasion for him to mention

any sacrifice of Melchisedec's, should any such thing be supposed in the text of Moses. 2. A supposition of such a sacrifice of bread and wine as that pleaded for, is contrary to the apostle's design, and destructive of it. For whereas he endeavoureth to prove that the priesthood of Melchisedec was far more excellent than that of Levi, he could not do it by this, that he offered bread and wine in sacrifice, for so also did the Levitical priests, Lev. vii. 13, xxiii. 13, 18. But all the excellencies which the apostle insisteth on, consist in the dignity of his office, and the qualifications of his person, not in the matter of his sacrifice. 3. Let all be granted they can desire, yet are they not advantaged as unto their especial end thereby. For what is the offering of real bread and wine, and no more, unto the offering of the body and soul of Jesus Christ, under the appearance of them? 4. As unto what they contend, that the Lord Jesus Christ would not be a priest for ever, unless he had those priests on earth who continue to offer him in the sacrifice of the mass; it is so far from truth, as that the contrary is irrefragably true and certain. For if he indeed hath need of other priests to carry on his office, he doth not continue the administration of it himself, or all the apostle's arguings against the perpetuity of the Aaronical priesthood are invalid. But because I am not willing to engage in anything controversial beyond what is absolutely necessary, I shall only tender some considerations evidencing that no such thing as a sacrifice can be included in that expression, 'He brought forth bread and wine;' and so proceed.

1. The process of the story directs unto another sense of the words. Abraham was now returned with his forces unto the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale, Gen. xiv. 17, a place not far from Jerusalem, called, as it is likely, the king's dale, from Melchisedec, unto whom it belonged; where afterwards Absalom built a pillar, for the memorial of his name, 2 Sam. xviii. 18. Here probably he continued for awhile, as to refresh his own people, so to stay for the coming of the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah. For upon their defeat in the battle, they had left the plain, and fled into the mountains, ver. 10, giving up the cities with all their spoil unto the conquerors. But now, hearing of the success of Abraham, and his recovery of the captives with their goods, they resort unto him for relief: he who intended to restore all unto them, stayed for them, as it is probable, some days in the king's dale. Now, it was the manner in those countries, where any forces were on an expedition, that those in their way who were at peace with them, did bring forth supplies of bread and wine, or water for their refreshment. For the neglect of this duty, wherein they brake the laws of friendship and hospitality, did Gideon so severely punish the inhabitants of Succoth and Penuel, Judges viii. 5—7, 13—16. And the observance of this duty is recorded unto the commendation of Barzillai the Gileadite, who sent refreshment unto David and his army; for he said, 'the people are hungry, and thirsty, and weary in the wilderness,' 2 Sam. xvii. 27, 28, 29. In this state of things, Melchisedec, being the neighbour, friend, and confederate of Abraham, when he came with his army and abode so near unto him, brought forth bread and wine for their refreshment; which being merely a civil action, our apostle

takes no notice of it. And they who can discover a sacrifice in this expression, have either more skill in the opening of mysteries than he had, or a better invention in coining groundless fables and imaginations of their own.

2. This act of Melchisedec is immediately subjoined to the mention of him as king, being an instance of kingly power and munificence : ' Melchisedec, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine.' After this is added, ' and he was a priest of the Most High God ;' which is a plain introduction of, and preparation for the expression of his exercise of that office in his blessing of Abraham, which ensues in the next words. The Romanists contend that *vau* in *והוא* is redditive, giving a reason of what was before affirmed : ' He brought forth bread and wine,' because he was the priest of the high God. But as this offers force to the universal usage of that particle, which is connexive only ; so it will not serve their occasion. For they would have it that Melchisedec only offered this sacrifice of bread and wine ; whereas, if the reason why he did so, was because he was the priest of the high God, then every one who was so, was in like manner to offer the same sacrifice. And whereas they place the whole especial nature of the Melchisedecian priesthood in this his sacrifice, if this were common to him with all others, then was he not a priest of a particular order ; and so the whole discourse of the apostle is vain and impertinent. But it is plain that he having nothing to do with, nor inference to make from, his royal office or acts, doth therefore omit this which evidently was an act of kingly bounty.

3. The word here used, *הוציא*, ' he brought forth,' or caused to be brought forth, bread and wine, is no sacred word, nor is ever used in the Scripture to express the sacred action of oblation or offering in sacrifice. It is always a common action that is denoted thereby.

4. The apostle's silence in this matter casteth this pretence out of all consideration. His design was to evince the excellency of the priesthood of Christ above that of Levi, from this particular consideration, that he was a priest after the order of Melchisedec. To prove that he was so indeed, and withal to show how great and excellent a person this Melchisedec was, who bare that office as a type of Christ in his, and also in how many things the resemblance between the Lord Christ and him did consist, wherein he was made like unto the Son of God, he proposeth unto consideration every minute circumstance of all that was spoken of him, and what also in common use ought to be spoken of him, but being not so, was certainly omitted for some special reason and signification ; insisting on some things which no man could have conjectured to have been designedly significant, if the Holy Ghost himself had not made the discovery thereof ; omitting nothing that might confirm the truth, or illustrate the evidence of his argument ; yet he wholly passeth by this passage without the least notice of it. Herein, if the Romanists may be believed in this accurate collection of all things, he omits nothing but only that wherein the essence and substance of his cause and plea did wholly consist. For this his offering of bread and wine in sacrifice, they say, was that thing alone wherein he was peculiarly the type of Christ, and dispute

with great vehemency that the resemblance between them consisted herein alone, although the apostle instances expressly in sundry other things, as we shall see more afterwards, and makes no mention of this at all. It is therefore clear as the day-light, that he and they are diversely minded in this matter. But if they are in the right, certainly never any man managed an argument unto less advantage, than the apostle doth that in this place, wherein yet there is an appearance of so great accuracy and care. For they do suppose that he scrupulously collects all circumstances belonging unto the matter he treats of, and some of them of a difficult application unto his purpose, and at the same time omits that wherein the whole force of his argument did consist; which is a failure not modestly to be ascribed unto any person of sobriety or judgment. Wherefore we need not farther trouble ourselves with these forced and futilous pretences. The reason why the apostle mentions Melchisedec as king of Salem is to intimate his first prerogative above the Aaronical priests, in that he was a king. And we may observe, that,

Obs. VIII. Acts of munificence and bounty are memorable and praiseworthy, though they no way belong unto things sacred by virtue of divine institution. So was this bringing forth of bread and wine by Melchisedec to refresh Abraham and his people, though there was nothing of sacrifice therein. In former ages, either men were more inclined to such acts than now they are, or there were more efficacious means of engaging them thereunto, than are judged meet now to be made use of, because perhaps discovered to have something of deceit in them. But this went along with all their bounty, that if they would make the acts of it sacred and religious, all should be peculiarly devoted and dedicated unto God; wherein, although their pious intentions are to be commended, yet it may justly be feared that they missed of their aim, in making things and services sacred which God had not made so. But such acts as those we speak of towards men, need no more of religion in them, but that they be done in obedience to the will of God, who requires of us to do good to all, and to exercise loving kindness in the earth. They are so good and praiseworthy, provided, 1. They are of real use, and not in things that serve only for ostentation and show. 2. That they interfere with no other especial duty, nor cause an omission of what is necessary, &c. Again,

Obs. IX. It is acceptable with God that those who have laboured in any work or service of his, should receive refreshments and encouragements from men. For as such an acceptable service is the relief given to Abraham and his people, by Melchisedec celebrated; God is himself a sufficient reward unto his people in and for all their services. He needs not call in the help of men to give them a recompence. However it is well pleasing unto him, that he, or his work which they do, in any thing, be owned by men.

IV. The apostle proceeds with his description of the subject of his proposition, with respect unto that office which he principally regards; *ἱερεὺς τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου*, 'Priest of the Most High God.' Two things are here asserted. 1. That in general he was a priest. 2. The limitation of that office with respect unto the author and object of it is expressed—he was a priest of the Most High God.

First. He was a priest, and he was the first that was so by especial institution. How the rite of sacrificing was common to all worshippers of old, and what was the peculiar interest of the first-born therein, I have at large before declared. I have also proved, that Melchisedec was the first who was authoritatively separated unto this office by God's approbation. And as it was a new, so it was a great and remarkable thing in the world. For although we know not how far it was received or understood by the men of that age, who I believe were not stupidly ignorant and carnal, as some would have them to be; yet certain it is, that the institution of this office, and the representation of it in the person of Melchisedec, gave great light and instruction into the nature of the first promise, and the work of the blessing seed which was to be exhibited. For the faith of the church in all ages was so directed, as to believe that God had respect unto Christ and his work, in all his institutions of worship. Wherefore the erection of the office of a priesthood to offer sacrifice, and that in the person of so great a man as Melchisedec, must needs lead them into an acquaintance with the nature of his work in some measure, both he and it being so conspicuously represented unto them.

In this general assertion that he was a priest, two things are included. 1. That he was truly and really a man, and not an angel or an appearance of the Son of God prelusory to his incarnation. For every priest is taken from among men, ch. v. 1, of the same common nature with other men, and in the same state until he be separated unto his office. And so was Melchisedec, a man called out from amongst men, or he was not a priest. 2. That he had an extraordinary call into his office. For he falleth likewise under that other rule of our apostle: 'No man taketh this honour unto himself, unless he be called of God,' Heb. v. 4. But of what nature this call was, and how he received it, cannot positively be determined in particular. Two things are certain concerning him negatively. 1. That he came not to this office in the church by succession unto any that went before him, as did all the Levitical priests after Aaron. There was none went before him in this office, as none succeeded unto him, as we shall see immediately. And when the Lord Christ is said to be a priest after the order of Melchisedec, it doth not suppose that he was of any certain order wherein were a series of priests succeeding one another, but only that it was with Christ as it was with him, in point of call and office. Wherefore his call was personal, in some act of God towards him, wherein himself and no other was concerned. 2. He was not called or set apart unto his office by any outward unction, solemn consecration, or ceremonial investiture. For the Lord Christ Jesus had none of these, who was made a priest after the manner that he was; only there was on outward sign of his call unto all his offices, in the descending of the Holy Ghost on him in the form of a dove Matt. iii; John i. These things belonged unto the law and Aaronical priesthood, wherein spiritual things were to have a carnal representation. And those by whom they are received in the separation of any unto an evangelical office, do prefer the ministration of the law before that of the gospel, as more glorious, because they discern not the glory of

spiritual things. Besides there was none in the world greater than he nor nearer to God to confer this office upon him, as Aaron was consecrated by Moses. For in the authoritative collation of an office, there is a blessing; and, without controversy, 'he who blesseth is greater than he who is blessed by him,' as we shall see immediately. And therefore would not God make use of any outward means, in the call or the separation of the Lord Christ unto his offices, or any of them, because there was none in heaven or earth greater than he, or nearer unto God to be employed therein. Angels and men might bear witness as they did unto what was done by the Lord God and his Spirit, Isa. lxi. 1, but they could confer nothing upon him. And therefore in the collation of the ministerial office under the gospel, the authority of it resides only in Jesus Christ. Men can do no more but design the person according to his rules and laws, which may be done among equals. Wherefore the call of Melchisedec unto his office was extraordinary, and consisted in an extraordinary unction of the Spirit. And this had two things attending of it. 1. That it gave unto himself sufficient security and warrant to undertake and execute the office whereunto he was called. So did every extraordinary call accompanied with a divine afflatus and inspiration, Amos vii. 14, 15. 2. That it evidenceth itself unto all that feared God, who thereon willingly submitted unto his administrations in the discharge of his office. And this is all that we can know, as to the way and manner of his becoming a priest. That he was not so by succession unto any other, by the right of primogeniture, nor made so by men, are certain from the apostle's discourse. The time, place, season, and occasion of his call, are all hidden from us; but he was made a priest by God himself. For,

Obs. X. Every one is that in the church, and nothing else, which God is pleased to make him so to be.—Wherefore, for us to rest in God's vocation is our honour and our safety, as well as our duty. For,

Obs. XI. Where God calleth any one unto a singular honour and office in his church, it is in him a mere act of his sovereign grace.—So he took this Melchisedec, who had nothing of stock, race, descent, or succession to recommend him, but as one as it were newly sprung out of the earth, and raised him to the highest dignity that any man in those days was capable of. Let us not therefore repine or murmur at any of God's dealings with others, nor envy because of his gifts bestowed on them; may he not do what he will with his own, seeing he is greater than man, and giveth no account of his matters?

Obs. XII. A divine call is a sufficient warrant for the acting of them according unto it, who are so called, and the obedience of others unto them in their work or office.—By virtue hereof this Melchisedec arose in the midst of the nations of the world, took on him a new office and power, being owned and submitted unto therein, by Abraham and all that believed.

Obs. XIII. The first personal instituted type of Christ was a priest; this was Melchisedec—There were before real instituted types of his work, as sacrifices. And there were moral types of his person, as Adam, Abel, and Noah, which represented him in sundry things. But the first

person who was solemnly designed to teach and represent him by what he was and did, was a priest. And that which God taught herein was, that the foundation of all that the Lord Christ had to do in and for the church was laid in his priestly office, whereby he made atonement and reconciliation for sin. Every thing else that he doth is built on the supposition hereof. And we must begin in the application where God begins in the exhibition. An interest in the effects of the priestly office of Christ, is that which in the first place we ought to look after. This being attained, we shall be willing to be taught and ruled by him, and not else.

Secondly. The apostle adds the limitation of this his office of priesthood, as to its author and especial object, and that is, 'the most high God.' For so by $\delta \Theta ε ο ς \delta \upsilon ψ ι σ τ ο ς$, doth he render $אֵל עֲלִיִן$, 'in Moses.' 1. He was $בֶּהֱן לֵאל$, 'a priest to God.' This determines the sense of the word Cohen to the office of the priesthood; contrary to the pretensions of some modern Jews, and the Targum on Ps. cx. For whereas they cannot understand how the Messiah should be a priest, and perceive well enough the inconsistency of the legal priesthood with such a supposition, they would have the word Cohen in the Psalms to signify 'a prince or a ruler.' But although the word used absolutely may be applied sometimes to such a purpose, yet where God is proposed as its object, a priest of God, or unto God, none can be signified but one in the priestly office. 2. He was a priest to the most high God. This is the first time that this title is ascribed unto God in the Scripture, which afterwards is frequently repeated, and so also are others of the same importance, as 'God above,' 'God over all,' 'the God of heaven,' and absolutely 'the most High.' And it is either descriptive or distinctive, as all such attributes and epithets are.

1. As it is descriptive; the majesty, power, and authority of God over all are intended therein. The most high God is the glorious God with whom is terrible majesty. To represent them it is said, that his 'throne is high and lifted up,' Isa. vi. 1. And he is called 'the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity,' Isa. lvii. 15. Thus is he styled to fill our hearts with a reverence of him, as one infinitely above us, and whose glorious majesty is absolutely inconceivable. So when the Holy Ghost would express the glory of Christ as exalted, he says, he is made 'higher than the heavens, and he is sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high.' The most high God therefore is first, God as inconceivably exalted in glory and majesty. Again, his power and authority are also intended herein: 'the Most High ruleth over all,' Dan. iv. 17. God over all, in power and authority disposing of all things, is the most high God. So Abraham explains this name, Gen. xiv. 18.

2. As it is distinctive, it respects other gods, not in truth and reality but in reputation. For so there were then lords many, and gods many in the world. So they were esteemed by them that made them, and worshipped them: $λεγομενοι \theta ε ο ι$, as our apostle speaks, 'such as were called gods,' 1 Cor. viii. 5, but by nature were not gods,' Gal. iv. 8. They were all earthly, and though some of them had their being above, as the sun, moon, and host of heaven, yet they had all their deity

from beneath ; nor ever had it any existence but in the deluded imaginations of the sons of men. In opposition unto them, with distinction from them, God is called ‘the most high God.’ The world was at that time fallen into all manner of idolatry. Every country, every city, every family almost, had made new gods unto themselves. The most general veneration, as I have elsewhere shown, was then given unto the sun, and that because he appeared to them on high, or the highest being they could apprehend. Hence had he the name of *ἡλιος* among the Greeks, from *ἥλν*, ‘the high one.’ In opposition unto all these gods, and renunciation of them, Melchisedec professed himself the priest of the most high God ; as Paul preached at Athens the unknown God, in opposition unto all their known *σεξασματα*, or ‘idols,’ whom they supposed themselves acquainted withal. And whereas God had not yet revealed himself by any especial name, as he did afterwards on sundry occasions ; (the first he made of that kind being *El Shaddai*, or God Almighty, Gen. xvii. 1, as himself declares, Exod. vi. 3 ;) those that feared him made use of this title as most comprehensive, as most suited unto their present faith and profession. So Abraham expounds this title, ver. 22, ‘the most high God, Possessor of heaven and earth,’ which he gives as a reason why he would not take aught of the king of Sodom, seeing he was the servant of that God who disposed of all things in heaven and earth, and so had no need of supplies from him. His God could make him rich without the help of the king of Sodom. Wherefore God, under this consideration of the most high God, was the principal object of the faith of believers in those days. For whereas they were few in number, and all the inhabitants of the earth being greedily set upon getting possessions and inheritances for themselves, they believed in God as he who was able to protect them, and provide for them, according to the tenor of the name whereby he afterwards revealed himself unto Abraham, namely, of *El Shaddai*, or ‘God Almighty.’ And this also was the principal part of their profession, that they served the most high God alone in opposition to all the false and dunghill deities of the earth.

The Socinians, in all their disputes against the deity of Christ do always make use of this name, and continually repeat it. ‘Christ,’ they say, ‘is not the most high God :’ a God they will allow him to be, but not the most high God. But whereas this name is used in distinction only from all false gods, if their Christ be a God, but not on any account the most high God, he is a false god, and as such to be rejected : see Jer. x. 11. And from this name or title of God, as it is descriptive of his majesty and authority, we may observe,

Obs. XIV. To keep up and preserve a due reverence of God in our minds and words, we should think of, and use those holy titles which are given unto him, and whereby he is described in the Scripture.—This was the constant manner of the holy men of old, and which God himself in sundry places directs unto. Thus Abraham immediately makes use of this name, Gen. xiv. 22, ‘I have lift up my hand unto Jehovah the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth.’ So are we taught to fear that dreadful and glorious name, ‘The Lord thy God,’ Deut. xxviii. 58 ; see Isa. xxx. 15, lvii. 15. And there is nothing that

argues a greater contempt of God among men, than the common slight irreverent mention of his name, whose highest degree is that horrible profanation of swearing and cursing by it, with wicked and diabolical spirits. Let us not therefore think of God, nor mention him, but as 'the most high and holy One that inhabiteth eternity.' Not that on all occasions of mentioning him, we should constantly make use of these glorious titles, the Scripture warranting us to speak both to him and of him, without their addition unto his name; but that we should do so as occasion doth require, and always sanctify him in our hearts and words, as he unto whom they do belong.

Obs. XV. It is good at all times to fix our faith on that in God, which is meet to encourage our obedience and dependence upon him in our present circumstances.—The believers in those days did in a very particular manner confess themselves to be strangers and pilgrims in the earth, Heb. xi. 13. The church was not as yet fixed unto any certain place, and they being separated from the apostate world, not mixing with it, nor incorporating in any society, went up and down from one place to another. In this condition, having no inheritance nor abiding place, but exposed unto manifold dangers, they eyed God in an especial manner as the most high God; as he that was over all, and had the disposal of all things in his own sovereign power. And that variety of titles which in the Scripture are given unto God, with the descriptions that are made of him are all suited unto this end, that in the variety of occasions and trials that may befall us in this world, we may still have something peculiarly suited unto the encouragement of our faith and dependence on God.

Obs. XVI. In particular, it is a matter of inestimable satisfaction, that he whom we serve is the most high God, the sovereign Possessor of heaven and earth. It is in sense the same with that name which God gave himself when he entered into covenant with Abraham, encouraging thereby to an adherence to him in faith and obedience, Gen. xvii. 1, 'I am God almighty.' And it were easy to demonstrate what relief in all troubles, dangers, persecutions, distresses, inward and outward, in life and death, we may thence receive. As this name is distinctive, we may observe, that,

Obs. XVII. Public profession in all ages is to be suited and pointed against the opposition that is made unto the truth, or apostasy from it. The world being now generally fallen into idolatry and the worship of new earthly gods, believers made this the principal part of their profession, that they served the most high God, which ought to be observed on all like occasions.

V. The apostle describes this Melchisedec from that action of his, with its circumstances, which gave occasion unto the whole account of him: 'Who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings.' On this occasion only is he introduced in the Scripture story, as a new person never heard of before, nor ever afterwards to be made mention of, as unto any of his own concerns. Abraham did not only overthrow the whole army of the kings, and recovered the spoils, but he slew the kings themselves, as is expressly affirmed, Gen. xiv. 17. Hence is he here said, to return from the slaughter of the kings; for, as he includ-

eth in it the destruction of their host, so it was that which signalized his victory. And the *ακροθίνια* afterwards mentioned, were the opima spolia taken from the king's themselves. As Abraham thus returned with honour and glory, made very great in the eyes of the nations round about, as he staid in the king's dale to deliver unto the king of Sodom his goods and people with a royal munificence, becoming a servant of the most high God, who had a better portion than could be found amongst the spoils, Melchisedec knowing the state of things, and the promise made to Abraham, comes out unto him for the ends mentioned.

But it may be inquired whether this were a just occasion for the introduction of this king of peace, priest of the high God, and type of Christ, to bless him who returned from war with the spoils of a bloody victory. *Ans.* 1. The apostasy and rebellion of the whole world against God, have made it necessary that spiritual victory be the foundation of all the actings of Christ, in the setting up of his kingdom. The first promise of him was, that he should break the serpent's head, wound the head over the large earth, Ps. cx. 6. This was to be effected by a glorious conquest and victory, which is everywhere so described in the Scripture: see Col. ii. 15. And because outward force and opposition is always used by the world in the defence of the interest of Satan, he will also sometimes apply the outward sword for the destruction of his stubborn adversaries, Isa. lxiii. 1—3; Rev. xix. This, therefore, was no unmeet season for the introduction of him who made so solemn a representation of him. 2. Abraham himself was in this victory herein also a type of Christ, not absolutely of his person as was Melchisedec, but of his power and presence in his church. Melchisedec, I say, represented Christ in his person and his offices. Abraham represented his presence in the church, or the church as his body. I will neither approve of, nor reject that conjecture of some, that these four kings were types of the four great monarchs of the world which the church of God was to conflict withal, and at length to prevail against; as Dan. vii. 18, 27. And, indeed, many things in their names and titles, do notably countenance that conjecture. But it is certain in general that they were great oppressors of the world, roving up and down for dominion and spoil. Wherefore, Abraham's conquest of them was not only a pledge of the final success of the church in the world, but also a representation of the usefulness of the church unto the world, whenever its pride and blindness will admit of its help and kindness, Micah v. 7. The church is, indeed, the only means of conveying blessings unto the world, as the oppression thereof will prove its ruin.

3. The land of Canaan was now given unto Abraham and his seed for a possession, to be the seat of the church and God's worship among them. The nations now inhabiting it, were devoted unto destruction in an appointed season. And he was not to allow these foreign kings to set up any dominion therein. And God gave him this victory as a pledge of his future possession.

4. Abraham was obliged, both in justice and affection, to rescue his brother Lot, whom they were carrying away captive. And this is

expressed as the next cause of his engagement against them, ver. 14. On all accounts, therefore, this war was just, and the victory of God. And because there was a representation therein of the victory and success of Christ in his church, it was a season most eminently proper for the introduction of Melchisedec, blessing him in the exercise of sacerdotal power.

5. This congress of Melchisedec and Abraham, after Abraham had gotten the victory over all his adversaries, was a type and representation of the glorious congress and meeting of Christ and the church at the last day, when the whole church shall have finished its warfare, and be victorious over the world, sin, the law, death, and hell. Then will the Lord Christ bring out the stores of heaven for their eternal refreshment, and give them in the fulness of the blessing, and all things shall issue in the glory of the most high God. All the promises are unto him that overcometh. And we may observe, that,

Obs. XVIII. 1. All the commotions and confusions that are among the nations of the world, do lie in, or shall be brought into, a subserviency unto the interest of Christ and his church. I intend those places where either the seat of the church is, or is to be. A great war and tumult there was between these eastern kings and those of Canaan, and many nations were smitten and destroyed in the expedition, Gen. xiv. 5—7. And what is the final issue whereinto all these things do come? Why, two things fell out hereon that neither side of the combatants either looked for, or had any interest in. 1. The victory of Abraham, or the church over them all. 2. A glorious type and representation of Christ brought forth visibly acting in his church. Yea, I may add, that in Abraham's glorious victory, and royal munificence on the one hand, and in the sacerdotal blessing of Melchisedec on the other, there was such a representation of Christ in his principal offices as priest and king, as had never been made in the world before. This issue did God direct that war and tumult unto. It will be no otherwise with all those confusions and disorders that the world is filled withal at this day, though we can see nothing of the ways and means of their tendency unto such an end.

2. There have been, and are to be, such seasons wherein God will dispose of nations, and their interest, according as the condition of the church doth require; as he did here with all these nations, Isa. xliii. 3, 4, lx. 6, 7.

3. The blessing of God may be expected on a just and lawful war. This war and victory of Abraham, which he received the blessing upon, is celebrated, Isa. xli. 2, 3. And our apostle mentions that circumstance of the slaughter of the kings as that which was a token of God's kindness unto Abraham, and of his own greatness. And where these things occur, 1. A lawful, necessary, immediate cause of war, as Abraham had for the rescue of Lot. 2. A lawful call unto the war, as Abraham had, being a sovereign prince, and raising his army of his own people merely, and that to the securing of the possessions of a country granted unto him by God himself; and, 3. A subserviency unto the glory of Christ and the good of the church; the presence of God in it, and the blessing of God upon it, may be justly expected.

VI. Melchisedec is farther described by two acts of his sacerdotal power, or office which he exercised on this occasion of meeting Abraham. 1. He blessed him; and then, 2. He received tithes of him.

He met Abraham and blessed him. This solemn benediction is fully expressed, Gen. xiv. 19, 20, ‘And he blessed him and said, Blessed be Abraham of the most high God, Possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be the most high God, who hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand.’ There are two parts of this blessing: 1. That which hath Abraham for its object,—a blessing of prayer. 2. That which hath God for its object,—a blessing of praise. Our apostle seems to take notice only of the first, or that part of the blessing whereof Abraham was the immediate object. But the truth is, the other part whereby he blessed God, being on the account of Abraham, and as it were in his name, it belongs also to the blessing wherewith he was blessed.

As to this blessing, we may consider, 1. The nature, 2. The form of it. As to the nature of it, blessings in general are the means of communicating good things, according to the power and interest in them of them that bless, Gen. xxxiii. 11. So also are curses of evil. Hence, it is God alone that absolutely can either bless or curse, for he only hath sovereign power of all good and evil. He doth, therefore, so express his blessing: ‘In blessing I will bless thee,’ Gen. xxii. 17, do it assuredly and effectually, as having all the subject-matter of blessings in my hand. And, therefore, he says to Abraham, ‘I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee,’ Gen. xii. 3, because he is over them and all their blessings and curses. Balak therefore, was not a little mistaken when he tells Balaam, ‘I know that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed,’ Num. xxii. 6. For, however he might divine concerning them that should be so, absolutely he could neither bless nor curse. Wherefore, I say all blessings are instituted means of the conveyance and communication of good unto others, according unto the power and interest of them that bless, in that good. This being amongst men by God’s concession and institution various, there are also various sorts of blessings, which may be reduced unto two heads. 1. Such as are authoritative. 2. Such as are charitative or merely euctical. The latter sort of blessing is removed from our consideration in this place. For our apostle treats only of such blessings as evidently and unavoidably prove him that blesseth, to be superior unto him that is blessed, ver. 7. But this is not so in this latter sort of blessings, which consist only in prayer for a blessing on them. For so equals may bless one another; yea, inferiors may bless superiors, children may bless parents, servants masters, subjects their rulers, Ps. xx. 1—4.

Authoritative benediction among men is twofold. 1. Paternal. 2. Sacerdotal, or with respect unto any other office in the church.

Paternal benedictions were of old of two sorts. 1. Such as were of common right. 2. Such as had an especial prophetic warrant. For the first, parents have an especial right, by virtue of divine institution, authoritatively to bless their children, inasmuch as he hath given unto them an especial interest in the matter of the blessing, and power for

the communication of it. And this blessing consists in two things. 1. A solemn declaration unto God of their acceptance and approbation of that duty and obedience which the children perform unto them by the law of nature and God's appointment. This brings ordinarily the children so blessed under the promise of the fifth commandment. So are the words of the command, *למען וארכון ימך*, 'that they may prolong thy days.' They shall have power to communicate this good unto thee by their blessing, in their solemn declaration of their acceptance and approbation of thy obedience. And if this were more considered, and more observed by parents and children, it would be much to their advantage. And, indeed, the state of those children is unhappy, whose parents cannot sincerely avow an approbation of their duty, which intercepts the benefit of their blessings. 2. Parents bless children, by endeavouring to enstate them in their own covenant interest. God having promised to be a God unto believers, and their seed in and by them, they do three ways bless them with the good things thereof. First. By communicating unto them the privilege of the initial seal of the covenant, as a sign, token, and pledge of their being blessed of the Lord. Secondly. By pleading the promise of the covenant in their behalf. Thirdly. By careful instructing of them in the mercies and duties of the covenant. Wherefore, although this power of blessing be founded in the law of nature, and in all nations something hath been observed that looks towards it, yet it is by faith alone, and an interest in the covenant, that any parents are able to bless their children in a due manner. For a blessing is a communication of good according to his interest in it that blesseth, which we have none in any that is really so, but by virtue thereof. And whereas these things are a solemn appointment of God, it is certainly a disadvantage, that a foppish ceremony is in common practice substituted in the room of them.

Secondly. There was of old a paternal benediction that had its rise in an especial warrant, and was accompanied with a spirit of prophecy. This consisted in a certain prediction and declaration of future events, whereby those so blessed were infallibly and indispensably stated in a right unto them. So Noah blessed Shem and Japheth, Isaac blessed Jacob, Jacob all his sons. Herein God gave unto some parents the honour of a power to bequeath unto their posterity, those good things which he graciously intended to bestow on them. This kind of blessing is now absolutely ceased, for it wholly respected the coming of Christ in the flesh, with those other things which conduced thereunto.

It were well, if instead of all these several ways of blessing, many parents did not curse their children. Some upon their provocations, have desperately and profanely imprecated curses upon them; and we have known instances wherein God hath eminently revenged their impiety, by his judgments inflicted on parents and children both. Some entail a curse upon them, by oppressions and falsehood, in getting their estates, or in a flagitious course of life, which God will revenge to the third generation. But most do curse them with the cursed example of their conversation, initiating them, almost from the cradle, in a course of sin and wickedness.

It is true, those parents who do use conscientiously the ways appointed of God, whereby they may bless their children, do oftentimes not see the effect of their endeavours. They bless them, but they are not blessed. But, 1. They have peace and comfort in the discharge of their duty. 2. Their blessing may have success, and oftentimes hath, when they are gone out of the world; yea, in their children's children for many generations. 3. If all fail, they shall be witnesses for God at the last day, against their own profligate posterity. But I return.

Sacerdotal blessings were authoritative also; and that on a double ground. 1. Of common right and equity. 2. Of especial institution.

First. There was a common right and equity, that he who was called to be a priest, should bless the people authoritatively. For as he was appointed to act for men with God, so it is reasonable that he should pronounce blessings unto them in the name of God; that as he ministerially carried their gifts, offerings, and services unto God, so in like manner, he should return his acceptance and blessing unto them. Whereas, therefore, this right and duty belonged unto the office of the priest, two things ensue thereon. 1. That this blessing was an act of authority,—for every act of office is so. 2. That he who thus blesseth another, is greater than he who is blessed by him, as our apostle disputes, and we shall see afterwards. And we may take notice in our passage,

Obs. XIX. That whatever be the interest, duty, and office of any to act in the name of others towards God, in any sacred administration, the same proportionably is their interest, power, and duty, to act towards them in the name of God in the blessing of them. And, therefore, ministers may authoritatively bless their congregations. It is true, they can do it only declaratively, but withal, they do it authoritatively, because they do it by virtue of the authority committed unto them for that purpose. Wherefore, the ministerial blessing is somewhat more than eulogical or a mere prayer. Neither is it merely doctrinal and declaratory, but that which is built on a particular especial warrant, proceeding from the nature of the ministerial office. But, whereas it hath respect in all things unto other ministerial administrations, it is not to be used but with reference unto them, and that by them, by whom at that season they are administered.

Secondly. There was an especial institution of a sacerdotal benediction under the Old Testament, recorded, Num. vi. 22—27, 'And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and his sons, saying, On this wise shall ye bless the children of Israel, saying, The Lord bless thee and keep thee, the Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee, the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon thee and give thee peace; and they shall put my name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them.' Their putting the name of God upon the people, was their praying for, and pronouncing blessings on them in his name, by virtue of this institution. For it is an institution whereby the name of God is put on any thing or person. Hereon God would effectually bless them. This especial institution, I acknowledge, was after the days of Melchisedec, and the cessation of his office as to actual administration. But it is ap-

parent, and may be proved, that many, if not the most of those sacred institutions which were given in one system unto Moses, were singly and gradually given out by inspiration and prophecy, unto the church, before the giving of the law; only at Sinai, their number was increased, and the severity of their sanction heightened. Thus, this sacerdotal benediction was but a transcript from, and expressive of that power and form of blessing, which Melchisedec as a priest, enjoyed and used before. And from what hath been spoken, we may gather the nature of this blessing of Melchisedec, wherewith he blessed Abraham. For, 1. It hath the nature of a blessing in general, whereby any one man may bless another, in that it was euctical and eucharistical; it includeth both prayer for him, and thanksgiving on his account unto God. And 2. It was authoritative and sacerdotal; he was the priest of the High God, and he blessed Abraham, that is, by virtue of his office. For so the nature of the office requireth, and so God had in particular appointed, that the priests should bless in his name. 3. It was prophetical, proceeding from an immediate inspiration, whereby he declares the confirmation of the great blessing promised unto Abraham; 'Blessed be Abraham.' And we may see,

Obs. XX. That he who hath received the greatest mercies and privileges in this world, may yet need their ministerial confirmation.—Abraham had before received the blessing from the mouth of God himself. And yet it was no doubt a great confirmation of his faith, to be now blessed again in the name of God by Melchisedec. And indeed, such is the estate of all the faithful, the children of Abraham in this world, that what through the weakness of their faith, what through the greatness of their temptations and trials, they stand in need of all ministerial renovations of the pledges of God's good-will towards them. We are apt to think, that if God should speak once unto us as he did to Abraham, and assure us of the blessing, we should never need farther confirmation whilst we live. But the truth is, he doth so speak unto all that believe in the word, and yet we find how much we want the ministerial renovation of it unto us. Bless God for the ministry, for the word and sacraments; ordinarily our faith would not be kept up without them.

Obs. XXI. In the blessing of Abraham by Melchisedec, all believers are virtually blessed by Jesus Christ.—Melchisedec was a type of Christ, and represented him in what he was and did, as our apostle declares. And Abraham in all these things bare the person of, or represented all his posterity according to the faith. Therefore doth our apostle in the foregoing chapter entitle all believers, unto the promises made unto him, and the inheritance of them. There is, therefore, more than a bare story in this matter. A blessing is in it conveyed unto all believers in the way of an ordinance for ever.

Obs. XXII. It is God's institution that makes all our administrations effectual. So did sacerdotal benedictions become authoritative and efficacious. Innumerable ways and means of blessing things and persons, have been found out in the Papacy. They will bless bells, steeples, churches, churchyards, utensils, fonts, candles, salt, and children by confirmation. There is, in truth, in them all, a want of

that wisdom, gravity, and reverence, which ought to accompany men in all religious services; but that which renders them all useless, and casts them out of the verge of religion, is, that they want a divine institution.

The second sacerdotal act, or exercise of priestly power ascribed unto Melchisedec, is, that he received tithes of all. 'To whom Abraham also gave the tenth of all.' As Abraham gave them in a way of duty, so he received them in a way of office. So the apostle expresseth it, ver. 6, 'He received tithes of Abraham,' or tithed him. And the word *παντων*, 'of all,' is limited unto the spoils which he took of the enemies, ver. 4. To whom Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. This in the original history is so expressed, as to leave it doubtful both of whom the tenths were given, and of what they were, Gen. xiv. 20, *ויתן לו מעשר מכל*, 'and he gave him the tenth of all.' The words immediately preceding, are the words of Melchisedec, and the story concerneth him; so that if the relative included in *ויתן*, 'he gave,' do answer unto the next antecedent, Melchisedec gave the tenth of all unto Abraham. Nor doth it appear what the *כל*, 'all' was, that is intended; whether his own whole estate, or all titheable things which he had then with him. But all this ambiguity is removed by our apostle, according to the mind of the Holy Ghost, and withal declared how great a mystery depended on the right understanding of those words. It was Abraham that gave the tenth of all to Melchisedec, whereby he acknowledged him to be the priest of the High God, and the type of the Son of God as incarnate, every way superior unto him who but newly received the promises. And that the tenth which he gave, was only of the spoils that he took from the enemies, as a token and pledge in particular, that the victory and success which he had against the kings, was from God.

This receiving of tithes by Melchisedec, was a sacerdotal act. For, 1. The tenth thus given was first given unto God; and he who received them, received them as God's officer in his name. Where there was none in office to receive them, they were immediately to be offered unto God in sacrifice, according unto their capacity. So Jacob vowed the tenth unto God, Gen. xxviii. 22, which he was himself to offer, there being no other priest to receive it at his hand, and no doubt but he did it accordingly, when God minded him to pay his vow at Bethel, Gen. xxxv. 1—6. And 2. The things that were fit for this sort, were actually to be offered in sacrifice unto God. This, Saul knew, when he made that his pretence of sparing and bringing away the fat cattle of the Amalekites, 1 Sam. xv. 15. And I no way doubt but that these tenths that Abraham gave, at least such of them as were meet for that service, although it be not expressed, were offered in sacrifice unto God by Melchisedec. For whereas he was a king, he stood in no need of any contribution from Abraham; nor was it honourable, to receive any thing in way of compensation for his munificence in bringing forth bread and wine, which was to sell his kindness and spoil his bounty, nor would Abraham have deprived the king of Sodom and others, of any of their goods, to give them unto another. Wherefore, he received them as a priest, to offer what was meet in

sacrifice to God, whereon, no doubt, according to the customs of those times, there was a feast wherein they ate bread together, and were mutually refreshed. 3. This matter was afterwards precisely determined in the law, wherein all tithes were appropriated unto the priest. I observe these things, only to show that the apostle had just ground to infer from hence, the sacerdotal power of Melchisedec, and his pre-eminence in that office above Abraham. For every thing in the Scripture is significant, and hath its especial design, the whole being inlaid with truth by infinite wisdom, whether we apprehend it or not. Without this light given by the Holy Spirit himself, how should we have conceived that this giving the tenth of the spoils to Melchisedec, was designed to prove his greatness and dignity above Abraham and all the Levitical priests on that account, as the great type and representative of Jesus Christ. And indeed, all the mysteries of sacred truth which are contained in the Old Testament, are seen clearly only in the light of the New; and the doctrine of the gospel, is the only rule and measure of the interpretation of the writings of the Old Testament. Wherefore, although the writings of both are equally the word of God, yet the revelation made immediately by Jesus Christ, is that which ought to be our guide in the whole. And they do but deceive themselves and others, who in the interpretation of mystical passages and prophecies of the Old Testament, do neglect the accomplishment of them, and light given unto them, in the New, taking up with Jewish traditions or vain conjectures of their own, such as the late writings of some who highly pretend unto learning; are stuffed withal. And we may see from hence, 1. How necessary it is for us, according to the command of our Saviour, to 'search the Scriptures,' John v. 39. Ερευνᾶν, to make a scrupulous inquiry, a diligent investigation, to find out things hidden, or parcels of gold ore. So are we directed to 'seek for wisdom as silver, and to search for her as for hid treasures,' Prov. ii. 4. There are precious, useful, significant truths in the Scripture, so disposed of, so laid up, as that if we accomplish not a diligent search, we shall never set eye on them. The common course of reading the Scripture, nor the common help of expositors, who for the most part, go in the same track, and scarce venture one step beyond those that are gone before them, will not suffice, if we intend a discovery of these hid treasures. This diligent search was attended unto by the prophets themselves under the Old Testament, with respect unto their own prophecies which they received by inspiration, 1 Pet. i. 10, 11. God gave out those deep and sacred truths by them, which they comprehended not, but made diligent inquiry into the mind of the Holy Ghost, in the words which themselves had spoken. What belongs unto this diligent search, shall be elsewhere declared. 2. That the clear revelation of the New Testament, ought to be our principal rule in the interpretation of difficult passages in the Old. What our apostles in these cases had by immediate inspiration and direction, that we must look for, from what is recorded in their writings, which is sufficient for us, and will not fail us.

There is great inquiry usually made on this place, whether tithes be due by the light of nature, or at least by such a moral positive

command of God, as should be perpetually obligatory to all worshippers to the end of the world. This, many contend for, and the principal reasons which they plead from the Scripture, are these. 1. That tithes were paid before the law, as well as under the law; and what was so observed in the worship of God, namely, that being in usage before the law, and confirmed by the law, is originally of the law of nature, and could have no other fountain. 2. Our Lord Jesus Christ himself, speaking of tithing mint and cummin, approveth of it, affirming that those things ought not to be omitted, though the most inferior instance that could be given of the duty. 3. He seems in like manner to have respect thereunto, when he commands to give unto Cæsar, the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God, the things that are God's, which were the tithes, the law concerning them being thereby confirmed, which proves it not to be ceremonial. And this, some men judge to be a certain argument, of that which is moral and unalterable, namely, the appointed usage of it before the law, under the law, and under the gospel, after the expiration of the law of ceremonies, or the law of commandments contained in ordinances. And it seems so to be, if there be the same reason of the law or command in all these seasons, for otherwise it is not so. For instance it is supposed that the eating of blood was forbidden before the law, and assuredly it was so under the law, and is so in the New Testament, Acts xv., which yet proves it not to be morally evil, and perpetually forbidden. For it is not so upon the same grounds and reasons. For in that place of Gen. ix. 4, 'But flesh with the life thereof, that is, the blood thereof shall ye not eat:' blood is not absolutely forbidden, but in some cases and with respect unto a certain end. It was not to be eaten whilst it was yet hot and warm in the flesh, which prohibition God gave to prevent that savage custom, which yet afterwards got ground among mankind, of eating flesh like ravenous beasts, whilst the blood was yet warm in it. Under the law it was forbidden, because God had taken it to be the principal part of the sacrifices, and far the most significant, Lev. xvii. 5, 6, 11, 14. And in the 15th of the Acts, it is only occasionally forbidden for a season, to avoid scandal and offence. So that if it should be supposed that the matter of the prohibition before the law, under the law, and in that synod at Jerusalem, were the same, yet the reasons of it being various, it doth not prove a morality in the law, or such as should be everlastingly obligatory. But where not only the subject-matter, but the formal reason of the command is the same, there it is of natural equity, and unalterable; and so it is said to be in the case of tithes.

I shall not enter into any long digression about this controverted subject. It is such as wherein the various interests of men, have engaged their utmost diligence on the one hand and on the other. But this I am sure enough of, that unless they were paid by them that give them, with more conscience and regard unto duty than generally they seem to be, not one in a thousand having respect in the payment of them, to any thing but the civil law of the land; and unless they turned to a better account with them by whom they are received, than generally they do, it is to no great purpose to dispute upon what

grounds, or by what right they are due unto any. And without solicitousness concerning offence, I shall take leave to say, that it is no safe plea for many to insist on, that tithes are due and divine, as they speak, that is, by a binding law of God now under the gospel. For, be the law and institution what it will, nothing is more certain than that there is nothing due under the gospel by virtue of God's command or institution with respect unto his worship, unto any who do not wholly give up themselves unto the ministry and labour in the word and doctrine, unless they be such as are disenabled by age and infirmities, who are not to be forsaken all the days of their lives. For men to live in pleasure and idleness, according to the pomp, vanities, and grandeur of the world, neither rising early, nor going to bed late, nor spending their time or strength in the service of the church, according to the duties required of all the ministers thereof in the gospel, to sing unto themselves that tithes are due to them, by the appointment and law of God, is a fond imagination, a dream that will fill them with perplexity when they shall awake. But as to the question in hand, I shall briefly give my thoughts about it in the ensuing observations and propositions.

1. By tithes is understood either the express law of tithing, or paying the tenth of all our substance, and of the whole increase of the earth; or only the dedication of a certain portion of what we have, unto the uses of the worship and service of God. If this latter be intended, it is with me past all doubt and question, that a bountiful part of our enjoyments, is to be separated unto the use and service of the worship of God; particularly unto the comfortable and honourable support of them that labour in the ministry. And it is no small part of that confusion which we suffer under, that Christians being in all places compelled by civil laws to pay the tenth unto some or other, whether they will or not, are either discouraged or disenabled, or think themselves discharged from doing that, which God certainly requireth at their hands in a way of duty. However, this will be no excuse for any, for generally they have yet left unto them, that whereby they may discharge their duty in an acceptable manner. And I cannot but wonder how some men can satisfy their consciences in this matter, in such circumstances as I shall not now name.

2. If the strict legal course of tithing be intended, it cannot be proved from this text, nor from any other instance before the law. For Abraham gave only the tenth of the spoils which were not titheable by law. For if the places taken or destroyed in war, were anathematized, as Jericho was and also Amalek, no portion was to be reserved under a pretence of sacrifice or any other sacred use, as Saul found to his cost. And if they were not anathematized, all the spoils were left entirely unto the people that went to war, without any sacred decimation. So the Reubenites and the Gadites, at their return over Jordan into their own land, carried all their rich spoils and cattle with them. no tithe being mentioned, Josh. xxii. 8. Although there is no question but many of them offered their free will-offerings at the tabernacle. And when God would have a sacred portion out of the spoils, as he would have in the wilderness, out of those that were taken from the Midian-

ites, to manifest that they fell not under the law of tithes, he took not the tenth part, but one portion of five hundred from the soldiers, and one of fifty from the people, Num. xxxi. 28—30. Wherefore, the giving of the tenth of the spoils, was not from the obligation of any law, but was an act of free-will and choice in the offerer. But yet there was so great an equity herein also, namely, that God should have an acknowledgment in the fruits of those successes which he gave in war, that out of the spoils of his and his people's enemies, David made his provision for the building of the temple. And the captains of the host that went against Midian, after a tribute was raised for the Lord out of the spoils, according unto the proportions mentioned, when they found the goodness of God in the preservation of their soldiers, whereof there was not one lost, they made a new voluntary oblation unto God out of their spoils, Num. xxxi. 48—50. And as for the instance of Jacob, who vowed unto God the tenth of all, it is so far from proving that the tenth was due by virtue of any law, that it proves the contrary. For had it been so, it could not have been the matter of any extraordinary vow, whereby he could express his obedience unto God.

3. The precise law of tithing, is not confirmed in the gospel. For that saying of our Saviour's, approving the tithing of mint and cummin, evidently respects that legal institution which was then in force, and could not be violated without sin. And by his approbation of that law, and of the duty in observance of it, he did no more confirm it, or ascribe an obligatory power unto it under the gospel, than he did so unto all other those ceremonial institutions, which both he himself observed as a man made under the law, and enjoined others so to do. They all continued in full force unto the time of reformation, which gave them their bounds and limits, Heb. ix. 10, and ended with his resurrection. His other saying, of giving 'unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God, the things that are God's,' respects our whole moral obedience unto God, and not this or that particular institution. The meaning of it is, that we are to pay or perform unto God, all whatever he requireth of us in a way of obedience, but what that is in particular, is not here determined. And other mention of tithes in the gospel, there is none.

4. Whereas by the light of nature, all rules of reason and positive institutions, a portion of what God is pleased to give unto every man, is to be returned unto him, in the way of his worship and service, wherein it may be used according unto his appointment; and whereas, before the giving of the law, sundry holy men fixed on the tenth part, as that which was meetest to be so dedicated unto God, and that as is probable, not without some especial conduct of the Holy Spirit, if not upon express revelations; and whereas, this was afterwards expressly confirmed under the law by positive institution, the equity whereof is urged in the gospel; it is the best direction that can be given unto any what proportion of their estate should be set apart unto this purpose. Herein, I confess, so many circumstances are in particular cases to be considered, as that it is impossible any one certain rule should be prescribed unto all persons. But whereas, withal,

there is no need in the least to furnish men with pleas and excuses for the non-performance of their duty, at least as unto the necessary degrees of it, that I shall not suggest any thing unto them, which may be used to that purpose. I shall, therefore, leave this rule in its full latitude, as the best direction of practice in this matter.

5. On these suppositions it is, that the apostle, treating of this matter, makes no use of the right or law of tithing, though directly unto his purpose, if it had not been abrogated. For, intending to prove that the ministers of the gospel ought to be liberally supported in their works, with the earthly things of them unto whom they do administer the things of God, he argueth from the light of nature, the general equity of other cases, the analogy of legal institutions, the rules of justice, with this especial institution of Christ in the gospel, but makes no mention of the natural or legal right of tithing, 1 Cor. ix. 7—15. And farther I shall not at present divert on this subject. And we may observe, that

Obs. XXIII. Whatsoever we receive signally from God in a way of mercy, we ought to return a portion of it unto him in a way of duty. That this was the practice of the saints of old, might easily be proved by an induction of instances, from this act of Abraham, (yea, from the sacrifice of Abel,) down to the vow of Jacob, the dedications of David, Solomon, and others, in their respective places and generations. The light of nature also counted it as a duty among all the civilized heathens. The offerings and sacred dedications of nations and private families, are famous on this account. And it was laid as a lasting blemish on good Hezekiah, that he returned not unto the Lord according to the mercy which he had received.

And we may do well to consider, 1. That no man hath any great or signal success in any affair or occasion, more than others, or more than at other times, but there will be in his mind an ascription of it unto one cause or another. This the nature of things makes necessary, nor can it be avoided, Hab. i. 11. 2. That whatever a man doth secretly ascribe such successes unto, that he makes in some sense his God. 'They sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense unto their drag, because by them their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous,' Hab. i. 16. They ascribe their successes unto their own strength, endeavours, and means that they used. Hereby they deified themselves as far as in them lay; and therefore, these thoughts are called sacrificing and burning incense, which were expressions of religious worship. And it is no better with us, when in our successes in our trades and affairs, we secretly applaud our own endeavours, and the means we have used, as the only causes of them. 3. It is a great sign that a man hath not engaged God in the getting of any thing, when he will not entitle him unto any portion of what is gotten. There are two evils common in the world in this case. Some will make no acknowledgment unto God, in the especial consecration of any part of their substance unto him, where it is lawfully gotten. And some will make great dedications of what hath been gotten by robbery, spoils, oppression, and violence. Many public works of munificence and charity, as they are called, have had no other original. This is but an endea-

your to entitle God to injustice, and draw him to a co-partnership with them, by giving him a share in the advantage. God 'hateth robbery for burnt-offerings,' Isa. lxi. 8, and he 'smites his hands at men's dishonest gain,' Ezek. xxii. 13. He will have nothing to do with such things, nor accept of any portion of them or from them, however he may overpower things in his providence to his glory. Both these ways are full of evil, though the latter be the worst. 4. No man hath any ground to reckon that he can settle what he hath, unto himself or his, where this chief rent unto God is left unpaid. He will at one time or other, make a re-entry upon the whole, take the forfeiture of it, and turn the ungrateful tenant out of possession. And among other things, this makes so many estates industriously gotten, so speedily moulder away, as we see they do in the world. 5. God hath always his receivers ready to accept of what is tendered, namely, his poor, and those that attend the ministry of his house.

VI. The apostle pursues his design and argument from the name and title of the person spoken of, with their interpretation. 'First, being by interpretation king of righteousness, and after that also king of Salem, that is, king of peace.' And we shall consider herein,

1. The names themselves with their interpretation.
2. The grounds or reasons of the apostle's arguing from this interpretation of names.
3. What is intended in them, or what he would have us learn from them.
4. Their order, which he particularly observes.

1. He respecteth his proper name, that is, *Μελχισεδεκ*, 'Melchisedec.' For the fancy of some, that Sedec was a place or city where first he reigned, as he did afterwards at Salem, is very fond. For then he must be utterly without a name belonging unto his person, which the apostle doth not observe, as he would have done one way or other, had any such unusual thing offered itself unto him. Besides, had it been so, he would not have been called Melchisedec, but said to be Melech Sedec, as he is said to be Melech Salem. *מלך*, is a 'king,' and by the interposition of Yod, to smooth the composition, the former Segol is turned into Pathah, and the latter into Scheva, whence Melchi ariseth. Some would have this Yod to be a pronoun affix, and then the meaning of the word is 'my king;' and on this supposition, taking *קדש* for *קדוש* Sedek for Saddik, they would render it, 'my righteous king.' But there is nothing more ordinary in the composition of names, than the interposition of Yod paragogicum, to soften the sound and pronunciation of them. So is it in Adonizedek, Adonibezek, Abimelech, Achitob, Abishua, Abishag, Abishalom, and sundry others. Wherefore, Melchi is nothing but the name Melech, a 'king,' a little varied to fit it unto the composition intended. *קדש*, is righteousness.' And so the whole name is properly interpreted and rendered by our apostle, *βασιλεως δικαιοσυνης*, a 'king of righteousness.'

2. His title is, *מלך שלם*, 'the king of Salem,' of which place we have spoken before. This is by interpretation, saith our apostle, *βασιλεως ειρηνης*, the 'king of peace.' Some think that herein occurs a greater difficulty, than did in the interpretation of his name. For *שלם*, 'Salem,'

say they, doth not signify peace, but שלום, 'Shalom.' Salem is only as much as pacificus, 'peaceable,' not pax, or peace itself. But yet neither ought this to give us any trouble. For instances may be given in this language, wherein the same word is used sometimes substantively; sometimes adjectively; as for instance, ארך and כבד are. And upon the matter, the signification is the same. Rex pacificus and rex pacis do both denote him that he is the maker and author of peace. So God on that account is called the 'God of peace,' Rom. xv. 13, xvi. 20; 1 Thess. v. 23; 2 Thess. iii. 16; Heb. xiii. 20. Wherefore, as we ought to acquiesce in the authority of the apostle, who knew better than us all the signification of these names, so that he gives is proper, according unto our best conception of these things.

Secondly. It may be inquired what ground the apostle had to argue from the signification of these names, which seems to be but a curious and infirm kind of argumentation. And we find by experience, that whilst some have followed and imitated, as they suppose, this example, they have fallen into woeful mistakes.

Ans. 1. The apostle takes it for granted in general, that every thing in the story of Melchisedec was mystical and figurative. This he did on good grounds, because the only reason of its introduction, was to give a representation of the person and priesthood of Christ.

2. It was usual under the Old Testament, to have names given unto children by a spirit of prophecy, as to Noah, Peleg, and others, yea, it may be most of the patriarchs. It was so also to have men's names changed upon some great and solemn occasions, as Abram was called Abraham, Sarai, Sarah, Jacob was called Israel, and Solomon, Jedediah. And whereas this was sometimes done by divine authority, as in the instances mentioned, whence it was highly significant; so the people, in imitation thereof, did often give other names to themselves, or others, on some occasion wherewith they were affected. Hence it is that we find the same persons so frequently called by divers names, which gives no little difficulty in genealogies. But where this was done by divine warrant, it was doctrinal and prophetically instructive. So was it in that great name given unto our Lord Jesus Christ himself, namely, Immanuel, which the evangelist remembers and gives us the interpretation thereof, Matt. i. 23. Now, whether this name was given to Melchisedec from his nativity, by a spirit of prophecy, as is most probable, or whether his name were changed by God himself, when he was publicly called unto his office, is uncertain, and no way needful to be inquired into. But certain it is, that this name was given him by divine direction, and that for the very end for which it is here used and applied by our apostle. And no countenance can hence be taken unto their curiosity, who seek for mysteries out of names and their numbers, which, for aught they know, had a casual imposition, or that which respected some particular occasion, whereof they are utterly ignorant.

3. As for the name of the place where he reigned, or Salem, it was also given unto it on the same ground, to be presignificative of the work that was to be effected by him whom he typed out. Most probably at that time, God first gave that name unto that place; for that

it was not the Salem by Shechem, we have before declared. And I am persuaded that God himself, by some providence of his, or other intimation of his mind, gave that name of peace first unto that city, because there he designed not only to rest in his typical worship for a season, but also in the fulness of time, there to accomplish the great work of peace-making between himself and mankind. Hence it was afterwards, by the same guidance, called Jerusalem, or a vision of peace, because of the many visions and prophecies concerning the spiritual and eternal peace which was to be wrought and published in that place; as also from all those holy institutions of his worship, which there represented the means whereby that peace was to be wrought, the sacrifice of Christ himself, the only real and proper priest of the church. Wherefore our apostle doth justly argue from the signification of those names which were given, both to the person and place, by divine authority and guidance, that they might teach and fore-signify the things whereunto by him they are applied.

Thirdly. The interpretation of the names being proper, and the argument from thence in this case useful, as to the signification of them, it must be inquired how this man was king of righteousness and peace. Most suppose that no more is intended but that he was a righteous and peaceable king, one that ruled righteously and lived peaceably. And it is true that absolutely in himself, and as to his own personal qualifications, he was so and no more, nor could be more. But these names have respect to his relative state, and were given him as a type of Christ. He was a king of righteousness and peace, as he was without father and without mother, that is, to represent Christ in his office. Really he was a righteous and peaceable king; typically he was the king of righteousness and peace. Now the king of righteousness is he who is the author, cause, and dispenser of righteousness to others. As God is said to be 'the Lord our righteousness.' And so is the king of peace also, in which sense God is called the God of peace. Thus was it with Melchisedec as he was the representative of Jesus Christ.

4. The last thing that the apostle observes from these names and titles, is their order, wherein it is natural that the name of a man should precede the title of his rule. First, king of righteousness, and afterwards king of peace. Righteousness must go first, and then peace will follow after. So it is promised of Christ and his kingdom, that in his days 'the righteous shall flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth,' Ps. lxxii. 7. First, they are made righteous, and then they have peace. And Isa. xxxii. 17, 'The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and peace for ever.' This is the order of these things. There is no peace but what proceedeth from and is the effect of righteousness. So these things with respect to Christ are declared by the Psalmist, Ps. lxxxv. 9—13. What we are taught hence is,

1. That the Lord Jesus Christ is the only King of righteousness and peace to the church. See Isa. xxxii. 1, 2, ix. 6. He is not only a righteous and peaceable king, as were his types Melchisedec and Solomon, but he is the author, cause, procurer, and dispenser of right-

teousness and peace to the church. So is it declared, Jer. xxiii. 5, 6, 'Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a Righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely, and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness.'

VII. The apostle proceeds yet to other instances in the description of Melchisedec wherein he was made like to the Son of God, ver. 3, 'Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life.' The things here asserted being at the first view strange and uncouth, would administer occasion to large discourses, and accordingly have been the subject of many inquiries and conjectures. But it is in no way to the edification of those who are sober and godly, to engage into any long disputes about those things, wherein all learned sober expositors are come to an issue and agreement, as they are in general in this matter. For it is granted that Melchisedec was a man, really and truly so, and therefore of necessity must have all these things; for the nature of man, after him who was first created, who yet also had beginning of life and end of days, doth not exist without them. Wherefore these things are not denied of him absolutely, but in some sense, and with respect to some especial end. Now this is with respect to his office therein, or as he bare that office, he was 'without father, without mother,' &c. And how doth this appear that so it was with him? It doth so because none of them is recorded or mentioned in the Scripture, which yet diligently recordeth them concerning other persons; and in particular those who could not find and prove their genealogies, were by no means to be admitted to the priesthood, Ezra ii. 61—63. And we may therefore by this rule inquire into the particulars.

1. It is said of him in the first place, that he was *απατωρ, αμητωρ*, 'without father, without mother,' whereon part of the latter clause, namely, 'without beginning of days,' doth depend. But how could a mortal man come into the world without father or mother? 'Man that is born of a woman,' is the description of every man; what therefore can be intended? The next word declares, he was *αγενεαλογητος*, 'without descent,' say we. But *γενεαλογια*, is 'a generation, a descent, a pedigree,' not absolutely, but rehearsed, described, recorded. *Γενεαλογητος*, is he whose stock and descent is entered on record. And so on the contrary, *αγενεαλογητος*, is not he who hath no descent, no genealogy, but he whose descent and pedigree is nowhere entered, recorded, reckoned up. Thus the apostle himself plainly expresseth this word, ver. 6, *ὁ μη γενεαλογουμενος ἐξ αυτων*, 'whose descent is not counted,' that is, reckoned up in record. Thus was Melchisedec without father and mother, in that the Spirit of God, who so strictly and exactly recorded the genealogies of other patriarchs and types of Christ, and that for no less an end than to manifest the truth and faithfulness of God in his promises, speaks nothing to this purpose concerning him. He is introduced as it were one falling from heaven, appearing on a sudden, reigning in Salem, and officiating in the office of the priesthood to the High God.

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

1. Whereas the observation of the apostle is built on the silence of Moses, in the history, which was sufficient for him, whatever was the cause and reason of that silence, we may inquire whence it was? Whence it was, I say, that Moses should introduce so great and excellent a person as Melchisedec, without any mention of his race or stock, of his parents or progenitors, of his rise or fall, contrary to his own custom in other cases, and contrary to all rules of useful history. For to introduce so great a person, in any story, and on so great an occasion, without giving any account of him, or any of his circumstances, whereby his concernment in the matter related might be known, is utterly contrary to all rules of serious history.

Ans. 1. Some of the Jews absurdly imagine that it was because his parents were not only obscure, but that he was born of fornication, and so he had no right of genealogy. But this is both a foolish and wicked imagination. For it is not to be supposed God would have advanced a person known to be of such an extract and original, into the honour of the priesthood, and that of the most excellent kind that ever was under the Old Testament. For being low and mean in the world it is neither disadvantage nor disparagement. The best of men were so, and all the chief patriarchs were but shepherds. But bastardy is a mark of infamy in the world, and God would not raise such a one to administer peculiarly to him, and that as a type of his own Son who was to be incarnate.

2. Some say that there is no singular thing herein, but that it is done according to the custom of Scripture, which relates only the genealogies of the patriarchs, who were of that lineage from whence Christ did come. But when it makes mention of any others, though

they be never so eminent, it reckoneth not up their genealogy. Thus it dealeth with Jethro the father-in-law of Moses, and with Job, so great and holy a person, concerning whom it says no more, but that 'there was a man in the land of Uz named Job.' And some things may be allowed herein. But the instances are no way parallel. For Jethro, he was a stranger to the church, and there is a full account concerning him, so far as it is either necessary or useful, that we should in point of story know any thing of him. And the story of Job is a separate story, wherein himself only and family was concerned; and we have therein his country, the number and names of his children, with the years of his life, and time of his death. But as we have none of these things in the account of Melchisedec, so he is introduced as one in whom the church of God was publicly concerned. Wherefore,

3. The true cause of the omission of all these things, was the same with that of the institution of his priesthood, and the introduction of his person in the story. And this was that he might be the more express and signal representative of the Lord Christ in his priesthood. For to this end it was not only needful that he should be declared to be a priest, as the Messiah was to be, but also in that declaration all those circumstances were to be observed, wherein the nature of the priesthood of Christ might be any way prefigured. After this the church being reduced into a standing order for succession, it was obliged necessarily for many generations to a priesthood which depended solely on their genealogy and pedigree both by father and mother, Ezra x. 18, 19; Neh. vii. 63—65. Wherefore, whereas the priesthood of our Lord Christ was to depend on no such descent, ('for it is evident that our Lord sprang of Judah, whereof Moses spake nothing of the priesthood,') it was necessary that it should be originally represented, by one who had no genealogy, seeing that as to his office he himself was to have none. And therefore when the church of Israel was in the highest enjoyment of the Levitical priesthood, whose office depended wholly on their genealogy, yea so far as on a supposition of a defect or change thereof, not only the priesthood itself, but all the sacred worship also which it was designed to officiate, must utterly cease; yet the Holy Ghost then thought meet to remind them, that a priest was to come without respect to any such descent or genealogy, in that he was to be after the order of Melchisedec who had none, Ps. cx. 4. This is the true and only reason why in the story of Melchisedec as the priest of the High God, there is no mention made of father, mother, genealogy, beginning of life or end of days.

And we may herein consider the sovereign wisdom of the Holy Ghost, in bringing forth truth unto light according as the state and condition of the church doth require. And,

First. He proposeth only a naked story of a person that was a type of Christ, and that obscurely and sparingly. Something the men of the age wherein he lived might learn by his ministrations, but not much. For that which was principally instructive in him for the use of the church was not of force till all his circumstances were forgotten;

and the church was now to be instructed, not so much by what he was, as what was recorded of him, wherein the Scripture superseded all tradition that might be of him in the world. Yea, the contrivance of any tradition concerning his parents, birth, and death, had been contrary to the mind of God, and what instruction he intended the church by him. Afterwards when, it may be, all thoughts of any use or design of this story in Moses was lost, and the church was fully satisfied in a priesthood quite of another nature, the Holy Ghost in one word of prophecy instructs the church, not only that the things spoken concerning Melchisedec were not so recorded for his own sake, or on his own account, but with respect to another priest which was afterwards to arise, by him represented. This gave a new consideration, sense, and design to the whole story; but moreover gives the church to know, that the priesthood which it then enjoyed was not always to continue, but that another of another nature was to be introduced, as was signified long before the institution of that priesthood which they enjoyed, Ps. cx. 4. And as this was sufficient for the use and edification of the church in those days, yet it was left greatly in the dark as to the full design and meaning of these things. And therefore it is evident that at the coming of our Saviour, and at the accomplishment of this type, the church of the Jews had utterly lost all knowledge and understanding of the mystery of it, and the promise renewed in the Psalm. For they thought it strange that there should be a priest that had no genealogy, no solemn consecration nor investiture with his office. Wherefore our apostle, entering on the unfolding of this mystery, doth not only preface it with an assertion of its difficulty, or how hard it was to be understood aright, but also by a long previous discourse variously prepareth their minds to a most diligent attention. And the reason of it was not only because they had utterly lost the understanding that was given in these things formerly, but also because the true understanding of them would put an end at that time to that priesthood and worship which they had adhered to. Wherefore until this time the church was not able to bear the true understanding of this mystery, and now they could no longer be without it. Hence is it here so fully and particularly declared by our apostle. And we may observe,

Obs. XXIV. That the church never did in any age, nor ever shall want that instruction by divine revelation which is needful to its edification in faith and obedience. This it had in all ages, according to that gradual progression which God gave to light and truth, in the explication of the great mystery of his grace, 'which was hid in him from the foundation of the world.' An instance hereof we have in the things which concern this Melchisedec, as we have observed. The church never had need to look after the traditions of their fathers, or to betake themselves to their own inventions; their instruction by revelation was always sufficient for the state and condition wherein they were. Much more, therefore, is it so now, when the sum and perfection of all divine revelations is given in to us by Jesus Christ.

Obs. XXV. It is a great honour to serve in the church, by doing or suffering for the use and service of future generations. This was

the honour of Melchisedec, that he was employed in a service, the true use and advantage whereof was not given to the church, until many generations after. And I add suffering to doing, because it is well known what glories have sprung up in future ages, on the past sufferings of others.

Obs. XXVI. The Scripture is so absolutely the rule, measure, and boundary of our faith and knowledge in spiritual things, as that what it conceals is instructive, as well as what it expresseth. This the apostle manifests in many of his observations concerning Melchisedec, and his inferences from thence. But I have, as I remember, discoursed somewhat hereof before.

Secondly. Our next inquiry is, wherein Melchisedec was typical of Christ, or what of all this belongeth unto the following assertion, that he was made like unto the Son of God; that is, so described as that he might have a great resemblance of him.

Ans. It is generally thought that he was so in the whole, and in every particular mentioned distinctly. Thus, he is said to be without father and without mother, (no mention is made of them,) because the Lord Christ was in some sense so also. He was without father on earth as to his human nature, with respect whereunto God says that he will create a new thing in the earth, 'that a woman should compass a man,' Jer. xxxi. 22, or conceive a man without natural generation. And he was without mother as to his person or divine nature, being the only begotten of the Father by an eternal generation of his own person. But yet it must not be denied, but that on the other side he had both father and mother: a Father as to his divine, and a mother as to his human nature. But as to his whole person, he was without father and mother. Again, whereas he is said to be without genealogy, it is of somewhat a difficult application; for the genealogy of Christ, *βίβλος γενεσεως*, or ספר הנדוד, 'the roll of his pedigree,' is declared by two of the evangelists, the one driving of it up to Abraham, the other unto Adam, as it was necessary, to manifest the truth of his human nature, and the faithfulness of God in the accomplishment of his promises. It may be, therefore, respect is had unto those words of the prophet, Isa. liii. 8, דורו מי יודע, 'Who shall declare his generation?' there was somewhat in his age and generation, by reason of his divine pre-existence to all, that was ineffable.

Again, He is said to be without beginning of days and end of life. And this also is spoken by our apostle with respect to the narration of Moses, wherein mention is made neither of the one nor of the other. And it belongs unto his conformity to the Son of God, or that wherein he represented him: for as unto his divine person, the Lord Christ had neither the one nor the other, as the apostle proves, ch. i. 10—12, from Ps. cii. 25—27. But on the other side, as to his human nature, he had both; he had both beginning of days and end of life, both which are upon solemn record. Wherefore it should seem, that if there be a likeness in these things on the one account, there is none on the other, and so no advantage in the comparison.

Considering these difficulties in the application of these particulars, some do judge that these instances do not belong unto the analogy

and resemblance between Christ and Melchisedec, but are introduced only in order to what ensues, namely, 'He abides a priest for ever,' wherein alone the similitude between him and Christ doth consist. And so they say we find things quoted in the Scripture at large, when only some one passage in it may be used directly unto the business in hand. But although this will be difficultly proved, namely, that any testimony is cited in the Scripture, whereof any principal part of it belongs not unto the matter designed to be confirmed, yet it may be granted that it is so sometimes, when the sense of the whole context is to be taken in. But there was no reason on this ground, that the apostle should make so many observations on what was not spoken at all, which in an ordinary way ought to have been mentioned, if the whole of what he so observed was not at all to his purpose.

Wherefore it must be granted, as that which the plain design of the apostle exacteth of us, that Melchisedec, even in these things, that in the story he was without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, was a type and representative of Christ. But it is not of the person of Christ absolutely, nor of either of his natures distinctly, that our apostle treateth, but merely with respect unto his office of priesthood. And herein, all the things mentioned do concur in him, and make a lively representation of him. It was utterly a new doctrine to the Hebrews that the Lord Christ was a priest, the only high priest of the church, so as that all other priesthood must cease. And their chief objection against it was, that it was contrary unto the law, and inconsistent with it. And this because he was not of the line of the priests, either as to father, or mother, or genealogy, nor had any to succeed him. But in this type of his, the apostle proves that all this was to be so. For, 1. In this respect he had neither father nor mother, from whom he might derive any right or title unto his office. And this was for ever sufficient to exclude him from any interest in the priesthood, as it was established by law. 2. He had no genealogy upon the priestly line. And that which is recorded of him on other accounts, is so far from having respect to his right unto the priesthood of the law, that it directly proves and demonstrates that he had none. For his genealogy is evidently of the tribe of Judah, which was excluded legally from that office, as we have, besides the institution, an instance in king Uzziah, 2 Chron. xxvi. 16—18, from Exod. xxx. 7; Num. xviii. 7. Hence, our apostle concludes, that had he been on the earth, that is, under the order of the law, he could not have been a priest, there being others who by virtue of their descent, had alone the right thereunto, Heb. viii. 3, 4. Wherefore, God in these things instructed the church, that he would erect a priesthood that should no way depend on natural generation, descent, or genealogy; whence it inevitably follows, that the state of the priesthood under the law was to cease, and to give place unto another, which our apostle principally designs to prove. 3. In this respect also the Lord Christ was without beginning of days and end of life. For, although in his human nature he was both born and died, yet he had a priesthood which had no such beginning of days, as that it should be traduced from any other to him, nor shall ever cease, or

be delivered over from him unto any other, but abides unto the consummation of all things.

In these things was Melchisedec made like unto Christ, whom the apostle here calls the Son of God: *αφωμοιωμενος τῷ υἱῷ τοῦ Θεοῦ*, 'made like unto the Son of God.' I have formerly observed in this Epistle, that the apostle makes mention of the Lord Christ under various appellations, on various occasions; so that in one place or another he makes use of all the names whereby he is signified in the Scripture. Here he calls him the Son of God, and that 1. To intimate that though Melchisedec were an excellent person, yet was he infinitely beneath him whom he represented, even the Son of God. He was not the Son of God, but he had the honour in so many things to be made like unto him. 2. To declare how all these things which were any way represented in Melchisedec, or couched in the story, or left unto inquiry by the veil of silence drawn over them, could be fulfilled in our high priest; and it was from hence, namely, that he was the Son of God. By virtue hereof he was capable of an always-living, abiding, uninterrupted priesthood, although as to his human nature he once died in the discharge of that office.

This description being given of the person treated of, which makes up the subject of the proposition, it is affirmed concerning him, that, *μενει ιερεὺς εἰς τὸ διηνεκές*, 'he abideth a priest for ever.' For any thing we find in the story of his death, or the resignation of his office, or the succession of any one unto him therein, 'he abideth a priest for ever.' Some I find have been venturing at some obscure conjectures of the perpetuity of the priesthood of Melchisedec in heaven. But I cannot perceive that they well understood themselves what they intended. Nor did they consider that the real continuance of the priesthood for ever in the person of Melchisedec, is as inconsistent with the priesthood of Christ, as the continuance of the same office in the line of Aaron. But things are so related concerning him in the Scripture, as that there is no mention of the ending of the priesthood of his order, nor of the ending of his own personal administration of his office by death or otherwise. Hence is he said to abide a priest for ever. This was that which our apostle principally designed to confirm from hence, namely, that there was in the Scripture, before the institution of the Aaronical priesthood, a representation of an eternal, unchangeable priesthood to be introduced into the church, which he demonstrates to be that of Jesus Christ.

It may not be amiss, in the close of this exposition of these verses, summarily to represent the several particulars wherein the apostle would have us to observe the likeness between Melchisedec and Christ, or rather the especial excellencies and properties of Christ, that were represented in the account given of the name, reign, person, and office of Melchisedec. As,

1. He was said to be, and he really was, and he only, first the king of righteousness, and then the king of peace; seeing he alone brought in everlasting righteousness, and made peace with God for sinners. And in his kingdom alone are these things to be found.

2. He was really and truly the priest of the high God, and properly

he was so alone. He offered that sacrifice, and made that atonement, which was signified by all the sacrifices offered by holy men, from the foundation of the world.

3. He blesseth all the faithful, as Abraham the father of the faithful was blessed by Melchisedec. In him were they to be blessed, by him are they blessed, through him delivered from the curse and all the fruits of it, nor are they partakers of any blessing but from him.

4. He receiveth all the homage of his people, all their grateful acknowledgment of the love and favour of God, in the conquest of their spiritual adversaries, and deliverance from them, as Melchisedec received the tenth of the spoils from Abraham.

5. He was really without progenitors or predecessors unto his office, nor would I exclude that mystical sense from the intention of the place, that he was without father as to his human nature, and without mother as to his divine.

6. He was a priest without genealogy, or derivation of his pedigree from the loins of Aaron, or any other that ever was a priest in the world, and moreover mysteriously was of a generation which none can declare.

7. He had in his divine person, as the high priest of the church, neither beginning of days nor end of life, as no such thing is reported of Melchisedec. For the death which he underwent in the discharge of his office, being not the death of his whole person, but of his human nature only, no interruption of his endless office did ensue thereon. For, although the person of the Son of God died, whence God is said to redeem his church with his own blood, Acts xx. 28, yet he died not in his whole person. But as the Son of man was in heaven whilst he was speaking on the earth, John iii. 13, namely, he was so in his divine nature; so whilst he was dead in the earth in his human nature, the same person was alive in his divine. Absolutely, therefore, or in respect of his office, he had neither beginning of days nor end of life.

8. He was really the Son of God, as Melchisedec in many circumstances was made like unto the Son of God.

9. He alone abideth a priest for ever; whereof we must particularly treat afterwards.

The doctrinal observations that may be taken from these verses, are, Obs. XXVII. When any were of old designed to be types of Christ, there was a necessity that things more excellent and glorious should be spoken or intimated of them, than did properly belong unto them. So many things are here observed of Melchisedec, which were not properly and literally fulfilled in him. And so there are likewise of David and Solomon in sundry places. And the reason is, because the things so spoken were never intended of them absolutely, but as they were designed to represent the Lord Christ, unto whom alone they did truly belong. And in the exposition of such typical prophecies, the utmost diligence is to be used in distinguishing aright what is absolutely spoken of the type only, and what is spoken of it merely as representing Christ himself.

Obs. XXVIII. All that might be spoken, so as to have any probable application in any sense unto things and persons typically, coming

short of what was to be fulfilled in Christ, the Holy Ghost, in his infinite wisdom, supplied that defect, by ordering the account which he gives of them so, as more might be apprehended and learned from them than could be expressed. And where the glory of his person, as vested with his office, could not be represented by positive applications, it is done by a mystical silence, as in this story of Melchisedec. And the most eminent and glorious things assigned unto types, as such, have a more glorious signification in Christ than they have in them. See to this purpose our exposition of ch. i. 5.

Obs. XXIX. That Christ, abiding a priest for ever, hath no more a vicar or successor, or substitute in his office, or any deriving a real priesthood from him, than had Melchisedec, whereof we shall speak afterwards.

Obs. XXX. The whole mystery of divine wisdom, effecting all inconceivable perfections, centred in the person of Christ, to make him a meet, glorious, and most excellent priest unto God in the behalf of the church. This it is the principal design of the whole gospel to demonstrate, namely, to declare that all the treasures of divine wisdom and knowledge are hid in Jesus Christ, Col. ii. 3. The constitution of his person was the greatest mystery that ever infinite wisdom effected, 1 Tim. iii. 16. And thereby did God gloriously represent himself and all his infinite perfections unto us, Heb. i. 3; Col. i. 14, 15; 2 Cor. iv. 6. Had he not the divine nature, he could not have been the express image of God himself. And had he not been man, he could not have represented him unto us. Nor can any thing be more mysteriously glorious, than the furniture of his person as Mediator, with all fulness of power, wisdom, and grace, for the accomplishment of his work, John i. 16; Col. i. 18, 19, ii. 9; Phil. ii. 5—9. The work that he wrought in offering himself a sacrifice, and making atonement for sin, hath the highest inconceivable impression of divine wisdom upon it, John iii. 16; Acts xx. 28; Rev. v. 8; Eph. v. 2. And so also hath the grace that is from thence administered by him, and from him, unto Jews and Gentiles, Eph. iii. 8—11. Instances of the like kind may be multiplied. And we may consider thence, first, into what condition of sin and misery we were fallen by our apostasy from God, whence nothing would or could recover us, but this blessed work of the whole mystery of divine wisdom; and then, the unspeakable riches and excellencies of that wisdom, love, and grace, which provided this way for our recovery.

VER. 4, 5.—IN these verses, the apostle proceeds to the application of what was before discoursed. For having proved that Christ, the promised Messiah, was to be a priest after the order of Melchisedec, from Ps. cx. and given a description both of the person and office of this Melchisedec, from the historical narration of them as laid down by Moses, he makes application of the whole unto his present purpose. And from the consideration of sundry particulars in his description, confirms in general the argument which he had in hand. For that which principally he designeth to prove, is that a more excellent priesthood than that of Aaron being introduced according to the pur-

pose and promise of God, it followed necessarily that that priesthood, with all the worship, rites, and ceremonies which belonged unto it, was to cease and be taken out of the way. For as this new promised priesthood was inconsistent with it, and could not be established without the abolition of it, so it brought a far greater benefit and spiritual advantage unto the church, than it before enjoyed. And we are not to wonder that the apostle insists so much hereon, and that with all sorts of arguments, especially such as the Old Testament furnished him withal. For this was the hinge on which the eternal salvation or destruction of that whole church and people at that time did turn. For if they would not forego their whole priesthood and worship, their ruin was unavoidable. Christ would either be rejected by them, or be of no profit unto them. Accordingly things fell out with the most of them: they clave absolutely unto their old institutions, and, rejecting the Lord Christ, perished in their unbelief. Others contended for the continuance of their priesthood and worship, for which they supposed they had invincible reasons, although they admitted the profession of Christ and the gospel therewithal. But our apostle knowing how inconsistent these things were, and how the retaining of that persuasion would keep them off at present from believing the necessity, usefulness, glory, and advantages of the priesthood of Christ, and the spiritual worship of the gospel, as also dispose them unto apostasy for the future, laboureth by all means to eradicate this pernicious fundamental error out of their minds. Unto this end doth he so diligently insist on all the instances, and particulars of them, whereby God of old did intimate unto their forefathers the introduction of this alteration, with the advantage of the church thereby. And I mention these things, that we may see the reason the apostle did so scrupulously, as it were, insist on all the ensuing particulars, which otherwise we may not so easily discern the necessity of; and withal to show, 1. How hard it is to dispossess the minds of men of inveterate persuasions in religion. 2. The great care and diligence they ought to use and exercise who have the care of the souls of men committed unto them, when they discern them in apparent danger of ruin.

That the old priesthood was to be removed, and the new one mentioned to be introduced, he proves in the first place by the greatness of the person, who was first chosen of God to prefigure and represent the Lord Christ in his office of priesthood. For if he were so excellent in his person and office, as deservedly to be preferred above Aaron and all his successors, then he who was prefigured and represented by him, must be so also; yea, be much more, as that which is typed out and signified, is, and always must be, more excellent than the type and sign, which are of no use but with respect thereunto.

In these verses he chooseth out his first instance, in what he had observed before out of the narrative of Moses concerning the greatness and excellency of Melchisedec, in that he received tithes of Abraham. His design is to prove him more excellent and great than all the Levitical priests. But herein he takes a step backward, and begins with Abraham himself, from whom both people and priests

confessedly derived all their privileges. And he produceth his instance in the case of tithes, whereon, as it is known, the whole Levitical priesthood did depend. And this the apostle knew full well, that if once he proved him greater than Abraham, he should not need with that people to prove him above any of his posterity, but they would immediately give over the contest. So in their exceptions unto our Saviour's testimony concerning himself, they acknowledge they could proceed no higher: 'Art thou,' say they, 'greater than our father Abraham? whom makest thou thyself to be?' John viii. 53. But yet our apostle, not content herewith, to obviate all pretences, proves distinctly afterwards, that the whole order of the Levitical priests were inferior to him.

VER. 4, 5.—Θεωρεῖτε δε πηλικος ούτος ὧ και δεκατην Αβρααμ εδωκεν εκ των ακροθινιων ὁ πατριαρχεις. Και οἱ μεν εκ των υἱων Λευι την ιερατειαν λαμβανοντες, εντολην εχουσιν αποδεκατουν τον λαον κατα τον νομον, τουτεστι, τους αδελφους αὐτων, καιπερ εξεληλυθο-
τας εκ της οσφους Αβρααμ.

Θεωρεῖτε δε, considerate, spectate. Syr. ܘܬܝܕܥܝܬܐ, Videte. Vul. Lat. Intuemini, 'consider, behold, contemplate:' serious consideration with diligent intuition is intended. Πηλικος ούτος; quantus hic; sit, Vul. fuerit is supplied by others; as by us, 'how great this man was.' Syr. כמה רב הנה, quam magnus hic. Δεκατην εκ των ακροθινιων. Beza, Decimas spoliolum—decimas de spoliis hostium; de spoliis. Vul. Lat. Decimas de præcipuis, 'of the chief things.' The Syr. makes a distinction, מעשרא ורישיה.

VER. 4.—*Consider then how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.*

The duty of the Hebrews, upon the proposition of the state of Melchisedec before insisted on, is here pressed on them. And the words contain both a respect unto the preceding discourse, a duty prescribed, the object of that duty, and the reason of a qualification therein expressed, amplified by the title, state, and condition of one person concerned.

1. The note of respect unto the preceding discourse is in the particle δε, which we render 'now:' 'Consider, now, then, or therefore;' 'but do you consider.' The things before laid down are, as of importance in themselves, so of especial concernment to you.

2. The especial duty which he prescribes unto them, with respect unto the things proposed by him concerning the excellency of Melchisedec and his office, is, that they 'would consider it,' θεωρεῖτε δε. He doth four times in this Epistle call the Hebrews unto this especial duty, of an intense consideration of the things proposed unto them, as we have translated his words, and that not unduly, ch. iii. 1, x. 24, xii. 3, and in this place. Ch. iii. 1, x. 24, we have the same word in the original, κατανοησατε, whose import hath been declared on ch. iii. 1. Ch. xii. 3, the word is αναλογισασθε, which signifies to call things

unto a due reckoning and account, so as to conform our minds unto them, which is our great duty with respect unto the patient sufferings of Christ there intended. The word here used signifies 'diligently to behold, contemplate, or to look into the things proposed unto us.' He had before warned them that what he had to discourse on this subject was difficult and hard to be understood, but withal such was its use and excellency, that neither would he refrain from declaring of them, nor ought they to spare any pains in a diligent inquiry into them. Having therefore laid down the matter of fact, and stated the whole subject which he designed to treat upon, he adds their duty with respect thereunto. And this in the first place is, that they would heedfully and diligently look into them.

Obs. I. It will be fruitless, and to no advantage, to propose or declare the most important truths of the gospel, if those to whom they are proposed do not diligently inquire into them.—And here those unto whom the dispensation of the gospel is committed, are pressed with no small difficulty, as our apostle professeth that he was in this very case. For whereas it is incumbent on them in that declaration of the whole counsel of God which is enjoined them, to insist upon sundry things that are deep, mysterious, and hard to be understood, when their hearers, for want of a good foundation of knowledge in the principles of religion, or through carelessness in attending unto what is delivered, do not come unto a due perception and understanding of them, it is very grievous to see their own labours and others' profit disappointed. Wherefore if men think they have nothing to do, but as it were to give the hearing unto such as endeavour to carry them on to perfection, they will lose all the advantage of their ministry. This duty, therefore, is here prescribed by the apostle with respect unto this truth, to obviate this slothful frame. And we may on this occasion briefly name the things that are required thereunto. As, 1. Sense of a concernment in them. Unless this be well fixed on the mind, men will never diligently attend unto them, nor duly consider them. If upon the proposal of sacred truths that appear hard to be understood, they begin to think that this belongs not to them, that it is for others who are more exercised than they, it is not likely they should ever endeavour to apprehend them aright. And this very frame keeps many in a low form of knowledge all their days; possibly also this neglect is increased in many, by the spreading of a late foolish apprehension, that we are upon the matter, to look after nothing but the doctrines and precepts of morality that are in the Scripture; but as for the more spiritual mysteries of grace, we are not concerned in them. Where this principle is once imbibed, men will rest and satisfy themselves in the most profound ignorance; and not only so, but despise all such as endeavour to be wiser than themselves. But, 2. Unto a due apprehension of these things there is not only required a sense of our concernment, but also a delight in them. If the light be not pleasant unto us, as well as useful, we shall not value it nor seek after it. When such mysterious truths, as that here insisted on by our apostle, are proposed unto men, if they have no delight in such things, they will never be at the cost and pains of inquiring into them with

necessary diligence. Curiosity, indeed, or a humour to pry into things which we have not seen, and which we cannot see in a due manner because not revealed, is every-where condemned by our apostle, who warns us all to be wise unto sobriety, and not above what is written. But there is a secret delight and complacency of mind in every beam of spiritual light, shining in its proper divine revelation, when the soul is disposed aright unto the reception of it. Without this, in some measure, we shall not follow on to know, nor thrive in knowledge. 3. Study, meditation, and prayer, with the diligent use of all other means appointed for the search and investigation of the truth, do close this duty. Without these things in hearers, ministers lose all their labour in the declaration of the most important mysteries of the gospel. This the apostle, as to the present case, designs to obviate in the frequent prescription of this duty.

That which the apostle proposeth in the first place, and in general, as the object of this inquiry and consideration, is *πηλικος ουτος*, *quantus iste erat*; the word respects greatness and excellency in any kind. Nunc *quantus Achilles*, *quantus erat Julius Cæsar*, and the like. And this greatness of Melchisedec respected neither the endowments of his person, nor the largeness of his dominion, nor his riches or wealth, in which sense some are said to be great in the Scripture, as Job, Barzillai, and others; but it regards alone his dignity with respect unto his office, and his nearness unto God on that account. That which these Hebrews insisted on as their chief and fundamental privilege in Judaism, and which they were most unwilling to forego, was the greatness of their predecessors, with their nearness unto God in favour and office. In the first way, as to divine love and favour, they gloried in Abraham, and opposed the privilege of being his children on all occasions unto the person and doctrine of Christ, John viii. 33, 53. And in the latter, they thought Aaron and his successors to be preferred above all the world. And whilst they were under the power and influence of these apprehensions, the gospel could not but be ungrateful unto them, as depriving them of their privileges, and rendering their condition worse than it was before. To undeceive them in this matter, and to demonstrate how unspeakably all those in whom they trusted, came short of the true high priest of the church, he calls them to consider the greatness of him, whose only eminence consisted in being a type or representative of him. Wherefore the greatness of Melchisedec here proposed unto earnest consideration, is that which he had in representing Jesus Christ, and his nearness unto God on that account. And it were well that we were all really convinced, that all true greatness consists in the favour of God, and our nearness unto him, on the account of our relation unto Jesus Christ. We neither deny nor undervalue any man's wealth or power hereby. Let those who are rich and wealthy in the world, be accounted and called great, as the Scripture sometimes calls them so. And let those who are high in power and authority be so esteemed, we would derogate nothing from them which is their due. But yet the greatness of them all is but particular, with respect unto some certain things, and therefore fading and perishing. But this greatness and honour of the

favour of God, and nearness unto him, on the account of relation unto Jesus Christ, is general, abiding, yea, eternal.

The proof of the apostle's assertion, included in that interrogation, 'How great this man was?' follows in an instance of what he had before observed and proposed unto them; 'unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.' Ὡς καὶ δεκάτην ἔδωκε; δεκάτην, that is, μερίδα, 'the tenth part.' The conjunction καὶ is emphatical; and although in the original it is joined with δεκάτην, yet in construction it is to be understood with Abraham: not, 'unto whom Abraham gave even the tenth;' but, 'unto whom even Abraham gave the tenth,' as it is in our translation. The proof of the greatness of Melchisedec from hence consists in three things. 1. In the nomination of the person that was subject unto him, or Abraham. 2. In the qualification of his person—he was the patriarch. 3. In what he did—he gave him the tenth part of the spoils.

1. As to the person himself, Ἀβραάμ, Abraham, he was the stock and root of the whole people, their common father in whom they were first separated from other nations to be a people of themselves. And herein they had a singular reverence for him, as generally all nations have for the first founders of their political state, who among the idolatrous heathens were commonly deified, and made the objects of their religious adoration. But moreover it was he who first received the promise and the covenant, with the token of it, and by whom alone they put in their claim unto all the privileges and advantages which they gloried in, above all nations in the world. This Abraham therefore, they esteemed next unto God himself. And their posterity do now place him in heaven above the angels, hardly allowing that the Messiah himself should be exalted above him, and tell a foolish story, how he took it ill that the Messiah should be on the right hand, and he on the left hand of God. But it is sufficiently evident from the gospel, how much in those days they boasted of him, and trusted in him. Hence it is that our apostle expresseth it so emphatically, 'even Abraham.'

2. The qualification of his person, and his title thereon, is added in like manner: he was ὁ πατριάρχης. A patriarch is a father, that is, a prince or ruler of a family,—a ruling father; and these patriarchs were of three sorts among the Jews. Of the first sort was he alone who was the first separated progenitor of the whole nation. He was אב ראשון, 'the first father' of all that great family. Secondly. There were such as succeeded him, from whom the whole nation in like manner descended, as Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise, Heb. xi. 9. Thirdly. Such as were the first heads of their twelve tribes into which the nation was divided, that is, the twelve sons of Jacob, are called patriarchs, Acts vii. 8, 9. Others that followed them, as David, who is also called a patriarch, Acts ii. 29, were termed so, in allusion unto them, and being signally the progenitors of a most eminent family among them. Now, it is evident that the first of these on all accounts is the principal, and hath the preeminence over all the rest. And this was Abraham alone. Wherefore, if any one were greater than Abraham, and that in his own time,

it must be acknowledged that it was upon the account of some privilege, that was above all, that ever that whole nation as descendants from Abraham were made partakers of. But that this was so, the apostle proves by the instance ensuing, namely, that he gave to Melchisedec, &c.

3. Εδωκε, 'he gave them;' yet not arbitrarily, but in the way of a necessary duty, not as an honorary respect, but as a religious office. And he gave thus δεκατην, that is, μεριδα, or *מעדא*, 'the tithe-portion,' delivering it up unto his use and disposal, as the priest of the most high God. And this tenth was των ακροθιμιων, as the apostle interprets the passage of Moses, 'of the spoils of war.' Θιν is acervus, 'a heap of corn,' or any useful things: ακροθιμιον is 'the top of the heap,' the best of it, from whence the first-fruits were taken for sacred services. And because it was the custom of all nations afterwards, to dedicate or devote some portion of what they got in war unto religious services, the word itself came to signify the spoils of war. At first it was the portion that was taken out of the whole, and afterwards the whole itself was signified by it. Now, although Abraham had reserved nothing unto himself of what belonged unto the king of Sodom and his companions, yet the army and king which he had newly slain and destroyed, having smitten sundry other nations, Gen. xiv. 5—7, and dealt with them as they did with Sodom and the other towns, took all their goods and provision, ver. 11; being now in their return home and laden with prey, it fell all into the hand of the conqueror. The tenth part of the spoils in every kind, might probably be a very great offering, both for sacrifice and sacred dedication, in the place where Melchisedec ministered in his office. What farther concerns the greatness of this man, the apostle farther declares in the ensuing verses, where it will fall under consideration. From this one instance of Abraham's paying tithes unto him, it is in a great measure already evinced.

But how came Melchisedec to be thus great? Is it because he was originally in himself more wise and honourable than any of the sons of men? We read no such thing concerning him, which the apostle declares to be the rule and measure of all our conceptions in this matter. Is it that he attained this dignity and greatness by his own industry and endeavours? as the prophet says of some, that their judgment and their dignity proceeds from themselves, Hab. i. 7. Neither do we find any thing of that nature ascribed unto him. The sole reason and cause hereof is, that God raised him up, and disposed of him into that condition, of his own good pleasure. And we may see in him, that,

Obs. II. The sovereign will, pleasure, and grace of God, is that alone which puts a difference among men, especially in the church. He makes men great or small, high or low, eminent or obscure, as it seemeth good unto him. 'He raiseth up the poor from the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory; for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them,' 1 Sam. ii. 8, which is plentifully elsewhere testified unto. Whence was it that

the twelve poor fishermen were made apostles, to sit on twelve thrones judging the tribes of Israel, and becoming princes in all nations? Who made the most glorious apostle, of the first and fiercest persecutor? Was it not he who hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and is gracious unto whom he will be gracious? And it is laid down as a universal rule, that no man hath any thing in this kind but what he hath freely received, nor doth any man make himself to differ from others, 1 Cor. iv. 7. For, 1. God lays the foundation of all spiritual differences among men, in his sovereign decree of eternal election, Rom. ix. 11—16; Eph. i. 4. And among them that are chosen, he calleth them when and how he pleaseth, both unto grace and employment, or work. And, 2. As to grace, gifts, and spiritual endowments, the Holy Spirit divideth unto every man as he will, 1 Cor. xii. 11. Let every one, then, be contented with his lot and condition,—every one endeavour to fill up the place and state wherein he is fixed, and as he is called to abide with God. Let God be owned in all his gifts and graces, and our souls be humbled in what we come short of others; and the sovereignty of grace admired in all the different effects of it which we behold. And,

Obs. III. Whereas even Abraham himself gave the tenth of all to Melchisedec, we may observe, that the highest privilege exempts not any from the obligation unto, and performance of the meanest duty. Notwithstanding all these advantages and privileges which Abraham was possessed of, on the account whereof he was mighty in his own days, and almost adored by his posterity, yet when the meanest duty was presented unto him, he readily complied with it. Nor ought it to be otherwise with any. For, 1. Privilege is less than duty. A man may have the greatest privileges and yet be rejected, but the least sincere duty shall not be unrewarded. For duty, indeed, is our chief honour and advantage. And for men to pretend to such advancements in the church of God, as that they should be exempted thereby from the ordinary labour of the ministry, is horrid pride and ingratitude. But when spiritual or ecclesiastical privileges are pretended to countenance men in a life or course of idleness, sloth, pleasure, sensuality, or worldliness in any kind, it is a crime that, it may be, we as yet want a name to express. Wherefore, 2. Whatever is pretended, that is no privilege, which either exempts a man from, or hinders him in and unto, the performance of any duty whatever; it is such a privilege as, being well improved, will send men to hell. It will prove no otherwise, let the pretence be what it will. For, 3. There are, indeed, but two ends of any privileges whereof in this world we may be made partakers; whereof the first is to enable us unto duty, and the other is to encourage us thereunto. Hereunto we may add, that when any are highly exalted in privileges, they have an advantage thereby to give an eminent example unto others in the performance of their duties. When these ends are not pursued, all privileges, promotions, dignities, exaltations, are snares, and tend unto the ruin of men's souls. There are things still of this nature, both as to whole churches, and as unto particular persons. Some churches are like Capernaum, as to the outward means of grace, as it were lifted up to heaven. Let them take

heed of Capernaum's judgment, in being brought down as low as hell for their abuse of them, or negligence in their improvement. Some persons have eminent endowments, and if they are not eminent in service, they will prove their disadvantage. Yea, the highest privileges should make men ready to condescend unto the meanest duties. This is that which our Lord Jesus Christ so signally instructed his disciples in, when he himself washed their feet, and taught them the same duty towards the meanest of his disciples, John xiii. 11—17.

Obs. IV. Opportunities for duty which render it beautiful, ought diligently to be embraced. So did Abraham as to this duty on his meeting of Melchisedec. Hence the performance of this duty became so renowned, and was of the use whereunto it is here applied by our apostle. It is season that gives every thing its beauty. And omission of seasons or tergiversations under them, are evidences of a heart much under the power of corrupt lusts or unbelief.

Obs. V. When the instituted use of consecrated things ceaseth, the things themselves cease to be sacred or of esteem. For what became of all these dedicated things after the death of Melchisedec? They were no more sacred, the actual administration of his typical priesthood ceasing. Of what use was the brazen serpent, after it was taken from the pole whereon it was lifted by God's appointment? or of what use would the lifting of it up be, when it was not under an express command? We know it proved a snare,—a means of idolatry, and that was all. God's institution is the foundation and warrant of all consecration. All the men in the world cannot really consecrate or dedicate any thing, but by virtue of divine appointment. And this appointment of God respected always a limited use, beyond which nothing was sacred. And every thing kept beyond its appointment, is like manna so kept, it breeds worms and stinketh. These things are manifest, from the consideration of all things that God ever accepted or dedicated in the church. But ignorance of them is that which hath filled the world with horrid superstition. How many things have we had made sacred, which never had warrant from any institution of God? Monasteries, abbeys, persons and lands, altars, bells, utensils, with other things of the like nature very many, which, whatever use they are of, yet all the men in the world cannot make them sacred. And the extending of the sacredness of dedicated things beyond their use, hath had no less pernicious event. Hence, was the useless reservation of the consecrated bread after the sacrament, and afterwards, the idolatrous worship of it. But these things are here mentioned only occasionally. The apostle adds, in the confirmation of his argument,

VER. 5.—*And verily they that are the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham.*

There is in these words an illustration and confirmation of the present argument, proving the preference of Melchisedec above Abraham,

from his giving the tithe or tenth of all to him, and consequently receiving the blessing from him. And this is taken from what was determined in the law, and acknowledged among the Hebrews, with which kind of arguments the apostle doth principally press them in the whole Epistle, as we have shown on many occasions. Now, this is, that the priests who received tithes by the law, were superior in dignity and honour to the people from whom they did receive them. And this was only declared in the law, for the foundation of it was in the light of nature, as the apostle expressly intimates in the instance of benediction afterwards.

There are to be considered in the words, 1. The introduction of this new confirmation of his foregoing argument. 2. A description of the persons in whom he instanceth. 3. The action ascribed to them with its limitation. And, 4. The qualification of the persons to whom their power was exercised.

The introduction of his reasoning herein is in these words, *καὶ οἱ μὲν*. The connexion in the conjunction is plain; yet a reason is not here given of what was spoken before, but a continuation of the same argument with farther proof is intended. And he adds the note of observation *μὲν*, ‘verily;’ as if he had said, as to this matter of tithing, and what may thence justly be inferred as to dignity and preeminence, you may consider how it was under the law, and there what I propose to you, you will find directly confirmed. It is a great advantage to press them with whom we have to do from their own principles.

The description of the persons in whom he instanceth is in those words, *οἱ ἐκ τῶν υἱῶν Λεβὶ, ἱερατεῖαν λαμβανόντες*, ‘the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood.’ It was the priests directly whom he intended, or the sons of Aaron; and he might have so expressed it, ‘the priests according to the law.’ But he varieth his expression for sundry reasons that appear in the context.

1. Because all the Levites did receive tithes by the law; yea, tithes in the first place was paid to them in common. But because their dignity among the people was less conspicuous than that of the priests; and the design of the apostle is not merely to argue from the giving of tithes to any, but the giving of them to them as priests, as Abraham gave tithes of all to Melchisedec as priest of the High God, he thus expresseth it, ‘the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood.’ For though all the sons of Levi received tithes, yet all of them did not receive the priesthood, with which sort of persons alone he was concerned.

2. He doth thus express it, to introduce the mention of Levi, whom he was afterwards to mention on the same occasion, and to lay him, and the whole tribe, under the weight of the same argument.

3. He reminds them by the way of another dignity of the priesthood, in that not all the posterity of Abraham, no, nor yet of Levi, were partakers thereof; but it was a privilege granted only to one part of them, even the family of Aaron. And these are the persons in whom he makes his instance. Thus God distributes dignity and preeminence in the church as he pleaseth. Not all the posterity of Abraham, but only those of Levi, were set apart to receive tithes, and not

all the posterity of Levi, but only the family of Aaron, did receive the priesthood. And this order, of his sovereign pleasure, God required of them all to submit to and acquiesce in, Num. xvi. 9, 10. And it is a dangerous thing, out of envy, pride, or emulation, to transgress the bounds of dignity and office that God hath prescribed, as we may see in that instance of Korah. For every man to be contented with his station, which God hath fixed him to by rule and providence, is his safety and honour. What God calleth and disposeth men to, therein are they to abide, and to that are they to attend. It was new to the people, to see the whole tribe of Levi taken into a peculiar sacred condition, to attend for ever on the worship of God; yet therein they acquiesced. But, when the priests were taken out of the Levites and exalted above them, some of them murmured at it, and stirred up the congregation against Aaron, as though he took too much on him, and deprived of their liberty the congregation, which yet was all holy. The end of this sedition was known, notwithstanding the specious pretence of it.

What is ascribed to these persons ensues in the words, 'have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law;' *εντολην εχουσιν αποδεκατουν τον λαον, κατα τον νομον*. They had a command to take tithes, and they were to do it according to the law; the one was their warrant, and the other their rule, for so are the commandment and the law here to be distinguished. 1. They had a commandment to take tithes, that is, there was a command or institution enabling them so to do. For the command in the first place respected the people, making it their duty to pay all their tithes to the Levites. God did first take the tithe to be his peculiar portion, and thereby alienated it from the people that they had no propriety in it. And the 'tithe of the land,' saith he, 'is the Lord's,' Lev. xxvii. 30. Hence, those that withheld their tithes are said to 'rob God,' Mal. iii. 8. And wherever it can be manifested that God hath by an institution of his own, taken the whole tithe of any place into his own possession, there for any to detain them for their own use, it is sacrilege, and not else. But God having thus in the land of Canaan taken them into his own propriety, he commanded the people to pay them to the priests. This command given to the people to pay them, was a command to the priests to receive them. For what men have a right to do in the church by God's institution, that they have a command to do. The right of the priests to tithing was such, as that it was not at all their liberty to forego it at their pleasure, yea, it was their sin so to have done. The command which obliged others to pay them, obliged them to receive them. And they who on slight pretences do forego what is due to them, with respect to their office, will on as slight pretences, when occasion serves, neglect what is due from them on the same account. And this fell out frequently with the priests of old; they neglected their wages, that they might have countenance in the neglect of their work. And we may hence observe, that,

Obs. VI. Rule, institution, and command, without regard to unrequired humility, or pleas of greater zeal and self-denial, unless in evident and cogent circumstances, are the best preservatives of order and

duty in the church.—They are so in every kind, especially in the disposal of earthly things, such as the maintenance of the officers of the church doth consist in. Neither the people's pretence of poverty nor the minister's pretence of humility, will regulate this matter as it ought to be. But as it is the people's duty to provide for them, wherein they exercise grace and obedience towards Jesus Christ, so it is the minister's duty cheerfully to receive what is their due, by the appointment of Christ, for they have a command so to do. But whereas they are not many who are apt to transgress on this hand, we shall not need farther to press this consideration. But add,

Obs. VII. As it is the duty of those who are employed in sacred ministrations to receive what the Lord Christ hath appointed for their supportment, and in the way of his appointment, so it is likewise without trouble, solicitousness, or complaint to acquiesce therein.—So was it with the priests of old, they were to receive their portion, and to acquiesce in their portion, the neglect of which duty was the sin of the sons of Eli. We take it for granted, that the way of maintenance is different as to the ministers of holy things, under the Old and New Testament. That the law of maintenance is taken away, it is the highest folly to imagine, it being so expressly asserted by our Saviour himself and his apostles, Luke. x. 7; 1 Cor. ix. But here it is thought lies the disadvantage, that whereas the priests under the Old Testament had a certain portion which was legally due to them, and they might demand it as their own, it is now referred to the voluntary contribution of them that have the benefit and advantage of their labour. Now whereas they oftentimes, yea for the most part, are negligent in their duty and through love of the present world, very scanty and backward in their contributions, ministers cannot be supported in their work, in any measure proportionable to what the priests were of old. Besides it should seem unworthy of a minister of the gospel who ought to be had in esteem, and is declared by the apostle to be worthy of double honour, to depend on the wills and as it were charity of the people, many of them, it may be, poor and low themselves. And these things have taken such impressions on the minds of the most of them that are called ministers, as that with the help of the secular powers, they have wisely provided a new way and law of legal tithing for their subsistence, with a notable overplus of other good ecclesiastical lands and revenues, which practice I shall neither justify nor condemn, let the effects of it and the day declare it. Only I say that the institution of Christ before mentioned, stands in no need of this invention or supply, to safeguard it from these objections. For,

1. The change made in the way of maintenance, pretended to be so disadvantageous to ministers of the gospel, is no other but a part of that universal alteration, wherein carnal things are turned into those that are more spiritual, which was made by the bringing in of the kingdom of Christ. And if ministers may complain that they have, by the gospel, lost the former allotment of sacred officers in tithes, the people may as well complain, that they have no inheritances in the land of Canaan. But he is unworthy the name of a minister of the gospel, who is not satisfied with what our Lord hath ordained in every kind. And as for

those who indeed think better of what was of use in Judaism or heathenism, than what is warranted by the gospel, I shall not debate the matter with them. Wherefore as yet I judge, that the taking of the maintenance of sacred ministers from the law of a carnal commandment, enforcing of it, charging it on the grace and duty of the church, is a perfective alteration, becoming the spirituality and glory of the kingdom of Christ. For,

2. This way is the most honourable way, and that which casts the greatest respect upon them. Even the princes and rulers of the world, have their revenue and support from the substance of the people. Now I would only ask, whether it would not be more honourable, that the people should willingly and of their own accord, bring in their contribution, than merely to pay it under the compulsion of a law. For in this latter way, no man knoweth whether they have the least true honour for their ruler, or regard unto his office. But if it might be done in the former, all the world must take notice what reverence, regard, and honour they have for the person and dignity of their prince. It is true generally the men of the world are such lovers of themselves, and so little concerned in public good, that if they were left absolutely at liberty in this matter, their governors might be defrauded of their right, and the ends of government be disappointed. Wherefore, in all countries provision is made by law, for the payment of that tribute which yet without law was due; but whether it be meet to bring this order into the church or not, I much question. If it be so, possibly it may secure the revenue of ministers, but it will not increase their honour. For however men may please themselves with outward appearances of things, true honour consists in that respect and reverence, which others pay them in their minds and hearts. Now, when this is such, and that on the account of duty, that men will freely contribute unto their support I know no more honourable subsistence in the world. What! will some say, to depend on the wills and love of the people, there is nothing more base and unworthy? Yea, but what if all the honour that Jesus Christ himself hath, or accepts from his people, proceeds from their wills and affections? Mahomet, indeed, who knew well enough that neither honour, respect, nor obedience were due unto him, and that he could no way recompense what should be done towards him in that kind, provided that men should be brought into subjection to his name by fire and sword. But our Lord Jesus Christ despiseth all honour, all obedience and respect that is not voluntary and free, and which doth not proceed from the wills of men. And shall his servants in the work of the gospel, suppose themselves debased, to receive respect and honour from the same principle? Well, therefore, because our apostle tells us that our Lord hath ordained, that those who preach the gospel, shall live on the gospel, and all obedience unto his ordinances and institutions, must be voluntary, if ministers are ashamed, and esteem it unworthy of them, to receive what is so contributed in a way of voluntary obedience, let them try if they can prevail with themselves to receive it so for him, and in his name, who is not ashamed to receive it, no, if it be only a cup of cold water, so it comes from a free and willing mind when he despiseth the revenue of the whole world upon compulsion.

If they will not do so, the best way is to leave his service, and take up with that which is more honourable. For my part, I do judge that the way of maintenance of ministers, by voluntary benevolence, in a way of duty and obedience unto Christ, though it be not likely the most plentiful, is yet the most honourable of all others. And of this judgment I shall be, until I am convinced of two things. 1. That true honour doth not consist in the respect and regard of the minds of men unto the real worth and usefulness of those who are honoured, but in outward ceremonies and forced works of regard. 2. That it is not the duty which every church owes to Jesus Christ, to maintain those who labour in the word and doctrine, according to their ability; or that it is any gospel duty which is influenced by force or compulsion.

3. It must be acknowledged that this way of voluntary contribution is not like to afford matter for that grandeur and secular greatness, those ample revenues, those provisions for ease, wealth, and worldly honour, which some think necessary in this case. But yet, however, it must be granted, that all those large possessions and dominions which some now enjoy under the name of church-revenues, were originally voluntary grants and contributions. For it will not be said that the clergy got them by force of arms or fraud, nor were they their patrimonial inheritance. But yet I fear, there were some undue artifices used, to induce men unto such donations and ecclesiastical endowments, and somewhat more of merit fixed thereon, than truth will allow, besides a compensation therein, for what might be undergone in purgatory, when men were gone out of the world. However, the thing itself in its whole kind, that men out of their substance and revenue should design a portion to the service of the church, is not to be condemned. But it proved mischievous and fatal, when those who received what was so given, being unmeasurably covetous and worldly, fixed no bounds unto the charity or superstition of men in this kind, until they had overrun the world with their gains. And not only so but whereas there was no pretence of use for such great revenues, in any way pretended to be of divine appointment, they were forced to invent and find out ways innumerable, in abbeys, monasteries, cloisters, to be repositories of their overflowing treasure and revenue. But when God had appointed to build his tabernacle, of the freewill-offerings of the people, a type of the gospel church, when there was provision enough of materials brought in, the liberality of the people was restrained by proclamation, and some, perhaps, grieved that their offerings were not received, *Exod. xxxvi, 5, 6*. Through want of this care to put a stop unto the devotions of men in these donations, according unto a just measure of the church's necessary use, the bounds whereof were broken up and left invisible by the pride, ambition, covetousness, and craft of the clergy, the whole world ran into superstition and confusion. At present I grant, that the way which the gospel appoints, is not likely to make provision for pomp, grandeur, wealth, revenues, and inheritances unto them that rely upon it. Nor do I think, that if the present establishment of a superfluous revenue unto the clergy were removed, the world itself would in haste run

into the same state again. Wherefore, those who judge these things necessary and desirable, must be permitted, as far as I know, to betake themselves unto the advantage the world will afford; it is acknowledged that the gospel hath made no provision of them.

4. It is indeed supposed unto the disadvantage of this way, that by means thereof, ministers do become obnoxious unto the people, do depend on them, and so cannot deal so uprightly and sincerely with their consciences as they ought to do, lest they incur their displeasure, wherein they are too much concerned. It were easy to manifest, with how many more and greater inconveniences the other way is attended, were we now comparing of them. And in truth it is a vain thing to look for or expect any such order and disposal of these things, as should administer no occasion for the wisdom and graces of them concerned, nor would such a way be at all useful. I say, therefore, that God hath established mutual duty, to be the rule and measure of all things between ministers and people. Hereunto it is their wisdom and grace to attend, leaving the success unto God. And a minister may easily conclude, that seeing his whole support in earthly things, with respect unto his ministry, depends on the command of God, on the account of the discharge of his duty, if he have respect thereunto in his work, or so far as it is lawful for him to have, that the more sincere and upright he is therein, the more assured will his support be. And he who is enabled to give up himself unto the work of the ministry in a due manner, considering the nature of that work, and what he shall assuredly meet withal in its discharge, is not in much danger of being greatly moved with this pitiful consideration, of displeasing this or that man in the discharge of his duty.

5. It is farther pleaded, that these things were tolerable at the first entrance and beginnings of Christianity, when the zeal, love, and liberality of its professors, did sufficiently stir them up unto an abundant discharge of their duty; but now the whole body of them is degenerate from their pristine faith and love, coldness and indifferency in the things of their eternal concernment, with love of self and this present evil world, do so prevail in them all, as that if things were left unto their wills and sense of duty, there would quickly be an end of all ministry for want of maintenance. This is of all others the most cogent argument in this case, and that which prevails with many good and sober men, utterly to decry the way of ministers' maintenance by a voluntary contribution. I shall briefly give my thoughts concerning it, and so return from this digression. And I say, 1. I do not condemn any provision that is made among men, by good, wholesome, and righteous laws, for this end and purpose, provided it be such as is accommodated unto the furtherance of the work itself. Such provision as in its own nature is a snare and temptation, inclining men unto pride, ambition, luxury, distance from, and elation above, the meanest of the sheep or lambs of Christ, or, as it were, requiring a worldly grandeur and secular pomp in their course of life, must plead for itself as it is able. But such as may comfortably support, encourage, and help men in this work and discharge of their duty, being made without the wrong of others, is doubtless to be approved. Yea, if in this

degeneracy of Christianity under which we suffer, any shall out of love and obedience unto the gospel, set apart any portion of their estates, and settle it unto the service of the church in the maintenance of the ministry, it is a good work, which, if done in faith, will be accepted. 2. Let those who are true disciples indeed know, that it is greatly incumbent on them, to roll away that reproach, which is cast upon the institutions of Christ, by the miscarriages of the generality of Christians. He hath ordained that those who preach the gospel, shall live on the gospel. And the way whereby he hath prescribed this to be effected, is, that those who are his disciples, should, in obedience unto his commands, supply them with temporals, by whom spirituals are dispensed unto them. If this be not done, a reproach is cast upon his institutions, as insufficient unto the end for which they were designed. It is therefore incumbent on all, who have any true zeal for the glory and honour of Christ, to manifest their exemplary obedience and fruitfulness in this matter; whereby it may appear that it is not any defect in the appointments of Christ, but the stubborn disobedience and unbelief of men, that is the cause of any disorder. 3. Seeing there is such a degeneracy among Christians, as that they will not be wrought upon unto a voluntary discharge of their duty in this matter, it may be inquired what hath been the cause, or at least, the principal occasion thereof. Now if this should be found and appear to be the coldness, remissness, neglect, ignorance, sloth, ambition, and worldliness of those who have been their guides and leaders, their officers and ministers in most ages; it will evince how little reason some have to complain, that the people are backward and negligent in the discharge of their duty. And if it be true, as indeed it is, that the care of religion, that it be preserved, thrive and flourish, not only in themselves, but in the whole church, be committed unto those persons, there can be no such apostasy as is complained of among the people, but that the guilt of it will be at their doors. And if it be so, it is to be inquired whether it be the duty of ministers absolutely to comply with them in their degeneracy, and suffer them to live in the neglect of their duty in this matter, only providing for themselves some other way; or whether they ought not rather by all ways and means, to endeavour their recovery into their pristine condition. If it be said, that whatever men pretend, yet it is a thing impossible, to work the people unto a due discharge of their duty in this matter; I grant it is, whilst that is only or principally intended. But if men would not consider themselves or their interest, in the first place, but really endeavour their recovery unto faith, love, obedience, and holiness, and that by their own example, as well as teaching, it may well be hoped, that this duty would revive again, in the company of others; for it is certain it will never stand alone by itself. But we must proceed with our apostle.

Secondly. These sons of Levi who obtained the priesthood, received tithes, *κατα τον νομον*, 'according to the law;' that is, as the matter or manner of tithing was determined by the law. For by tithes I understand that whole portion, which by God's order and command, belonged unto the priests; and this in all the concerns of it was determined by the law. What, when, how, of whom, all was expressly established by law. So they received tithes according to the law,

in the order, way, and manner therein determined. For it is God's law and appointment, that gives boundaries and measures unto all duties. What is done according unto them, is straight, right, and acceptable; whatever is otherwise, however it may please our own wisdom or reason, is crooked, froward, preverse, and rejected of God.

But there is an objection that this assertion of the apostle seems liable unto, which we must take notice of in our passage. For whereas he affirms that the Levites who received the office of the priesthood, took tithes of their brethren, it is evident from the first grant and institution of tithing, that the Levites who were not priests, were the first who immediately received them of the people. See Num. xviii. 21—24.

Answ. 1. By tithes, the whole consecrated portion according unto the law is intended, as we said before. Hereof the portion allotted unto the priests, out of various offerings or sacrifices, was no small part, wherein the Levites had no interest, but they belonged, and were delivered immediately unto the priests. 2. The Levites themselves were given unto the priests, for their service in and about holy things, Num. iii. 9. Whatever afterwards was given unto the Levites, it was so with reference unto the supportment of the priesthood in due order. The tithes, therefore, that were paid to the Levites, were in the original grant of all, to the priests. 3. The priests tithed the whole people in that tenth of all, which they received of the Levites; and that being given unto them, what remained in the possession of the Levites themselves, became as all other clean things, to be used promiscuously, Num. xviii. 26—32.

The privilege of the priests in taking the tenth of all, is amplified by the consideration of the persons of whom they took them; now these were not strangers or foreigners, but their own brethren, *τουτέστι τους αδελφους αυτων*. And these also were so their brethren, as that they had a right unto, and were partakers of the same original privilege with themselves, which did not exempt them from the duty of paying tithes of all unto them; 'took tithes of their brethren, though they came out of the loins of Abraham.' Abraham first received the promises, and was an equal common spring of privileges to his whole posterity. The priests were not more children of Abraham than the people were. The whole people, therefore, being so, and thereby equally interested in all the privileges of Abraham, or the church of believers, it is manifest how great the honour and preeminence of the priests were, in that they took tithes of them all. And this the apostle declares, to strengthen his argument for the greatness and excellency of Melchisedec, in that he received tithes of Abraham himself. And we may learn,

Obs. VIII. That it is God's prerogative to give dignity and preeminence in the church, among them which are otherwise equal, and this must be acquiesced in. Our common vocation by the word, states us all equally in the same privilege, as all the children of Abraham were in that respect in the same condition. But in this common state, God makes by his prerogative, a threefold difference among believers; as to grace, as to gifts, as to office.

First. God is sovereign in the communication of grace. For although all true believers have the same grace in the kind thereof, yet some much excel others in the degrees and exercise of it. As one star differeth from another, that is, excelleth another in glory, so here one saint excelleth another in grace. This, both the examples of the Scripture, and the experience of all ages of the church, doth testify. And this depended on the sovereign pleasure of God. As he is gracious unto whom he will be gracious, so when, and how, and in what measure he pleaseth. Some shall have grace sooner than others, and some, that which is more eminent than others have. Only he that hath least, shall have no lack, as to making of him meet for the inheritance of the saints in light; and he that hath most, hath no more than he shall find need of, and exercise for. But so it is, some God will have as pillars in his house, and some are but as bruised reeds. And every one's duty it is for himself, in his place and condition, to comply with the will of God herein. First. Let not the weak, the feeble of the flock, those who either really are so, or in their own apprehensions, complain or faint. For, 1. There is no man in the world that hath so little grace, who hath any, but he hath more than he ever deserved; as none hath so much, as that any drachm of it is of his own earning. And as he who hath nothing but what he hath freely received, hath nothing to boast of, so he who hath that which he never deserved, hath no reason to complain. 2. It is the pleasure of God it should be so. If it be his will to keep us spiritually poor, so we are thereby kept humble, we shall be no losers. I say not this, as though any one who hath but a little grace, or apprehends himself to have so, should on the pretence that such is the will of God, concerning him and his condition, neglect the most earnest endeavour after more, which would be a shrewd evidence that he hath none at all; but that those who in a diligent use of means for growth and improvement, cannot yet arrive unto such an increase, such an addition of one grace unto another, as their profiting may be manifest, which falls out on several occasions, may find relief in the sovereign pleasure of God, to keep them in their low condition. 3. They may do well to consider, that indeed there is a great deal of glory in the least of true grace. Though there be not so much as in more grace, yet there is more than in all things under the sun besides. No man hath so little grace, who hath any, as that he is ever able to set a sufficient price upon it, or to be thankful enough for it. 4. There is indeed so much spoken in the Scripture concerning the love, care, compassion, and tenderness of our Lord Jesus Christ, towards the weak, the sick, the diseased of his flock, that on some accounts, the state of those humble souls who have yet received but little grace, seems to be most safe and desirable, Isa. xl. 11. Let not such, therefore, complain; it is God alone who is the author of this difference between them and others. And on the same grounds, Secondly. Let those who are strong, who have much grace, learn, 1. Not to boast, or be lifted up. For, as we observed before, they have nothing but what they have freely received. Yea, it is very suspicious that what any one boasteth of, is not grace. For it is the nature of all true grace, to

exclude all boasting. He that by comparing himself with others, finds any other issue in his thoughts, but either to admire sovereign grace, or to judge himself beneath them, is in an ill condition, or at least in an ill frame. 2. Let them learn not to trust unto what they have received. There is none hath so much grace, as not every moment to need supplies of more. And he, who like Peter, trusteth unto that wherein he is above others, will one way or other, be brought down beneath them all. 3. Let such be greatly fruitful, or this appearance of much grace will issue in much darkness.

Secondly. God dealeth thus with men as to spiritual gifts. Among those who are called, the Spirit divideth unto every one even as he will. Unto one he giveth five talents, unto another two, and to a third but one. And this diversity depending merely on God's sovereignty, is visible in all churches. And as this tends in itself unto their beauty and edification, so there may be an abuse of it unto their disadvantage. For besides those disorders which the apostle declares to have ensued, particularly in the church of Corinth, upon the undue use and exercise of spiritual gifts, there are sundry evils which may befall particular persons by reason of them, if their original and end be not duly attended unto. For, 1. Those who have received these spiritual gifts in any eminent manner, may be apt to be lifted up with good conceits of themselves, and even to despise their brethren who come behind them therein. This evil was openly prevalent in the church of Corinth. 2. Among those who have received them in some equality, or would be thought so to have done, emulations, and perhaps strifes thereon, are apt to ensue. One cannot well bear that the gift of another should find more acceptance, or be better esteemed than his own. And another may be apt to extend himself beyond his due line and measure, because of them. And, 3. Those who have received them in the lowest degree, may be apt to despond, and refuse to trade with what they have, because their stock is inferior unto their neighbour's. But what is all this to us? May not God do what he will with his own? If God will have some of the sons of Abraham to pay tithes, and some to receive them, is there any ground of complaint? Unto him that hath the most eminent gifts, God hath given of his own, and not of ours; he hath taken nothing from us to endue him withal, but supplied him out of his own stores. Whoever, therefore, is unduly exalted with them, or envies because of them, he despiseth the prerogative of God, and contends with him that is mighty.

Thirdly. God distinguisheth persons with respect unto office. He makes, and so accounts whom he will, faithful, and puts them into ministry. This of old Korah repined against. And there are not a few who free themselves from envy at the ministry, by endeavouring to bring it down into contempt. But the office is honourable, and so are they by whom it is discharged in a due manner; and it is the prerogative of God to call whom he pleaseth thereunto. And there is no greater usurpation thereon, than the constitution of ministers by the laws, rules, and authority of men. For any to set up such in office as he hath not gifted for it, nor called unto it, is to sit in the temple of God, and to show themselves to be God. We may also hence observe, that,

Obs. IX. No privilege can exempt persons from subjection unto any of God's institutions, though they were of the loins of Abraham. Yet,

VER. 6—10. In the five following verses, the apostle pursues and concludes that part of his argument from the consideration of Melchisedec, which concerned the greatness and glory of him who was represented by him, and his preeminence above the Levitical priests. For if Melchisedec, who was but a type of him, was in his own person in so many instances more excellent than they, how much more must he be esteemed to be above them, who was represented by him. For he whom another is appointed to represent, must be more glorious than he by whom he is represented. This part of his argument the apostle concludes in these verses, and thence proceeds unto another great inference and deduction, from what he had taught concerning this Melchisedec. And this was that which struck unto the heart of that controversy which he had in hand, namely, that the Levitical priesthood must necessarily cease, upon the introduction of that better priesthood, which was fore-signified by that of Melchisedec. And these things, whatsoever sense we now have of them, were those on which the salvation or damnation of these Hebrews did absolutely depend. For unless they were prevailed on to forego that priesthood which was now abolished, and to betake themselves alone unto that more excellent which was then introduced, they must unavoidably perish; as accordingly on this very account it has fallen out with the generality of that people, their posterity persisting in the same unbelief unto this day. And that which God made the crisis of the life and death of that church and people, ought to be diligently weighed and considered by us. It may be, some find themselves not much concerned in this laborious accurate dispute of the apostle, wherein so much occurs about the pedigrees, priests, and tithes, which they think belongs not to them. But let them remember, that in that great day of taking down the whole fabric of Mosaic worship, and of the abolition of the covenant of Sinai, the life and death of that ancient church, (the posterity of Abraham, the friend of God, to whom unto this season an enclosure was made of all spiritual privileges, Rom. ix. 4,) depended upon their receiving or rejecting of the truth here contended for. And God, in like manner, doth oftentimes single out especial truths, for the trial of the faith and obedience of the church in especial seasons. And when he doth so, there is ever after an especial veneration due unto them. But to return:

Upon the supposition that the Levitical priests did receive tithes, as well as Melchisedec, wherein they were equal; and that they received tithes of their brethren the posterity of Abraham, which was their especial prerogative and dignity; he yet proveth by four arguments, that the greatness he had assigned unto Melchisedec, and his preeminence above them, was no more than what was due unto him. And the first of these is taken from the consideration of his person of whom he received tithes, ver. 6. The second from the action of benediction which accompanied his receiving of tithes, ver. 7. The third from

the condition and state of his own person, compared with all those who received tithes according to the law, ver. 8. And the fourth from that which determines the whole question, namely, that Levi himself, and so consequently all the whole race of priests that sprang from his loins, did thus pay tithes unto him.

VER. 6, 7.—Ὁ δε μη γενεαλογουμενος εξ αυτων, δεδεκατωκε τον Αβρααμ, και τον εχοντα τας επαγγελιας ευλογηκε. Χωρις δε πασης αντιλογιας, το ελαττον ὑπο του κρειττονος ευλογειται.

The Ethiopic translation omits those words, Ὁ δε μη γενεαλογουμενος εξ αυτων, δεδεκατωκε Αβρααμ. He takes up the name Abraham in the foregoing verse, 'who came forth out of the loins of Abraham;' and adds unto them what follows in this, 'who received the promise;' possibly deceived by a maimed transcript of the original.

Μη γενεαλογουμενος. Syr. כהן דלן דלן כהן בשרבחה, 'He who is not written in their genealogies,' properly enough; for the apostle speaks of the genealogies that were written, and on record in the book of Genesis, wherein there is none of Melchisedec. And it is the writing by divine inspiration that his argument is founded on. Answ. Genealogisatus, 'genealogised.' Is cujus genus non recensetur ex illis, 'whose stock is not reckoned from them;' or as Beza, Ad illos non refertur. Vul. Lat. Cujus generatio non annumeratur in eis; that is, as the Rhemists, 'He whose generation is not numbered among them.' Our translation, 'Whose descent is not counted from them;' putting pedigree in the margin. Γενεαλογουμενος is, is cujus ortus, generatio, nativitas recensetur; 'whose original, nativity, stock, race, is reckoned up or recorded.'

Εξ αυτων, 'from them, from among them.' Vul. Lat. in eis, for inter eos, 'among them,' whose generation is not numbered among them. The meaning is, he was not of their stock or race, he sprang not of them, nor arose from among them.

Δεδεκατωκε, decimas tulit, sumpsit, exegit, accepit, decimavit; δεκατεωω is decimo, or decimam partem excerpo, 'to take out the tenth part,' τα των πολεμιων δεκατευσειν ευξαμενος τοτε; Plut. in Camillo, ex spoliis hostium decimas excerpere; δεκατωω, with an accusative case as here, is 'to receive tithes of any;' and αποδεκατωω, in the same construction, is of the same signification, ver. 5. αποδεκατουν τον λαον. But absolutely it signifies 'to pay tithes,' or 'to give tithes,' not to receive them, Luke xviii. 12, αποδεκατω παντα οσα κτωμαι, 'I tithe all that I possess;' that is, give tithe out of it.

VER. 6.—*But he whose descent is not reckoned from them, received tithes from Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises.*

A description there is in these words of Melchisedec, by a negation of a certain respect, useful to be observed unto the design of the apostle; and then an assertion upon a supposition thereof. 1. He was a person, μη γενεαλογουμενος εξ αυτων, whose 'descent, pedigree, nativity, traduction of stock and lineage, was not reckoned from

among them.' He had observed before absolutely, that he was not at all genealogised, ver. 3, *αγενεαλογητος*, 'without descent.' And how this was necessary to shadow the eternity of the priesthood of Christ, we have declared. For if he had any genealogy, or had stood in need thereof, it had been to show from whom he derived his priesthood, and unto whom it was transmitted; whereas he had no such circumstances, nor was to have, as the end of his call and office. Hence it follows in particular, that he could not derive his descent from Levi: morally he could not, because so he had none at all; and naturally he could not, for in his days Levi was only yet in the loins of Abraham; so that in no respect he could descend from him. But the apostle hath a peculiar intention in this verse. For whereas he designed to prove the greatness of Melchisedec, from his receiving tithes, he intends here to declare on what right and title he did so; for there were but two ways whereby any one did or might take tithes of any. 1. By virtue of the law, or institution of God in the law. In this way, none could receive tithes, but he who legally derived his descent from Levi. 2. By virtue of some special grant or personal privilege, either before or above the law. Whereas therefore Melchisedec, as is here declared, had no interest in the former, it must be with respect unto the latter that he had this right, which argues his dignity. So God may, and sometimes doth, communicate of his favour and privileges, by special exemption, and not by an ordinary rule or constitution. I do not at all know, nor can it be proved, that God is now by his word, or law, or constitution, obliged to give no ministry unto the church, but by virtue of an orderly outward call according to the rule. It is true, we are obliged to keep ourselves unto the rule and law in the call of ministers, so far as we are able; but whether God hath bound himself unto that order, I very much question. Yea, when there is any great and signal work to be done in the church, it may be such as the church cannot or will not call any unto, even such a reformation of persons as may prove a dissolution of its constitution, if God raise, gift, and providentially call any unto that work, assisting them in it, I should not doubt of the lawfulness of their ministry, as granted unto them by special privilege, though not communicated by external rule and order. It is good ordinarily to be genealogised into the ministry by established rule; but God can by virtue of his own sovereignty grant this privilege unto whom he pleaseth. And let not any imagine that such a supposition must needs immediately open a door unto confusion; for there are invariable rules to try men and their ministry at all times, whether they are sent of God or not. The doctrine which they teach, the ends which they promote, the lives which they lead, the circumstances of the seasons wherein they appear, will sufficiently manifest whence such teachers are.

2. Having thus described Melchisedec, and manifested on what account the things mentioned were ascribed or did belong unto him, he mentions the things themselves, which were two. 1. That he received tithes of Abraham. 2. That he blessed him; in both which he demonstrates his greatness and dignity. 1. By the consideration of the person of whom he received tithes—it was Abraham himself.

2. By an especial circumstance of Abraham—it was he who received the promises, from whence the whole church of Israel claimed their privileges.

1. Δεδεκατωκε τον Αβρααμ, ‘he received tithes of Abraham.’ The Levitical priests received tithes of those who came out of the loins of Abraham, which was an evidence of their dignity by God’s appointment. But he received them of Abraham himself, which evidently declares his superiority above them, as also herein above Abraham himself. And the apostle, by insisting on these things particularly, shows, 1. How difficult a matter it is to dispossess the minds of men of those things which they have long trusted unto and boasted of. It is plain from the gospel throughout, that all the Jews looked on this as their great privilege and advantage, that they were the posterity of Abraham, whom they conceived on all accounts the greatest and most honourable person that ever was in the world. Now, although there was much herein, yet when they began to abuse it, and trust unto it, it was necessary that their confidence should be abated and taken down. But so difficult a matter was this to effect, that the apostle applies every argument unto it, that hath a real force and evidence in it, especially such things as they had not before considered, as it is plain they were utterly ignorant in the instructive part of this story of Melchisedec. And we see, in like manner, when men are possessed with an inveterate conceit of their being the church, and having all the privileges of it inclosed unto them, although they have long since forfeited openly all right thereunto, how difficult a thing it is to dispossess their minds of that pleasing presumption. 2. That every particle of divine truth is instructive and argumentative, when it is rightly used and improved. Hence the apostle presseth all the circumstances of this story, from every one of them, giving light and evidence unto the great truth which he sought to confirm.

2. That it might yet farther appear how great Melchisedec was, who received tithes of Abraham, he declares who Abraham was, in an instance of his great and especial privilege. It was, τον εχοντα τας επαγγελιας, ‘he who received the promises.’ This he singles out as the greatest privilege and honour of Abraham, as it was indeed the foundation of all the other mercies which he enjoyed, or advantages that he was entrusted withal. The nature of this promise, with the solemn manner of its giving unto Abraham, and the benefits included in it, he had at large declared, ch. vi. 13—16. Hereby Abraham became the father of the faithful, the heir of the world, and the friend of God; so that it exceedingly illustrates the greatness of Melchisedec, in that this Abraham paid tithes unto him.

The medium of the argument in this instance is liable only to one exception; namely, that Abraham was not the first that received the promises, so that although he were not, yet there might be others greater than Melchisedec, who never made any acknowledgment of his preeminence. For the promise was given to Adam himself immediately after the fall, as also unto Noah in the covenant made with him, and to others also who before Abraham died in the faith. Answ. It is true they had the promise and the benefit of it; but yet so as, in

sundry things, Abraham was preferred above them all. For, 1. He had the promise more plainly and clearly given unto him, than any of his predecessors in the faith. Hence he was the first of whom it is said, that he saw the day of Christ and rejoiced, as having a clearer view of his coming, and of salvation by him, than any that went before him. 2. The promise was confirmed unto him by an oath, which it had not been unto any before. 3. The promised seed was in it peculiarly confined unto his family or posterity; see Heb. ii. 17. 4. His receiving of the promise, was that which was the foundation of the church in his posterity, which he had peculiarly to deal withal. He had therefore the preeminence above all others in this matter of receiving the promises.

But it may yet be said, that Abraham had not received the promises then, when he was blessed of Melchisedec, so that it was no argument of his preeminence at that time. But, 1. He had before received the promise for the substance of it, which was afterwards more solemnly confirmed unto him, on the trial of his faith in offering his only son, Gen. xii. 2, 3, ch. xiii. 15, 16. 2. He was then actually instated in a right unto all that farther confirmation of the promises which he received on various occasions, and what followed added not unto the dignity of his person, but served only unto the confirmation of his faith. So Melchisedec blessed him who had the promises. And we may observe,

Obs. 1. We can be made partakers of no such grace, mercy, or privilege in this world, but God can, when he pleaseth, make an addition thereunto. He who had received the promises, was afterwards blessed. We depend upon an infinite fountain of grace and mercy, from whence it is made out unto us by various degrees, according to the good pleasure of God. Neither will he give unto us, nor are we capable to receive in this world, the whole of what he hath provided for us, in the enjoyment whereof, our final blessedness doth consist. Wherefore, as it is required of us to be thankful for what we have, or to walk worthy of the grace we have received, yet we may live in a constant expectation of more from him, and it is the great comfort and relief of our souls that we may so do.

Obs. II. It is the blessing of Christ, typified in and by Melchisedec, that makes promises and mercies effectual unto us. He is himself the great subject of the promises, and the whole blessing of them cometh forth from him alone. All besides him, all without him, is of, or under the curse. In him, from him, and by him alone, are all blessings to be obtained.

Obs. III. Free and sovereign grace is the only foundation of all privileges. All that is spoken of the dignity of Abraham, is resolved into this, that he received the promises.

VER. 7.—But what if Abraham was thus blessed by Melchisedec, doth this prove that he was less than he by whom he was blessed? It doth so, saith the apostle, and that by virtue of an unquestionable general rule.

VER. 7.—Χωρίς δε πάσης αντιλογίας, το ελαττον ὑπο του κρείττονος εὐλογείται.

The words ελαττον and κρείττον, ‘less and greater,’ are in the neuter gender, and so rendered in most translations, illud quod minus est, à majore; only the Syriac reduceth them to the masculine, ܡܢ ܕܡܝܬܪ ܡܢ ܕܡܝܬܪ ܡܢ, ‘He who is the less, is blessed of him who is the greater, or more excellent than him,’ which is the sense of the words.

Χωρίς δε πάσης αντιλογίας, ERASM. Porro nemo negat : absque ulla, omni, contradictione, ‘and without all contradiction.’

VER. 7.—*And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the greater.*

The words prevent an objection, which is supposed, not expressed. And therefore are they continued with those foregoing by the conjunction δε, as carrying on what was before asserted by a farther illustration and confirmation of it. And there is in them, 1. The manner of the assertion; 2. The proposition itself.

1. The manner of it is in these words, χωρίς πάσης αντιλογίας, ‘without, beyond, above, all reasonable contradiction.’ A truth this is that cannot, that will not be gainsayed, which none will deny or oppose; as that which is evident in the light of nature, and which the order of the things spoken of doth require. All truths, especially divine truths, are such as ought not to be contradicted, and which no contradiction can avert, or change their natures, that they should not so be. But against some of them, not for want of truth, but either from want of evidence in themselves, or for want of light in them unto whom they are proposed, contradictions may arise, and they may be called into dispute or question. Thus it hath fallen out with all truths which we receive by mere supernatural revelation. The darkness of the minds of men, unable clearly to discern them, and perfectly to comprehend them, will raise disputes about them, and objections against them. But some truths there are, which have such an evidence in themselves, and such a suitableness to the principles of reason and natural light, that no colour of opposition can be made unto them. And if any one of brutish affections or prejudices do force an opposition unto them, they are to be neglected and not contended withal. Wherefore that which is here intimated is, that there are some principles of truth that are so secured in their own evidence and light, as that being unquestionable in themselves, they may be used and improved as concessions, whereon other less evident truths may be confirmed and established. The due consideration hereof is of great use in the method of teaching, or in the vindication of any unquestioned truths from opposition. In all teaching, especially in matters that are controverted, it is of great advantage to fix some unquestionable principles, whence those which are less evident, or are more opposed, may be deduced, or be otherwise influenced and confirmed. Neglect hereof, makes popular discourses weak in their application, and those

wherein men contend for the truth, infirm in their conclusions. This course therefore the apostle here useth, and resolveth his present argument into such an unquestionable principle, as reason and common sense must admit of.

2. The proposition thus modified, is, *το ελαττον ὑπο του κρειττονος ευλογειται*, 'that the less is blessed of the greater;' that is, wherein one is orderly blessed by another, he that is blessed is therein less than, or beneath in dignity, unto him by whom he is blessed, as it is expressed in the Syriac translation. Expositors generally on this place distinguish the several sorts of benedictions that are in use and warrantable among men, that so they may fix on that concerning which the rule here mentioned by the apostle, will hold unquestionably. But as unto the especial design of the apostle, this labour may be spared; for he treats only of sacerdotal benedictions, and with respect to them, the rule is not only certainly true, but openly evident. But to illustrate the whole, and to show how far the rule mentioned may be extended, we may reduce all sorts of blessings unto four heads.

1. There is *benedictio potestativa*; that is, such a blessing as consists in an actual efficacious collation on, or communication of the matter of the blessing unto the person blessed. Thus God alone can bless absolutely. He is the only Fountain of all goodness, spiritual, temporal, eternal, and so of the whole entire matter of blessing, containing it all eminently and virtually in himself. And he alone can efficiently communicate it unto, or collate it on any others, which he doth as seemeth good unto him, according to the counsel of his own will. All will grant, that with respect hereunto, the apostle's maxim is unquestionable, God is greater than man. Yea, this kind of blessing ariseth from, or dependeth solely on, that infinite distance that is between the being or nature of God, and the being of all creatures. This is God's blessing; *בִּרְבַּח הַטֶּמֶת*, 'an addition of good,' as the Jews call it, a real communication of grace, mercy, privileges, or whatever the matter of the blessing be.

2. There is *benedictio authoritativa*. This is when men in the name, that is, by the appointment and warrant of God, do declare any to be blessed, pronouncing the blessings to them, whereof they shall be made partakers. And this kind of blessing was of old, of two sorts. First. Extraordinary, by virtue of especial immediate inspiration, or a spirit of prophecy. Secondly. Ordinary, by virtue of office and institution. In the first way Jacob blessed his sons, which he calls a declaration of 'what should befall them in the last days,' Gen. xlix. 1. And such were all the solemn patriarchal benedictions, as that of Isaac, when he had infallible direction, as to the blessing, but not in his own mind as to the person to be blessed, Gen. xxvii. 27—29. So Moses blessed the children of Israel in their respective tribes, Deut. xxxiii. 1. In the latter way, the priests, by virtue of God's ordinance, were to bless the people with this authoritative blessing. 'And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and his sons, saying, On this wise shall ye bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be

gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace: and they shall put my name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them,' Num. vi. 22—27. The whole nature of this kind of blessing is here exemplified. It is founded in God's express institution and command. And the nature of it consists in putting the name of God on the people, that is, declaring blessings to them in the name of God, praying blessings for them on his command. Wherefore the word 'bless,' is used in a twofold sense in this institution; ver. 23, 'Ye shall bless the children of Israel,' is spoken of the priests; ver. 27, 'I will bless them,' is spoken of God. The blessing is the same, declared by the priests, effected by God: they blessed declaratively, he efficiently. And the blessing of Melchisedec in this place seems to have a mixture in it of both these. For as it is plain that he blessed Abraham by virtue of his sacerdotal office, which our apostle principally considereth; so I make no question but he was peculiarly acted by immediate inspiration from God, in what he did. And in this sort of blessing, the apostolical maxim maintains its evidence in the light of nature.

3. There is *benedictio charitativa*; that is, when one is said to bless another, by praying for a blessing on him, or using the means whereby he may obtain a blessing. This may be done by superiors, equals, inferiors, any or all persons mutually towards one another. See 1 Kings viii. 14, 55, 56; 2 Chron. vi. 3; Prov. xxx. 11. This kind of blessing, it being only improperly so, wherein the act of duty is demonstrated by its object, doth not belong to this rule of the apostle.

4. There is *benedictio reverentialis*; hereof God is the object. So men are said often to bless God, and to bless his holy name, which is mentioned in the Scripture as a signal duty of all that fear and love the Lord. Now this blessing of God, is a declaration of his praises, with a holy, reverential, thankful admiration of his excellencies. But this belongs not at all to the design of the apostle, nor is regulated by this general maxim, but is a particular instance of the direct contrary, wherein without controversy, the greater is blessed of the less. It is the second sort of blessings that is alone here intended; and that is mentioned as an evident demonstration of the dignity of Melchisedec, and his preeminence above Abraham.

Obs. IV. It is a great mercy and privilege, when God will make use of any, in the blessing of others with spiritual mercies.—It is God alone who originally and efficiently can do so, who can actually and infallibly collate a blessing on any one. Therefore is he said to 'bless us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things,' Eph. i. 3. There is no one blessing, but he is the sole author and worker of it. But yet also he maketh use of others, severally, in various degrees of usefulness, for their communication. And this he doth, both to fill up that order of all things in dependence on himself, wherein he will be glorified; and also to make some partakers in his especial grace and favour, by using them in the collation of good things, yea, the best things on others. For what greater privilege can any one be made partaker of, than to be an instrument in the hand of God, in the communication of

his grace and goodness? And a privilege it is whose exercise and improvement must be accounted for. I speak not therefore of them whose benedictions are euctical and charitative only in their mutual prayers, but of such as are in some sense authoritative. Now a man blesseth by the way of authority, when he doth it as an especial ordinance, as he is called and appointed of God thereunto. Peculiar institution gives peculiar authority. So parents bless their children and household, and ministers the church.

First. Parents bless their children in the name of the Lord, several ways. 1. By instruction, the discharge whereof was the glory and honour of Abraham in the sight of God himself, Gen. xviii. 17—19. For whereas the knowledge and fear of God, is the greatest blessing that any one in this world can be made partaker of, he hath ordained that parents shall be instrumental in the communication of them to their children, suitably to that general law of nature, whereby they are obliged in all things to seek their good. This being the end of the instruction which God hath appointed them to attend to, they do therein bless them in the name of the Lord. And if parents did truly consider, how they stand in the stead of God in this matter, how what they do is peculiarly in his name and by his authority, they would (it may be) be more diligent and conscientious in the discharge of their duty, than they are. And if children could but understand, that parental instruction is an instituted means of God's blessing them, with the principal blessing; and that whereon all others, as to them, do much depend, whereunto the fifth commandment is express, they would with more diligence and reverence apply themselves to the reception of it, than is usual among them. 2. They do it by their example. The conversation and holy walking of parents is God's ordinance whereby he blesseth their children. This is the second way of instruction, without which the former will be insufficient, yea, insignificant. Let parents take what pains they please in the teaching and instruction of their families, unless their personal walk be holy and their lives fruitful, they will do more for their destruction than their edification. The least disorder of life persisted in, is of more prevalency to turn aside children from the ways of God, from the liking and practice of them, than a multitude of instructions are to persuade to their embracement. For besides that we are all naturally more prone to evil than good, and a far less occasion or means will hasten us down a precipice, than raise us and bear us up in the difficult course of holy obedience; instances of a life inconsistent with instructions or or not answering them, beget secret thoughts in the minds of them who are instructed, that all the pains taken therein is hypocritical, than which apprehension, nothing is more effectual to alienate the minds of any from the ways of God. But when the truths which men teach their families, are exemplified by the holiness and fruitfulness of their own lives, then are they an ordinance of God for the blessing of them. To pray, to read, to catechise, to instruct, and then to lead a life in frowardness, passion, worldly-mindedness, vain communication and the like, is to pull down with one hand what we set up with the other, or rather with both our hands to pull down our own houses. 3. By

prayer for them. So David blessed his household, 2 Sam. vi. 20. For besides the duty of prayer, absolutely considered, there is in those prayers by the appointment of God, an especial plea for, and application of the promises of the covenant to them, which we ourselves have received. So it is expressed in the prayer of David, 2 Sam. vii. 29, 'Therefore now let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee, for thou O Lord God hast spoken it, and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever.' And I do not understand, how those who do not believe the especial interest of their children in the covenant of grace, can bless them in the name of the Lord in a due manner. These are some few heads of parental benedictions, and whether the duty thereof be answered in that common custom, which some even confine all parental blessings to, in an open neglect of all the duties mentioned, and of others of an alike nature, is not hard to determine.

Secondly. Ministers bless the church. It is part of their ministerial duty, and belongs to their office so to do. 1. They do it by putting the name of God on the church. This was the way whereby the priests blessed the people of old, Num. vi. 22—27. And this putting the name of God on the church is, by the right and orderly celebration of all the holy ordinances of worship of his appointment. For the name of God and of Christ is on them all; wherefore in the orderly celebration of them, the name of God is put on the church, and is brought under the promise of the meeting and blessing of God, as he hath spoken concerning every thing whereon he hath placed his name. This is an especial way of authoritative blessing, which can no way be discharged but by virtue of ministerial office. Only let ministers take heed that they put not the name of a false god on the church, by the introduction of any thing in religious worship, which is not of God's appointment. 2. They bless the church, in the dispensation and preaching of the word, to the conversion and edification of the souls of men. So speak the apostles concerning their preaching of the word, Acts iii. 26. 'Unto you first, God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning every one of you from his iniquities.' This sending of Christ after his resurrection, was the sending of him in the ministry of the apostles and others, by the preaching of the gospel. And the end hereof is to bless them to whom it is preached. And it is known that all the principal spiritual blessings of God in this world, are communicated to the souls of men by the ministry of the word, and ministerial administration of the sacraments, as the only outward causes and means thereof. Herein do ministers bless the people in the name and authority of God. 3. They do it by the particular ministerial applications of the word to the souls and consciences of men. This authority hath Christ given to them; saith he, 'Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained,' John xx. 23. I know what use hath been made of these words, that is, how they have been abused to give countenance to the necessity of private confession of all sins to the priests, and of their power of absolution or remission thereon. But yet the real intention of the words, and the

truth that is in them, must not be waved or overlooked. It is not therefore the mere preaching of the word, and therein a doctrinal declaration of whose sins are remitted, and whose sins are retained, according to the gospel, which men are respectively interested in by their faith or unbelief, that is here intended; the commission, giving the power here mentioned, is of a more general nature. But an especial application of the word to the consciences of men, with respect to their sins, is included therein. And this is done two ways. 1. With respect to the judgment of the church. 2. With respect to the judgment of God. The first is that binding or loosing, which the Lord Christ hath given power for, to the ministers and guides of the church, as to the communion thereof, Matt. xviii. 18. For by the ministerial application of the word to the sins and consciences of men, are they to be continued in, or excluded from the communion of the church, which is called the binding or loosing of them. The other respects God himself, and the sense which the conscience of a sinner hath of the guilt of sin before him. In this case the ministers of the gospel are authorized in the name of Christ, to remit their sins, that is, so to apply the promises of mercy and grace to their souls and consciences, as that, being received by faith, they may have peace with God. So are they authorized to remit or retain sins, according to the tenor and terms of the gospel. Not that the remission of sins absolutely doth depend on an act of office, but the release of the conscience of a sinner from the sense of guilt, doth sometimes much depend on it, rightly performed; that is, by due application of the promises of the gospel, to such as believe and repent. 4. How they bless the church by prayer and example, may be understood, from what hath been spoken concerning those things with respect to parents. The authority that is in them, depends on God's especial institution, which exempts them from, and exalts them above, the common order of mutual charitative benedictions. 5. They bless the people declaratively, as a pledge whereof it hath been always of use in the church, that at the close of the solemn duties of its assemblies, wherein the name of God is put on it, to bless the people by express mention of the blessing of God, which they pray for on them. But yet, because the same thing is done in the administration of all other ordinances, and this benediction is only euctical or by the way of prayer, I shall not plead for the necessity of it. And we may yet infer two things from hence.

Obs. V. 1. That those who are thus appointed to bless others in the name of God, and thereby exalted into a preeminence above those that are blessed, by his appointment, ought to be accordingly regarded by all that are so blessed by them. It is well if Christians do rightly consider what their duty is to them who are appointed as a means to communicate all spiritual blessings to them.

Obs. VI. And 2. Let those who are so appointed take heed that by their miscarriage they prove not a curse to them whom they ought to bless. For if they are negligent in the performance of their duties in the things mentioned, much more, if therewithal they put the name of any false god on them, they are no otherwise.

VER. 8.—THE eighth verse carrieth on the same argument, by a particular application to the matter in hand, of the things which he had in general observed before in Melchisedec. For, whereas the apostle had before declared, that ‘he was without father, without mother, without beginning of days or end of life,’ he now shows how all this conduced to his purpose.

VER. 8.—Και ὧδε μὲν δεκάτας ἀποθνησκοντες ἄνθρωποι λαμβανουσιν· ἐκεῖ δὲ μαρτυρουμένος ὅτι ζῇ.

Ἄνθρωποι, Syr. by an usual idiotism of that language, ‘the sons of man.’ Ἀποθνησκοντες, qui moriuntur, ‘who die.’ Vul. Lat. Homines morientes, ‘dying men,’ of which difference we must speak afterwards. Μαρτυρουμένος ὅτι ζῇ, generally, de quo testatum est, quod vivat. Vul. Lat. Ibi autem contestatur quia vivit; which the Rhemists render, ‘but there he hath witness that he liveth,’ both obscurely. Arias. Testatione dictus quia vivit, to no advantage. Μαρτυρουμένος, is properly, is de quo testatur, as Erasmus, Beza, Castalio, Smidle, render it. The Arabic concurs with the Vulgar. The Syriac by way of paraphrase, ‘He of whom the Scripture witnesseth that he liveth.’

VER. 8.—*And here men verily that die receive tithes, but there he of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.*

There is in the words a comparison and opposition between the Levitical priests and Melchisedec in this matter of receiving tithes, which in general was common to them both. And we may consider in them, 1. The circumstances of the comparison. 2. The general agreement of both sorts, which is the ground of the comparison. 3. The parts of the antithesis, or opposition, or dissimilitude between them.

First. The circumstances of the comparison are two.

First. The manner of its introduction, in the earnestness of the assertion, in the particle μὲν; it is as much as quidem or equidem, ‘truly, verily,’ which is omitted in our translation, though elsewhere the same particle is so rendered. ‘This, moreover, is the state of the case in this matter.’ And the insertion of it is proper unto an affirmation upon a concession, as this here is.

Secondly. The determination of the time or place, or manner of the opposition in those adverbs ὧδε and ἐκεῖ, ‘here and there,’ ὧδε usually refers unto place; and some think that the apostle hath respect unto Jerusalem the seat of the Levitical priesthood, and the land of Canaan, which alone was titheable according to the law. For the Jews do judge and that rightly, that the law of legal tithing extended not itself beyond the bounds of the land of Canaan; a sufficient evidence that it was positive and ceremonial. In opposition hereunto, ἐκεῖ, ‘there,’ must signify some other places, or any place where the priesthood of Melchisedec hath its signification; that is, in Christian religion. But the truth is, if ὧδε here signifies a certain and determinate place, that opposed in ἐκεῖ, ‘there,’ must be Salem, where Melchisedec dwelt,

which was not only afterwards titheable, as within the bounds of Canaan, but most probably was Jerusalem itself, as we have declared. This conjecture, therefore, is too curious; nor do we need to tie up ourselves unto the precise signification of the word *ὧδε*, although that also be sometimes used with respect unto time as well as place. Wherefore, these words, ‘here and there,’ do express the several different states under consideration. ‘Here,’ is in the case of the Levitical priesthood; and ‘there’ respects the case of Melchisedec, as stated, Gen. xiv.

Secondly. The foundation of the comparison, that wherein both agreed, is in this, that they received tithes. It is expressed of the one sort only, namely, the Levitical priests—they received tithes; but it is understood of the other also, whereon the word is repeated and inserted in our translation—but there he receiveth them. *Δεκατὰς λαμβανουσι*, ‘they do receive tithes,’ in the present tense. But it may be said, there was none that then did so; or at least, de jure, could do so, seeing the law of tithing was abolished. Wherefore, an enallage may be allowed here of the present time for that which was past: they do, that is, they did so whilst the law was in force. But neither is this necessary; for, as I have before observed, the apostle admits or takes it for granted, that the Mosaical system of worship was yet continued, and argueth on that concession unto the necessity of its approaching abolition. And yet we need not here the use of this supposition. For the words determine neither time nor place, but the state of religion under the law. According to the law are tithes to be paid unto, and received by such persons. This, therefore, is agreed, that both the Levitical priests and Melchisedec received tithes.

Thirdly. The opposition and difference lies in the qualification and properties of them by whom they are received. For, 1. Those on the one side, that is, of the Levitical priesthood, were *αποθνησκοντες ανθρωποι*, *homines qui moriuntur*, or *homines morientes*, ‘men that die, dying men;’ that is, men subject unto death, mortal men, who lived and died in the discharge of their office, according unto the common law of mortality. And the observation of Slichtingius on these words is, as far as I can understand, useless unto his own design, much more to the apostle’s. *Notandum vero quod non mortalibus hominibus, sed morientibus tantum Melchisedecum autor opponat, nec immortalem eum esse, sed vivere dicit; vita autem non mortalitati sed morti proprie opponitur.* Something is aimed at in way of security unto another opinion, namely, that all men were created in a state of mortality, without respect unto sin. But nothing is gotten by this subtlety. For by ‘dying men,’ the apostle intends not men that were actually dying, as it were at the point of death. For in that condition the priests could neither execute their office, nor receive tithes of the people. Only he describes such persons as in the whole course of their ministry were liable unto death, from the common condition of mortality, and in their several seasons died accordingly. Wherefore, dying men, or men subject to death, and mortal men, are in this case the same. And although life, as to the principle of it, be opposed unto death, yet as unto a continual duration, the thing here intended

by the apostle, it is opposed unto mortality, or an obnoxiousness unto death. For a representation is designed of him, who was made a priest, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. Wherefore, saith the apostle those who received tithes after the law, were all of them mortal men, that had both beginning of days and end of life. So the death of Aaron, the first of them, and in him of all his successors, is recorded in the Scripture.

In opposition unto this state of the Levitical priests, it is affirmed that *ἐκεῖ*, in the case of Melchisedec, *μαρτυρουµενος οτι ζῇ*, 'it is witnessed that he liveth.' How *ἡ* liveth, and how it is witnessed unto that he liveth, we must inquire. For it is apparently of Melchisedec, of whom, in the first place, as the type, these things are spoken; and yet we know that really, and in his own person, he was dead long before. But there are several things on the account whereof it is said, that it is witnessed that he liveth. For, 1. Whatever the Scripture is silent in as to Melchisedec, which it usually relates of others in the like state, our apostle takes for a contrary testimony unto him. For he lays down this general principle, that what the Scripture conceals of Melchisedec, it doth it to instruct us in the mystery of his person and ministry, as types of Christ and his. Hence, the silence of the Scripture in what it useth to express, must in this case be interpreted as a testimony unto the contrary. So it witnessed of him, that he was without father, without mother, without descent, in that it mentioneth none of them. And, whereas he had neither beginning of days nor end of life recorded in the Scripture, it is thereby witnessed, that not absolutely, but as to his typical consideration, he liveth. For there are no bounds nor periods fixed unto his priesthood, nor did it expire by the bringing in that of Levi, as that did by the introduction of Christ's. 2. He did actually continue his office unto the end of that dispensation of God, and his worship wherein he was employed; and this witnesseth the perpetuity of his life, in opposition unto the Levitical priests. For these two states are compared by the apostle, that of Melchisedec and that of Levi. There was a time limited unto this priesthood in the house of Aaron; and during that time one priest died and another succeeded in several generations, until they were greatly multiplied, as the apostle observeth, ver. 23. But during the whole dispensation of things with respect unto Melchisedec, he continued in his own person to execute his office from first to last, without being subject unto death, wherein it is witnessed that he liveth. 3. He is said 'to live,' that is, always to do so, because his office continueth for ever, and yet no mere mortal man succeeded him therein. 4. In this whole matter, he is considered not absolutely and personally, but typically, and as a representation of somewhat else. And what is represented in the type, but is really, subjectively, and properly found only in the antitype, may be affirmed of the type as such. So it is in all sacramental institutions; as the paschal lamb was called expressly God's passover, Exod. xii. 11, when it was only a pledge and token thereof; as under the New Testament, the bread and wine in the sacred supper, are called the body and blood of Christ, which they do

represent. Thus it is true really and absolutely of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he liveth for ever, that he is a priest for ever, which the apostle much insisteth on, and urgeth to his purpose afterwards. This eternity, or ever-living of Jesus Christ, was represented in Melchisedec, in that it is not said any where in the Scripture that he died: it is witnessed, therefore, that he liveth, because he whom he represents doth really do so, and his own death is not mentioned, on purpose that he might so represent him. And the apostle's argument, unto the dignity and preeminence of Melchisedec above the Levitical priests in this instance, is of an unquestionable evidence. For consider Melchisedec, not in his natural being and existence, which belongs not unto this mystery, but in his Scripture-being and existence, and he is immortal, always living, wherein he is more excellent than those, who were always obnoxious unto death in the exercise of their office. And from the branches of this comparison we may take two observations.

Obs. VII. In the outward administration of his worship, God is pleased to make use of poor, frail, mortal, dying men. So he did of old, and so he continues still to do. 'Our fathers, where are they? and the prophets do they live for ever?' Zech. i. 5. The prophets of old, the most eminent administrators under the Old Testament, they were all mortal dying men, and whilst they lived in this world, they were subject unto like passions with other men, James v. 17. And the same account the apostle giveth us of the principal administrators of the New Testament, 2 Cor. iv. 8—12, vi. 8, 9. And we know it is so with all those into whose hands the same work is transmitted. Yea, oftentimes as to the infirmities of body and outward condition, their weakness and frailty are signalized above others. Nor doth any advantage accrue to the gospel, by the secular exaltations of such as pretend unto the same employment, wherein, without other qualifications, they do little resemble the ministry of Christ himself. Such, I say, doth God please to make use of, persons obnoxious unto all infirmities and temptations with all other believers, and equally with them falling under the stroke of mortality. He could have accomplished his whole design immediately by his grace and Spirit, without the institution of any administrators. He could have employed his holy angels in the declaration and dispensation of the gospel; or he could have raised up men so signalized with wisdom, and all endowments of mind and body, as should have eminently distinguished them from the whole race of mankind besides. But waving these, and all other ways possible and easy unto his infinite wisdom and power, he hath chosen to make use in this great occasion, of poor, infirm, frail, tempted, sinning, dying men. And sundry reasons of this his holy counsel are expressed in the Scripture.

1. He doth it to make it evident that it is his own power, and nothing else, which gives efficacy and success unto all gospel administrations. 2 Cor. iv. 7, 'We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.' There is an excellency of power which accompanieth the dispensation of the word. Mighty spiritual effects are produced by it, such as wherein the glory of God doth consist, and whereon the eternal welfare of the

souls of men doth depend. This glory in subduing the adverse power of sin, Satan, and the world, in the quickening, sanctifying, saving the souls of the elect, God will be seen and owned in, he will not give it unto another. Whereas, therefore, those by whom these treasures are communicated unto others, are frail, perishing, earthen vessels, or those by whom the gospel is dispensed are poor, frail, weak men, seen and known so to be, there is no veil by their ministry cast over the glory of God. There is not a soul convinced, converted, or comforted by their word, but they may truly say of it, as the apostles did of the miracle which they wrought, Acts. iii. 12, 'Why look ye so on us, as though by our own power and holiness we made this man to walk?' this blind man to see? this dead man to live? By the consideration of our meanness, all may discern that the excellency of this power is of God, and not of us. Yea, for this very end, our apostle refused to make use of such a persuasiveness of words and exercise of wisdom, as might give any appearance or countenance unto such an apprehension, as though by them this effect were produced. 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5, 'My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God.' And herein ought he to be an example unto us all. But it is come to that with many, that being destitute utterly of what he had, namely, an ability to dispense the word in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power, they do wholly betake themselves unto what he refused, or the enticing words of man's wisdom, according to their ability. But what the Jews spoke blasphemously of Christ, upon his opening the eyes of him who was born blind, may in a sense be truly spoken of any of us, upon the opening of the eyes of them that were spiritually blind: 'Give God the praise, we know that this man is a sinner.'

2. God hath so ordered things in wisdom and grace, that the administrators of holy things unto others, might have experience in themselves of their state and condition, so as to be moved with compassion towards them, care about them, and zeal for them. Without these graces, and this constant exercise, men will be but very useless instruments in this work. And these will not grow any where but in men's own experience. For how shall he be tender, compassionate, careful, towards the souls of others, who knows no reason why he should be so towards his own? The high priest of old was such a one as could have compassion on the ignorant and them that are out of the way, for that he himself was encompassed with infirmity, Heb. v. 2. And therein was he a type of Christ, who was in all points tempted as we are, that he might be ready to succour them that are tempted. This gave him the experience of compassion in the exercise of it. Wherefore, when a minister of the gospel knows his own weakness, infirmities, and temptations, his need of mercy and grace, the ways of his obtaining supplies of them, the danger of the snares which he is exposed unto, the value of his own soul, the preciousness of the blood of Christ, and excellency of the eternal reward, he cannot, considering the charge committed unto him, and the duty required of him, but be moved with pity, compassion, tenderness, love, and zeal, towards those

unto whom he doth administer, especially considering how greatly their eternal welfare depends on his ability, diligence, and faithfulness, in the discharge of his duty. And this proves on sundry accounts, greatly to the advantage of the poor tempted disciples of Christ. For it makes a representation unto them of his own compassion and love, as the great Shepherd of the sheep, Isa. xl. 11, and causeth a needful supply of spiritual provisions to be always in readiness for them, and that to be administered unto them with experience of its efficacy and success.

3. That the power of gospel grace and truth may be exemplified unto the eyes of them unto whom they are dispensed, in the persons of them by whom it is administered according unto God's appointment. All who know aught in this matter, know what temptations and objections will arise in the minds of poor sinners, against their obtaining any interest in the grace and mercy that is dispensed in the gospel. Some, they judge, may be made partakers of them, but for them, and such as they are, there seems to be no relief provided. But is it no encouragement unto them, to see that by God's appointment the tenders of his grace and mercy are made unto their souls, by men subject unto like passions with themselves, and who, if they had not freely obtained grace, would have been as vile and unworthy as themselves? For as the Lord called the apostle Paul to the ministry, who had been a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious, that he might in him show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern unto them who should hereafter believe on him to everlasting life, that is, for the encouragement even of such high criminal offenders to believe, 1 Tim. i. 13—16; so in more ordinary cases, the mercy and grace which the ministers of the gospel did equally stand in need of, with those to whom they dispense it, and which they have received, is for a pattern, example, and encouragement of them to believe after their example.

4. In particular, God, in this matter, maketh use of persons that die, that their testimony unto the truth of gospel grace and mercy, may be complete and unquestionable. Death is the great touch-stone and trial of all things of this nature, as to their efficacy and sincerity. Many things will yield relief, and various refreshments in life, which upon the approach of death vanish into nothing. So it is with all the comforts of this world, and with all things that have not an eternal truth and substance in them. Had not those therefore who dispense sacred things, been designed themselves to come unto this touch-stone of their own faith, profession, and preaching, those who must die, and know always that they must do so, would have been unsatisfied what might have been the condition with them, had they been brought unto it; and so have ground to fear in themselves what will become of that faith, wherein they have been instructed, in the warfare of death when it shall approach. To obviate this fear and objection, God hath ordained that all those who administer the gospel, shall all of them bring their own faith unto that last trial; that so giving a testimony unto the sincerity and efficacy of the things which they have preached, in that they commit the eternal salvation of their souls unto them, (and higher testimony none can give,) they may be encouragements to others to follow their examples, to imitate their faith, and pursue their

course unto the end. And for this cause also doth God oftentimes call them forth unto peculiar trials, exercises, afflictions, and death itself in martyrdom, that they may be an example and encouragement unto the whole church.

I cannot but observe for a close of this discourse, that as the unavoidable infirmities of the ministers of the gospel, managed and passed through in a course of faith, holiness, and sincere obedience, are, on many accounts, of singular use and advantage unto the edification and consolation of the church; so the evil examples of any of them in life and death, with the want of those graces which should be excited unto exercise by their infirmities, is pernicious thereunto.

Obs. VIII. The life of the church depends on the everlasting life of Jesus Christ.—It is said of Melchisedec, as he was a type of him, ‘It is witnessed that he liveth.’ Christ doth so, and that for ever; and hereon under the failings, infirmities, and death of all other administrators, depends the preservation, life, continuance, and salvation of the church. But this must be spoken peculiarly on, ver. 27, whither it is remitted.

Ver. 9, 10.—It may be objected unto the whole preceding argument of the apostle, that although Abraham himself paid tithes unto Melchisedec, yet it followeth not that Melchisedec was superior unto the Levitical priests, concerning whom alone the question was between him and the Jews. For although Abraham might be a priest in some sense also, by virtue of common right, as were all the patriarchs, yet was he not so by virtue of any especial office, instituted of God to abide in the church. But when God afterwards, by peculiar law and ordinance, erected an order and office of priesthood in the family of Levi, it might be superior unto, or exalted above that of Melchisedec, although Abraham paid tithes unto him. This objection, therefore, the apostle obviates in these verses, and therewithal giving his former argument a farther improvement, he makes a transition, according unto his usual custom (as it has been observed that it is his method to do) unto his especial design, in proving the excellency of the priesthood of Christ, above that of the law, which is the main scope of this whole discourse.

VER. 9, 10.—Καὶ (ὥς εἶπας εἰπεῖν) διὰ Ἀβραὰμ, καὶ Λεὼν ὁ δεκάτας λαμβανὼν δεδεκατῶται. Ἐπὶ γὰρ ἐν τῇ οὐφύϊ τοῦ πατρὸς ἡν, ὅτε συνῆντησεν αὐτῷ ὁ Μελχισεδέκ.

Ὡς εἶπας εἰπεῖν, ut verbum dicere, ‘as to speak a word.’ Vul. Lat. ut ita dictum sit, ‘be it so said.’ Syr. ‘as only one may say.’ Arab. ‘and it is said that this discourse, or reason, may be some way ended.’ Ut ita loquar, ‘as I may so speak.’ In the rest of the words there is neither difficulty, nor difference among translators.

There are three things observable in these words. 1. The manner of the introduction of the apostle’s new assertion. 2. The assertion itself, which hath the force of a new argument unto his purpose, ver. 9. And, 3. The proof of his assertion in ver. 10.

1. The manner of the introduction of his assertion, is in these words,

ὥς εἰπὼς εἰπεῖν, ‘as I may so say.’ This qualification of the assertion, makes an abatement of it one way or other. Now this is not, as to the truth of the proposition, but as to the propriety of the expression. The words are, as if that which is expressed, was actually so, namely, that Levi himself paid tithes, whereas it was so only virtually. The thing itself intended, was with respect unto the apostle’s purpose, as if it had been so indeed; though Levi not being then actually existent, he could not be tithed in his own person. Nor is the apostle dubious of the truth of the consequence which he urgeth from this observation, as if he had said *prope dixerim*, which is supposed as one signification of this phrase. Only the instance being new, and he arguing from what was virtual only, as if it had been actual, he gave his assertion this qualification. This is spoken upon an allowance of the common acceptance of the sense of these words among interpreters. For my part, I rather incline to judge, that he useth this phrase for as much as *ut verbo dicam*, to sum up the whole in a word. To put an issue unto this dispute, between the Levitical priesthood and that of Melchisedec; I say, that not only Abraham, but even Levi himself was tithed by him.

2. His assertion is, *καὶ Λεὺι*, that Levi who received tithes, was tithed in Abraham, namely, when Abraham gave the tithes of all to Melchisedec. By Levi he intendeth not the person of Levi absolutely, the third son of Jacob, but his posterity, or the whole tribe proceeding from him, so far as they were interested in the priesthood. For Levi himself never received tithes of any, the priesthood being erected in his family, long after his death, in the person of his great-grandchild Aaron. So then Levi who received tithes, is the same with the sons of Levi who received the priesthood, ver. 5, namely, in their several generations unto that day.

Of this Levi it is affirmed that *δεδεκατῶται διὰ Ἀβραάμ*, ‘he was tithed or paid tithes in Abraham,’ or through him, and by him, as the word is. When Abraham himself gave tithes to Melchisedec, he did it not in his own name only, but in the name of himself and his whole posterity. And this upon the principles before laid down and vindicated, proves the preeminence of the priesthood of Melchisedec, above that of the house and family of Levi. All the difficulty of the argument lies in the proof of the assertion, namely, that Levi did indeed so pay tithes in Abraham. This the apostle therefore proves by the observation which he lays down, ver. 10, ‘For he was yet in the loins of his father when Melchisedec met him.’

3. The force of this proof seems to depend on a double principle. 1. That children, the whole posterity of any one, are in his loins before they are born. And this principle is sure in the light of nature and common reason; they are in them as the effect in its cause; nor have they any future existence, but with relation unto their progenitors, even the remotest of them. 2. That what any one doth, that all his posterity are esteemed to do in and by him. But it is certain that this rule will not generally hold, nor indeed will it ever do so absolutely, without some other cogent circumstances. By human laws, the crimes of men reflect dishonour in some cases on their families; and on the

other side, they entail the honour, which by their worth they have acquired on their posterities. What a man also gives away of his estate unto public uses, as in the foundation of schools or hospitals, his children may be said to do it in him, because so much is decreased from their inheritance. As here, what Abraham gave to Melchisedec, it was alienated from his posterity, Levi among the rest. But none of these things reach the case in hand, or are sufficient to give force or evidence unto the reasoning of the apostle. Wherefore, to find them out, sundry things must be observed, which are manifest truths in themselves, and on the supposition whereof, the apostle's argument stands firm.

1. That Abraham was now called of God, and separated unto his service, so as to be the foundation of a new church in the world. And there is a relation unto such an original stock in all the branches, beyond what they have unto any other intermediate progenitors. Hence, all the idolatrous nations in the world, constantly made the first persons from whom they derived their original, of whose offspring they would be accounted, their gods whom they worshipped. These were their Joves indigetes, their home-born deities, whom they honoured, and whose honours they thought descended unto them by inheritance.

2. He had now received the promise, that God would be a God unto him and to his seed after him; whereby all his posterity were taken into covenant with him, and hereon Abraham covenanted with God in the name of, and as the great representative of all his seed. And such covenants are the foundation of all order and rule in this world. For after persons, or a people have covenanted into such agreements in government, and as to the administration of common right among themselves, provided the terms whereon they have agreed be good, and suitable to the light of nature, their posterity are not at liberty to alter and change them at their pleasure. For whereas they derive all their right and inheritances from their progenitors, they are supposed in them to have consented to all that was done by them.

3. Hereon what God said and did unto Abraham, he said it and did it unto all his seed in him. The promises were theirs, and the inheritance was theirs; yea, what God is said to give unto Abraham so often, namely, the whole land of Canaan, was never actually made good unto him in his own person, no, not a foot-breadth. But he received the grant of it as a representative of his posterity, who, four hundred years after, had the actual possession of it.

4. What Abraham did solemnly in obedience unto God, by virtue of the covenant as a public condition thereof, he did undertake in it for his posterity, and performed it in their name. And therefore God enjoined him to bring all his posterity under the token of that engagement in circumcision, so soon as they were capable thereof. And on the other hand, God continually affirms that he would do them good, because of his oath and engagement unto Abraham, seeing they were intended therein. Wherefore,

5. Abraham in this solemn address unto God, by Melchisedec the type of Christ, wherein he expressed his covenant obedience unto him, was the representative of all his posterity, and in particular, of

Levi and of all the priests that descended from him. And having now received the whole land, by virtue of a covenant in the behalf of his posterity, that it should be theirs, though he himself had never possession of it, nor in it, he doth in the name of his posterity, and as their representative, give the tenths unto God by Melchisedec, as that chief rent which God for ever reserved unto himself, upon his grant. When the people came actually to possess the land, they held it always on this condition, that the tenths of all should be given unto God. And this Abraham in his taking seisin of it for them, paid in their name. So truly and virtually was Levi himself tithed in the loins of Abraham when Melchisedec met him. Wherefore, it was not merely Levi being in the loins of Abraham with respect unto natural generation, whence he is said to be tithed in him, but his being in him with respect unto the covenant which Abraham entered into with God in the name of his whole posterity.

This reasoning of the apostle's, I confess, at first view seemeth as intricate and more remote from cogency, than any elsewhere used by him. And therefore by some profane persons hath it been cavilled at. But all things of that nature arise merely from want of a due reverence unto the word of God. When we come unto it with those satisfactions in our minds, that there is truth, and divine wisdom in every expression of it, that all its reasonings are cogent and effectual, though we understand them not, we shall not fail upon a humble inquiry to attain what we may safely embrace, or see what we ought to admire. And so this place, which at first sight seems to present us with a reasoning on a very uncertain foundation, being duly inquired into, we find it resolved into the firm principles of reason and religion.

And the foregoing observation will expedite two difficult questions which expositors raise to themselves on this verse. The first whereof is, whether Christ himself may not as well as Levi, be said to pay tithes in Abraham, as being in his loins? which would utterly frustrate the design of the apostle. The second is, how, or in what sense one may be said to do any thing in another, which may be reckoned or imputed to him?

For the first of these, Austin and others have well laboured in the solution of it: the sum of what they say is, That the Lord Christ was not in Abraham as Levi was, not in his nature as it was corrupted; nor did he educe or derive his nature from him by carnal generation, or by the common way of the propagation of mankind. And these things do constitute a sufficient difference and distance between them in this matter. But yet with these considerations, and on the supposition of them, there is another which contains the true and proper reason of this difference. And that is, that the Lord Christ was never in Abraham as a federate, as one taken into covenant with him, and so represented by him, as Levi was. Abraham was taken into covenant with Christ, as the Head, Sponsor, Surety, and Mediator of the New Covenant, with respect whereunto he says of himself and the elect, 'Behold I and the children which the Lord hath given me.' Hereon he was the representative of Abraham and of all that believe, and what he did is imputed to them. But he was never taken into

covenant with Abraham, nor was capable of so being, seeing to him it was a covenant of pardon and justification by faith, which he was no way concerned in but as the procurer of them for others. Wherefore what Abraham did, cannot be imputed to him, so as that he should be esteemed to have done them in him.

And this makes way for the solution of the general question, How one may be said to do any thing in another which shall be reckoned to him as his own act? And this may be by virtue of a covenant, and no otherwise. Hence divines do usually illustrate the imputation of the sin of Adam to his posterity by this example of Levi, though I have not met with any who truly understand the ground of the comparison, which is Abraham acting as a covenanter in the name of his posterity. But whereas this is opposed with some vehemency by Slichtingius in his comment on this place, I shall transcribe his words, and consider his discourse. '*Hæc sententia non ad omnes actiones transferenda est; sed ad eas tantum, quæ propriè versantur vel in auctione vel in diminutione rerum quæ à parentibus in liberos devolvi et hæreditario jure transferri solent, qualis actio est decimarum solutio. Persolvuntur enim de bonis et facultatibus, quæ hactenus cum sunt liberorum, quatenus jus hæreditatis ad eos spectat, præsertim si certum sit, fore liberos, qui in bona succedant, quemadmodum Abrahamo contigit, cui certa fuit à Deo promissa posteritas. Quemadmodum enim hæredes personam patris post mortem ratione possessionis bonorum veluti repræsentant, ita antequam hæredes à patre separentur et de bonis paternis statuendi arbitrium habeant, pater omnium liberorum suorum personam quadam ratione refert, et quicquid de illis statuerit aut fecerit id hæredes quodammodo fecisse censentur. Dico, quodammodo, quia propriè id dici non potest; nec autor hic D. id propriè factum esse asserit, sed improprietatem verbis suis subesse ipsemet profitetur, ut antea vidimus. Ex dictis autem facilè intelligitur, id quod nos unà cum autore D. statuimus, ad eos tantum successores seu posteros esse extendendum ad quos vel certo, ut Abrahami posteris contigit, vel saltem verisimiliter perventura sit hæreditas parentis et notabilis aliqua bonorum ob eo profectorum portio. Alioquin vis illa hæreditatis de qua diximus, expirabit, nec posteris tribui poterit id quod majorum aliquis circa bona sua fecerit. Quibus ita explicatis, facile jam apparet falli eos qui ex hoc loco colligunt omnem Adami posteritatem in ipso Adamo parente suo peccasse, et mortis supplicium verè fuisse commeritum. Nam vel de eo nunc quidquam dicam ipsum autorem improprietatem in hac loquendi forma agnoscere, nequaquam id extendendum est ad parentum majorumve peccata ac merita. Etenim peccata ac merita qua talia mere sunt personalia, seu personam ejus qui peccat non egrediuntur, nec eatenus parentes posteritatem suam repræsentant; licet fieri queat ut ex eorum delicto damnum aliquod nec exiguum ad liberos redundet, quemadmodum quidem in Adami delicto contigit; ipsum tamen peccatum ac meritum Adami revera non communicatur cum ejus posteritate, ac proinde posterii Adami ob parentis sui noxam revera non puniuntur, nisi et ipsi parentem fuerint imitati.'*

I have transcribed these words at large, because their design is to

defeat that article of our faith concerning the imputation of the sin of Adam to all his posterity, which there is no doubt but they will make use of, who are gone over among ourselves to the negative of it: and that it might appear whose heifer they plough withal, who deny the imputation of the righteousness of Christ to justification, because those things that are personal and inherent in one, cannot be communicated to another. I say, therefore, 1. That this assertion, of one being accounted to another in what he doth, holds only in those things which belong to the increase or diminution of an inheritance, which descends from parents to children, and not otherwise, is gratis dictum, without pretence or confirmation. Even in things moral, God threatens to visit the sins of the fathers on the children. So the Israelites wandered penally in the wilderness forty years, and bare the iniquity of their parents. The infants that perished in the flood, and at the conflagration of Sodom, died penally under the judgment that came for the sin of their parents. Wherefore the general foundation of his whole discourse is unproved and false, and the application of it to the present case, as we shall see, weak and impertinent. For, 2. This renders the argument of the apostle as weak and impertinent as any thing can be imagined. For it allows Levi to be no otherwise tithed in Abraham, but as part of the goods which Abraham gave in tithe to Melchisedec would have descended to him. For he was but one of the twelve sons of Jacob, the grandchild of Abraham, whose share in those tithes cannot be computed to be worth mentioning, much less to bear the weight of an argument in so great a cause. Besides, it is not the person of Levi, but his posterity in the family of Aaron, that is intended. And such moveables as were tithed by Abraham, do seldom descend through so many generations. It is therefore ridiculous to impose such a kind of argumentation on the holy apostle. 3. Yea, this interpretation is directly contrary to what the apostle designed to confirm by the instance he gives. For that which he aimed at, was to prove Levi inferior to Melchisedec, by his paying of tithes in the loins of Abraham. But if he did this no otherwise, but that some goods that should have descended to him were given to Melchisedec, it argues him rather superior to him; for absolutely he that gives is superior to him that receives, as it is in general a more blessed thing to give than to receive. 4. That which he proceeds on, is a general rule of his own framing, which is no way applicable to this particular case, as it is a particular case. It is that, as children succeed into the room of their parents as to their goods, and after a sort represent them; so parents before their children come to inherit, do represent their children, so as that they may be said in some sense, to do what is done by their parents. But this is a rule made without any colour of reason. For, 1st. I would know when this representation and concernment should expire, or whether it hold to all generations. If it hold for ever, then may we all be said, in some sort, to do what Adam did with his goods and lands before he died, and so of all our intervenient progenitors. If it do expire, and this relation abideth only for a season, I desire to know the bounds of that season. Aaron was the first of the house of Levi, who is intended in these

words, and he was the seventh generation from Abraham, in which time, it is probable, if ever, this right of inheritance would expire. 2dly. It is not true in any sense, in the very next parents in most cases. For suppose a parent be wicked and flagitious, and shall waste his substance and goods in riotous living, in what sense shall his son, suppose him a person fearing God, be said so to have disposed of his goods in him? 3dly. The truth is, unless it be by a subsequent approbation of what our progenitors have done, or by virtue of a covenant whereby they and their posterity were obliged, which is the case in hand, children can in no sense be said to do what their progenitors have done, in the disposal of their goods and inheritances. Neither indeed will a subsequent approbation give any tolerable sense to this assertion, unless there be a power of an effectual dissent in the children also. If a man give a part of his estate to found an hospital, and leave the care of it to his posterity, with this proviso, that if any of them saw just cause for it, they should resume the estate into their own possession; in case they do not so, they may in some sense be said to do, what indeed their father did. But if this be not in their power, though they approve of what he did, they cannot be said to have done it. But in covenants the case is plain. Men may enter into a mutual covenant for the erection of a government among them, which proving a foundation of all their civil rights for the future, their posterity may be said to have made that covenant, and to be obliged thereby, as it was in this case. 5. Neither will it advantage his pretence, with a seeming acknowledgment of some impropriety in his assertion in those words, *ὡς ἐπος εἶπεν*, ‘as I may so say.’ For although it should be granted that he intends some impropriety in the expression, yet there must be truth in his assertion, which this interpretation will not allow: for if it be true only in the sense he contends for, it is true in none at all, for that is not any. But the meaning of these words is, *ut verbo dicam*, that I may give you a summary of the whole, that which my argument riseth up to. 6. Having given us this crooked rule, he adds a limitation to it, whereby he hopes to reduce the whole to his purpose. ‘For,’ saith he, ‘this rule is not to be extended to the merits or sins of parents and ancestors, though some loss may accrue to the children thereby;’ for thence he infers, that though we may suffer some loss by the sin of Adam, yet his sin is not imputed to us. But, 1st. How far the children of flagitious parents may not only suffer loss, but undergo temporal punishment also for the sins of their parents, was shown before in the instances of those who perished in their infancy, both by the flood and in the conflagration of Sodom. 2dly. The case between any other parent and his posterity, is not the same as it was between Adam and us all; so that these things are sophistically jumbled together. There is indeed an analogy between Adam and his posterity on the one hand, and Christ with believers on the other, and never was there, nor shall there be the like relation between any else. For these two individual persons were appointed of God to be the heads of the two covenants, and representatives of the federates as to the ends of the covenants. Hence the whole evil of the one and the good of the other, as they were, and

as far as they were, heads of the covenants, are imputed to them who derive from them in their respective covenants. But after the first sin Adam ceased to be a head to his posterity, as to the good or evil of that covenant, which was now broken and disannulled. Neither was he, nor any of his posterity ever after, restored or assumed into the same state and condition. It is therefore highly vain, to confound the consideration of our concern in what Adam did as he was the head of the covenant, with what he afterwards did, and other intervenient progenitors might do. All this our apostle confirms at large, Rom. v. 7. Abraham was taken into a new administration of the covenant with new promises and seals. But he neither was, nor could be, made the head and representative of that covenant whereinto he was taken, otherwise than typically. Hence his moral good or evil could not be reckoned to his posterity in covenant. But yet he was made the head and spring of the administration of its outward privileges; and this, so far as his trust extended, was imputed to his posterity, as in the case of circumcision. Wherefore seeing what he did to Melchisedec, belonged to the administration of the covenant committed to him, Levi is rightly said to have done it in him also. And so these things do mutually illustrate one another. But to deny that we were all in Adam as the head of the first covenant, that we sinned in him, that the sin which we in any sense have sinned is imputed to us, is not to dispute with us, but expressly to contradict the Holy Ghost.

But we may take some observations from these words. As,

Obs. IX. They who receive tithes of others for their work in holy administrations, are thereby proved to be superior to them of whom they do receive them.—They are given to them among other ends, as an acknowledgment of their dignity. So it was when they were paid of old by God's institution; and so it would be still, if they might be paid or received in a due manner, with respect to the labour of any in gospel administrations. But whereas not one among thousands, doth give or pay them on any other ground but because they must do so whether they will or no; nor would do so any more, were it not for the coercive enforcing power of human laws; and whereas they on the other side that do receive them, do look on them not as a free pledge of the people's respect and the honour that they bear to them, but as their own right and due by law, they are a testimony neither of the people's obedience, nor of the minister's dignity, but only of the extreme disorder of all things in religion.

Obs. X. It is of great concern to us, what covenant we do belong to, as being esteemed to do therein what is done by our representatives in our name.—There were never absolutely any more than two covenants; wherein all persons indefinitely are concerned. The first was the covenant of works, made with Adam and with all in him. And what he did as the head of that covenant, as our representative therein, is imputed to us as if we had done it, Rom. v. 12. The other is that of grace, made originally with Christ, and through him with all the elect. And here lieth the life and hope of our souls, that what Christ did as the Head of that covenant as our representative, it is all imputed to us for righteousness and salvation. And certainly there is

nothing of more importance to us, than to know whether of these covenants we belong to; we are also some way concerned in them, by whom that one or the other of these covenant-states is conveyed to us. For before we make our own personal voluntary choice, we are by the law of our natures, and of the covenant itself, inclosed in the same condition with our progenitors, as to their covenant-state. And thence it is that in the severest temporal judgments, children not guilty of the actual transgression of their parents, not having sinned after the similitude of them, by imitation, do yet oftentimes partake of the punishment they have deserved, being esteemed in some manner to have done what they did, so far as they were included in the same covenant with them. And many blessings on the other hand are they partakers of, who are included in the covenant of those parents who are interested in the covenant of grace. For such parents succeed in the room of Abraham every one of them. And what Abraham did as to the administration of the covenant intrusted with him, his posterity whose representative he was therein, are said to have done in him, as Levi is in this place, and therefore had the seal of the covenant given to them in their infancy. And an alteration in this dispensation of grace hath not yet been proved by any, or scarce attempted so to be.

VER. 11.—IN this verse, after so long a preparation and introduction, whereby he cleared his way from objections, and secured his future building, the apostle enters on his principal argument, concerning the priesthood of Christ, and all the consequences of it with respect unto righteousness, salvation, and the worship of God, which depend thereon. This being his main design, he would not engage into it, before he had in every respect declared and vindicated the dignity and glory of the person of Christ, as vested with his blessed offices. And from hence unto the didactical part of the epistle, he proceeds in a retrograde order unto what he had before insisted on. For whereas he had first declared the glory of the person of Christ in his kingly office, ch. i. then in his prophetical, ch. ii. iii. and having now entered on his sacerdotal, he goes on to enlarge upon this last function; then he returns unto his prophetical, and shuts up the whole with a renewed mention of his kingly power, as we shall see in their order and proper places.

VER. 11.—Εἰ μὲν οὖν τελειωσις δια τῆς Λευϊτικῆς ἱερωσύνης ἡν, (ὁ λαὸς γὰρ ἐπ' αὐτῇ νενομοθετητο) τις ἐτι χρεία, κατὰ τὴν ταξιν Μελχισεδεκ ἕτερον ἀνιστασθαι ἱερεα, καὶ οὐ κατὰ τὴν ταξιν Ααρων λεγεσθαι.

Τελειωσις, Syr. כְּמִירוּת, consummatio, perfectio, 'a sacred perfection, or completeness of state and condition.'

Δια τῆς Λευϊτικῆς ἱερωσύνης. Syr. בְּיַד כְּמִירוּת דְּלֵוִי, 'by the hand of the priesthood of Levi himself.' Because Levi himself received not the priesthood in his own person, but his posterity, Tremellius renders it Levitarum, 'the priesthood of Levites.' The original leaves no

scruple, 'by the Levitical priesthood,' the priesthood that was confined to the house, family, tribe, and posterity of Levi.

Ὁ λαὸς γὰρ ἐπ' αὐτῇ ἐνενόμοζετο, M. S. ἐνενόμοζετο, corruptly; Nam sub hoc, populo sancita est lex, Beza. 'For under it the law was established to the people.' Sub ipso populus legem accepit, acceperat; Syr. דבּה סים נמוסא לעמא, 'by whom, or whereby the law was imposed upon the people.' If דבּה, 'by whom,' relate unto Levi, the sense is mistaken; and much more by the Arab. which takes the law only for the law of the sacerdotal office, from which it is plainly distinguished. The Ethiopic reads the whole verse to this purpose: 'And the people did according to the law of the priesthood which was appointed; what need was there therefore that he should give another priest, whose appointment one should say was according to Melchisedec?' which argues the great unskilfulness of that interpreter.

Τίς ἐτι χρεία, quid adhuc, quid amplius opus erat, esset; necessarium fuit? 'What need was there yet, or moreover.' Syr. למא, 'wherefore,' ad quid? 'to what purpose?'

Ἀνιστάσθαι, Oriri. Beza, Exoriri. Surgere, Vul. Lat. Syr. דנקם, 'should arise.' Oriri, properly, κατὰ τὴν τάξιν. Syr. בדמוהא, 'in or after the likeness of Melchisedec,' secundum ordinem.

Καὶ οὐ κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Ααρων λεγέσθαι, Et non secundum ordinem Aaron dici, Syr. אחר דין, which is rendered in the translation in the Polyglot, sed dixit, 'but he said, it shall be, or he shall be in the likeness of Aaron:' Dixisset autem, which, regulated by the precedent interrogation, gives us the true sense of the place. 'Suppose there must another priest arise, yet if perfection had been by the Levitical priesthood, he would have said that he should be of the order of Aaron.'

VER. 11.—*If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law) what farther need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron.*

The first thing in the words, is the introduction of the ensuing discourse and argument, in those particles of inference, εἰ μὲν οὖν, 'if therefore.' If things be as we have declared, he had a peculiar scope and design in all those things. These he is now introducing. The improvement of his whole preceding discourse, and the whole mystery of the priesthood of Melchisedec, he will now make an application of unto the great cause he had in hand. He hath proved by all sorts of arguments, that the priesthood of Melchisedec was superior unto that of Aaron. Before he had evinced that there was to be another priest after his order; and this priest must of necessity be greater than all those who went before him of the tribe of Levi, inasmuch as he was so, by whom he was represented before the institution of that priesthood. Now he will let the Hebrews know whither all these things do tend in particular, and what doth necessarily follow from, and depend upon them. This he lays the foundation of in this verse, and declares in those following. And that they might consider how what he had

to say was educed from what he had before proved, he introduceth it with these notes of inference, *εἰ μὲν οὖν*, 'if therefore.' And to comprehend the meaning of these words in general, with the design of the apostle in them, we may observe,

1. That his reasoning in this case is built upon a supposition which the Hebrews could not deny. And this is, that *τελειωσις*, 'perfection or consummation,' is the end aimed at in the priesthood of the church. That priesthood which perfects or consummates the people, in order unto their acceptance with God, and future enjoyment of him, their present righteousness and future blessedness, is that which the church stands in need of, and cannot rest till it comes unto. That priesthood which doth not do so, but leaves men in an imperfect unconsummated estate, whatever use it may be of for a season, yet cannot it be perpetual unto the exclusion of another. For if so, either God had not designed to consummate his people, or he must do it some other way, and not by a priesthood. The first is contrary to the truth and faithfulness of God in all his promises, yea, would make all religion vain and ludicrous. For if it will never make men perfect, to what end doth it serve, or what must do so in the room thereof? That this should be done in any other way, than by a priesthood, the Hebrews did neither expect nor believe. For they knew full well, that all the ways appointed by the law, to make atonement for sin, to attain righteousness and acceptance with God, depended on the priesthood and services of it, in sacrifices and other parts of divine worship. If therefore the apostle proves that perfection could not be attained by, nor under the Levitical priesthood, it necessarily follows, that there must be some more excellent priesthood remaining as yet to be introduced. This therefore he undeniably evinceth by this consideration. For,

2. Look unto the Levitical priesthood in the days of David and Solomon. Then was that order in its height and at its best; then was the tabernacle first, and afterwards the temple, in their greatest glory, and the worship of God performed with the greatest solemnity. The Hebrews would grant, that the priesthood of Levi could never arise to a higher pitch of glory, nor be more useful than it was in those days. Yet, saith he, it did not then consummate the church; perfection was not then attainable by it. This the Jews might deny, and plead that they desired no more perfection than what was in those days attained unto. Wherefore our apostle proves the contrary; namely, that God designed a perfection or consummation for his church, by a priesthood, that was not then attained. This he doth by the testimony of David himself, who prophesied and foretold that there was to be another priest after the order of Melchisedec. For if the perfection of the church was all that God ever aimed at by a priesthood; if that were attained, or attainable by the priesthood in David's time, to what end should another be promised to be raised up of another order? To have done so, would not have been consistent with the wisdom of God, nor the immutability of his counsel. For unto what purpose should a new priest of another order be raised up, to do that which was done before? Wherefore,

3. The apostle obviates an objection that might be raised against the sense of the testimony produced by him, and his application of it. For it might be said, that as after the institution of the Levitical priesthood, there was yet mention of another priest to rise, it might be some eminent person of the same order, such a one as Joshua the son of Josedec after the captivity, who was eminently serviceable in the house of God, and had eminent dignity thereon, Zech. iii. 4--7. So that the defect supposed might be in the persons of the priests, and not in the order of the priesthood. This the apostle obviates, by declaring that if it had been so, he would have been called or spoken of as one of the order of Aaron. But whereas there were two orders of the priesthood, the Melchisedecian and Aaronical, it is expressly said that this other priest should be of the former, and not of the latter.

4. He hath yet a farther design, which is not only to prove the necessity of another priest and priesthood, but thereon also a change and an abrogation of the whole law of worship under the Old Testament. Hence he here introduceth the mention of the law, as that which was given at the same time with the priesthood, and had such a relation thereunto, as that of necessity it must stand and fall with it. And this may suffice for a view of the scope of this verse, and the force of the argument contained in it. We shall now consider the particulars of it.

1. A supposition is included, that *τελειωσις*, which we render 'perfection,' is the adequate and complete end of the office of the priesthood in the church. This, at one time or another, in one order or another, it must attain, or the whole office is useless. And the apostle denies that this could be obtained, *δια της Λευϊτικῆς ἱερωσύνης*, 'by the Levitical priesthood.' And he calls the priesthood of the law Levitical, not only because Levi was their progenitor, the patriarch of their tribe, from whom they were genealogised; but also because he would comprise in his assertion, not only the house of Aaron, unto whom the right and exercise of the priesthood was limited and confined, but he would also take into consideration the whole Levitical service which was subservient unto the office of the priesthood, and without which it could not be discharged. Wherefore the Levitical priesthood is that priesthood in the family of Aaron, which was assisted in all their sacerdotal actings and duties by the Levites, who were consecrated of God unto that end. That *τελειωσις*, or 'perfection,' was of this priesthood, is denied in a restrictive interrogation. If it had been so, it would have been otherwise with respect unto another priest, than as it is declared by the Holy Ghost.

2. Our principal inquiry on this verse will be, what this *τελειωσις* is, and wherein it doth consist. The word is rendered *perfectio*, *consummatio*, *consecratio*, *sanctificatio*, *dedicatio*. The original signification and use of the word hath been spoken unto on ch. ii. ver. 10, where it is rendered sanctification. Real and internal sanctification is not intended, but that which is the same with sacred dedication or consecration. For it is plainly distinguished from real inherent sanctification by our apostle, ch. x. 14, *Μία γὰρ προσφορά τετέλειωκεν εἰς τὸ διηγεῖς τοὺς ἁγιαζομένους*, 'By one offering, he hath perfected them

that are sanctified.' This τελειωσις, the effect and product of τετελειωκεν, is wrought towards them who are sanctified, and so doth not consist in their sanctification. Much less therefore doth it signify an absolute perfection of inherent holiness. Some men no sooner hear the name of perfection in the Scripture, but they presently dream of an absolute, sinless, inherent perfection of holiness, which, if they are not utterly blinded and hardened, they cannot but know themselves far enough distant from. But this word hath no such signification. But if it denote not internal holiness at all, it cannot denote the perfection of it. Nor is any such perfection attainable in this life, as the Scripture every where testifies. Wherefore the apostle hath no need to prove that it was not attainable by the Levitical priesthood, nor to reflect upon it for that reason, seeing it is not attainable by any other way or means whatever. We must therefore diligently inquire into the true notion of this τελειωσις, or 'perfection,' which will guide the remaining interpretation of the words. And concerning it we may observe in general,

First. That it is the effect, or end, or necessary consequent of a priesthood. This supposition is the foundation of the whole argument of the apostle. Now the office and work may be considered two ways. 1. With respect unto God, who is the first immediate object of all the proper acts of that office. 2. With respect unto the church, which is the subject of all the fruits and benefits of its administration.

If we take it in the first way, then the expiation of sin is intended in this word. For this was the great act and duty of the priesthood towards God, namely, to make expiation of sin, or atonement for it by sacrifice. And if we take the word in this sense, the apostle's assertion is most true. For this perfection was never attainable by the Levitical priesthood. It could expiate sin, and make atonement only typically, and by way of representation; really and effectually, as to all the ends of spiritual reconciliation unto God, and the pardon of sin, they could not do it. For it was not possible, as our apostle observes, that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins, ch. x. 4, which he also proves in his ensuing discourse at large. But I do not know that this word is any where used in this sense, nor doth it include any such signification. And whereas God is the immediate object of that sacerdotal energy whereby sin is expiated, it is the church that is here said to be perfected; so that expiation of sin cannot be intended thereby, though it be supposed therein. Besides, the apostle doth not here understand sacrifices only, by which alone atonement was made, but all other administrations of the Levitical priesthood whatever.

The Socinians would have expiation of sin here intended, and I shall therefore examine briefly what they speak to this purpose, in their comment on this place. Perfectionis, τελειωσεως, nomine hoc loco nihil aliud intelligit autor, quàm veram et perfectam expiationem peccatorum, qua non tantum quorundam sed omnium etiam gravissimorum criminum reatus, isque non tantum pœnæ alicujus temporariæ et ad hanc vitam spectantis, sed ipsius æternæ mortis aufertur, jusque homini vitæ sempiternæ conceditur; qua denique non tantum reatus omnis omnium peccatorum, sed et ipsa peccata in hominibus tolluntur.

Namque his in rebus vera hominum perfectio coram Deo consistit. Si ergo hæc perfectio hominibus contingere potuisset per sacerdotium Leviticum, certè nullus fuisset usus novi sacerdotis Melchisedeciani. Sacerdotium enim propter peccatorum expiationem constituitur. At si perfecta peccatorum expiatio contingebat per Aaronicum sacerdotium, quid opus erat novum istum superinducere sacerdotem secundum ordinem Melchisedeci, ut scilicet perageret id, quod peragere potuerat Aaronicus? Quocirca cùm Deus illum constituere voluerit, atque adeo jam constituerit; hinc patet nemini per Leviticum sacerdotium, perfectionem seu perfectam expiationem contigisse, ut certe non contigit. Quorundam enim peccatorum expiatio per illud fiebat, nempe ignorantiarum et infirmitatum; gravium autem peccatorum et scelerum pœna mortis luenda erat. Nec ista expiatio ad tollendam æternam mortem quidquam virium habuit, sed tantum ad tollendas quasdam pœnas temporarias, et huic vitæ proprias. Nec denique illis sacrificiis ulla vis inerat homines ab ipsis peccatis retrahendi.

1. What in general is suited unto the apostle's argument, whatever be the sense of the *τελειωσις* here mentioned, is approved. The question is, whether the expiation of sin be here intended, what is the nature of that expiation, and what was the use of the sacrifices under the law? All which on this occasion are spoken unto, and the mind of the Holy Ghost in them all perverted. For, 1. That expiation of sin, properly so called, by an act of the priestly office towards God, is not here intended, hath been before declared, both from the signification of the word, and the design of the apostle. What these men intend by the expiation of sin, and how remote it is from that which the Scripture teacheth, and the nature of the thing itself requireth in the reason and common understanding of all mankind, I have fully evinced in the Exercitations about the priesthood of Christ. And take expiation in the sense of the Scripture, with the common sense and usage of mankind, and in their judgment, it was by the Levitical priesthood, and was not by the priesthood of Christ. For it cannot be denied, but that the Levitical priests acted towards God, in their offering of sacrifices to make atonement for sin. But that the Lord Christ did so, is by these men denied. For that which under this name they ascribe unto him, is only the taking away of punishment due unto sin by his power, which power was given him of God upon his ascension or entrance into heaven as the holy place. 2. They deny that expiation was by the Levitical priesthood, on two grounds. First. Because they did expiate only some lesser sins, as of ignorance and infirmity; and so it cannot be said to be by them, because they were only some few sins that they could expiate. Secondly. Because their expiation concerned only deliverance from temporal punishment. That expiation, in the Scripture sense, could not be really effected by the Levitical priesthood, is granted, and shall afterwards be proved. But both these pretended reasons of it are false. For, First. There was an atonement made in general for all the sins of the people. For when Aaron made an atonement by the scapegoat, Lev. xvi. 10, he confessed over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgression in all their sin, ver. 21. And herein the greatest as

well as the least of their sins were comprised. For although there were some sins which being capital, according unto the constitutions of their commonwealth, in which respect there was no sacrifice appointed in particular whereby they who were guilty of them might be freed from punishment, that the ordinances of God might not seem to interfere; yet had they by their interest in the more general sacrifices, a right unto expiation of sin as to its guilt, for otherwise every one who died penally, must of necessity die eternally. Secondly. It is also false that their sacrifices had no other use but to free men from temporal punishments. Indeed it is a wild apprehension, that the use of sacrifices in the church of old, to be observed by the people with so great solemnities, and under so great penalties, wherein the principal actings of faith did consist, as also the great exercise of the spiritual obedience of the whole church, should serve only to free men from legal, outward, civil, temporal punishments for lesser sins of ignorance and infirmity, which were none at all for the most part. Absolutely indeed, and of themselves, by virtue of their own worth, or by their own innate efficacy, they neither did, nor could expiate sin, as to its guilt and eternal punishment, which attended all sin by the curse of law; nor did God ever appoint them for that end, yet they did it relatively and typically, that is, they represented and exhibited unto the faith of the sacrificers, that true effectual sacrifice to come, whereby all their sins were pardoned and done away. Wherefore, Thirdly. The difference between the expiation of sin by the Levitical priesthood and by Christ, did not consist in this, that the one expiated sin only with respect unto temporal punishments, the other with respect unto them that are eternal; but in the manner of their expiation, and the efficacy of each to that end. They expiated sins only typically, doctrinally, and by way of representation; the benefit received from their sacrifices being not contained in them, nor wrought by their causality, nor procured by their worth or value, but these were exhibited unto the faith of the sacrificers, by virtue of their relation unto the sacrifice of Christ. Hence were they of many sorts and often repeated, which sufficiently argues that they did not effect what they did represent. But the Lord Christ, by the one offering of himself, wrought this effect really, perfectly, and absolutely, by its own value and efficacy, according unto the constitution of God. But this is not the perfection here intended by the apostle.

Secondly. This *τελειωσις* respects the church, which is the subject of all the benefits of the priesthood, and it is that perfect state of the church in this world, which God from the beginning designed unto it. He entered upon its erection in the first promise, with respect unto his worship, and the blessed condition of the church itself. Hereon, and with respect hereunto, is the church-state of the Old Testament said to be weak and imperfect, like that of a child under governors and tutors. Hence, also, it had a yoke imposed on it, causing fear and bondage: 'God having ordained better things for us,' or the church under the New Testament, *ἵνα μὴ χωρὶς ἡμῶν τελειωθῶσι*, Heb. xi. 40, 'that they without us should not be consummated,' or made perfect in their church-state. And this state of the church is expressed by this

word in other places, as we shall see. The foundation of it was laid in that word of our Saviour wherewith he gave up the ghost, *τετελεισται*, John xix. 30, 'It is finished,' or completed; that is, all things belonging to that great Sacrifice whereby the church was to be perfected, were accomplished. For he had respect unto all that the prophets had foretold; all that he was to do in this world, and the consummation of the church was to ensue thereon, when, by one offering, he for ever perfected them that are sanctified. And those who were thoroughly instructed in the privileges of this church-state, and had a sense of the benefits thereof, are called *τελειοι*, 'perfect,' 1 Cor. ii. 6. We speak wisdom, *εν τοις τελειοις*, the mysteries of the gospel, wherein such persons discerned the wisdom of God. And so are they called, Heb. v. 14. This our Saviour prayed for in the behalf of his church, immediately before he procured it by his sacrifice, John xvii. 23, *ινα ωσι τετελειωμενοι*, 'that they may be perfected.' And the end of the institution of the ministry of the gospel, to make his mediation effectual unto the souls of men by the application of it in the word unto them, was to bring the church, *εις ανδρα τελειον*, Eph. iv. 13, 'to a perfect man,' or that perfection of state which it is capable of in this life. So the apostle informs us, that what he aimed at in his ministry, by warning every man, and teaching them in all wisdom, was that he might present, *παντα ανθρωπον τελειον εν Χριστω*, Col. i. 28, 'every man,' that is, all believers, 'perfect in Christ Jesus.' For, 'in him we are complete,' ch. ii. 10, where, though another word be used, (*πεπληρωμενοι*) yet the same thing is intended; namely, that perfect complete state of the church which God designed to bring it unto in Christ. And that our apostle useth the same word in the same sense in sundry places in this Epistle, we shall see in our progress.

Thirdly. This *τελειωσις*, or 'perfection,' may be considered two ways.

1. As to its absolute completeness in its final issue. This the apostle denies that he himself had as yet attained, Phil. iii. 12, 'Not as though I had already attained, or received,' *ελαβον*, namely, the whole of what is purchased for me by Christ, *η ηδη τετελειωμαι*, 'or were already made perfect,' which could not be without attaining the resurrection of the dead, ver. 11, though the substance be so already in the saints departed; whence he calls them the spirits of just men, *τετελειωμενων*, Heb. xii. 23, 'made perfect.' And this he calls absolutely, *το τελειον*, 1 Cor. xiii. 10, 'that which is perfect;' or that state of absolute perfection which we shall enjoy in heaven.

2. It may be considered as to its initial state in this world, expressed in the testimonies before recited; and this is that which we inquire after. And the Lord Christ, as the sole procurer of this state, is said to be *τελειωτης*, 'the consummator, the perfecter, the finisher of our faith, or religious worship,' Heb. xii. 2, as having brought us into a state *τελειωσεως*, 'of perfection.'

This is that, whatever it be, which we shall immediately inquire into, that is denied unto the Levitical priesthood, and afterwards unto the law, as that which they could not effect. They could not, by their utmost efficacy, nor by the strictest attendance unto them, bring

the church into that state of perfection, which God had designed for it in this world, and without which the glory of his grace had not been demonstrated.

Fourthly. The chief thing before us, therefore, is to inquire what this state of perfection is, wherein it doth consist, and what is required unto the constitution of it; and in the whole, to show that it could not be by the Levitical priesthood or law. Now, the things that belong unto it, are of two sorts. 1. Such as belong unto the souls and consciences of believers, that is, of the church: and, 2. Such as belong to the worship of God itself. For with respect unto these two, doth the apostle discourse, and asserts a state of perfection in opposition to the imperfect state of the church under the law, with respect unto them both. And as unto the first, there are seven things concurring unto the constitution of this state. 1. Righteousness. 2. Peace. 3. Light or knowledge. 4. Liberty with boldness. 5. A clear prospect unto a future state of blessedness. 6. Joy. 7. Confidence and glorying in the Lord. And the latter, or the worship of the gospel, becomes a part of this state of perfection. 1. By its being spiritual. 2. Easy, as absolutely suited unto the principles of the new creature. 3. In that it is instructive. 4. From its relation unto Christ as the high priest. 5. From the entrance we have therein into the holy place. In these things consists that state of perfection which the church is called unto under the New Testament, which it could never attain by the Levitical priesthood. This is that kingdom of God which is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, Rom. xiv. 17. But because these things are of great importance, although the particulars are many, I shall briefly consider them all apart.

First. The first thing constituting this gospel state of perfection, is righteousness. The introduction of all imperfection and weakness in the church, was by sin. This made the law weak, Rom. viii. 3, and sinners to be without strength, Rom. v. 7. Wherefore, the reduction of perfection, must in the first place be by righteousness. This was the great fundamental promise of the times of the New Testament, Isa. lx. 21; Ps. lxxii. 7, lxxxv. 10, 11. And this was to be brought in by Christ alone. Wherefore, one name whereby he was promised unto the church, was, 'the Lord our righteousness,' Jer. xxiii. 6. Righteousness of our own we had none, nor could any thing in the whole creation supply us with the least of its concerns, with any thing that belongs thereunto; yet without it must we perish for ever. Wherefore, Jehovah himself becomes our righteousness, that we might say, 'In Jehovah have we righteousness and strength, and that in him all the seed of Israel might be justified and glory,' Isa. xlv. 24, 25. For 'by him are all that believe justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses,' Acts xiii. 39. To this end he brought in everlasting righteousness, Dan. ix. 24, צדק עולם. Not a temporary righteousness suited unto the עולם, the age of the church under the old covenant, which is often said to be everlasting in a limited sense; but that which was for all ages to make the church blessed unto eternity. So is he made unto us of God righteousness, 1 Cor. i. 30.

This is the foundation of the gospel τελειωσις, or ‘perfection;’ and it was procured for us, by the Lord Christ offering up himself in sacrifice as our great high priest. For, ‘we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins,’ Eph. i. 7. God having set him forth to be a ‘propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the forgiveness of sins.’ And this he is in opposition unto whatever the law could effect, taking away that condemnation which issued from a conjunction of sin and the law. For ‘what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us,’ Rom. viii. 3, 4. The end of the law, in the first place, was to be a means and instrument of righteousness unto those to whom it was given. But after the entrance of sin, it became weak, and utterly insufficient unto any such purpose: for, ‘by the deeds of the law can no flesh be justified.’ Wherefore, ‘Christ is become the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth,’ Rom. x. 4. And by whomsoever this is denied, namely, that Christ is our righteousness, which he cannot be but by the imputation of his righteousness unto us, they do virtually overthrow the very foundation of that state of perfection, which God had designed to bring his church unto. This, the Levitical priesthood could not effect, for the reason given in the words following: ‘For under it the people received the law.’ It could do no more but what the law could do; but that could not make us righteous, because it was weak through the flesh. And by the deeds of the law, no man can be justified.

It may be said that believers had this righteousness under the Levitical priesthood, or they could not have had a good report through faith, namely, this testimony, that they pleased God.

Ans. 1. Our apostle doth not deny it, yea, he proves it at large by manifold instances, ch. xi, that they had it. Only he denies that they had it by virtue of the Levitical priesthood, or any duties of the law. He speaks not of the thing itself with respect unto the persons of believers under the Old Testament, but of the cause and means of it. What they had of this kind, was by virtue of another priesthood, which therefore, was to be introduced; and the other, which could not effect it, was therefore to be removed. He denies not perfection unto persons under the Levitical priesthood, but denies that they were made partakers of it thereby.

2. They had this righteousness really and as to the benefits of it, but had it not in that clearness and evidence of its nature, cause, and effects, as it is now revealed in the gospel. Hence, although their interest in it was sufficient to secure their eternal concerns, yet they had it not in such a way as was required unto this τελειωσις in this life. For we know how great a portion of the perfect state of the gospel consists in a clear apprehension, that Christ is, and how he is our righteousness, whereon the main of our present comforts do depend. The great inquiry of the souls of men is, how they may have a righteousness before God. And the clear discovery of the causes of it, of

the way and manner how we are made partakers of it, is a great part of the perfection of the gospel state.

3. It was so obscurely represented unto them, as that the law rose up in a competition with it, or rather against it, in the minds of the generality of the people. They 'looked for righteousness as it were by the works of the law,' Rom. ix. 32, and on this rock of offence, this stumbling-stone, they shipwrecked their eternal condition, ver. 32, 33. For whilst they 'went about to establish their own righteousness, they submitted not unto the righteousness of God,' Rom. x. 3. And we may easily apprehend how great a snare this proved to them. For there is in corrupted nature, such an opposition and enmity unto this righteousness of God in Christ, and the dictates of the law are so rivetted in the minds of men by nature, that now after the full and clear declaration of it in the gospel, men are shifting a thousand ways, to set up a righteousness of their own in the room of it. How strong, then, must the same inclination be in them who had nothing but the law to guide them, wherein this righteousness was wrapt up under many veils and coverings. Here, therefore, at the last, the body of the people lost themselves, and continue unto this day under the curse of that law, which they hoped would justify and save them.

Secondly. Peace is the next thing that belongs unto this gospel state of perfection. The 'kingdom of God is peace,' Rom. xiv. 17. To lay the foundation of this kingdom, the Lord Christ both made peace, and preached peace, or declared the nature of the peace he had made, tendering and communicating of it unto us, Eph. ii. 14—17. And this peace of evangelical consummation, is threefold. 1. With God. 2. Between Jews and Gentiles. 3. In and among ourselves.

1. It is peace with God. This is the first effect and fruit of the righteousness before mentioned, Isa. xxxii. 17. For, 'being justified by faith, we have peace with God,' Rom. v. 1. And hereon depends our peace in the whole creation above and below. And if we look into the promises of the Old Testament concerning the kingdom of Christ, the greatest part, and the most eminent of them, respect peace with God and the whole creation. All things in the creation were at odds, jarring and interfering continually, upon the entrance of sin. For an enmity thereby being introduced between God and man, it extended itself unto all other creatures that had either dependence on man, or were subservient naturally unto his use, or were put in subjection to him by God, the Lord of all. Hereby were they all cast into a state of vanity and bondage, which they groan under, and as it were, look out for a deliverance from, Rom. viii. 20—23. But in this gospel state, God designs a reconciliation of all things, or a reduction of them into their proper order. For he 'purposed in himself, that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he would gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him,' Eph. i. 9, 10. The *ανακεφαλαιωσις* here mentioned, is the same on the matter with the *τελειωσις* in this place. God has in his counsel and purpose, distributed the times or ages of the world, into several parts or seasons, with respect unto his own works, and the

revelation of his mind and will unto men. See our exposition on ch. i.

1. Every one of these parts or seasons, had its particular *οικονομία*, or 'dispensation.' But there was a *πληρωμα των καιρων*, 'a certain time or season,' wherein all the rest that were past before, should have their complement and perfection. And this season had its especial *οικονομία*, or 'dispensation' also. And this was the *ανακεφαλαιωσις* mentioned; the peace-making and reconciliation of all things, by gathering up the scattered, divided, jarring parts of the creation into one Head, even Christ Jesus. And as this enmity and disorder entered into the whole by the sin of man, so the foundation of this catholic peace and order, from which nothing is excluded but the serpent and his seed, must be laid in peace between God and man. This, therefore, God designed in Christ alone, 2 Cor. v. 20, 21. The first and fundamental work of Christ, as the high priest of the new covenant, was to make peace between God and sinners. And this he did by bringing in everlasting righteousness. So was he typed by Melchisedec, first king of righteousness, then king of peace. For 'when we were enemies, we were reconciled unto God by the death of his Son,' Rom. v. 10. Hence his name was *עֵר שָׁלוֹם*, 'the Prince of peace,' Isa. ix. 6. Wherefore, this reconciliation and peace with God, is a great part of this gospel perfection. So our Saviour testifieth, John xiv. 27, 'Peace,' saith he, 'I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you: let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.' Assured peace with God, delivering the souls of his disciples from all trouble and fear, is that which he peculiarly bequeathed unto them. And so great a share in this *τελειωσις* doth this peace with God, and the consequents of it in peace with the residue of the creation bear, that the kingdom of Christ is most frequently spoken of under this notion, Isa. xi. 4—9, &c. But these things are liable unto a double objection. For,

First. Some may complain hereon, Behold our bones are dried, our hope is lost, we are cut off for our parts. For we cannot attain unto this peace with God, being exercised with fear and disconsolations all our days, so as that we seem to have no interest in this gospel state. *Ans.* 1. Peace is made for all that believe. 2. The way of attaining it is laid open unto them, Isa. xxvii. 5. 3. Patient abiding in faith, will in due time bring them into this peace. 4. It is one thing to have peace with God, which all believers have; another to have the constant sense and comfort of it in their own souls, which they may want for a season.

Secondly. Some say, they are so far from finding peace with the whole creation, that on all accounts they meet with great enmities in the world. *Ans.* 1. It is not said that peace is made for us with Satan or the world, the serpent and his seed. This belongs not unto this perfection. 2. Whatever troubles we may have with other things, yet in the issue, they shall all work together for our good, which is sufficient to constitute a state of peace.

This part of the perfection of the church, could not be attained by the Levitical priesthood. For two things belonged thereunto. 1. That peace be actually made. 2. That it be fully declared. So the apostle

expresseth it as it was effected by Christ, Eph. ii. 14.—He is our peace: and that, 1. By making peace—he made peace, ver. 15, 16. 2. By declaring it, ver 17.—he came and preached peace. Neither of these could be done by the Levitical priesthood. Not the first, it could not make peace, because it could not bring in righteousness, which is the cause and foundation of it, Isa. xxxii. 17; Rom. v. 1. Not the second, it could not declare or preach this peace. For the giving of the law, with all tokens of dread and severity, with the curse annexed unto it, was directly contrary hereunto. This, therefore, was brought in by this better priesthood alone.

2. Peace between Jews and Gentiles, belongs unto this state. For God designed not the erecting of his kingdom amongst one party or sort of mankind. That it should be otherwise, that the Gentiles should become the children of Abraham, and be made heirs of the promise, was a great mystery under the Old Testament, Eph. iii. 4—6. And we know how slow the disciples of Christ himself were, in the receiving and understanding hereof. But evident it is, that this was God's design from the giving of the first promise, and we see now in the light of the gospel, that he gave many intimations of it unto the church of old, with respect whereunto the veil abideth on the minds of the Jews unto this day. Wherefore, without this peace also, the perfect state of the church aimed at, could not be attained. But this could never have been brought about by the Levitical priesthood and law. For they were indeed the principal occasion of the distance between them, and the means of the continuance of their disagreement. And that which the Jews thought to have been the principal advantage and privilege of Abraham in his posterity, was that which, whilst it continued, kept him from the actual possession of his greatest glory, in being the heir of the world, and a father of a multitude of nations. Nor whilst that priesthood was standing, could Japheth be persuaded to dwell in the tents of Shem. Hence, this peace was so far from being the effect of the Levitical priesthood and the law, as that it could not be introduced and established until they were both taken out of the way, as our apostle expressly declares, Eph. ii. 14—16. The last issue of this contest, came unto these two heads. 1. Whether the Gentiles should at all be called unto the faith of the gospel. 2. Whether being called, they should be obliged unto the observance of the law of Moses. The first fell out among the apostles themselves, but quickly determined by our Lord Jesus Christ unto their joy and satisfaction. And this he did two ways. 1. By sending Peter to preach the gospel unto Cornelius, and therein bestowing the Holy Ghost on them that did believe, Acts x. 14, 17, 45, 46, 47, xi. 17, 18. 2. By giving Paul an open full commission to go to the Gentiles and preach the gospel unto them, Acts xxii. 21, xxvi. 15—18. Here the body of the people of the Jews, fell off with rage and madness. But the other part of the controversy, was of longer continuance. The Jews, finding that the Gentiles were by the gospel brought so near unto them, as to turn from dumb idols unto God, and to receive the promise no less than themselves, would by all means have brought them over unto the obedience of the law of Moses also. This yoke, the Gentiles

being greatly afraid of, were in no small perplexity of mind what to do. The gospel they were resolved to embrace, but were very unwilling to take on them the yoke of the law. Wherefore, the Holy Ghost in the apostles, at length puts an issue unto the difference also, and lets the church know, that indeed the wall of partition was broken down, the law of commandments contained in ordinances was taken away, and that the Gentiles were not to be obliged unto the observance of it, which they greatly rejoiced in, Acts xv. 31. Other way there was none for the reconciliation of those parties, who had been at so long and so great a variance.

It will be said, that we yet see a variance between Jews and Gentiles continued all the world over; and they are in all places mutually an abomination unto each other. And it is true it is so, and is likely so to continue. For there is no remedy that can be so effectual to heal a distemper, or make up a fracture, as that it will work its cure without use or application. The gospel is not at all concerned in what state and condition men are who reject it, and refuse to believe it. They may still live in enmity and malice, hateful and hating one another. But where it is believed, embraced, and submitted unto, there an absolute end is put unto all difference or enmity between Jews and Gentiles, as such, seeing all are made one in Christ. And this *τελειωσις* belongs only unto them who do obey the gospel.

3. Peace among ourselves, that is, among believers, doth also belong hereunto. There was peace and brotherly love required under the law. But no duty receiveth a greater improvement under the gospel. The purchase of it by the blood of Christ, his prayer for it, the new motives added unto it, the communication of it as the legacy of Christ among his disciples, with the especial ends and duties of it, do constitute it a part of the perfect state of the church under the gospel.

Thirdly. The third thing wherein this *τελειωσις*, or perfection, doth consist, is spiritual light and knowledge with respect to the mysteries of the wisdom and grace of God. God had designed for the church a measure of spiritual light and knowledge which was not attainable under the law, which is the subject of that great promise, Jer. xxxi. 34, the accomplishment of which is declared, 1 John ii. 27. And there are three things which concur to the constitution of this privilege.

1. The principal revealer of the mind and will of God. Under the law God made use of the ministry of men to this purpose, as of Moses and the prophets. And he employed also, both in the erection of the church-state, and in sundry particulars afterwards, the ministry of angels, as our apostle declares, ch. ii. 2. And in some sense that state was thereby put in subjection to angels, ver. 5. But this ministry, the dispensation of light and knowledge thereby, could not render it complete, yea, it was an argument of the darkness and bondage under which it was. For there was yet one greater than they all, and above them all, one more intimately acquainted with God and all the counsels of his will by whom he would speak forth his mind, Deut. xviii. 18, 19. This was the Son of God himself, without whose immediate ministry the consummation of the church-state could not be attained.

This consideration our apostle insists on at large in the first chapter and the beginning of the second, concluding from thence the preeminence of the evangelical state above the legal. The especial nature whereof we have declared in the exposition of those places. A most eminent privilege this was, yea, the highest outward privilege that the church is capable of, and eminently concurs to its perfection. For whether we consider the dignity of his person, or the perfect knowledge and comprehension he had of the whole counsel of God, and the mysteries of his grace, it incomparably exalts the church state above that of old, whence our apostle draws many arguments to the necessity of our obedience, above what they were urged withal. See ch. ii. 2, 3, xii. 25. And this full revelation of his counsels by the ministry of his Son, God did reserve, partly that he might have a preeminence in all things, and partly because none other either did or could comprehend the mysteries of it as it was now to be revealed. See John i. 18.

2. The matter or things themselves revealed. There was under the Levitical priesthood a shadow of good things to come, but no perfect image or complete delineation of them, ch. x. 1. They had the first promise, and the enlargements of it to Abraham and David. Sundry expositions were also added to them, relating to the manner of their accomplishment. And many intimations were given of the grace of God thereby. But all this was done so darkly, so obscurely, so wrapped up in types, shadows, figures, and allegories, as that no perfection of light or knowledge, was to be obtained. The mystery of them continued still hid in God, Eph. iii. 9. Hence are the doctrines concerning them called parables and dark sayings, Ps. lxxviii. 2. Neither did the prophets themselves see into the depth of their own predictions, 1 Pet. i. 11, 12. Hence the believing church waited with earnest expectation, 'till the day should break, and the shadows should flee away,' Cant. ii. 17, iv. 6. They longed for the breaking forth of that glorious light, which the Son of God was to bring, attending in the meantime to the word of prophecy, which was as the light of a candle to them shining in a dark place. They lived on that great promise, Mal. iv. 2. They expected righteousness, light, and grace, but knew not the way of them. Thence their prophets, righteous men, and kings, desired to see the things of the gospel, and saw them not, Matt. xiii. 17; Luke x. 24. And therefore John the Baptist, who was greater than any of the prophets, because he saw and owned the Son of God as come in the flesh, which they desired to see, and saw not; yet living and dying under the Levitical priesthood, not seeing life and immortality brought to light by the gospel, the least in the kingdom of God is greater than he in spiritual knowledge. Wherefore it belonged to the *τελειωσις*, or perfect state of the church, that there should be a full and plain revelation and declaration made of the whole counsel of God, of the mystery of his will and grace, as the end of those things which were to be done away. And this is done in the gospel, under that new priesthood which was to be introduced. Nor without this priesthood could it be so made. For the principal part of the mystery of God depends on, consists in the discharge of the office of that priesthood. They do

so on his oblation and intercession, the atonement made for sin, and the bringing in of everlasting righteousness thereby. The plain revelation of these things, which could not be made before their actual accomplishment, is a great part of this gospel perfection. This the apostle disputes at large, 2 Cor. iii. from ver. 7, to the end of the chapter.

3. The inward spiritual light of the minds of believers, enabling them to discern the mind of God, and the mysteries of his will as revealed, doth also belong to this part of the perfection of the gospel church-state. This was promised under the Old Testament, Isa. xi. 9, liv. 13; Jer. xxxi. 34. And although it was enjoyed by the saints of old, yet was it so in a very small measure and low degree, in comparison of what it is now after the plentiful effusion of the Spirit. See 1 Cor. ii. 11, 12. This is that which is prayed for Eph. i. 17—19, iii. 18, 19. Wherefore this head of the *τελειωσις*, or perfection intended, consists in three things. 1. The personal ministry of Christ in the preaching of the gospel, or declaration of the mystery of the wisdom and grace of God in himself. 2. The dispensation or mission of the Holy Ghost to reveal and fully make known the same mystery by the apostles and prophets of the New Testament, Eph. iii. 5. 3. In the effectual illumination of the minds of them that do believe, enabling them spiritually to discern the mysteries so revealed, every one according to the measure of his gift and grace. See concerning it, 1 Pet. ii. 9; Eph. iii. 17—19, v. 8.

Fourthly. There belongs to this perfection that *παρρησια*, that liberty and boldness which believers have in their approaches to God. This is frequently mentioned as an especial privilege and advantage of the gospel state, Eph. iii. 12; Heb. iii. 6, iv. 16, x. 19, 35; 1 John iii. 21, iv. 17, v. 14. And on the contrary, the state under the Levitical priesthood is described as a state of fear and bondage, that is comparatively, Rom. viii. 15; 2 Tim. i. 7; Heb. ii. 15. And this bondage, or fear arose from sundry causes inseparable from that priesthood and the administrations of it. As,

1. From the dreadful manner of giving the law. This filled the whole people with terror and amazement. On the administration of the Spirit by the gospel, believers do immediately cry, 'Abba Father,' Rom. viii. 16; Gal. iv. 6. They have the liberty and boldness to draw nigh to God, and to call him Father. But there was such an administration of a spirit of dread and terror in the giving of the law, as that the people were not able to bear the approaches of God to them, nor the thought of an access to him. And therefore they desired that all things for the future might be transacted by an internuncius, one that might go between God and them whilst they kept at their distance, Deut. v. 23—27. When any first hear the law, they are afraid of God, and desire nothing more than not to come near him. They would be saved by a distance from him. When any first hear the gospel, that is, so as to believe it, their hearts are opened with love to God, and all their desire is, to be near to him, to draw nigh to his throne. Hence it is called the joyful sound. Nothing can be more opposite than these two frames. And this spirit of fear and dread thus

first given out in the giving of the law, was communicated to them in all their generations, whilst the Levitical priesthood continued. For as there was nothing to remove it, so itself was one of the ordinances provided for its continuance. This are we now wholly delivered from. See ch. xii. 18—21.

2. It arose from the revelation of the sanction of the law in the curse. Hereby principally the law gendered to bondage, Gal. iv. 25. For all the people were in some sense put under the curse; namely, so far as they would seek for righteousness by the works of the law. So saith our apostle, 'As many as are of the work of the law are under the curse,' Gal. iii. 10. This curse was plainly and openly denounced as due to the breach of the law, as our apostle adds, 'It is written, Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.' And all their capital punishments were representations thereof. This could not but take a deep impression on their minds, and render them obnoxious to bondage. Hence, although on the account of the promise they were heirs, yet by the law they were made as servants and kept in fear, Gal. iv. 1. Neither had they such a prospect into the nature and signification of their types, as to set them at perfect liberty from this cause of dread. For as there was a veil on the face of Moses, that is, as all the revelations of the mind and will of God by him, were veiled with types and shadows; so there was a veil on their hearts also in the weakness of their spiritual light, that 'they could not look steadfastly to the end of that which is abolished,' 2 Cor. iii. 13, that is, to him 'who is the end of the law for righteousness unto them that do believe,' Rom. x. 4. It was therefore impossible but that their minds must ordinarily be filled with anxiety and fear. But there is now no more curse in the gospel state. Rev. xxii. 2. The curse abideth only on the serpent and his seed, Isa. lxxv. 25. The blessing of the promise doth wholly possess the place of it, Gal. iii. 13, 14. Only they who will choose still to be under the law, by living in the sins that it condemneth, or seeking for righteousness by the works which it commands, are under the curse.

3. Under the Levitical priesthood, even their holy worship was so appointed and ordered, as to keep them partly in fear, and partly at a distance from the presence of God. The continual multiplication of their sacrifices, one day after another, one week after another, one month after another, one year after another, taught them, that by them all there was not an end made of sin, nor everlasting righteousness brought in by any of them. This argument our apostle makes use of to this purpose, ch. x. 1, 'The law,' saith he, 'could never by those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually, *τους προσερχομενους τελειωσαι*, bring the worshippers to this perfection.' And he gives this reason for it, namely, because they had still a conscience of sin, that is, a conscience condemning them for sin, and therefore there was a remembrance made of sin again every year, ver. 2, 3. Hereby they were kept in dread and fear. And in their worship they were minded of nothing so much as their distance from God, and that they had not as yet a right to an immediate access to him. For they were not so much as once to come into the holiest, where were the pledges

and tokens of God's presence. And the prohibitions of their approaches to God were attended with such severe penalties, that the people cried out they were not able to bear them, Num. xvii. 12, 13, which Peter reflects on, Acts xv. 10, 'The Holy Ghost thereby signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not made manifest whilst the first tabernacle was standing,' Heb. ix. 8. No man had yet right to enter into it with boldness, which believers now have, ch. x. 19, 20.

4. God had designed the whole dispensation of the law under that priesthood unto this very end, that it should give the people neither rest nor liberty, but press and urge them to be looking after their full relief in the promised Seed, Gal. iv. 1, 2, iii. 24. It pressed them with a sense of sin, with a yoke of ceremonious observances, presenting them with the handwriting of ordinances which was against them, Col. ii. 14. It urged their consciences not to seek after rest in or by that state. Here could be no perfection, because there could be no liberty. The *παρρησία*, or boldness we speak of, is opposed unto all these causes of bondage and fear. It was not the design of God always to keep the church in a state of nonage, and under schoolmasters: he had appointed to set it at liberty in the fulness of time, to take his children nearer unto him, to give them greater evidences of his love, greater assurances of the eternal inheritance, and the use of more liberty and boldness in his presence. But what this *παρρησία* of the gospel is, wherein it doth consist, what is included in it, what freedom of spirit, what liberty of speech, what right of access, and boldness of approach unto God, built upon the removal of the law, the communication of the Spirit, the way made into the holiest by the blood of Christ, with other concernments of it, constitutive of gospel perfection, I have already in part declared in our exposition on ch. iii. 5, and must, if God please, yet more largely insist upon it, on ch. x., so that I shall not here further speak unto it.

Fifthly. A clear foresight into a blessed estate of immortality and glory, with unquestionable evidences and pledges, giving assurance of it, belongs also to this consummation. Death was originally threatened as the final issue of sin. And the evidence hereof was received under the Levitical priesthood in the curse of the law. There was indeed a remedy provided against its prevalency in the first promise. For whereas death comprised all the evil that was come, or was to come, on man for sin, 'In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt die:' the promise contained the means of deliverance from it, or it was no promise, tendered no relief unto man in the state whereinto he was fallen. But the people under the law could see but little into the manner and way of its accomplishment, nor had they received any pledge of it, in any one that was dead and lived again so as to die no more. Wherefore their apprehensions of this deliverance were dark, and attended with much fear, which rendered them obnoxious unto bondage. See the exposition on ch. ii. 14, where we have declared the dreadful apprehensions of the Jews concerning death, received by tradition from the fathers. They could not look through the dark shades of death into light, immortality, and glory. See the twofold spirit of the Old and New Testament, with respect unto the apprehensions of death ex-

pressed ; the one, Job x. 21, 22, the other, 2 Cor. v. 1—4. But there is nothing more needful unto the perfect state of the church. Suppose it endowed with all possible privileges in this world, yet if it have not a clear view and prospect, with a blessed assurance of immortality and glory after death, its condition will be dark and uncomfortable. And as this could not be done without bringing in of another priesthood, so by that of Christ's it is accomplished. For,

1. He himself died as our high priest. He entered into the devouring jaws of death, and that as it was threatened in the curse. And now is the trial to be made. If he who thus ventured on death as threatened in the curse, and that for us, be swallowed up by it, or detained by its power and pains, there is a certain end of all our hopes. Whatever we may arrive unto in this world, death will convey us over into eternal ruin. But if he brake through its power, and have the pains of it removed from him, and do swallow it up into victory, and rise triumphantly into immortality and glory, then is our entrance into them also, even by and after death, secured. And in the resurrection of Christ, the church had the first unquestionable evidence that death might be conquered, that it and the curse might be separated, that there might be a free passage through it into life and immortality. These things originally, and in the first covenant, were inconsistent, nor was the reconciliation of them evident under the Levitical priesthood. But hereby was the veil rent from top to bottom, and the most holy place not made with hands laid open unto believers. See Isa. xxv. 7, 8.

2. As by his death, resurrection, and entrance into glory, he gave a pledge, example, and evidence unto the church of that in his own person which he had designed for it, so the grounds of it were laid in the expiatory sacrifice which he offered, whereby he took away the curse from death. There was such a close conjunction between death and the curse, such a combination between sin, the law and death, that the breaking of that conjunction, and the dissolving of that combination, was the greatest effect of divine wisdom and grace, which our apostle so triumpheth in, 1 Cor. xv. 54—57. This could no otherwise be brought about, but by his being made a curse in death, or bearing the curse which was in death in our stead, Gal. iii. 13,

3. He hath clearly declared unto the utmost of our capacities in this world, that future state of blessedness and glory, which he will lead all his disciples into. All the concernments hereof under the Levitical priesthood, were represented only under the obscure types and shadows of earthly things. But he hath 'abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,' 2 Tim. i. 10. He destroyed and abolished him who had the power of death, in taking away the curse from it, Heb. ii. 14. And he abolished death itself in the removal of those dark shades which it cast on immortality and eternal life ; and hath opened an abundant entrance into the kingdom of God and glory. He hath unveiled the uncreated beauties of the King of glory, and opened the everlasting doors, to give an insight into those mansions of rest, peace, and blessedness. which are prepared for believers in the everlasting enjoyment of God. And these things

constitute no small part of that consummated estate of the church which God designed, and which the Levitical priesthood could no way effect.

Sixthly. There is also an especial joy belonging unto this state. For this kingdom of God is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Neither was this attainable by the Levitical priesthood. Indeed, many of the saints of the Old Testament did greatly rejoice in the Lord, and had the joy of his salvation abiding with them; see Ps. li. 12; Isa. xxv. 9; Hab. iii. 17, 18. But they had it not by virtue of the Levitical priesthood. Isaiah tells us that the ground of it was the swallowing up of death in victory, xxv. 8, which was no otherwise to be done, but by the death and resurrection of Christ. It was by an influence of efficacy from the priesthood that was to be introduced that they had their joy; whence Abraham saw the day of Christ, and rejoiced to see it. The prospect of the day of Christ was the sole foundation of all their spiritual joy, that was purely so. But as unto their own present state, they were allowed and called to rejoice in the abundance of temporal things; though the Psalmist, in a spirit of prophecy, prefers the joy arising from the light of God's countenance in Christ, above all of that sort, Ps. iv. 6, 7. But ordinarily their joy was mixed and allayed with a respect unto temporal things; see Lev. xxiii. 39—41; Deut. xii. 11, 12, 18, xvi. 11, xxvii. 7. This was the end of their annual festivals. And those who would introduce such festival rejoicings into the gospel state, do so far degenerate into Judaism, as preferring their natural joy in the outward manner of expression, before the spiritual ineffable joys of the gospel. This it is that belongs unto the state thereof; such a joy in the Lord, as carrieth believers with an holy triumph through every condition, even when all outward causes of joy do fail and cease. A joy it is unspeakable, and full of glory, 1 Pet. i. 8; see John xv. 11; Rom. xv. 13; Jude 24. It is that inexpressible satisfaction, which is wrought in the minds of believers by the Holy Ghost, from an evidence of their interest in the love of God by Christ, with all the fruits of it, present and to come, with a spiritual sense and experience of their value, worth, and excellency. This gives the soul a quiet repose in all its trials, refreshment when it is weary, peace in trouble, and the highest satisfaction in the hardest things that are to be undergone, for the profession of the name of Christ, Rom. v. 1—5.

Seventhly. Confidence and glorying in the Lord, is also a part of this perfection. This is the flowering, or the effect and fruit of joy; a readiness unto, and the way whereby we do express it. One great design of the gospel is to exclude all boasting, all glorying of any thing of self in religion, Rom. iii. 27. It is by the gospel and the law of faith therein that men are taught not to boast or glory, neither in outward privileges, nor in moral duties; see Phil. iii. 5—9; Rom. iii. 27, 28, iv. 2. What then is there no glorying left us in the profession of the gospel, no triumph, no exultation of spirit, but we must always be sad and cast down, at best stand but on even terms with our oppositions, and never rejoice over them? Yes, there is a greater and more excellent glorying introduced, than the heart of man

on any other account is capable of. But God hath so ordered all things now, that no flesh should glory in his presence, but that he who glorieth should glory in the Lord, 1 Cor. i. 29, 31. And what is the reason of the foundation hereof? It is this alone, that 'we are in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption,' ver. 30. So it was promised of old, that in the Lord, that is, the Lord our righteousness, all the seed of Israel should be justified and glory, Isa. xlv. 25. This is that *καυχημα της ελπιδος*, which we have opened on, ch. iii. 6. 14, whither the reader is referred. It is that triumphant exultation of spirit which ariseth in believers, from their absolutely preferring their interest in heavenly things above things present, so as to contemn and despise whatever is contrary thereunto, however tendered in a way of allure-ment or rage.

In these things and others of the like nature and kind, consists that *τελειωσις*, or consummation of the state of the church as to the persons of the worshippers, which the apostle denies to have been attainable, by or under the Levitical priesthood. The arguments wherewith he confirms his assertion ensue in the verses following, where they must be further considered. But we may not proceed without some observations for our own edification in this matter.

Obs. I. An interest in the gospel consisteth not in an outward profession of it, but in a real participation of those things wherein the perfection of its state doth consist. Men may have a form of godliness, and be utter strangers to the power of it. Multitudes in all ages have made, and do make, a profession of the gospel, who yet have no experience in themselves of the real benefits and advantages wherewith it is accompanied. All that they obtain hereby, is but to deceive their souls into eternal ruin. For they live in some kind of expectation, that in another world they shall obtain rest, and blessedness, and glory by it. But the gospel will do nothing for them hereafter in things eternal, who are not here partakers of its power and fruits in things spiritual.

Obs. II. The preeminence of the gospel state above the legal is spiritual and undiscernible unto a carnal eye. For, 1. It is evident that the principal design of the apostle in all these discourses is, to prove the excellency of the state of the church under the New Testament, in its faith, liberty, and worship, above that of the church under the Old. And, 2. That he doth not in any of them, produce instances of outward pomp, ceremonies, or visible glory, in the confirmation of his assertion. He grants, all the outward institutions and ordinances of the law, insisting on them, their use, and signification in particular; but he opposeth not unto them any outward visible glory in gospel administrations. 3. In 2 Cor. iii. he expressly compares these two administrations of the law and the gospel as unto their excellency and glory. And, first, he acknowledgeth that the administration of the law, in the institution and celebration of it, was glorious, ver. 6—11. But withal he adds, that it had no glory in comparison with that under the New Testament, which doth far excel it. Wherein then doth this glory consist? He tells us it doth so in this, in that it is

the administration of the Spirit, ver. 8, 'How shall not the administration of the Spirit be rather glorious?' He doth not resolve it into outward order, the beauty and pomp of ceremonies and ordinances. In this alone it doth consist, in that the whole dispensation of it is carried on by the grace and gifts of the Spirit; and that they are also administered thereby. This, saith he, is glory and liberty, such as excel all the glories of the old administrations. 5. In this place he sums it up all in this, that the perfection we have treated of was effected by the gospel, and could not be so by the Levitical priesthood, and the whole law of the commandments contained in ordinances. In these spiritual things therefore are we to seek after the glory of the gospel, and its preeminence above the law. And those who suppose they render the dispensation of the gospel glorious, by vying with the law in ceremonies and an external pomp of worship, as doth the church of Rome, do wholly cross his design. And therefore,

Secondly. This *τελειωσις*, or perfection, respects the worship of the gospel, as well as the persons of the worshippers, and the grace whereof they are made partakers. God had designed the church unto a more perfect state in point of worship, than it was capable of under the Levitical priesthood. Nor indeed could any man reasonably think, or wisely judge, that he intended the institutions of the law, as the complete ultimate worship and service, that he would require or appoint in this world, seeing our natures, as renewed by grace, are capable of that which is more spiritual and sublime. For,

1. They were in their nature carnal, as our apostle declares, ver. 16, and ix. 10. The subject of them all, the means of their celebration, were carnal things, beneath those pure spiritual acts of the mind and soul, which are of a more noble nature. They consisted in meats and drinks, the blood of bulls and goats, the observance of moons and festivals, in a temple made of wood and stone, gold and silver, things carnal, perishing and transitory. Certainly God, who is a Spirit, and will be worshipped in spirit and in truth, designed at one time or other a worship more suited unto his own nature, though the imposition of these things on the church for a season, was necessary. And as they were carnal, so they might be exactly performed by men of carnal minds, and were so for the most part, in which respect God himself speaks often with a great undervaluation of them; see Ps. l. 8—13; Isa. i. 11—13. Had not he designed the renovation of our natures into his own image, a new creation of them by Jesus Christ, this carnal worship might have sufficed, and would have been the best we are capable of. But to suppose that he should endow men, as he doth by Christ, with a new spiritual supernatural principle, enabling them unto a more sublime and spiritual worship, it cannot be imagined that he would always bind them up unto those carnal ordinances in their religious service. And the reason is, because they were not a meet and sufficient means for the exercise of that new principle of faith and love which he bestows on believers by Jesus Christ. Yea, to burden them with carnal observances, is a most effectual way to take them off from its exercise in his service. And so it is at this day; wherever

there is a multiplication of outward services and observances, the minds of men are so taken up with bodily exercise about them, as that they cannot attend unto the pure internal actings of faith and love.

2. What by their number and what by their nature, and the manner of exacting of them, they were made a yoke which the people were never able to bear with any joy or satisfaction, Acts xv. 10. And this yoke lay partly in the first place on their consciences, or the inner man. And it consisted principally in two things. 1. The multitude of ceremonies and institutions did perplex them, and gave them no rest. Seeing which way soever they turned themselves, one precept or other, positive or negative, 'Touch not, taste not, handle not,' was upon them. 2. The veil that was on them, as to their use, meaning, and end, increased the trouble of this yoke. They could not see unto the end of the things that were to be done away, because of the veil, nor could apprehend fully the reason of what they did. And it may be easily conceived how great a yoke it was to be bound unto the strict observance of such rites and ceremonies in worship; yea, that the whole of their worship should consist in such things, as those who made use of them did not understand the end and meaning of them. And, 2dly. It lay on their persons from the manner of their imposition; as they were tied up unto days, times, and hours, so their transgression or disobedience made them obnoxious to all sorts of punishments, and excision itself. For they were all bound upon them with a curse; whence 'every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward,' ch. ii. 2. For 'he that despised Moses' law, died without mercy,' ch. x. 28, which they complained of, Num. xvii. 12, 13. This put them on continual scrupulous fears, with endless inventions of their own to secure themselves from the guilt of such transgressions. Hence the religion of the Jews at present, is become a monstrous confused heap of vain inventions, and scrupulous observances of their own, to secure themselves, as they suppose, from transgressing any of those which God had given them. Take any one institution of the law, and consider what is the exposition they give of it in their Mishna, by their oral tradition, and it will display the fear and bondage they are in, though the remedy be worse than the disease. Yea, by all their inventions, they did but increase that which they endeavoured to avoid. For they have brought things unto that pass among them, that it is impossible that any one of them should have satisfaction in his conscience, that he hath aright observed any of God's institutions, although he should suppose that he required nothing of him, but the outward performance of them.

3. Their instructive efficacy, which is the principal end of the ordinances of divine worship, was weak, and no way answered the power and evidence of gospel institutions, ch. x. 1. Therefore was the way of teaching by them intricate, and the way of learning difficult. Hence is that difference which is put between the teachings under the Old Testament and the New. For now it is promised, that men 'shall not teach every man his brother, and every man his neighbour, saying, Know the Lord,' as it was of old. The means of instruction were so

dark and cloudy, and having only a shadow of the things themselves that were to be taught, and not the very image of them, that it was needful that they should be continually inculcated to keep up the knowledge of the very rudiments of religion. Besides, they had many ordinances, rites, and ceremonies, imposed on them to increase their yoke, whereof they understood nothing but only that it was the sovereign pleasure and will of God, that they should observe them, though they understood not of what use they were. And they were obliged unto no less an exact observance of them, than they were unto that of those which were the clearest and most lightsome.

The best direction they had from them, and by them, was, that indeed there was nothing in them, that is, in their nature or proper efficacy, to produce or procure those good things which they looked for through them, but only pointed unto what was to come. Wherefore they knew, that although they exercised themselves in them with diligence all their days, yet by virtue of them they could never attain what they aimed at; only there was something signified by them, and afterwards to be introduced, that was efficacious of what they looked after. Now, unto the strict observance of these things, were the people obliged under the most severe penalties, and that all the days of their lives. And this increased their bondage. God indeed, by his grace, did influence the minds of true believers among them unto satisfaction in their obedience, helping them to adore that sovereignty and wisdom which they believed in all his institutions. And he gave unto them really the benefits of the good things that were for to come, and that were prefigured by their services. But the state wherein they were by reason of these things was a state of bondage. Nor could any relief be given in this state unto the minds or consciences of men by the Levitical priesthood. For it was itself the principal cause of all these burdens and grievances, in that the administration of all sacred things was committed thereunto.

The apostle takes it here for granted, that God designed a *τελειωσις*, or state of perfection unto the church; and that as to its worship, as well as unto its faith and obedience. We find by the event, that it answered not the divine wisdom and goodness, to bind up the church during its whole sojourning in this world, unto a worship so carnal, burdensome, so imperfect, so unsuited to express his grace and kindness towards it, or its sense thereof. And who can but pity the woeful condition of the present Jews, who can conceive of no greater blessedness than the restoration of this burdensome service. So true is it what the apostle says, the veil is upon them unto this present day, yea, blindness is on their minds that they can see no beauty but only in things carnal, and like their forefathers who preferred the bondage of Egypt, because of their flesh-pots, before all the liberty and blessings of Canaan; so do they their old bondage state, because of some temporal advantages it was attended withal, before the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

In opposition hereunto, there is a worship under the gospel which hath such properties as are constitutive also of this perfection. By gospel worship, I understand the whole way and order of that solemn

worship of God, which the Lord Christ hath commanded to be observed in his churches, with all the ordinances and institutions of it, and all the private worship of believers, in their whole access unto God. The internal glory and dignity of this worship must be referred unto its proper place, which is ch. x. 19—22. Here I shall only mention some few things, wherein its excellency consists in opposition unto the defects of that under the law, on the account whereof it is constitutive of that evangelical perfection whereof we treat.

First. It is spiritual, which is the subject of the apostle's discourse, 2 Cor. iii. 6—9. &c. And it is so on a twofold account. 1. In that it is suited unto the nature of God, so as that thereby he is glorified as God. For God is a Spirit, and will be worshipped in spirit, which our Saviour asserts to belong unto the gospel state, in opposition unto all the most glorious carnal ordinances and institutions of the law, John iv. 21—24. So is it opposed unto the old worship, as it was carnal. It was that which in and by itself, answered not the nature of God, though commanded for a season; see Ps. l. 8—14. 2. Because it is performed merely by the aids, supplies, and assistances of the Spirit, as it hath been at large proved elsewhere.

Secondly. It is easy and gentle, in opposition unto the burden and insupportable yoke of the old institutions and ordinances. That so are all the commands of Christ unto believers, the whole system of his precepts, whether for moral obedience or worship, himself declares. 'Take my yoke upon you,' saith he, 'and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light, Matt. xi. 29, 43. So the apostle tells us, that 'his commandments are not grievous,' 1 John v. 3. But yet concerning this ease of gospel worship, some things must be observed.

1. As to the persons unto whom it is so easy and pleasant; and it is so only unto them who, being weary and heavy laden, do come unto Christ, that they may have rest, and do learn of him; that is, unto convinced, humbled, converted sinners, that do believe in him. Unto all others, who on mere convictions, or by other means, do take it upon them, it proves an insupportable burden, and that to which they cannot endure to be obliged. Hence the generality of men, although professing the Christian religion, are quickly weary of evangelical worship, and do find out endless inventions of their own, wherewith they are better satisfied in their divine services. Therefore, have they multiplied ceremonies, fond superstitions, and downright idolatries, which they prefer before the purity and simplicity of the worship of the gospel: as it is in the church of Rome. And the reason hereof is, that enmity which is in the minds against the spiritual things, represented and exhibited in evangelical worship. For there being so near an alliance between those things and this worship, they that hate the one, cannot but despise the other. Men of unspiritual minds cannot delight in spiritual worship. It is therefore,

2. Easy unto believers, on the account of that principle wherewith they are acted in all divine things. This is the new nature, or the new creature in them, wherein their spiritual life doth consist. By this

they delight in all spiritual things in the inner man, because they are cognate and suitable thereunto. Weariness may be upon the flesh, but the spirit will be willing. For as the principle of corrupted nature goeth out with delight and vehemency unto objects that are unto its satisfaction, and unto all the means of its conjunction unto them, and union with them; so the principle of grace in the hearts of believers, is carried with delight and fervency unto those spiritual things which are its proper object; and therewithal unto the ways and means of conjunction with them, and union unto them. And this is the proper life and effect of evangelical worship. It is the means whereby grace in the soul is conjoined and united unto grace in the word and promises, which renders it easy and pleasant unto believers, so that they delight to be exercised therein.

3. The constant aid they have in and for its performance, if they be not wanting unto themselves, doth entitle it unto this property. The institution of gospel worship is accompanied with the administration of the Spirit, Isa. lix. 21, and he *συναντιλαμβάνεται*, helpeth and assisteth in all the worship of it, as was intimated before.

4. The benefit which they receive by it, renders it easy and pleasant unto them. For all the ordinances of evangelical worship are of that nature, and appointed of God unto that end, so as to excite, increase, and strengthen grace in the worshippers, as also to convey and exhibit a sense of the love and favour of God unto their souls. And in these two things consists the principal interest of all believers in this world, nor have they any design in competition with that of increasing in them. Finding, therefore, how by the diligent attendance unto this worship, they thrive in both parts of their interest, it cannot but be pleasant unto them.

5. The outward rites of it are few, lightsome, easy to be observed, without scrupulous tormenting fears; and they do not, by attendance unto bodily services, divert the mind from that communion with God, of which they are a means.

Thirdly. It is instructive, and that with clearness and evidence of the things which we are to know and learn. This was a great part of the imperfection of legal institutions, that they taught the things which they signified and represented obscurely, and the mind of God in them was not learned but with much difficulty, no small part of their obedience consisting in a resignation of their understandings unto God's sovereignty, as to the use and the end of the things wherein they were exercised in his worship. But all the ordinances and institutions of the gospel, do give light into, and exhibit the things themselves unto the minds and faith of believers. Hereon they discern the reasons and grounds of their use and benefit; whence our whole worship is called our reasonable service, Rom. xii. 1. Thus, in the preaching of the word, Jesus Christ is evidently set forth crucified among us, Gal. iii. 1, not darkly represented in types and shadows. And in the sacrament of the supper, we do plainly show forth his death until he come, 1 Cor. xi. 26. And the like may be said of all other evangelical institutions. And the principal reason hereof is, because they do not represent or shadow things to come, no, nor yet things absent,

as did those of old; but they really represent and exhibit spiritual things, Christ and the benefits of his mediation unto our souls. And in the observance of them, we are not kept at a distance, but have an admission unto the holy place not made with hands, because Christ, who is the minister of that holy sanctuary, is in them, and by them, really present unto the souls of believers. Two other things mentioned before concerning this worship, namely, its relation unto Christ, as our high priest, and our access in it unto the holy place, the throne of grace, must be spoken unto at large elsewhere.

This is a brief declaration of that *τελειωσις* or 'perfection,' which the apostle denies to have been attainable by the Levitical priesthood. And the grounds of his denial he gives us in the remaining words of the text, which we shall also consider: only we may observe by the way, that,

Obs. III. To look for glory in evangelical worship from outward ceremonies and carnal ordinances, is to prefer the Levitical priesthood before that of Christ. That which we are to look for in our worship, is a *τελειωσις*, such a perfection as we are capable of in this world. This the apostle denies unto the Levitical priesthood, and ascribes it unto the priesthood of Christ. But if such a perfection is to be found in ceremonies and ordinances, outwardly pompous and glorious, upon necessity the contrary conclusion must be made and affirmed. But yet so it is come to pass in the world, that men do order things in their public worship, as if they judged that the pure unmixed worship of the gospel, had no glory in comparison of that of the law, which did excel, and whereunto they do more or less conform themselves. But it is time for us to proceed with our apostle.

Having denied perfection unto the Levitical priesthood, which he lays down in a supposition including a negation, so as to make way for the proof of what he denied; for the further explication of it, and application unto his present purpose, he adds the respect that their priesthood had to the law, intending thereby to bring the law itself under the same censure of disability and insufficiency.

'Ο λαός γὰρ ἐπ' αὐτῇ νενομοθετήτο.

1. The subject spoken of is ὁ λαός, 'the people,' that is in the wilderness, the body of the church, to whom the law and priesthood were given immediately by the ministry of Moses. But after this, the whole posterity of Abraham in their successive generations, were one people with them, and are so esteemed. For a people is still the same: and as a people never dies, till all individuals that belong unto it are cut off; so by this people, the whole church of all ages under the Old Testament is intended.

2. Of this people he says, *νενομοθετήτο*, 'they were legalized.' They were also evangelized, as our apostle speaks, ch. iv. 2. They were so in the promise made unto Abraham, and in the many types of Christ and his offices and sacrifice that were instituted among them. Yet were they at the same time so brought under the power of the law, as that they had not the light, liberty, and comfort of the gospel, which we enjoy. *Νομοθετεῖν*, is *legem ferre*, *legem sancire*, *legem imponere*; to 'make, constitute, impose a law.' And the passive *νομοθετῆσθαι*, when applied unto persons, is *legi latæ subjici*, or *legem*

latam accipere, to be made 'subject unto a law;' to receive the law made to oblige them. So is it used in this place. We have, therefore, not amiss rendered it, 'received the law,' 'the people received the law.' But the sense of that expression is regulated by the nature of a law. They so received it, as to be made subject unto it, as to be obliged by it. Other things may be otherwise received; but a law is received by coming under its obligation. They were brought under the power, authority, and obligation of the law. Or because the law was the foundation and instrument of their whole state, both in things sacred and civil, the meaning of the word may be, they were brought into that state and condition whereinto the law disposed them.

This is said to be done, ἐπ' αὐτῇ, 'under it;' that is, ἐπεστυγῇ, under that priesthood. But how the people may be said to receive the law under the Levitical priesthood, must be further inquired into. Some think that ἐπὶ in this place, answers unto בְּ in the Hebrew; that is, 'concerning it.' And so the meaning of the word is, 'for it was concerning the Levitical priesthood that the people received a command;' that is, God by his law and command, instituted the Levitical priesthood among them, and no other, during the times of the Old Testament. According unto this interpretation, it is not the whole law of commandments contained in ordinances that is intended, but the law constituting the Levitical priesthood. This sense is embraced by Slichtingius and Grotius, as it was before them touched on, but rejected by Junius and Piscator. But, although there be no inconveniency in this interpretation, yet I look not on it, as suited unto the design of the apostle in this place. For his intention is to prove, that perfection was not to be obtained by the Levitical priesthood. Unto this end he was to consider that priesthood under all its advantages; for if any of them seem to be omitted, it would weaken his argument; seeing what it could not do under one consideration, it might do under another. Now, although it was some commendation of the Levitical priesthood that it was appointed of God, or confirmed by a law, yet was it a far greater advancement, that therewith the whole law was given, and thereon did depend, as our apostle declares in the next verses.

The introduction of this clause by the particle γὰρ, may be on a double account, which, though different, yet either of them is consistent with this interpretation of the words. 1. It may be used in a way of concession of all the advantages that the Levitical priesthood was accompanied withal; be it, that together with that priesthood, the people also received the law. Or, 2. On the other side, there is included a reason why perfection was not to be attained by that priesthood; namely, because together with it, the people were brought into bondage under the yoke of the law. Either way, the whole law is intended. But the most probable reason of the introduction of this clause by that particle, *for*, was to bring in the whole law into the same argument, that perfection was not attainable by it. This the apostle plainly resumes, ver. 18, 19, concluding, as of the priesthood here, that it made nothing perfect. For it is the same law which made nothing perfect, that was given together with that priesthood, and not that especial command alone, whereby it was instituted.

There yet remains one difficulty in the words. For the people are said to receive the law under the Levitical priesthood, and therefore, it should seem that that priesthood was established before the giving of the law. But it is certain that the law was given on mount Sinai, before the institution of that priesthood. For Aaron was not called, nor separated unto his office, until after Moses came down from the mount the second time, with the tables renewed after he had broken them, Exod. xl. 12—14. Two things may be applied to the removal of this difficulty. For 1. The people may be said to receive the law under the Levitical priesthood, not with respect unto the order of the giving of the law, but as unto their actual obedience unto it, in the exercise of the things required in it. And so nothing that appertained unto divine worship according to the law, was performed by them until that priesthood was established. And this, as I have shown, is the true signification of the word *νενομοθετητο* here used. It doth not signify the giving of the law unto them, but their being legalized, or brought under the power of it. Wherefore, although some part of the law was given before the institution of that priesthood, yet the people were not brought into the actual obedience of it, but by virtue thereof. But 2. The apostle in this place hath especial respect unto the law, as it was the cause and rule of religious worship, of sacrifices, ceremonies, and other ordinances of divine service. For in that part of the law, the Hebrews placed all their hopes of perfection, which the moral law could not give them. And in this respect, the priesthood was given before the law. For, although the moral law was given in the audience of the people before on the mount, and an explication was given of it unto Moses, as it was to be applied to the government of that people in judiciary proceedings, commonly called the judicial law, before he came down from the mount, Exod. xxi. xxiii. yet as to the system of all religious ceremonies, ordinances of worship, sacrifices of all sorts, and typical institutions, whatever belonged unto the sacred services of the church, the law of it was not given out unto them till after the erection of the tabernacle, and the separation of Aaron and his sons unto the office of the priesthood. Yea, that whole law was given by the voice of God, out of that tabernacle, whereof Aaron was the minister, Lev. i. 1, 2. So that the people in the largest sense may be said to receive the law under that priesthood. Wherefore, the sense of the words is, that together with the priesthood the people received the law of commandments contained in ordinances, which yet effected not, in their conjunction, the end that God designed in his worship. And we may observe that,

Obs. IV. Put all advantages and privileges whatever together, and they will bring nothing to perfection without Jesus Christ. God manifested this in all his revelations and institutions. His revelations from the foundation of the world, were gradual and partial, increasing the light of the knowledge of his glory, from age to age. But put them all together from the first promise, with all expositions of it, and additions unto it, with prophecies of what should afterwards come to pass, taking in also the ministry of John the Baptist; yet did they not all of them together, make a perfect revelation of the mind and will

of God, as he will be known and worshipped, Heb. i. 1; John i. 18. So also was there great variety in his institutions. Some were of great efficacy and of clearer significance than others. But all of them put together made nothing perfect. Much more will all the ways that others shall find out to attain righteousness, peace, light, and life before God, come short of rest or perfection.

The last thing considerable in these words, is the reason whereby the apostle proves, that in the judgment of the Holy Ghost himself, perfection was not attainable by the Levitical priesthood. For if it were, what farther need was there that another priest should arise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? The reason in these words is plain and obvious. For after the institution of that priesthood, and after the execution of it in its greatest glory, splendour, and efficacy, a promise is made in the time of David, of another priest, of another order to rise. Hereof there can be no account given, but this alone, that perfection was not attainable by that which was already instituted and executed. For it was a perfection that God aimed to bring his church unto, or the most perfect state in righteousness, peace, liberty, and worship, which it is capable of in this world. And whatever state the church be brought into, it must be by its high priest and the discharge of his office. Now, if this might have been effected by the Levitical priesthood, the rising of another priest was altogether needless and useless. This is that invincible argument whereby the holy apostle utterly overthrows the whole system of the Judaical religion, and takes it out of the way, as we shall see more particularly afterwards. But the expressions used in this reason, must be distinctly considered.

That another priest, *ἑτέρου ἐτέρου*, ‘a priest of another sort.’ Not only a priest who individually was not yet exhibited, but one of another stock and order. A priest that should not be of the tribe of Levi, nor of the order of Aaron as is afterwards explained.

Ἀνιστασθαι, ‘to arise;’ that is, to be called, exalted; to stand up in the execution of that office. To rise up, or to be raised up, is used indefinitely concerning any one that attempts any new work, or is made eminent for any end good or bad. In the latter sense, God is said to raise up Pharaoh to show his power in him, that he might magnify his glorious power in his punishment and destruction, Exod. ix. 16; Rom. ix. 17. In a good sense with respect unto the call of God, it is used by Deborah, Judg. v. 7, ‘Until I Deborah arose, until I arose a mother in Israel.’ Commonly *ἐγείρω* and *ἐγειρομαι* are used to this purpose, Matt. xi. 11; John vii. 52. ‘To arise,’ therefore, is to appear and stand up at the call of God, and by his designation, unto the execution or performance of any office or work. So was this other priest’s office, in compliance with the call and appointment of God.

And this priest was thus to arise after the order of Melchisedec. So it is expressly affirmed in the Psalms. And here the apostle takes in the consideration of what he had before discoursed, concerning the greatness of Melchisedec. For he designed not only to prove the thing itself, which is sufficiently done in the testimony out of the Psalmist; but also to evidence the advantage and benefit of the church by this

change. And hereunto the consideration of the greatness of Melchisedec, was singularly subservient, as manifesting the excellency of that priesthood by which the righteousness of the church and its worship was to be consummated.

Lastly. The apostle adds negatively of this other priest who was to rise, by reason of the weakness of the Levitical priesthood, which could not perfect the state of the church, that he was not to be 'called after the order of Aaron.'

Και ου κατα την ταξιν Ααρων λεγεσθαι, 'and not to be called after the order of Aaron,' that is in the Psalm where the rising of this priest is declared and foretold; there he is said to be, or denominated a priest after the order of Melchisedec, and nothing is spoken of the order of Aaron. Λεγεσθαι denotes only an external denomination, not an internal call. It is not the same with καλουμενος, used by our apostle, ch. v. 4. Καλουμενος υπο του Θεου, 'called of God;' that is, by an effectual call and separation unto office. But it answers to προσαγορευθεις, ch. v. 10, cognominatus, called so by external denomination. For the real call of Christ unto his office by him who said unto him, 'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee,' was such as the call of Melchisedec himself could not represent. Wherefore the call of Christ unto his office, and that of Melchisedec, are nowhere compared. But upon the account of sundry resemblances, insisted on by the apostle in the first verses of this chapter, Christ is called by external denomination, a priest after his order, and is nowhere called so after the order of Aaron. And the reason why the apostle addeth this negative, is evident. For it might be said, that although another priest was foretold to arise, yet this might respect only an extraordinary call unto the same office, and not a call unto an office of another kind or order. Aaron was called by God immediately and in an extraordinary manner; and all his posterity came unto the same office by an ordinary succession: so God promiseth to raise up a priest in a singular manner, 1 Sam. ii. 35, 'I will raise me up a faithful priest, which shall do according unto that which is in mine heart and in my mind.' A priest of another order is not here intended, but only the change of the line of succession from the house of Ithamar, unto that of Phinehas, fulfilled in Zadok in the days of Solomon. So a new priest might be raised up, and yet the old legal order and administration be continued. But, saith the apostle, he is not to be of the same order: for the defect of the Levitical priesthood was not only in the persons which he mentions afterwards, but it was in the office itself, which could not bring the church to perfection. And that de facto he was so to be, he proves by this argument negatively from the Scripture, that he is nowhere by the Holy Ghost, said to be of the order of Aaron, but on the contrary, of that of Melchisedec, which is inconsistent therewithal.

And this is the first argument whereby the apostle confirms his principal design, which he particularly strengthens and improves in the verses following.

VER. 12.—Μετατιθεμενης γαρ της ιερωσυνης, εξ αναγκης και νομου μεταθεσις γινεται.

Mutato sacerdotio, Vul. Lat. translato, Bez. hoc sacerdotio, expressing the article. Syr. 'Yea, even as a change was made in the priesthood, so a change was made also in the law,' not to the mind of the apostle. Ethiop. 'If their law so passed away, their priesthood shall pass away;' more out of the way than the other.

VER. 12.—*For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change of the law.*

In this verse, the apostle evidently declares what he intended by the law in that foregoing, which the people received under the Levitical priesthood. It was the whole law of commandments contained in ordinances, or the whole law of Moses, so far as it was the rule of worship and obedience unto the church. For that law it is, that followeth the fates of the priesthood.

And herein lieth the stress and moment of the controversy, which the apostle then had with the Jews, and which we have at this day with their unbelieving posterity. For the question was, whether the law of Moses was to be absolutely eternal, the rule of the worship of the church, whilst it was to continue in this world. And it appears that in the preaching of the gospel, that which most provoked the Jews was, that there was inferred thereby a cessation and taking away of Mosaic institutions. This was that which enraged them unto the shedding of the blood of the church, which they were guilty of, after the murder of the Head thereof. For they fell on Stephen, under pretence that he had said that Jesus of Nazareth should destroy the customs which Moses delivered, Acts vi. 14. And this also provoked their rage against our apostle, Acts xxi. 28. Yea, the most of them who were converted to the faith of the gospel, yet continued obstinate in this persuasion, that the law of Moses was yet to continue in force, Acts xxi. 20. And with this opinion, some of them troubled the peace and hindered the edification of the churches, called from among the Gentiles, as hath been at large elsewhere declared. This matter therefore which the apostle now entereth on, was to be managed with care and diligence.

This he enters on in this verse, being a transition from one point to another, having made way for his intentions in the verse foregoing. That which hitherto he hath insisted on in this chapter, is the excellency of the priesthood of Christ, above that of the law, manifested in the representation made of it by Melchisedec. In the pursuit of his argument to that purpose, he proves that the Aaronical priesthood was to be abolished, because after its institution there was a promise of the introduction of another, wherewith it was inconsistent. And herein observing the strict conjunction that was between that priesthood and the law, with their mutual dependence on one another, he proves from thence that the law itself was also to be abolished.

Herein therefore lay the principal design of the apostle in this whole epistle. For the law may be looked on under a double consideration. 1. As to what the Jews in that degenerate state of the church obstinately looked for from it. 2. As to what it did really re-

quire of them, whilst it stood in force and power. And under both these considerations it was utterly inconsistent with the gospel.

1. The Jews at that time expected no less from it, than expiation of sin by its sacrifices, and justification by the works of it. It is true, they looked for these things by it unjustly, seeing it promised no such thing, nor was ever ordained to any such purpose; but yet these things they looked for, and were resolved so to do, until the law should be removed out of the way. And it is evident how inconsistent this is with the whole work of the mediation of Christ, which is the sum and substance of the gospel. But suppose they looked not absolutely for atonement and justification by the sacrifices and works of the law, yet the continuance of their observance was repugnant to the gospel. For the Lord Christ, by the one offering of himself, had made perfect atonement for sin, so that the sacrifices of the law could be of no more use or signification. And the continuance of them, wherein there was renewed mention of the expiation of sin, did declare that there was not a perfect expiation already made, which overthrows the efficacy and virtue of the sacrifice of Christ. Even as the daily repetition of a sacrifice in the mass continueth to do. Again, whereas the Lord Christ by his obedience and righteousness had fulfilled the law, and was become the end of it for righteousness to them that do believe, the seeking after justification as it were by the works of the law, was wholly repugnant thereunto.

2. And in the next place, the law may be considered as it prescribed a way of worship in its ordinances and institutions, which God doth accept. This the people were indispensably obliged to, whilst the law stood in force. But in the gospel, our Lord Jesus Christ, had now appointed a new spiritual worship, suited to the principles and grace thereof. And these were so inconsistent as that no man could at once serve these two masters.

Wherefore the whole law of Moses, as given to the Jews, whether as used or abused by them, was repugnant to, and inconsistent with the gospel, and the mediation of Christ, especially his priestly office therein declared. Neither did God either design, appoint, or direct that they should be co-existent. If then the law continue in its force, and have power to oblige the consciences of men, and is still so to abide, there is neither room nor place for Christ and his priesthood in the church, nor indeed for the discharge of his other offices. And this opposition between the law and the gospel, works and grace, our own righteousness and that of Christ, our apostle doth not only grant, but vehemently urge in all his epistles, allowing none to suppose that they may have both these strings to their bow. One of them, he is peremptory, that all mankind must betake themselves to. Here the Jews were entangled, and knew not what to do. The greatest part of them adhered to the law, with an utter rejection of the gospel and the Author of it, perishing in their unbelief. Others of them endeavoured to make a composition of these things, and retaining of Moses, they would admit of Christ and the gospel also. And this the Holy Ghost in the apostles did for a while bear withal. But now whereas the whole service of the tabernacle was of itself fallen down, and become

as useless, so of no force, its obliging power ceasing in its accomplishment by Christ; and whereas the time was drawing near, wherein God by his providence would utterly remove it, the inconsistency of it with the gospel state of the church was now fully to be declared.

This therefore our apostle grants, that there was such a repugnancy between the law and the gospel, as to the ends of righteousness and divine worship, as that one of them must of necessity be parted withal. Wherefore the whole controversy turning on this hinge, it was highly incumbent on him to manifest and prove, that the law did now cease, according to the appointment of God; and that God had of old designed, foretold, and promised that so it should do, and be abolished, on the introduction of that which was the end and substance of it. And this I look on as the greatest trial the faith of men ever had in the concerns of religion; namely, to believe that God should take away, abolish, and leave as dead and useless, that whole system of solemn worship, which he had appointed in so glorious a manner, and accepted for so many generations. But yet, as we are to acquiesce in the sovereign pleasure of God, made known by revelation against all reasonings of our own whatsoever; so it must be confessed, that faith was greatly bespoken and prepared by the nature, end, and use of all those institutions, which more than intimated, that they were appointed only for a time, and served to introduce a more glorious dispensation of divine wisdom and grace.

The proof therefore of the utter cessation of the law, the apostle enters on by the invincible argument, whose foundation or proposition is laid in this verse, and the especial parts of it are explained, confirmed and vindicated in those that follow. And in his ensuing discourse his principal design is to prove, that the church is so far from being a loser, or disadvantaged by this change, as that she receiveth thereby the highest privilege, and greatest blessing that in this world she is capable of.

In the words of this verse there is a supposition of the change of the priesthood, as that which was proved before, and an inference from thence to a necessity of the change of the law.

Μετατιθεμενης της ιερωσυνης, 'the priesthood being changed;' that is, the priesthood of Levi appointed and exercised under the law. Μετατιθεμενης, *translato, mutato*; so some read, 'transferred,' 'translated;' some 'changed.' The former do not reach the whole sense intended. For the office of the priesthood may be transferred from one person to another, from one family to another, yea, from one tribe to another; and yet the priesthood, as to the kind and nature of it, continue the same. This, our apostle afterwards mentions, ver. 13, 14, as a part of his argument to prove the priesthood itself to be changed. But this it doth not absolutely, seeing it is possible that the office may be transferred from one tribe to another, and yet not be changed as to its nature. But the proof lies in this, that Moses in the institution of the priesthood, made no mention of the tribe of Judah, and therefore, if that office be transferred unto that tribe, it must be of another kind than that before instituted. And on this supposition, that which he intends to prove, follows evidently upon the translation of the priesthood. For all the sacred ser-

vices and worship which the law required, were so confined, or at least had such respect unto the Levitical priesthood, as that no part of it, no sacred duty could be performed, on a supposition of taking away the priesthood from that tribe and family. For whereas the whole of their worship consisted in the service and sacrifices of the tabernacle, God had appointed, that whosoever did draw nigh unto the performance of any of these services, that was not of the seed of Aaron, should be cut off and destroyed. Wherefore, upon a supposition of the ceasing or changing of the priesthood in that family, the whole law of ordinances became unpracticable, useless, and lost its power; especially seeing there was no provision made in the law itself for a priesthood in any other tribe. Besides, such was the contexture of the law, and such the sanction of it, 'cursed is he who continueth not in all things written in the law to do them,' that if any thing be taken out of it, if its order be disturbed, if any alteration be made, or any transgression be dispensed withal, or exempted from the curse, the whole fabric must of necessity fall to the ground.

But yet it is not a mere transferring of the priesthood from one tribe to another, that is here intended by the apostle. For there is such a change of the priesthood, as there is of the law. But the change of the law was an *αἰθέσις*, a 'disannulling' or abolishing, as is affirmed, ver. 18. Such, therefore, must the change of the priesthood be, and so it was. The priesthood was changed, in that one kind of it was utterly abolished, and another introduced. So was the Levitical priesthood changed, as that the other priest which came with his office in the room thereof, could not be called or said to be after the order of Aaron, but was of another kind, typed out by Melchisedec. It may therefore be inquired, on what grounds this priesthood was to be so abolished, or how it appears that so it is, and by what means it was actually taken away.

That it was so to be abolished, the apostle proves, 1. Because before the institution of that priesthood, there was another far more excellent, namely, that of Melchisedec. 2. That the Holy Ghost had declared that the introduction of that more excellent priesthood for a season, was to prefigure and represent another priesthood that was afterwards to be established. And this could not be that of Levi, seeing God doth not make use of that which is more excellent to figure or represent that which is inferior thereunto. Another priesthood, therefore, must arise, and be granted unto the church in answer unto that type. 3. That it was impossible that this new priest after the order of Melchisedec, should be consistent with that of Levi, or that it should be continued after that was brought in. For, First. He was to be of another tribe, as he immediately proves. Secondly. Because his priesthood and sacrifice were to be of another kind than that of Levi, which he demonstrates at large in the ensuing chapters. Thirdly. Because on the other hand, the priesthood of Aaron, 1. Could never accomplish and effect the true and proper ends of the priesthood, which the church stood in need of, and without which, it could not be consummated. And, 2. Was in its own nature, offices, works, and duties, inconsistent with any priesthood, that was not of its own order. It must therefore be abolished.

It may therefore be inquired, how the priesthood was changed, or that of the house of Levi taken away. And I say, as the apostle directs, it was done by the appointment of God. For his introduction of another priest, when it was actually accomplished, had the force of a repealing law. The institution of the former was abrogated thereby, without any other constitution. For as unto its use, it did hence cease of itself. It had no more to do, its work was at an end, and its services were of no advantage to the church: For the sign of what is to come, is set aside, and ceaseth to be a sign, when the thing signified is brought in. Yea, the continuance of it would give a testimony against itself. And as to its right, this new institution of God, applied by his own authority unto it in its proper season, took it away. 2. The application of the authority of God, in the institution of a new priesthood to take away the old, was made by the Holy Ghost, in the revelation of the will of God by the gospel, wherein the ceasing of it was declared. And sundry things may be observed concerning this abolishing of it.

Obs. I. Notwithstanding the great and many provocations of them by whom it was exercised and discharged, yet God took it not away, until it had accomplished the end whereunto it was designed.—Neither the wickedness of the people, nor of the priests themselves, could provoke the Lord to revoke his institution, until the appointed end of it was come. And it is no small part of the blindness of the present Jews, to think that God would so utterly abolish his own ordinance, as they must acknowledge he hath done, if he would have it to be of any longer use in the church. For sixteen hundred years, they have not had any priest among them, nor is it possible they should according unto the law, if they were actually restored unto their own pretended right in Canaan. For they have utterly lost the distinction of tribes among them, nor can any of them in the least pretend they are of the lineage of the priests. And for any one to usurp that office who is not lineally descended from Aaron, they own to be an abomination. As, therefore, they know not how to look for a Messiah from the tribe of Judah, seeing all sacred genealogy is at an end; no more can they look for a priest of the house of Aaron. Now this end of it, was the bringing in of a better hope, or the promised seed, who, according to the promise, was to come to the second temple, and, therefore, whilst that priesthood continued. 2. God took it not away till he brought in that which was more excellent, glorious, and advantageous unto the church, namely, the Priesthood of Christ. And if this be not received through their unbelief, they alone are the cause of their being losers by this alteration. 3. In abundant patience and condescension, with respect unto that interest which it had in the consciences of men from his institution, God did not utterly lay it aside in a day, after which, it should be absolutely unlawful to comply with it. But God took it away by degrees, as shall afterwards be declared.

Obs. II. That the efficacy of all ordinances or institutions of worship, depends on the will of God alone.—Whilst it was his will that the priesthood should abide in the family of Levi, it was useful and effectual unto all the ends whereunto it was designed. But when he

would make an alteration therein, it was in vain for any to look for either benefit or advantage by it. And although we are not now to expect any change in the institutions of divine worship, yet all our expectations from them, are to be resolved into the will of God.

Obs. III. Divine institutions cease not without an express divine abrogation.—Where they are once granted and erected by the authority of God, they can never cease without an express act of the same authority taking of them away. So was it with the institutions of the Aaronical priesthood, as the apostle declares. And this one consideration, is enough to confirm the grant of the initial seal of the covenant unto the present seed of believers, which was once given by God himself, in the way of an institution, and never by him revoked.

Obs. IV. God will never abrogate or take away any institution or ordinance of worship, unto the loss or disadvantage of the church.—He would not remove or abolish the priesthood of Levi, until that which was incomparably more excellent, was introduced and established.

Obs. V. God in his wisdom so ordered all things, that the taking away of the priesthood of the law, gave it its greatest glory. For it ceased not, before it had fully and absolutely accomplished the end whereunto it was designed, which is the glory and perfection of any ordinance: even the mediation of Christ himself shall cease, when all the ends of it are fulfilled. And this end of the priesthood was most glorious; namely, the bringing in that of Christ, and therein of the eternal salvation of the church. And what more honourable issue could it come unto? The Jews, by their pretended adherence unto it, are they which cast the highest dishonour upon it; for they own that it is laid aside, at least that it hath been so for sixteen hundred years, and yet neither the end of it effected, nor any thing brought in by it, unto the greater advantage of the church.

The next thing considerable in these words, is the inference which the apostle makes from his assertion and the proof it: ‘there is made of necessity, a change also of the law.’ Εξ αναγκης, ‘of necessity.’ It is not a note of the necessity of the inference from the proposition in the way of argument, but the necessary dependence of the things mentioned, the one on the other. For whereas the whole administration of the law, so far as it concerned the expiation of sin by sacrifices, and the solemn worship of God in the tabernacle or temple, depended absolutely on, and was confined unto the Aaronical priesthood, so as that without it, no one sacrifice could be offered unto God, nor any ordinance of divine worship be observed; that priesthood being abolished and taken out of the way, the law itself of necessity and unavoidably ceaseth and becometh useless. It doth so, I say, as unto all the proper ends of it, as a law obligatory unto the duties required in it.

Wherefore, there is also νομου μεταθεσις, ‘a change of the law;’ that is, an abolition of it. For it is a change of the same nature with the change of the priesthood; which, as we have shown, was its abolition and taking away. And how this came to pass, the word γινεται declares, ‘there is made a change.’ It did indeed necessarily follow

on the change of the priesthood; yet not so, but that there was an act of the will and authority of God on the law itself. God made this change, and he alone could do it; that he would do so, and did so, the apostle proves in this and the verses following. So is the law of commandments contained in ordinances taken out of the way, being nailed unto the cross of Christ, where he left it completely accomplished.

But moreover, the law in its institution was an instructive revelation, and taught many things concerning the nature of sin, its expiation and cleansing; representing, though darkly, good things to come. So it is yet continued as a part of the revealed will of God. And the light of the gospel being brought unto it, we may learn things far more clearly out of it, than ever the Jews of old could do.

And the force of the argument here insisted on by the apostle, against the absolute perpetuity of the law, which was of old, and yet continueth to be the head of the controversy between the Jews and the church of Christ, is so unavoidable, that some of them have been compelled to acknowledge that in the days of the Messiah, legal sacrifices and the rest of their ceremonies, shall cease; though the most of them understand that their cause is given away thereby. And they have no other way to free themselves from this argument of the apostle, but by denying that Melchisedec was a priest, or that it is the Messiah who is prophesied of, Ps. cx. which evidences of a desperate cause, and more desperate defenders of it, have been elsewhere convinced of folly. Wherefore, this important argument is confirmed by our apostle in the ensuing verses. And we may see,

Obs. VI. How it is a fruit of the manifold wisdom of God, that it was a great mercy to give the law, and the greater to take it away. And,

Obs. VII. If under the law the whole worship of God did so depend on the priesthood, and that failing or being taken away, the whole worship of itself was to cease, as being no more acceptable before God; how much more is all worship under the New Testament rejected by him, if there be not a due regard therein unto the Lord Christ, as the only high priest of the church, and to the efficacy of his discharge of that office.

Obs. VIII. It is the highest vanity to pretend use or continuance in the church, from possession or prescription, or pretended benefit, beauty, order, or advantage, when once the mind of God is declared against it.—The pleas of this kind for the old priesthood and law, excelled all that can be insisted on, with respect unto any other things for which any pretend a veneration in divine worship; yet were they of no validity or efficacy.

VER. 13.—Εφ' ὃν γὰρ λέγεται ταῦτα, φυλῆς ἑτέρας μετεσχῆκεν, ἀφ' ἧς οὐδεὶς προσεσχῆκε τῷ θυσιαστηρίῳ.

Εφ' ὃν, in quem; in quo, Vul. Lat. ἐν τῷ ὅντι, Syr. 'For he concerning whom these things are spoken.' 'For he on whom these things are said,' Rhem. improperly. Φυλῆς ἑτέρας μετεσχῆκεν, Vul. de alia tribu est, Rhem. 'is of another tribe,' omitting the espe-

cial force of the word *μετεσχηκεν*, though the substance of the sense be retained. Syr. ܕܒܪܐ, 'was born' of another tribe. Particeps fuit, did derive his genealogy from, and so had his especial relation unto another tribe. *Προεσχηκε*, ministravit, attendit; Vul. præsto fuit. The Ethiopic, 'And if any one will say so (or as one may say) he placeth another tribe, because they kept not the altar,' mistaking both the meaning of the design, and sense of the apostle's words.

VER. 13.—*For he of whom these things are spoken, pertaineth unto another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar.*

The causal conjunction *γάρ*, doth not only intimate a pursuit of the foregoing argument, and the confirmation of the supposition whereon it was built, but also an entrance upon the express application of the whole preceding discourse, unto the person of Jesus Christ, the true and only high priest of the church.

1. In the words there is, the subject to be further treated on, described, *ἐφ' ὃν λεγεται ταυτα*. That *περι οὗ*, de quo, 'he concerning whom,' quem designaverunt hæc, ad quem hæc pertinent, 'he who is designed in all these things,' 'he unto whom they do all belong.' He with respect unto whom, *ταυτα*, 'these things;' that is, all that hath been spoken concerning Melchisedec and his priesthood, all things that do naturally follow and ensue thereon. For although sundry of them were spoken first and immediately concerning other persons and things; yet they all belong ultimately and perfectly unto Christ alone, whom they did represent and make way for. And we may observe hence,

Obs. I. That it is our duty in studying of the Scripture, to inquire diligently after the things which are spoken concerning Jesus Christ, and what is taught of him in them.—This doth our apostle find out, in all that was spoken concerning Melchisedec and the Levitical priesthood. This Jesus himself gives in charge, John v. 39, 'Search the Scriptures, they are they which testify of me.' Our principal aim in searching the Scriptures ought to be, that we may find out what they say, and what they testify concerning Christ. And this was the practice of the prophets of old, with respect unto all the revelations which they received, 1 Pet. i. 10—12. Let the pains and industry, and skill of men in the reading and interpreting of the Scriptures, be what they will, without this design, they will never rightly be understood, nor duly improved. For as those things which concern his person, office, and grace, with the mysteries of the wisdom of God in them all, are the principal subject of them; so all other things which are taught and revealed in them, are never apprehended unto any good end or purpose, unless their relation unto him, and dependence upon him be rightly understood. Some are charged that they esteem of no preaching but that which is concerning the person of Christ, which how false an accusation it is, their preaching and writings do discover. But this they say indeed, that is, some do so, that seeing it is the design of God to gather all things into a head in Christ, that

preaching is to little purpose, which doth not, more or less expressly, evidence the relation of all truths and duties unto him.

2. It is added *φυλῆς ἑτέρας μετεσχῆκε*, 'he pertained unto another tribe.' To confirm his argument concerning the changing or abolition of the priesthood, the apostle supposeth the distribution of the people into tribes, according unto the number of the sons of Jacob. And as these tribes had a common interest in the church, so some of them had peculiar privileges granted and confirmed unto them by law. So the priesthood was granted, confined, and confirmed unto the tribe of Levi, and unto the family of Aaron in that tribe. And it was so confined thereunto, as that all the rest of the tribes were for ever excluded from any interest therein, and all that belonged unto them incapacitated thereof. But unto one of the tribes, so excluded from an interest in the legal priesthood, did he belong, of whom these things are spoken. And this I look upon as the principal reason of the distinction of that people into their tribes; namely, that God thereby might provide for their instruction, as to the continuance of the legal worship among them, which could be no longer continued than the priesthood was reserved unto that one tribe, whereunto it was originally granted, *μετεσχῆκε*; see the meaning of the word in our exposition on ch. ii. 14. His share, lot, and interest lay in another tribe.

3. He describes in general this other tribe whereof he was, by its legal exclusion from all the service of the altar; 'Of which no man gave attendance at the altar.' What tribe that was in particular, he declares in the next verse, showing not only of what tribe he was, but also what it was necessary he should be. Another tribe, *αφ' ἧς*, 'whereof,' from which none that was genealogized, attended at the altar; that is, had right so to do, or was not forbidden by the law so to do. God doth not reckon that to be done in his service, which he hath not appointed, much less which he hath forbidden. What other inroads were made on the sacerdotal office, we know not; but one of the tribe here intended by the apostle, whereof none was to attend the altar, did draw nigh to offer incense, for which he was rebuked by the high priest, and punished of God, 2 Chron. xxvi. 18. And God exercised the greater severity herein, that the church might understand, that when he introduced and allowed of a priest of another tribe, that old priesthood must of necessity cease and be abolished. 'No man gave attendance,' that is, had right so to do.

That expression, *προσεσχῆκε τῷ θυσιαστηρίῳ*, 'attended, waited, on the altar,' may be a synecdochical description of the whole priestly office, from the principal work and duty belonging thereunto. But I suppose the apostle may not only include the priests, unto whom the immediate work of sacrificing at the altar did belong; but all those who attended the services of it, though they could offer neither burnt incense nor sacrifice; that is, all the Levites in their courses. For he so excludes the tribe, whereof he speaks, from the least relation unto the sacerdotal work or office. None of them ever did or might draw near nor minister unto the altar in any sacred services whatsoever. See 1 Cor. ix. 13.

This entrance doth the apostle make into the confirmation of his

assertion, that the priesthood was changed, and therewithal the law. For it appears that there was to be a priest, who had no right by the law so to be; seeing he was of that tribe which the law utterly excluded from any interest in the sacred services of the altar; and much more those which were peculiar unto the Aaronical priests. Thus,

Obs. II. All men's rights, duties, and privileges in sacred things, are fixed and limited by divine institution. And,

Obs. III. Seeing Christ himself had no right to minister at the material altar, the re-introduction of such altars, is inconsistent with the perpetual continuance of his priesthood.

VER. 14.—The apostle confirms his assertion by a particular application of it unto the person of our Lord Jesus Christ.

VER. 14.—Προδηλον γαρ ὅτι ἐξ Ιουδα ανατεταλκεν ὁ Κυριος ἡμων, εἰς ἣν φυλὴν οὐδεν περι ἱερωσυνης Μωσης ἐλαλησε.

Περι ἱερωσυνης, Vul. Lat. de sacerdotibus, without countenance from any copies of the original or ancient translation.

The words contain a double assertion. 1. That our Lord sprang of the tribe of Judah. 2. That of that tribe, Moses spake nothing concerning the priesthood. There wants nothing to complete the proof of his argument, but that our Lord was a priest, which he therefore proves in the ensuing verses.

VER. 14.—*For it is evident (or manifest) that our Lord sprang out of Judah, of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning the priesthood.*

In the first part of the words, there are two things considerable. The manner of the proposition, or the modification of the assertion, προδηλον εστι. The conjunction γαρ, 'for,' doth only show that a reason or proof of what was before laid down, is here introduced. And of this he saith, palam est, manifestum, 'it is manifest, open,' a thing confessed; evident, as we say, in itself. A thing easy to be proved, but that it is by no man denied. Only whereas δηλον is 'manifest' or evident, προδηλον seems to intimate what was 'manifest beforehand;' as προδηλω is 'to evidence a matter beforehand.' And this may not only respect, but be confined unto the preceding promises and declaration, that the Messiah should be of the tribe of Judah. But we may consider in general, how this is said to be a thing evident, or manifest in its application unto our Lord Jesus Christ. And,

1. This was included in the faith of believers, who granted him to be the Messiah. For nothing was more plainly promised under the Old Testament, nor more firmly believed by the church, than that the Messiah was to be of the tribe of Judah, and of the family of David. And thus it was προδηλον, 'manifest to them beforehand.' For unto Judah the promise was solemnly confined, Gen. xlix. 8—10, and frequently reiterated unto David, as I have shown elsewhere. Whoever,

therefore, acknowledged our Lord Jesus Christ to be the true Messiah, as all the Hebrews did unto whom our apostle wrote, though the most of them adhered unto the law and to its ceremonies, they must and did grant, that he sprang of the tribe of Judah. And none of the unbelieving Jews made use of this objection, that he was not of the tribe of Judah, which if they could have managed, had absolutely justified them in their unbelief. This was sufficient unto the purpose of the apostle, seeing he proceeded not only on what was granted among them, but firmly believed by them, and not denied by their adversaries.

2. It was in those days manifest by his known genealogy. For by the providence of God, his parents were publicly enrolled of that tribe and of the family of David, in the tax and recognition of the people appointed by Augustus Cesar, Luke ii. 4. And this was made yet more famous by the cruelty of Herod, seeking his destruction among the children of Bethlehem, Matt. ii. And the genealogies of all families, whilst the Jewish commonwealth continued in any condition, were carefully preserved, because many legal rights and constitutions did depend thereon. And this preservation of genealogies was both appointed of God, and fenced with legal rights for this very end, to evidence the accomplishment of his promise in the Messiah. And to this end was his genealogy written and recorded by two of the evangelists, as that whereon the truth of his being the Messiah did much depend.

Sundry of the ancients had an apprehension, that the Lord Christ derived his genealogy both from the tribes of Judah and Levi, in the regal and sacerdotal offices, as he who was to be both King and Priest. And there is a story inserted in Suidas, how in the days of Justinian the Emperor, one Theodosius, a principal patriarch of the Jews, acquainted his friend, one Philip a Christian, how he was enrolled by the priests in their order, as of the lineage of the priests, by the name of Jesus the son of Mary and of God; and that the records thereof were kept by the Jews at Tiberias to that very time. But the whole story is filled with gross effects of ignorance and incredible fables, being only a dream of some superstitious monastic. But the ancients grounded their imagination, on the kindred that was between his mother and Elizabeth the wife of Zechariah the priest, who was the daughter of Aaron, Luke i. 5. But this whole conceit is not only false, but directly contradictory to the scope and argument of the apostle in this place. For the authors of it would have the Lord Christ so to derive his genealogy from the tribe of Levi, as thence to be entitled to the priesthood, which yet could not be, unless he was also proved to be of the family of Aaron. And to assign a priesthood to him as derived from Aaron, is openly contradictory to the apostle in this place, and destructive of his whole design, as also of the true real priesthood of Christ himself; as is evident to any one who reads this chapter. The alliance and kindred that was between the blessed Virgin and Elizabeth, was doubtless by an antecedent intermarriage of those tribes, as Elizabeth's mother might be sister to the father or grandfather of the holy Virgin. And this was not only lawful between

the tribes of Judah and Levi, or the regal and sacerdotal families, whence Jehoshabeath the wife of Jehoiadah, was the daughter of Jehoram the king, 2 Chron. xxii. 11, as some have imagined; but such marriages were usual to, and lawful among all the other tribes, where women had no inheritances of land, which was expressly provided against by a particular law. And this very law of exception doth sufficiently prove the liberty of all others. For the words of it are, 'Every daughter, that possesseth an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel, shall be wife unto one of the family of the tribe of her father, that the children of Israel may enjoy every one the inheritance of their father,' Num. xxxvi. 8. Both the express limitation of the law to those who possessed inheritances, and the reason of it for the preservation of the lots of each tribe entire, as ver. 3, 4, manifest that all other were at liberty to marry any Israelite, be he of what tribe soever. And thus both the genealogies of Matthew and Luke, one by a legal, the other by a natural line, were both of them from the tribe of Judah and family of David. So,

Obs. I. It pleaseth God to give sufficient evidence unto the accomplishment of his promise.

2. For the manner of the proceeding of the Lord Christ from that tribe, the apostle expresseth it by *ανατεταλκε*, 'he sprang.' *Ανατελλω* is usually taken in an active sense, to 'cause to rise,' Matt. v. 45, *Τον ηλιον αυτου ανατελλει*, 'he causeth his sun to rise.' And sometimes it is used neutrally, for 'to rise;' and so, as some think, it peculiarly denotes the rising of the sun, in distinction from the other planets. Hence is *ανατολη* 'the east,' from the rising of the sun. So the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ is called, the rising of the sun of righteousness with healing in his wings, Mal. iv. 2, *ανατολη εξ υψους*, Luke i. 78, 'the day-spring from on high.' Thus did the Lord Christ arise in the light and glory of the sun, a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel. But the word is used also to express other springings, as of water from a fountain, or a branch from the stock. And so it is said of our Lord Jesus, that he should 'grow up as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground,' Isa. liii. 2. 'A rod out of the stem, and a branch out of the roots of Jesse,' ch. xi. 1. Hence he is frequently called the branch, and the branch of the Lord, Isa. iv. 2; Jer. xxiii. 5, xxxiii. 15; Zech. iii. 8, vi. 12. But the first, which is the most proper sense of the words, is to be regarded; he arose eminently and illustriously from the tribe of Judah.

Having laid down this matter of fact, as that which was evident, and on all hands confessed, he observes upon it, that 'of that tribe, Moses spake nothing concerning the priesthood.'

Εις ην φυλην, 'with reference unto which tribe,' *περι ης*, de qua tribu. Being to prove that the priesthood did no way belong to the tribe of Judah; so that the introduction of a priest of that tribe, must necessarily exclude those of the house of Aaron from that office, he appeals unto the lawgiver, or rather the law itself. For by Moses, not the person of Moses absolutely is intended; as though these things depended on his authority; but it is his ministry in giving of the law; or his person only as ministerially employed in the declaration of it,

that our apostle respects. And it is the law of worship that is under consideration. Moses did record the blessing of Judah, as given him by Jacob, wherein the promise was made unto him, that the Shiloh should come from him,' Gen. xlix. 10. And this same Shiloh was also to be a priest. But this was a promise before the law, and not to be accomplished until the expiration of the law, and belonged not unto any institution of the law given by Moses. Wherefore, Moses as the lawgiver, when the office of the priesthood was instituted in the church, and confirmed by especial law or ordinance, spake nothing of it with respect unto the tribe of Judah. For as in the law, the first institution of it was directly confined unto the tribe of Levi, and house of Aaron, so there is not in all the law of Moses, the least intimation that on any occasion in any future generations, it should be translated unto that tribe. Nor was it possible, without the alteration and abolition of the whole law, that any one of that tribe should once be put into the office of the priesthood. The whole worship of God was to cease, rather than that any one of the tribe of Judah should officiate in the office of the priesthood. And this silence of Moses in this matter, the apostle takes to be a sufficient argument to prove that the legal priesthood did not belong, nor could be transferred unto the tribe of Judah. And the grounds hereof are resolved into this general maxim, that whatever is not revealed and appointed in the worship of God, by God himself, is to be considered as nothing, yea, as that which is to be rejected. And such he conceived to be the evidence of this maxim, that he chose rather to argue from the silence of Moses in general, than from the particular prohibition, that none, who was not of the posterity of Aaron, should approach unto the priestly office. So God himself condemneth some instances of false worship, on this ground, that he never appointed them, that they never came into his heart, and thence aggravates the sin of the people, rather than from the particular prohibition of them, Jer. vii. 31. Wherefore,

Obs. II. Divine revelation gives bounds, positively and negatively, unto the worship of God.

VER. 15—17.—THAT the Aaronical priesthood was to be changed, and consequently the whole law of ordinances that depended thereon, and that the time wherein this change was to be made was now come, is that which is designed unto confirmation in all this discourse. And it is that truth whereinto our faith of the acceptance of evangelical worship is resolved. For without the removal of the Old, there is no place for the New. This, therefore, the apostle now fully confirms, by a recapitulation of the force and sum of his preceding arguments.

VER. 15—17.—Και περισσοτερον επι καταδηλον εστιν, ει κατα την ομοιοτητα Μελχισεδεκ ανισταται ιερευς ετερος, ος ου κατα νομον εντολης σαρκικης γεγονεν, αλλα κατα δυναμιν ζωης ακαταλυτου. Μαρτυρει γαρ· οτι συ ιερευς εις τον αιωνα κατα την ταξιν Μελχισεδεκ.

VER. 15—17.—*And it is yet far more evident, for that after the*

similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, who is made not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

There are four things to be considered in these words. 1. The manner of the introduction of this new argument, declaring its especial force, with the weight that the apostle lays upon it,—‘and it is yet far more evident.’

2. The medium or argument itself which he insists upon, which is, that from what he had already proved, there was another priest to arise after the similitude of Melchisedec.

3. The illustration of this argument, in an explication of the ways and means whereby this priest arose, declared both negatively and positively,—‘who is made not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.’

4. The confirmation of the whole, with the testimony of David,—‘for he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.’

The manner of the introduction of this argument is emphatical:—*Και περισσοτερον επι καταδηλον εστι*. ‘And it is yet far more evident.’

The conjunctive particle *και* connects this consideration unto that foregoing, as of the same nature and tendency.

The thing spoken of is said to be *καταδηλον*. Of what he said before, he affirmed that it was *προδηλον*, ver. 14, namely, that our Lord sprang of Judah, ‘evident, manifest, demonstrable;’ but this he adds is *καταδηλον*, which composition of the word strengthens the signification, arguing yet a more open and convincing evidence.

Hence he adds, that it is *περισσοτερον*, *magis patet*; *abundantius manifestum*, comparatively with what was said before, of an abundant efficacy for conviction, that whose light nothing can stand against. But we must observe, that the apostle doth not compare the things themselves absolutely with one another, and so determine that one is of a more evident truth than the other; but he compares them only with respect unto the evidence in arguing unto his end. There is more immediate force in this consideration, to prove the cessation of the Levitical priesthood, that another priest was to rise after the similitude of Melchisedec, than was merely in this, that our Lord sprang of the tribe of Judah; but of this afterwards.

And therefore he adds *ετι*, ‘yet;’ that is, above all that hath been collected from the consideration of Melchisedec, there is yet this uncontrollable evidence unto our purpose remaining.

The apostle we see lays great weight on this argument, and withal proceeds gradually and distinctly from one thing to another in the whole discourse. It may be we see not why he should insist so much upon, and so narrowly scan all particulars in this matter. For being freed by the gospel from the power of temptations about it, and being of the Gentiles, who were never concerned in it, we cannot be sensible of the just importance of what is under confirmation. The truth is, he hath the greatest argument in hand, that was ever controverted in

the church of God, and upon the determination whereof the salvation or ruin of the church did depend. The worship he treated of, was immediately instituted by God himself; and had now continued near fifteen hundred years in the church. All this while it had been the certain rule of God's acceptance of the people, or of his anger towards them; for whilst they complied with it, his blessing was continually upon them, and the neglect of it was still punished with severity. And the last caution that God had given them, by the ministry of the last prophet he sent unto them, was, that they should 'abide in the observance of the law of Moses, lest I come (says he) and smite the whole earth with a curse,' Mal. iv. 6. Besides these, and sundry other things, that were real and pleadable in the behalf of the Mosaic worship, the Hebrews esteemed it always their great and singular privilege above all other nations, which they would rather die than part withal. And the design of the apostle in this place is to prove, that now utterly unexpectedly unto the church, after so long a season, their whole worship was to be removed, to be used no more, but that another system of ordinances and institutions absolutely new, and inconsistent with it, was to be introduced. And upon the compliance of the Hebrews with this doctrine, or the rejection of it, depended their eternal salvation or destruction.

It was therefore very necessary that the apostle should proceed warily, distinctly, and gradually, omitting no argument that was of force and pleadable in this cause, and that he should not fail to remark in an especial manner on those arguments, which contained an especial evidence and demonstrative force in them, as he doth in this instance. For this introduction of it, 'and it is yet far more,' or 'abundantly more evident,' is as a hand put in the margin of a writing, calling for a peculiar attendance unto, and consideration of the matter, directed unto. And we may see,

Obs. I. That present truths are earnestly to be pleaded and contended for.—So the apostle Peter would have believers established, *εν τη παρουση αληθεια*, 'in the present truth.' All truth is eternal, and in itself equally subsistent and present unto all ages. But it is especially so either from the great use of it in some seasons, or the great opposition that is made unto it. So this doctrine about the abolition of the Mosaic ceremonies and institutions, with the introduction of a new priesthood and new ordinances of worship, was then the present truth, in the knowledge and confirmation whereof, the church was eternally concerned. And so may other truths be at other seasons. And any of them may be so rendered, by the opposition that at any time is made to them. For God is pleased to exercise and try the faith of the church by heresies, which are fierce, pertinacious, and subtle oppositions made to the truth. Now none of them, which aim at any consistency in and with themselves, or are of any real danger unto the church, did ever reject all gospel truths, but some general principles they will allow, or they would leave themselves no foundation to stand upon, in their opposition unto others. Those therefore singly opposed by them at any time, as the deity or satisfaction of Christ, justification by faith, and the like, being so opposed, become the present truth of the age, in the instance of ad-

herence whereunto, God will try the faith of his people, and requires that they may be earnestly pleaded for. And this is that which the apostle Jude intends, ver. 3, where he exhorts us, *επαγωνίζεσθαι*, 'to contend,' 'strive,' 'wrestle,' with all earnestness and the utmost of our endeavours, for the faith once delivered unto the saints; namely, because of the opposition that was then made unto it. And a truth may come under this qualification, by persecution as well as heretical opposition. Satan is always awake and attentive unto his advantages; and therefore, though he hate all truth, yet doth he not at all times equally attempt upon every thing that is so. But he waiteth to see an inclination in men from their lusts, or prejudices, or interests in this world, against any especial truth, or way of divine worship, which God hath appointed. When he finds things so ready prepared, he falls to his work, and stirs up persecution against it. This makes that truth to be the present truth to be contended for, as that wherein God will try the faith, and obedience, and patience of the church. And the reasons why we ought with all care, diligence, and perseverance, to attend unto the preservation and profession of such truths, are obvious unto all.

Obs. II. Important truths should be strongly confirmed.—Such is that here pleaded by the apostle, and therefore doth he so labour in the confirmation of it. He had undertaken to convince the Hebrews of the cessation of their legal worship, out of their own acknowledged principles. He deals not with them merely by his apostolical authority, and by virtue of the divine revelations of the will of God which himself had received; but he proceeds with them on arguments taken out of the types, institutions, and testimonies of the Old Testament, all which they owned and acknowledged, though without his aid they had not understood the meaning of them. On this supposition, it was necessary for him to plead and press all the arguments from the topic mentioned, which had any cogency in them; and he doth so accordingly.

Obs. III. Arguments that are equally true, may yet on the account of evidence not be equally cogent; yet,

Obs. IV. In the confirmation of the truth, we may use every help that is true and seasonable, though some of them may be more effectual unto our end than others.—This we are instructed in, by the apostle affirming in this place, that what he now affirms is yet far more evident. And this evidence, as we observed before, may respect either the things themselves, or the efficacy in point of argument. For in themselves, all things under the Old Testament, were typical and significant of what was afterwards to be introduced. So our apostle tells us, that the ministry of Moses consisted in giving testimony to those things which were to be spoken or declared afterwards, ch. iii. 5. But among them, some were far more clear and evident as to their signification than others were. In the latter sense, the things which he had discoursed about Melchisedec, and his priesthood, were more effectually demonstrative of the change of the Levitical priesthood, than what he had newly observed concerning the rising of our Lord Jesus Christ, not of the tribe of Levi but of Judah, although that had life and evidence also in itself, which is principally intended.

The argument itself is next expressed, whereunto this full evidence is ascribed, *εἰ κατὰ τὴν ὁμοιοτητα Μελχισεδεκ ἀνίσταται ἱερεὺς ἕτερος*, ‘if another priest do arise after the similitude of Melchisedec.’ And in the words there is, 1. The modification of the proposition in the particle *εἰ*. 2. The notation of the subject spoken of—another priest. 3. His introduction into his office—he did arise. 4. The nature of his office, and the manner of his coming unto it—after the likeness of Melchisedec.

Εἰ, ‘if,’ is generally taken here not to be a conditional, but a causal conjunction. And so, as many judge, it is used, Rom. viii. 31; 2 Cor. v. 15; 1 Thess. iii. 8; 1 Pet. i. 17. And it is rendered in our translation by ‘for,’ ‘for that another priest;’ as Beza rendered it by *quod*, ‘because.’ Others by *ex eo quod*, and *siquidem*. Syr. ‘And again this is more known by that which he said.’ All take it to be an intimation of a reason proving what is affirmed; and so it doth if, with the Vulgar, we retain *si*, or *siquidem*, ‘if so be.’ And it is yet far more evident, ‘if so be that another priest.’

As to the argument in general, we must observe, 1. That the design of the apostle in this place, is not to demonstrate the dignity and eminency of the priesthood of Christ from that of Melchisedec, his type, which he had done before sufficiently; he doth not produce the same words and arguments again unto the same purpose: but that which he aims at is from that testimony, whereby he had proved the dignity of the priesthood of Christ, now also to prove the necessary abolition of the Levitical priesthood. Wherefore, 2. He doth not insist on the whole of the testimony before pleaded, but only on that one thing of another priest, necessarily included therein.

2. The subject spoken of is *ἱερεὺς ἕτερος*, that is not merely *אחר*, that is, *ἄλλος*, alius; as the Syriac understood it, who renders it by *אחרניא*: but it is *נ* alienus, that is intended. Every *נ* was by the law absolutely forbidden to approach unto the priest’s office, or altar, or sacred employment. So *ἕτερος*, ‘another,’ in this case, is ‘a stranger,’ one that is not of the house or family of Aaron. And nothing can be more evident, than that the Levitical priesthood, and the whole law of divine worship, must be taken away and abolished then, if it appear that any *נ*, *ἕτερος*, or ‘stranger,’ may be admitted into that office; much more, if it were necessary that it should so be. For the law of the priesthood took care of nothing more than that no stranger that was not of the house of Aaron, should be called to that office; see Exod. xxix. 33; Lev. xxii. 10; Num. i. 51, iii. 10. Aaron, and his sons, they shall wait on the priest’s office, *ויהיו חקרב יומה*, ‘and the stranger that cometh nigh,’ that is to discharge any sacerdotal duty, ‘shall be put to death.’ And God gave an eminent instance of his severity with respect unto this law in the punishment of Corah, though of the tribe of Levi, for the transgression of it. And he caused a perpetual memorial to be kept of that punishment, to the end they might know, that no stranger that is not of the seed of Aaron should come near to offer incense before the Lord, Num. xvi. 10. And hence our apostle in the next verse observes, that this priest was not to be made after the law of a carnal commandment, seeing his making was a dissolution of that law or commandment. If therefore there must be

ἕτερος ἑτερος, 'another priest,' that was not of the lineage of Aaron, the other is abolished.

3. His introduction into his office is expressed by *ανίσταται*, 'there ariseth;' oritur, exoritur. Syr. *ܫܪܓ*, Surgit. Vul. Lat. Exurgat, 'arose,' in an extraordinary manner, Judges v. 7, 'Until I Deborah arose, I arose a mother in Israel;' that is, by an extraordinary call from God to be a prophetess and a deliverer. Deut. xviii. 18, 'A prophet will I raise up unto you,' which was Christ himself. So God 'raised up a horn of salvation in the house of his servant David,' Luke i. 69, that is, with an extraordinary power and glory. So was this priest to arise, not springing out of, nor succeeding in any order of priesthood before established. But all things in the law lay against his introduction; and the body of the people in the church, was come unto the highest defiance of any such priest. But as God had fore-signified what he would do, when the time of the reformation of all things should come, so when he performed his word herein, he did it in that manner, with that evidence of his glory and power, as introduced him against all opposition. For when the appointed time is come, wherein the decrees of God shall bring forth, and his counsel be accomplished, all difficulties, though appearing insuperable, shall vanish and disappear, Zech. iv. 6, 7.

4. The nature of his priesthood is declared in its resemblance unto that of Melchisedec, *κατα την ὁμοιοτητα*. The apostle intendeth not to express the words of the Psalmist, *על דברתי*, which he constantly renders *κατα ταξιν*, 'according unto the order;' but he respects the whole conformity that was between Melchisedec and our Lord Jesus Christ, in the instances which he had before insisted on. For whereas God had ordered all things in the Scripture concerning Melchisedec, that he might be *αφωμοιωμενος τῷ υἱῷ του Θεου*, ver. 3, 'made like unto the Son of God,' he is said to arise, *καθ' ὁμοιοτητα* 'according to the likeness or similitude of Melchisedec.' For every similitude is mutual; one thing is as like unto another, as that is unto it. This therefore is evident, that there was to be another priest; *ἕτερος*, not only *ἄλλος*, merely 'another,' but *ἁλλογενης*, 'one of another stock and race;' and a priest he was to be after the similitude of Melchisedec, and not so much as after the similitude of Aaron. The arising of Christ in his offices puts an end unto all other things that pretend an usefulness unto the same end with them. When he arose as a king, he did not put an end unto the office and power of kings in the world; but he did so unto the typical kingdoms over the church, as he did to the priesthood by arising as a priest. And when he ariseth spiritually in the hearts and consciences of believers, an end is put unto all other things, that they might before look for life, or righteousness, or salvation by.

VER. 16.—This verse containeth an illustration and confirmation of the foregoing assertion, by a declaration of the way and manner how this other priest, who was not of the seed of Aaron, should come unto that office. And this was necessary also for the prevention of an objection, which the whole discourse was obnoxious to. For it might be said, that whatever was affirmed concerning another priest, yet there

was no way possible, whereby any one might come so to be, unless he were of the family of Aaron. All others were expressly excluded by the law. Nor was there any way or means ordained of God, any especial sacrifice instituted, whereby such a priest might be dedicated, and initiated into his office. In prevention of this objection, and confirmation of what was before declared, the apostle adds,

VER. 16.—*Who was made not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.*

The words declare, 1. That this priest was made so; and, 2. How he was made so, both negatively and positively.

1. He was made so: *ὅς γεγονε*, ‘which priest was made,’ ‘or’ ‘who was made a priest.’ The force of this expression hath been explained on ch. iii. 2, and ch. v. 5. The Lord Christ did not merely on his own authority and power take this office on himself. He became so, he was made so, by the appointment and designation of the Father. Nor did he do any thing in the whole work of his mediation, but in obedience unto his command, and in compliance with his will. For it is the authority of God alone, which is the foundation of all office, duty, and power, in the church. Even that Christ himself is and was unto the church, he is and was so by the grace and authority of God, even the Father. By him was he sent, his will did he perform, through his grace did he die, by his power was he exalted, and with him doth he intercede. What acts of God in particular do concur unto the constitution of this office of Christ, and to the making him a priest, have been declared before.

2. The manner of his being made a priest, is expressed negatively, *οὐ κατὰ τὸν νόμον ἐντολῆς σαρκικῆς*, ‘not after;’ or ‘not according to the law of a carnal commandment.’ Syr. *דפוקנה פניני*, ‘the law of bodily commandments.’ It is unquestionable, that the apostle by this expression intendeth in the first place the law of the Levitical priesthood, or the way and manner whereby the Aaronical priests were first called and vested with their office, and then any other law, constitution, rule, or order of the same kind. He was made a priest neither by that law, nor any other like unto it. And two things we must inquire into. 1. Why the call of the Aaronical priests is said to be after the law of commandment. 2. Why this commandment is said to be fleshly.

First. For the first we may observe that the whole law of worship among the Jews is called by our apostle, *ὁ νόμος τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δογμασι*, Eph. ii. 15, ‘The law of commandments in ordinances.’ And it is so called for two reasons.

1. Because commands were so multiplied therein, that the whole law was denominated from them. Hence it became *ζυγος δυσβάστακτος*, ‘a yoke hardly to be borne,’ if not altogether intolerable, Acts xv. 10. 2. Because of that severity wherewith obedience was exacted. A command in its formal notion expresseth authority, and the multiplication of them severity; and both these God designed to make eminent in that law, whence it hath this denomination, ‘a law of com-

mandments.' Hereof the law of the constitution of the office of the priesthood, and the call of Aaron thereunto, was a part, and he was therefore made a priest by the law of commandments; that is, by a preceptive law, as a part of that system of commands wherein the whole law consisted. See this law, and all the commands of it, Exod. xxviii. throughout.

Secondly. Why doth the apostle call this commandment *σαρκικης*, 'carnal or fleshly.' *Ans.* It may be on either of these three accounts.

1. With relation unto the sacrifices, which were the principal part of the consecration of Aaron unto his office. And these may be called fleshly on two accounts. 1. Because of their subject-matter, they were flesh, or the bodies of beasts; as the Syriac reads these words, 'the commandment of bodies,' that is, of beasts to be sacrificed. 2. In themselves, and their relation unto the Jewish state, they reached no further than the purifying of the flesh. They sanctified unto the purifying of the flesh, as the apostle speaks, ch. ix. 13. And thus the whole commandment should be denominated from the principal subject-matter, or the offering of fleshly sacrifices unto the purifying of the flesh.

2. It may be called carnal, because a priesthood was instituted thereby, which was to be continued by carnal propagation only; the priesthood appointed by that law, was confined unto the carnal seed and posterity of Aaron, wherein this other priest had no interest.

3. Respect may be had unto the whole system of those laws and institutions of worship, which our apostle, as was also before observed, calls carnal ordinances, imposed unto the time of reformation, ch. ix. 10. They were all carnal, in opposition unto the dispensation of the Spirit under the gospel, and the institutions thereof.

None of these ways was the Lord Christ made a priest. He was not dedicated unto his office by the sacrifice of beasts, but sanctified himself thereunto, when he offered himself through the eternal Spirit unto God, and was consummated in his own blood. He was not of the carnal seed of Aaron, nor did, nor could claim any succession unto the priesthood, by virtue of an extraction from his race. And no constitution of the law in general, no ordinance of it, did convey unto him either right or title unto the priesthood. It is therefore evident, that he was in no sense made a priest according to the law of a carnal commandment; neither had he either right, power, or authority, to exercise the sacerdotal function, in the observance of any carnal rites or ordinances whatever. And we may observe,

Obs. V. That what seemed to be wanting unto Christ, in his entrance into any of his offices, or in the discharge of them, was on the account of a greater glory.—Aaron was made a priest with a great outward solemnity. The sacrifices which were offered, and the garments he put on, with his visible separation from the rest of the people, had a great ceremonial glory in them. There was nothing of all this, nor any thing like unto it, in the consecration of the Lord Christ unto his office. But yet indeed these things had no glory, in comparison of that excelling glory, which accompanied those invisible acts of divine

authority, wisdom, and grace, which communicated his office unto him. And indeed in the worship of God, who is a Spirit, all outward ceremony is a diminution and debasement of it. Hence were ceremonies for beauty and glory multiplied under the Old Testament, but yet, as the apostle shows, were all but carnal. But as the sending of Christ himself, and his investiture with all his offices, were by secret and invisible acts of God and his Spirit, so all evangelical worship, as to the glory of it, is spiritual and internal only. And the removal of the old pompous ceremonies from our worship, is but the taking away of the veil, which hindered from an insight and entrance into the holy place.

2. The way and manner whereby the Lord Christ was made a priest, is expressed positively: *αλλα κατα δυναμιν ζωης ακαταλυτου*. 'but according to the power of an indissoluble life.' *Αλλα* denotes an opposition between the way rejected and this asserted, as those which were not consistent. He was not made a priest that way, but this. How is Christ then made a priest according to the power of an endless life? that is, saith one in his Paraphrase, 'installed into the priesthood after his resurrection.' What is meant by 'installed,' I do not well know. It should seem to be the same with *τελειωθεις*, 'consecrated, dedicated, initiated.' And if so, this exposition diverts wholly from the truth. For Christ was installed into his office of priesthood, before his resurrection, or he did not offer himself as a sacrifice unto God, in his death and blood-shedding. And to suppose, that the Lord Christ discharged and performed the principal act of his sacerdotal office, which was but once to be performed, before he was installed a priest, is contradictory to Scripture and reason itself. *Ideo ad vitam immortalem perductus est, ut in æternum sacerdos noster esset*. 'He was therefore brought unto an immortal life, that he might be our priest for ever,' saith another. But this is not to be made a priest according to the power of an endless life. If he means, that he might always continue to be a priest, and to execute that office always unto the consummation of all things, what he says is true, but not the sense of this place; but if he means, that he became immortal after his resurrection, that he might be our priest, and abide so for ever, it excludes his oblation in his death from being a proper sacerdotal act, which that it was, I have sufficiently proved elsewhere, against Crellius and others.

Some think that the endless life intended is that of believers, which the Lord Christ by virtue of his priestly office confers upon them. The priests under the law proceeded no further but to discharge carnal rites, which could not confer eternal life on them for whom they ministered. But the Lord Christ in the discharge of his office, procureth eternal redemption and everlasting life for believers. And these things are true, but they comprise not the meaning of the apostle in this place. For how can Christ be made a priest according to the power of that eternal life, which he confers on others? For the comparison and opposition that is made between the law of a carnal commandment, whereby Aaron was constituted a priest, and the power of an endless life, whereby Christ was made so, do evidence, that the making

of Christ a priest, not absolutely, which the apostle treats not of, but such a priest as he is, was the effect of this endless life.

Wherefore the *ζωή ακαταλυτος*, the indissoluble life here intended, is the life of Christ himself. Hereunto belonged, or from hence did proceed that *δυναμις*, or power, whereby he was made a priest. And both the office itself, and the execution or discharge of it, are here intended. And as to the office itself, this eternal or endless life of Christ is his life as the Son of God. Hereon depends his own mediatory life for ever, and his conferring of eternal life on us, John v. 26, 27. And to be a priest by virtue of, or according unto this power, stands in direct opposition unto the law of a carnal commandment.

It must therefore be inquired, how the Lord Christ was made a priest according unto this power. And I say it was, because thereby alone he was rendered meet to discharge that office, wherein God was to redeem his church with his own blood, Acts xx. 28. By 'power,' therefore, here, both meetness and ability are intended. And both these the Lord Christ had from his divine nature, and his endless life therein.

Or it may be the life of Christ in his human nature is intended, in opposition unto those priests, who being made so by the law of a carnal commandment, did not continue in the discharge of their office by reason of death, as our apostle observes afterwards. But it will be said, that this natural life of Christ, the life of the human nature, was not endless, but had an end put unto it in the dissolution of his soul and body on the cross.

I say therefore, this life of Christ was not absolutely the life of the human nature, considered separately from his divine; but it was the life of the person of the Son of God, of Christ as God and man in one person. And so his life was endless. For, first, in the death which he underwent in his human nature, there was no interruption given unto his discharge of his sacerdotal office, no, not for a moment. For, secondly, His person still lived, and both soul and body were therein inseparably united unto the Son of God. Although he was truly and really dead in his human nature, he was still alive in his indissoluble person. And this the apostle hath a respect unto, in the testimony which he cites in the next verse, to prove that he is a priest for ever. The carnal commandment gave authority and efficacy unto the Levitical priests. But Christ is made a priest according to the power of an endless life; that is, through the power and efficacy of that eternal life, which is in his divine person, both his human nature is preserved always in the discharge of his office, and he is enabled thereby to work out eternal life on the behalf of them for whom he is a priest. And so the apostle proves the difference of this other priest, from those of the order of Aaron, not only from the tribe wherein he was to be, and from his type Melchisedec, but also from the way and means, whereby the one and the other were enabled to discharge their office.

VER. 17.—THE proof of all before asserted, is given in the testimony of the Psalmist so often before appealed to: 'For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.'

The introduction of this testimony is by *μαρτυρεῖ γὰρ*, or ‘he witnesseth or testifieth;’ that is, David doth in the Psalm, or rather the Holy Ghost speaking in and by David, doth so testify. He doth not absolutely say that so he ‘speaks,’ but ‘testifies;’ because he used his words in a way of testimony unto what he had delivered. And although one thing be now principally intended by him, yet there is in these words a testimony given unto all the especial heads of his discourse. As, 1. That there was to be another priest, a priest that was not of the stock of Aaron, nor tribe of Levi. For he says unto the Messiah prophesied of, who was to be of the seed of David, *συ ἱερεὺς*, ‘Thou art a priest,’ although a stranger from the Aaronical line. 2. That this other priest was to be after the order of Melchisedec, and was not to be called after the order of Aaron. For he was *על דברת*—*κατὰ ταξιν*, ‘after the order:’ ‘is a redundant, and not a suffix. *דברת* is from *דבר*, and signifies ‘a state or order of things: *בני על דברת בני*, *אמרתני אני בלבי* Eccles. iii. 18, ‘I said in my heart concerning the estate of the sons of men,’ their condition and order of all things; that is, *ταξις*. The priesthood of Christ in the mind of God, was the eternal idea or original exemplar of the priesthood of Melchisedec. God brought him forth, and vested him with his office, in such a way and manner, as that he might outwardly represent in sundry things, the idea of the priesthood of Christ in his own mind. Hence he and his priesthood, became an eternal exemplar of the priesthood of Christ, as unto its actual exhibition; and therefore is he said to be made a priest after his order, that is, suitably unto the representation made thereof in him. 3. That he was made a priest, namely, by him and his authority, who said unto him, ‘Thou art a priest;’ as ch. v. 5, 6, 10. 4. That he was so after the power of an endless life; for he was a priest for ever. This word is applied to the law and legal priesthood, and signifies a duration commensurate unto the state and condition of the things whereunto it is applied. There was an *עולם* of the law, an age whereunto its continuance was confined. So long all the promises annexed to it stood in force. And as ascribed unto the new state of things under the gospel, it doth not signify eternity absolutely, but a certain unchangeable duration, unto the end of the time and works of the gospel. For then shall the exercise of the priesthood of Christ cease, with his whole mediatory work and office, 1 Cor. xv. 28. Christ therefore is said to be a priest for ever. 1. In respect of his person, endued with an endless life. 2. Of the execution of his office unto the final end of it—he lives for ever to make intercession. 3. Of the effect of his offices, which is to save believers unto the utmost, or with an everlasting salvation.

And the apostle had sufficient reason to affirm that what he proposed was eminently manifest, namely, from the testimony which he produceth thereof. From what can be more evident, than that the Aaronical priesthood was to be abolished, if so be that God had designed and promised to raise up another priest in the church, who was neither of the stock nor order of Aaron, nor called the same way to his office as he was, and who, when he was so raised and called, was to continue a priest for ever, leaving no room for the continuance of

that priesthood in the church, nor place for its return when it was once laid aside? And we may observe that,

Obs. VI. The eternal continuance of Christ's person gives eternal continuance and efficacy unto his office.—Because he lives for ever, he is a priest for ever. His endless life is the foundation of his endless priesthood. Whilst he lives, we want not a priest; and therefore he says, that because he lives, we shall live also.

Obs. VII. To make new priests in the church, is virtually to renounce the faith of his living for ever as our priest, or to suppose that he is not sufficient to the discharge of his office.

Obs. VIII. The alteration that God made in the church by the introduction of the priesthood of Christ, was progressive towards its perfection.—To return therefore unto, or look after legal ceremonies in the worship of God, is to go back unto poor beggarly elements and rudiments of the world.

VER. 18, 19.—IN the twelfth verse of this chapter, the apostle affirms, that the priesthood being changed, there was of necessity a change made of the law also. Having proved the former, he now proceeds to confirm his inference from it, by declaring that the priest and priesthood that were promised to be introduced, were in all things inconsistent with the law. In that place, he mentions only a *μεταθεσις*, or change of the law. But he intended not an alteration to be made in it, so as that being changed and mended, it might be restored unto its former use. But it was such a change of it, as was an *αθετησις*, an abrogation of it, as in these verses he doth declare.

Now this was a matter of the highest concern unto the Hebrews, and of great importance in itself. For it included, and carried along with it, an alteration of the whole state of the church, and of all the solemn worship of God therein. This therefore was not to be done but on cogent reasons, and grounds indispensable. And no doubt but the apostle foresaw what a surprisal it would be unto the generality of the Hebrews, to hear that they must quit all their concern and special interest in the law of Moses. For he had three sorts of persons to deal withal in this great cause.

1. Such as adhered unto, and maintained the Mosaic institutions, in opposition unto Christ and the whole way of our coming unto God by him. These esteemed it the greatest blasphemy imaginable for any to affirm, that the law was to be changed or abrogated. And this was the occasion of the death of the first martyr of Jesus Christ, under the accusation of blasphemy, which by the law was to be punished with death. For this they made their charge against Stephen, that he spake 'blasphemous words against Moses, (whom they put in the first place,) and against God,' Acts vi. 11. And the proof of this blasphemy they lay on those words, that Jesus should change the customs which Moses had delivered to them. Accordingly, on this very account, they stirred up persecution with rage and madness against the holy apostles, all the world over. The mouths of these cursed unbelievers were to be stopped, and therefore cogent and unanswerable reasons were in this case to be urged by the apostle; and they are so

accordingly. And they were to know, that notwithstanding all their rage and bluster, those that believed were not ashamed of the gospel; and they must be told that the law was to be abrogated, whether they would hear or forbear, however they were provoked or enraged thereby.

2. There were others of them who, although they received the gospel, and believed in Christ, yet were persuaded that the law was still in force, and the worship prescribed in it still to be observed. And of these there were very great multitudes, as the apostle declares, Acts xxi. 20. This error was, in the patience of God, for a while tolerated among them, because the time of their full conviction was not yet come. But those who were possessed with it, began after a while to be very troublesome unto the church, and would not be content to observe the law themselves, but would impose the observance of it on all the Gentile converts, on the pain of eternal damnation, Acts xv. 1. They said and contended, that unless they were circumcised after the manner of Moses, they could not be saved. These also were to be restrained and convinced; and those of them who were obstinate in this persuasion, not long after apostatised from the whole of Christianity. And,

3. There were sincere believers, whose faith was to be strengthened and confirmed. With respect unto them all, the apostle laboureth with great diligence in this argument, and evidently proves, both that it was the will and purpose of God, that the administration of the law should have an end, and also that the time was now come, wherein it was to cease and be abrogated. This therefore he proceeds withal in these verses.

VER. 18, 19.—*Αθετησις* μεν γαρ γινεται προαγουσης εντολης, δια το αυτης ασθενες και ανωφελες. Ουδεν γαρ ετελειωσεν ο νομος, επεισαγωγη δε κρειττονος ελπιδος, δι' ης εγγιζομεν τω Θεω.

Αθετησις, Vul. Lat. *Reprobatio*. Rhem. 'Reprobation,' most improperly. Syr. *שחלפא*, *mutatio*, 'a change,' which reacheth not the force of the word. Ar. *Abrogatio*. Bez. *Fit irritum*; that is, *mandatum*. *Αθετω* is rendered, *loco moveo*, *abrogo*, *abdico*, *irritum facio*; 'to take out of the way,' 'to abrogate,' 'to disannul,' 'to make void'; and for the most part it hath respect unto a rule, law, or command, that was or is in force. Sometimes it is used of a person, who ought in duty to be regarded and honoured, but is despised, Luke x. 16; John xii. 48, where it is rendered 'to despise.' So 1 Thess. iv. 8; Jude 8. Sometimes it respects 'things,' Gal. ii. 21; 1 Tim. v. 12, but commonly it respects 'a law,' and is applied to them who are absolutely under the power of the law, or such in whose power the law is. The first sort are said to make void the law, when they transgress it neglecting the authority whereby it is given, Mark vii. 9; Heb. x. 28. But when this word is applied unto him who hath power over the law, it signifies the abrogation of it, so far as that it shall have no power to oblige unto its observance. *Αθετησις* is used nowhere in the New Testament but here, and ch. ix. 26. Here it is applied unto the law, being the taking away of its power to oblige unto obe-

dience ; there unto sin, denoting the abrogating of its power to condemn.

Μεν γαρ, quidem, equidem, enim. Syr. כן, autem, ‘but ;’ ‘for verily.’

Προαγουσης εντολης, præcedentis mandati. The Syriac thus renders the verse, ‘The change which was made in the first commandment, was made for its weakness, and because there was no profit in it.’

Δια το αυτης ασθενες, propter ipsius imbecillitatem ; infirmitatem ; propter illud quod in eo erat infirmum aut imbecille.

Και ανωφελες ; et inutilitatem, כה ויהי ליה תועלת, Syr. ‘and because there was no profit in it.’

The Arab. changeth the sense of the place, reading to this purpose : ‘For there is a transgression where the commandment went before, because that was weak and of little advantage.’

Ετελειωσεν ο νομος ; perfecit lex. Bez. Consummavit ; ad perfectum adduxit. Vul. Lat. Rhem. ‘Brought nothing to perfection.’ Syr. ‘For the law did not perfect any thing.’

Επεισαγωγή δε κρειττονος ελπιδος. Vul. Introductio verò melioris spei. Beza, Sed superintroducta spes potior. Others, Sed erat introductio ad spem potiore. Syr. ‘But there entered in the room thereof, a hope more excellent than it.’

Εγγιζομεν ; appropinquamus ; accedimus ; Vul. proximamus. Rhem. ‘we approach.’

Our own translation fully expresseth the original in all the parts of it, only it determines the sense of ver. 19, by the insertion of that word *did*.

VER. 18, 19.—*For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect ; but the bringing in of a better hope by which we draw nigh unto God.*

1. The subject spoken of is the command ; 2. Described by the time of its giving—‘it went before ;’ 3. Hereof it is affirmed, that it is disannulled ; and, 4. The reason thereof is adjoined from a twofold property or adjunct of it in particular. For, First. It was weak. Secondly. It was unprofitable. 5. As unto its deficiency from its general end—‘it made nothing perfect ;’ 6. Illustrated by that which took its work upon itself, and effected it thoroughly—‘the hope brought in, by which we draw nigh unto God.’

1. The εντολη, or command, is of as large a signification, ver. 18, as νομος, ‘the law,’ in ver 19. For the same thing is intended in both the words. It is not therefore the peculiar command for the institution of the legal priesthood, that is intended, but the whole system of Mosaic institutions. For the apostle having already proved, that the priesthood was to be abolished, he proceeds on that ground, and from thence, to prove, that the whole law was also to be in like manner abolished and removed. And indeed it was of such a nature and constitution that pull one pin out of the fabric, and the whole must fall to the ground. For the sanction of it being, that he was cursed who

continued not in all things written in the law to do them, the change of any one thing must needs overthrow the whole law. How much more must it do so, if that be changed, removed, or taken away, which was not only a material part of it, but the very hinge, whereon the whole observance of it did depend and turn. And the whole of this system of laws is called *εντολη*, 'a command,' because it consisted, *εν δογμασι*, in 'arbitrary commands and precepts,' regulated by that maxim, 'The man that doth these things shall live by them,' Rom. x. 5. And therefore the law, as a command, is opposed unto the gospel as a promise of righteousness by Jesus Christ, Gal. iii. 11, 12. Nor is it the whole ceremonial law only, that is intended by the command in this place; but the moral law also, so far as it was compacted with the other into one body of precepts for the same end. For with respect unto the efficacy of the whole law of Moses, as unto our drawing nigh to God, it is here considered.

2. This commandment is described by the time of its giving; it is *προαγουσα*, 'it went before,' that is, before the gospel as now preached and dispensed. It did not do so absolutely. For our apostle shows and proves, that as to the promise, whereby the grace of the new covenant was exhibited, and which contained the substance and essence of the gospel, it was given four hundred and thirty years before the giving of the law, Gal. iii. 17. Wherefore, the precedency of the law here expressed, may respect the testimony produced out of David, whereby the apostle proves the cessation of the priesthood, and consequently of the law itself. For the command was given before that testimony, and so went before it. But it rather respects the actual introduction of a new priest in the accomplishment of this promise. For hereon the whole change and alteration in the law and worship pleaded for by our apostle, did ensue. The commandment going before, is the law whereby the worship of God and obedience unto him, was regulated before the coming of Christ, and the introduction of the gospel.

3. Of this command or law, it is affirmed that there is an *αθετησις*, and that with some earnestness. *Αθετησις μιν γαρ γινεται*, for 'truly, verily, certainly.' This, whatever it be, it came not to pass of its own accord, but it was made by him who had power and authority so to do, which must be the lawgiver. *Αθετησις* may respect a law, as was before intimated, either on the account of the lawgiver, him that hath power over it, or of those unto whom it is given as a law, and who are under the power of it. In the latter sense, *αθετω* is to 'transgress a law,' to make it void what lies in us, by contemning the authority of him by whom it is given; that use of the word was before observed in Mark vii. 9; Heb. x. 28. In the first sense it is directly opposed unto *νομοθεσια*; that is, 'the giving, presenting, and promulgating of a law,' by a just and due authority, whence it hath a power and force to oblige unto obedience. *Αθετησις* is the dissolution hereof. The word, as was said even now, is once more used in the New Testament, and that by our apostle in this Epistle, ch. ix. 26. Christ hath appeared *εις αθετησιν αμαρτιας*, 'to put away sin,' say we, by the sacrifice of himself. That is, to the abrogation or abolishing of that power, which sin hath by its guilt to bind over sinners unto punishment. So the

αἰρεσις of the law, is its abrogation, in taking away all its power of obliging unto obedience or punishment. The apostle elsewhere expresseth the same act by *καταργεω*, Eph. ii. 15; 2 Tim. i. 10. It is therefore plainly declared that the law is abrogated, abolished, disannulled; but we must yet farther inquire, 1. How this could be done; 2. By what means it was done; and, 3. which himself adds expressly, For what reason it was done.

First. We must inquire how this could be done. This inquiry seems not to be without its difficulties. For it was a law originally given unto the church by God himself, and continued therein with his approbation for many generations. And there are multiplied instances in the sacred records, of his blessing them who were faithful and obedient in its observance. Yea, the whole prosperity of the church did always depend thereon; as its neglect was always accompanied with severe tokens of God's displeasure. Besides, our Saviour affirmeth of himself, that he came not *καταλυσαι τον νομον*, Matt. v. 17, to dissolve or destroy the law, which upon the matter is the same with *αἰρεσαι*. For if a law be disannulled or abrogated, it is totally dissolved as to its obligatory power. And our apostle removes the suspicion of any such thing from the doctrine of the gospel, Rom. iii. 31, 'Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.'

Ans. There are two ways whereby any law may be disannulled or abrogated. *First.* By taking away all authority and use from it as unto its proper end, whilst it is in its pretended force. For suppose it to be made for ever or for a time only, its abrogation is its deprivation of all authority and use as a law. And this cannot regularly be done but on one of these accounts. 1. That the authority giving the law, was not valid from the beginning, but men have been obliged unto it on a false presumption thereof. 2. That the matter of it was never good or useful, or meet to be made the matter of law. On neither of these accounts could this law be abolished, nor ever was so by the Lord Christ or the gospel, nor is so to this day. For God himself was the immediate author of it, whose authority is sovereign and over all; and thence also it follows, that the matter of it was good. For the commandment, as our apostle speaks, was holy, just, and good, Rom. vii. 12. And however there be a difference between that which is morally good in itself and its own nature, and that which is so only by divine institution; yet the revealed will of God is the adequate rule of good and evil unto us, as unto our obedience. On these accounts, therefore it never was, nor ever could be abolished.

Secondly. A law may be abrogated, when on any consideration whatever, its obligation unto practice doth cease or is taken away. Thus was it with this law; for, as every other law, it may be considered two ways.

1. With respect unto its main end, and directive power to guide men therein. This, in all human laws, is the public good of the community of society unto which it is given. When this ceaseth, and the law becomes not directive or useful unto the public good any more, all rational obligations unto its observance do cease also. But yet this

law differeth also from all others. All that any other law aimeth at, is obedience unto itself, and the public good, which that obedience will produce. So the moral law in the first covenant, had no other end but obedience unto it, and the rewardableness thereon, of them that did obey it. So was it an entire instrument of our living to God and of eternal rewards thereon. But as in its renovation it was made a part of the law here intended, it came with it to be of another nature or to have another use and end. For the whole scope and design of this law, was to direct men not to look after that good which was its end, in obedience unto itself, but in something else, that it directed unto by that obedience. The end it directed unto, was righteousness before God ; but this could never be attained by an obedience unto it, nor was it ever intended that so it should do. This the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, Rom. viii. 3. And therefore, those who pursued and followed after it with the most earnestness for this end, never attained thereunto. Rom. ix. 31, 32. This end, therefore, is principally to be considered in this law, which, when it is attained, the law is established, although its obligation unto obedience unto itself, do necessarily cease. Now this end of the law was Christ and his righteousness, as the apostle expressly declares ; ‘ For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth,’ Rom. x. 4. And therefore, this whole law was our schoolmaster to Christ, Gal. iii. 24, 25. This is called by our Saviour, *πληρῶσαι τον νομον*, ‘to fulfil the law,’ and is opposed to the destroying of it, Matt. v. 17, ‘I came not *καταλυσαι*, to destroy, or dissolve the law, but to fulfil it.’ That is, not to abrogate it or take it away, as that which either wanted a just authority, or was not good or useful, the common reasons of the abrogation of any law in force : but I came to bring in, and accomplish the whole end which it aimed at, and directed unto ; whereon it would cease to oblige unto a farther practice. And this the apostle calls *ισταναι*, ‘to establish the law ;’ ‘Do we then make void the law through faith ? yea, we establish the law,’ Rom. iii. 31. That is, we declare how it hath its end and full accomplishment, which is the greatest establishment that any law is capable of. And if the fulfilling of the law, both as unto what it requires in a way of obedience, and what also in its curse for sin, be not imputed unto us, we do not by faith establish the law, but make it void.

2. The law may be considered with respect unto the particular duties that it required and prescribed. And because the whole law had its end, these were appointed only until that end might be, or was attained. So saith our apostle, ‘They were imposed until the time of reformation,’ ch. ix. 10. Wherefore, two things did accompany this law in its first institution. 1. That an obedience unto its commands, would not produce the good which it directed unto, as formally respecting the law itself. 2. That the duties it required had a limited time for their performance and acceptance, allotted to them. Wherefore without the least disparagement unto it, as unto the authority whereby it was given or as unto its own holiness and goodness, it might be disannulled as unto its actual obligation unto practice, and the observance of its commands. For the end of it being fully accomplished, it is no less esta-

blished, than if the observance of it had been continued unto the end of the world. It was therefore established by Christ and the gospel, as unto its end, use, and scope; it was disannulled as to its obligatory power, and to the observance of its commands. For these two are inconsistent, namely, that a law, as unto all its ends, should be fulfilled, and yet stand in force in its obligatory power unto obedience.

Secondly. We must inquire how this was done, or how this law was abrogated, as to its obligatory power and efficacy. And this was done two ways.

First. Really and virtually. This was done by Christ himself in his own person. For the fulfilling and accomplishing of it, was that which really and virtually took away all its obligatory power. For what should it oblige men unto? An answer is ready unto all its demands, namely, that they are fulfilled; and as unto what was significative in its duties, it is all really exhibited; so that on no account it can any more oblige or command the consciences of men. This the apostle sets out, in a comparison with the relation that is between a man and his wife, with the obligation unto mutual duties that ensues thereon, Rom. vii. 1—6. Whilst the husband is alive, the wife is obliged unto all conjugal duties towards him and unto him alone. But upon his death, that obligation ceaseth of itself, and she is at liberty to marry unto another. So were we obliged unto the law, whilst it was alive, whilst it stood in its force and vigour: but when through the death of Christ, the law was accomplished, it died as to the relation which was between it and us, whereon all its obligation unto observance was disannulled. This was that, whereby the law was really and virtually abrogated. Its preceptive part being fulfilled and its significative being exhibited, it was of no more force and efficacy as a law. The reason why it was thus to have an end put to it, is declared in the close of the verse.

Secondly. It was so abrogated declaratively; or the will of God concerning its abrogation, was made known four ways.

1. In general by the promulgation and preaching of the gospel, where the accomplishment and cessation of it, was declared. For the declaration made, that the Messiah was come, that he had finished his work in the world, and thereby made an end of sin, bringing in everlasting righteousness, whereby the law was fulfilled, did sufficiently manifest its abrogation. The apostles, I confess, in their first preaching to the Jews, spake not of it expressly, but left it to discover itself as an undeniable consequent of what they taught, concerning the Lord Christ and the righteousness of God in him. This, for some while, many of them that believed, understood not, and therefore were zealous of the law, which God in his patience and forbearance did graciously tolerate, so as not to impute it unto them. It was indeed great darkness, and manifold prejudices, that hindered the believing Jews from seeing the necessary consequence unto the abolition of the law, from the promulgation of the gospel: yet this was God pleased to bear with them in, that we might not be too fierce, nor reflect with too much severity on such as are not able in all things to receive the whole truth as we desire they should.

2. It was so by the institution and introduction of new ordinances of worship. This was wholly inconsistent with the law, wherein it was expressly enacted, that nothing should be added unto the worship of God therein prescribed. And if any such addition was made by the authority of God himself, as was inconsistent with any thing before appointed, it is evident that the whole law was disannulled. But a new order, a new entire system of ordinances of worship, was declared in the gospel. Yea, and those, some of them especially, as that of the Lord's supper, utterly inconsistent with any ordinances of the law, seeing it declares that to be done and past, which they direct us unto as future and to come.

3. There was a determination made in the case, by the Holy Ghost, upon an occasion administered thereunto. Those of the apostles, who preached the gospel unto the Gentiles, had made no mention unto them of the law of Moses, as knowing that it was nailed unto the cross of Christ, and taken out of the way. So were they brought unto the faith and obedience of the gospel without any respect unto the law, as that wherein they were not concerned, now it had received its accomplishment. But some of the Jews who believed, being yet persuaded that the law was to be continued in force, and its observance imposed on all who were proselyted by the gospel, occasion was given unto that solemn determination, which was made by the apostles, through the guidance of the Holy Ghost, Acts xv. And the substance of that determination was this; that the gospel, as preached unto the Gentiles, was not a way or means of proselyting them unto Judaism, but the bringing them unto a new church-state, by an interest in the promise and covenant of Abraham, given and made four hundred and thirty years before the giving of the law. Whilst the law stood in its force, whoever was proselyted unto the truth, he was so unto the law, and every Gentile that was converted unto the true God, was bound to be circumcised, and became obliged unto the whole law. But that being now disannulled, it is solemnly declared, that the Gentiles converted by the gospel, were under no obligation unto the law of Moses, but being received into the covenant of Abraham, were to be gathered into a new church-state, erected in and by the Lord Christ in the gospel.

4. As unto those of the Hebrews, who yet would not understand these express declarations of the ceasing of the obligatory power of the law, to put an end unto all disputes about his will in this matter, God gave a dreadful *αἰρησις* or 'abolition' unto it, in the total, final, irrevocable destruction of the city and temple, with all the instruments and vessels of its worship, especially of the priesthood, and all that belonged thereunto. Thus was the law disannulled, and thus was it declared so to be.

Obs. I. It is a matter of the highest nature and importance, to set up, take away, or remove any thing from, or change any thing in, the worship of God. Unless the authority of God interpose, and be manifested so to do, there is nothing for conscience to rest in, in these things. And,

Obs. II. The revelation of the will of God, in things relating unto

his worship, is very difficultly received, where the minds of men are prepossessed with prejudices and traditions. Notwithstanding all those ways whereby God had revealed his mind concerning the abolition of the Mosaic institutions, yet these Hebrews could neither understand it nor receive it, until the whole seat of its worship was destroyed and consumed.

Obs. III. The only securing principle in all things of this nature, is to preserve our souls in an entire subjection unto the authority of Christ, and unto his alone.

Thirdly. The close of the verse gives an especial reason of the disannulling or abrogation of the command, taken from its own nature and efficacy. For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before; *δια το αутης ασθενες και ανωφελες*, that is, *δια την αутης ασθενειαν και ανωφελιαν*. The adjective in the neuter gender put for a substantive, which is emphatical; as on the contrary it is so, when the substantive is put for the adjective; as 1 John ii. 27, *Αληθες εστι και ουκ εστι ψευδος*, 'is true and is not a lie;' that is, mendax, false or 'lying.' And *αутης*, 'its own,' is added to show that the principal cause of disannulling the law, was taken from the law itself.

I have proved before, that the commandment in this verse is of equal extent and signification with the law in the next. And the law there doth evidently intend the whole law, in both the parts of it, moral and ceremonial, as it was given by Moses unto the church of Israel. And this whole law is here charged by our apostle with weakness and unprofitableness, both which make a law fit to be disannulled. But it must be acknowledged that there is a difficulty of no small importance in the assignation of these imperfections unto the law; for this law was given by God himself. And how can it be supposed that the good and holy God should prescribe such a law unto his people, as was always weak and unprofitable. From this and the like considerations, the blasphemous Manichees denied that the good God was the author of the Old Testament, and the Jews continue still upon it to reject the gospel, as not allowing the least imperfection in the law, but equalling it almost with God himself. We must, therefore, consider in what sense the apostle ascribes these properties to the law.

1. Some seek for a solution of this difficulty, from Ezek. xx. 11, compared with ver. 25. Ver. 11. God saith, that 'I gave them my statutes, and showed them my judgments, which if a man do, he shall live in them.' But ver. 25, 'I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live.' The first sort of laws, they say, were the decalogue, with those other judgments that accompanied it, which were given unto the people as God's covenant, before they broke it by making the golden calf. These were good in themselves, and good unto the people, so as if they did them, they should live therein. But after the people had broken the covenant in making of a golden calf, God gave them that whole system of ordinances, institutions, and laws which ensued. These they say, in that place of Ezekiel, God calls ordinances that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live, as being imposed on the people in the way of punishment. And with respect unto these they say it

is, that the apostle affirms the commandment was weak and unprofitable.

But as the application of this exposition unto this passage in the apostle's discourse, is not consistent with the design of it, as will afterwards appear, so indeed the exposition itself is not defensible. For it is plain, that by the laws and statutes mentioned, ver. 11, not any part of them, but the whole system of ordinances and commandments which God gave by Moses, is intended. And the two words in the text, *מִשְׁפָּטִים* and *חֻקִּים*, do express the whole law, ceremonial and judicial. And it was not from this or that part, but from the whole law that the people, as far as they were carnal, looked for righteousness and salvation, Rom. x. 5; Gal. iii. 12. And as these laws and statutes, mentioned ver. 11, contained the whole law given by Moses, so those intended, ver. 25, whereof it is said, that they were not good, nor could they live in the keeping of them, cannot be the laws and statutes of God considered in themselves. For it is inconsistent with the holiness, goodness, and wisdom of God, to give laws, which in themselves and their own nature, should not be good, but evil. Nor, on supposition that he has given them statutes that were not good, and judgments wherein they should not live, could he plead, as he doth, that his ways were equal, and that their ways were unequal. For in these laws, he evidently promised that those who did them should live therein. Where is the equality, equity, and righteousness, if it were otherwise? Wherefore, if the statutes of God be intended in the place, it must be with respect unto the people, their unbelief and obstinacy, that it is said of them that they were not good; being made useless unto them by reason of sin. In that sense the apostle says, that 'the commandment which was ordained unto life, he found to be unto death,' Rom. vii. 10. But I rather judge, that having charged the people with neglect and contempt of the laws and judgments of God, which were good, God's giving them up judicially unto ways of idolatry and false worship, which they made as laws and judgments unto themselves, and willingly walked after the commandment, as Hos. v. 11 is here so expressed. But there is no ground for such a distinction between the laws and judgments of God in themselves, that some of them should be good, and some of them should be not good; that in some of them men might live, but not in others.

Secondly. I answer that the whole law may be considered two ways. *First*. Absolutely in itself. *Secondly*. With respect, 1. Unto the end for which it was given. 2. Unto the persons to whom it was given.

First. Considering the law in itself, no reflection can be made upon it, because it was an effect of the wisdom, holiness, and truth of God. But in the respects mentioned, it manifests its own weakness and unprofitableness. For they were sinners to whom it was given, and both defiled and guilty, antecedently unto the giving of the law, being so by nature, and thereon children of wrath. Two things they stood in need of in this condition.

1. Sanctification by an inherent purity and holiness, with a complete righteousness from thence. This, the moral law was at first the rule and measure of, and would have always effected it by its observance.

It could never indeed take away any defilement of sin from the soul, but it could have prevented any such defilement. But now, with respect unto the persons to whom it was given, it became weak and unprofitable unto any such end. It became so, saith the apostle, by reason of the flesh, Rom. viii. 3. For, although in itself it was a perfect rule of righteousness, Rom. x. 5; Gal. iii. 12, 21, yet it could not be a cause or means of righteousness unto them, who were disabled by the entrance of sin to comply with it, and fulfil it. Wherefore, the moral law, which was in itself efficacious and useful, was now become unto sinners, as unto the ends of holiness and righteousness, weak and unprofitable: for 'by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified.'

2. Sinners do stand in need of the expiation of sin; for being actually guilty already, it is to no purpose to think of a righteousness for the future, unless their present guilt be first expiated. Hereof there is not the least intimation in the moral law. It hath nothing in it, nor accompanying of it, that respects the guilt of sin, but the curse only. This, therefore, was to be expected from the ceremonial law, and the various ways of atonement therein provided, or no way at all. But this of themselves they could not effect. They did indeed represent and prefigure what would so do, but of themselves they were insufficient unto any such end. For it is not possible, as our apostle speaks, that 'the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin,' ch. x. 5. And this law may be considered three ways. 1. In opposition unto Christ, without respect to its typical signification, under which notion it was now adhered unto by the unbelieving Hebrews. This being no state of it by divine appointment, it became thereby not only of no use unto them, but the occasion of their ruin. 2. In competition and conjunction with Christ; and so it was adhered unto by many of these Hebrews who believed the gospel. And this also was a state not designed for it, seeing it was appointed only to the time of reformation, and therefore, was not only useless, but noxious and hurtful. 3. In subordination unto Christ to typify and represent what was to be obtained in him alone; so during its own season it was of no use unto that end, but yet could never effect the things which it did represent. And in this state doth the apostle pronounce it weak and unprofitable, namely, on a supposition that atonement and expiation of sin was actually to be made, which it could not reach unto.

Secondly. But it may be yet farther inquired, Why God did give this law unto the people, which, although good in itself, yet, because of the condition of the people, it could not attain the end which was intended. The apostle gives so full an answer unto this inquiry, that we need not farther to insist upon it. For he giveth two reasons why God gave this law. First, he saith it was 'added because of transgression, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made,' Gal. iii. 19. It had a manifold necessary respect unto transgression. As, 1. To discover the nature of sin, that the consciences of men might be made sensible thereof. 2. To coerce and restrain it by its prohibition and threatenings, that it might not run out into such an excess as

to deluge the whole church. 3. To represent the way and means, though obscurely, whereby sin might be expiated. And these things were of so great use, that the very being of the church depended on them. Secondly. There was another reason for it, which he declares in the same place, ver. 23, 24. It was 'to shut up men under a sense of the guilt of sin,' and so with some severity drive them out of themselves, and from all expectation of a righteousness by their own works, that so they might be brought unto Christ, first in the promise, and then as he was actually exhibited.

This brief account of the weakness and unprofitableness of the law, whereon it was disannulled and taken away, may at present suffice. The consideration of some other things in particular will afterwards occur to us. Only in our passage we may a little examine, or reflect on the senses that some others have given unto these words.

Slichtingius, in his comment on the next verse, gives this account of the state of the law. '*Lex expiationem concedebat leviorum delictorum, idque ratione pœnæ alicujus arbitrariæ tantum: gravioribus autem peccatis quibus mortis pœnam fixerat, nullam reliquerat veniam, maledictionis fulmen vibrans in omnes qui gravius peccassent.*' But these things are neither accommodate unto the purpose of the apostle, nor true in themselves. For, 1. The law denounced the curse equally unto every transgression, be it small or great: 'Cursed is he who continueth not in all things.' 2. It expiated absolutely no sin small or great, by its own power and efficacy; neither did it properly take away any punishment, temporal or eternal. That some sins were punished with death, and some were not, belonged unto the polity of the government erected among that people. But, 3. As unto the expiation of sin, the law had an equal respect unto all the sins of believers, great and small: it typically represented the expiation of them all in the sacrifice of Christ, and so confirmed their faith as to the forgiveness of sin, but farther it could not proceed.

And Grotius on the place. '*Non pereduxit homines ad justitiam illam veram et internam, sed intra ritus et facta externa constitit: Promissa terrestria non operantur mortis contemptum, sed eum operatur melior spes vitæ æternæ et cœlestis.*' Which is thus enlarged by another: 'The Mosaical law got no man freedom from sin, was able to give no man strength to fulfil the will of God, and could not purchase pardon for any that had broken it. This, therefore, was to be done now afterwards by the gospel, which gives more sublime and plain promises of pardon of sin, which the law could not promise, of an eternal and heavenly life to all true penitent believers; which gracious tenders now made by Christ, give us a freedom of access unto God, and confidence to come and expect such mercy from him.' *Ans.* 1. What is here spoken, if it intend the law in itself, and its carnal ordinances without any respect unto the Lord Christ and his mediation, may in some sense be true. For in itself it could neither justify nor sanctify the worshippers, nor spiritually or eternally expiate sin. But 2. Under the law, and by it, there was a dispensation of the covenant of grace, which was accompanied with promises of eternal life. For it did not

only repeat and reinforce the promise inseparably annexed unto the law of creation, 'Do this and live,' but it had also other promises of spiritual and eternal things annexed unto it, as it contained a legal dispensation of the first promise or the covenant of grace. But, 3. The opposition here made by the apostle is not between the precepts of law and the precepts of the gospel, the promises of the law and the promises of the gospel, outward righteousness and inward obedience; but between the efficacy of the law unto righteousness and salvation, by the priesthood and sacrifices ordained therein, on the one hand, and the priesthood of Christ, with his sacrifice which was promised before, and now manifested in the gospel, on the other. And herein he doth not only show the preference and dignity of the latter above the former, but also that the former of itself could do nothing unto these ends; but whereas they had represented the accomplishment of them for a season, and so directed the faith of the church unto what was future, that now being come and exhibited, it was of no more use nor advantage, nor meet to be retained.

Thus then was the law disannulled; and it was so actually by the means before mentioned. But that the church might not be surprised, there were many warnings given of it before it came to pass. As, 1. A mark was put upon it from the very beginning, that it had not a perpetuity in its nature, nor inseparably annexed unto it. For it had no small presignification in it, that immediately upon the giving of it as a covenant with that people, they brake the covenant in making the golden calf of Horeb, and thereon Moses brake the tables of stone wherein the law was written. Had God intended that this law should have been perpetual, he would not have suffered its first constitution to have been accompanied with an express emblem of its disannulling. 2. Moses expressly foretels, that after the giving of the law, God would provoke them to jealousy by a foolish people, Deut. xxxii. 21; Rom. x. 19, that is, by the calling of the Gentiles, whereon the wall of partition that was between them, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, was of necessity to be taken out of the way. 3. The prophets frequently declared, that it was of itself utterly insufficient for the expiation of sin, or the sanctification of sinners, and thereon preferred moral obedience above all its institutions; whence it necessarily follows, that seeing God did intend a *τελειωσις*, or state of perfection for his church, that this law was at last to be disannulled. 4. All the promises concerning the coming of Christ as the end of the law, did declare its station in the church not to be perpetual; especially that insisted on by our apostle, of his being a priest after the order of Melchisedec. 5. The promises and predictions are express, that a new covenant should be established with the church, unto the removal of the old, whereof we must treat in the next chapter. By all these ways was the church of the Hebrews forewarned, that the time would come, when the old Mosaic law, as to its legal or covenant efficacy, should be disannulled, unto the unspeakable advantage of the church. And we may hence observe,

Obs. IV. The introduction into the church of what is better and more full of grace in the same kind with what went before, doth dis-

annul what so preceded ; but the bringing in of that which is not better, which doth not communicate more grace, doth not do so. Thus our apostle expressly disputes, that the bringing in of the law four hundred years after the giving of the promise, did not evacuate, or any way enervate the promise. And the sole reason hereof was, because the promise had more grace and privilege in it, than the law had. But here the bringing in of another priesthood, because it was filled with more effectual grace and mercy, utterly disannulled that which was instituted before. And as we may hence learn the care and kindness of God unto the church, so also our own duty in adhering with constant obedience unto the institutions of Christ. For this must be so, until something else more full of grace and wisdom than they are, be appointed of God in the church. And indeed, this is that which is pretended by those by whom they were rejected. For they tell us that the ordinances of the gospel are weak and unprofitable, and are disannulled by that dispensation of the Spirit which hath ensued after them. But the truth is, to fancy a dispensation of the Spirit without, against, or above the ordinances of Christ, who alone doth dispense him, and that in the ways of his own appointment, is to renounce the whole gospel.

Obs. V. If God would disannul every thing that was weak and unprofitable in his service, though originally of his own appointment, because it did not exhibit the grace he intended, he will much more condemn any thing of the same kind that is invented by men. I could never yet understand, why God should abolish those ordinances of worship which himself had appointed, because they were weak, and approve of such as men should find out of themselves, which cannot have the least efficacy or signification towards spiritual ends ; such as are multiplied in the papacy.

Obs. VI. It is in vain for any men to look for that from the law, now it is abolished, which it could not effect in its best estate ; and what that is, the apostle declares in the next verse.

VER. 19.—Ουδεν γαρ ετελειωσεν ο νομος, επεισαγωγή δε κρειττονος ελπιδος, δι' ης εγγιζομεν τω Θεω.

Ουδεν γαρ. Syr. מִדָּם גַּר לָא ; non enim aliquid ; that is, nihil.

Ετελειωσε. Syr. גָּמַר, perfectit, 'finished, perfected.' Vul. Lat. ad perfectum adduxit. Rhem. 'brought to perfection.' Bez. consummavit. Others, sanctificavit. Of the use of this word, we have spoken before.

Επεισαγωγή, &c. Syr. עַל דִּין חֲלֻפָּהּ סָבַר דְּמִיתָּר מִחֻבָּה, 'but for it (or in its stead) there entered a hope which is better than it.' Beza, Superintroducta spes potior. Επεισαγωγή, is suprainductio, or postintroductio, 'the bringing in of one thing after another.' Some supply erat, here, and read the words, sed erat introductio ad spem potiorem ; or, spei melioris.

Εγγιζομεν. Proximamus ad Deum. Vul. Lat. Appropinquamus Deo.

VER. 19.—*For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope, whereby we draw nigh unto God.*

The disannulling or abolition of the law, was laid down in the preceding verse, as a necessary consequent of its being weak and unprofitable. For when a law hath been tried, and it is found liable unto this charge, it is equal and even necessary, that it should be disannulled, if the end aimed at be necessary to be attained, and there be any thing else to be substituted in its room, whereby it may so be. This therefore the apostle declares in this verse, giving the reasons in particular of what he had before asserted in general. So the causal connexion γαρ, 'for,' doth intimate. And,

1. He gives an especial instance, wherein it was evident that the law was weak and unprofitable.

2. He declares what was to be introduced in the room thereof, which would attain and effect the end, which the law could not reach to, by reason of its weakness.

3. He expresseth what that end was.

The first he doth in those words, ουδεν γαρ ο νομος ετελειωσε, 'for the law made nothing perfect.' The subject spoken of is νομος, 'the law;' that is, the whole system of Mosaic ordinances, as it was the covenant which God made with the people in Horeb. For the apostle takes the commandment and the law for the same in this chapter, and the covenant in the next, for the same with them both. And he treats of them principally in the instance of the Levitical priesthood; partly because the whole administration of the law depended thereon; and partly because it was the introduction of another priesthood, whereby the whole was disannulled.

Of this law, commandment, or covenant, it is said that ουδεν ετελειωσε, 'it made nothing perfect.' Ουδεν, 'nothing,' for ουδενα, 'no man,' say expositors generally; 'it made no man perfect.' So the neuter is put for the masculine. So it is in those words of our Saviour, John vi. 37, Παν ο διδωσι μοι ο πατηρ προς εμε ηξει, 'All that the Father giveth me, cometh unto me;' that is, 'every one.' So is ουδεν, as here, put for ουδενα, ver. 63, η σαρξ ουκ ωφελει ουδεν, 'the flesh profiteth nothing;' that is, say some, 'no man.' But I am not satisfied with this exposition, but rather judge that the apostle did properly express his intention. 'It made nothing,' that is, none of the things which we treat about, 'perfect.' It did not make the church state perfect, it did not make the worship of God perfect, it did not perfect the promises given unto Abraham in their accomplishment, it did not make a perfect covenant between God and man: it had a shadow, an obscure representation, of all these things, but it made nothing perfect.

What the apostle intends by τελειωσις, and so 'consequently by ετελειωσε in this place, we have discoursed at large before on verse 11. So that we shall not here again insist on it.

But it may be inquired why, if the law made nothing perfect, it was instituted or given by God himself? He had designed a state of perfection unto the church, and seeing the law could not effect it, nay,

seeing it could not be introduced whilst the law was in force, to what end served the giving of this law?

Ans. This doubt was in part solved before, when we showed the ends for which the law was given, although it was weak and unprofitable, as unto some other. But yet there are some other reasons to be pleaded, to represent the beauty and order of this dispensation. For,

1. In all these things, the sovereignty of God is to be submitted unto. And unto humble souls, there is beauty in divine sovereignty. When the Lord Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and thanked his heavenly Father that he had revealed the mysteries of the gospel unto babes, and hid them from the wise and prudent, he assigns no other reason but his sovereignty and pleasure wherein he rejoiced, 'Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight,' Luke x. 21. And if we cannot see an excellency in the dispensations of God, because they are his, who gives no account of his matters, we shall never delight in his ways. So our apostle gives no other reason of this legal dispensation, but that God had provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect, Heb. xi. 40. Therefore did he give them this law for a season, which made nothing perfect; for even so it seemed good in his sight. It is the glory of God to be gracious to whom he will be gracious, and that at what time he will, and unto what degree and measure he pleaseth. And in this glory of his are we to acquiesce.

2. Mankind having woefully prevaricated and apostatized from God, it was just and equal that they should not be at once instated in their reparation. The suddenness of it might have taken off from its greatness. Wherefore, as God left the generality of the world without the knowledge of what he intended, so he saw good to keep the church in a state of expectancy, as to the perfection of liberty and deliverance intended. He could have created the world in an hour or moment; but he chose to do it in the space of six days, that the glory of his work might be distinctly represented unto angels and men. And he could, immediately after the fall, have introduced the promised seed, in whose advent the church must of necessity enjoy all the perfection whereof it is capable in this world. But to teach the church the greatness of their sin and misery, and to work in them an acknowledgment of his unspeakable grace and mercy, he proceeded gradually in the very revelation of him, as we have shown on ch. i. ver. 1, and caused them to wait under earnest desires, longings, and expectations, many ages for his coming. And during this season it was of necessity that they should be kept under a law that made nothing perfect. For as our apostle speaketh, 'if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void,' Rom. iv. 14, 'and if righteousness come by the law, then is Christ dead in vain,' Gal. ii. 21. And if there 'had been a law given, which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law,' Gal. iii. 21. Wherefore until the actual exhibition of the promised Seed, it was absolutely necessary that the church should be kept under a law that made nothing perfect.

3. That people unto whom the law was peculiarly to be given, and

by whom God would accomplish his further design, were a stubborn, earthly, hard-hearted people, that stood in need of a yoke, to burden and subdue them unto the will of God. So obstinate they were in what they had once received, and so proud of any privilege they enjoyed, that whereas their privileges were very many, and very great, they would never have had any thought of looking out after another state, but have foregone the promise, had they not been pinched, and burdened, and disappointed in their expectation of perfection by this law, and the yoke of it.

4. God had designed that the Lord Christ should in all things have the preeminence. This was due unto him on the account of the glory of his person, and the greatness of his work. But if the law could have made any thing perfect, it is evident that this could not have been.

Perfection being thus denied unto the law, it is added, *επεισαγωγή δε κρείττονος ελπίδος*. The words are elliptical, and without a supplement give no certain sense. And this may be made two ways. First. By the verb substantive *ην*, and so the whole of what is asserted is an effect of the law. It made nothing perfect, but it was the bringing in of a better hope, or an introduction unto a better hope, as some render the words. It served as God's way and method, unto the bringing in of our Lord Jesus Christ: unto this end it was variously serviceable in the church. For as its institutions, promises, instructions, and types, did represent him unto the faith of believers; so it prepared their minds unto an expectation of him, and longing after him. And the conjunction *δε*, which is adversative, seems to intimate an opposition in what the law did, unto what it is said before that it did not. It did not make any thing perfect, but it did bring in a better hope; and we know in how many things it was a preparatory introduction of the gospel. Wherefore this sense is true, though not, as I judge, directly intended in these words.

Beza first observed, that *δε* was put for *αλλα* in this place, as it is unquestionably in sundry others. If so, not an assignation of a contrary effect unto the law unto what was before denied, is intended; but the designation and expression of another cause of the effecting of that which the law could not effect. And the defective speech is to be supplied by *ετελειωσε*, 'made perfect;' as we do it by 'did,' that is, 'did make all things perfect.' To the same purpose the apostle expresseth himself in other words, Rom. viii. 3, 'For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.' For the words are so to be supplied: what the law could not do, that God did; which what it was, and how God did it, the following words declare. Thus God had designed to bring the church unto a better state, a state of comparative perfection in this world. This the law was not a means or instrument suited unto: wherefore another way is fixed on to that end, which being completely effective of it, the law was laid aside and disannulled as unprofitable.

This the word *επεισαγωγή* doth lead unto; for it is as much as post-introductio, or superintroductio, 'the introduction of one thing after,' or 'upon another.' This was the priesthood and sacrifice of Christ,

which were brought in after the law, upon it, in the room of it, to effect that which the law could not do. This our apostle further argues and confirms, ch. x. 1—10. This therefore is the sense of the words:—The introduction of the better hope, after, and upon the law, when a sufficient discovery had been made of its weakness and insufficiency, as unto this end, did make all things perfect, or bring the church to that state of consummation, which was designed unto it.

It remaineth only therefore that we show what this *κρείττονος ἐλπίδος*, ‘better hope,’ is, whereunto this effect is ascribed. Whatever it be, it is called ‘better,’ with respect unto the law, with all things that the law contained or could effect, somewhat of more power and efficacy to perfect the church state. This neither was, nor could be any thing but Christ himself and his priesthood; for in him we are complete, Col. ii. 10, and by one offering he hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified, the heavenly things themselves being purified thereby. Hope therefore is used here metonymically, to design the thing hoped for. From the giving of the first promise, and throughout under the dispensation of the law, Christ, and his coming into the world, were the hope of all believers, the great thing which they desired, longed, and hoped for. Hence was he called, ‘the Desire of all nations,’ Hag. ii. that which the secret desires of the whole race of mankind worked towards. And in the church, which enjoyed the promises, they rejoiced in the foresight of it, as did Abraham; and desired to see his day, as did the prophets, diligently inquiring into the time and season of the accomplishment of those revelations, which they had received concerning him, 1 Pet. i. 11, 12. It is not therefore the doctrine of the gospel, with its precepts and promises, as some suppose, which is here intended, any otherwise but as it is a declaration of the coming of Christ, and the discharge of his office; for without respect hereunto, without virtue and efficacy thence alone derived, the outward precepts and promises of the gospel would no more perfect the church-state than the law could do.

Obs. VII. When God hath designed any gracious end towards the church, it shall not fail, nor his work cease for want of effectual means to accomplish it.—All means indeed have their efficacy, from his designation of them unto their end. His wisdom makes them meet, and his power makes them effectual. Whatever therefore seems to be a means in the hand of God unto any end, and doth not effect it, was never designed thereunto; for he fails in none of his ends, nor do his means come short of what he aims at by them. Wherefore, although God designed a perfect state of the church, and after that gave the law, yet he never designed the law to accomplish that end. It had other ends, as we have already declared. But men were very apt to take up with the law, and to say of it, ‘Surely the Lord’s Anointed is before us.’ Wherefore God, by many ways and means, discovered the weakness of the law as unto this end. Then were men ready to conclude, that the promise itself concerning this perfect church-state, would be of none effect. The mistake lay only herein, that indeed God had not as yet used that only means for it, which his infinite

wisdom had suited for, and his infinite power would make effectual unto its attainment. And this he did in such a way, as that those who would not make use of his means, but would, as it were, impose that upon him, which he never intended to make use of in that kind, perished in their unbelief. Thus was it with the generality of the Jews, who would have perfection by the law, or none at all.

Wherefore, the promise of God concerning the church, and to it, must be the rule and measure of our faith. Three things do deeply exercise the church, as unto their accomplishment. 1. Difficulties rendering it wholly improbable. 2. Long unexpected procrastination. 3. Disappointment of appearing means of it. But in this instance of the introduction of a perfect church-state in and by the person of Jesus Christ, God hath provided a security for our faith, against all objections, which these considerations might suggest. For,

1. What greater difficulties can possibly lie in the way of the accomplishment of any of the promises of God, which yet are upon the sacred record unaccomplished, as suppose, the calling of the Jews, the destruction of antichrist, the peace of the church, und prosperity of it in the plentiful effusion of the Spirit; but that as great, and greater, lay in the way of the fulfilling of this promise? All the national provocations, sins, and idolatries, that fell out in the posterity of Abraham; all the calamities and desolating judgments that overtook them, the cutting down of the house of David, until there was only a root of it left in the earth; the unbelief of the whole body of the people; the enmity of the world, actuated by all the craft and powers of Satan, were as mountains in the way of the accomplishment of this promise. But yet they all of them became at length a plain before the Spirit of God. And if we should compare the difficulties and oppositions, that at this day lie against the fulfilling of some divine promises, with those that rose up against this one of perfecting the church-state in Christ, it would, it may be, abate our forwardness in condemning the Jews of incredulity, unless we found ourselves more established in the faith of what is to come, than for the most part we are.

2. Long and unexpected procrastinations, are trials of faith also. Now this promise was given at the beginning of the world, nor was there any time allotted for its accomplishment. Hence it is generally supposed, from the words there used in the imposition of the name of Cain on her first-born, that Eve apprehended that the promise was actually fulfilled. The like expectations had the saints of all ages; and were continually looking out after the rising of this bright morning Star. Many a time did God renew the promise, and sometimes confirmed it with his oath, as unto Abraham and David; and yet still were their expectations frustrated, so far as confined unto their own generations. And though God accepted them in their cries, and prayers, and hopes, and longing desires, yet near four thousand years were expired, before the promise received its accomplishment. And if we do believe that the faith and grace of the New Testament, do exceed what was administered under the Old; and that we do enjoy that pledge of God's veracity in the accomplishment of his promises, which they attained not unto, shall we think it much, if we are exer-

cised some part of that season, (as yet but a small time,) in looking after the accomplishment of other promises?

3. Disappointment of appearing means is of the same nature. Long after the promise was given and renewed, the law is in a solemn and glorious manner delivered unto the church, as the rule of their worship, and the means of their acceptance with God. Hence the generality of the people did always suppose, that this was it, which would make all things perfect. Something indeed they thought might be added unto its glory, in the personal coming of the Messiah; but the law was still to be that which was to make all things perfect. And we may easily apprehend what a surprisal it was unto them, when it was made manifest that the law was so far from effecting this promised state, that there was a necessity of taking it out of the way, as a thing weak and unprofitable, that the better hope perfecting the state of the church might be introduced. Such appearances of means highly probable for the deliverance of the church, are sometimes represented to us, which after a while do utterly disappear, and things are rolled into a posture quite contrary unto the expectations of many. When there is an appearance of what God hath promised, of what believers have prayed for, it is no wonder if some do earnestly embrace it. But where God hath laid aside any means, and sufficiently declared that it is not his holy pleasure to use it in such a way, or unto such a length, as we would desire for the fulfilling of his promises, it is not duty, but obstinacy and selfishness, to adhere unto it, with any such expectations.

Obs. VIII. Believers of old who lived under the law, did not live upon the law, but upon the hope of Christ, or Christ hoped for.—Christ is the same (that is, to the church) yesterday, to-day, and for ever. If justification, if salvation could be had any other way, or by any other means, then was his coming needless, and his death in vain. It was the promise of him, and not of the law, which he had broken, which was the relief and salvation of Adam. This being the first thing that was proposed unto fallen man, as the only means of his restoration, justification, and salvation, if any thing were afterwards added unto the same purpose, it would declare this to be insufficient; which would be an impeachment of divine wisdom and grace. On the same promise of Christ, which virtually contained and exhibited unto believers all the benefits of his mediation, as it was frequently renewed and variously explained, did all the saints live under the Old Testament. And the obscurity of the revelations of him in comparison of that by the gospel, respected only the degrees, but not the essence of their faith.

Obs. IX. The Lord Christ by his priesthood and sacrifice, makes perfect the church and all things belonging thereunto, Col. ii. 10.

In the last place, the apostle illustrates the work wrought through the introduction of the better hope, by the effect of it in them that do believe. *Δι' ἧς ἐγγιζομεν τῷ Θεῷ*, 'by which we draw nigh unto God.' *Δι' ἧς*, 'by which,' may refer either to the remote antecedent *ἐπισημασμένη*, the 'introduction or bringing in,' or unto the next, which is

ἐλπίδος, the 'hope;' being both of the same gender. By the introduction of the better hope, we draw nigh to God; or by which hope, we draw nigh to God. Both come to the same for the substance of the sense; but the application is more natural to the next antecedent, by which hope, we draw nigh unto God. It remaineth only that we inquire, what it is thus to draw nigh to God.

Εγγιζω is a word belonging to the sacerdotal office, denoting the approach of the priests to God in his worship. So the LXX. for the most part render קרַב, the general term for all access unto God with sacrifices and offerings. And this doth the apostle intend. Under the Levitical priesthood, the priests in their sacrifices and solemn services, did draw nigh unto God. The same now is done by all believers under the sacerdotal ministration of Jesus Christ. They now, all of them, draw nigh unto God. And in all their worship, especially in their prayers and supplications, they 'have by him an access unto God,' Eph. ii. 18. There is a similitude in these things, and an allusion in the one unto the other; yet so as that the one doth far excel the other, as to grace and privilege. For, 1. Under the law, it was the priests alone who had this privilege of drawing nigh unto God, in the solemn worship of the temple and tabernacle. The people were kept at a distance, and might never come near the sacred services of the holy place. But all believers being made a royal priesthood, every one of them hath an equal right and privilege by Christ, of drawing nigh unto God. 2. The priests themselves did draw nigh only unto outward pledges, tokens, and symbols of God's presence. Their highest attainment was in the entrance of the high priest once a-year into the most holy place. Yet was the presence of God there only in things made with hands, only instituted to represent his glory. But believers do draw nigh to God himself, to the throne of his grace, as the apostle declares, ch. x. 19—22. It may therefore be granted, that there is this intention in the words. For as by the law of old, the priests in the solemn worship of the church, did draw nigh to God in those visible pledges of his presence which he had appointed; and this they did by virtue of the Aaronical priesthood and the law of its institution, which was the utmost that could be attained in their imperfect state; so now upon the introduction of the better hope, and by virtue thereof, believers in all their solemn worship, do draw nigh unto God himself, and find acceptance with him.

And there are two reasons for the admission of this interpretation. For, 1. One part of the apostle's design, is to manifest the glory and preeminence of gospel worship above that of the law. And the excellency hereof, consists not in outward forms and pompous ceremonies, but in this, that all believers do therein draw nigh unto God himself with boldness. 2. Whereas it is peculiarly the priesthood of Christ, and his discharge of that office in his oblation and intercession, which he intends by the better hope, as he fully declares himself towards the end of the chapter; they are those which we have a peculiar respect unto, in all our approaches unto God in our holy worship. Our entrance unto the throne of grace, is through the veil of his flesh as

offered. Our admission is only by virtue of his oblation, and our acceptance depends on his intercession. Herein, therefore, in a peculiar manner, by this better hope, we draw nigh unto God.

But yet there is a more extensive signification of this expression in the Scripture, which must not be here excluded. By nature all men are gone far off from God. The first general apostasy, carried mankind into a most inconceivable distance from him. Though our distance from him by nature, as we are creatures, be infinite, yet this hinders not but that in his infinite goodness and condescension, we may have intercourse with him, and find acceptance before him. But the distance which came between us by sin, cuts off all communion of that kind. Wherefore, our moral distance from God, as our nature is corrupted, is greater, with respect unto our relation unto him, than our essential distance from him, as our nature is created. Hence, being afar off, is the expression of this state of nature, Eph. ii. 13, 'You were sometimes afar off.' And whatever accompanieth that state in wrath and curse upon men, in fear, bondage, the power of sin and enmity against God within them; in obnoxiousness unto misery in this world and eternal destruction hereafter, is comprised in that expression. It is to be far from the love and favour of God, from the knowledge of him, and obedience unto him. Wherefore, our drawing nigh unto God, denotes our deliverance and recovery from this estate. So it is expressed in the place named: 'But now in Christ Jesus, ye who were sometimes afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ.' To represent this, all the acts of solemn worship, which respected the sacrifice of Christ, were called approximations. And hereunto, unto this drawing nigh to God, or that we may so do, two things are required.

First. A removal of whatever kept us at a distance from God. And the things of this nature, were of two sorts. 1. What was upon us from God for our sin and apostasy. This was his wrath and curse; and these were declared in the publishing of the law on Mount Sinai, with the terrible appearances and dreadful voices that accompanied. This made the people stand afar off, Exod. xx. 21; as an emblem of their condition with respect to the law. 2. Guilt within, with its consequences of fear, shame, and alienation from the life of God. Unless these things of the one sort and the other, those upon us and those within us, be taken away and removed, we can never draw nigh unto God. And to secure our distance, they were enrolled in a hand-writing as a record against us, that we should never on our own account, so much as endeavour any access unto him, Eph. ii. 14; Col. ii. 14. How they were removed by the bringing in of the better hope, that is, by the priesthood of Christ, the apostle declares in this Epistle, as we shall see, God willing, in our progress. This neither was, nor could be done by the law or its ordinances: neither the moral preceptive part of it, nor the ceremonial, in all its rites and sacrifices, could of themselves expiate sins, make atonement for our apostasy, turn away the wrath of God, nor take away guilt, fear, bondage, and alienation out of the minds of men.

Secondly. There is moreover required hereunto, that upon the jus-

tification and acceptance of our persons, we have faith, liberty, boldness, confidence, and assurance given unto us in our coming unto God. And this cannot be without the renovation of our natures into his image, the quickening of our souls with a new principle of spiritual life, and ability unto all duties of acceptable obedience. All these things are required unto our drawing nigh unto God, or unto a state of reconciliation, peace, and communion with him. And we may observe,

Obs. X. Out of Christ, or without him, all mankind are at an inconceivable distance from God.—And a distance it is of the worst kind; even that which is an effect of mutual enmity. The cause of it was on our part voluntary, and the effect of it, the height of misery. And however any may flatter and deceive themselves, it is the present condition of all who have not an interest in Christ by faith. They are far off from God, as he is the fountain of all goodness and blessedness; ‘inhabiting,’ as the prophet speaks, ‘the parched places of the wilderness, and shall not see when good cometh,’ Jer. xvii. 6, far from the dews and showers of grace or mercy, far from divine love and favour; cast out of the bounds of them, as Adam out of paradise, without any hope or power in themselves to return. The flaming sword of the law, turns every way to keep them from the tree of life. Yet are they not so far from God, but they are under his wrath and curse, and whatever of misery is contained in them. Let them fly whither they please, wish for mountains and rocks to fall on them, as they will do hereafter; hide themselves in the darkness and shades of their own ignorance, like Adam among the trees of the garden, or immerge themselves in the pleasures of sin for a season; all is one, the wrath of God abideth on them. And they are far from God in their own minds also; being alienated from him, enemies against him, and in all things made up with Satan, the head of the apostasy. Thus is it, and inconceivably worse, with all that embrace not this better hope to bring them nigh unto God.

Obs. XI. It is an effect of infinite condescension and grace, that God would appoint a way of recovery for those who had wilfully cast themselves into this woeful distance from him. Why should God look after such fugitives any more? He had no need of us or our services in our best condition, much less, in that useless depraved state whereinto we had brought ourselves. And although we had transgressed the rule of our moral dependence on him, in the way of obedience, and thereby done what we could to stain and eclipse his glory; yet he knew how to repair it to advantage, by reducing us under the order of punishment. By our sins we ourselves come short of the glory of God, but he could lose none by us, whilst it was absolutely secured by the penalty annexed to the law. When upon the entrance of sin, he came and found Adam in the bushes, wherein he thought foolishly to hide himself, who could expect (Adam did not) but that his only design was to apprehend the poor rebellious fugitive, and give him up to condign punishment? But quite otherwise, above all thoughts that could ever have entered into the hearts of angels or men; after he had declared the nature of the apostasy, and his own indignation against

it, he proposeth and promiseth a way of deliverance and recovery. This is that which the Scripture so magnifies under the names of grace and love of God, which are beyond expression or conception, John iii. 16. And it hath also that lustre frequently put upon it, that he dealt not so with the angels that sinned; which manifests in what condition he might have left us also, and how infinitely free and sovereign that grace was, from whence it was otherwise. Thence it was that he had a desire again unto the works of his hands, to bring poor mankind near unto him. And whereas he might have recalled us unto himself, yet so as to leave some marks of his displeasure upon us, to keep us at a distance from him, than that we stood at before; as David brought back his wicked Absalom to Jerusalem, but would not suffer him to come into his presence; he chose to act like himself, in infinite wisdom and grace, to bring us yet nearer to him, than ever we could have approached by the law of our creation. And as the foundation, means, and pledge hereof, he contrived and brought forth that most glorious and unparalleled effect of divine wisdom, in taking our nature unto that inconceivable nearness unto himself, in the union of it unto the person of his Son. For as all things in this bringing of us nigh to God who were afar off, are expressive effects of wisdom and grace; so that of taking our nature into union with himself, is glorious unto astonishment. And as we are thereby made inconceivably more nigh to God in our nature, than we were upon our first creation, or than angels shall ever be; so by virtue thereof, are we in our persons, brought in many things much nearer to God, than ever we could have been brought by the law of creation. ‘O Lord our God, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens,’ Ps. viii. 1. It is in the admiration of this unspeakable grace, that the Psalmist is so ravished in the contemplation of God, as hath been declared in our exposition on the second chapter of this Epistle.

Obs. XII. All our approximation unto God in any kind, all our approaches unto him in holy worship, are by him alone, who was the blessed hope of the saints under the Old Testament, and is the life of them under the New.—These things must be afterwards spoken unto.

VER. 20—22.—THE apostle had warned the Hebrews before, that he had many things to say, and those not easy to be understood, concerning Melchisedec. And herein he intended not only those things which he expresseth directly, concerning that person and his office, but the things themselves signified thereby in the person and office of Christ. And therefore he omits nothing which may from thence be any way represented. So from that one testimony of the Psalmist, he makes sundry inferences unto his purpose. As,

1. That the Lord Christ was to be a priest, which included in it the cessation of the Levitical priesthood, seeing he was of the tribe of Judah, and not of the tribe of Levi.

2. That he was to be another priest, that is, a priest of another order, namely, that of Melchisedec. And this he variously demonstrates, to prove his preeminence above the Aaronical priesthood: as also

thereon, that upon his introduction, that order was utterly to cease and be disannulled.

3. He observes from the same testimony unto the same purpose, that he was to be a priest for ever, so as that there should never more, upon his death or otherwise, be any need of another priest, nor any possibility of the return of the former priesthood into the church.

4. Neither yet doth he rest here, but observes moreover, the manner how God, in the testimony insisted on, declared his purpose of making the Lord Christ a priest, which was constitutive of his office; and that was by his oath. And thence takes occasion to manifest how far his priesthood is exalted above that under the law. This is that which now lies before us in these verses. And we have in these things an instance given, of what unsearchable stores of wisdom and truth, are laid up in every parcel of the word of God, if we have a spiritual light in their investigation.

VER. 20—22.—Και καθ' ὅσον οὐ χωρὶς ὀρκωμοσίας· (οἱ μὲν γὰρ, χωρὶς ὀρκωμοσίας εἰσιν ἱερεῖς γεγονότες· ὁ δὲ μετὰ ὀρκωμοσίας, διὰ τοῦ λεγοντος πρὸς αὐτὸν ὡμοσε Κύριος, καὶ οὐ μεταμεληθήσεται· Σὺ ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισεδεκ·) κατὰ τοσούτον κρείττονος διαθήκης γέγονεν ἐγγυὸς Ἰησοῦς.

The words of the 20th verse being elliptical, the sense of them is variously supplied. Most translators carry on the sense unto that which is the midst of the 21st in our translation, 'Others were made priests without an oath.' The Syriac refers the words unto them foregoing; ושרדה לן במומתא 'and confirmed it (that is the better hope) with an oath.' And Beza, etiam quatenus non sine jurejurando superintroducenda est, 'inasmuch as (that hope) is not brought in without an oath;' and another, 'since;' et eò potior illa spes, quatenus non absque jurejurando superintroducenda est, Schmid. But this limits the comparison unto this verse, which the apostle really finisheth, ver. 22. Vul. Lat. et quantum est non sine jurejurando, which the Rhemists render 'and inasmuch as it is not without an oath.' Ours supply, 'he was made a priest: inasmuch as not without an oath he was made a priest: no doubt according to the mind of the apostle. For he hath a prospect in these words, unto what ensues, where he expressly applies this oath unto the priesthood of Christ, and the consummation thereof.

Και καθ' ὅσον, etiam quatenus; et quatenus, 'and inasmuch.' Καθ' ὅσον is omitted by the Syriac; Vul. in quantum est, 'inasmuch;' hereunto answereth, κατὰ τοσούτον, ver. 22, eatenus.

Ὁρκωμοσία is the same with ὀρκος, jusjurandum, an 'oath.' But it is here principally applied unto those oaths whereby conventions, compacts, or covenants were confirmed. Hence ὀρκωμοσία were the sacrifices that were offered in the confirmation of sworn covenants. It is three times used here by our apostle on this occasion, ver. 20, 21, 28, and nowhere else in the New Testament.

Οἱ μὲν γὰρ, Vul. alii quidem, which the Rhemists mend by rendering it, 'and the other;' Beza, nam illi quidem; and so the Syriac, וְהֵן גַּרְ, 'and they;' ours, 'for those priests,' rather, 'and truly

those priests,' though *μεν γαρ*, have only the force of a causal conjunction.

Εἰσι γεγονότες; Syr. ܘܡܝܢ, 'were,' but the manner of their being made priests, is intended; and so the words are to be expressed fully; *facti sunt*, 'were made.'

Δια του λεγοντος προς αυτον; the Syriac adds, *בִּיד דָּוִד*, 'by the hand of David.' It is not the giving of the oath, but the recording of it in the Psalm, that he intendeth.

Ου μεταμελησεται, non pœnitebit, Syr. ܘܠܐ ܢܕܒܠ, and 'will not lie;' will not repent or change his mind.

Κατα τοσούτον; Vul. in tantum, 'to answer,' in quantum, before; tantò, eatenùs; tanto, 'by so much;' Syr. ܠܗ ܕܠܗ ܕܠܗ, hoc toto, 'by all this;' and so proceeds: 'this covenant was more excellent, wherein Jesus was made the surety.'

Of the signification of the word *εγγυος*, I shall speak afterwards.

VER. 20—22.—*And inasmuch as not without an oath. For they truly were made without an oath, but this with an oath, by him that said unto him, The Lord swear, and will not repent, thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec. By so much was Jesus made surety of a better covenant.*

The same argument is pursued as in the foregoing verses, only with a new medium, and that such as leads on towards the conclusion of the whole disputation. The introduction of a new priesthood, the cessation or abolition of the old, with the advantage of the church thereby, because of its dignity, preeminence and stability, above that which was to give place unto it, are the things which the apostle is in the proof and confirmation of.

There are three things in these three verses.

1. A proposition of a new medium for the confirmation of the principal argument before insisted on, ver. 20.

2. An illustration and proof of what is asserted in that proposition, ver. 21.

3. An inference from its being so established and proved, ver. 22.

In the proposition three things may be considered.

1. The connexion of it unto the preceding discourse, by the conjunction *και*.

2. The modification of the proposition in the manner of its introduction, *καθ' ὅσον*, quanto, quatenus, in quantum, 'inasmuch.'

3. The proposition itself expressed negatively; *ου χωρις*, 'not without,' &c.

The note of connexion *και*, may respect ver 17; where the same testimony now insisted upon, is introduced, and so may intimate a farther pursuit of the same argument. If so, the other two verses, 18, 19, are inserted as a parenthesis, comprising an inference of what the apostle had before proved, with the reasons of it. For whereas before, he had only made use of the words of the Father unto Christ, 'thou art a priest for ever,' and thereon showed what would thence follow; he now proceeds to declare the manner how those words were

spoken, namely, with an oath. Or it may respect the words immediately foregoing, namely, the bringing in of a better hope; for it was brought in by an oath: and this sense is followed by most translators, who supply the defect in these words, by the repetition of a better hope. But although neither of those suppositions concerning the connexion of the words, doth prejudice the sense or design of them, yet, as we have observed before, *καί*, 'for,' oftentimes is as much as 'moreover,' as it is rendered, etiam, by Beza; and then it denotes, not an immediate connexion with, or dependence on what went before in particular, but only an advancing on the same general argument. And so it is here a note of introduction, of a new special consideration for the confirmation of the same design. Thence our translators supply the words, not with any thing that went before, but with what follows after, which the apostle designed now in particular to speak unto, 'he was made a priest.'

The modification of a proposition is in those words, *καθ' ὅσον*, eatenus quantum, in quantum 'inasmuch,' 'so much.' Hereunto answers *κατα τοσούτον*, ver. 22, in tantum; quanto, tanto. The excellency of the covenant whereof Christ was made Mediator above the old covenant, had proportion with the preeminence of his priesthood above that of Aaron, in that he was made a priest by an oath, but they were not so. And we may observe in general, that,

Obs. I. The faith, comfort, honour, and safety of the church, depends much on every particular remark that God hath put upon any of the offices of Christ, or whatever belongs thereto. We have lived to see men endeavouring their utmost to render Christ himself, and all his offices, of as little use in religion, as they can possibly admit, and yet retain the name of Christians. And it is to be feared, that he is as little valued by some in their practice, as he is by others in their notions. This is not the way of the Scripture. Therein every concernment of him and his offices is particularly insisted on; and the apostle in this chapter makes it manifest, what important mysteries depend on such minute considerations, as some would think were little to be regarded. But all things concerning him are full of divine mysteries, and every word about them that drops from infinite wisdom, ought to be an object of faith and admiration. When, therefore, we cease to inquire with all diligence into all the revelations made concerning Christ or his offices, or any thing which belongs unto them; we do really cease to be Christians. And there can be no greater evidence of our want of faith in him and love unto him, than if we neglect a due consideration of all things, that the Scripture reveals and testifies concerning him.

The proposition itself is in those words—'not without an oath.' Two things the apostle supposeth in this negative proposition.

1. That there were two ways whereby men either were or might be made priests, namely, they might be so either with, or without an oath. And he expresseth the latter way, applying it negatively unto Christ, that he might include a negation of the former way with respect unto the priests under the law; both which he afterwards expressly mentioneth.

2. That the dignity of the priesthood depends on, and is declared by the way whereby God was pleased to initiate men into that office.

These two things being in general laid down, us those which could not be denied, the apostle makes application of them in the next verse distinctly, unto the priests of the law on the one hand, and Christ on the other, in a comparison between whom he is engaged. And we may observe, that,

Obs. II. Nothing was wanting on the part of God, that might give eminency, stability, glory, and efficacy, unto the priesthood of Christ: 'Not without an oath.'—For,

1. This was due unto the glory of his person. The Son of God, in infinite grace, condescending unto the susception of this office, and the discharge of all the duties of it, it was meet that all things which might contribute any thing unto the glory or efficacy of it, should accompany his undertakings. For being in himself the image of an invisible God, by whom all things were created, it was meet that in his whole work, he should in all things have the preeminence, as our apostle speaks, Col. i. 15, 16, 18. He was in every thing that he undertook, to be preferred and exalted above all others, who ever were employed in the church, or ever should be; and therefore was he made a priest, not without an oath.

2. God saw that this was needful to encourage and secure the faith of the church. There were many things defective in the priesthood under the law, as we have partly seen already, and shall yet see more fully in our progress. And it suited the design and wisdom of God that it should be so. For he never intended that the faith of the church should rest and be terminated, in those priests or their office. What he granted unto them, was sufficient unto the end and use whereunto he had designed it; so as that the church might have all that respect for it, which was needful or for their good. But so many defects there were in that administration, as might sufficiently evidence that the faith of the church was not to acquiesce therein, but to look for what was yet to come, as our apostle proves by many instances in this chapter. But upon the introduction of the priesthood of Christ, God really and actually proposeth and exhibiteth unto the church, all that they were to trust unto, all that he would do, or was any way needful to be done for their peace and salvation. No other relief was to be expected for the future; therefore did God, in infinite wisdom and grace, for the stability and security of their faith, grant the highest and most peculiar evidences, of the everlasting confirmation of his priesthood. And hereby did he manifest, that this dispensation of his will and grace was absolutely unchangeable, so that, if we comply not therewithal, we must perish for ever. Thus the whole Scripture, and all contained therein, direct us to our ultimate hope and rest in Christ alone.

VER. 21.—In the application of this assertion, the apostle affirms that those priests, *οἱ μὲν γὰρ*, 'the priests under the law,' were made without an oath. No such thing is mentioned in all that is recorded concerning their call and consecration. For where they are expressly

declared in their outward circumstances, Exod. xxviii. xxix, there is mention made of no such thing. But their dedication consisted in three things.

1. A call from God expressed, *εἰσιν ἱερεῖς γεγονότες*, Exod. xxviii. 1. We have shown how necessary this was unto the first erection of any priesthood, though it was to be continued by an ordinary succession; see ch. v. 4. It is therefore granted, that in this general foundation of the office, Aaron had it, even as Christ had, though not in the same way or manner. For the call of Christ was far more eminent and glorious than that of Aaron, as hath been shown.

2. It consisted in the appointment and preparation of those peculiar garments, and mystical ornaments, wherein they were to administer their office, and their unction with the holy anointing oil, when clothed with those garments.

3. In the sacrifices wherewith they were consecrated, and actually set apart unto that office whereunto they were called. And these two were peculiar unto them, there being no use of them in the consecration of Christ, for both of them did declare their whole administration to be external and carnal, and therefore could never make any thing perfect, nor were capable of a confirmation unto perpetuity.

But the promise made unto Phinehas, seems to be express for an eternity in this priesthood. 'Behold,' saith God, 'I give unto him my covenant of peace, and he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood,' Num. xxv. 12, 13. But this proves not a certain absolute perpetuity of this priesthood of Phinehas. For,

1. The covenant intended, was not a complete solemn covenant confirmed either by oath or sacrifice, but only a naked promise or declaration of the will of God. And that ברית is frequently used for such a promise, as wherein the nature of a covenant is not contained, is acknowledged by the Jews themselves.

2. All the special covenants or promises that God made unto, or with any under the law that had respect unto legal administrations, were all of them commensurate unto the duration and continuance of the law itself. Whilst the covenant of the law itself was in force, they also continued; and when that ceased, then also were they to cease. For the foundation being taken away, the whole building must come to the ground. Now that this old covenant of the law was to cease and be taken away, by the introduction of another and a better, God did openly and frequently declare under the Old Testament, as our apostle manifests by one signal instance in the next chapter. And this is the sense of לְעוֹלָם, 'for ever,' in this case constantly. It expresseth a certain continuance of any thing so as not to be changed, or to have another thing substituted in the room of that whereunto it is applied, whilst that legal dispensation continued. And so it was in this promise made unto Phinehas. For although there was an intercision made afterwards, as to the continuance of the priesthood in the line of his family, by the interposition of Eli and his sons, who were of the posterity of Ithamar, yet he returned again into the enjoyment of this promise, in the person of Zadok in the days of Solomon, and

so continued until the second temple was forsaken of God also, and made a den of thieves.

But neither with respect unto him or any other, is there any mention of the oath of God. For indeed God did never solemnly interpose himself with an oath in a way of privilege or mercy, but with direct respect unto Jesus Christ. So he swore by himself unto Abraham, that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed, whereby he declared the immutability of his counsel, in sending his Son to take his seed upon him. So he swore unto David by his holiness, that his seed, namely Christ, should sit on the throne for ever. Wherefore, although God never changeth any real internal acts of his will, or his purposes, for with him there it neither variableness nor shadow of turning; yet he often works an alteration in some things, which on some conditions, or for some time, he hath proposed and enjoined unto his church, unless they were confirmed by his oath. For this declares them to be absolutely immutable.

This is the account the apostle gives of the Aaronical priests, *καὶ οἱ μὲν χωρὶς ὀρκωμοσίας*, ‘and they truly,’ that is, Aaron and all his posterity that exercised the priest’s office in a due manner, they were all made priests, that is, by God himself. They did not originally take this honour unto themselves, but were called of God. For he hath no regard unto them who in those days invaded the priest’s office with violence, deceit, or bribery, and so not only corrupting, but evacuating the covenant of Levi. Those that entered into and executed their office according to the law, are here intended by him. These were all made priests in the way of God’s appointment; but neither all of them, nor any of them, were made priests by an oath. God, into whose sovereign will and pleasure all these things are resolved, granted unto them what he saw convenient, and withheld what seemed good unto him; what he did was sufficient to oblige the people unto obedience, during that dispensation of his will; and what he did not add, but reserved for a further dispensation of his grace, intimated that liberty which he reserved unto himself of making an alteration therein, as he saw good. And we may see, that,

Obs. III. Although the decrees and purposes of God were always firm and immutable, yet there was no fixed state of outward dispensations, none confirmed with an oath, until Christ came. Nor shall we find any rest in any thing, until we come to Christ.

The apostle in the next words declares in particular, and positively, what he had in general and negatively before laid down; ‘but this with an oath,’ *ὁ δὲ*, ‘but he, this man,’ he who was to be a priest after the order of Melchisedec. He was made *μεθ’ ὀρκωμοσίας*, ‘with an oath.’ This is first asserted, and then proved by the testimony of the Psalmist; and the assertion may have a double signification. 1. That this oath was constituent of his office. Therein his call and consecration did consist. 2. That his call, constitution, or consecration, was confirmed and ratified with an oath. And the latter sense is intended; for so doth the antithesis require. Those legal priests had a divine constitution and call, but they had no confirmation by the addition of an oath: God used not an oath in or about any thing that belonged

unto them. Wherefore, this man was also to have another call unto and constitution of his office, but he was to be confirmed therein by an oath. Wherein this call of Christ unto his office did consist, what were the acts of the divine will thereabout, and what was the manifestation of them, I have declared at large in the Exercitations about the priesthood of Christ. Two things are to be considered in this oath. 1. The form; and, 2. The matter of it. 1. The form of it is in those words, *ωμοσε Κυριος και ου μεταμεληθησεται*, 'The Lord sware, and will not repent.' And the matter of it is, that he in his own person should be a priest for ever.

The person swearing is God the Father, who speaks unto the Son in the Ps. cx. 1, 'The Lord said unto my Lord;' and the oath of God is nothing but the solemn, eternal, unchangeable decree and purpose of his will, under an especial way of declaration. So the same act and counsel of God's will is called his decree, Ps. ii. 7. Wherefore, when God will so far unveil a decree and purpose, as to testify it to be absolute and unchangeable, he doth it in the way of an oath, as hath been declared, ch. vi. 13, 14. Or to the same purpose, God affirms that he hath sworn in the case.

If, then, it be demanded, When God thus sware unto Christ? I answer, we must consider the decree itself unto this purpose, and the peculiar revelation or declaration of it, in which two this oath doth consist. And as to the first, it belongs entirely unto those eternal federal transactions between the Father and the Son, which were the original of the priesthood of Christ, which I have at large explained in our Exercitations. And as for the latter, it was when he gave out that revelation of his mind, in the force and efficacy of an oath in the Psalm by David. It is, therefore, not only a mistake, but an error of danger in some expositors, who suppose that this oath was made unto Christ upon his ascension into heaven. For this apprehension being pursued, will fall in with the *πρωτον ψευδος* of the Socinians in this whole cause, namely, that the kingly and priestly offices of Christ are not really distinct. Moreover, it supposeth the principal discharge of the priesthood of Christ, in his sacrifice, to have been antecedent unto this oath, which utterly enervates the apostle's argument in these words. For if he were made a priest, and discharged his office without an oath, as he must be and do on this supposition, that the oath of God was made unto him after his ascension, (or that his death and oblation therein belonged not unto his priestly office,) he had no pre-eminence herein above the Aaronical priests. He might so have a subsequent privilege of the confirmation of his office, but he had none in his call thereunto.

Wherefore, this oath of God, though not in itself solely the constituent cause of the priesthood of Christ, yet it was, and it was necessarily to be, antecedent unto his actual entrance upon, or discharge of any solemn duty of his office.

That additional expression, *ου μεταμεληθησεται*, 'and he will not repent,' declares the nature of the oath of God, and of the purpose confirmed thereby. When God makes an alteration in any law, rule, order, or constitution, he is, or may be said, *ανθρωποπαθως*, 'to repent.'

This God by this word declares shall never be; no alteration or change, no removal or substitution, shall ever be made in this matter.

2. The matter of this oath is, *ὅτι ἱερεὺς*, that Christ is and should be a priest for ever. He was not only made a priest with an oath, which they were not, but a priest for ever. This adds unto the unchangeableness of his office, that he himself, in his own person, was to bear, exercise, and discharge it, without substitute or successor.

And this *εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα*, 'for ever,' answers to the 'for ever' under the law; each of them being commensurate unto the dispensation of that covenant which they do respect. For absolute eternity belongs not unto these things. The 'ever' of the Old Testament, was the duration of the dispensation of the old covenant. And this 'for ever,' respects the new covenant, which is to continue unto the consummation of all things, no change therein being any way intimated, or promised, or consistent with the wisdom and faithfulness of God, all which were otherwise under the law. But at the end of the world, together with the dispensation of the new covenant, an end will be put unto all the mediatory offices of Christ, and all their exercise. And there are four things which the apostle declareth and evinceth in this observation.

1. That our high priest was peculiarly designed unto, and initiated into his office by the oath of God, which none other ever was before him.

2. That the person of the high priest is hereby so absolutely determined, as that the church may continually draw nigh unto God in the full assurance of faith.

3. That this priesthood is liable to no alteration, succession, or substitution.

4. That from hence ariseth the principal advantage of the New Testament above the Old, as is declared in the next verse. And we may observe,

Obs. IV. That although God granted great privileges unto the church under the Old Testament, yet still in every instance he withheld that which was the principal, and should have given perfection to what he did grant. He made them priests, but without an oath.—In all things, there was a reserve for Christ, that he in all might have the preeminence.

Obs. V. God by his oath declares the determination of his sovereign pleasure unto the object of it. What he proposeth and prescribeth unto us, he declares no more of his mind and his will about, but that he requireth and approveth of our obedience unto it, but still reserves the liberty unto himself of making those alterations in it and about it, that seem good unto him. Nothing, therefore, in the whole legal administration being confirmed by the oath of God, it was always ready for a removal at the appointed season.

Obs. VI. Christ's being made a priest by the oath of God for ever, is a solid foundation of peace and consolation to the church. For,

Obs. VII. All the transactions between the Father and the Son, concerning his offices, undertakings, and the work of our redemption, have respect unto the faith of the church, and are declared for our

consolation.—Such were his solemn call to his sacerdotal office, and the oath of God whereby he was confirmed therein. I will not say that these things were needless on the part of Christ himself, seeing it became the glory of his person, to be thus testified unto in his condescension unto office, yet was it in all these things the good and benefit of the church that was designed. What the Lord Christ said of his prayer unto God the Father, at least, so far as it was vocal, that it was not needful for him, but was only for the confirmation of the faith of others, John xi. 41, 42, may be spoken of all other transactions between God and him; the faith of others was principally respected in them, and thereunto they were absolutely needful. For,

1. The things which God proposeth unto our faith through Christ, are exceedingly great and glorious, and such as being most remote from our innate apprehensions, do need the highest confirmation. Things they are, which ‘eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have they entered into the heart of man,’ 1 Cor. ii. 9. Things unexpected, great, and glorious, are apt to surprise, amaze, and overwhelm our spirits, until they are uncontrollably testified unto. So when Jacob’s sons told their father that Joseph was alive, and made governor over all the land of Egypt, Gen. xlv. 26, the tidings were too great and good for him to receive. But it is added, that when they gave evidence unto their report, by the waggons that Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob revived, ver, 27, 28. The things of the gospel,—pardon of sin, peace with God, participation of the Spirit, grace and glory, are great and marvellous. Men, at the hearing of them, are like them that dream, the words concerning them seem like the report of the woman unto the apostles, concerning the resurrection of Christ, they seemed as idle tales, and they believed them not, Luke xxiv. 11. Wherefore, God discovers the fountains of these things, that we may apprehend the truth and reality of them. His eternal covenant with his Son about them, his oath that he hath made unto him, whereby he was established in his office, and the like glorious transactions of his wisdom and grace, are revealed unto this very end, that we might not be faithless in these things, but believe. For can any thing that is proposed unto us be supposed to exceed the duty of faith, when we see it either in itself, or in its springs and foundation solemnly confirmed by the oath of God? They are glorious things which we are to expect from the priesthood of Christ, and the discharge of that office. And is it not an unspeakable encouragement thereunto, that God hath confirmed him in that office by his solemn oath unto him? For two things evidently present themselves unto our minds thereon. First. That this is a thing which the infinitely holy and wise God lays great weight and stress upon. And what is he not able to effect when he doth so, and consequently lays out the treasures of his wisdom, and engageth the greatness of his power in the pursuit of it? And, secondly. His counsel herein is absolutely immutable, and such as on no emergency can admit of alteration. If, therefore, the engagement of infinite wisdom, grace, and power, will not excite and encourage us unto believing, there is no remedy, but we must perish in our sins.

2. As the things proposed in the gospel, as effects of the priest-

hood of Christ, are in themselves great and glorious, requiring an eminent confirmation; so the frame of our hearts with respect unto them, is such from first to last, as stands in need of all the evidence that can be given unto them. For there is in us by nature an aversion from them, and a dislike of them. In the wisdom of our carnal minds, we look on them as foolish and useless. And when this woeful enmity is conquered by the mighty power of God, and the souls of sinners are brought over to approve of these effects of divine wisdom and grace, yet no man can recount how many doubts, fears, jealous suspicions, we are, as to our closing with them by faith, obnoxious unto. Every one's own heart, if he have any acquaintance with it, if he be diligent in the examination of it, will sufficiently satisfy him, what objections faith hath to conflict withal in this matter. And it is to be feared, that he who is insensible of the oppositions that arise against sincere believing, never yet knew what it is to believe. To encourage and strengthen our hearts against them, to give power unto faith against all oppositions, doth God thus reveal the wisdom of his counsel, and the glorious springs of this ministration, whereinto our whole faith is principally resolved. And indeed we may try the sincerity of our faith by its respect unto these things. It may be some, for aught I know, may be carried on in such an easy course, and be so preserved from perplexing temptations, as not to be driven to seek their relief so deep, as these springs of God's confirmation of the office of Christ by his oath do lie; but yet he that doth not, of his own choice, refresh his faith with the consideration of them, and strengthen it with pleas in his supplications taken from thence, seems to me to be greatly unacquainted with what it is truly to believe.

VER. 22.—*By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.*

Κατα τοσοντον, 'by so much,' answers directly to καθ' ὅσον, ver. 20, 'inasmuch.' There is therefore an immediate connexion of these words unto that verse. Hence, ver. 21, wherein a confirmation is interserted of the principal assertion, is justly placed in a parenthesis in our translation. So the sense of the words is to this purpose: 'And inasmuch as he was not made a priest without an oath, he is by so much made the surety of a better testament.'

And there may be a twofold design in the words. 1. That his being made a priest by an oath, made him meet to be the surety of a better testament; or 2. That the testament whereof he was the surety, must needs be better than the other; because he who was the surety of it as made a priest by an oath. In the one way, he proves the dignity of the priesthood of Christ from the New Testament; and in the other, he dignity of the New Testament from the priesthood of Christ. And we may reconcile both these senses by affirming, that really and efficiently the priesthood gives dignity unto the New Testament, and declaratively the New Testament sets forth the dignity of the priesthood of Christ.

It is owned tacitly, that the priesthood of Levi, and the Old Testa-

ment, were good, or these could not be said to be better in way of comparison. And good they were, because appointed of God, and of singular use unto the church during their continuance. But this priesthood and testament are better, by so much as that which is confirmed with an oath, is better than that which is not so, which alone gives the proportion of comparison in this place. Many other advantages there were of the priesthood of Christ, and of the New Testament in comparison unto those of old, all which increase the proportion of difference; but at present the apostle considers only what depends on the oath of God. Wherefore, the design of the comparison contained in those words, *κατα τοσούτον*, is, that whereas this priest, after the order of Melchisedec, was designed to be the surety of another testament, he was confirmed in his office by the oath of God, which gives a preeminence both unto his office, and to the testament whereof he was to be a surety.

In the assertion itself, that Jesus was made a surety of a better testament, we may consider, 1. What is included or supposed in it; and 2. What is literally expressed.

Three things are included and supposed in this assertion. 1. That there was another testament that God had made with his people. 2. That this was a good testament. 3. That this testament had in some sense a surety.

As to what is expressed in these words, there are four things in them. 1. The name of him who was the subject discoursed of—it is Jesus. 2. What is affirmed of him—he was a surety. 3. How he became so—he was made so. 4. Whereof he was a surety, and that is of a testament of God: which, 5. Is described by its respect unto the other before mentioned, and its preference above it,—it is a better testament.

First. Some things are supposed. 1. It is supposed that there was another testament which God had made with his people. This the apostle supposeth in this whole context, and at length brings his discourse unto its head and issue in the eighth chapter, where he expressly compareth the two testaments, the one with the other. Now this was the covenant or testament, that God made with the Hebrews on Mount Sinai, when he brought them out of Egypt, as is expressly declared in the ensuing chapters, whereof we must treat in its proper place.

2. It is supposed, that this was a good testament. It was so in itself, as an effect of the wisdom and righteousness of God. For all that he doth is good in itself, both naturally and morally, nor can it otherwise be. And it was of good use unto the church, namely, unto them who looked unto the end of it, and used it in its proper design. Unto the body of the people indeed, as far as they were carnal, and looked only on the one hand for temporal benefits by it, or on the other for life and salvation, it was a heavy yoke, yea, the ministration of death. With respect unto such persons and ends, it contained statutes that were not good, commandments that could not give life; and was every way unprofitable. But yet in itself it was on many accounts good, just, and holy. 1. As it had an impression upon it of

the wisdom and goodness of God. 2. As it was instructive in the nature and demerit of sin. 3. As it directed unto and represented the only means of deliverance, by righteousness and salvation in Christ. 4. As it established a worship, which was very glorious and acceptable unto God during its season. But as we shall show afterwards, it came short in all excellencies and worth of this whereof Christ is the surety.

3. It is supposed that this testament had a Mediator. For this New Testament having a surety, the other must have so also. But who this was must be inquired.

First. Some would have our Lord Jesus Christ to be the surety of that testament also. For so our apostle affirms in general: 'There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time,' 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6. Be the covenant or testament what or which it will, there is but one Mediator between God and man. Hence our apostle says of him, that 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever,' Heb. xiii. 8. If therefore he be the only Mediator to-day under the New Testament, he was so also yesterday under the Old.

Ans. 1. There is some difference between a mediator at large, and such a mediator as is withal a surety. And however on any account, Christ may be said to be the mediator of that covenant, he cannot be said to be the surety of it.

2. The place in Timothy cannot intend the old covenant, but is exclusive of it. For the Lord Christ is there called a Mediator, with respect unto the ransom that he paid in his death and blood-shedding. This respected not the confirmation of the old covenant, but was the abolition of it; and the old was confirmed with the blood of beasts, as the apostle expressly declares, ch. ix. 18, 19.

3. The Lord Christ was indeed in his divine person, the immediate administrator of that covenant, the angel and messenger of it on the behalf of God the Father; but this doth not constitute him a mediator properly; for a mediator is not of one, but God is one.

4. The Lord Christ was a Mediator under that covenant, as to the original promise of grace, and the efficacy of it, which were administered therein; but he was not the Mediator and Surety of it as it was a covenant; for had he been so, he being the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, that covenant could have never been disannulled.

Secondly. Some assert Moses to have been the surety of the Old Testament. For so it is said, that the law was given by the disposition of angels in the hand of a mediator, Gal. iii. 19, that is, of Moses, whom the people desired to be the internuncius between God and them, Exod. xx. 19; Deut. v. 24, xviii. 16.

Ans. 1. Moses may be said to be the Mediator of the old covenant, in a general sense, inasmuch as he went between God and the people, to declare the will of God unto them, and to return the profession of obedience from them unto God. But he was in no sense the surety thereof. For on the one side God did not appoint him in his stead, to give assurance of his fidelity unto the people. This he took absolutely unto himself, in those words wherewith all his laws were pre-

faced, 'I am the Lord thy God.' Nor did he, nor could he, on the other side, undertake unto God for the people; and so could be esteemed in any sense the surety of the covenant. 2. The apostle hath no such argument in hand, as to compare Christ with Moses, nor is he treating of that office wherein he compares him with him, and prefers him above him, which was his prophetic office, whereof he had before discoursed, ch. iii. 4—7. Wherefore,

Thirdly. It was the high priest alone who was the surety of that covenant. It was made and confirmed by sacrifices, Ps. l. 5. as we shall see more at large afterwards, ch. ix. 19, 20. And if Moses were concerned herein, it was as he executed the office of the priest in an extraordinary manner. Therefore the high priest offering solemn sacrifices, in the name and on behalf of the people, making atonement for them according to the terms of that covenant, supplied the place of the surety thereof. And we may observe, that,

Obs. VIII. How good and glorious soever any thing may appear to be, or really be in the worship of God, or as a way of our coming to him, or walking before him; if it be not ratified in and by the immediate suretyship of Christ, it must give way unto that which is better; it could be neither durable in itself, nor make any thing perfect in them that made use of it.

Secondly. In what is positively asserted in the words, we may observe,

1. The person who is the subject spoken of, and that is *Ἰησοῦς*, 'Jesus.' He had in general declared the nature of the priesthood of him who was to have that office, according to the order of Melchisedec. But he had not yet in this whole chapter, that is, from the beginning of this discourse, mentioned who that person was, or named him. But here he makes application of the whole unto him: it is Jesus who in all these things was intended. And this he doth suitably unto his design and occasion. For two things were in question among the Hebrews. 1. What was the nature of the office of the Messiah. 2. Who was the person. For the first of these, he proves unto them from their own acknowledged principles, that he was to be a priest, as also what was the nature of that priesthood, and what would be the necessary consequents of the setting up that office in the church, and the exercise of it: this his whole precedent discourse is designed unto. Now he asserts the second part of the difference, namely, that it was Jesus who is this priest, because in him alone do all things concur that were to be in that priest, and he had now discharged the principal part and duty of that office.

It was sufficient for the church of the Jews to believe in the Messiah, and to own the work of redemption which he was to accomplish. Nor did the mere actual coming of Christ make it absolutely necessary that they should all immediately be obliged to believe him to be the person. Many, I doubt not, died after his incarnation, and went to heaven, without an actual belief that it was he who was their Redeemer. But their obligation to faith towards that individual person, arose from the declaration that was made of him, and the evidence given to prove him to be the Son of God, the Saviour of the world.

So he tells those to whom he preached, and who saw his miracles, 'If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins,' John viii. 24. It would not now suffice them to believe in the Messiah in general, but they were also to believe that Jesus was he, or they must perish for their unbelief. Howbeit they were only intended, who, hearing his words and seeing his miracles, had sufficient evidence of his being the Son of God. Of others in the same church, this was not as yet required. Nor, it may be, doth our Saviour oblige them immediately unto faith in this matter, only he declares what would be the event with them, who upon the accomplishment of his work in the earth, and the sending of the Holy Ghost after his ascension, whereby he gave the principal declaration and evidence of his being the Messiah, should continue in their unbelief. Hereon, and not before, the belief in his individual person, in Jesus the Son of God, became the foundation of the church; so that whoever believed not in him, did die in their sins. Wherefore, the apostles, immediately upon the coming of the Holy Ghost, made this the first and principal subject of their preaching, namely, that 'Jesus was the Christ.' See Acts ii.—v. So our apostle in this place, having asserted the nature of the office of the promised Messiah, makes an application of it unto his person, as he also had done, ch. ii. 9. And we may observe that,

Obs. IX. All the privileges, benefits, and advantages of the offices and mediation of Christ, will not avail us, unless we reduce them all unto faith in his person. Indeed it is not so much what is done, though that be inconceivably great, as by whom it is done, namely, Jesus the Son of God, God and man in one person.

It is a matter of somewhat a surprising nature that divers in these days, do endeavour to divert the minds and faith of men, from a respect unto the person of Christ. Were it not that the crafts of Satan have made nothing, be it ever so foolish or impious in religion, to seem strange, a man could not but admire, how such an attempt should be either owned or countenanced. For my part, I must acknowledge, that I know no more of Christian religion, but what makes me judge, that the principal trouble of believers in this world, lies herein, that they can no more fervently love, nor more firmly believe in the person of Christ, than what they have as yet attained unto. But this notion hath been vented and carried on among us, by persons who, out of an aim after things novel and contrary to the received faith, have suffered themselves to be imposed on by those, who have other principles than what they seem to own. For the Socinians, denying the divine nature of Christ, do (in the pursuit of that infidelity) their utmost to take the minds of men from a regard unto his person, and would reduce all religion unto a mere obedience to his commands. And indeed, there can be no place for that divine faith in him, trust on him, and love unto him, which the church always professed, if it be supposed that he is not God and man in one person. And their reasonings, they are to this purpose, which some represent unto us, 'who yet will not avow that principle from whence alone they are taken and do rise. But so long as we can hold the Head, or this great foundation of religion, that the Lord Christ is the eternal Son of God,

which alone gives life and efficacy unto his whole work of mediation, our faith in all its actings will be reduced unto his person: there it beginneth, there it endeth. It is Jesus who is this Mediator and surety of the covenant, in whose person God redeemed the church with his own blood.

2. That which is affirmed of this person is, that he was made a surety.

1. The way whereby he became so, is expressed by *γεγονε*, 'he was made so.' So is this word used with respect unto him, ch. i. 4, of the same importance with another, translated, 'appointed,' ch. iii. 2, and it signifies what is expressed, ch. v. 5. The places may be consulted, with our exposition of them. Respect is had herein, unto the acts of God the father in this matter. What those acts of God are, whether eternal or temporal, that did concur unto, or any way belong unto the investiture of Christ in his office, I have at large declared on ch. i. 1—3. And more particularly for what concerns his priesthood, it hath been handled apart in our exercitations on that subject. But we may here also observe, that

Obs. X. The whole undertaking of Christ, and the whole efficacy of the discharge of his office, depends on the appointment of God, even the Father.

3. It is affirmed that he was thus made, appointed, or constituted, that is, by God himself, a surety, which is farther declared by the addition of that whereunto his suretiship had a respect, namely, a better covenant; *κρείττονος διαθήκης*. Of the proper signification of the word *διαθήκη*, and its use, we must treat expressly afterwards. Here we shall only observe, that in this word the apostle takes many things as granted among the Hebrews. As,

1. That there was to be another covenant or testament of God, with and towards the church, besides that which he made with Israel, when he brought them out of Egypt. The promises hereof are so frequently repeated in the prophets, especially those who prophesied towards the latter end of their church state, that there could be no question about it, nor could they be ignorant of it.

2. That this new covenant or testament, should be better than the former, which was to be disannulled thereby. This carried along with it, its own evidence. For after God in his wisdom and goodness had made one covenant with his people, he would not remove it, abolish it, and take it away by another, unless that other were better than it; especially declaring so often as he doth, that he granted them this new covenant, as the highest effect of his grace and kindness towards them. And that indeed it was expressly promised to be better covenant than the former, we shall see in the next chapter, if we live and God will.

3. It is supposed that this better covenant must have a surety. The original covenant that God made with Adam, had none, and therefore was it quickly broken and disannulled. The especial covenant made with Israel, had no surety, properly so called. Only therein the high priest, did represent what was to be done by any one that should undertake to be such a surety.

Of the word *εγγυος* and its signification, we have spoken before. And in our inquiry into the nature of this suretiship of Christ, the whole will be resolved into this one question, namely, whether the Lord Christ was made a surety only on the part of God unto us, to assure us that the promise of the covenant on his part should be accomplished, or also an undertaker on our part, for the performance of what is required, if not of us, yet with respect unto us, that the promise may be accomplished. The first of these is vehemently asserted by the Socinians, who are followed by Grotius and Hammond, in their annotations on this place.

The words of Slichtingius are:—‘Sponsor *fœderis* appellatur Jesus, quod nomine Dei nobis spoponderit, id est, fidem fecerit, Deum *fœderis* promissiones servaturum esse. Non verò quasi pro nobis spoponderit Deo, nostrorumve debitorum solutionem in se receperit. Nec enim nos misimus Christum sed Deus, cujus nomine Christus ad nos venit, *fœdus* nobiscum paxit, ejusque promissiones ratas fore spopondit et in se recepit, ideoque nec sponsor simpliciter sed *fœderis* sponsor nominatur. Spopondit autem Christus pro *fœderis* divini veritate, non tantum quatenus id firmum ratumque fore verbis perpetuò testatus est, sed etiam quatenus muneris sui fidem maximis rerum ipsarum comprobavit documentis, tum perfectâ vitæ innocentia et sanctitate, tum divinis planè quæ patravit operibus, tum mortis adeò truculentæ, quam pro doctrinæ suæ veritate subiit, perpeessione.’ After which, he subjoins a long discourse, about the evidences which we have of the veracity of Christ. And herein we have a brief account of their whole opinion concerning the mediation of Christ. The words of Grotius are:—‘Spopondit Christus, i. e. nos certos promissi fecit, non solis verbis sed perpetuâ vitæ sanctitate, morte ob id toleratâ, et miraculis plurimis,’ which are an abridgment of the discourse of Slichtingius. To the same purpose Dr. Hammond expounds it, that he was a sponsor or surety for God unto the confirmation of the promises of the covenant.

On the other hand, the generality of expositors, ancient and modern, of the Roman and Protestant churches, affirm that the Lord Christ as the surety of the covenant, was properly a surety or undertaker unto God for us, and not a surety or undertaker unto us for God. And because this is a matter of great importance, wherein the faith and consolation of the church is highly concerned, I shall insist distinctly upon it.

And first, we may consider the argument that is produced to prove, that Christ was only a surety for God unto us. Now this is taken neither from the name nor nature of the office or work of a surety, nor from the nature of the covenant whereof he was a surety, nor of the office wherein he was so. But the sole argument insisted on, is, that we do not give Christ as a surety of the covenant unto God, but he gives him unto us, and therefore he is a surety for God, and the accomplishment of his promises, and not for us to pay our debts, or to answer what is required of us.

But there is no force in this argument. For it belongs not unto the nature of a surety, by whom he is or may be designed unto his office

and work. His own voluntary susception of the office and work, is all that is required thereunto, however he may be designed or induced to undertake it. He who of his own accord, doth voluntarily undertake for another, on what grounds, reasons or considerations soever he doth so, is his surety. And this the Lord Christ did in the behalf of the church. For when it was said, 'Sacrifice and burnt-offerings and whole burnt-offerings for sin, God would not have,' or accept as sufficient to make the atonement that he required, so as that the covenant might be established and made effectual unto us, then said he, 'Lo I come to do thy will, O God,' Heb. x. 5, 6. He willingly, and voluntarily, out of his own abundant goodness and love, took upon him to make atonement for us, wherein he was our surety. And accordingly this undertaking is ascribed unto that love which he exercised herein, Gal. ii. 20; 1 John iii. 16; Rev. i. 5. And there was this in it moreover, that he took upon him our nature, or the seed of Abraham, wherein he was our surety. So that although we neither did nor could appoint him so to be, yet he took from us that wherein and whereby he was so: which was as much as if we had designed him unto his work, as to the true reason of his being our surety. Wherefore, notwithstanding those antecedent transactions, that were between the Father and him in this matter, it was the voluntary engagement of himself to be our surety, and his taking our nature upon him for that end, which was the formal reason of his being instituted in that office.

2. We may consider the arguments, whence it is evident that he neither was, nor could be a surety unto us for God, but was so for us to God. For,

1. *Εγγυος* or *εγγυητης*, a 'surety,' is one that undertaketh for another, wherein he is defective really, or in reputation. Whatever that undertaking be, whether in words of promise, or in depositing of real security in the hands of an arbitrator, or by any other personal engagement of life and body, it respects the defect of the person for whom any one becomes a surety. Such a one is sponsor or fidejussor, in all good authors and common use of speech. And if any one be of absolute credit himself, and of a reputation every way unquestionable, there is no need of a surety unless in case of mortality. The words of a surety in the behalf of another, whose ability or reputation is dubious, are, *ad me recipio, faciet aut faciam*. And when *εγγυος* is taken adjectively, as sometimes it is, it signifies him who is *satisfactionibus obnoxius*; liable to payments for others that are non-solvent.

2. God can therefore have no surety properly, because there can be no imagination of any defect on his part. There may be indeed a question, whether any word or promise, be a word or promise of God. To assure us hereof, it is not the work of a surety, but only of any one or any means that may give evidence that so it is. But upon a supposition that what is proposed, is his word or promise, there can be no imagination or fear of any defect on his part, so as that there should be any need of a surety for the performance of it. He doth indeed make use of witnesses to confirm his word, that is, to testify that such promises he hath made, and so he will do. So the Lord

Christ was his witness, Isa. xliii. 10, 'Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen.' But they were not all his sureties. So he affirms that he came into the world to bear witness unto the truth, John xviii. 37, that is, the truth of the promises of God; for he was the 'minister of the circumcision for the truth of the promises of God unto the fathers,' Rom. xv. 8. But a surety for God properly so called, he was not, nor could be. The distance and difference is wide enough between a witness and a surety; for a surety must be of more ability, or more credit and reputation, than he for whom he is a surety, or there is no need of his suretiship. This none can be for God, no not the Lord Christ himself, who in his whole work, was the servant of the Father. And the apostle doth not use this word in a general improper sense, for any one that by any means gives assurance of any other thing; for so he had asserted nothing peculiar unto Christ. For in such a sense all the prophets and apostles were sureties for God, and many of them confirmed the truth of his word and promises, with the laying down of their lives. But such a surety he intends as undertaketh to do that for others, which they cannot do for themselves, or at least are not reputed to be able to do what is required of them.

3. The apostle had before at large declared, who and what was God's surety in this matter of the covenant, and how impossible it was that he should have any other: and this was himself alone, interposing himself by his oath. For in this cause, 'because he had none greater to swear by, he swore by himself,' Heb. vi. 13, 14. Wherefore, if God would give any other surety besides himself, it must be one greater than he. This being every way impossible, he swears by himself only. Many ways he may and doth use for the declaring and testifying of his truth unto us, that we may know and believe it to be his word; and so the Lord Christ in his ministry, was the principal witness of the truth of God. But other surety than himself, he can have none. And therefore,

4. When he would have us in this matter, not only come to the full assurance of faith concerning his promises, but also to have strong consolation, he resolves it wholly into the immutability of his counsel, as declared by his promise and oath, Heb. vi. 18, 19. So that neither is God capable of having any surety, properly so called, neither do we stand in need of any on his part, for the confirmation of our faith in the highest degree.

5. We on all accounts stand in need of a surety for us, or on our behalf. For without the interposition of such a surety, no covenant between God and us, could be firm and stable, or an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure. In the first covenant made with Adam, there was no surety, but God and man were the immediate covenanters. And although we were then in a state and condition able to perform and answer all the terms of the covenant, yet was it broken and disannulled. If this came to pass by the failure of the promise of God, it was necessary that on the making of a new covenant, he should have a surety to undertake for him, that the covenant might be stable and everlasting. But this is false and and blasphem-

ous to imagine. It was man alone who failed and brake that covenant. Wherefore, it was necessary that upon the making of the new covenant, and that with a design and purpose that it should never be disannulled, as the former was, that we should have a surety and undertaker for us. For if that first covenant was not firm and stable, because there was no surety to undertake for us, notwithstanding all that ability which we had to answer the terms of it, how much less can any other be so, now our natures are become depraved and sinful? Wherefore, we alone are capable of a surety, properly so called for us: we alone stood in need of him, and without him, the covenant could not be firm and inviolable on our parts. The surety, therefore, of this covenant, is so with God for us.

6. It is the priesthood of Christ that the apostle treats of in this place, and that alone. Wherefore he is a surety as he is a priest and in the discharge of that office, and is therefore so with God on our behalf. This Slichtingius observes, and is aware what will ensue thereon against his pretensions which he endeavours to obviate. ‘*Mirum (saith he) porrò alicui videri posset, cur D. Autor de Christi sacerdotio in superioribus et in sequentibus agens derepente eum sponsorem fœderis, non vero sacerdotem vocet. Cur non dixerit, tantò præstantioris fœderis factus est sacerdos Jesus? hoc enim planè requirere videtur totus orationis contextus. Credibile est in voce sponsoris sacerdotium quoque Christi intelligi. Sponsoris enim non est solùm alieno nomine quippiam promittere, et fidem suam pro alio interponere; sed etiam si ita res ferat, alterius nomine id quod spopondit, præstare. In rebus quidem humanis, si id non præstet is pro quo sponsor fidejussit; hic verò propter contrariam causam (nam prior hic locum habere non potest) nempe quatenus ille, pro quo spopondit Christus, per ipsum Christum promissa sua nobis exhibet, quâ in re præcipuè Christi sacerdotium continetur.*

Ans. 1. It may indeed seem strange unto any one who imagineth Christ to be such a surety as he doth, why the apostle should so call him and so introduce him, in the description of his priestly office, as that which belongeth thereunto. But grant what is the proper work and duty of a surety, and who the Lord Jesus was a surety for, and it is evident that nothing more proper or pertinent could be mentioned by him, when he was in the declaration of that office. 2. He confesseth that by his exposition of this suretiship of Christ, as making a surety for God, he contradicteth the nature and only notion of a surety among men. For such a one he acknowledgeth doth nothing but in the defect and inability of them for whom he is engaged and doth undertake. He is to pay that which they owe, and to do what is to be done by them, which they cannot perform. And if this be not the notion of a surety in this place, the apostle makes use of a word nowhere else used in the whole Scripture, to teach us that which it doth never signify among men, which is improbable and absurd. For the sole reason why he did make use of it was, that from the nature and notion of it among men in other cases, we may understand the signification of it, what he intends by it, and what under that name he ascribes unto the Lord Jesus. 3. He hath no way to solve

the apostle's mention of Christ's being a surety in the description of his priestly office, but by overthrowing the nature of that office also. For to confirm this absurd notion that Christ as a priest was a surety for God, he would have us believe that the priesthood of Christ consists in his making effectual unto us the promises of God, or his effectually communicating of the good things promised unto us; the falsehood of which notion, really destructive of the priesthood of Christ, I have elsewhere at large detected and confuted. Wherefore seeing the Lord Christ is the surety of the covenant as a priest, and all the sacerdotal actings of Christ have God for their immediate object, and are performed with him on our behalf, he was a surety for us also.

It remaineth that we inquire positively, how the Lord Christ was the surety of the new covenant, and what is the benefit we receive thereby. And unto this purpose we must first consider that opinion of some, that the whole end of the mediation of Christ, was only to procure the new covenant; although at first view it be irreconcilable unto the nature and notion of a surety. For a surety is not the procurer of that whereof he is the surety, but only the undertaker for its accomplishment. But we must more distinctly consider this assertion, and in what sense Christ may be said to procure the new covenant by his death and mediation. And to this end we must observe, that the new covenant may be considered divers ways in various respects.

1. In the designation and preparation of its terms and benefits, in the counsel of God. And this, although it have the nature of an eternal decree, yet is it distinguished from the decree of election, which first and properly respects the subjects or persons for whom grace and glory are prepared. For this respects the preparation only of that grace and glory, as to the way and manner of their communication. It is true, this purpose or counsel of God's will, is not called the covenant of grace, which is the express declared exemplification of it. The covenant of grace, I say, is only the declaration of this counsel of God's will, accompanied with the means and powers of its accomplishment, and the prescription of the ways whereby we are to be interested in it, and made partakers of the benefits of it. But in the inquiry after the procuring cause of the new covenant, it is the first thing that ought to come under consideration. For nothing can be the procuring cause of the covenant which is not so of this spring and fountain of it, of this idea of it in the mind of God. But this is nowhere in the Scripture affirmed to be the effect of the death or mediation of Christ, and so to ascribe it, is to overthrow the whole freedom of eternal grace and love. Neither can any thing that is absolutely eternal, as is this decree and counsel of God, be the effect of, or be procured by any thing that is external and temporal. And besides, it is expressly assigned unto absolute love and grace; see Eph. i. 4—6, with all those places where the love of God is assigned as the sole cause of the designation of Christ unto his office, and the sending of him.

2. It may be considered with respect unto the federal transactions between the Father and Son, concerning the accomplishment of this

counsel of his will. What these were, wherein they did consist, I have declared at large in my exertitions. Neither do I call this the covenant of grace absolutely, nor is it so called in the Scripture. But it is that wherein it had its establishment, as unto all the ways, means, and ends of its accomplishment; and all things so disposed, as that it might be effectual to the glory of the wisdom, grace, righteousness, and power of God. Wherefore the covenant of grace could not be procured by any means or cause, but that which was the cause of this covenant of the Mediator, or of God the Father with the Son as undertaking the work of mediation. And as this is nowhere ascribed unto the death of Christ in the Scripture, so to assert it, is contrary unto all spiritual reason and understandings. Who can conceive that Christ by his death, should procure the agreement between God and him, that he should die?

3. With respect unto the declaration of it: this you may call God's making or establishing of it with us, if you please, though making of the covenant in the Scripture is applied only unto its execution or actual application unto persons. But this declaration of the grace of God, and the provision in the covenant of the Mediator for the making of it effectual unto his glory, is most usually called the covenant of grace. And this is twofold.

1. In the way of a singular and absolute promise, as it was first declared unto, and thereby established with Adam and afterwards with Abraham. This is the declaration of the purpose of God, or the free determination of his will as to his dealing with sinners, on the supposition of the fall and the forfeiture of their first covenant state. Hereof the grace and will of God was the only cause, Heb. viii. 8. And the death of Christ could not be the means of its procurement; for he himself, and all that he was to do for us, was the substance of that promise wherein this declaration of God's grace and purpose was made, or of this covenant of grace which was introduced and established in the room of that which was broken and disannulled as to the ends and benefits of a covenant. The substance of the first promise, wherein the whole covenant of grace was virtually comprised, directly respected and expressed the giving of him for the recovery of mankind from sin and misery by his death, Gen. iii. 15. Wherefore if he, and all the benefits of his mediation, his death and all the effects of it, be contained in the promise of the covenant, that is, in the covenant itself; then was not his death the procuring cause of that covenant, nor do we owe it thereunto.

2. In the additional prescription of the way and means whereby it is the will of God that we shall enter into a covenant state with him or be interested in the benefits of it. This being virtually comprised in the absolute promise, is expressed in other places by the way of the conditions required on our part. This is not the covenant, but the constitution of the terms on our part, whereon we are made partakers of it. Nor is the constitution of these terms an effect of the death of Christ or procured thereby. It is a mere effect of the sovereign wisdom and grace of God. The things themselves as bestowed on us, communicated unto us, wrought in us by grace, are all of them effects

of the death of Christ; but the constitution of them to be the terms and conditions of the covenant, is an act of mere sovereign wisdom and grace. God so loved the world as to send his only begotten Son to die, not that faith and repentance might be the means of salvation, but that all his elect might believe, and that all that believe might not perish, but have life everlasting. But yet it is granted, that the constitution of these terms of the covenant, doth respect the federal transactions between the Father and the Son, wherein they were ordered to the praise of the glory of God's grace; and so although their constitution was not the procurement of his death, yet without respect unto it, it had not been. Wherefore the sole cause of making the new covenant in any sense, was the same with that of giving Christ himself to be our Mediator, namely, the purpose, counsel, goodness, grace, and love of God, as it is every-where expressed in the Scripture.

It may be therefore inquired what respect the covenant of grace hath to the death of Christ, or what influence it hath thereunto.

I answer, it hath a threefold respect thereunto.

1. In that it was confirmed, ratified, made irrevocable thereby. This our apostle insists upon at large, ch. ix. 15—20. And he compares his blood in his death and sacrifice of himself, to the sacrifices and their blood whereby the old covenant was confirmed, purified, dedicated or established, ver. 18, 19. Now these sacrifices did not procure that covenant or prevail with God to enter into it, but only ratified and confirmed it; and this was done in the new covenant by the blood of Christ, in the way that shall be afterwards declared.

2. He thereby underwent, and performed all that which the righteousness and wisdom of God required, that the effects, fruits, benefits, and grace intended, designed, and prepared in the new covenant, might be effectually accomplished and communicated to sinners. Hence although he procured not the covenant for us by his death, yet he was in his person, mediation, life and death, the only cause and means, whereby the whole grace of the covenant is made effectual to us. For,

3. All the benefits of it were procured by him; that is, all the grace, mercy, privileges, and glory that God had prepared in the counsel of his will, and proposed in the covenant or promises of it, are purchased, merited, and procured by his death, and effectually communicated or applied to all the covenanters, by virtue thereof, with other of his mediatory acts. And this is much more an eminent procuring of the new covenant, than what is pretended about the procurement of its terms and conditions. For if he should have procured no more but this, if we owe this only to his mediation, that God would thereon, and did grant and establish this rule, law, and promise, that whosoever believed should be saved, it was possible that no one should be saved thereby; yea if he did no more, considering our state and condition, it was impossible that any one should be saved.

These things being premised, we shall now briefly declare how or wherein he was the surety of the covenant, as he is here called.

A surety, sponsor, vas, præ, fidejussor, for us the Lord Christ, was by his voluntary undertaking out of his rich grace and love, to do,

answer, and perform all that is required on our parts, that we may enjoy the benefits of the covenant, the grace and glory prepared, proposed, and promised in it, in the way and manner determined on by divine wisdom. And this may be reduced to two heads.

1. He undertook as the surety of the covenant to answer for all the sins of those who are to be, and are made partakers of the benefits of it. That is, to undergo the punishment due to their sins; to make atonement for them, by offering himself a propitiatory sacrifice for their expiation, redeeming them by the price of his blood from their state of misery and bondage under the law and the curse of it. Isa. liii. 4—6, 10; Matt. xx. 28; 1 Tim. ii. 6; 1 Cor. vi. 20; Rom. iii. 25, 26; Heb. x. 5—8; Rom. viii. 2, 3; 2 Cor. v. 19—21; Gal. iii. 13. And this was absolutely necessary, that the grace and glory prepared in the covenant might be communicated unto us. Without this undertaking of his, and performance of it, the righteousness and faithfulness of God would not permit, that sinners, such as had apostatized from him, despised his authority, and rebelled against him, falling thereby under the sentence and curse of the law, should again be received into his favour, and be made partakers of grace and glory. This therefore the Lord took on himself as the surety of the covenant.

2. That those who were to be taken into this covenant, should receive grace enabling them to comply with the terms of it, fulfil its conditions and yield the obedience which God required therein. For by the ordination of God, he was to procure, and did merit and procure for them the Holy Spirit, and all the needful supplies of grace to make them new creatures, and enable them to yield obedience to God from a new principle of spiritual life, and that faithfully to the end. So was he the surety of this better covenant.

Obs. XI. The stability of the new covenant depends on the suretiship of Christ, and is secured to believers thereby.—The introduction of a surety in any case, is to give stability and security. For it is never done but on a supposition of some weakness or defect on one account or other. If in any contract, bargain, or agreement, a man be esteemed every way responsible both for ability and fidelity, there is no need of a surety, nor is it required. But yet whereas there is a defect or weakness amongst all men, mentioned by our apostle in the next verses, namely, that they are all mortal and subject to death, in which case neither ability nor fidelity will avail any thing; men in all cases of importance need sureties. These give the utmost confirmation that affairs among men are capable of. So doth the suretiship of Christ on our behalf in this covenant. For the evidencing whereof, we may consider,

First. The first covenant as made with Adam, had no surety. As to that which in the new covenant the suretiship of Christ doth principally respect, it had no need of any. For there was no sin, transgression, or rebellion against God to be satisfied for, so that it was absolutely incapable of a surety to that end. But as to the second part of it, or his undertaking for us, that through supplies of strength from him, we shall abide faithful in the covenant, according to the terms and tenor of it; this had no inconsistency with that first

state. As the Lord Christ, on his undertaking the work of mediation became an immediate head to the angels that sinned not, whereby they received their establishment and security from any future defection; so might he have been such a head to, and such an undertaker for man in innocency. No created nature was or could have been unchangeable in its condition and state, merely on its root of creation. As some of the angels fell at first, forsaking their habitation, falling from the principle of obedience which had no other root but in themselves; so the rest of them, all of them, might afterwards in like manner have apostatized, and fallen from their own innate stability, had they not been gathered up into the new head of the creation, the Son of God as Mediator; receiving a new relation from thence, and establishment thereby. So it might have been with man in innocency. But God in his infinite sovereign wisdom, saw it not meet that so it should be. Man shall be left to the exercise of that ability of living to God, which he had received in his creation, and which was sufficient for that end; a surety God gave him not. And therefore although he had all the advantage of a sinless nature, filled with holy principles, dispositions, and inclinations, free from all vicious habits, rebellious affections, inordinate imaginations could afford to him, yet he broke the covenant, and forfeited all the benefits thereof. Whatever there was besides, in that covenant, of grace, power, ability, and the highest obligations to duty, yet all was lost for want of a surety. And this abundantly testifies to the preeminence of Christ in all things. For whereas Adam with all the innumerable advantages he had, that is, all helps necessary in himself, and no opposition or difficulty from himself to conflict withal, yet utterly brake the covenant wherein he was created and placed; believers who have little strength in themselves, and a powerful inbred opposition to their stability, are yet secured in their station by the interposition of the Lord Christ as their surety.

Secondly. When God made a covenant with the people in the wilderness, to manifest that there could be no stability in it without respect to a surety, that it could not continue, no not for a day, he caused it to be dedicated or confirmed with the blood of sacrifices. This the apostle declares, and withal its typicalness with respect to the new covenant and the confirmation of it with the blood of Christ, ch. ix. 18—21. And afterwards, as we have declared, the high priest in the sacrifices that he offered, was the typical mediator or surety, of that covenant. And the end of this appointment of God, was to manifest, that it was from the blood of the true sacrifice, namely, that of Jesus Christ, that the new covenant was to receive its stability. And we need a surety to this purpose,

1. Because in the state and condition of sin, we are not capable of immediate dealing or covenanting with God. There can be no covenanting between God and sinners, unless there be some one to stand forth in our name, to receive the terms of God, and to undertake for us. So when God began to treat immediately from heaven with the people of old, they all jointly professed, that such was the greatness and glory of God, such the terror of his majesty that it was impossible for them so to treat with him; and if he spake to them any more, they should all die and be consumed. Wherefore with one consent they

desired that there might be one appointed between God and them, to transact all things and to undertake for them as to their obedience which God well approved in them, Deut. v. 23—31. Adam indeed in the state of innocency could treat immediately with God, as to that covenant wherein he was placed. For notwithstanding his infinite distance from God, yet God had made him for converse with himself, and did not despise the work of his own hands. But immediately on the entrance of sin he was sensible of the loss of that privilege, whereon he both fled and hid himself from the presence of God. And hence those who of old thought they had seen God, concluded that they should die, as being sensible of their incapacity to treat immediately with him. So when the prophet cried out that he was undone or cut off, because of the immediate presence of God, his eyes having 'seen the King, the Lord of hosts,' Isa. vi. 5, he was not relieved from his apprehensions, until his mouth was touched with a coal from the altar, a type of the mediation and sacrifice of Christ. Whilst we have any thing of sin remaining in us, we can have nothing to do with God immediately. Wherefore that there may be any covenant between God and us, much more such an one as shall be 'ordered in all things, and sure,' there must be one to stand before God in our stead, to receive the terms of God, and declare them to us, and to undertake for us, that we shall stand to them and make them good to the glory of God. And in this sense was the new covenant first made with Christ, not only as he undertook the work of mediation, which he did on the especial eternal compact which was between the Father and him; but also as he undertook for all the elect to receive the terms of the covenant from God for them, in which sense the promise in the 'first place was made unto the seed that is one, which is Christ,' Gal. iii. 16, and to answer for them, that they should receive and stand to those terms. For he said, 'Surely they are my people, children that will not lie, so he was their Saviour,' Isa. lxiii. 8. Wherefore the holiness and glorious greatness of God, would not admit that there should be any new covenant at all between God and sinners, without the interposition of a surety. Nor did it become the infinite wisdom of God, after man had broken and disannulled the covenant made with him in innocency, to enter into a new covenant with him in his fallen condition, without an immediate undertaker, that it should be assuredly kept and the ends of it attained. If you have lent a man a thousand pounds on his own security, when he owed nothing else, nor was indebted to any other; and he hath not only failed in his payment, but contracted other debts innumerable, will you now lend him ten thousand pounds on the same security, expecting to receive it again? Had God entered into never so many covenants with men, without such a surety and undertaker, they would have been all broken and disannulled, as he well knew. He knew that we, 'would deal very treacherously, and were rightly called transgressors from the womb,' Isa. xlvi. 8. But so to covenant with us, would no way have become the infinite wisdom of God. Wherefore 'he laid help upon one that is mighty, he exalted one chosen out of the people,' Ps. lxxxix. 19. He committed this work to Jesus Christ, and then said concerning us, 'now deliver for I have found a ransom.'

2. The changeableness of our condition in this world requires a surety for us, to render the covenant firm, stable, and unalterable. So the Psalmist, complaining of our frail and mutable condition, shows that it is in Christ alone that we have all our establishment, Ps. cii. 25—28, ‘Of old thou hast laid the foundations of the earth,’ &c. That it is the Lord Christ, the Son of God, that in an especial manner is intended, I have shown and proved at large on ch. i. 10, where this passage in the Psalm is applied to him. And the conclusion that the Psalmist makes from the consideration of his immutability, is this, ‘the children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee,’ ver. 28. Without an interest in him and his stability, we are subject to change, alter, decline, so as it is impossible the covenant should be sure to us. The very nature of the principle whereby we live, and walk before God in this world, renders our condition alterable in itself. For ‘we walk by faith and not by sight,’ 2 Cor. v. 7. It is vision alone, or the immediate enjoyment of God which will instate us in an unalterable condition. Whilst we walk by faith, it is otherwise with us, and we depend wholly on our surety for our security in the covenant.

3. Who is it among the whole society of believers, that is not sensible of such actual dispositions to change, yea such actual changes, as that it is not evident to him, that his final stability depends on the undertaking of a surety? No man can give an account from himself whence it is, that he hath not already utterly broken covenant with God. There is no one corruption, no one temptation, but doth evidence a sufficiency in themselves to defeat us of our covenant interest, if we stood on our own bottoms. It is faith alone with respect to the suretiship of Christ, which discovers how we have been kept hitherto, and which gives us any comfortable prospect of our future preservation. And the same is evident from the consideration of all the adversaries of our covenant interest.

Here we might stay awhile to contemplate the glory of divine wisdom and grace, in providing this surety of the covenant, and to adore the infinite love and condescension of him, who undertook the discharge of this office for us. But we must proceed, only observing,

Obs. XII. That the Lord Christ’s undertaking to be our surety, gives the highest obligation to all duties of obedience according to the covenant.—For he hath undertaken for us, that we shall yield to God this covenant obedience, and said, ‘surely they are children that will not lie.’ He is no believer who understands not somewhat of the force and power of this obligation.

VER. 23—25.—Και οἱ μὲν, πλείονες εἰσι γεγονότες ἱερεῖς, διὰ τὸ θάνατον κωλυεσθαι παραμένειν· Ὁ δὲ, διὰ τὸ μένειν αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, ἀπαράβατον ἔχει τὴν ἱερωσύνην· Ὁ δὲν καὶ σωζειν εἰς τὸ παντελὲς δύναται τοὺς προσερχομένους δι’ αὐτοῦ τῷ Θεῷ, παντοτε ζῶν εἰς τὸ ἐντυγχάνειν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν.

Και οἱ μὲν, πλείονες. Vulg. Lat. Et alii quidem plures facti sunt

sacerdotes, 'and many others truly were made priests,' or, 'and others truly were made many priests.' The Rhemists reduce it to this sense, 'and the other indeed were made priests being many;' rendering οἱ μὲν, by alii, instead of illi, which corrupts the sense, and takes off from the immediate respect to the priests of the order of Aaron, intended by the apostle.

Et illi quidem plures sunt facti sacerdotes. 'And they truly were many priests.' So the Syr. וְהָיוּ הוּא כַּמְרָא סְנִינָא, 'and they were many priests,' omitting the note of assertion, μὲν, 'truly.'

Εἰσι γεγονότες, 'were made,' not only the event and matter of fact, but God's institution is also intended.

Δια το θανατω κωλυεσθαι. Vulg. Lat. Idcirco quòd morte prohiberentur permanere, Rhem. 'because that by death they were prohibited to continue.' Ours, 'because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death,' quoniam per mortem, non sinebantur permanere; which is the true meaning of the words. Syr. 'Because they died and were not left to continue.'

Ὁ δε, hic autem, at iste, but this man, δια το μενειν αυτον εις τον αιωνα, quòd maneat in æternum; quoniam ipse in æternum maneat, propterea quod in æternum manet; all to the same purpose. Syr. מְשֵׁל לְעֶלְם קִים, 'Because he standeth' (or continueth) 'for ever.'

Απαρabaτον χει την ιερωσυνην, sempiternum, perpetuum habet sacerdotium. Syriac, לֹא עֲבָרָא כַּמְרוּתָא, 'his priesthood passeth not away;' απαρabaτος, is, that may not be transgressed, and so not altered, as απαρabaτος νομος, 'a sacred law,' which none ought to transgress, which cannot in any thing be dispensed withal: and by consequence only, it is that which passeth not away. That priesthood, (την ιερωσυνην,) which altereth not, which cannot be changed.

Ὅθεν και σωζειν. Syr. וּמְשַׁכַּח לְמֵאֲחָיו, 'and he can quicken, or enliven, or give eternal life;' εις το παντελες, Syr. לְעֶלְם, 'for ever,' respecting duration of time, in perpetuum, Vul. Lat. Others, perfectè, 'perfectly,' completely; ours, 'to the utmost.'

Τους προσερχομενους; accedentes per semetipsum ad Deum. Rhemists, 'he is able to save for ever going by himself to God;' strangely darkening the sense. For going seems to respect his own going to God, which the Vulg. accedentes will not bear, eos qui per ipsum accedunt ad Deum, 'those who by him draw nigh to God.'

Παντοτε ζων; semper vivens ad interpellandum pro nobis, 'always living to make intercession for us,' instead of 'for them,' αυτων, Syr. וְמוֹסֵף קְרוּתָא חֲלִפְיָהוּ, 'causing to ascend, or offering prayers for them.'

VER. 23—25.—*And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death. But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able to save them also to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

The apostle in these words proceedeth to his last argument, from the consideration of the priesthood of Christ, as typed and represented

by that of Melchisedec. And his intention is still to prove the excellency of it above the Levitical, and of his person above theirs. And in particular he makes it manifest that the bringing in of this better hope, did perfect or consummate all things which the law could not do.

That he hath in these verses a respect to Melchisedec as a type of Christ, and what we are taught thereby, is evident from the matter treated of in them. He had observed that, as to the description given of him in the Scripture, 'he abideth a priest continually,' ver. 3, and that it is witnessed of him that he lives, seeing it is nowhere mentioned that he died, ver. 8, and this is the last consideration of him which he improveth to his purpose, and it is that which gives virtue and efficacy to all the other that he had before insisted on. Set this aside, and all the other, whether advantages or excellencies which he had discoursed of, would be as ineffectual to the ends aimed at, as the law itself. For what profit could it be to the church, to have so excellent and glorious a priest for a season, and then immediately to be deprived of him by the expiration of his office.

Moreover, as what the apostle affirms here of Christ, hath respect to what he had before observed concerning Melchisedec, so what he affirms of the Levitical priests, depends on what he had before declared concerning them, namely, that they were all mortal dying men and no more, who actually died in their successive generations, ver. 8.

The words therefore have three things in them in general.

1. The state and condition of the Levitical priests by reason of their mortality, ver. 23. This he observes because he is not declaring the dignity of Christ and his priesthood absolutely, but with respect to them; whose state therefore was the antithesis in the comparison.

2. The state and condition of the priesthood of Christ on the account of his glorious immortality, ver. 24.

3. The blessed effects and consequents of the priesthood of Christ, inasmuch as by virtue of his immortality, he was 'a priest for ever,' ver. 25.

In the first, (ver. 23,) there is, 1. The introduction of his assertion and observation, *kai oi men*, 'and they truly.'

2. What he affirms of those priests, 'they were many.'

3. Whence that came to pass; namely, 'because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death;' which is not alleged only as the cause and reason of their being many, but also as a proof of their weakness and infirmity.

First. In the introduction of his assertion, there is a note of connexion, and another of asseveration.

1st. The first is the copulative conjunction, 'and,' *kai*. A process to a new argument to the same purpose with those foregoing is intended hereby. The former design is continued, and a new confirmation of it is added. For he resolved to omit nothing that was of moment and to his purpose.

2dly. There is a vehemency in his assertion, or a note of assevera-

tion; and *οἱ μὲν*, 'they truly.' He had used the same note before in the same manner, ver. 21, where we omit the emphasis of it without cause. And in other places the same translators render this particle by 'truly,' as they do here, 1 John i. 3. But he doth not so much assert a thing by it that was dubious, as positively declare that which was well known, and could no way be gainsaid by them with whom he had to do. And an argument pressed *ex concessis* is forcible. This is a known truth.

Secondly. That which he affirms of them is, *πλείονες εἰσι γεγονότες ἱερεῖς*, 'that they were many priests,' or there were many made priests, or they who were made priests were many. The sense is the same. By the appointment of God himself, there were many who were made priests, or executed the office of the priesthood. It is of the high priests only, Aaron and his successors, of whom he speaks; and it is with respect to their succession one to another, that he affirms they were many. This both the reason of it which he subjoins, and what he afterwards adds concerning the priesthood of Christ, wherein there was no succession, do evidently declare. For there neither was nor could be by the law any more than one at a time. Perhaps in the disorder and confusion of that church, there might be more that were so called and esteemed, as were Annas and Caiaphas; but that confusion he takes no notice of, but attends to what always was or ought to have been according to the law.

By succession these high priests were many. For from Aaron, the first of them, to Phinehas, who was destroyed with the temple, there were inclusively four score and three high priests. Of these, thirteen lived under the tabernacle, before the building of the temple by Solomon; eighteen under the first temple before its destruction by the Babylonians; and all the rest lived under the second temple, which yet stood no longer than the first. And the multiplication of high priests under the second temple, the Jews look on as a punishment and token of God's displeasure: for because the sins of a nation, their rulers are many and frequently changed.

Whatever advantages there may be in an orderly succession, yet is it absolutely an evidence of imperfection. And by the appointment of this order God signified an imperfection and mutability in that church state. Succession indeed was a relief against death; but it was but a relief, and so supposed a want and weakness. Under the gospel it is not so, as we shall see afterwards. Observe, that

Obs. I. God will not fail to provide instruments for his work that he hath to accomplish.—If many priests be needful, many the church shall have.

Thirdly. The reason of this multiplication of priests was, *διὰ τὸ θάνατῳ κωλυεσθαι παραμενεῖν*, 'because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death.' They were mortal men, subject to death, and they died. Death suffered them not to continue in the execution of their office. It forbade them so to do, in the name of the great sovereign Lord of life and death. And hereof an instance was given in Aaron, the first of them. God, to show the nature of this priesthood unto the people, and to manifest that the everlasting priest was

not yet come, commanded Aaron to die in the sight of all the congregation, Num. xx. 25—28. So did they all afterwards, as other men, die in their several generations. They were all by death forbidden to continue. Death laid an injunction on them one after another, from proceeding any farther in the administration of their office. It is not surely without some especial design, that the apostle thus expresseth their dying: 'they were by death prohibited to continue.' Wherefore, he shows hereby, 1. The way whereby an end was put unto the personal administration, and that was, by death. 2. That there was an imperfection in the administration of that office, which was so frequently interrupted. 3. That they were seized upon by death, whether they would or not, when it may be, they would have earnestly desired to continue, and the people also would have rejoiced in it. Death came on them, neither desired nor expected, with his prohibition. 4. That when death came and seized on them, it kept them under its power, so that they could never more attend unto their office. But it was otherwise with the priest of the better covenant, as we shall see immediately. Observe,

Obs. II. There is such a necessity of the continual administration of the sacerdotal office in behalf of the church, that the interruption of it by the death of the priests, was an argument of the weakness of that priesthood,

The high priest is the sponsor and mediator of the covenant. Those of old were so typically, and by way of representation. Wherefore, all covenant transactions between God and the church, must be through him. He is to offer up all sacrifices, and therein represent all our prayers. And it is evident from thence, what a ruin it would be to the church, to be without a high priest one moment. Who would venture a surprisal to his own soul in such a condition? Could any man enjoy a moment's peace, if he supposed that in his extremity, the high priest might die? This now is provided against, as we shall see in the next verse.

VER. 24.—*But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.*

In opposition unto what was observed in the Levitical priests, the contrary is here affirmed of the Lord Christ. And the design of the apostle is still the same, namely, to evince by all sorts of instances, his preeminence as a priest above them as such also.

1. The person spoken of is expressed by $\delta \delta \epsilon$. The exceptive conjunction $\delta \epsilon$, 'but,' answereth unto $\mu \epsilon \nu$ before used, and introduceth the other member of the antithesis. 'O, hic, ille, iste, he of whom we speak, namely, Jesus, the surety of the New Testament. We render it, 'this man,' not improperly; he was the Mediator between God and man, 'the man, Christ Jesus.' Nor doth the calling of him, 'this man,' exclude his divine nature; for he was truly a man, though God and man in one person. And the things here ascribed unto him, were wrought in and by the human nature, though he that wrought them were God also; but 'he,' or 'this man,' who was represented by Melchisedec, of whom we speak.

2. It is affirmed of this person, that he hath an unchangeable priesthood; the ground and reason whereof is assigned, namely, *δια το μενειν αυτον*, 'because he continueth ever,' which must be first considered. The sole reason here insisted on by the apostle, why the Levitical priests were many, is because they were forbidden by death to continue. It is sufficient, therefore, on the contrary, to prove the perpetuity of the priesthood of Christ, that he abideth for ever. For he doth not absolutely hereby prove the perpetuity of the priesthood, but his perpetual uninterrupted administration of it. *Δια το μενειν εις τον αιωνα*.

This was the faith of the Jews concerning the Messiah, and his office. We have heard, say they, out of the law, *οτι ο Χριστος μενει εις τον αιωνα*, John xii. 34, 'that Christ abideth for ever;' whereon they could not understand what he told them about his being lifted up by death. And so the word *μενει* signifieth 'to abide,' 'to continue in any state or condition,' John xxi. 22, 23. And this was that in which principally he was typified by Melchisedec, concerning whom there is no record, as to the beginning of days or end of life, but as unto the Scripture description of him he is said to abide a priest for ever.

It may be said in opposition hereunto, that the Lord Christ died also, and that no less truly and really than did Aaron or any priest of his order. Wherefore, it will not hence follow, that he had any more an uninterrupted priesthood than they had. In answer to this, some say, the apostle here considers the priesthood of Christ only after his resurrection and ascension into heaven, after which he dies no more, death hath no more power over him. And if we will believe the Socinians, then he first began to be a priest. This figment I have fully confuted elsewhere. And there is no ground in the context, on which we may conjecture that the apostle intends the administration of his priesthood in heaven only, although he intends that also. For he speaks of his priesthood as typified by that of Melchisedec, which, as we have proved before, respected the whole of his office.

I say, therefore, that although Christ died, yet he was not forbid by death to abide in his office as they were. He died as a priest, they died from being priests. He died as a priest, because he was also to be a sacrifice. But he abode, and continued not only vested with his office, but in the execution of it in the state of death. Through the indissolubleness of his person, his soul and body still subsisting in the person of the Son of God, he was a capable subject of his office. And this being in the state of the dead belonged unto the administration of his office, no less than his death itself. So that from the first moment of his being a priest, he abode so always without interruption or intermission. This is the meaning of *δια το μενειν αυτον*, 'he in his own person abideth.' Nor doth the apostle say, that he did not die, but only that he abideth always.

3. It followeth from hence, that he hath, *απαραλατον ιερωσυνην*, 'an unchangeable priesthood.' A priesthood subject to no change or alteration; that cannot pass away. But *ιερωσυνη παραλατος* is sacerdotium successivum, per successionem ab uno alteri traditum. Such a priesthood as which, when one hath attained, it abideth not with him,

but he delivereth over unto another, as Aaron did his unto Eleazar his son, or it falls unto another by some right or law of succession; a priesthood that goes from hand to hand. *Ἱερωσύνη ἀπαράβατος*, is a priesthood that doth not pass from one unto another. And this the apostle seems directly to intend, as is evident from the antithesis. The priests after the order of Aaron were many, and that by reason of death. Wherefore it was necessary that their priesthood should pass from one to another by succession. So that when one received it, he that went before him ceased to be a priest. And so it was, either the predecessors were taken off by death, or on any other just occasion, as it was in the case of Abiathar, who was put from the priest's office by Solomon, 1 Kings ii. 27. Howbeit, our apostle mentions their going off by death only; because that was the ordinary way, and which was provided for in the law. With the Lord Christ it was otherwise. He received his priesthood from none. Although he had sundry types, yet he had no predecessor. And he hath none to succeed him, nor can have any added or joined unto him in his office. The whole office of the priesthood of the covenant, and the entire administration of it, are confined unto his person. There are no more that follow him than went before him.

The expositors of the Roman church, are greatly perplexed in the reconciling of this passage of the apostle, unto the present priesthood of their church. And they may well be so, seeing they are undoubtedly irreconcilable. Some of them say that Peter succeeded unto Christ in his priesthood, as Eleazar did unto Aaron. So Ribera. Some of them deny that he hath any successor, properly so called. *‘Successorem non habet, nec ita quisquam Catholicus loquitur, si bene et circumspectè loqui velit,’* saith Estius. But it is openly evident that some of them are not so circumspect as Estius would have them, but do plainly affirm that Peter was Christ's successor. A Lapide indeed affirms that Peter did not succeed unto Christ as Eleazar did to Aaron, because Eleazar had the priesthood in the same degree and dignity with Aaron, and so had not Peter with Christ. But yet that he had the same priesthood with him, a priesthood of the same kind, he doth not deny.

That which they generally fix upon is, that their priests have not another priesthood, or offer another sacrifice, but are partakers of his priesthood, and minister under him, and so are not his successors, but his vicars; which I think is the worst composure of this difficulty they could have thought upon. For,

1. This is directly contrary unto the words and design of the apostle. For the reason he assigns why the priesthood of Christ doth not pass from him unto any other, is because he abides himself for ever to discharge the office of it. Now this excludes all subordination and conjunctions: all vicars, as well as successors, unless we shall suppose that although he doth thus abide, yet is he one way or other disabled to discharge his office.

2. The successors of Aaron had no more another priesthood but what he had, than it is pretended that the Roman priests have no other priesthood but what Christ had. Nor did they offer any other sacri-

fice than what he offered, as these priests pretend to offer the same sacrifice that Christ did. So that still the case is the same between Aaron and his successors, and Christ and his substitutes.

3. They say that Christ may have substitutes in his office, though he abide a priest still, and although the office still continue the same unchangeable. So God in the government of the world makes use of judges and magistrates, yet is himself the supreme rector of all. But this pretence is vain also. For they do not substitute their priests unto him, in that which he continueth to do himself, but in that which he doth not, which he did indeed, and as a priest ought to do, but now ceaseth to do for ever in his own person. For the principal act of the sacerdotal office of Christ consisted in his oblation, or his offering himself a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour unto God. This he did once, and ceaseth for ever from doing so any more. But these priests are assigned to offer him in sacrifice every day, as partakers of the same priesthood with him, which is indeed not to be his substitutes, but his successors; and to take his office out of his hand, as if he were dead, and could henceforth discharge it no more. For they do not appoint priests to intercede in his room, because they grant he continueth himself so to do; but to offer sacrifice in his stead, because he doth so no more. Wherefore, if that be an act of priesthood, and of their priesthood, as is pretended, it is unavoidable that his priesthood is passed from him unto them. Now, this is a blasphemous imagination, and directly contrary both unto the words of the apostle, and the whole design of his argument. Nay, it would lay the advantage on the other side. For the priests of the order of Aaron had that privilege, that none could take their office upon them, nor officiate in it whilst they were alive. But although Christ abideth for ever, yet according unto the sense of these men, and their practice thereon, he stands in need of others to officiate for him, and that in the principal part of his duty and office. For offer himself in sacrifice unto God, he neither now doth, nor can, seeing henceforth he dieth no more. This is the work of the mass-priests alone, who must, therefore be honoured as Christ's successors, or be abhorred as his murderers, for the sacrifice of him must be by blood and death.

The argument of the apostle, as it is exclusive of this imagination, so it is cogent unto his purpose. For so he proceedeth. That priesthood which changeth not, but is always vested in the same person, and in him alone, is more excellent than that which was subject to change continually from one hand to another. For that transmission of it from one unto another, was an effect of weakness and imperfection. And the Jews grant that the frequency of their change under the second temple, was a token of God's displeasure. But thus it was with the priesthood of Christ which never changeth, and that of Aaron which was in a transient succession. And the reasons he gives of this contrary state of these two priesthoods do greatly enforce the argument. For the first priesthood was so successive, because the priests themselves were obnoxious to death, the sum and issue of all weaknesses and infirmities. But as to the Lord Christ, his priesthood is perpetual and unchangeable, because he abideth personally for ever,

being made a priest according to the power of an endless life, which is the sum of all perfections that our nature is capable of. And we may observe,

Obs. III. The perpetuity of the priesthood of Christ depends on his own perpetual life. He did not undertake any office for the church to lay it aside whilst he lives, until the whole design and work of it be accomplished. And therefore, he tells his disciples, 'that because he liveth they shall live also,' John xiv. 19. For whilst he lives, he will take care of them. But this must be spoken unto on the next verse.

Obs. IV. The perpetuity of the priesthood of Christ, as unchangeably exercised in his own person, is a principal part of the glory of that office. His discharge of this office for the church in his own person throughout all generations is the glory of it. 1. Hereon depends the church's preservation and stability. There is neither a ceasing, nor any the least intermission of that care and providence, of such interposition with God on its behalf, which are required thereunto. Our high priest is continually ready to appear, and put in for us on all occasions. And his abiding for ever, manifests the continuance of the same care and love for us, that he ever had. The same love wherewith, as our high priest, he laid down his life for us, doth still continue in him, and every one may, with the same confidence, go unto him with all their concerns, as poor diseased and distempered persons went unto him when he was upon earth; when he never showed greater displeasure than unto those who forbade any to come unto him, whatever their pretences were. 2. Hereon depends the union and communion of the church with itself in all successive generations. For, whereas he is their head and high priest, in whom they all centre as unto their union and communion, and who hath all their graces and duties in his hand to present them unto God, they have a relation unto each other, and a concern in one another. We that are alive in this generation have communion with all those that died in the faith before us, as shall be declared, if God will, on ch. xii. ver. 22—24. And they were concerned in us, as we are also in the generations that are to come. For all the prayers of the church, from first to last, are lodged in the hands of the same high priest who abides for ever. And he returns the prayers of one generation unto another. We enjoy the fruits of the prayers, obedience, and blood of those that went before us; and if we are faithful in our generation, serving the will of God, those shall enjoy the fruits of ours, who shall come after us. Our joint interest in this our abiding priest, gives a line of communication unto all believers in all generations. And, 3. The consolation of the church also depends hereon. Do we meet with troubles, trials, difficulties, temptations, and distresses? Hath not the church done so in former ages? What do we think of those days wherein prisons, tortures, swords, and flames, were the portion of the church all the world over? But did any of them miscarry? Was any one true believer lost for ever? And did not the whole church prove victorious in the end? Did not Satan rage, and the world gnash their teeth, to see themselves conquered and their power broken, by the faith, patience, and suffering of

them whom they hated and despised? And was it from their own wisdom and courage that they were so preserved? Did they overcome merely by their own blood, or were delivered by their own power? No, but all their preservation and success, their deliverance and eternal salvation, depended merely on the care and power of their merciful high priest. It was through his blood, the blood of the Lamb, or the efficacy of his sacrifice, that they overcame their adversaries, Rev. xii. 11. By the same blood were their robes washed and made white, ch. vii. 14. From thence had they their righteousness in all their sufferings. And by him had the church its triumphant issue out of all its trials. Now is he not the same that he ever was, vested with the same office, and hath he not the same qualifications of love, compassion, care, and power for the discharge of it, as he always had? Whence, then, can any just cause of despondence in any trials or temptations arise? We have the same high priest to take care of us, to assist and help us, as they had, who were all of them finally victorious. 4. This gives perpetual efficacy unto his sacrifice, &c.

Obs. V. The addition of sacrificing priests as vicars of, or substitutes unto Christ, in the discharge of his office, destroys his priesthood, as to the principal eminency of it, above that of the Levitical priesthood.

VER. 25.—*Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

In this verse, the apostle brings his whole preceeding mysterious discourse unto an issue, in the application of it unto the faith and comfort of the church. It was not his design merely to open mysterious truths in the notion of them; nor only to prove the glory and preeminence of the gospel church-state, above that of the same church, under Mosaic institutions, on the account of the priesthood of Christ: but his principal design was, to demonstrate the spiritual and eternal advantages of all true believers by these things. The sum of what he intends, he proposeth in this verse, and afterwards enlargeth on unto the end of the chapter. What believers ought to seek in, and what they may expect from this blessed glorious priesthood, is that which he now undertakes to declare. In like manner, on all occasions he manifests, that the end of God in the whole mystery of his grace by Jesus Christ, and institutions of the gospel, is the salvation of his elect unto the praise of the glory of his grace. There are in the words,

1. The illative conjunction or note of inference—‘wherefore.’
2. An ascription of power unto this high priest—‘he is able.’
3. The end of that power, or the effect of it: it is to save, which is farther described, 1. By the extent of it—‘it is unto the uttermost.’ 2. The especial object of it—‘those that come to God by him.’
4. The reasons of the whole; which are, 1. His perpetual life. 2. His perpetual work—‘he ever liveth to make intercession for them.’

The note of inference *οθεν*, is frequently made use of by our apostle in this argumentative discourse, as ch. ii. 17, iii. 1, viii. 3, ix. 18, and in this place, *ideo*, quapropter. Nor is it any where else in the New Testament used for the introduction of a conclusion or inference from premises in a way of argument. And the causality which here it includes, may respect the whole foregoing discourse, as asserting that which necessarily follows thereon. Or it may have respect only unto the ensuing clause in this verse; as if the apostle had only intended in particular, that the Lord Christ is able to save to the uttermost, because he ever abideth. But he rather seems to make an inference from the whole foregoing discourse, and the close of the verse is only an addition of the way and manner, how the Lord Christ accomplisheth what is ascribed unto him by virtue of his office. Being such a high priest as we have evidenced him to be, made by an oath and abiding for ever, he is able to save.

Obs. VI. Considerations of the person and offices of Christ, ought to be improved unto the strengthening of the faith, and increase of the consolation of the church.—So they are here by the apostle. After the great and ample declaration that he hath made of the excellency of his priestly office with respect unto his person, he applies all that he hath spoken unto the encouragement of the faith and hope of them that endeavour to go to God by him. And all those who explode such considerations and such improvements of them, are no otherwise to be looked on but as persons utterly ignorant both of Christ and faith in him.

2. That which is inferred to be in this priest, is power and ability, *δυναται*, ‘he is able,’ ‘he can.’ This is the second time the apostle ascribeth power or ability unto this priest; see ch. ii. ver. 18, and the exposition thereof. And it is not an ability of nature, but of office, that is intended. An ability of nature in Christ, he had proved sufficiently in the first chapter of the Epistle, and that accompanied with supreme power or authority over all; but whereas, as our Mediator, he hath undertaken such offices for us, he is, as such, able to do no more, than he is able to do by virtue of them, or in the discharge of those offices. If therefore there be any thing needful for us, which although it may be supposed within the compass of the divine power of the Son of God, is yet not to be effected in a way of office, that as our Mediator he is not able for. Hence doth our apostle press his ability not absolutely, but as the high priest of the church. As if a man who is mighty in wealth, riches, and power, be also made a judge, it is one thing what he can do by his might and power, another what he is able for, and can do as a judge. And he who hath to deal with him as a judge, is to consider only what he is able for in the discharge of that office. And he doth this, partly to evince his preeminence above the high priests of the law. For by reason of their personal infirmities, and the limited nature of their office, they were really unable to effect many things which the church stood in need of from those that discharged that office, supposing them the only way of our approach unto God. Were they never so ready, willing, diligent, and watchful, yet they were not

able to do all that was necessary for the church. Being themselves sinful men, made priests by the law of a carnal commandment and subject unto death, they had no ability to effect in the church what is expected from the priestly office. But the Lord Christ our high priest being free from all these imperfections, as he was a priest, 'he is able.' But principally he insists upon it, to encourage and confirm the faith of the church in him with respect unto this office. Wherefore, having by many demonstrations assured us of his love and compassion, ch. ii. and ch. v. there remains nothing but to satisfy us also of his power and ability. And this he hath now evinced from the nature and dignity of his office, as vested in his person. This is the ability here intended, not an absolute divine power inherent in the person of Christ, but a moral power; a jus, 'a right,' and what can be effected in the just discharge of this office. And hereon,

Obs. VII. The consideration of the office-power of Christ, is of great use unto the faith of the church. To this end we may observe,

1. That the foundation of all the benefits which are received by Christ, that is, of the spiritual and eternal salvation of the church, is laid in his condescension to undertake the office of a mediator between God and man. And as this was the greatest effect of divine wisdom and grace, so it is the first cause, the root and spring of all spiritual blessings unto us. This, the whole Scripture beareth testimony unto, Heb. x. 7; 1 John iii. 16. This is the fundamental article of faith evangelical. And the want of laying this foundation aright, as it occasioneth many to apostatize from the gospel unto a natural religion, so it weakeneth and disordereth the faith of many believers. But this is the first ground of all friendship between God and man.

2. Having undertaken that office, all the actings of it for us, and towards us, or towards God in our behalf, are circumscribed and limited by that office. We have no ground of faith to expect any thing from him or by him, but what belongs unto the office that he hath undertaken. Neither are we in our addresses unto him, and expectations from him, to consider him absolutely as God, the eternal Son of God only, but as the Mediator between God and man. We can look for no more from a king, but what he can justly do as a king, nor from any other person in office; no more are we to look for from Christ himself.

3. This office of Christ in general, as the Mediator and sponsor of the new covenant, is distinguished into three especial offices, of a king, a prophet, and a priest. Whatever, therefore, we receive from Christ, or by him, we do it as he acts in that threefold capacity, or in one of those offices, a king, a priest, or a prophet. Whatever he hath done for us, or continueth to do, whatever he doth over us, for us, or towards us, he doth it in and under one of these capacities. For unto them, may all his office relation unto us be reduced. And the kindness of all those other relations wherein he stands unto us, as of a shepherd, the bishop of our souls, of a husband, of a brother, of a friend, he puts forth and exerciseth in the acts and actings of these offices.

4. All these offices, whether vested jointly in any one other person, or severally and distinctly in several persons, as they were under the Old Testament, could never extend their acts and effects unto all the occasions and necessities of the church. The business of our apostle, in this chapter, is to prove, that the office of the priesthood as vested in Aaron and his successors, made nothing perfect, did not consummate the church-state, nor could effect its salvation. The kingly office as it was typically managed by David and others, was remote from answering that rule and safety which the church stood in need of. Neither did nor could any one prophet, no nor yet all the prophets together, reveal and declare the whole counsel of God. But,

5. These offices as they were in Christ, did perfectly answer, and yet do, all that belongs to the redemption, sanctification, protection, and salvation of the church. And this they do on two accounts.

1. Because they were committed unto him in a more full, ample, and unlimited manner, than either they were, or could be unto others, on purpose that they might answer all the ends of God's grace towards the church. So as he was made a king, not this or that degree or enlargement of power was committed unto him, but 'all power in heaven and in earth,' over all the creation of God, in all things spiritual, temporal, and eternal. See our description and delineation of this power, on ch. i. 2, 3. As a prophet, he did not receive this or that particular revelation from God, but all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge were laid up in him, and he knew the whole mind and counsel of God, as coming forth from his divine bosom. And as unto his sacerdotal office, we are now engaged in an inquiry into its especial nature, as differing from, and exalted above, whatever was committed to any of the sons of men, under that name.

2. The principal reason of the all-sufficiency of the office, power, and ability of Christ, is taken from his own person, which alone was capable of a trust of such a power, and able to execute it unto all the ends of it. He alone who was God and man in one person, was capable of being such a king, priest, and prophet, as was able to save the church unto the uttermost. Wherefore, in the consideration of this office-power of Christ, wherein all our salvation doth depend, we have two things to attend unto. First. His person who bears these offices, and who alone was fit and able so to do; and secondly. The especial nature of the office as committed unto him. On these grounds he was able to do infinitely more as a priest, than all the priests of the order of Aaron could do. So the apostle expresseth it in the next words.

3. 'He is able to save,' *καὶ σωζειν*, 'even to save, to save also;' not for this or that particular end, but absolutely, even to save. The general sense of this word is limited and determined in the use and application of it throughout the Scripture; not any temporal deliverance, but that which is supernatural, spiritual, and eternal, is intended thereby.

And, 1. The notion of the word includeth in it a supposition of some evil or danger, that we are delivered from. This is sin, with its consequents of misery, in the curse of the law, and the wrath to come.

Wherefore, it is said of Christ, that he 'saves his people from their sins,' Matt. i. 21, 'from the curse,' Gal. iii. 13, and 'from the wrath to come,' 1 Thess. i. 10. In these things, all that is or can be evil unto our nature here, or unto eternity, are included.

2. The bringing of us into an estate of present grace and right unto future blessedness, with the enjoyment of it in its appointed season, is intended in it. For although this be not included in the first notion of the word, yet it belongs unto the nature of the thing intended. This salvation, called therefore great and eternal salvation, doth not merely respect the evil we are delivered from, but the contrary good also, in the present favour and future enjoyment of God. And concerning this salvation, two things are to be considered.

1st. That there is power and ability required unto this work. 'He is able to save.' It was no easy thing to take away sin, to subdue Satan, to fulfil the law, to make peace with God, to procure pardon, to purchase grace and glory, with all other things great and glorious, that belong unto this salvation. And it is the great concern of faith, well to fix this principle; that he who hath undertaken this work, is able to accomplish it, and that by the means he hath designed to use, and the way wherein he will proceed. We are apt to pass this over without any inquiry into it, and to take it for granted, that God is able to do whatever he pleaseth: but it is not of the absolute power of God whereof we speak, but of the power of God or of Christ, put forth in such a peculiar way. And the want of faith herein, is the first and most proper part of unbelief. Wherefore, as God engageth his omnipotency or all-sufficiency as the foundation of all his covenant-actings towards us, Gen. xvii. 1; so he often pleadeth the same power to assure us of the accomplishment of his promises, Isa. xl. 28, 29. And it is expressly asserted as the principal ground of faith, Rom. iv. 21, xi. 23; 1 Cor. x. 13; Eph. iii. 20; 2 Tim. i. 12; Jude 24, and often in this Epistle.

2d. It is here supposed that the discharge of Christ's priestly office, is the way designed to save us by, or to effect this great work of salvation. No other way or means is appointed of God unto this end. Here we must look for it, or go without it. Wherefore, the inquiry is necessary, whether in the discharge of this office, and within the bounds and limits of it, he be able to save us with this salvation. For indeed many are like those sons of Belial, who said of Saul when God had anointed him king, 'how shall this man save us, and despised him,' 1 Sam. x. 21. They understand not how Christ is able to save them by his priesthood, and therefore, under various pretences, they trust to themselves, and despise him. All false religion is but a choice of other things for men to place their trust in with a neglect of Christ. And all superstition grows on the same root, in all effects or instances of it, be they great or small. Wherefore, I say, we are to consider whether this office and the acts of it, be suited and meet for the effecting all things that belong to this salvation. For if we find them not so, we cannot believe that he is a priest able to save us. But they evidence themselves to be otherwise, unless our minds are darkened by the power of unbelief, as we shall see in the particulars afterwards insisted on by our apostle. And we are here taught, that,

Obs. VIII. It is good to secure this first ground of evangelical faith, that the Lord Christ, as vested with his offices and in the exercise of them, is able to save us.—Salvation is that which all sinners, who have fallen under any convictions, do seek after. And it is from God they look for it; he alone they know can save them; and unless he do so, they cannot be saved. And that he *can* do so, they seem for a while to make no question, although they greatly doubt whether he *will* or not. Here under these general apprehensions of the power of God, they cannot long abide, but must proceed to inquire into the way whereby he will save them, if ever they be saved. And this the whole Scripture testifieth to be no otherwise but by Jesus Christ. ‘For there is no salvation in any other; neither is there any other name under heaven given among men whereby they must be saved,’ Acts iv. 12. When their thoughts are thus limited to Christ alone, their next inquiry is, How shall this man save us? And hereon are they directed to his offices, especially his priesthood, whereby he undertakes to deliver them from the guilt of their sins, and to bring them into favour with God. Is it not therefore highly incumbent on them, to satisfy themselves therein, that Christ is able to save them in the exercise of this office? For if he be not, there is no salvation to be obtained. And when men are come thus far, as that they will not question in general but that the Lord Christ in the discharge of his sacerdotal office, is able to save sinners in general, yet unbelief will keep them off from acquiescing in this power of his as so limited, for their own salvation. As Naaman had thoughts in general that Elisha could cure men of their leprosy, yet he would not believe that he could cure them in the way and by the means he prescribed. He thought he would have taken another course with him more suited to his apprehensions, as a means for his recovery. Hereon he turns away in a rage, which if he had not by good advice been recalled from, he had lived and died under the plague of his leprosy, 2 Kings v. 10—14. When persons are reduced to look for salvation only by Christ, and do apprehend in general that he can save sinners, yet oftentimes when they come to inquire into the way and manner of it by the exercise of his priestly office, they cannot close with it. Away they turn again into themselves, from which if they are not recovered, they must die in their sins. Unless therefore we do well and distinctly fix this foundation of faith, that Christ as a Priest is able to save us, or is able to do so in the discharge of his sacerdotal office, we shall never make one firm step in our progress. To this end we must consider,

That the Lord Christ as Mediator, and in the discharge of his office, is ‘the wisdom of God and the power of God.’ So saith our apostle, ‘Christ crucified is to them that believe the power of God and the wisdom of God,’ 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. His death is both an effect of divine power and wisdom, and thereby do they exert their efficacy to the utmost, for the attaining of the end designed in it. Wherefore we are to look to this priesthood of Christ, as that which divine wisdom hath appointed, as the only way and means whereby we may be saved. And if there be any defect therein, if Christ in the discharge of it, be not able to save us notwithstanding the difficulties which to us seem

insuperable, it must be charged on divine wisdom, as that which was wanting in the contrivance of a due means to its end. And so it is done by the world, For the apostle testifieth, that this wisdom of God is looked on and esteemed by men as mere foolishness. The way proposed in it to save sinners by the cross of Christ, is accounted as folly by all unbelievers, whatever else they pretend as the reason of their unbelief. But this faith is to fix on, namely, that although we yet see not how it may be done, nor have the experience of it in our own souls, yet this being the way which infinite wisdom hath fixed on, there is no defect in it, but Christ by it is able to save us. For the very first notions which we have of wisdom as divine and infinite, is, that we are to acquiesce in its contrivances and determinations, though we cannot comprehend the reasons or ways of them. Besides, the Lord Christ is herein also the power of God. God in him and by him put forth his omnipotent power for the accomplishing of the effect and end aimed at. Wherefore although we are not to look for our salvation from the power of God, absolutely considered; yet are we to look for it from the same omnipotency, as acting itself in and by Jesus Christ. This is the way whereby infinite wisdom hath chosen to act omnipotent power. And into them is faith herein to be resolved.

3. He is able to save also *εις το παντελες*. The word may have a double sense; for it may respect the perfection of the work, or its duration, and so it is variously rendered: 'to the utmost,' that is completely; or 'evermore,' that is, always or for ever. So the Syriac translation carries it.

Take the word in the first sense, and the meaning is, that he will not effect or work out this or that part of our salvation, do one thing or another that belongs to it, and leave what remains to ourselves or others, but he is 'our Rock and his work is perfect.' Whatever belongs to our entire complete salvation, he is able to effect it. The general notion of the most that are called Christians, lies directly against this truth.

In the latter sense two things may be intended. 1. That after an entrance is made into this work, and men begin to be made partakers of deliverance thereby, there may great oppositions be made against it in temptations, trials, sins and death, before it be brought to perfection. But our Lord Christ, as our faithful high priest, fainteth not in his work, but is able to carry us through all these difficulties, and will do so until it be finished for ever in heaven. 2. That this salvation is durable, perpetual, eternal, Isa. xlv. 17. *Salvare in æternum*; to procure salutem æternam. But *favores sunt ampliandi*; and there is nothing hinders but that we may take the words in such a comprehensive sense, as to include the meaning of both these interpretations. He is able to save completely as to all parts, fully as to all causes, and for ever in duration. And we may observe,

Obs. IX. Whatever hinderances and difficulties lie in the way of the salvation of believers, whatever oppositions do rise against it, the Lord Christ is able, by virtue of his sacerdotal office, and the exercise of it, to carry the work through them all unto eternal perfection. In the assertion of the ability of Christ in this matter, there is a suppo-

sition of a work whereunto great power and efficacy is required ; and whereas it is emphatically affirmed, that he is able to save to the uttermost, it is supposed that great oppositions and difficulties do lie in the way of its accomplishment. But these things are commonly spoken unto by our practical divines, and I shall not therefore insist upon them.

The whole is further declared by instancing in those who are to be saved or made partakers of this salvation. He is able to save to the uttermost, but yet all are not to be saved by him ; yea, they are but few that are so. Of the most it may be said, they will not come unto him that they may have life. Wherefore those whom he is thus able to save and doth save accordingly, are all those, and only those who come unto God by him. *Τους προσερχομενους*, 'to come to God,' hath a double sense in the Scripture, for it is sometimes expressive of faith, sometimes of worship. 1. To come unto God is to believe. Faith or believing is a coming to God. So Christ calling us unto faith in him, calleth us to come unto him, Matt. xi. 28. And unbelief is a refusal to come to him, 'you will not come to me that you may have life.' Faith in God through him, is coming to the Father by him, John xiv. 6, so to come to God by Christ, is through him to believe in God, 1 Pet i. 21.

2. Our access to God in his worship, is our coming unto him. So is it most frequently expressed in the Old Testament, drawing nigh unto God. And the expression is taken from the approach, that was made unto the tabernacle, in and with all holy services. Worship is an approximation unto God, Ps. lxxiii. 28. *קרבה אל-הים*. So our apostle calls those who worshipped God in the ordinances of the law, *τους προσερχομενους*, Heb. x. 1, 'the comers,' 'the worshippers ;' not those that come to the worship, but those who by that worship come to God. In answer hereunto, our evangelical worship is *προσαγωγη*, an access, an approximation, a drawing nigh or coming to God, Eph. ii. 18 ; Heb. x. 22. The latter sense is principally here intended ; for the discourse of the apostle is concerning the state of the church under the New Testament, with the advantage of it above that of old, by its relation unto the priesthood of Christ. They came of old to God with their worship by the high priest of the law ; but those high priests could not save them in any sense. But the high priest of the New Testament can save to the utmost all gospel worshippers, all that come to God by him. But the former sense of the word is also included and supposed herein. They that come unto God by Christ, are such, as believing in him, do give up themselves in holy obedience to worship God in and by him.

So is the way expressed of this coming unto God, *δι' αυτου* ; that is, by him as a high priest ; as it is at large explained by the apostle, ch. x. 19—22. Now to come unto God by Jesus Christ in all holy worship, so as thereon to be interested in his saving power as the high priest of the church, is so to come, 1. In obedience unto his authority as to the way and manner of it ; 2. With affiance in his mediation, as to the acceptance of it ; 3. With faith in his person as the foundation of it.

First. It is to come in obedience unto his authority, and that on a double account. 1. Of the way of coming. It is not by legal institutions, it is not by our own inventions, it is only by his appointment, Matt. xxviii. 20. To come to God any other way, gives us no interest in the care or saving power of Christ, John xv. 7, 8. 2. Of that especial respect which we have in our souls and consciences unto his sovereign rule over us.

Secondly. With affiance in his mediation. And therein faith hath respect unto two things. 1. The sacrifice he hath offered, the atonement and reconciliation he hath made for us, whereon our whole liberty of access unto God doth depend, ch. x. 19—22. 2. To his intercession, whereby he procures actual acceptance for our persons and our duties, Heb. iv. 16; 1 John ii. 2.

Thirdly. The foundation of the whole is faith in his person as vested with his holy office, and in the discharge of it. It is so to believe in him, as to believe that he is able to save to the utmost all that come unto God by him. This is the ground whereon in our holy worship we assemble in his name, Matt. xviii. 20. And make all our supplications unto God in his name, John xvi. 26. That is, by an exercise of faith and trust in him, that by and through him we shall be accepted with God. And we may hence observe,

Obs. X. The salvation of all sincere gospel worshippers, is secured by the actings of the Lord Christ in the discharge of his priestly office.

Obs. XI. Attendance unto the service, the worship of God in the gospel, is required to interest us in the saving care and power of our high priest.—Men deceive themselves who look to be saved by him, but take no care to come to God in holy worship by him. Nor is it an easy or common thing so to do. All men pretend unto divine worship, some one way, some another, and in words they interpose the name of Christ therein, but really to come to God by him, is a matter of another import. Two things are indispensably required thereunto: 1. That the principle of saving faith be antecedent unto it. 2. That the exercise of faith be concomitant with it. Unless we are true believers, our worship will not be accepted. And unless we are in the exercise of faith on God through Christ in the performance of it, it gives no glory to him, it brings no advantage unto ourselves.

Obs. XII. Those who endeavour to come unto God in any other way but by Christ, as by saints and angels, may do well to consider, whether they have any such office in heaven, as by virtue whereof they are able to save them to the uttermost.—That this is done by those of the Roman church, cannot with any modesty be denied, yea it is avowed by them. For when they are charged with the wickedness of their doctrine and practice in this matter, evacuating the mediation of Christ, they reply that they admit of no mediators of reconciliation with God, but only of intercession. Be it so, ability to save to the utmost is here ascribed unto our high priest, upon the account of his intercession. A respect unto his oblation whereby he made reconciliation is included, but it is the efficacy of his intercession that is expressly regarded. 'For being reconciled by his death, we are saved by his life,' Rom. v. 10. He therefore alone is the Mediator of inter-

cession, who is able by virtue of his office to save us to the utmost through that intercession of his.

Those whom they choose to go to God by, are able to save them, or they are not. If they are not, is it not the greatest folly and madness imaginable, whilst we seek after salvation, to set him aside on any occasion, in any one instance, who can save us to the utmost, and betake ourselves unto them who cannot save us at all? If they are able to save us in any sense, it is either by virtue of some office, and office-power that they are invested withal in heaven, (as ministers are in the discharge of their office said to save them that hear them, 1 Tim. iv. 16, that is, ministerially and instrumentally,) or without any such office. If they can do so without any office, they can do more than Jesus Christ can do; for he is able to do it by virtue of his office only. And if it might have been otherwise, what need was there that Christ should undertake and discharge this office of the priesthood, and that our apostle should so labour to prove the excellency of this his office, only to satisfy us that he is able to save them that come to God by him? If they do it by virtue of any office committed to them, let it be named what it is. Are they priests in heaven for ever after the order of Melchisedec? Dishonour enough is done unto Christ, by making any sacrificing priests on the earth, as they do in their mass; but to make interceding priests in heaven also, is the highest reproach unto him. Or are they the kings or prophets of the church; or under what name or title is this power intrusted with them? Such imaginations are most foreign from true Christian religion. A holy painful minister on the earth, can do much more towards the saving of the souls of men, than any saint or angel in heaven. For the work of doing it ministerially by the dispensation of the word, is committed unto them in the way of office; but office in the church beareth none in heaven, but only Jesus Christ.

And what is the reason why men should so readily close with other means, other mediators of intercession, to go to God by them? For when they pray to saints, although they should only pray unto them to intercede for them, as some of them pretend, (however openly and manifestly against their express and avowed practice,) yet do they go to God by them. For to speak of any religious prayer, and yet not to look on it in general as a going or coming to God, is a fond and senseless imagination. Wherefore, whenever they pray to saints, as most of them do more than to Jesus Christ, their design is to go to God by them. But what is it that should induce them hereunto? Our Lord Christ hath told us, that he is the way; and that no man cometh unto the Father but by him, John xiv. 6. What reason can any man give why he should not believe him, but although he hath said that no man cometh unto the Father but by him, should yet attempt to go another way? Have others more power in these things than he, so as it is advisable on that account to make our application unto them? Where is it said of any saints or angels, or all of them together, that they are able to save to the utmost all that come to God by them? Or where is any one word spoken of their power or interest in heaven unto that purpose? But it will be said, that we may be relieved and saved, we

stand not in need of power only, but of love, pity, and compassion; and although the saints have less ability than Christ, yet they may have more of love and compassion for us. For some of them, it may be, were our kindred, or progenitors, or countrymen, or such as may have an especial kindness for us, especially the blessed virgin, and other female saints, are, by their natural constitution, as well as their grace, (who would not think so?) mightily inclined unto pity and compassion. And indeed they are marvellous things, which some of them tell us concerning the blessed virgin in this case, and her condescension in the pursuit of her love and pity. But yet this imagination is the highest pitch of folly and ingratitude. Certainly nothing can more stir up the indignation of God, than to have any creatures in heaven or earth, or all together, equalled in love and compassion with Jesus Christ. He that doth not know that there is an unparalleled eminency of these in him, who is not in some measure instructed in the cause and effect of them, knows no more of the gospel than a Jew. There is more love, pity, and compassion in Christ Jesus towards every poor sinner, that comes to God by him, than all the saints in heaven are able to comprehend. And if kindred or alliance may be of consideration in this matter, he is more nearly related to us than father, or mother, or wife, or children, or all together, we being not only bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, but so joined to him, as to be one spirit with him.

But it will yet be said, that it is on none of these considerations that men choose to go to God by other mediators of intercession; only whereas the Lord Christ is so great and so gloriously exalted at the right hand of the Majesty on high, they dare not always presumptuously intrude into his glorious presence: and therefore they make use of the saints, who are more cognate to us, and not clothed with such terrible majesty. And in going to God by the friends of Christ, they please him as well as if they went immediately by himself.

Ans. 1. He is an unbeliever to whom the glorious exaltation of the Lord Christ is a discouragement from going to him, or by him to God on the throne of grace. For all the glory, power, and majesty of Christ in heaven is proposed to believers, to encourage them to come to him, and to put their trust in him. But this is the talk of men who, whatever devotion they pretend to, indeed know nothing really, of what it is to pray, to believe, to trust in Christ, or by him to draw near with boldness to the throne of grace; see Heb. iv. 14—16.

2. All the glory, power, and majesty of Jesus Christ as exalted in heaven, as our Mediator, are but means effectually to exert and exercise his love and compassion towards us; ‘He lives for ever to make intercession for us.’ But we proceed.

The close of this verse gives us the special reason and confirmation of all the efficacy that the apostle hath assigned to the priesthood of Christ; *παντοτε ζων εις το εντυγχανειν υπερ αυτων*, ‘always living to make intercession for them.’ And three things must be considered in these words.

1. The state and condition of Christ as a high priest. He ‘liveth always,’ or for ever.

2. What he doth as a high priest in that state and condition: he 'maketh intercession for us.'

3. The connexion of these things, their mutual regard, or the relation of the work of Christ to his state and condition; the one is the end of the other; 'he lives for ever to make intercession for us.'

1. As to his state and condition, *παντοτε ζων*, 'he lives for ever.' He is always living. The Lord Christ in his divine person hath a threefold life in heaven. The one he lives in himself; the other for himself, and the last for us.

1st. The eternal life of God in his divine nature; this he liveth in himself; 'As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself,' John v. 26. He hath given it him by eternal generation, in a communication to him of all the divine properties. And he that hath life in himself, a life independent on any other, he is the living One, the living God. No creature can have life in himself. For 'in God we live, move, and have our being.' He is hereby Alpha and Omega, 'the first and the last, the beginning and end of all,' Rev. i. 11, because he is *ὁ ζων*, 'the living one,' ver. 18. And this life of Christ is the foundation of the efficacy of all his mediatory actings, namely, that he was in his own divine person the living God, Acts xx. 28; 1 Cor. ii. 8; 1 John iii. 16. But this is not the immediate cause of his mediatory effects, nor is it here intended.

2d. There is a life which he liveth for himself, namely, a life of inconceivable glory in his human nature. He led a mortal life in this world, a life obnoxious to misery and death, and died accordingly. This life is now changed into that of immortal eternal glory. 'Henceforth he dieth no more, death hath no more power over him.' And not only so, but this life of his is to him the cause of, and is attended with all that ineffable glory which he now enjoys in heaven. This life he lives for himself, it is his reward, the glory and honour he is crowned withal. All the endowments, all the enjoyments, and the whole eternal exaltation of the human nature in the person of Christ, belongs to this life of glory. And the glorious exaltation of that individual human nature, which the Son of God assumed, far above all principalities and powers, and every name that is named in this world, or the world to come, is the principal part of the design of infinite wisdom, in the work of the new creation. But neither is this the life here intended.

3d. The Lord Christ lives a mediatory life in heaven, a life for us. So saith our apostle, 'he was made a Priest after the power of an endless life,' whereof we have treated before. He lives as King, Prophet, and Priest of the church. So he describes himself, Rev. i. 18, 'I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and death.' As he died for us, so he liveth for us, and is entrusted with all power over the church's adversaries, for its good. As he died for us, so he liveth for us in heaven; and therefore tells us, that 'because he liveth, we shall live also,' John xiv. 19. Now this life differeth not essentially from that life of glory in the human nature which he liveth for himself in heaven: only it denoteth one especial end of it, and that only for a season. The Lord Christ will have the life in himself, the divine life to all eternity; and

so also will be the life of glory in the human nature. But he shall cease to live this mediatory life for us, when the work of his mediation is accomplished, 1 Cor. xv. 28. But he shall lead this life always for us, till the whole work committed to him be accomplished, and shall lead it as a life of glory in himself to eternity.

Obs. XIII. It is a matter of strong consolation to the church, that Christ lives in heaven for us. It is a spring of unspeakable joy to all true believers, that he lives a life of immortality and glory in and for himself in heaven. Who can call to mind all the miseries which he underwent in this world, all the reproach and scorn that was cast on him by his enemies of all sorts, all the wrath that the whole world is yet filled withal against him, and not be refreshed, rejoiced, transported, with a spiritual view by faith of all that majesty and glory, which he is now in the eternal possession of? So was it with Stephen, Acts vii. 56. And therefore in all the appearances and representations which he hath made of himself since his ascension into heaven, he hath manifested his present glory, Acts xxvi. 13; Rev. i. 14—18. And the due consideration hereof cannot but be a matter of unspeakable refreshment to all that love him in sincerity.

But herein lieth the life of the church's consolation, that he continues to live a mediatory life in heaven for us also. It is not, I fear, so considered, nor so improved as it ought to be. That Christ died for us, all who own the gospel profess in words, though some so explain their faith, or rather their infidelity, as to deny its proper use, and to evacuate its proper ends. That so he lived for us here in this world, as that his life was some way or other to our advantage, at least thus far, that he could not have died if he had not lived before, all men will grant, even those by whom the principal end of this life, namely, to fulfil the law for us, is peremptorily denied. But that Christ now lives a life of glory in heaven, that most men think is for himself alone. But the text speaks to the contrary. 'He lives for ever to make intercession for us.' Neither is this the only end of his present mediatory life in heaven, though this only be here expressed. Should I undertake to show the ends of the present mediatory life of Christ for the church, it would be too great and long a decursion from the text. However, the whole of the work of this life of his may be reduced into these three heads.

1. His immediate actings towards the church itself, which respects his prophetic office.
2. His actings for the church in the world, by virtue and power of his kingly office.
3. His actings with God the Father in their behalf, in the discharge of his sacerdotal office.

First. The first consisteth in his sending and giving the Holy Ghost to the church. He lives for ever to send the Holy Spirit to his disciples. Without this constant effect of the present mediatory life of Christ, the being of the church would fail, it could not subsist one moment. For hereon depends, 1. All saving light to understand the word of God, or spiritual things in a spiritual manner, wherein he continueth the exercise of his prophetic office. 2. All habitual grace,

whereby the souls of the elect are quickened and regenerated. 3. All supplies of actual grace, which the whole church hath from him every moment, and without which it could yield no obedience to God. 4. All spiritual gifts, the sole foundation and means of the church's edification, and without which it can have no real benefit by any gospel ordinances or administrations. 5. All comfort and all consolation, which in all variety of occurrences the church doth stand in need of; which things I have elsewhere spoken to at large.

Secondly. His actings by virtue of his mediatory life for the church in the world, are also various, wherein he exerciseth his kingly power; that power which is given to him as he is head over all things to the church, Eph. i. 22. Hence is the whole preservation of the church in this world, by glorious effects of divine wisdom and power. Hence, doth proceed the present controuls that are given to its adversaries, and hence will proceed their future destruction, for he must reign until all his enemies be made his footstool. In the exercise of this life, wherein the keys of hell and death are committed to him, doth he put forth his mighty power over the world, Satan, death, the grave, and hell, for the eternal security and salvation of the church. Did he not live this life for us in heaven, neither the whole church, nor any one member of it, could be preserved one moment from utter ruin. But hereby are all their adversaries continually disappointed.

Thirdly. By virtue of this life he acts with God on the behalf of the church. And the only way whereby he doth this, in the discharge of his priestly office, is expressed here in the text, *εντυχανειν υπερ αυτων*, 'He lives for ever to make intercession for them.' Now, this expression, containing the whole of what the Lord Christ as the high priest of the church doth now with God for them, and whereon the certainty of our salvation doth depend, it must with some diligence be inquired into.

Expositors, especially those of the Roman church, inquire with many disputes into the external form of the intercession of Christ, as namely, whether it be oral and vocal or not. And they produce many testimonies out of the ancients on the one side and the other. And great weight is laid by some on the difference and determination of it. For whereas Ribera grants that the dispute is more about words and the manner of expression, than the matter itself, Tena affirms that what he says is most false. And it is evident that the testimonies produced by themselves out of the ancients, as Chrysostome, Theophylact, Ambrose, Austin, and so to Rupertus and Thomas, are expressly contradictory to one another. Now, although our principal concern lieth in the internal form and efficacy of the intercession of our high priest, rather than in the outward manner of it; yet so far as that also is revealed, we may inquire into it. And we shall find that the true stating of it tends to the encouragement and establishment of our faith. And the things ensuing may be observed to this purpose.

1. The Socinian figment about the nature of the intercession of Christ, is of no consideration. For by a strange violence offered to the nature of things, and the signification of words, they contend that

this intercession is nothing but the power of Christ to communicate actually all good things, the whole effect of his mediation, to believers. That Christ hath such a power is no way questioned; but that this power in the exercise of it, is his intercession, is a most fond imagination. That which casts them on this absurd conception of things, is their hatred of the priestly office of Christ, as exercised toward God on our behalf. But I have elsewhere sufficiently disputed against this fiction.

2. The intercession of Christ was under the Old Testament typified three ways. 1. By the living fire that was continually on the altar. Herewith were all sacrifices to be kindled and burned, which thence were called אֵשׁ, 'firings.' But this principally typified his prayers, when he offered himself unto God through the eternal Spirit, which he did with strong cries and supplications or intercessions, Heb. v. 7. Hereby, and the actings of the eternal Spirit therein, he kindled and fired in himself a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour to God, Eph. v. 2. 2. By the מִזְבֵּחַ, or daily sacrifice of morning and evening for the whole people. See the institution of it, Exod. xxix. 38---42. For although that sacrifice had in it the nature of an expiatory oblation, because it was by blood; yet, the principal end of it was to make continual application of the great solemn annual expiation, unto the consciences of the people. 3. By the incense that was burned in the sanctuary. And this was of two sorts, 1st. That wherewith the high priest entered once a year into the most holy place on the day of expiation. For he might not enter in, yea, he was to die if he did, unless in his entrance he filled the place, and covered the ark and mercy-seat with a cloud of incense, Lev. xvi. 12, 13. Which incense was to be fired with burning coals from the altar of burnt-offerings. So did our high priest; he filled heaven at his entrance with the sweet savour of his intercession, kindled with the coals of that eternal fire, wherewith he offered himself unto God. 2dly. The incense that was burned every day in the sanctuary by the priests in their courses. This represented prayer, Ps. cxli. 2, and was always accompanied with it, Luke i. 9, 10. This, also, was a type of the continual efficacy of the intercession of Christ, Rev. viii. 4. But the most solemn representation of it, was in that anniversary sacrifice, whereof we must treat afterward at large; in this there was atonement made for all the sins and transgressions of the people, Lev. xvi. 21. And it was consummated by carrying some of the blood as a representation of it into the most holy place, sprinkling it before the ark of the covenant and the mercy-seat. This was done but once in the year. To keep this in remembrance, and to make application of the benefits of it unto the consciences of the worshippers, the daily sacrifice was appointed. So doth the intercession of Christ make continual application of his great sacrifice and atonement, whence it derives its efficacy. And as the fire on the altar kindled all the renewed sacrifices, which were to be repeated and multiplied because of their weakness and imperfection; so doth the intercession of Christ make effectual the one perfect sacrifice, which he offered once for all, in the various applications of it unto the consciences of believers, Heb. x. 2.

3. The actual intercession of Christ in heaven, as the second act of his sacerdotal office, is a fundamental article of our faith, and a principal foundation of the church's consolation. So is it asserted to be, 1 John ii. 1, 2. And it is expressed by our apostle, as that whereby the death of Christ is made effectual unto us, Rom. viii. 3, 4. For it compriseth the whole care, and all the actings of Christ as our high priest with God, in the behalf of the church. This, therefore, is the immediate spring of all gracious communications unto us. For hereby doth he act his own care, love, and compassion; and from thence do we receive all mercy, all supplies of grace and consolation, needful unto our duties, temptations, and trials. Hereon depends all our encouragement to make our application unto God, to come with boldness of faith unto the throne of grace, ch. iv. 15, 16, x. 21, 22. Wherefore, whatever apprehensions we may attain of the manner of it, the thing itself is the centre of our faith, hope, and consolation.

4. It is no way unworthy or unbecoming the human nature of Christ, in its glorious exaltation to pray unto God. It was in and by the human nature that the Lord Christ exercised and executed all the duties of his offices whilst he was on earth. And he continueth to discharge what remains of them in the same nature still. And however that nature be glorified, it is the same essentially that it was, when he was in this world. To ascribe another kind of nature unto him, under pretence of a more divine glory, is to deny his being, and to substitute a fancy of our own in his room. So, then, the human nature of Christ, however exalted and glorified, is human nature still, subsisting in dependence on God, and subjection unto him. Hence, God gives him new revelations now in his glorified condition, Rev. i. 1. With respect hereunto he acted of old as the angel of the covenant, with express prayers for the church, Zech. i. 12, 13. So the command given him to intercede by the way of petition, request, or prayer, Ps. ii. 8, 'ask of me,' respects his state of exaltation at the right hand of God, when he was declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead, ver. 7, 8. And the incense which he offereth with the prayers of the saints, Rev. viii. 3, 4, is no other but his own intercession, whereby their prayers are made acceptable unto God.

5. This praying of Christ at present, is no other but such as may become him who sits down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. There must, therefore, needs be a great difference as to the outward manner, between his present intercession in heaven, and his praying whilst he was on the earth, especially at some seasons. For, being encompassed here with temptations and difficulties, he cast himself at the foot of God with strong cries, tears, and supplications, Heb. v. 7. This would not become his present glorious state, nor is he liable or exposed unto any of the causes or occasions of that kind of treating with God. And yet at another time whilst he was in this world, he gave us the best estimate and representation of his present intercession, that we are able to comprehend. And this was in his prayer recorded, John xvii. For therein his confidence in God, his union in and with him, the declaration of his will and desires, are all expressed

in such a manner, as to give us the best understanding of his present intercession. For a created nature can rise no higher to express an interest in God, with a oneness of mind and will, than is therein declared. And as the prayers with cries and tears, when he offered himself unto God, were peculiarly typified by the fire on the altar; so was this solemn prayer represented by that cloud of incense, wherewith the high priest covered the ark and the mercy-seat at his entrance into the most holy place. In the virtue of this holy cloud of incense did he enter the holy places not made with hands. Or we may apprehend its relation unto the types in this order. His prayer, John xvii., was the preparation of the sweet spices, whereof the incense was made and compounded, Exod. xxx. 34. His sufferings that ensued thereon were as the breaking and bruising of those spices, wherein all his graces had their most fervent exercise, as spices yield their strongest savour under their bruising. At his entrance into the holy place, this incense was fired with coals from the altar; that is, the efficacy of his oblation wherein he had offered himself unto God, through the eternal Spirit, rendered his prayer as incense covering the ark and mercy-seat, that is, procuring the fruits of the atonement made before God.

6. It must be granted, that there is no need of the use of words in the immediate presence of God. God needs not our words whilst we are here on earth, as it were absent from him. For he is present with us, and all things are open and naked before him. But we need the use of them for many reasons, which I have elsewhere declared. But in the glorious presence of God, when we shall behold him, as the Lord Christ doth, in the most eminent manner face to face, it cannot be understood, what need or use we can have of words to express ourselves unto God, in prayers or praises. And the souls of men in their separate state and condition, can have no use of voice or words; yet are they said to cry and pray with a loud voice, because they do so virtually and effectually, Rev. vi. 9, 10. However, I will not determine what outward transactions are necessary unto the glory of God in this matter, before the angels and saints that are about his throne. For there is yet a church state in heaven wherein we have communion, Heb. xii. 22—24. What solemn outward, and, as it were, visible transactions of worship, are required thereunto, we know not. And, it may be, the representation of God's throne, and his worship, Rev. iv. 5, wherein the Lamb in the midst of the throne hath the principal part, may not belong only unto what is done in the church here below. And somewhat yet there is, which shall cease, and not be any more after the day of judgment, 1 Cor. xv. 26, 28.

7. It must be granted that the virtue, efficacy, and prevalency of the intercession of the Lord Christ depends on, and flows from, his oblation and sacrifice. This we are plainly taught from the types of it of old. For the incense and carrying of blood into the holy place after the expiatory sacrifice, the great type of his oblation of himself, did both of them receive their efficacy, and had respect to the sacrifice offered without. Besides, it is expressly said, that the Lord Christ, by the one offering of himself, obtained for us eternal redemption, and

for ever perfected them that are sanctified. Wherefore, nothing remains for his intercession, but the application of the fruits of his oblation to all them for whom he offered himself in sacrifice, according as their conditions and occasions do require. Wherefore,

8. The safest conception and apprehension that we can have of the intercession of Christ, as to the manner of it, is his continual appearance for us in the presence of God, by virtue of his office as the high priest over the house of God, representing the efficacy of his oblation, accompanied with tender care, love, and desires, for the welfare, supply, deliverance, and salvation of the church. Three things therefore concur hereto. 1. The presentation of his person before the throne of God on our behalf, Heb. ix. 24. This renders it sacerdotal. His appearance in person for us is required thereunto. 2. The representation of his death, oblation, and sacrifice for us, which gives power, life, and efficacy to his intercession. Thence he appears in the midst of the throne, as a lamb that had been slain, Rev. v. 8. Both these are required to make his intercession sacerdotal. But, 3. Both these do not render it prayer or intercession. For intercession is prayer, 1 Tim. ii. 1; Rom. viii. 26. Wherefore, there is in it moreover, a putting up, a requesting and offering to God, of his desires and will for the church, attended with care, love, and compassion, Zech. i. 12.

Thus far then may we proceed. 1. It is a part of his sacerdotal office: he intercedes for us as the high priest over the house of God. 2. It is the first and principal way whereby he acts and exerciseth his love, compassion, and care, towards the church. 3. That he hath respect therein unto every individual believer, and all their especial occasions: 'If any man sin, we have an advocate.' 4. That there is in his intercession, an effectual signification of his will and desire unto his Father; for it hath the nature of prayer in it, and by it he expresseth his dependence upon God. 5. That it respects the application of all the fruits, effects, and benefits of his whole mediation unto the church. For this is the formal nature of it, that it is the way and means appointed of God in the holy dispensation of himself and his grace unto mankind, whereby the continual application of all the benefits of the death of Christ, and all effects of the promises of the covenant, shall be communicated unto us, unto his praise and glory. 6. The efficacy of this intercession, as it is sacerdotal, depends wholly on the antecedent oblation and sacrifice of himself, which is therefore, as it were, represented unto God therein. This is evident from the nature and order of the typical institutions whereby it was prefigured, and whereunto by our apostle it is accommodated. But what belongs unto the manner of the transactions of these things in heaven, I know not.

The third thing observed, was the connexion of the two things mentioned, or their relation one to another; namely, the perpetual life of Christ and his intercession: 'he lives for ever to make intercession.' His intercession is the end of his mediatory life, not absolutely, nor only, but principally. He lives to rule his church, he lives to subdue his enemies, for he must reign until they are all made his footstool: he lives to give the Holy Spirit, in all his blessed effects, unto believ-

ers. But because all these things proceed originally by an emanation of power and grace from God, and are given out into the hand of Christ upon his intercession, that may well be esteemed the principal end of his mediatory life. So he speaks expressly concerning that great fruit and effect of this life of him, in sending of the Spirit, 'I will pray the Father,' I will intercede with him for it, 'and he shall send you another Comforter,' John xiv. 16. And the power which he exerts in the subduing and destruction of the enemies of his kingdom, is expressly promised unto him upon his intercession for it, Ps. ii. 8, 9. For this intercession of Christ, is the great ordinance of God, for the exercise of his power towards, and the communication of his grace to the church, unto his praise and glory. So doth our high priest live to make intercession for us. Many things we may from hence observe.

Obs. XIV. So great and glorious is the work of saving believers unto the utmost, that it is necessary that the Lord Christ should lead a mediatory life in heaven, for the perfecting and accomplishment of it. He lives for ever to make intercession for us. It is generally acknowledged that sinners could not be saved without the death of Christ; but that believers could not be saved without the life of Christ following it, is not so much considered; see Rom. v. 10, viii. 34, 35, &c. It is, it may be thought by some, that when he had declared the name of God, and revealed the whole counsel of his will, when he had given us the great example of love and holiness in this life, when he had fulfilled all righteousness, redeemed us by his blood, and made atonement for our sins by the oblation of himself, confirming his truth and acceptation with God in all these things by his resurrection from the dead, wherein he was declared to be the Son of God with power, that he might have now left us to deal for ourselves, and to build our eternal safety on the foundation that he had laid. But alas! when all this was done, if he had only ascended into his own glory, to enjoy his majesty, honour, and dominion, without continuing his life and office in our behalf, we had been left poor and helpless, so that both we, and our right unto an heavenly inheritance, should have been made a prey unto every subtle and powerful adversary. He could therefore no otherwise comfort his disciples when he was leaving this world; but by promising that he would not leave them orphans, John xiv. 18, that is, that he would still continue to act for them, to be their patron, and to exercise the office of a mediator and advocate with the Father for them. Without this, he knew they must be orphans, that is, such as are not able to defend themselves from injuries, nor secure their own right unto their inheritance.

The sure foundations of our eternal salvation were laid in his death and resurrection. So it is said, that 'when God laid the foundation of the earth, and placed the corner-stone thereof, that the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy,' Job xxxviii. 7. Although the foundations were only laid, yet that being by infinite power and wisdom, which would infallibly accomplish and perfect the whole, it was a blessed cause of praise and ascribing glory to God. Yet were the continued actings of the same power required unto the perfection of it. The foundation of the new creation was laid glori-

ously in the death and resurrection of Christ, so as to be the matter of triumphant praises unto God. Such is the triumph thereon described Col. ii. 15; 1 Tim. iii. 16. And it may be observed, that as on the laying the foundation of the earth, all the holy angels triumphed in the expression and demonstration of the infinite wisdom, power, and goodness of God which they beheld; so in the foundation of the new creation, the apostate angels who repined at it, and opposed it unto their power, were led captive, carried in triumph, and made the footstool of the glory of Christ. But all this joy and triumph is built on the security of the unchangeable love, care, and power of Jesus Christ, gloriously to accomplish the work which he had undertaken. For had he left it when he left the earth, it had never been finished. For great was that part of the work which yet remained to be perfected.

Neither could the remainder of this work be committed unto any other hand. He employed others under him in his work, to act ministerially in his name and authority. So he useth the ministry of angels and men. But did not he himself continue to act in them, by them, with them, and without them, the whole work would fail and be disappointed. In one instance of the revelation of the will of God concerning the state of the church by the opening of the book, wherein it was recorded, there was none found worthy in heaven or earth to do it, but the Lamb that was slain, the lion of the tribe of Judah, Rev. v. 5, vi. 1. How much less is any creature able to accomplish all that remains for the saving of the church unto the utmost. Who can express the opposition that continues to be made unto this work of completing the salvation of believers? What power is able to conflict and conquer the remaining strength of sin, the opposition of Satan and the world? How innumerable are the temptations which every individual believer is exposed unto, each of them in its own nature ruinous and pernicious?

God alone knoweth all things perfectly in infinite wisdom, and as they are. He alone knows how great a work it is to save believers unto the utmost; what wisdom, what power, what grace and mercy is requisite thereunto. He alone knows what is meet unto the way and manner of it, so as it may be perfected unto his own glory. His infinite wisdom alone hath found out and determined the glorious and mysterious ways of the emanation of divine power and grace unto this end. Upon all these grounds, unto all these purposes, hath he appointed the continual intercession of the Lord Christ in the most holy place. This he saw needful and expedient unto the salvation of the church, and to his own glory. So will he exert his own almighty power unto those ends. The good Lord help me to believe and adore the mystery of it.

Obs. XV. The most glorious prospect that we can take into the things that are within the veil, into the remaining transactions of the work of our salvation in the most holy place, is in the representation that is made unto us of the intercession of Christ. Of old, when Moses went into the tabernacle, all the people looked after him, until he entered in, and then the pillar of the cloud stood at the door of it,

that none might see into the holy place, *Exod. xxxiii. 8, 9.* And when the Lord Christ was taken into heaven, the disciples looked after him, until a cloud interposed at the tabernacle door, and took him out of their sight, *Acts i. 9.* And when the high priest was to enter into the tabernacle, to carry the blood of the sacrifice of expiation into the most holy place, no man, be he priest or not, was suffered to enter into, or abide in the tabernacle, *Lev. xvi. 17.* Our high priest is now likewise entered into the most holy place, within the second veil, where no eye can pierce unto him. Yet is he there as a high priest, which makes heaven itself to be a glorious temple, and a place as yet for the exercise of an instituted ordinance, such as the priesthood of Christ is. But who can look into, who can comprehend the glories of those heavenly administrations? Some have pretended a view into the orders and service of the whole choir of angels, but have given us only a report of their own imaginations. What is the glory of the throne of God, what the order and ministry of his saints and holy ones, what is the manner of the worship that is given unto him that sits on the throne and to the Lamb, the Scripture doth sparingly deliver, as knowing our disability, whilst we are clothed with flesh, and inhabit tabernacles of clay, to comprehend aright such transcendent glories. The best and most steady view we can have of these things, is in the account which is given us of the intercession of Christ. For herein we see him by faith yet vested with the office of the priesthood, and continuing in the discharge of it. This makes heaven a temple, as was said, and the seat of instituted worship, *Rev. vii. 15.* Hence, in his appearance unto John, he was clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle: both which were sacerdotal vestments, *Rev. i. 13.* Herein is God continually glorified; hereby is the salvation of the church continually carried on and consummated. This is the work of heaven, which we may safely contemplate by faith.

Obs. XVI. The intercession of Christ, is the great evidence of the continuance of his love and care, his pity and compassion towards his church. Had he only continued to rule the church as its King and Lord, he had manifested his glorious power, his righteousness and faithfulness. The sceptre of his kingdom is a sceptre of righteousness. But mercy and compassion, love and tenderness, are constantly ascribed unto him as our high priest; see *Heb. iv. 15, v. 1. 2.* So the great exercise of his sacerdotal office, in laying down his life for us, and expiating our sins by his blood, is still peculiarly ascribed unto his love, *Gal. ii. 20; Eph. v. 2; Rev. i. 5.* Wherefore, these properties of love and compassion belong peculiarly unto the Lord Christ as our high priest. All men who have any spiritual experience and understanding, will acknowledge how great the concern of believers is in these things, and how all their consolation in this world depends upon them. He whose soul hath not been refreshed with a due apprehension of the unspeakable love, tenderness, and compassion of Jesus Christ, is a stranger unto the life of faith, and unto all true spiritual consolation.

But how shall we know that the Lord Christ is thus tender, loving,

and compassionate, that he continueth so to be; or what evidence or testimony have we of it? It is true, he was eminently so when he was upon the earth in the days of his flesh, and when he laid down his life for us. We know not what change may be wrought in nature itself, by its investiture with glory; nor how inconsistent these affections, which in us cannot be separated from some weakness and sorrow, are with his present state and dignity. Nor can any solid satisfaction be received by curious contemplations of the nature of glorified affections. But herein we have an infallible demonstration of it, that he yet continueth in the exercise of that office, with respect whereunto all these affections of love, pity, and compassion, are ascribed unto him. As our high priest, *δυναται συμπαθεσαι*, he is able to suffer, to condole with, to have compassion on his poor tempted ones, Heb. iv. 15. All these affections doth he continually act and exercise in his intercession. From a sense it is of their wants and weaknesses, of their distresses and temptations, of their states and duties, accompanied with inexpressible love and compassion, that he continually intercedes for them. For he doth so, that their sins may be pardoned, their temptations subdued, their sorrows removed, their trials sanctified, and their persons saved. And doing this continually as a high priest, he is in the continual exercise of love, care, pity, and compassion.

VER. 26.—In this verse, the apostle renders a reason of his whole preceding discourse, and why he laid so great weight on the description of our high priest. And he hath probably in it a respect unto what he had last asserted in particular, concerning his ability to save them to the utmost that come to God by him.

VER. 26.—*Τοιουτος γαρ ἡμιν επρεπεν αρχιερευσ, ὁσιος, ακακος, αμιανος, κεχωρισμενος απο των αμαρτωλων, και υψηλοτερος των ουρανων γενομενος.*

Τοιουτος γαρ ἡμιν επρεπεν; Syr. *וְאֵךְ הָיָה צֶדֶק הוּא לָנוּ*, ‘for yet also this high priest was just to us:’ that is, it was just, right, or meet that we should have this high priest. All others, *tal:s nos decebat*.

Ὅσιος: Syr. *דְּכִיָּא*, ‘pure;’ sanctus, ‘holy.’

Ακακος; Syr. *דְּלֹא בִישׁ*, ‘without malice.’ Beza, *ab omni malo alienus*. Innocens, ‘free from all evil.’

Αμιανος; Syr. *דְּלֹא כִלְשָׁן*, ‘without spot.’ Vul. *impollutus*. Beza, *sine labe*, ‘unpolluted, without spot.’

Κεχωρισμενος απο των αμαρτωλων; Syr. *דְּפָרִיק מִן חַטָּא*, ‘separate from sins;’ all others, ‘from sinners.’

The word will be farther explained in our inquiry into the things ignified by them.

VER. 26.—*For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.*

There is something supposed and included in this assertion; namely,

that if we intend to come unto God, we had need of a high priest to encourage and enable us thereunto. For if in particular we need such a high priest, it is supposed that without a high priest in general, we can do nothing in this matter. This, therefore, is the foundation which in this argument, the apostle proceedeth on; namely, that sinners as we are all, can have no access unto God, but by a high priest. And there was no need for him much to labour with those Hebrews in the confirmation hereof. For from the first constitution of their church, they had no other way of approach unto God, in and with their sacred services. And God had not only by the institution of that office among them, declared that this was the way whereby he would be worshipped; but also with legal prohibitions, fortified with severe penalties, he had forbidden all men, the highest, the greatest, the best and most holy, to come unto him by any other way. Hereby were they taught the everlasting necessity of a high priest, and the discharge of his office, whatever end or issue their typical priests came unto. And herein lies a great aggravation of the present misery of the Jews. High priest of their own they have none, nor have had for many ages. Hereon all their solemn worship of God, utterly ceaseth. They are the only persons in the world, who, if all mankind would give them leave and assist them in it, cannot worship God as they judge they ought to do. For if Jerusalem were restored into their possession, and a temple re-edified in it more glorious than that of Solomon, yet could they not offer one lamb in sacrifice to God. For they know this cannot be done without a high priest, and priests infallibly deriving their pedigree from Aaron, of whom they have amongst them not one in all the world. And so must they abide under a sense of being judicially excluded and cast out from all solemn worship of God, until the veil shall be taken from their hearts, and leaving Aaron, they return unto him who was typified by Melchisedec, unto whom even Abraham their father acknowledged his subjection.

Whence this necessity of a high priest for sinners arose, I have so largely inquired into, and declared in my exertitions on the original and causes of the priesthood of Christ, as that there is no need again to make mention of it. Every one's duty it is to consider it, and rightly improve it for himself: the want of living up to this truth, evacuates the religion of most men in the world.

Upon this supposition of the necessity of a high priest in general, the apostle declares what sort of high priest was needful for us. And this he shows,

1. In his personal qualifications.
2. In his outward state and condition, ver. 26.
3. In the nature of his office, and the manner of its discharge, ver. 27. And he confirmeth the whole by the consideration of the person who was this priest, and of the way and manner how he became so, compared with them, and their consecration unto their office, who were priests according unto the law, ver. 28.

The two first are contained in this verse; namely, 1. The personal qualifications of him who was meet to be a priest for us, by whom we might come unto God; and 2. His outward state and condition.

And in the first place, the necessity of such a high priest as is here described, is expressed by *επεπε*, 'became us.' Decuit, decebat. It was meet, it was just for us, as the Syriac renders it. And respect may be had therein, either unto the wisdom of God, or unto our state and condition, or unto both; such a high priest it was meet for God to give, and such a high priest it was needful that we should have. If the condecency of the matter, which lies in a contrivance of proper means unto an end, be intended, then it is God who is respected in this word; if the necessity of the kind of relief mentioned, be so, then it is we, who are respected.

The word is applied unto God in this very case, ch. ii. 10. 'It became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things.' Consider God as the supreme ruler and governor of the world, as the first cause and last end of all, and it became, was necessary unto his infinite wisdom and holiness, that having designed the bringing of many sons unto glory, he should make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. So the condecency here intended, may respect, 1. The wisdom, grace, and goodness of God. It became him to give us such a high priest as we stood in need of; namely, one that was able in the discharge of that office, to save all to the uttermost, that come unto God by him. For to design our salvation by a high priest, and not to provide such a one, as was every way able to effect it, became not the wisdom and grace of God.

2. Respect may be had herein *ἡμιν*, 'to us,' to our state and condition. Such this was, as none but such a high priest could relieve us in, or save us from. For we stand in need of such a one, as our apostle declares, as, 1. Could make atonement for our sins, or perfectly expiate them. 2. Purge our consciences from dead works, that we might serve the living God; or sanctify us throughout by his blood. 3. Procure acceptance with God for us, or purchase eternal redemption. 4. Administer supplies of the spirit of grace unto us, to enable us to live unto God in all duties of faith, worship, and obedience. 5. Give us assistance and consolation in our trials, temptations, and sufferings, with pity and compassion. 6. Preserve us by power, from all ruining sins and dangers. 7. Be in a continual readiness to receive us in all our addresses to him. 8. To bestow upon us the reward of eternal life. Unless we have a high priest that can do all these things for us, we cannot be saved to the uttermost. Such a high priest we stood in need of, and such a one it became the wisdom and grace of God to give unto us. And,

Obs. I. God in infinite wisdom, love, and grace, gave us such a high priest, as in the qualifications of his person, the glory of his condition, and the discharge of his office, was every way suited to deliver us from the state of apostasy, sin, and misery, and to bring us unto himself through a perfect salvation.—This the ensuing particulars will fully manifest.

The qualifications of this high priest are expressed, first, indefinitely in the word *τοιοῦτος*. A difference from other high priests is included herein. He must not be one of an ordinary sort, but one so singularly qualified unto his work, so exalted after his work, and so discharging

his work unto such ends. In all these things we stood in need of such a high priest, as was quite of another sort, order, and kind, than any the church had enjoyed under the law, as the apostle expressly concludes, ver. 28.

His personal inherent qualifications are first expressed; and we shall consider, first, some things in general that are common unto them all, and then declare the especial intendment of every one of them in particular.

Such a high priest became us, as is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.

1. There is some allusion in all these things unto what was typically represented in the institution of the office of the priesthood under the law. For the high priest was to be a person without blemish, not maimed in any part of his body. He was not to marry any one that was defiled, nor to defile himself among the people. On his forehead in his ministrations, he wore a plate of gold with this inscription, 'Holiness to the Lord.' And no doubt but personal holiness was required of him in an especial manner; for want whereof, God cast out the posterity of Eli from the priesthood. But most of these things were only outward representations, of what was really required unto such a high priest as the church stood in need of. For they were mostly external, giving a denomination unto the subject, but working no real change in it. And where they were internal, they were encompassed with such a mixture of sins, weaknesses, infirmities, and the intercession of death, as that they had no glory in comparison of what was required. All these things the apostle observes, reducing them unto two heads, namely, that they were obnoxious unto sin and death; and therefore, as they died, so they offered sacrifices for their own sins. But the church was taught by them from the beginning, that it stood in need of a high priest, whose real qualifications should answer all these types and representations of them.

2. It is possible that our apostle in this description of our high priest, designed to obviate the prejudicate opinion of some of the Hebrews concerning their Messiah. For generally they looked on him as one that was to be a great earthly prince and warrior, that should conquer many nations, and subdue all their enemies with the sword, shedding the blood of men in abundance. In opposition unto this vain and pernicious imagination, our Saviour testifies unto them, that he came not to kill, but to save and keep alive. And our apostle here gives such a description of him in these holy, gracious qualifications, as might attest his person and work to be quite of another nature than what they desired and expected; and their frustration herein was the principal occasion of their unbelief. See Mal. iii. 1—3.

3. I am sorry that it hath fallen from the pen of an able expositor of our own on this place, that the time when the Lord Christ was thus made a high priest for ever, and that by an oath, was after he had offered one sacrifice, not many; for the people, not for himself;

once, not often; of everlasting virtue, and not effectual for some petty expiations for a time; and after he was risen, ascended, and set at the right hand of God.

If by being made a high priest, only a solemn declaration of being made so, is intended, these things may pass well enough. For we allow that in the Scripture, then a thing is oftentimes said to be, when it is first manifested or declared. So was the Lord Christ determined to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead. But if it be intended, as the words will scarce admit of any other interpretation, that then the Lord Christ was first made a high priest, after all this was performed, the whole real priesthood of Christ, and his proper sacrifice is overthrown. For it is said he was not made a high priest until after that he had offered his one sacrifice. And if it were so, then he was not a priest, when he so offered himself. But this implies a contradiction, for there can be no sacrifice where there is no priest. And therefore the Socinians, who make the consecration of the Lord Christ unto his sacerdotal office, to be by his entrance into heaven, do utterly deny his death to have been a sacrifice, but only a preparation for it, as they fancy the killing of the beast to have been of old. And the truth is, either the Lord Christ was a priest before, and in the oblation of himself on the cross, or he was never any, nor needed so to be, nor could he so be; for after he was freed from death, he had nothing to offer. And it is a strange order of things, that the Lord Christ should first offer his only sacrifice, and after that be made a priest. But the order, time, and manner of the call and consecration of the Lord Christ to his priesthood, I have elsewhere declared. Wherefore,

4. We may observe that all these qualifications of our high priest, were peculiarly necessary on the account of the sacrifice which he had to offer. They were not only necessary for him, as he was to be the sacrificer, but also as he was to be the sacrifice; not only as he was to be the priest, but as he was to be the lamb. For the sacrifices were to be without blemish, as well as the sacrificers. So were we 'redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot,' 1 Pet. i. 19. But however the sacrifices were chosen under the law without blemish, yet were they still in their own nature, but calves, and goats, and lambs. And therefore, priests who had weaknesses and infirmities and sins of their own, might be meet enough to offer them. But here, both priest and sacrifice were to be equally pure and holy.

5. We must not pass by the wresting of this text by the Socinians; nor omit its due vindication. For they contend that this whole description of our high priest, doth not respect his internal qualifications in this world, before and in the offering of himself by his blood; but his glorious state and condition in heaven. For they fear (as well they may) that if the qualifications of a priest were necessary to him, and required in him whilst he was in this world, that then he was so indeed. He who says such a high priest became us as is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, doth affirm that when he was so, he was our high priest. In that state wherein these things were

necessary unto him, he was a priest. To avoid this ruin unto their pretensions, they offer violence unto the text, and the signification of every word in it, and dangerously insinuate a negation of the things intended, to be in Christ in this world. So speaks Slichtingius on the place. ‘Unde apparet sequentibus verbis, seu epithetis Christo tributis, non mores ipsius seu vitam ab omni peccati labe puram, sed felicem ac beatum statum describi ac designari, ob quem fiat ut in æternum vivens, nostri quoque perpetuam gerat curam. Licet enim omnia ista ratione vitæ et morum de Christo intellecta verissima sint, tamen nihil ad præsens autoris institutum faciunt.’ So also argues Smalcus, de Reg. Christi, cap. 23, whom we have elsewhere refuted.

The paraphrase of one of our own, seems to comply herewith ; which is as followeth : ‘And this was a sort of high priests which we sinful weak creatures had need of, (which by the way I do not understand, for we stood not in need of a new sort of high priests, but of one single individual high priest) one that being mercifully disposed, is also incapable of suffering any hurt, of being defiled or corrupted, and consequently, of dying, and to that end is exalted unto a pitch above our sinful, corruptible condition here.’ So ἀκακος and ἀμάντος are rendered in the margin, ‘free from evil and undefileable.’ The sense is plainly the same with that of Slichtingius, though there be some variety in the expressions of the one and the other. And therefore is Christ said to be exalted that he might be such as he is here described, as though he was not so before, in the sense here intended by the apostle, however the words here in another sense might be applied to him.

Three things seem to be aimed at in this exposition.

First. To make way for another corrupt notion on the next verse, wherein these men, with Grotius, would have Christ in some sense, offer for his own sins also ; which there can be no pretence for, if these things be ascribed unto him, as he was a priest in this world.

Secondly. To take care that the innocency, holiness, and absolute purity of our high priest be not supposed to be necessary unto our justification, neither as the material, nor formal cause of it. For if the Lord Christ, in the sacrifice of himself, died for our justification, and that he might do so, it was necessary that he should antecedently be holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners ; then was his being so, necessary unto our justification as a cause thereof.

Thirdly. To obviate an apprehension of his being a high priest before his death, and of his offering his one sacrifice therein. For if he had not the qualifications necessary unto a high priest, before his ascension into heaven, he could not be so before. But these things are none of them compliant with the truth. And,

1. This exposition is contrary to the concurrent sense of all sober, ancient and modern expositors. And which is more, it is contrary to the common sense of all Christians. Not one of them who knoweth aught of these things, unless their minds are perverted with these men’s glosses, and that merely to comply with other opinions wherein the text is no way concerned ; but judge, in their first and last consideration of these words, that they respect Jesus Christ, as to his per-

sonal holiness in this world. And that exposition had need be well confirmed, which is not only contrary to the judgment of all learned men, but also destructive of the common faith of Christians. But as yet, we have nothing beyond crude assertions offered in the proof of it.

2. It is contrary unto, or inconsistent with the sense and use of the words in all good authors, sacred and profane; and contrary unto the application of them unto the Lord Christ in other places of the Scripture, as we shall see immediately.

3. It is contrary to the order of the apostle's words; for he placeth all these properties as qualifications of this person, antecedently unto his exaltation. He was first holy, harmless, undefiled, and then made higher than the heavens. But according to this exposition, his being made higher than the heavens, is the antecedent cause of his being made holy, &c.

4. It is highly false that the blessed state pretended to be here set forth, was antecedently unto his being a priest, and the sacrifice which he offered; yea, such an estate was inconsistent with the oblation of himself. For he offered himself unto God in his blood, Heb. ix. 14, and that with strong cries and tears, ch. v. 7, which were inconsistent with such a state; for it is so described on purpose to be exclusive of every thing required thereunto.

5. Slichtingius pleads, that although all these things were true, with respect unto the life and manners of Christ, yet it was no way unto the purpose of the apostle, to mention them unto the end designed. But, 1. If that be the sense of the words which he contends for, not one of them is true with respect unto the life and manners of Christ in this world, for they all belong unto his blessed estate in the other. 2. We shall see on the next verse, how far he will allow them to be true of the life and manners of Christ in any sense, seeing in some sense he affirms him to have offered sacrifice for his own sins. And this he doth with an express contradiction unto his own main hypothesis. For by sins he understands weakness and infirmities; and whereas he will not allow Christ to have offered himself before his entrance into the holy place, and makes it necessary that he should be antecedently freed from all weaknesses and infirmities, it is the highest contradiction to affirm that he offered for them; seeing he could not offer himself until he was delivered from them. 3. We have only his bare word for it, that the ascription of those things unto our high priest, as inherent qualifications, was not unto the purpose of the apostle. And his assertion is built on a false supposition, namely, that the Lord Christ was not a high priest on the earth, nor did offer himself unto God in his death, which overthrows the foundation of the gospel.

6. The vanity and falsehood of this novel exposition, will yet farther and fully be evinced, in an inquiry into the proper signification of these words as here used by the apostle; every one whereof is wrested to give countenance to it.

1. He is, or was to be, *ὁσιος*, sanctus, 'holy,' that is *קדוש*. For Acts ii. 22, *קדוש*, is rendered *τον ὁσιον σου*, 'thy holy one,' from Ps. xvi. 10. And the Lord Christ is there said to be *ὁσιος* antecedently

to his resurrection; which must be with respect to his internal holiness, 'Thou shalt not suffer thine holy One to see corruption.' And in the New Testament the word is every where used for him that is internally holy, 1 Tim. ii. 8; Tit. i. 8. The Syriac renders it in this place by ܐܬܝܪ, 'pure,' which is an inherent qualification, as it doth, 1 Tim. ii. 8, and Tit. i. 8, by ܐܬܝܪܐ, 'pious, holy,' ὁσιος, saith Hesychius, καθαρος, δικαιος, εὐσεβης, εἰρηνικος, ἅγιος, 'pure, righteous, godly, peaceable, chaste.' So ὁσιως, is used only for 'holily,' 1 Thess. ii. 10, and ὁσιότης, is 'internal holiness,' Luke i. 75; Eph. iv. 24. Nowhere is it used for a merciful disposition, much less for venerable and sacred on the account of an immortal nature, or any other privilege, as it is pretended. Neither is the word used in any other good author, to signify any one but him that is holy and righteous, or free from all sin and wickedness.

It is therefore the holy purity of the nature of Christ that is intended in this expression. His life and actions are expressed in the ensuing epithets. His nature was pure and holy, absolutely free from any spot or taint of our original defilement. Hence as he was conceived in the womb, and as he came from the womb, he was *το ἅγιον*, 'the holy thing' of God, Luke i. 35. All others since the fall have a polluted nature and are originally unholy. But his conception being miraculous, by the immediate operation of the Holy Ghost, and his nature not derived to him by natural generation, the only means of the propagation of original defilement, and as in the first instant of his being, he was filled with all habitual seeds of grace, he was ὁσιος, 'holy.' And such a high priest became us, as was so. Had he had a nature touched with sin, he had not been meet either to be a priest or sacrifice. The holiness of nature was needful to him, who was to answer for the unholiness of our nature, and to take it away. Unholy sinners do stand in need of a holy priest and a holy sacrifice. What we have not in ourselves we must have in him, or we shall not be accepted with the holy God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.

2. He was to be *ακακος*, that is, saith Slichtingius, *omnis mali expers, nullis amplius miseriis obnoxius*, 'incapable of suffering any hurt,' saith another to the same purpose. 1. The word is but once more used in the New Testament, and that in a sense remote enough from one not exposed to misery, or incapable of suffering, Rom. xvi. 18, *ἐξαπατωσι τας καρδιας των ακακων*. Men simple and harmless, who for the most part are exposed to most evils and troubles in the world. 2. It is never used in any good author in such a sense, nor can any instance be produced to that purpose: but it constantly signifies, one innocent, harmless, free from malice, who doth no evil. Nor did any one, before these interpreters, dream of a passive interpretation of this word. It is, 'he who doth no evil,' not he who can suffer no evil. *Κακος*, is *malus*, or *qui dolo malo utitur*, 'an evil malicious person.' *Κακια*, is *vitiositas*, in the judgment of Cicero. 'Virtutis, (saith he,) *contraria est vitiositas, sic enim malo quàm malitiam appellare, quam Græci κακιαν, appellant; nam malitia certi cujusdam vitii nomen est, vitiositas omnium.*' We render it sometimes 'naughti-

ness,' James i. 22, sometimes 'malice' or maliciousness,' 1 Pet. ii. 16 All manner of evil with deceitful guile. Wherefore *ακακος*, is he that is free from all evil, fraud, or sin; the same absolutely with that of the apostle Peter, 1 Pet. ii. 22, 'Who did no sin, neither was there guile found in his mouth.'

'*ὅσιος*, 'holy,' is his epithet with respect to his nature; *ακακος*, 'harmless,' respects his life. The first includes all positive holiness; the other an abnegation of all unholiness. As he was *ὅσιος*, he had not *κακὸν παρακειμενον*, 'sin present,' as we have with us, Rom. vii. 18, 21, or *ἁμαρτιαν ἐνπεριστατον*, 'sin easily besetting,' Heb. xii. 1. As he was *ακακος*, he was free from every effect of such a principle.

And we had need of such a high priest. Had he not been innocent and every way blameless himself, he would have had other work to do, than always to take care of our salvation, as the apostle observes in the next verse. He must first have offered for his own sins, as the high priest did of old, before he had offered for us or ours. And this added to the merit of his obedience. For whereas he was absolutely innocent, harmless, and free from all evil and guile, he was reproached and charged with every thing that is evil; a seducer, a blasphemer, a seditious person, the worst of malefactors. For herein also, as to the suffering part, 'he was made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might become the righteousness of God in him.' And a great encouragement this is to those who suffer in the like kind according to their measure.

3. He was to be *αμωτος*, *cujus felicitas et beatitas nulla vel minima adversitate quasi labe pollui inficique possit*, saith Slichtingius; than which a more vain imagination, or more absurd expression, can be hardly thought on. But it is not for us to charge the apostle with such obscurity, and expressing of his mind in such uncouth terms, never used by any others, nor by himself in any other place, in such a sense or signification: 'unpolluted,' 'undefiled,' that is 'every way happy and blessed, not touched with the defilement of any adversity. But the use of adversity, is to purge and purify. And as that word doth properly signify, undefiled, unpolluted, that is, morally with any sin or evil, so it is not used in the New Testament in any other sense. See Heb. xiii. 4; James i. 27; 1 Pet. i. 4. The inquiry therefore is how this differs from *ακακος*, which contains a negation of all moral evil. Answ. The one is, he did no evil in himself; the other, that he contracted none from any thing else, nor from any persons with whom he conversed. This may fall out sometimes. Hence the prophet in his consternation at the appearance of the glory of God to to him, cried out he was undone, not only because of his own sinful defilements, but because of 'the uncleanness of the people among whom he dwelt,' Isa. vi. 5. And on this ground there was an atonement of old to be made for the holy place and tabernacle. Not that they had any uncleanness of their own, but because of the uncleanness of the people, and their 'remaining among them in the midst of their uncleannesses,' Lev. xvi. 16.

And besides, many things might befall the high priests of old, whereby they might be legally defiled, and so rendered incapable for the

discharge of the office. And for this cause, they always had a second priest in readiness, at the great solemn festivals, especially at the anniversary expiation, that in case any such pollution should befall the high priest, the other might for that time take his place, and discharge his office. So it was with them principally with respect to ceremonials, though immoralities might also defile them, and incapacitate them for their duty. But no such thing was our high priest liable to, either from himself or from converse with others. As he was unconcerned in ceremonials, so in all moral obedience, nothing could affix on him either spot or blemish. And such a high priest became us. For whereas it was his design and work to sanctify and cleanse his church, till it have neither spot nor wrinkle, but be holy and without blemish, as it was, Eph. v. 25, 26; how had he been meet to attempt or effect this work, had not he himself been every way undefiled?

4. He was *κεχωρισμενος απο των αμαρτωλων*, that is, saith Slichtingius, ‘Loco et conditione, ut statim additur, excelsior cœlis factus.’ He is at the bottom of his notions and end of his invention, so that he can find out no sense for this expression, but puts us off to the next words, which are quite of another signification, or express a thing of another nature, and are distinguished from this expression by the conjunction, ‘and separate from sinners,’ that is, saith he, made higher than the heavens. We must therefore inquire after another sense of these words, which readily offers itself to us. ‘Separate from sinners.’ ‘From sins,’ saith the Syriac. But that was sufficiently secured before: from ‘sinners,’ as sinners, and ‘in their sins.’ He was like to us in all things, sin only excepted. We must therefore consider wherein he was, and wherein he was not separate from sinners.

1. He was not separate from them as to community of nature. For ‘God sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh,’ Rom. viii. 3. He sent him in the flesh, for he sent him ‘made of a woman, made under the law,’ Gal. iv. 4, wherein ‘the word was made flesh,’ John i. 14, but he sent him only in the ‘likeness of sinful flesh.’ And that because ‘he made him sin, who knew no sin,’ 2 Cor. v. 21. He took our flesh, that is, our nature on him without sin, yet so as that by reason of the charge of sin, with the consequences thereof, that was on him, ‘he was in the likeness of sinful flesh.’ He was not therefore really separate from sinners as they were flesh, but as they were sinful flesh. He took on him the seed of Abraham, and because the children were partakers of flesh and blood he himself partook also of the same. Without this relation to us, and union with us, in one common nature, whereby ‘he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified, are of one,’ he could not have been a high priest or sacrifice for us. He was not therefore thus separated from sinners, as to be of another nature from them. He took not on him the nature of angels, nor was a mere spirit, but had flesh and bones, as he declared to his disciples. And the same nature he hath still with him in heaven, and in the same will appear at judgment. It is equally destructive to our faith and comforts, to suppose our high priest not separate from us in point of sin, and to be separate from us as to his nature.

2. He was not separated from sinners as to the duties of outward

conversation. He lived not in a wilderness, nor said to the children of men, 'Stand off, I am holier than you.' He conversed freely with all sorts of persons, even publicans and harlots, for which he was reproached by the proud hypocritical Pharisees. His work was to call sinners to repentance, and to set before their eyes an example of holiness. This he could not have done had he withdrawn himself from all communication with them. Yea, he condescended to them beyond the legal austerities of the Baptist, Matt. xi. 18, 19. Hence those who of old, pretending more than ordinary holiness and devotion, did withdraw themselves into wildernesses from the converse of men, did quite forget the example and work of their Master; yea, they did avowedly prefer the example of the Baptist, as they supposed, before that of our Saviour, which sufficiently reflects on his wisdom and holiness. Nor indeed did they in the least express the pattern which they proposed unto themselves for imitation. For although John lived in the wilderness of Judea for the most part, yet was he the voice of one crying in the wilderness. He lived there where it was most convenient for him to discharge his ministry, and preach the word of God. And his austerities in food and raiment, were but to express outwardly the doctrine of repentance, enforced by threats, which he preached. But as these persons forsook the example of Christ and the gospel, to go back unto John and his ministry, so they utterly mistook their pattern, and instead of making their retirement a means and help to discharge the ministry in calling others unto faith and repentance, they made it a covert for their own ignorance and superstition. And for those votaries of the Roman church, who pretend in the foolish imitation of them to fancy a wilderness in the midst of populous cities, there can be no course of life invented more alien from the conduct of natural light, more useless unto the glory of God and the good of the community of mankind, nor more contrary to the example and commands of our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles.

3. He is not said to be separate from sinners, so in state and condition, as kings and potentates are from persons poor and mean; and who therefore, out of a sense of their own meanness, and the others' state and greatness of mind, dare not approach unto them. No, but as he was meek and lowly, and took up his whole converse with the lower sort of the people, the poor of this world; so he did by all ways and means, invite and encourage all sorts of sinners to come unto him.

4. He is not said to be separate from sinners, as though he had been ever in any communion with them, in any thing wherein he was afterwards separated from them. The participle *κεχωρισμενος* hath the sense of an adjective, declaring what is, and not how he came so to be. He was always in such a state and condition, so holy, so harmless, and undefiled, as never to have a concern in any thing, from which he was to be separated.

It appeareth hence plainly wherein it was that he was separate from sinners; namely, in sin, in its nature, causes, and effects. Whatever of that sort he underwent, was upon our account, and not his own. He was every way, in the perfect holiness of his nature and

his life, distinguished from all sinners; not only from the greatest, but from those who ever had the least taint of sin, and who otherwise were most holy. And so it became us that he should be. He that was to be a middle person between God and sinners, was to be separate from those sinners, in that thing, on the account whereof he undertook to stand in their stead.

And these are the properties of the human nature of our high priest, and which were necessary, antecedently unto the discharge of any part or duty of his office.

His present state and condition is in the next place expressed—
'and made higher than the heavens.'

Ὑψηλοτερος γενομενος, 'made higher.' God is called, ὁ ὑψιστος θεος, 'the most high God,' 'God above.' And glory is to be ascribed unto him, ἐν ὑψιστοις, 'in the highest,' Luke ii. 14. And the Lord Christ, in his exaltation, is said to sit down 'at the right hand of the Majesty,' ἐν ὑψηλοις, Heb. i. 3, 'on high.' He was for a season made lower than the angels, made on the earth, and descended into the lower parts of the earth; and that for the discharge of the principal part of his priestly office, namely, the offering of himself for a sacrifice unto God. But he abode not in that state, nor could he discharge his whole office, and all the duties of it therein; and therefore, he was made higher than the heavens. He was not made higher than the heavens, that he might be a priest; but being our high priest, and as our high priest, he was so made, for the discharge of that part of his office which yet remained to be performed; for he was to live for ever to make intercession for us.

Ὑψηλος, as may be seen in the foregoing instances, hath a double signification: 1. Of place. 2. Of state and condition.

1. If it be place that is meant, then by the heavens which he is made above, those aspectable heavens, with all their glory are intended. He is no longer on the earth, but exalted into a throne of majesty above these heavens. So it is said, that he passed through these heavens when he went into the presence of God, ch. iv. 14, 15, and there he abides. For although the heaven of heavens cannot contain him, as unto the immensity of his divine nature; yet as unto his human nature here spoken of, the heavens must receive him, until the time of the restitution of all things, Acts iii. 21. He is in this sense no more on the earth, nor subject unto any of those inconveniences which his abode here below must be exposed unto. Yea, had he always continued here, he could not have been such a high priest as became us, as our apostle declares, ch. viii. 4.

2. Ὑψηλος may respect state and condition, or the glorious state on the right hand of the majesty on high which he is exalted unto. And in this sense, by the heavens, than which Christ is made higher, exalted above, the angels, the sacred inhabitants of those heavenly places, are intended. And this our apostle, in other places, often insists upon as a great manifestation of the glory of Christ; see Eph. i. 21, 22; Phil. ii. 10, 11; Heb. i. 4, ii. 7, 8. I see no reason but that both these may be included in this expression. He was so exalted as to the place of his residence from the earth, above those aspectable heavens,

as withal to be placed in honour, dignity, and power above all the inhabitants of heaven, he only excepted who puts all things under him.

And so we have finished the exposition of these words, with the vindication of the proper meaning of them.

Two ends there are why the apostle gives us such a description of the high priest that became us, or which we stood in need of.

1. To manifest that the Levitical priests were no way qualified for this office, no way meet or able to bring us unto God. Something they did represent, but nothing of themselves they did effect. They all of them came short in every qualification which was necessary unto this end. They were all sinners, and living and dying on the earth, they never attained unto that condition of glory and dignity which was necessary unto the full and final discharge of that office. So he declares his mind to have been expressly in the next verses.

2. To encourage the faith of believers, by evidencing unto them, that whatever was needful in a high priest to bring them to God, and to save them to the utmost, was found in all perfection in Christ Jesus. And we may observe, that,

Obs. II. Although these properties of our high priest are principally to be considered as rendering him meet to be our high priest, yet are they also to be considered as an exemplar and idea of that holiness and innocency which we ought to be conformable unto. If we will give up ourselves to the conduct of this high priest, if by him alone we design to approach unto God; conformity unto him in holiness of nature and life, according to our measure, is indispensably required of us. None can more dishonour the Lord Christ, nor more perniciously deceive and betray their own souls, than by professing him to be their priest, with their trust thereby to be saved by him, and yet not endeavour to be holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, like unto him.

Obs. III. Seeing all these properties were required unto Christ, and in him, that he might be our high priest, he was all that he is here said to be for us, and for our sakes; and benefit from them doth redound unto us. For seeing he was a priest for us, all that he was that he might be a priest, was for us also. Such a high priest became us, and such a high priest we have.

Obs. IV. The infinite grace and wisdom of God, are always to be admired by us in providing such a high priest as was every way meet for us, with respect unto the great end of his office, namely, the bringing of us unto himself.

Obs. V. The dignity, duty, and safety of the gospel church, depend solely on the nature, the qualifications, and the exaltation of our high priest. Or our high priest every way answering the mind, the holiness, and wisdom of God; and being fit to supply all our necessities, in our whole state and condition; the work of our salvation is absolutely secured in his hand. The great design of the gospel is to satisfy believers herein. And God would have it so, that he might provide not only for our future salvation, but for our present consolation also.

Obs. VI. If such a high priest became us, was needful unto us, for the establishment of the new covenant, and the communication of the

grace thereof unto the church, then all persons, Christ alone excepted, are absolutely excluded from all interest in this priesthood. He that takes upon himself to be a priest under the gospel, must be holy harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, that is, absolutely so; or he is an impostor, who endeavours to deceive the souls of men.

Obs. VII. If, therefore, we consider aright what it is that we stand in need of, and what God hath provided for us, that we may be brought unto him in his glory, we shall find it our wisdom to forego all other expectations, and to betake ourselves unto Christ alone.

VER. 27, 28.—‘Ὁς οὐκ ἐχει καθ’ ἡμέραν ἀναγκὴν, ὥσπερ οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς, πρῶτον ὑπὲρ τῶν ἰδίων ἁμαρτιῶν θυσίας ἀναφέρειν, ἐπεὶ τῶν τοῦ λαοῦ· τούτο γὰρ ἐποίησεν ἐφάπαξ, ἑαυτὸν ἀνενεγκας. Ὁ νομος γὰρ ἀνθρώπους καθιστήσιν ἀρχιερεῖς, ἐχοντας ἀσθενεῖαν· ὁ λόγος δὲ τῆς ὀρκωμοσίας τῆς μετὰ τὸν νομὸν, υἱὸν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τετελειωμένον.

The words used in this context have been opened in several places before. And in one thing only is there any material difference among the translators of them. And this is in those words, *τῆς μετὰ τὸν νομὸν*. For the Syriac reads them *ܒܬܪ ܢܡܘܨܐ*, rendering the article in the masculine gender, ‘who was after the law;’ and so doth the Vulgar Latin also, *qui post legem est*, referring unto *λόγος*, as the antecedent, and not *ὀρκωμοσίας*. And Erasmus renders *μετὰ τὸν νομὸν* by *supra legem*, ‘above the law’ But others think, and that rightly, that *μετὰ*, with an accusative case, is never to be rendered by *supra*, or ‘above.’

VER. 27, 28.—*Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for their own sins, and then for the people’s, for this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests, which have infirmity, but the word of the oath, which was since the law, the Son who is perfected for evermore.*

As these verses contain other instances of the preeminence of our high priest above those of the order of Aaron; so all those mentioned in the former of them, do depend directly on, and flow from the qualifications and endowments of his person expressed in that foregoing. For, whereas he is such a one as is there described, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens, for such a one alone became us, he was above and freed from all those things and services which the Levitical priests were obliged unto, for want of these qualifications. For all the things ascribed, ver. 27, to them, and denied concerning him, were all effects of the weakness and imperfection of their persons and their services, which he, as unto his person, was absolutely exempt and free from, so that he had no need to do as they did. And this being declared, the whole matter, with the fundamental reason of all the differences insisted on, is summarily expressed, ver. 28, as we shall see in the exposition of the words.

‘Who needeth not daily.’ The words are a negation as they re-

spect our high priest, and include an affirmation with respect unto the priests of the law, both in sundry instances. And the design of them is to exclude all those imperfections from him, which they were subject unto. And we may observe in the words,

1st. The manner of the negation, *οὐκ ἔχει ἀνάγκην*, 'he needeth not,' 'it is not necessary for him.' The things expressed were not such as those priests might do, or omit, as they saw occasion; but they were necessarily obliged unto them. And the necessity the apostle intends, was not only that which arose from God's institution, who appointed them to offer daily, first for themselves, and then for the people, but that also which arose from their own state and condition, and from the nature of the sacrifices that they offered. For themselves being weak, infirm, and sinful, and their offerings being only of earthly things that could never perfectly expiate sin, these things were necessary for them, and so God had ordained. Wherefore there are three grounds or reasons of the necessity here ascribed unto these priests.

1. God had appointed them so to do. This comes first to view, although there be another reason even of this appointment. And God taught hereby both them and the church, their utter incapacity to effect the work committed unto them, at once, whereon they were to multiply their oblations.

2. The nature of the offerings and sacrifices which they offered, did make the manner of it here expressed, necessary unto them. For they were such as could not attain the end of expiating sin, but only could represent that which did so; and therefore, the repetition of them was needful, because their principal use was to be instructive only. Things that are really efficient themselves, may at once produce and perfect their effects; but those which are instructive only, must be reiterated.

3. This necessity arose from their own state before God, and the state of the people. For they themselves often sinned, and having no other to offer for them, it was necessary that they should often offer for themselves. And so it was with the people also. They sinned still, and still must be offered for. After one offering, their sins again increased on them, and made another necessary.

From all these considerations, our high priest was absolutely exempted; and that on a twofold account. 1. Of his person, which being holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, he needed not offer for himself. 2. Of his offering, which being at once perfectly expiatory of the sins of the people, needed not to be repeated. And on these grounds, God also had appointed that he should offer himself only once for all.

2dly. The second thing in these words, is the declaration of them that lay under this necessity which our high priest was not liable unto, *ὡσπερ οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς*, 'as high priests,' that is, those high priests of the law, concerning whom he had treated. So we well render the words, 'as those high priests,' in like manner as they were, or as they had need. For the apostle, with respect unto the Levitical priesthood, carrieth on the comparison between Christ and them, especially in the instance of the high priests, and the discharge of their office; for they

were the head of the priesthood, and the glory of the church of Israel. Howbeit, all other priests employed in the holy offerings and sacrifices of the people, are included herein. And it is apparent, that, if the priesthood of Christ doth so far excel that office in the high priests of the Old Testament, it must needs excel it in those of a subordinate order or degree. All these priests had need to offer in the manner here expressed.

3rdly. A threefold difference is intimated between our high priest and them. As,

1. In the frequency of their offerings, they were to offer daily, which also includes the order of their offering, first for themselves, and then for the people. Whereas he offered once only.

2. It is supposed they offered the sacrifices appointed by the law, which were of brute creatures only, whence their insufficiency and frequent repetition did proceed, as declared, ch. x. 1—3, 'He offered himself.'

3. In the cause of their offerings; they 'offered for their own sins,' but he had none of his own to offer for.

Now, all the things here ascribed unto the Levitical priests, are weaknesses and imperfections in their office. And hereby the main position of the apostle, and which was destructive of the whole fabric of Mosaical worship, namely, that the law whereby they were constituted made nothing perfect, was abundantly confirmed. For the greatest effect of that law was the constitution of this priesthood. And what perfection can be expected by such a priesthood, where the priests were obliged continually to offer for their own sins? No sooner was one offering past, but they were providing matter, making another necessary. And so it was with respect unto the sins of the people. And what perfection could be comprised in an everlasting rotation of sins and sacrifices? Is it not manifest, that this priesthood and these sacrifices, could never of themselves expiate sin, nor make perfect them that came to God by them? Their instructive use was excellent: they both directed faith to look unto the great future high priest and sacrifice, and established it, in that they were pledges given of God in assurance thereof. The eye of them all was a continual guidance unto the church, to look unto him who alone was to make atonement for sin, and bring in everlasting righteousness. Howbeit, they were of that nature, and were so ordained of God, that they should never give perfect ease and peace unto them that were exercised in them. Some relief they found in them, but complete peace they did not afford. Nor can any thing do so, that is often to be repeated. The frequent repetitions of the sacrifices of the mass in the church of Rome, doth sufficiently manifest that there is no solid abiding peace with God in that church. For this is not to be attained by any thing that must be frequently repeated. So our apostle affirms expressly that if the sacrifices of the law could have made perfect them that came to God by them, or given them perfect peace with God, they would have ceased to have been offered. And so it would be with the sacrifice of the mass. Only by the one offering of Christ, they are perfected as to peace with God, for whom he offered. And it gave

great evidence unto their instructive efficacy, that in themselves they were so weak, so imperfect, and ineffectual.

It was therefore unbelief, heightened unto obstinacy, which caused the Hebrews to refuse this high priest and sacrifice when exhibited of God, whereas before they could never attain unto peace firm and stable. But love of carnal worship, and adherence unto self-righteousness, are inseparable companions.

Obs. I. God requireth our faith and obedience in and unto nothing, but what is, as absolutely needful for us, so highly reasonable unto the minds of them that are enlightened.—Such was this priesthood of Christ, now proposed unto the faith of the church, in comparison of what was before enjoyed.

4thly. There is in the words the time and season of the performance of what is here ascribed unto these high priests, as necessary for them. They were to do it, *καθ' ἡμέραν*, 'daily;' that is, so often as occasion required, according to the law. For there is no reason to confine the apostle's intention unto the annual expiatory sacrifice only; as though *καθ' ἡμέραν* were the same with *κατ' ἐνιαυτον*, Heb. x. 1, 'daily' as much as 'yearly.' It is true, that in that sacrifice the high priest offered first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. But *προτερον*, here used, doth not express that order, as we shall see. Nor is it the *חֹמֶד*, or daily sacrifice alone, that is intended, though that be included also; for that jube sacrificium had respect unto the sins of the whole church, both priests and people. As we are obliged to pray for the pardon of sin every day, by virtue of that sacrifice which is *προσφατος και ζωσα*, 'new and living' in its efficacy continually, and as occasion did require. And so there was an obligation on the priest to offer for himself a sin-offering, as often as he sinned according to the sins of the people, Lev. iv. 3, 'If the priest that is anointed (that is, the high priest) do sin according unto the sin of the people, then let him bring for his sin which he hath sinned, a young bullock without blemish, unto the Lord for a sin-offering.' And unto this institution the apostle here hath respect.

5thly. What they were thus obliged unto, is declared; *θυσιας αναφερειν ὑπερ ἁμαρτιων*, 'to offer sacrifices for sins.' All propitiatory and expiatory sacrifices are intended. But possibly a principal regard is had unto the great anniversary sacrifice, in the feast of expiation, Lev. xvi. For although the apostle mentions *θυσιας*, 'sacrifices' in the plural number, and that was but one; yet because of the repetition of it, it being offered year by year continually, as he speaks, Heb. x. 1, it may be signified hereby. And those sacrifices were *ὑπερ ἁμαρτιων*. And in answer unto them, our Lord Jesus Christ offered himself a sacrifice for sin. And this is expressed by *περι ἁμαρτιας*, 'for sin' only, without the mention of sacrifice, Rom. viii. 3. For because *חַמַּח* signifies both the sin and the sacrifice for it, as the verb *חָמַח* signifies in one conjugation to sin, and in another to expiate sin, the sacrifice itself is expressed by *περι ἁμαρτιας*, 'for sin.'

6thly. The order of these sacrifices is expressed by *προτερον* and *επειτα*, 'first' and 'then.' 'First for his own sins, and then for those of the people.' Either the whole discharge of the office of the high

priests may be intended in this order, or that which was peculiar unto the feast of expiation. For he was in general to take care in the first place about offering for his own sins according to the law, Lev. iv. For if that were not done in due order, if their own legal guilt were not expiated in its proper season according to the law, they were no way meet to offer for the sins of the congregation, yea they exposed themselves unto the penalty of excision. And this order was necessary, seeing the law appointed men to be priests who had infirmities of their own, as is expressed in the next verse. Or the order intended may respect, in an especial manner, the form and process prescribed in the solemn anniversary sacrifice at the feast of expiation, Lev. xvi. First. He was to offer a sin-offering for himself and his house, and then for the people, both on the same day.

1. Ὑπερ τῶν ἰδίων ἁμαρτιῶν, 'for his own sins;' and this upon a double account. First. Because he was really a sinner, as the rest of the people were. 'If he do sin according to the sin of the people,' Lev. iv. 3. Secondly. That upon the expiation of his own sins in the first place, he might be the more meet to represent him who had no sin. And therefore he was not to offer for himself in the offering that he made for the people, but stood therein as a sinless person, as our high priest was really to be.

2. For the sins of the people; τῶν τοῦ λαοῦ, that is, for the whole congregation of Israel; according to the law, Lev. xvi. 21.

This was the duty, the order and method of the high priests of old in their offerings and sacred services. This, their weaknesses, infirmities and sins, as also the sacrifices which they offered, did require. All that could be learned from it was, that some more excellent priest and sacrifice was to be introduced. For no perfection, no consummation in divine favour, no settled peace of conscience, could in this way be obtained; all things openly declared that so they could not be. And hence have we an evidence of what is affirmed, John i. 17, 'The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.' And the privilege or advancement of the church in its deliverance from those various, multiplied, obscure means of instruction, into the glorious light of the way and causes of our adoption, justification, and salvation, is inexpressibly great and full of grace. No longer are we now obliged to a rigid observance of those things which did not effect what they did represent. An increase in thankfulness, fruitfulness, and holiness, cannot but be expected from us.

These are the things that are here denied of our high priest: he had no need to offer sacrifice in this way, order, and method. The offering of sacrifice is not denied, that is, sacrifice for the sins of the people; yea, it is positively asserted in the next words: but that he offered daily many sacrifices, or any for himself, or had need so to do, this is denied by the apostle. That alone which he did is asserted in the remaining words of the verse; 'for this he did once when he offered himself.'

And two things are in the words, 1. What he did in general; 2. In particular, how he did it.

For the first, it is said, τοῦτο γὰρ ἐποίησεν, 'this he did.' Τοῦτο re-

fers unto one clause of the antecedent, namely, offering for the sins of the people. This he did once, when he offered himself; for himself he did not offer.

But contrary unto the sense of the whole church of God, contrary to the analogy of faith, and with no small danger in the expression, Socinus first affirmed that the Lord Christ offered also for himself or his own sins. And he is followed herein by those of his own sect, as Slichtingius on this place; and so he is also by Grotius and Hammond, which is the channel whereby many of his notions and conceptions are derived unto us. It is true, that both he and they do acknowledge, that the Lord Christ had no sins of his own properly so called; that is, transgressions of the law; but his infirmities, say some of them, whereby he was exposed unto death; his sufferings, say others, are called his sins.

But nothing can be more abhorrent from truth and piety than this assertion. For,

1. If this be so, then the apostle expressly in terms affirms, that Christ offered for his own sins, and that distinctly from the sins of the people. And from this blasphemy we are left to relieve ourselves by an interpretation that the Scripture nowhere gives countenance unto; namely, that by sins, infirmities or miseries are intended. It is true that infirmity, *ασθενεια*, doth sometimes signify sin, or obnoxiousness unto sin; but sin doth nowhere signify natural infirmities, but moral evils always. It is true Christ was made sin; but where it is said so, it is also added, that it was for us; and, to take off all apprehensions of any thing in him that might be so called, 'that he knew no sin.' He was made sin for us, when he offered for the sins of the people. And other distinct offering for himself he offered none. And therefore in sundry places, where mention is made of his offering himself, it is still observed, that he did no sin, but was as a lamb without spot and blemish. Let therefore men put what interpretation they please on their own words, (for they are not the words of the apostle, that Christ offered himself for his own sins,) the language is and must be offensive unto every holy heart, and hath an open appearance of express contradiction unto many other testimonies of the Scripture.

2. The sole reason pretended to give countenance unto this absurd assertion is, that, *τοῦτο*, 'this,' must answer to the whole preceding proposition, which is its antecedent. Now therein is mention of the priests offering, first for their own sins, then for the sins of the people; and this it is said Christ did, that is, he offered first for his own sins, and then for the people. But to answer the whole antecedent in both parts of it, it is indispensably necessary, that he must, as they did, offer two distinct offerings, one, namely the 'first,' for himself, and the other, or 'then,' for the people. For so did they, so were they obliged to do by the law, and other offerings for themselves and the people, in any other order or method, there never was nor could be. But this is expressly contradictory unto what is here affirmed of the Lord Christ and his offering; namely, that he offered himself once only, and if but once, he could not offer first for himself, then for the people; nor at all for himself and

them in the same offering, which the high priests themselves could not do.

3. This insinuation not only enervates, but is contradictory unto the principal design of the apostle in the verse foregoing and in that which follows. For, ver. 26, he on purpose describes our high priest by such properties and qualifications as might evidence him to have no need to offer for his own sins, as those other priests had. For from this consideration, that he was holy harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, the apostle makes this inference, that he needed not to offer for himself as those high priests did. But according unto this interpretation, no such thing ensues thereon; but notwithstanding all those qualifications, he had need to offer for his own sins. And ver. 28, the difference he puts between him and them is this, that they were men subject to infirmities, but he is the Son consecrated for ever; which apparently exempts him from any necessity of offering for himself. For as is apparent from the antithesis, he was not subject unto any of those infirmities which made it necessary unto them to offer for themselves. Wherefore the whole design of the apostle in these verses is utterly perverted and overthrown by this interpretation.

4. When those priests offered for their own sins, their sins were of the same nature with the sins of the people. 'If the priest that is anointed, shall sin after the manner of the people.' Lev. iv. 3. If therefore this be to be repeated *ἐκ του κοινου*, 'this he did when he offered for his own sins and of the people,' sins being only expressed in the first place and understood in the latter, sins properly so called must be intended, which is the height of blasphemy.

5. If the Lord Christ offered for himself or his own infirmities, then those infirmities were such as were obstructions and hinderances to his offering for others; for that is the only reason why he should offer for their removal or taking away. But this is so far otherwise, as that indeed he was obnoxious to no infirmity, but what was necessary that he might be a meet high priest and sacrifice for us. For so was every thing that is inseparable from human nature; which is utterly destructive of this figment.

6. This imagination will admit of no tolerable sense in its exposition or application. For how can we conceive that the Lord Christ offered for his own infirmities, that is, his sorrows, sufferings, and obnoxiousness to death? It must be by his sufferings and death, for in and by them he offered himself to God. But this is absurd and foolish: by his suffering he offered for his sufferings. What he offered for, he took away, as he did the sins of the people. But his own sorrows and sufferings he took not away, but underwent them all.

7. It is contradictory unto the principal maxim of the Socinians with respect unto the priesthood of Christ. For they maintain, that his one perfect offering or expiatory sacrifice, was in heaven only, and not on the earth. But he could not, at his appearance in the holy place, offer for his own infirmities and miseries, for they were all past and finished, himself being exalted in immortality and glory.

These things are sufficient to repress the vanity of this figment. But because there is no small danger in the proposal that hath been

made of it, I shall briefly examine what reasons its authors and promoters do produce to give countenance to it.

Thus proceeds and argues Crellius or Slichtingius on the place:—
‘Peccata proprie dicta, id est, divinaram legum transgressionem, cum in Christo locum non habeant ullum, 1. Necesse est ut in voce peccatorum sit improprietas, significanturque Christi infirmitates et perpersiones, 2. Qua de re jam egimus, cap. v. ver. 2, 3. 3. Sic vidimus istarum infirmitatum et perpersionum contraria, sanctitatis et innocentie nomine paulo ante versu superiore describi; qui duo versiculi mutuo se illustrent: (seipsum offerens.) 4. Docet quando Christus pro se obtulerit, preces nimirum et supplicationes, ut, cap. v. ver. 7, vidimus: tunc nempe cum in eo esset, ut seipsum Deo offerret, cum sese ad oblationem sui ipsius accingeret, hoc est, cum tanquam victima mactaretur. 5. Oblatio enim Christi sic hoc loco extendenda est ut mortem ipsius tanquam necessarium antecedens, et quoddam veluti initium complectatur. 6. Cum vero hic versiculus ex superiori commate pendeat et inferatur, vel hinc apparet, non agi isthic de moribus, sed de natura, deque felici statu ac conditione nostri pontificis. Nec enim ideo Christus opus non habet amplius pro se offerre, quod sanctus sit et inculpatus, ratione morum seu actionum suarum, cum semper talis fuerit; sed quod in perpetuum ab omnibus malis et afflictionibus sit liberatus.’

I have transcribed his words at large, because what is offered by others unto the same purpose, is all included in them. But the whole of it will be easily removed. For,

1. The impropriety of speech pretended, that sins should be put for infirmities, is that which the use of the Scripture will give no countenance unto. It is only feigned by these men at their pleasure. Let them, if they can, produce any one place, where by sins, not moral evils, but natural infirmities are intended. But by feigning improprieties of speech at our pleasure, we may wrest and pervert the Scripture, even also as we please.

2. Of the infirmities of the human nature of Christ, which were necessary that he might be a sacrifice, and useful unto his being a priest, we have also treated in the place quoted, Heb. v. 2, 3, whereunto the reader is referred.

3. Not the contrary unto these infirmities, but the contrary unto sin original and actual, is intended by holiness and innocency in the verse foregoing, as hath been proved in the exposition of that verse, whereunto the reader is referred.

4. The Lord Christ offered up prayers and supplications to God, when he offered himself: not to expiate his own infirmities by his offering, but that he might be carried through and supported in his oblation which he offered for the sins of the people, and had success therein. See the exposition on ch. v. 7.

5. He is more kind than ordinary in extending the oblation of Christ unto his death also. But he recalls his grant, affirming that he did only prepare himself for his offering thereby. And this also casts his whole exposition into much confusion. Christ offered himself once, saith the apostle, *εφάπαξ*, ‘once,’ and at ‘one time.’ This, I suppose,

is agreed. Then he offered for himself and his own sins, or not at all. For he offered but once, and at one time; where, then, did he thus offer himself, and when? In heaven upon his ascension, say the Socinians with one accord. Where, then, and when did he offer for himself? On the earth. Then he offered himself twice? No, by no means, he offered not himself on the earth; how, then, did he offer for himself on the earth? he did not indeed offer himself on the earth, but he prepared himself for his offering on the earth, and therein he offered for himself; that is, he did, and he did not offer himself upon the earth. For they cannot evade by saying that he did it when he offered up prayers on the earth; for the apostle says expressly in this place, that what he did, he did it when he offered himself. And it must be by such an offering as answered the offering of the high priest for himself, which was bloody.

6. The close of this discourse, whereby he would prove the truth of his exposition of the verse foregoing, from his interpretation of this, is absurd; as that which would give countenance unto an evident falsehood, from what is more evidently so.

Grotius adds little unto what Slichtingius offers in this case. Only he tells that *ἀναγρία* is taken for those griefs which are commonly the punishment of sin; Rom. vi. 10. But it is a mistake; *ἀναγρία*, in that place, signifies nothing but the guilt of sin, which Christ died to expiate and take away. He died once for sin, that is, he suffered once for sin. He says, moreover, that profluvium mulierum is called *דומא*, Lev. xii. 8, xv. 13, as also is the leprosy, ch. xiv. 13. But herein also he is mistaken; both the one and the other subject unto those defiling distempers, were appointed to offer a sin-offering for those sins, which those defilements were tokens of, and the sin of nature which they proceed from. Again he says, that Christ in his offering was freed from those infirmities and miseries, *per mortem acceleratam*. But his death was not hastened one moment until all was finished; nor did he offer for the hastening of his death. And his ensuing words are most ambiguous; Christ offered, *pro doloribus istis qui solent peccatorum pœnæ esse, et quos Christus occasione etiam peccatorum humani generis toleravit*. If the sorrows intended, were not true punishments of sin, they could not be offered for. And what sorrows Christ underwent so far as they were penal, he offered for them when he offered for the sins of the people, and not otherwise. But those which are called his own sins, must be every way distinct from the sins of the people, and have no relation unto them; as the sins of the high priests of old had not. Wherefore, if by the occasion of the sins of men, he intend, that his sufferings and griefs were for the sins of men, then he offered for them when he offered for the sins of the people, when he bare our sins and sorrows, and had no need to offer distinctly for them as his own. And if it were a sorrow that was not for sin, it cannot be called sin. Christ's sufferings on the occasion of the sins of mankind, are well understood by those who are any way skilled in the Socinian mysteries.

Hammond says the same:—‘He both,’ saith he, ‘offered for himself, that is, made expiation, as it were, (not to deliver himself from sin, for

he was never guilty of any,) but from the infirmities assumed by him, but especially from death itself; and so is now never likely to die; and to determine his Melchisedecian priesthood.' *Ans.* 1. To make expiation, as it were, from the infirmities assumed by him, or to be delivered from them, is hard to be understood. 2. Much more is it, how by death, wherein he offered himself, he should make expiation to be delivered from death itself. 3. And it is as hard to say, that Christ offered for himself once by death, that he might die no more, seeing it is appointed unto all men only once to die.

I have digressed thus far, to crush this novel invention, which, as it is untrue and alien from the sense of the apostle, so it hath, in the expression of it, an ungrateful sound of impiety. But I expect not so much sobriety, as that considering the means of its conveyance unto the minds of men at present, it should not be vented again, until what hath been here pleaded in its confutation, be answered. At present, I shall proceed with the exposition of the remainder of the words.

How, and what Christ offered for the sins of the people, is declared in the words remaining.

1. For the way or manner of it. He did it *εφαπαξ*, 'once only.' This is directly opposed unto the frequency of the legal sacrifices repeated daily, as there was occasion. Those high priests offered *καθ' ἡμέραν*, 'daily,' on all occasions; he, *εφαπαξ*, 'once only.'

And I cannot but observe by the way, that this assertion of the apostle is no less absolutely exclusive of the Missatical sacrifices of the priests of the Roman church, than it is of the Levitical sacrifices of the high priest of the church of the Jews. Their expositors on this place, do generally affirm in plea for their church, that they offer it not to make expiation of sins, but only to represent and make application of the one sacrifice of Christ on the cross. But in their mass itself, they speak otherwise, and expressly offer it to God a sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead. Neither yet do we inquire unto what end they do what they do; and this is all they say, that they offer the same sacrifice that Christ did, that is, himself. And this they do a thousand times more frequently than the expiatory sacrifices were among the Jews. Neither were their sacrifices offered properly, by God's appointment, to make atonement for sin by their own virtue and efficacy; but only to be a representation and application of the sacrifice of Christ to come. Whatever ends they therefore fancy unto themselves, by pretending to offer the same sacrifice that Christ did, they contradict the words of the apostle, and wholly evert the force of his argument. For if the same sacrifice which the Lord Christ offered, be often offered, and had need so to be, the whole argument to prove the excellency of his priesthood in that he offered himself but once, above them who often offered the same sacrifices, falls to the ground.

And hence, also, the foundation of this fiction is razed. For it is, that the Lord Christ offered himself at the supper the night before he was betrayed, as the Trent council affirms, Sess. xxii. Cap. 1. For if he did so, he offered himself more than once,—twice at least; which, being a matter of fact, is to give the apostle the lie.

2. What he offered is expressed in the last place, and therein the reason is contained why he offered but once, and needed not to do so daily, as those priests did. And this is taken from the excellency of his offering, he offered *εαυτον*, 'himself.' And this gives the highest preference of the priesthood of Christ above that of Levi. For, 1. Those priests had nothing of their own to offer, but must be furnished with offerings from among the other creatures. 2. Though they had the best from them, the blood and fat, yet it was but the blood of calves, and sheep, and goats. And what can this do for the real expiating of the sins of our souls? See Micah vi. 6—8. Wherefore, when at any time the people were brought under any serious conviction of sin, they could not but apprehend, that none of these sacrifices, however multiplied, could deliver them from their guilt. But the Lord Christ had something of his own to offer, that which was originally and absolutely his own, not borrowed or taken from any thing among the creatures. And this was himself, a sacrifice able to make atonement for all the sins of mankind. And from the words thus expounded, we may observe,

Obs. I. That no sinful man was meet to offer the great expiatory sacrifice for the church; much less is any sinful man fit to offer Christ himself. As the first part of this assertion declares the insufficiency of the priests of the church of the Jews, so doth the latter the vain pretence of the priests of the church of Rome. The former the apostle proves and confirms expressly. For no other high priest but such a one as was in himself perfectly sinless, did become us, or our state and condition. He that was otherwise could not have any thing of his own to offer, and must in the first place offer for himself, and this he must be doing day by day. And the latter on many accounts is a vile presumptuous imagination. For a poor sinful worm of the earth, to interpose himself between God and Christ, and offer the one in sacrifice to the other, what an issue is it of pride and folly!

Obs. II. The excellency of Christ's person and priesthood freed him in his offering from many things that the Levitical priesthood was obliged unto. And the due apprehension hereof is a great guide to us in the consideration of those types. For many things we shall meet withal which we cannot see how they had a particular accomplishment in Christ, nor find out what they did prefigure. But all of them were such that their own infirm state and condition did require. Such was their outward call and consecration which they had by the law, in the sacrifice of beasts, with certain washings and unctions, their sacrificing often, and for themselves, their succession one to another, their purifications or legal pollutions. These, and sundry things of like nature, were made necessary to them from their own sins and infirmities, and so had no particular accomplishment in Christ. However, in general all the ordinances and institutions about them all, taught the church thus much, that nothing of that was to be found in the true high priest wherein they were defective.

Obs. III. No sacrifice could bring us to God, and save the church to the utmost, but that wherein the Son of God himself was both priest and offering. Such a high priest became us who offered him-

self once for all. And we may consider, 1. That this was one of the greatest effects of infinite divine wisdom and grace. His incarnation, wherein he had a body prepared for him for this purpose, his call to his office by the oath of the Father and unction of the Spirit, his sanctifying himself to be a sacrifice, and his offering up himself through the eternal Spirit to God, are all full of mysterious wisdom and grace. All these wonders of wisdom and love, were necessary to this great end of bringing us to God. 2. Every part of this transaction, all that belongs to this sacrifice, is filled up with perfection, that no more could be required on the part of God, nor is any thing wanting to give countenance to our unbelief. The person of the priest, and the offering itself, are both the same, both the Son of God. One view of the glory of this mystery, how satisfactory is it to the souls of believers! 3. A distinct consideration of the person of the priest and of his sacrifice, will evidence this truth to the faith of believers. What could not this priest prevail for in his interposition on our behalf? Must he not needs be absolutely prevalent in all he aims at? Were our cause intrusted in any other hand, what security could we have that it should not miscarry? And what could not this offering make atonement for? What sin, or whose sins could it not expiate? ‘Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world.’

Obs. IV. It was burdensome and heavy work to attain relief against sin, and settled peace of conscience, under the old priesthood, attended with so many weaknesses and infirmities.—Herein lies the greatest part of that yoke which the apostle Peter affirms that ‘neither they nor their fathers were able to bear,’ Acts xv. 10. Which the Lord Christ gives us deliverance from, Matt. xi. 27—30.

VER. 28—*For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.*

The apostle in this verse summeth up the whole of his precedent discourse, so as to evidence the true and proper foundation, which all along he hath built and proceeded on. 1. One principle there was agreed on between him and the Hebrews who adhered to Mosaic institutions; and this was, that a high priest over the church there must be; and without such a one there is no approach to God. So it was under the law, and if the same order be not continued, the church must needs fall under a great disadvantage. To lose the high priest out of our religion, is to lose the sun out of the firmament of the church. This was a common principle agreed on between them, whereon the apostle doth proceed.

2. He grants to them, that the high priests who officiated in the tabernacle and the temple, were called and appointed by God to their office, in the law.

3. Hereon ensued the main difference between him and them. They were persuaded and hoped that these priests should continue for ever in the church without change or alteration. He contends that there was a time designed, wherein they were to be removed, and a priest of

another order to be introduced in their room; which would be so far from being any disadvantage to the church, as that the whole safety, glory, and blessedness thereof did depend thereon. And this he proves by many cogent and irrefragable arguments to them. As,

1. That before the erection of the Levitical priesthood by the law, there was another priest of the High God, who was far greater and more excellent than those priests, yea, than Abraham himself, from whom they derived all their privileges.

2. Because after the giving of the law, and the setting up of the Levitical priesthood thereby, God again promiseth to raise up another priest, in another kind, after another order, after the manner of him who was called to that office long before the giving of the law. Wherefore he was prefigured before the law, and promised after the law, so that his introduction could not be prejudiced by the law.

3. That this high priest thus promised, neither was to be, nor could be, of the same stock, nature, or order with the Levitical priests, but one that was not only distinct from them, but really inconsistent with them. He manifests that there was no possibility they should be priests together, or that the church should be under the conduct of them both.

4. Whereas hereon it may be said, who knows whether this change and alteration will be to the advantage of the church or not? whether it were not better to adhere to those priests which we have already, than, relinquishing them, and all benefits by them, to betake ourselves to this new high priest? The apostle, in answer to this possible objection declares in sundry instances the excellency of this other priest above them. And not only so, but he proves undeniably, that by all which those other priests did perform in divine service, and by all that the law could effect, whereby they were constituted and made priests, there was no access to God, no perfection, nor consummation in peace of conscience to be obtained. For there were so many defects and weaknesses that accompanied them and their services, as rendered them wholly unable to attain those great ends. On the other hand, he manifesteth and proveth, that by this one single high priest now introduced, and his one sacrifice offered once for all, by reason of the perfection of the one and the other, all those blessed ends were completely accomplished.

This being the design of the apostle's discourse in this chapter, he giveth us a summary of the whole, and of the principal grounds which he proceeds upon, with wonderful brevity in this last verse. For upon an acknowledgment of the different principles mentioned, he shows us in an elegant antithesis,

1. The different means of the constitution of these different priests; on the one hand, the law; and on the other, the word of the oath.

2. The different times of their constitution; the one in the giving of the law, the other after the law.

3. The difference of their persons; those of the first sort were men, and no more; the other was the Son.

4. The difference in their state and condition; the former had infirmities, the latter is consecrated for ever.

5. This also is included in the words, that those of the first sort were many, men that had infirmities; he of the latter was one only. And in these things, as we shall briefly see, are the springs of all the arguments which the apostle hath used in this case, and a plain representation is given us of the truth he contended for.

1st. The first difference is in the constituting principles of these distinct offices. That on the part of the Levitical priesthood was *ὁ νομος*, 'the law,' that is, the ceremonial law as we call it; the law given in Horeb, concerning religious rites, the way and manner of the solemn worship of God in the tabernacle. It was not the moral law, not immediately the commands of the Decalogue, but the especial law of divine service and worship, that is intended.

And what doth the law do? *Καθίστησι*, 'It appointeth.' It did so morally, God appointed them in and by the law. And he speaks in the present tense. So long as the law continueth in force and efficacy it appointeth such priests. None other are to be looked for in, or expected from the law. Now a moral rule or institution is sufficient to convey power and authority of office unto men. So is it under the New Testament. - It is the gospel that makes ministers, and not the people, or any others, who have no power but only to act in obedience to the laws thereof. Hereby those other priests came so to be.

Hereunto is opposed, *λογος της ὑρκωμοσιας*, 'the word of the oath,' as the constituting cause of this new priest and priesthood. Thus much it had in common with the other way. It was a word, as that was also. The law was *λογος λαληθεις δι' αγγελων*, 'the word spoken by angels,' ch. ii. 2.—the word of God, though spoken by them. And a word in this sense is either a mere word of command, or a word of promise; either of which is sufficient to constitute an office, being declarations of the authority of God himself. By this word was both the office of the priesthood of Christ consecrated, and himself called to be a priest. See the exposition on ch. v. 5, 6. But herein especially did this word excel the word of the law, in that it was confirmed by the oath of God. It was the word, the will, the promise of God declared in and by his oath. And herein hath it many advantages above the law, which was not so. As,

1. A high federal solemnity. Things confirmed by an oath are peculiarly sacred, and are distinguished from all things that are not so; and therefore the interposition of an oath was originally, it may be solely, used in the confirmation of covenants about things of moment, and wherein several parties were highly concerned.

2. An oath declares the immutability of that counsel whence the matter sworn unto doth proceed. In the giving of the law, God declared his will, so far as to what he would have the people at present obliged unto. But he did not by any means declare, that he had in his unchangeable counsel determined that the kind of worship, and state of the church then erected, should continue for ever. Yea, he did many ways intimate that he did reserve unto himself the power of altering the whole. But now the immutability of God's counsel is declared by his oath. What was this oath of God, and how the Lord Christ was made a priest thereby, hath been before at large declared.

The apostle takes notice of it here only as it was given out in prophecy by David, which was but a solemn declaration of the eternal compact between the Father and the Son.

2dly. The difference of the time wherein these priesthoods were ordained, is included on the one hand, and expressed on the other. For the former, it was when the law was given, whereby they were made priests : the latter was, *μετα τον νομον*, 'after the law,' or the giving of it. This, I confess, doth not appear at first view to be to the advantage of the apostle's design, namely that this oath was after the law. For in another place, he expressly argues on the other hand, that what is first in such cases hath the preeminence, and cannot be disannulled by what doth ensue. Gal. iii. 17, 'And this I say, that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.' May it not be as well said, that this oath, which was declared about four hundred years after the giving of the law, could not disannul it, or make it of none effect ? The objection being not without its difficulty, I shall spend a little time in the full solution of it. I answer therefore, that what followeth after, cannot disannul what went before :

1. If that which is afterwards introduced be consistent with what was before established. For in that case there is no intimation of the pleasure of God, that it should be disannulled. He may add what he will unto what is already ordained, so it be consistent with it, without prejudicing the first institution.

2. Especially it cannot do so, if it be inferior unto that which went before, either in dignity or use and benefit, and so be made subservient unto it.

3. And it must be invalid unto any such purpose, if it had no other antecedent foundation, that did indeed precede the former grant ; for if it have so, it may rationally be supposed to be farther declared on purpose to supersede it.

Now thus it was with the law in respect to the promise, which (as the apostle proves) going before it, could not be disannulled by it. For,

1. The law, as it was then ordained of God, was consistent with the promise, yea, and given in the pursuit of it ; so as that there was no need that any should forsake the promise to comply with the will of God in giving the law.

2. The law as it was inferior in dignity and use unto the promise, so it was made subordinate and subservient unto it. For the main end of giving the law, was to guide and direct the church unto the right use and benefit of the promise.

3. The promise had an absolute priority above the law. There was no ground or foundation laid for the law, no intimation of its future introduction, before the giving of the promise. And therefore the promise could not be disannulled by it.

But in the present case all things are otherwise. For,

1. The priesthood confirmed by an oath, and introduced after the law, was utterly inconsistent with the law and the priesthood thereof.

This the apostle hath fully proved before. Wherefore, of necessity, either the law and the priesthood of it must be disannulled, or the oath of God must be of none effect; for what he had sworn unto was inconsistent with the continuance of what was before appointed for a time.

2. This new priesthood could no way be made subordinate or subservient unto the other, so as to leave it a place in the church. But as it was eminently above it in dignity and benefit, so the use of the other was only to be an introduction unto it, and therefore must cease thereon.

3. This priesthood had its reasons, grounds, foundation, and representation, long before the giving of the law. For besides that it had a virtual constitution in the first promise two thousand years before the giving of the law, it had also a typical representation before it in the priesthood of Melchisedec; and it received only a declaration and confirmation in the account given of the oath of God after the law.

Wherefore the direct contrary is here the matter in hand, unto what is spoken unto in that other argument of the apostle. And herein the first thing, namely, the promise, was confirmed by an oath, the latter was not. But here the latter which was after the law, was confirmed by the oath of God, which the law was not. And hereon its being after the law, is a sufficient evidence of its preeminence above the law, and all the institutions of it. For hereby was that introduced, which was to supply all the defects and weaknesses of the law and its priesthood, and so to disannul them, and take them out of the way.

3dly. The third difference is, that the law made *ανθρωπους*, ‘men to be high priests,’ that is, those who were mere men, and no more. And therefore, notwithstanding the office and dignity which they were called and exalted unto, they were all but servants in the house of God, nor could they be any other, as the apostle proves, Heb. iii. 5. In opposition hereunto, the word of the oath makes *υιον*, ‘the Son,’ a high priest; that Son who is Lord over the whole house, and whose the house is, as he declares in the same place, ver. 5. 6. And in this word the apostle openeth the necessity and dignity of the priesthood of the New Testament. For it consists in the dignity of the person designed unto that office. This was no other, nor could be other, but the Son, the eternal son of God. ‘*Filium, nempe Dei, non hominem cæteris parem, nascendi sorte,*’ saith Grotius; as though Christ were here called the Son, that is the Son of God, because he was differentiated from other men, in the way and manner of his birth, being born of a virgin. But this is not the true and formal reason of this denomination. Christ is the Son of God by eternal generation, and thereon alone doth his sonship depend. But many ways there were, whereby he was manifested so to be, especially by his miraculous conception and nativity, and by his resurrection from the dead. Hence, with respect unto them, he is sometimes called the Son of God; not that he became so thereby, but was only declared so to be. This therefore the apostle resolves the force of his argument into, namely, the dignity of the person of our high priest, he was the Son of God; for hereon the whole excellency and efficacy of his priesthood doth depend.

4thly. It is added in the last place, that the law made men priests, *εχοντας ασθενειαν*, 'that had infirmity,' 'subject to infirmities.' And these were of two sorts, moral and natural, neither could they be freed from either of them during the whole time of their priesthood. The first were their sins, hence they were obliged continually to offer sacrifice for their own sins, and that to the very last day of their lives. The sum and issue of their natural weakness, was death itself. This seized on every one of them, so as to put an everlasting end unto their sacerdotal administrations.

But wherefore did the law make such priests, men, mere men, that had infirmity, subject to sin and death, so as to put an end to their office? The reason is, because it could neither find any better nor make them any better whom it found in that condition. The law must be content with such as were to be had, and in itself it had no power to make them better.

In opposition hereunto, it is said, the word of the oath made the Son, *τετελειωμενον εις τον αιωνα*, 'consecrated for ever.' What was the consecration of the Lord Christ unto his office, and wherein it did consist, I have before at large declared. That which the apostle intends here, in an especial manner, is his absolute freedom from the infirmities which those other priests were obnoxious unto, namely, such infirmities in the first place as with respect whereunto, sacrifice was to be offered unto God, that is, their own sins. And the apostle here, opposing the consecration of Christ, unto their having infirmities, sheweth sufficiently that he intended not to insinuate that he offered for any infirmities of his own, seeing he is wholly different from them, and opposed unto them who had such infirmities. And if he had offered for his own infirmities, the apostle could not have objected it as the weakness of the law, that it made priests which had infirmity; for in that sense, the word of the oath should have done so also. But whereas his exaltation into heaven, for the discharge of the remaining duties of his priesthood in his intercession for the church, belonged unto the perfection of his consecration, he was therein also freed from all those natural infirmities which were necessary unto him, that he might be a sacrifice. The ensuing observations offer themselves unto us.

Obs. V. There never was nor ever can be, any more than two sorts of priests in the church, the one made by the law, the other by the oath of God. Wherefore,

Obs. VI. As the bringing in of the priesthood of Christ after the law, and the priesthood constituted thereby, did abrogate and disannul it; so the bringing in of another priesthood after this, will abrogate and disannul that also. And therefore,

Obs. VII. Plurality of priests under the gospel, overthrows the whole argument of the apostle in this place, and if we have yet priests that have infirmities, they are made by the law, and not by the gospel.

Obs. VIII. The sum of the difference between the law and the gospel, is issued in the difference between the priests of the one and the other state, which is inconceivably great.

Obs. IX. The great foundation of our faith, and the hinge whereon

all our consolation depends, is this, that our high priest is the Son of God.

Obs. X. The everlasting continuance of the Lord Christ in his office, is secured by the oath of God.

Μονῶ τῷ Θεῷ δοξα.

CHAPTER VIII.

THERE are two general parts of this chapter.

I. A farther explication of the excellency of the priesthood of Christ, or of Christ himself, as vested with that office; that is, both in his personal glory, and in the usefulness of his office to the church; above those of the order of Aâron.

II. A farther confirmation hereof; wherein is introduced the consideration of the two covenants, the old and the new. For to the former, was the whole administration of the Levitical priests confined. Of the latter, Christ as our high priest was the mediator and surety. And therefore the apostle fully proves the excellency of this new covenant above the old, which redounds to the glory of its mediator.

The first part is contained in the first five verses; the latter extends from thence to the end of the chapter.

In the first part, two things are designed. 1. A recapitulation of some things before delivered. 2. The addition of some farther arguments in the confirmation of the same truth, so long before insisted on.

Both of them he compriseth in three instances of the excellency of Christ in his priesthood, or in the discharge of his office.

1. In his exaltation and the place of his present residence; ver. 1.

2. In the sanctuary whereof he is a minister, and the tabernacle wherein at present he doth administer, ver. 2.

3. In the sacrifice he had to offer, or which he offered before his entrance into that sanctuary, ver. 3, which he illustrates by two especial considerations, ver. 4, 5.

Ver. 1.—Κεφαλαιον δε επι τοις λεγομενοις, τοιουτον εχομεν αρχιερα, ὃς εκαθισεν εν δεξια του θρονου της μεγαλωσυνης εν τοις ουρανοις.

Κεφαλαιον. Syr. כּוּר, Caput; Vul. Capitulum, Summa; Beza, Cæterum eorum quæ diximus hæc summa est, 'Moreover this is the sum of what we speak.' Summatim autem dicendo, 'to speak briefly,' επι τοις λεγομενοις. Syr. כּוּלָּהּ, 'of all these things; the head,' chief or principal of all these things. Vul. Super ea quæ dicuntur; Rhem. 'the sum concerning these things which be said.'

Τοιουτον εχομεν. Syr. 'We have a high priest, he who sitteth; omitting this word, or including it in כּוּר, is, ille.

της μεγαλωσυνης. Vul. Magnitudinis, which the Rhemists render by 'majesty,' and retain sedis for θρονου; Beza, Majestatis illius; or throni virtutis magnificandi.

Ver. 1.—*Now of the things that are spoken, this is the sum: we have such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.*

This first verse contains two things. 1. A preface to that part of the ensuing discourse which immediately concerns the priesthood of Christ, to the end of ver. 5. 2. A declaration of the first preeminence of our high priest, which the apostle would have us in an especial manner to consider.

First. The preface is in these words, *Κεφαλαιον δε επι τοις λεγομενοις*; which may be considered either as to its design in general, or as to the sense of the words.

I. The design of the apostle in this interlocution, (which is not unusual with him,) is to stir up the Hebrews to a diligent consideration of what he insisted on, and to leave an impression of it on their minds. And this he doth for two reasons.

1. Lest the length and difficulty of his preceding discourse should have any way discomposed their minds, or wearied them in their attention, so as that they could not well retain the substance of what he pleaded. In such cases it was always usual with them who pleaded important causes, before the wisest judges, to recapitulate what had been spoken at length before, and to show what hath been evinced by the arguments they had used in their plea. To this purpose speaks Quintilian, lib. 6. cap. 1, ‘Perorationis duplex ratio est posita, aut in rebus, aut in affectibus. Rerum repetitio aut congregatio, quæ Græce dicitur *ανακεφαλαιωσις*, a quibusdam Latinorum enumeratio, et memoriam iudicis reficit, et totam simul causam ante oculos ponit; et etiam si per singula minus moverat, turba valet. In hac, quæ repetimus quam brevissime dicenda sunt, et (quod Græco verbo patet) decurrendum per capita.’ How this whole course is steered by the apostle in this place, it is easy for any one to observe.

2. Because of the importance of the matter in hand. He is treating of the very head of all the differences between the law and the gospel, between those who adhered to Mosaic institutions, and those who embrace the faith. Hence he calleth them to a renewed attention to what he delivered. For herein he set life and death before them, and was zealous for them, and earnest with them, that they would choose life, and not die in their unbelief.

II. The sense of the words is to be considered. *Κεφαλαιον*, is capitulum, caput, properly the head of any living creature. But the most frequent use of it is in a sense metaphorical, as it is here used by the apostle. And so it hath a double sense and use whereunto it is principally applied, for it hath also other significations. For, 1. It is taken for that which is chief and principal in any matter, business, or cause. *Κεφαλαιον όλου του πραγαματος*, Isoc. ‘The head of the whole business.’ *Κεφαλαιον της παιδειας, λεγομεν την ορθην τροφην*, Plato, de Legib. lib. 1. ‘The principal thing in education or instruction.’ And so is caput used among the Latins. Caput est in omni procuracione negotii et muneris publici, ut avaritiæ pellatur etiam minima suspicio, ‘This is the chief or principal thing in the manage-

ment of all public affairs, that all suspicion of covetousness be far away.' 2. It is taken for the sum and substance of what hath been spoken or declared, reduced into a short scheme: *ὥς δε εν κεφαλαιῳ ειπειν*, ut summam dicam, Demosthenes. And so some render these words summam dicendo. And Isocrates hath an expression directly answering that of the apostle in this place, ad Nicoc. *Κεφαλαιον δε των ειρημινων*, 'the sum of what hath been spoken;' so ראש, caput, 'the head,' is used in the Hebrew, *בִּי הָשָׂא אֶת רֹאשׁ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל*, Exod. xxx. 12, 'When thou takest the head,' (the sum,) 'of the children of Israel.' So also Num. iv. 2. And in this sense is *ανακεφαλαιουμαι*, used by our apostle as some think, Eph. i. 10, but it may have another sense in that place. In whether of these two significations it is here used by our apostle, will best appear, from the consideration of what it is applied to, *επι τοις λεγομενοις*. For these words also are capable of a double interpretation.

1. *Επι*, may be put for *εν*, 'in' or 'among;' and then the things themselves treated of may be intended. And if so, *κεφαλαιον* requires the first signification, 'the chief and principal thing or matter.' 'Among all the things treated of, this is the principal,' as indeed it is, and that on which all other things in debate, did depend.

2. If *επι*, be in a manner redundant, and no more is intended but *των λεγομενων*, 'of the things spoken,' then *κεφαλαιον*, is to be taken into the second signification, and denotes a recapitulation of them. 'This is that which my arguments amount to, the sum of what I have pleaded.'

Both these senses are consistent. For the apostle, in this and the ensuing verses, doth both briefly recapitulate, what he had evinced by his preceding arguments, and also declares what is the principal thing that he had contended for and proved. I incline to the latter signification of the word, respected in our translation; yet so as that the former also is true, and safely applicable to the text.

And some directions we may take from the wisdom of the apostle in this management of his present subject, in our preaching or teaching of spiritual things. For,

Obs. I. When the nature and weight of the matter treated of, or the variety of arguments wherein it is concerned, do require that our discourse of it should be drawn forth to a length more than ordinary, it is useful to refresh the minds and relieve the memories of our hearers, by a brief recapitulation of the things insisted on.—It is so, I say, sometimes; as this way is taken once, and but once, by our apostle. When it is necessary, is left to the wisdom and choice of those who are called to this work; I mean of such who, labouring diligently and conscientiously in the discharge of it, do really consider at all times what is for the benefit and edification of their hearers. But this is to be done on great and important occasions; the usual way of the repetition of the heads of sermons formerly preached, is in my judgment useless and unprofitable.

Obs. II. When doctrines are important, and such as the eternal welfare of the souls of men are immediately concerned in, we are by all means to endeavour an impression of them on the minds of our

hearers.—Be they never so precious, and worthy of all acceptance, oftentimes they will not obtain an entrance into men's minds, unless they have an edge ministerially put on them. Wherefore they are by all suitable means, with gravity and zeal to be called to a diligent attendance to them. Weight is to be laid *doctrinally* in their delivery, on things that are of weight *really* in themselves. And this is the first part of this verse, or the preface of what ensues.

Secondly. The second part of it, in the following words, contains the first general preeminence of our high priest, and that taken from his present and eternal state or condition. And there are three things considerable in the words. 1. Our relation to this high priest. 2. The general denotation of him. 3. His eminency and dignity in particular above all others.

I. Our relation to him is expressed in the word *εχομεν*, 'we have.' For the apostle, together with his assertion of the priesthood of Christ, and the declaration of the nature of it, doth frequently intersert the mention of our interest therein, or our relation to him in the discharge of that office; 'Such a high priest became us,' Heb. vii. 26. 'We have not a high priest that cannot,' &c. ch. iv. 15. 'The high priest of our profession,' ch. iii. 1. And here, 'We have such a high priest.' And to the same purpose, 'We have an altar,' ch. xiii. 10. And two things the apostle seems to design herein.

1. The dignity of the Christian church, as now separated from the church of the Jews. In all their confidence in their worship, that which they principally boasted of was their high priest and his office. He was anointed with the holy oil. He wore the garments that were made for beauty and glory. He had on his forehead a plate of gold, with that glorious inscription, 'Holiness to Jehovah.' And he alone entered into the holy place, having made expiation of the sins of the people. The Christians who were now separated from them, they despised, as those who had no lot nor portion in all this glory; no such visible high priest as they had. So the same persons were afterwards reproached by the Pagans, that they had neither temples nor altars, nor images, nor visible deities. So hard was it to call off the carnal minds of men, from things visible and sensible in divine worship, to those that are spiritual and heavenly. And herein lies the reproach of degenerated Christians, especially those of the Roman church, that whereas the gospel, in asserting the pure, heavenly, spiritual worship of God, had prevailed against the world, and triumphed over all that is carnal, invented to please the senses, and satisfy the superstitious minds of men; they have made themselves the scorn and spoil of their conquered enemies, by returning, in various degrees, to the same kind of worship, which was before destroyed and triumphed over. And as therein they seem to make a public acknowledgment, that the gospel in the management of their predecessors, had much injured the world, in the introduction of a worship spiritual and divine, excluding all those visible glories which it had found out to entertain the minds of men; so it will appear in the issue that they have made themselves transgressors, by building up what was before destroyed. But the primitive Christians did still oppose the spiritual

worship of sanctified souls, in the observance of the institutions of Christ, to all the pretences of glory and beauty pleaded to be in their outward forms. So the apostle here, to evince the dignity of the Christian church against the unbelief of the Jews, pleads their relation to an invisible spiritual high priest, exalted in glory and dignity far above all that they could enjoy by virtue of a carnal commandment. Whatever you think of us, whatever you boast of yourselves, 'we have a high priest,' and that such a one, as he immediately declares.

2. He would teach us, that whatever be the glory and dignity of this high priest, without an interest in him, without an especial relation to him, unless 'we have a high priest,' we are not concerned therein. Many do give their assent to this truth, that Christ is a high priest, but how or wherein he is so to them, they know not, nor yet do they make any use of him as such. Yea, to many the principal mysteries of the gospel, are but mere notions and barren speculations; what it is to be practically influenced by them, and to live in the power of them, they know not. That there is a high priest they believe, but what it is for them to have a high priest, they cannot understand. But this is that we are to look after, if we intend any benefit by it. And we may know whether we have a high priest or not, really and substantially, by the use which we make of him as such in all our approaches to God. For he presides over the whole house of God, and all the sacred services thereof. None can come to the Father but by him. Through him have we boldness, through him have we ability, through him have we access unto, and acceptance with God. He presents both our persons and duties unto him. Without a daily improvement by faith of the office of Christ unto these ends, it cannot be said that we have a high priest.

3. That the office of the priesthood of Christ is confined unto the church, unto believers. Theirs he is, and for them alone doth he administer before God in this office.

II. There is a general denotation of this priest, as to his qualifications, in the word *τοιοῦτον*. He doth not now only say that 'we have a high priest;' nor 'another high priest,' not according to the ordinances of the law, which he had proved before, from the type of Melchisedec, and the testimony of the Psalmist; but moreover such a one as hath that dignity, and those excellencies which he now ascribes to him. The salvation of the church doth not depend merely on its having a high priest, which yet in itself is absolutely necessary to the church, but on his dignity and excellency, his exaltation and glory. Wherefore it is affirmed of him, that he is such a high priest as is set on the right hand of the throne of the glorious majesty in the heavens. And two things we must consider in these words. 1. The design of the apostle in them; and, 2. Their particular interpretation.

First. The design of the apostle, as we observed before, was not to prove the reality of his priesthood, that he was truly a priest; nor yet absolutely the qualifications of his person, but his dignity and excellency. For our Lord Jesus Christ, when he was on the earth, and whilst he offered up to God his great propitiatory sacrifice, was as un-

to his outward state and condition, inferior unto the Levitical high priests, who were in great honour and veneration among the people. But the state and condition of any in the bearing and discharge of an office, is not to be esteemed and reckoned from what he condescends unto, with respect unto any action or duty belonging unto that office. For a king may condescend unto very mean services, when the condition of his subjects and good of the kingdom require it of him. But it is to be reckoned from his durable estate and perpetual abode therein. Now, although our Lord Christ was for a season in a condition of deep humiliation, taking on him the form of a servant, and being esteemed even as a worm and no man, which was necessary unto the sacrifice he had to offer, yet as unto his durable state wherein he continues in the discharge of his office, he is incomparably exalted above all the high priests under the law. And this is that which the apostle designs here to declare. For what did the high priest do, after he had offered the anniversary sacrifice of expiation unto God? He entered indeed into the holy place, with the blood of the sacrifice, presenting it there before the august pledges of the presence of God. But all the while he was there, he stood before the typical throne, or ark and mercy-seat, with holy awe and reverence. And immediately on the discharge of his present duty, he was to withdraw and go out of the holy place. A great privilege this was, and a great honour was herein put on the high priest. For all others, both priests and people, were everlastingly excluded out of that sanctuary. But what is this unto the glory of our high priest? for after he had offered his great sacrifice unto God, he entered not into the holy place made with hands, but into heaven itself. And he entered not to stand with humble reverence before the throne, but to sit on the throne of God at his right hand. Nor did he do so to abide there for a season, but for evermore.

Secondly. As to the words themselves, we may observe that the apostle three times in this Epistle maketh use of them with some little variety; ch. i. 3, xii. 2, and in this place. Ch. i. 3, 'He sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high:' where there is no mention of the throne. Ch. xii. 2, 'He is set down at the right hand of the throne of God:' where majesty is not added. Here we have both; 'the right hand of the throne of the majesty.' In the first place, the glory of his kingly power is intended; in the second, his exaltation and glory, as they ensued on his sufferings; and in this place, the declaration of his glory in his priestly office. The same glory and advancement hath respect unto various acts and powers in the Lord Christ.

Εκαθίσεν. 1. The manner of his enjoyment of this dignity and glory is expressed in the word *εκαθίσεν*, 'he sat down.' Hereof there was nothing typical in the legal high priest, who never sat down in the holy place. But as he was in many things typified by the Levitical priests, so in what they could not reach unto, he was represented in Melchisedec, who was both a king and a priest. And hence he is prophesied of as a 'priest upon his throne,' Zech. vi. 13. And the immutable stability of his state and condition is also intended.

2. The dignity itself consists in the place of his residence, where he

sat down ; and this was, *εν δεξιᾳ*, ‘at the right hand.’ See the exposition hereof, ch. i. 3.

3. This right hand is said to be, *του θρονου της μεγαλowsυνης*. There is frequent mention in the Scripture of the throne of God. A throne is *insigne regium*, an ensign of royal power. That intended by it, is the manifestation of the glory and power of God in his authority and sovereign rule over all.

4. This throne is here said to be, *της μεγαλowsυνης*, of ‘majesty,’ or ‘glorious greatness and power,’ that is, of God himself, for his essential glory and power is intended. The right hand of the throne of majesty, is the same with the right hand of God. Only God is represented in all his glory, as on his throne. Christ is set down at the right hand of God, as considered in all his glorious power and rule. Higher expression there cannot be used to lead us into a holy adoration of the tremendous invisible glory which is intended. And this is the eternal stable condition of the Lord Christ our high priest. A state of inconceivable power and glory. Herein he dischargeth the remaining duties of his mediation, according as his nature of his especial offices do require. In this state doth he care and provide for the application of the benefits of his oblation or sacrifice unto believers ; and that by intercession, whereof we have spoken.

5. Thus is he said to be *εν ουρανοις*, ‘in the heavens ;’ as in the other place *εν υψηλοις*, ‘in the highest,’ that is, heavens. And by the heavens here, not these visible aspectable heavens, are intended ; for with respect unto them he is said to be exalted above all heavens, and to have passed through them. But it is that which the Scripture calls the heaven of heavens, 1 Kings viii. 27, wherein is the especial residence and manifestation of the glorious presence of God. With respect hereunto our Saviour hath taught us to call on our Father who is in heaven. And from the words we may observe, that,

Obs. III. The principal glory of the priestly office of Christ, depends on the glorious exaltation of his person.—To this end is it here pleaded by the apostle, and thereby he evinceth his glorious excellency above all the high priests under the law. To evidence and make useful this observation, the things ensuing are to be observed.

1. The divine nature of Christ is capable of no real exaltation by an addition of glory, but only by the way of manifestation. So God absolutely, is often in the Scripture said to be exalted, that is, he is so, when he himself by any acts of grace or providence, makes the eternal glory of his power, his holiness, or any other properties of his nature, manifest and conspicuous ; or when others ascribe unto him the glory and praise that are his due. So only may the Lord Christ be exalted or made glorious, with respect unto his divine nature, wherein he is essentially over all God blessed for ever. And there is in this way, an exaltation or manifestation of glory peculiar and proper unto the person of Christ, as distinct from the persons of the Father and the Holy Spirit. For he did in a peculiar way and manner for a season, forego and leave his glory as to the manifestation of it. For being (essentially) in the form of God, and counting it no robbery to be equal with God, yet he made himself of no reputation, and took upon

himself the form of a servant, Phil. ii. 6, 7. In his incarnation, and his whole converse on the earth, he cast a veil over his eternal glory, so as that it appeared not in its own native lustre. Those indeed who believed on him, 'saw his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth,' John i. 14. But they saw it darkly and as in a glass, during the time of his humiliation. But after his resurrection his glory was unveiled and made conspicuous, even when 'he was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead,' Rom. i. 4.

2. The person of Christ, as to his divine nature, was always on the throne, and is incapable of the exaltation here mentioned, of sitting down at the right hand of it. Although he came down from heaven, though he descended into the lower parts of the earth, although he was exposed unto all miseries, was obedient unto death, the death of the cross, wherein God redeemed his church with his own blood, yet did he all this in the human nature that he assumed; his divine person can no more really leave the throne of majesty, than cease to be. So he saith of himself, 'No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven,' John iii. 13. His ascension into heaven in this place, which preceded the actual ascension of his human nature, is nothing but his admission into the knowledge of heavenly things, of all the secrets of the counsel of God; see John i. 18; Matt. xi. 27. For it is of the knowledge of heavenly mysteries, that he is there discoursing with Nicodemus. In his incarnation, he came down from heaven, assuming a nature upon the earth, the highest condescension of God. And whereas the actings of his power on the earth are often called his coming down from heaven, Gen. xviii. 21. Isa. lxiv. 1.; how much more may this infinite condescension of the second person, in assuming our nature, be so called. But yet he was still in heaven; the Son of man which is in heaven. In his divine nature he was still on the throne of majesty. For this being an inseparable property of divine authority, he could never really forego it. Then,

3. It is the human nature of Christ, or Christ in his human nature, or with respect unto it, that is capable of this real exaltation, by a real addition of glory. It is not the manifestation of his glory with respect unto his human nature, but the real collation of glory on him after his ascension, that is intended. This the whole Scripture testifieth unto, namely, a real communication of glory unto Christ by the Father after his ascension which he had not before. See Luke xxiv. 26; John xvii. 24; Acts ii. 33; Acts v. 31; Rom. xiv. 9; Eph. i. 20—23; Phil. ii. 9—11; Heb. i. 3, xii. 2; 1 Pet. i. 21; Rev. v. 9—13. And concerning this glory given him of God, we may observe,

1. That it is not absolutely infinite and essentially divine glory. This cannot be communicated unto any. A creature, as was the human nature of Christ, cannot be made God, by an essential communication of divine properties unto it. Neither are they so communicable, nor is that a capable subject of their inhesion. Wherefore they speak dangerously who assert a real communication of the properties of the one nature of Christ unto the other, so as that the

human nature of Christ shall be omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient; neither doth the union of the two natures in the person of Christ, require any more the transfusion of the divine properties into the human, than those of the human into the divine. If therefore by that union, the human nature should be thought to be rendered subjectively omnipotent and omnipresent, the divine, on the other hand, must become limited and finite. But whatever belongs unto Christ with respect to either nature, belongs unto the person of Christ, and therein he is all that he is in either nature, and in both hath done and doth, what in either of them he hath done and doth, they yet continuing distinct in their essential properties.

2. Yet this exaltation and glory of Christ, in his human nature, is not only absolutely above, but also of another kind, than the utmost of what any other created being either hath, or is capable of. It is more than any other creature is capable of, because it is founded in the union of his person, a privilege which no other creature can ever pretend unto, or be made partaker of unto eternity, Heb. ii. 16. This renders his glory in his exaltation, of another kind than that of the most glorious creatures, in their best condition.

3. Again, It consists greatly in that power and authority over the whole creation, and every individual in it, and all their concerns, which is committed unto him. See our explanation hereof at large on Heb. i. 3.

4. This exaltation of the person of Christ gives glory unto his office, as the apostle here declares. It is the person of Christ which is vested with the office of the priesthood, or God could not have redeemed his church with his own blood: although he exercise all the duties of it, both here below, and in heaven above, in the human nature only. And it is the person of Christ which is thus exalted and made glorious, although the especial subject of this exaltation and glory be the human nature only. And this gives glory unto his office; for,

1st. This is a manifest pledge and evidence of the absolute perfection of his oblation, and that by one offering he hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified. When the high priest of old appeared for a while in the holy place, he returned again unto his former station, that he might be in a condition to offer another sacrifice at the return of the year. And hence doth our apostle prove, that none of the worshippers were perfected by those sacrifices. But our high priest having offered himself once for all, and now sitting down for ever at the right hand of God, in glory and majesty inconceivable, it is evident that he hath fully expiated the sins of all that come unto God by him. And this declares the glory of his office.

2dly. By his glorious power, he makes all things subservient to the ends of his mediation. For he is given to be head over all things to the church. All things are in his power and at his disposal, as he is exalted at the right hand of God, and he will assuredly make them all work together for the good of them that do believe. And,

3rdly. He is able to render the persons and duties of believers accepted in the sight of God. To present them unto God, is the great remaining duty of his office. That they be so, is their only real con-

cern in this world, and that alone which their minds are principally exercised about. And what greater security hereof can they have, than the interest and glory which this their high priest hath in heaven? 1 John ii. 1, 2.

VER. 2. The second preeminence of our Lord Christ as our high priest, which the apostle calls over in this summary of his discourse, is contained in this second verse.

VER. 2.—*Των ἁγίων λειτουργος, και της σκηνης αληθινης, ἣν ἐπηξεν ὁ Κυριος, και ουκ ανθρωπος.*

Λειτουργος, minister; *των ἁγίων*. Vul. Lat. Sanctorum. Rhem. ‘Of the holies.’ Syr. *קדשה*, ‘of the holy house,’ or domus sanctuarii, ‘of the house of the sanctuary.’ Sanctuarii, ‘of the sanctuary,’ as we shall see. *Ἡν ἐπηξεν ὁ Κυριος*. Vul. Lat. Quod fixit Deus, ‘which God hath fixed or pitched.’ Rhem. ‘which our Lord pight;’ following the original as to the word *Κυριος*. Syr. *אלהים*, ‘God.’ *ולא בר נשא*, ‘and not a Son of man.’ Some copies of the Vulgar Latin, Dominus.

VER. 2.—*A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.*

There are two parts of these words, expressing,

1. What is affirmed of our high priest, namely, that he was a ‘minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle.’

2. An amplification of what is so affirmed, by the description and distinction of this tabernacle, ‘which the Lord fixed, and not man.’

In the first also there are two things.

1. The assertion of his office, ‘he is a minister.’

2. The assignation and limitation of his discharge of that office; it is ‘the sanctuary and true tabernacle.’

First. It is affirmed, that he is *λειτουργος*, ‘a minister.’ Having declared the glory and dignity which he is exalted unto, as sitting down at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in heaven, what can be farther expected from him? There he lives, eternally happy in the enjoyment of his own blessedness and glory. Is it not reasonable it should be so, after all the hardships and miseries which he, being the Son of God, underwent in this world? Who can expect that he should any longer condescend unto office and duty? Neither generally have men any other thoughts concerning him. But where then would lie the advantage of the church in his exaltation, which the apostle designs in an especial manner to demonstrate? Wherefore unto the mention of it he immediately subjoins the continuation of his office. He is still *λειτουργος*, a public minister for the church.

Λειτουργω, is ‘to minister,’ either with God, or before God, as a priest for others; or for God, in the name of God towards others, as do magistrates and ministers of the gospel. And, therefore, all these sorts are called *λειτουργοι*, or said *λειτουργησαι*. The Lord Christ is

expressly spoken of here as a priest; it is a name of his priestly office, wherein he acts towards God. Nor is he any where called or said to be *λειτουργος*, in any of his actings from God towards us; although he be said therein to be *διακονος*, Rom. xv. 8, that is, he was so in the days of his flesh, but that name now no way belongeth to him. He is not, therefore, styled a minister, because he executeth the purposes of God towards us, as Slichtingius fancieth; but he acts towards God and before God, on our behalf, according to the duty of a priest. He went into heaven to appear in the presence of God for us, and to discharge his office before God on our behalf. And it is granted also, that by virtue thereof he doth also communicate all good things from God to us. For the whole administration of things sacred between God and the church, is committed to him. And we must observe, that

Obs. I. The Lord Christ, in the height of his glory, condescends to discharge the office of a public minister in the behalf of the church.—We are not to bound our faith on Christ, as to what he did for us on the earth. The life and efficacy of the whole of his mediation depends on what he did antecedently thereunto, and what he doth consequently to it. For in these things doth the glory of his love and grace most eminently appear. Antecedently to what he did on earth, and to make way for it, there was his infinite condescension in assuming our nature. He was in the form of God, and in the eternal enjoyment of all the blessedness which the divine nature is essentially accompanied withal. Yet being thus rich, this was his grace, that for our sakes he became poor. This ineffable grace and love of Christ is the principal object of our faith and admiration, as it is declared by the apostle, Phil. ii. 6—9. And as he emptied himself, and laid aside his glory for a season, to undertake the work of mediation; so now he hath resumed his glory as to the manifestation of his divine power, and hath the highest addition of glory in his human nature, by his exaltation at the right hand of God, yet he continueth his care of, and love towards the church, so as yet to discharge the office of a public minister in their behalf. As all the shame, reproach, misery with death, that he was to undergo on the earth, deterred him not from undertaking this work, so all the glory which he is environed withal in heaven, diverts him not from continuing the discharge of it.

Secondly. There is a limitation of this ministration of our high priest, with respect to its proper object, and that in a double expression. For, he is a minister, 1. *Των ἁγίων*. 2. *Της σκηνῆς τῆς ἀληθινῆς*.

1st. He is so, *Των ἁγίων*. The word may be either of the masculine or of the neuter gender, and so respect either persons or things. If it be taken in the former way, it is ‘of the saints.’ And this is the ordinary sense of *ἅγιοι*, in the books of the New Testament; saints or holy persons. But they cannot be here precisely intended. And the apostle useth this word frequently in another sense in this Epistle. *Των ἁγίων*, from *ἅγια*, of the neuter gender, may have a double signification. 1. Of holy things in general. 2. Of holy places.

1. Of things, so the Vul. Lat. renders the word, *sanctorum*, which

the Rhemists translate ‘holies;’ that is, of holy persons or holy things. And ours, place holy things in the margin. And the sense is true, if the signification of the word be extended to all holy things. For the ministration of them all is committed to Jesus Christ. But the word hath yet a more peculiar signification.

2. The inmost part of the tabernacle, our apostle calls *ἀγία ἁγίων*, Heb. ix. 3, that is, קדש קדשים, ‘the holy of holies,’ the most holy place. And absolutely he calls it *ἀγία*, ‘the holies,’ Heb. ix. 8, 12, 24, 25, xiii. 11. And in answer thereunto, he calleth our spiritual presence before God, whereunto we have an access by the blood of Christ, by the same name, Heb. x. 19. And hence the word is rendered by most interpreters, ‘the sanctuary,’ as by the Syr. ‘The house of the sanctuary.’ Particularly that part of the tabernacle whereinto the high priest entered alone, and that but once a year. Take this sanctuary properly and literally, and Christ was not the minister of it. He never entered into it, nor could, nor had any right so to do, because it belonged and was appropriated to others, as our apostle declares, ver. 4.

Wherefore we must take our direction herein from the words following. For mentioning the whole tabernacle, as he doth here one part of it, namely, the sanctuary, he gives it a note of distinction from the old tabernacle of Moses, the true tabernacle. So must the sanctuary be distinguished from that of old. It is that which answers thereunto. And this is nothing but heaven itself. Heaven, not as considered absolutely, but as the place of God’s glorious presence, the temple of the living God, where the worship of the church is represented, and all its affairs transacted. This is called God’s sanctuary, Ps. cii. 19, ‘He looked down from the height of his sanctuary, from heaven did the Lord behold the earth.’ And so the apostle himself plainly interprets this place, Heb. ix. 24, ‘Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself.’ And this is called the sanctuary, because there doth really dwell and abide, all that was typically represented in the sanctuary below. And therein doth the Lord Christ discharge his priestly office for the good of the church. It was a joyful time with the church of old, when the high priest entered into the holy place. For he carried with him the blood wherewith atonement was made for all their sins. Yet he was quickly again to leave that place and his ministration therein. But our high priest abides in the sanctuary, in the holy place for ever, always representing the efficacy of the blood whereby atonement was made for all our sins.

Obs. I. As no interposition between heaven and us should discourage us, whilst Christ is there ministering for us; so his being there will draw our hearts and minds thither continually, if so be we are really interested in his holy ministrations. These things are to some in darkness and obscurity; if not wholly out of their sight yet out of their practice. In their faith, worship, and obedience, they find no concernment in the heavenly ministrations of this high priest. Things within the veil are hid from them. Yet would such persons be esteemed Christians. But the relief, the direction, the consolation,

which true believers do or may, in the due exercise of faith, receive by the consideration hereof, are gracious and pleasant, yea, full of glory.

2dly. The second part of the limitation of the ministration of our high priest is in these words, *καὶ τῆς σκηνῆς τῆς ἀληθινῆς*, ‘and of that true tabernacle, which is farther described by its efficient cause, expressed both positively and negatively; ‘which God pitched and not man.’

Expositors generally agree, that by true in this place, that which is substantial, solid, and abiding, is intended. For it is opposed to that which is umbratile, transitory, and figurative. The old tabernacle could in no sense be said to be false or deceiving, for it was an ordinance of God, set up and used by his appointment, and gave true directions to its proper end. But it was figurative and typical, denoting somewhat that was to be the true and substantial tabernacle of God. So is the expression interpreted, John vi. 23, ‘Moses gave you not the bread from heaven, but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven;’ that is spiritually substantial, and abiding, nourishing the soul to eternal life.

But what the tabernacle here intended is, deserves our diligent inquiry. And I find a fourfold sense to be given of these words, ‘the true tabernacle.’

1. Some (as Grotius) take it for this whole universe, the fabric of heaven and earth. This some, even among the heathen, have called the tabernacle and temple of God. This he hath made as it were to dwell in, as a certain fixed place for the manifestation of his glory. And whereas the ministry of Christ, at least as to the effects of it, is not confined to any certain place, above or below, to no material tabernacle or temple; the whole universe is called his tabernacle, as being that which is true, substantial, and abiding. And thus it may answer what is affirmed of all power being given to him in heaven and earth, and his being given to be the head over all things to the church.—I see nothing absurd in this opinion, nor contradictory to the analogy of faith. But the design of the apostle in using these words and expressions, will not allow this to be his especial meaning. For somewhat he doth intend that the old tabernacle did typify and represent; now it did not typify the fabric of the universe, but that especial pattern which was shown to Moses in the mount.

2. Some, with more probability, do judge, that by the true tabernacle, the universal, spiritual, catholic church, is intended. For this is compared expressly to a tabernacle, Isa. xxxiii. 20, liv. 2. And herein doth God dwell, and walk amongst men. Hereof Christ may be said to be the minister. For as he is the head of it, so he dwelleth in it. And it is undoubtedly in the behalf of this tabernacle, that he continueth to administer in the holy place; and all the benefits of his ministration do redound hereunto. But yet all this doth not suffice to have the Lord Christ called the minister of this tabernacle. This indeed is that which he ministereth for, but it is not that which he ministereth by. The tabernacle, and the things contained in it, were the means of worship, and that which was materially employed

in divine service, which the catholic church answereth not to. Neither was the tabernacle of old, which is here alluded to, a type of the church, but of Christ himself.

3. Most expositors take the tabernacle, as they do the sanctuary, for heaven itself. And they would have the word true, by a zeugma, to belong to the sanctuary as well as to the tabernacle, which we have also before allowed. But yet this proveth not, that the sanctuary and the tabernacle must be the same, though both be equally true in the same sense. This way go the Greek expositors, as Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Cæcumenius, on the place. And because this tabernacle is said to be fixed of God, Chrysostom reproacheth them who say, that the heavens do move and are spherical, though he never had a prophetic dream of the Copernican hypothesis. But yet, as Beza well observes, they forsook their own interpretation on ch. ix. 11, 12, where the tabernacle is spoken of in the same sense that here it is. But besides the reasons that shall be given immediately for another interpretation, two things will not comply with this. For, 1. There is no reason why the apostle should express the same thing, first under the name of the sanctuary, and then of a tabernacle. 2. There is no especial reason why it should be added peculiarly concerning the heavens, 'which God hath fixed and not man,' for this was never questioned.

4. I say, therefore, that by this true tabernacle, the human nature of the Lord Christ himself is intended. Hereof he is the minister, herein doth he minister before God above. For,

1st. Hereof the old tabernacle was a type. Thence is the expression taken, and thereunto is opposition made in the epithet 'true.' This therefore is our best direction and rule in the interpretation of this expression. For look what that type did signify, what was to be the substantial antitype of it, that is the true tabernacle whereof the Lord Christ is the minister. For all agree that it is called true, in opposition and in answer to that which was umbratile and figurative. Now that tabernacle was not erected to be a type of heaven, nor is any such thing intimated in the Scripture. A token, pledge, and means it was of God's presence with his people here on earth, of his nearness to them, whence also he is said to dwell among them. But this he doth really and substantially only through Christ. He therefore alone is this true tabernacle. For,

2dly. In answer hereunto, when he was incarnate, and came into the world, it is said, that ἐσκηνώσε, 'He fixed his tabernacle,' among us, John i. 14. That is the signification of the word which we have translated 'to dwell,' because the tabernacle of old was the way and means of God's dwelling among the people, in the pledges of his gracious presence. All that old curious structure for an habitation for God, did only represent his taking our nature on him, fixing his tent thereby among men. What was the pattern of this tabernacle shown to Moses on the mount, we must inquire, on ver. 5.

3dly. He himself called his own body his temple, with respect to the temple at Jerusalem which was of the same nature and use with the tabernacle, John ii. 19, 22. And this he did, because his body

was that true substantial temple and tabernacle whereof he was the minister.

4thly. That is the true tabernacle which God truly and really inhabiteth, and on the account whereof he is our God. This was the nature, use, and end of the tabernacle of old. God dwelt therein in the signs and pledges of his presence, and was on the account thereof the God of that people, according to the terms of the covenant between them, Exod. xxv. 8; Rev. xxi. 3. That therefore wherein God dwells really and substantially, and on the account whereof he is our God in the covenant of grace, that, and no other, is the true tabernacle. But this is in Christ alone, 'for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,' Col. ii. 9. Thus the human nature of Christ is that true substantial tabernacle, wherein God dwelleth personally.

5thly. He is the only way and means of our approach to God in holy worship, as the tabernacle was of old; which we have elsewhere declared.

That alone which seems to be of any force against this interpretation, is, that the human nature of Christ is that wherein he is the minister of this tabernacle; it cannot therefore be the tabernacle itself wherein he doth minister, and therefore the place of his abode must be intended by the tabernacle whereof he is the minister.

Ans. By the same rule it would follow, that because Christ is the high priest, he is not the sacrifice, for the priest and the sacrifice among men cannot be the same. Howbeit Christ offered himself only. And the reason of these things is, that he was in his own person, and what he did therein, to answer all those types of priest, sacrifice, altar, tabernacle, and what belonged thereunto. He was the body and substance of them all, Col. ii. 17. No one of them was able to represent the fulness of grace that was to be in Christ. Therefore were there many of them ordained, and those of various sorts. And therefore his being eminently intended in one of them, no way hinders his being so in another. He was all in himself, priest, tabernacle, altar, and sacrifice.

Lastly. The efficient cause of this true tabernacle is declared both positively and negatively; 'which God hath pitched and not man,' ἡν ἐπηξεν ὁ Κυριος. It is in the article ἡν, confined to the tabernacle, and extends not to the sanctuary mentioned before. 'Of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched.' And hereby this tabernacle is distinguished from both the sanctuaries, the typical here below, and the real above, even heaven itself. For it was not of the same building with either of them, as the apostle declares, Heb. ix. 11.

Ἐπηξεν, 'pitched,' 'fixed.' It is a word proper unto the erection and establishment of a tabernacle. The fixing of stakes and pillars, with the fastening of cords thereunto, was the principal means of setting up a tabernacle, Isa. liv. 2. The preparation of the human nature or body of Christ is that which is intended. 'A body hast thou prepared me,' Heb. x. 5. And this body was to be taken down, and folded up for a season, and afterwards to be erected again, without the breaking or loss of any part of it. This of all buildings was peculiar to a tabernacle, and so was it with the body of Christ in his death and resurrection.

‘Ο Κυριος. The author of this work was ‘the Lord.’ This is the word or name whereby the writers of the New Testament do express the name of Jehovah. And whereas, in the revelation of that name, God declared that self-subsisting firmitude and unchangeableness of his nature, whereby he would infallibly give subsistence unto his word, and accomplishment unto his promises, the apostle hath respect unto it in this great work, wherein all the promises of God became yea and Amen. How this tabernacle was prepared and fixed immediately by the Holy Ghost, acting the infinite power of God alone therein, I have at large elsewhere declared.

It is added negatively, *καὶ οὐκ ἀνθρώπος*, ‘and not man.’ Some suppose a pleonasm in the words, and that this expression is redundant. For to say it was pitched by God, sufficiently includes that it was not done by man. But the expression is emphatical, and the apostle hath an especial design in it. For,

1. The old tabernacle itself may in some sense be said to be pitched by God. It was done by his command, order, and direction, as were all other ordinances of his appointment. But it cannot be said that God pitched it and not man, which excludes the whole service and ministry of man. For the ministry of men was used in the preparation, framing, and erection of it. But the pitching of this true tabernacle was the work of God alone, without any ministry or service of men. ‘A body hast thou prepared me.’

2. The apostle hath an especial respect to the incarnation of Christ, without the concurrence of man in natural generation. This is expressed in answer to that inquiry of the blessed virgin, ‘How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?’ Luke i. 34, 35.

This was the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and whereof Christ is the minister. And we may observe,

Obs. II. That all spiritually sacred and holy things are laid up in Christ.—All the utensils of holy worship of old, all means of sacred light and purification, were all placed and laid up in the tabernacle. And these were all patterns of the heavenly things themselves, which are all laid up in Christ the true tabernacle. They are all inclosed in him, and it will be in vain to seek for them elsewhere. For,

Obs. III. He hath the ministration of all these holy things committed to him.—He is the minister both of the sanctuary and tabernacle, and of all things contained in them. Herein he stands in no need of help or assistance, nor can any take his work out of his hand.

Obs. IV. The human nature of Christ is the only true tabernacle, wherein God would dwell personally and substantially.—The dwelling of God with men, was ever looked on as an infinite condescension. So Solomon expressed it in his prayer at the dedication of the temple. ‘But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven, and heaven of heavens, cannot contain thee,’ 1 Kings viii. 27. But there are various degrees of this condescension, various kinds of this inhabitation of God among men. Under the Old Testament he dwelt in the tabernacle and temple, by many symbols and pledges of his glo-

rious presence. Such in especial was the ark and mercy-seat; whence that which was done before the ark, is said to be done before the Lord, Exod. xxx. 8. This was, as Solomon expresseth it, a great condescension in the infinite, incomprehensible God, and there was a great glory accompanying this his presence. Under the New Testament, God dwelleth in his saints by his Spirit, whereby they become an holy temple to him. And of this inhabitation of God, I have treated elsewhere. But his dwelling in the human nature of Christ is quite of another nature than either of these, and his love, with his condescension, inconceivably more conspicuous than in them. Hence is that expression of our apostle, 'In him dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily,' Col. ii. 9. It is not any sign or token, it is not any effect of the divine power, goodness, and grace, that dwells in him, but the fulness of the Godhead, that is, the divine nature itself. And this dwelleth in him bodily, that is, by the assumption of the body, or the human nature into personal subsistence with the Son of God. How glorious should this be in our eyes! How did they admire the condescension of God of old, in his dwelling in the tabernacle and temple by the glorious signs of his presence! And yet was it all but a dark representation and shadow of this glorious love and grace, whereby he dwells in our nature in Christ.

Obs. V. The church hath lost nothing by the removal of the old tabernacle and temple, all being supplied by this sanctuary, true tabernacle, and minister thereof.—The glory and worship of the temple, was that which the Jews would by no means part withal. They chose rather to reject Christ and the gospel, than to part with the temple, and its outward pompous worship. And it is almost incredible how the vain mind of man is addicted unto an outward beauty and splendour in religious worship. Take it away, and with the most you destroy all religion itself: as if there were no beauty but in painting, no evidence of health, or vigour of body, but in warts and wens. The Christians of old suffered in nothing more from the prejudice of the whole world, Jews and Gentiles, than in this, that they had a religion, without temples, altars, images, or any solemnity of worship. And in latter ages men ceased not, until they had brought into Christianity itself a worship vying for external order, ceremony, pomp, and painting, with whatever was in the tabernacle or temple of old, coming short of it principally in this, that that was of God's institution for a time, this of the invention of weak, superstitious, and foolish men. Thus is it in the church of Rome. And a hard thing it is to raise the minds of men, unto a satisfaction in things merely spiritual and heavenly. They suppose they cannot make a worse change, nor more to their disadvantage, than to part with what is a present object and entertainment unto their senses, fancies, carnal affections, and superstitions, for that which they can have no benefit by, nor satisfaction in, but only in the exercise of faith and love, inclining us to that within the veil. Hence is there at this day so great a contest in the world, about tabernacles and temples, modes of worship and ceremonies, which men have found out in the room of those which they cannot deny but God would have removed. For so they judge that he will be satisfied with

their carnal ordinances in the church, when the time is come that he would bear his own no longer. But unto them that believe, Christ is precious. This true tabernacle, with his ministration, in their estimation far excels all the old pompous ceremonies and services of divine institution, much more, all the superstitious observances of human invention.

Obs. VI. We are to look for the gracious presence of God in Christ only.—Of old, all the tokens and symbols of God's presence were confined unto, and included in the tabernacle. There were they to be found, and nowhere else. Many altars the people of old did erect elsewhere, many high places they found out and prepared, but they were all sin and misery unto them; God granted his presence unto none of them all, Hos. viii. 11, xii. 11. And many ways there are whereby men may and do seek after the presence of God, after his favour and acceptance with him, not in and by this true tabernacle. But they labour in vain, and spend their strength for that which doth not profit. Neither the love, nor grace, nor goodness, nor mercy of God, are elsewhere to be found, nor can we by any other way be made partakers of them.

Obs. VII. It is by Christ alone that we can make our approach unto God in his worship.—All sacrifices of old were to be brought unto the door of the tabernacle. What was offered elsewhere, was an abomination to the Lord. With the instruments, with the fire, with the incense that belonged unto the tabernacle, were they to be offered, and no otherwise. And it is now by Christ alone, that we have an access in one Spirit unto the Father, Eph. ii. 18. He is the only way of going to him, John xiv. 6. And it is in and by his blood, that he hath consecrated a new and living way unto the holy place, ch. x. 19, 20.

Obs. VIII. It was an institution of God, that the people in all their distresses should look unto and make their supplications towards the tabernacle, or holy temple, 1 Kings viii. 29, 30.—And it is unto the Lord Christ alone, who is both the true tabernacle, and the minister thereof, that we are to look in all our spiritual distresses.

Obs. IX. If any one else can offer the body of Christ, he also is the minister of the true tabernacle.—For the Lord Christ did no more. He did but offer himself; and they that can offer him, do put themselves in his place.

VER. 3.—Πας γαρ Αρχιερεως εις το προσφερειν δωρα τε και θυσιας καθισταται· οδεν αναγκαιον εχειν τι και τουτον ο προσε νεγκη.

The summary description of our high priest designed, is carried on in this verse. And the apostle manifests, that as he wanted nothing which any other high priest had, that was necessary unto the discharge of his office, so he had it all in a more eminent manner than any other had.

Καθισταται εις το προσφερειν. Syr. דקאם דנקרב, Qui stat ut offerat, 'Who standeth (that is, at the altar) that he may offer;' rendering καθισταται neutrally, the whole sense is imperfect, 'For every high

priest who standeth (at the altar) that he may offer gifts and sacrifices;’ therefore,

Δωρα. Syr. קורבנא, oblationem, Vul. munera. Some rather use dona, and some donaria, ‘sacred gifts.’

Και θυσιας. Syr. דבחה, that is, זבחים, ‘sacrifices.’ Vulg. hostias; and the Rhemists, ‘hosts,’ it may be to countenance their name of the host in the mass.

Αναγκαιον. Syr. זדקא הוה, justum erat, æquum erat; ‘it was just and equal.’ Vul. Necesse est, in the present tense, ‘it is necessary.’ Beza, Necesse fuit, ‘it was necessary,’ properly; and so the Syriac renders the verb substantive understood in the original, or included in the infinitive mood following, in the preter-imperfect tense.

Εχειν, habere, hunc habere; Syr. להנא דנהא ליה, huic ut esset ei; ‘to this man that there should be to him,’ or with him.

’Ο προσεφερα. Vul. Aliquid quod offerat, ‘something that he may offer.’ Syr. מדם דנקרב, ‘something that he should offer.’ The Arabic adds ‘for himself,’ corruptly.

VER. 3.—*For every high priest is ordained (appointed) to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity (it was necessary) that this man (should) have somewhat also to offer.*

The connexion of these words unto what was before asserted, which giveth us the design of the apostle in them, is expressed in the causal conjunction, *γαρ*, ‘for.’ He both giveth a confirmation of what he had before affirmed, namely, that Christ was the minister of the true tabernacle, that is, of his body, and rendereth a reason why it should so be: and this he farther confirms in the verses ensuing. The reason he insists on, is taken from the general nature of the office of every high priest. That the Lord Christ is our high priest, he had sufficiently demonstrated and confirmed before; this therefore he now assumes as granted. And hereon what belongs unto him, as such, he farther manifests, by showing what the nature of that office required, and what did necessarily belong unto every one that was partaker thereof.

There are therefore two things in the words.

I. A general assertion of the nature, duty, and office of every high priest.

II. A particular inference from thence, of what did necessarily belong unto the Lord Christ in the susception and discharge of this office.

1. In the first, 1. The universality of the expression is to be observed. *Πας αρχιερευς*, ‘every high priest.’ By the context, this universal is cast under a limitation with respect unto the law; every high priest, that is, made or appointed by the law, for of those alone the apostle treateth. There was indeed never any high priest accepted of God, but those ordained by the law; yet was it necessary unto the apostle to make mention of the law also. And although they were many of them, yet were they all of the same order and office, and so were all alike authorized and obliged unto the same duties. Where-

fore the apostle thus expresseth it by 'every high priest,' to evidence that there lay no exception against his argument, seeing that in the whole multitude of high priests in their succession from first to last, there was no one but he was appointed unto this end, and had this duty incumbent on him. Yea, it is not one especial duty of their office that might be omitted, which he insisteth on, but the general end for which they were ordained; as he expresseth it in the next word.

2. Καθίσταται, 'is ordained;' that is, appointed of God by the law. Of the sense of this word, I have spoken before, as also of the thing intended: see ch. v. 12.

Obs. I. God's ordination or appointment gives rules, measures, and ends unto all sacred offices and employments.—Whoever undertakes any thing in religion or divine worship, without it, besides it, beyond it, is a transgressor, and therein worshippeth God in vain. He whom God doth not ordain in his service, is an intruder; and that which he doth not appoint is an usurpation. Nor will he accept of any duties, but what he himself hath made so.

3. The principal end why the high priests were ordained of God is expressed: it was to offer, δωρα τε και θυσιας, 'gifts and sacrifices.' This appears in their original institution, Exod. xxviii. xxix.

First. They were 'to offer.' God appointed Aaron and his successors, on purpose to offer gifts and sacrifices for the whole people.

Secondly. None but they, that is, none but the priests, were to offer; none but they might approach unto God, to offer any thing sacredly unto him. The people might bring their offerings unto God, but they could not offer them on the altar. And some offerings, as those at the feast of expiation, were appropriated unto the high priests only. So is the case stated by Azariah, the high priest, 2 Chron. xxvi. 18, 'Not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the Lord, but to the priests, the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated,' from Exod. xxx. 7; Num. xviii. 7. God hereby taught the people, that nothing should ever be accepted from them, but in and by the hand of the great high priest, who was to come. And this is that which we are here taught thereby. And whoever he be, if as great and prosperous as king Uzziah, who shall think to approach to God immediately, without the interposition of this high priest, he is smitten with the plague of spiritual leprosy.

4. What they were to offer is also declared: 'gifts and sacrifices.' Δωρα, munera, donaria, dona. Sometimes all קרבנים, 'the Corbanim,' in general, are intended by this word. For all sacred offerings, of what sort soever, are so called at their first institution, Lev. i. 2. 'If any one among you bring his Corban unto the Lord.' And thereon the especial kinds of offerings and sacrifices are enumerated, which in general were all Corbans. So every thing that is brought unto the altar is called δωρον, Matt. v. 23, 24. Προσφερης το δωρον, 'when thou bringest thy gift;' that is, אם הקריב קרבניך, 'to offer gifts,' sacred gifts of all sorts, especially sacrifices properly so called. Or by δωρα, the מנחות, 'Minchoth,' may be intended, as by θυσιας, the 'Zebachim' are. For these two contain the whole complex of sacred offerings.

For Zebachim, or *Ζυχαίαι*, are ‘bloody sacrifices;’ sacrifices by immolation or killing, of what sort soever the matter of it was, or unto what especial end soever it was designed. And the Minchoth were offerings of dead things, as of corn, oil, meats, and drinks. To offer all these was the office of the priesthood ordained. And we are taught thereby, that,

Obs. II. There is no approach unto God without continual respect unto sacrifice and atonement.—The principal end of sacrifices was to make atonement for sin. And so necessary was this to be done, that the office of the priesthood was appointed for it. Men do but dream of the pardon of sin, or acceptance with God, without atonement. This the apostle layeth down as that which was necessary for every high priest by God’s institution. There never was any high priest, but his office and duty it was to offer gifts and sacrifices, for unto that end was he ordained of God.

Hence he infers, that it was necessary that ‘this man should have somewhat to offer.’ For being a minister of the heavenly sanctuary, and the true tabernacle, a high priest he was. But this he could not be, unless he had somewhat to offer unto God. A priest that had nothing to offer, that was not ordained unto that end, is indeed no priest at all.

And in this assumption of the apostle, we may observe, 1. The note of inference. ‘Wherefore.’ 2. The designation of the person spoken of, ‘this man.’ 3. The manner of the ascription made unto him: he ‘must have.’ 4. The matter of it, ‘somewhat to offer.’

1. The note of inference is, *ὁθεν*, ‘wherefore.’ It is frequently used by the apostle, in this Epistle, when he proves his present assertions, from the old institutions of the law, and their signification, ch. ii. 17, iii. 1, vii. 25, ix. 18. And the whole force of this inference, especially that in this place, depends on this supposition, that all the old typical institutions did represent what was really to be accomplished in Christ; whence it was necessary, that he should be what they did signify and represent. Hence it is often observed in the gospel, that he did or suffered such things, or in such a manner, because things were so ordered under the law.

2. The designation of the person is expressed, *τουτον*, ‘this man,’ he of whom we speak, this high priest of the New Testament, whom he had before described, and specified by his name Jesus, and by his dignity, the Son of God. That ‘this man,’ this Jesus, the high priest of the New Testament.

3. The subject being stated, that which he affirms thereof, is, that he, this priest, must ‘have somewhat to offer.’ And this was *αναγκαιον*, ‘of necessity,’ that so it should be. For whatever otherwise this glorious person were or might be, yet a high priest he could not be, unless he had somewhat to offer; for to offer gifts and sacrifices, is the sole end of that office. This necessity, then, was absolute. For without this, no office of priesthood could be discharged, and consequently no atonement be made, nor could we be brought unto God. And it is said that it was thus necessary, *εχειν*, ‘that he should have.’ And it is not possession only that is intended, but possession with respect unto use. He was so to have somewhat to offer, as to offer it accord-

ingly. For it would not avail the church to have a priest that should have somewhat to offer, if it were not actually offered. Wherefore, respect is had, both to the meetness of Christ unto his office, and his faithfulness therein. He had what to offer, and he did offer it.

4. The matter of his offering is expressed, *τι ὁ προσενεγκη*, ‘somewhat to offer,’ that is, in sacrifice unto God. The apostle expresseth it indefinitely, *τι ὁ*; but what it is, which he was to have, he doth not as yet declare. He was not engaged farther by his present argument. But he elsewhere declares expressly what this was that he had to offer, what was the matter of his sacrifice, and what it was necessary that it should be. And this was himself, his whole human nature, soul, and body.

It may be it will be said, that it doth not necessarily follow, that if he have somewhat to offer, it must be himself. For he might offer somewhat else out of the flocks and herds, as they did of old. Nor indeed doth the apostle intend directly to prove it in this place, namely, that it must be himself which he must offer. But it doth necessarily follow from the arguments before insisted on, ch. vii. For whatever else God had appointed or approved of to be offered in sacrifice, he had ordained the Levitical priesthood to offer, and appropriated the offering of it unto them, so as no such sacrifice could ever be offered by any who was not of the seed of Aaron. Whereas, therefore, our high priest was not of the tribe of Levi, but of Judah, it is evident that he could not offer any of the things which were appropriated unto their ministry and service. And hence our apostle in the next verse, affirms directly, that if he were on the earth, that is, to officiate in his office with the things of the earth, after the manner of other priests, he could not be so much as a priest at all, seeing all such services were appropriated unto, and performed by the priests of another order. Again, if he might have done so, and accordingly had done so, our apostle manifests that his priesthood must have been ineffectual as to the proper ends of it. For the law could make nothing perfect; not only because of the infirmity and imperfection of its priests, but also because of the insufficiency of its sacrifices unto the great ends of expiating sin, by whomsoever they were offered. ‘For it is impossible,’ as he declares, ‘that the blood of bulls or goats should ever take away sin, or purge the conscience of the sinner,’ ch. x. 1—3, &c. Wherefore, as it was necessary that he should have somewhat to offer, so it was necessary that this somewhat should be himself, and nothing else.

Something must yet be added as unto the reading of the words themselves, which influenceth their proper sense. *Αναγκαιον*, ‘necessary,’ ‘of necessity,’ must have the verb substantive added to determine its signification. Erasmus adds, est, ‘it is necessary;’ and we render it, ‘it is of necessity.’ Beza supplies fuit, as doth the Syriac interpreter, *הוּא*, fuit, erat, ‘it was necessary.’ And so he renders *ὁ προσενεγκηται*, by quod offerret, ‘which he should offer,’ in both respecting the time past. Others render it by quod offerat, ‘which he may offer,’ with respect unto the time present or to come. And Beza gives this account of his translation, namely, that the apostle having respect unto

the sacrifice of Christ which was past, affirms, that it was necessary that he should have somewhat that he might offer, and not that it is necessary that he should have somewhat to offer. And although I will not deny, but that the Lord, by reason of the perpetual efficacy of his oblation, and the representation of it in his intercession, may be said to offer himself, yet his sacrifice and oblation of himself, were properly on the earth, as I have fully proved elsewhere.

This text being urged by Grotius with respect unto the offering and sacrifice of Christ, Crellius replies, *Concludit scriptor divinus ex eo quod Christus sit sacerdos, necesse fuisse ut habeat quod offerat; non, ut loquitur Grotius, necesse fuisse ut haberet quod offerret, quasi de re præteritâ loquatur.* Respons. ad cap. x. But as Beza very well observes, the apostle had before mentioned the one offering of Christ, as already perfected and completed, Heb. vii. 27. He cannot, therefore, speak of it now, but as that which was past; and here he only shows how necessary it was that he should have himself to offer, and so to offer himself, as he had done. And from these words we may observe,

Obs. III. That there was no salvation to be had for us, no not by Jesus Christ himself, without his sacrifice and oblation. It was of necessity that he should have somewhat to offer, as well as those priests had of old according to the law. Some would have it, that the Lord Christ is our Saviour, because he declared unto us the way of salvation; and gave us an example of the way whereby we may attain it, in his own personal obedience. But whence, then, was it of necessity that he must have somewhat to offer unto God as our priest, that is, for us? For this belongeth neither unto his doctrine nor example. It was necessary that he should have somewhat to offer, in answer unto those sacrifices of old, which were offered for the expiation of sin. Nor would our salvation be otherwise effected, by any other acts or duties of our high priest. For the church could not be saved without taking away the guilt of sin. The whole design of the priests and sacrifices of old, was to teach and instruct the church, how alone this might be performed; and this was only by making atonement for it by sacrifice, wherein the beast sacrificed, did suffer in the room of the sinner, and did by God's institution, bear his iniquity. This our apostle hath respect unto, and the realizing of all those typical representations in Christ, without which, his whole discourse is useless and vain. Wherefore, there was no other way for our salvation, but by a real propitiation or atonement made for our sins. And whosoever looketh for it otherwise, but in the faith and virtue thereof, will be deceived.

Obs. IV. As God designed unto the Lord Christ, the work which he had to do, so he provided for him, and furnished him with, whatever was necessary thereunto.—Somewhat he must have to offer. And this could not be any thing which was the matter of the sacrifices of the priests of old. For all those sacrifices were appropriated unto the discharge of the priesthood. And besides, they were none of them able to effect that which he was designed to do. Where-

fore, a body did God prepare for him, as is declared at large, Heb. x. 1—8, &c.

Obs. V. The Lord Christ being to save the church in the way of office, he was not to be spared in any thing necessary thereunto. And in conformity unto him,

Obs. VI. Whatever state or condition we are called unto, what is necessary unto that state, is indispensably required of us. So is holiness and obedience required unto a state of reconciliation and peace with God.

VER. 4.—*Εἰ μὲν γὰρ ἦν ἐπὶ γῆς, οὐδ' ἂν ἦν ἱερεὺς, οὕτως τῶν ἱερέων τῶν προσφερόντων κατὰ τὸν νόμον τὰ δῶρα.*

Vul. Lat. Si esset super terram; all others, in terra, to the same purpose. Syr. בארעא, 'in the earth.' *Οὐδ' ἂν ἦν ἱερεὺς, אף לא כהן, 'even also he should not be a priest.'* *Οὕτως τῶν ἱερέων*, the Vulgar omits *ἱερέων*, and renders the words, cum essent qui offerrent. Rhem. 'whereas there were who did offer.' The Syriac agrees with the original; Beza, manentibus illis sacerdotibus; quum sint alii sacerdotes.

In the preceding discourses the apostle hath fully proved, that the introduction of this new priesthood under the gospel, had put an end unto the old; and that it was necessary that so it should do, because, as he had abundantly discovered in many instances, it was utterly insufficient to bring us unto God, or to make the church-state perfect. And withal he had declared the nature of this new priesthood. In particular he hath shown, that although this high priest offered his great expiatory sacrifice once for all, yet the consummation of this sacrifice, and the derivation of the benefits of it to the church, depended on the following discharge of his office, with his personal state and condition therein. For so was it with the high priest under the law, as unto his great anniversary sacrifice at the feast of expiation, whose efficacy depended on his entrance afterwards into the holy place. Wherefore, he declares this state of our high priest to be spiritual and heavenly, as consisting in the ministry of his own body in the sanctuary of heaven.

Having fully manifested these things, unfolding the mystery of them, he proceeds in this verse to show how necessary it was that so it should be, namely, that he should neither offer the things appointed in the law, nor yet abide in the state and condition of a priest here on earth, as those other priests did. In brief, he proves that he was not in any thing to take on him the administration of holy things in the church, according as they were then established by law. For, whereas it might be objected,—If the Lord Christ was a high priest as he pleaded, why then did he not administer the holy things of the church, according to the duty of a priest? to which he replies, that so he was not to do; yea, a supposition that he might do so, was inconsistent with his office, and destructive both of the law and the gospel. For it would utterly overthrow the law, for one that was not of the line of Aaron to officiate in the holy place; and God had by the law made

provision of others, so that there was neither room nor place for his ministry. And the gospel also would have been of no use thereby, seeing the sacrifice which it is built upon, would have been of the same nature with those under the law. This the apostle confirms in this verse.

VER. 4.—*For indeed if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law.*

The words are an hypothetical proposition, with the reason or confirmation of it. The proposition is in the former part of the verse; ‘for if indeed he were on the earth, he should not be a priest.’ And the remainder of the words, is the reason or confirmation of this, ‘seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according unto the law.’

We may consider first the causal connexion, *γαρ*, ‘for,’ which relates unto what he had discoursed immediately before, as introducing a reason why things ought to be, as he had declared. He had in sundry instances manifested his present state and condition, with the way and manner of the discharge of his office. A priest he was, and therefore he must have somewhat to offer, which must be somewhat of his own, seeing the law would not accommodate him with a sacrifice, nor yet the whole creation; the law having prepossessed unto its own use, all that was clean and fit to be offered unto God. A sanctuary he must also have wherein to officiate, and this was to be heaven itself, because he was himself exalted into heaven, and set down at the right hand of God. And of all this there was yet another especial reason; ‘for if he were on the earth,’ &c.

‘If indeed he were on earth.’ *Ει μὲν*. The emphasis of the particle is not to be omitted. If really it were so; or therein is force granted unto the concession that the apostle here makes; truly it must be so.

‘If he were on earth,’ *ἢν ἐπὶ γῆς*, includes two things.

1. His continuance and abode on the earth. If he were not exalted into heaven in the discharge of his office,—if he were not at the right hand of God,—if he were not entered into the heavenly sanctuary, but could have discharged his whole office here on the earth without any of these things. If he were thus on the earth, or thus to have been on the earth.

2. The state and condition of his priesthood. If he were on the earth, or had a priesthood of the same order and constitution with that of the law,—if he were to have offered the same sacrifices, or of the same kind with them, which were to be perfected on the earth,—if he were not to have offered himself, wherein his sacrifice could not be absolutely consummated without the presentation of himself in the most holy place, not made with hands.

These two things the apostle was treating of, 1. His present state and condition as to the sanctuary wherein he administered, which was heavenly. 2. His sacrifice and tabernacle, which was himself; in opposition unto both these, is this supposition made, ‘If he were on the earth.’

This, therefore, is the full sense of this supposition, which is well to be observed to clear the meaning of the whole verse, which the Socinians endeavour with all their skill and force, to wrest unto their heresy.—‘If we did aver him to have such a priesthood, as in the discharge thereof he were always to continue on the earth, and to administer in the sanctuary of the tabernacle or temple with the blood of legal sacrifices.’ On this supposition the apostle grants that ‘he could not be a priest,’ οὐδ’ αὖ ἦν ἱερεὺς. He had not been, or could not be so much as a priest, or a priest at all in any sense. That a priest he was to be, and that of necessity he must be so, he had proved before. And on the occasion thereof he declares the nature of his sacrifice, tabernacle, and sanctuary; and now proves that they were so necessary for him, that without them he could not have been a priest.

It will be said, that he was a priest on the earth, and that therein he offered his great expiatory sacrifice in and by his own blood. And it is true. But, 1. This was not on the earth in the sense of the law, which alone appointed the sacrifices on the earth; it was not in the way, nor after the manner of the sacrifices of the law, which are expressed by that phrase, ‘on the earth.’ 2. Although his oblation or sacrifice of himself was complete on the earth, yet the whole service belonging thereunto, to make it effectual in the behalf of them for whom it was offered, could not be accomplished on the earth. Had he not entered into heaven to make a representation of his sacrifice in the holy place, he could not have been the high priest of the church from that offering of himself; because the church could have enjoyed no benefit thereby. Nor would he ever have offered that sacrifice, if he had been to abide on the earth, and not afterwards to enter the heavenly sanctuary to make it effectual. The high priest on the great day of expiation, perfected his sacrifice for his own sin, and the sins of the people, without the tabernacle. But yet he neither could, nor would, nor ought to have attempted the offering of it, had it not been with a design to carry the blood into the holy place, to sprinkle it before the ark and mercy-seat, the throne of grace. So was Christ to enter into the holy place not made with hands, or he could not have been a priest.

The reason of this assertion and concession is added in the latter part of the verse, ‘seeing there are priests that offer gifts according to the law.’

Οὐτως τῶν ἱερέων, Sacerdotibus existentibus, cum sint sacerdotes, ‘whereas there are priests.’ The apostle doth not grant that at that time when he wrote this Epistle, there were legal priests de jure, offering sacrifices according to the law. De facto, indeed, there were yet such priests ministering in the temple, which was yet standing. But in this whole Epistle, as to right and acceptance with God, he proves that their office had ceased, and that their ministrations were useless. Wherefore οὕτως, respects the legal institution of the priests, and their right to officiate then when the Lord Christ offered his sacrifice. Then there were priests who had a right to officiate in their office, and to offer gifts according to the law.

Two things are to be inquired into, to give us the sense of these words, and the force of the reason in them.

1. Why might not the Lord Christ be a priest, and offer his sacrifice, continuing on the earth, to consummate it, notwithstanding the continuance of these priests according to the law?

2. Why did he not in the first place take away and abolish this order of priests, and so make way for the introduction of his own priesthood?

1. I answer to the first, that if he had been a priest on the earth, to have discharged the whole work of his priesthood here below, whilst they were priests also, then he must either have been of the same order with them, or of another; and have offered sacrifices of the same kind as they did, or sacrifices of another kind. But neither of these could be. For he could not be of the same order with them. This the apostle proves because he was of the tribe of Judah, which was excluded from the priesthood, in that it was appropriated to the tribe of Levi, and family of Aaron. And, therefore also, he could not offer the same sacrifices with them, for none might do so by the law but themselves. And of another order together with them he could not be. For there is nothing foretold of priests of several orders in the church at the same time. Yea, as we have proved before, the introduction of a priesthood of another order was not only inconsistent with that priesthood, but destructive of the law itself, and all its institutions. Wherefore, whilst they continued priests according to the law, Christ could not be a priest among them, neither of their order nor of another; that is, if the whole administration of his office had been on the earth together with theirs, he could not be a priest among them.

2. Unto the second inquiry, I say the Lord Christ could not by any means take away that other priesthood, until he himself had accomplished all that ever was signified thereby, according unto God's institution. The whole end and design of God in its institution had been frustrated, if the office had ceased, *de jure*, before the whole of what was prefigured by its being, duties, and offices, was fulfilled. And, therefore, although there was an intercession of its administrations for seventy years, during the Babylonish captivity, yet was the office itself continued in its right and dignity, because what it designed to prefigure was not yet attained. And this was not done till the Lord Christ ascended into the heavenly sanctuary, to administer in the presence of God for the church. For until then, the high priest's entering into the holy place in the tabernacle once a year, had not an accomplishment in what was prefigured thereby. Wherefore, there was not an end put unto their office and ministration by the oblation of Christ on the cross, but they still continued to offer sacrifices according to the law. For there yet remained unto the fulfilling of what was designed in their whole office, his entering into the holy place above. Wherefore, they were still to continue priests, until he had completed the whole service prefigured by them, in the oblation of himself, and entering thereon into the heavenly sanctuary.

This, therefore, is the sense of the apostle's reasoning in this place. The priests of the order of Aaron continued, *de jure*, their administrations of holy things, or were so to do, until all was accomplished that

was signified thereby. This was not done until the ascension of Christ into heaven. For the first tabernacle was to stand until the way was made open into the holiest of all, as we shall see afterwards. Now, the Lord Christ was not a priest after their order, nor could he offer the sacrifices appointed by the law. Hence, it is evident that he could not have been a priest, had he been to continue in the earth, and to administer on the earth, for so their priesthood with which his was inconsistent, could never have had an end. For this could not be without his entrance as a priest into the heavenly sanctuary.

It appears, therefore, how vain the pretence of the Socinians is, from this place to prove, that the Lord Christ did not offer his expiatory sacrifice here on the earth. For the apostle speaks nothing of his oblation, which he had before declared to have been once for all, before he entered into heaven to make intercession for us. But he speaks only of the order of his priesthood, and the state and condition wherein the present administration of it was to be continued.

Obs. I. God's institutions, rightly stated, do never interfere.—So we see those of the ancient priesthood, and that of Christ did not. They had both of them their proper bounds and seasons, nor could the latter completely commence and take place, until the former was expired. The entrance of Christ into the holy place, which stated him in that condition wherein he was to continue the exercise of his priesthood unto the consummation of all things, put an absolute period unto the former priesthood by accomplishing all that was signified thereby, with a due and seasonable end unto all legal worship, as to right and efficacy. When he had done all that was figured by them, he took the whole work into his own hand.

Obs. II. The discharge of all the parts and duties of the priestly office of Christ, in their proper order, was needful unto the salvation of the church.—His oblation was to be on the earth, but the continuation of the discharge of his office was to be in heaven. Without this the former would not profit us; if he had done no more he could not have been a priest. For, 1. As this dependeth on the infinite wisdom of God, ordering and disposing all things that concern the discharge of this office unto their proper times and seasons; so, 2. Believers do find in their own experience, how all things are suited unto their conditions and wants. Unless the foundation of a propitiation for their sins be first laid, they can have no hopes of acceptance with God. This, therefore, was first done in the offering of the body of Christ once for all. But when this is done, unless they have a continual application of the efficacy of it unto their souls, neither their peace with God, nor their access unto God, can be maintained. And this is done by the ministration of his office in the heavenly sanctuary, which ensues thereon.

VER. 5.—Οἵτινες ὑποδειγματι καὶ σκίᾳ λατρεύουσιν τῶν ἐπουρανίων, καθὼς κεχορηματισταὶ Μωσῆς, μέλλων ἐπιτελεῖν τὴν σκηνὴν. Ὅρα γὰρ, φησὶ, ποιήσῃς πάντα κατὰ τὸν τύπον τὸν δεχθέντα σοὶ ἐν τῇ οὐρί.

Οἰτινες Qui, ut qui, 'as those who,' λατρευουσιν, deserviant, inser-viunt. Syr. דמשמשין, who ministered,' as in a sacred office, properly. Ὑποδειγματι, exemplari, Rhem. 'that serve the exemplar and shadow,' every way imperfectly. Syr. לדמיוה, 'unto the similitude.' Των επουρανιων, Eras. Cœlestium; others, Rerum cœlestium, 'of heavenly things.' Syr. דהלין דבשמיא, 'of the things which are in heaven.' Καὶ ὥς κεχηρηματισται, sicut responsum est Mosi. Rhem. 'As it was answered Moses.' Χρηματισμος is not an answer, but an oracle, given out upon inquiry, and so any divine instruction. Quemadmodum divinitus dictum est, 'admonished of God,' say we. Syr. דאחאמר, 'it was spoken,' simply; which expresseth not the original.

VER. 5.—*Who serve (in sacred worship) unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, even as Moses was admonished of God, when he was about to make the tabernacle; for see, (saith he) that thou make all things according to the pattern shown to thee in the mount.*

1. We must first consider the reading of these words, by reason of the testimony which the apostle quotes out of the law, and his rendering thereof. The words in the original, Exod. xxv. 40, are, וראה ועשה, 'And look (or take heed) and make after their pattern which was shown thee in the mount.' The apostle adds, παντα, 'all things,' which is not in the original, nor in the version of the LXX. But 1. He might take it from ver. 9, of the chapter, where the word is expressed, בכל אשר אני מראה אותך, 'according unto all that I shall show thee.' 2. Things indefinitely expressed, are to be expounded universally. 1 Kings viii. 39, 'and to give to every man according to his ways,' that is, 2 Chron. vi. 30, 'and render to every man according to all his ways.' Deut. xix. 15, 'At the mouth of two or three witnesses shall the matter be established,' that is, 2 Cor. xiii. 1, 'shall every word be established.' Ps. cx. 1, 'Until I make thine enemies thy footstool,' that is, 1 Cor. xv. 25, 'all thine enemies.' Wherefore, the apostle by the addition of παντα, 'all things,' says no more but what is expressed in one place, and necessarily understood in the other.

2. כהבניהם. 'According to their pattern, or the pattern of them;' the apostle renders by κατα τον τυπον only, 'according to the pattern,' which comes all to one. Τυπος: the word is from בנה, 'to bind;' and it is used for a prepared pattern or similitude that any thing is to be framed unto. So, whereas the apostle renders it by τυπος, he intends προτοτυπος or αρχετυπος not εκτυπος, such a type or pattern as other things are to be framed by, and not that which is the effigy or representation of somewhat else.

2. The connexion of these words with the preceding discourse, which gives us the general design of the apostle, is next to be considered. He had before intimated two things. 1. That the high priests, according to the law, did not minister the heavenly things. 2. That the Lord Christ alone did so; whence he concludes his dignity and preeminence above them, which is the argument he hath in hand.

Both these he confirms in these words. For he confines their ministry unto the types of heavenly things, exclusively of the heavenly things themselves. And by showing, as in the verse preceding, that if Christ had been to continue on the earth, he could not have been a priest, he manifests that he alone was to administer those heavenly things.

3. The argument in general whereby the apostle proves that they served unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, that is, only so and no more, is taken from the words of God to Moses. And the force of the argument is evident. For God in those words declares that there was something above and beyond that material tabernacle, which was prescribed unto him. For he showed him either an original or an exemplar on the top of the mount, which, what he was to do below, did but shadow and represent. And therefore, they who ministered in what he was to make, could serve only therein to be the example and shadow of heavenly things. This, therefore, is the apostle's argument from this testimony: If God showed unto Moses on the top of the mount that which was heavenly, and he was made an example or shadow of it, then they that ministered therein served only unto the example and shadow of heavenly things. In the words may be observed, 1. The persons spoken of, 'who.' 2. What is ascribed unto them, 'they serve.' 3. The limitation of that service; wherein there is, 1st. The present immediate object of it, 'an example and shadow.' 2d. The ultimate things intended, 'heavenly things.' 4. The proof of the whole assertion, from the words of God to Moses; wherein there is, 1st. The manner of the instruction given him, 'he was warned of God.' 2dly. The instruction or warning itself, 'see that thou make,' &c.

1. There is the persons spoken of, οἱ τινες, 'who.' It refers unto the priests mentioned, ver. 4, 'Seeing there are priests that offer gifts; who.' But although that expression comprised the whole order of Levitical priests, yet it refers in particular unto the high priests, ver. 3, *πας γὰρ ἀρχιερεύς*, 'every high priest,' 'which high priests.'

2. What is ascribed unto them; *λατρουνοσι*, 'do serve.' The general signification of the English word 'to serve,' is not intended, as any thing doth serve for an end, or one person serves another. For it is a sacred word, and signifies only to minister in sacred worship and service, as the Syriac translation renders it. And in particular it respects here all the *δικαιώματα λατρειας*, the ordinances of divine service,' which were appointed under the first tabernacle, ch. ix. 1, 'they do serve:' they do according unto the law officiate in sacred things; that is, they did so, de jure, in their first institution, and continued, de facto, so to do still. And the word *λατρεω*, is applied both unto the inward spiritual, and outward instituted holy worship of God; see Matt. iv. 10; Acts vii. 7; Rom. i. 9. It respects, therefore, all that the high priests did, or had to do, in the worship of God, in the tabernacle or temple.

3. The limitation of their sacred service is, that it was *ὑποδειγματικῶς*, 'to an example and shadow.' *Δείγμα* is a specimen of any thing, that whereby any thing is manifested by a part or instance. It is used in the New Testament only in Jude 7, *προκεινται δέγματα*, 'are

set forth for an example,' speaking of Sodom and Gomorrah, or a particular instance of what would be God's dealing with provoking sinners at the last day. *Δειγματίζω*, which is framed of *δειγμα*, is but once used in the New Testament, Col. ii. 15, where we render it to make a show, that is, a representation of what was done: *ὑποδειγμα*, the word here used is an example showing or declaring any thing in a way of instance. John xiii. 15, *ὑποδειγμα ἔδωκα ὑμῖν*, 'I have given you an example,' saith our Saviour, when he had washed his disciples' feet; that is, shown you in what I have done, what you ought to do also. So James v. 10, 'Take, my brethren, the prophets for an example.' But whereas, principally and commonly, examples are patterns of other things, that which they are to be conformed to, as in the places cited, John xiii. 15; James v. 10, this cannot be the sense of it in this place. For the heavenly things were not framed and fashioned after the example of these, but on the contrary. Wherefore, examples are of two sorts, effigiantia and effigiata, that is, *προτοτυπα* and *εκτυπα*; such as other things are framed by, or such as are framed by other things. In this latter sense it is here used; and I would choose to render it by a resemblance. It is less than *δειγμα*, simile quiddam, an obscure representation. Hence is added,

Και σκιᾷ, 'and the shadow.' Some suppose a shadow is taken artificially, and opposed unto an express image or complete delineation of any thing, by a similitude taken from the first lines and shadows of any thing that is afterwards to be drawn to the life; and so they say it is used, ch. x. 1, 'The law had only a shadow of good things to come, and not the express image of the things themselves.' But properly it is taken naturally, and opposed unto a body or substance, Col. ii. 17, 'Which things have a shadow of things to come; but the body is Christ.' It is indifferent in whether sense we here take the word, for what is affirmed is true in both. If we take it in the first way, it intends that obscure delineation of heavenly mysteries, which was in the legal institutions. They did represent and teach them, and so were taught and represented in the divine service of those priests. But it was so obscurely, that none could see their beauty and excellency therein. If it be used in the latter way, then it declares that the substance of what God intended in all his worship, was not contained nor comprised in the services of those priests. There were some lines and shadows to represent the body, but the body itself was not there. There was something above them and beyond them, which they reached not unto.

4. The things themselves whence they are restrained by this limitation, are expressed, *τῶν ἐπουρανίων*, 'of heavenly things.' The things intended in these words, are no other than what God showed unto Moses in the mount; and therefore we shall defer our inquiry into them, until we come unto those words. This therefore is the meaning of the words. The whole ministry of the priests of old, was in and about earthly things, which had in them only a resemblance and shadow of things above. And we may observe by the way,

Obs. I. God alone limits the signification and use of all his own institutions.—We ought not to derogate from them, nor to take any

thing out of them, which God hath put into them; nor can we put any thing into them, that God hath not furnished them withal. And we are apt to err in both extremes. The Jews to this day believe, that the ministration of their priests contained the heavenly things themselves. They do so, contrary to the nature and end of them, which the Scripture so often speaks unto. This is one occasion of their obstinacy and unbelief. They will imagine that there was nothing above or beyond their legal institutions, no other heavenly mysteries of grace and truth, but what is comprised in them. They put more in them than ever God furnished them withal, and perish in their vain confidence.

It hath so fallen out also under the New Testament. God hath instituted his holy sacraments, and hath put this virtue into them, that they should represent and exhibit unto the faith of believers, the grace which he intendeth and designeth by them. But men have not been contented herewith, and therefore they will put more into them, than God hath furnished them withal. They will have them to contain the grace in them, which they exhibit in the way of a promise, and to communicate it unto all sorts of persons, that are partakers of them. Thus, some would have baptism to be regeneration itself, and that there is no other evangelical regeneration but that alone, with the profession which is made thereon. Every one who is baptized, is thereby regenerated. The sign and figure of grace, they would have to be the grace itself. Nothing can be invented more pernicious unto the souls of men. For all sorts of persons may be brought to a ruinous security about their spiritual condition by it, and diverted from endeavours after that real internal work, in the change of their hearts and natures, without which, none shall see God. This is to put that into it, which God never placed there. Some suppose it to be such a distinguishing, or rather separating ordinance, that the administration of it in such a way or such a season, is the fundamental rule of all church fellowship and communion; whereas God never designed it unto any such end.

In the supper of the Lord, the church of Rome in particular, is not contented that we have a representation and instituted memorial of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the signs of his body as broken, and his blood as shed for us, with an exhibition of grace in the word of promise or the gospel; but they will have the natural body and blood of Christ, his flesh and bones, to be contained therein, and to be eaten or devoured by all that partake of the outward signs. This is to put that into an ordinance, which God never put into it, and so to overthrow it. And there are two grounds or ends of what they do. The first is, to turn the wisdom of faith into a carnal imagination. It requires the light and wisdom of faith, to apprehend the spiritual exhibition of Christ in the sacrament unto us. It is a great spiritual mystery, not at all to be apprehended, but by the supernatural light of faith. This, the vain darkened minds of men like not, they cannot away with it, it is a foolishness unto them. Wherefore, under the name of a mystery, they have invented the most horrible and monstrous figments, that ever befel the minds of men. This is easily re-

ceived and admitted by a mere act of carnal imagination; and the more blind and dark men are, the more are they pleased with it. 2. They do it to exclude the exercise of faith in the participation of it. As they deal with the wisdom of faith as to its nature, so they do with the exercise of faith as to its use. God hath given this measure unto this ordinance, that it shall exhibit and communicate nothing unto us, that we shall receive no benefit by it, but in the actual exercise of faith. This the carnal minds and hearts of men like not. It requires a peculiar exercise of this grace, and that in a peculiar manner, unto a participation of any benefit by it. But this, under the notion of bringing more into the ordinance than ever God put into it, they exclude and ease all men of. Let them but bring their mouths and their teeth, and they fail not of eating the body, and drinking the very blood of Christ. So, under a pretence of putting that in the ordinance, which God never put into it, they have cast out of the hearts of men, the necessity of those duties, which alone render it useful and beneficial.

Some, on the other side, do derogate from them, and will not allow them that station or use, which God hath appointed unto them in the church. 1. Some derogate from their dignity. This they do, by joining their own appointments unto them, as of equal worth and dignity with them. 2. Some derogate from their necessity, practically setting light by them, or disregarding the participation of them. 3. Some derogate from their use, openly denying their continuance in the church of God.

The reasons why men are so prone to deviate from the will of God in his institutions, and to despise the measures he hath given them, are, 1. Want of faith in its principal power and act, which is submission and resignation of soul unto the sovereignty of God. Faith alone renders that an all-sufficient reason of obedience. 2. Want of spiritual wisdom and understanding to discern the mystery of the wisdom and grace of God in them.

Obs. II. It is an honour to be employed in any sacred service, that belongs unto the worship of God, though it be of an inferior nature unto other parts of it.—It is so, I say, if we are called of God thereunto. This was the greatest honour that any were made partakers of under the Old Testament, that they served unto the example and shadow of heavenly things only. And if now God call any of us unto his service, wherein yet by the meanness of our gifts, or want of opportunities, we cannot serve him in so eminent a manner as some others do, yet if we abide in our station and duty, there is great honour in the meanest divine service.

Obs. III. So great was the glory of heavenly ministration, in the mediation of Jesus Christ, that God would not at once bring it forth in the church, until he had prepared the minds of men by types, shadows, examples, and representations of it.—This was the end of all legal institutions of divine worship and service. And in these institutions, the wisdom of God provided what was necessary to suit the cases of his people at the time. First, he filled these institutions with glory and beauty, that they might affect the minds of men with an

admiration and expectation of that greater glory, which they represented and pointed unto. And this they did among all them who truly believed, so that they continually looked and longed after the coming of him, the glory of whose ministry was represented in them. In these two things did their faith principally act itself. 1. In a diligent inquiry into the mediation and ministry of Christ, with the glory which it was to be accompanied withal, 1 Pet. i. 10, 11. 2. In earnest desires after the enjoyment of what they saw afar off, which was obscurely represented unto them, Cant. ii. 17, iv. 6. From both these arose that fervent love unto, zeal for, and delight in those ordinances of worship, which did so lead them unto these things that were so glorious, which in the Scripture are every-where expressed, and which were so well-pleasing unto God.

Secondly. On the other hand, because these institutions were to be so glorious, that they might be shadows of heavenly things, and the people unto whom they were given, were carnal, and given to rest themselves in present outward appearances, God was pleased to intermix with them, many services that were hard to be borne, and many laws with penalties severe and dreadful. This provision was laid in by divine wisdom, that they might not rest in what he designed only to prepare their minds, for the introduction of that which was far more glorious. And well is it for us, if we have a due apprehension of the glory of the heavenly ministration of Christ, now it is introduced. It is too evident that with many, yea, with most that are called Christians, it is far otherwise. For they are still seeking after the outward glory of a carnal worship, as though they had no view of the spiritual glory of the heavenly ministration of the gospel, in the hand of Jesus Christ our high priest. Nor will it be otherwise with any of us, unless we are enabled by faith to look within the veil, and see the beauty of the appearance of Christ at the right hand of God. The apostle tells us, that the ministration of the law was glorious; yet had it no glory in comparison of that which doth excel. But if we are not able to discern this more excellent glory, and satisfy ourselves therein, it is a great sign that we ourselves are carnal, and therefore are delighted with those things that are so. But we must proceed with our exposition.

5. The proof of the foregoing assertion is added by the apostle, in the words which God spake unto Moses with respect to his building the tabernacle, which was the seat of all the divine service they were to administer. And there are two things to be considered in this testimony. 1. The manner of its introduction. 2. The words of the testimony itself.

1. The words of the introduction are, *καθως κεχορηματισται Μωσης*, ‘admonished of God.’ *Χορηματισμος*, we render, ‘the answer of God,’ Rom. xi. 4. ‘But what saith unto him, *ὁ χορηματισμος*, the divine oracle;’ a responsum, a word or answer from God, giving caution or direction. And it is used principally for such an oracle of God, as hath a warning or caution in it, for the avoiding somewhat on the one hand, as well as doing what is given in charge on the other. So Joseph was *χορηματισθεις*, ‘divinely warned to avoid the danger’ that

was designed unto the child Jesus, Matt. ii. 22, as the wise men were to avoid going unto Herod, ver. 12 ; so Heb. xi. 7. ' Noah being, *χρηματισθεὶς*, divinely warned,' was moved with fear. Yet sometimes it is used for any immediate private revelation, Luke ii. 26 ; Acts x. 22. Wherefore, two things are intended in this expression. 1. That Moses had an immediate word, command, or oracle from God, to the purpose intended. And 2. That he was to use great caution and heed about what was enjoined him, that there might be no miscarriage or mistake. ' Admonished of God.' And the manner of the expression in the original, carrieth admonition in it; *וראה ועשה*, 'and look to it and do,' Exod. xxv. 40 ; take diligent care about it. The same is the sense of *ὄρα* when thus used, 'take heed,' 'look well to it.' When John upon surprisal would have fallen down before the angel to worship him, he replied, *ὄρα μη*, 'see thou do it not,' avoid it with care, Rev. xxii. 9. The matter was of the greatest importance, and the utmost diligence was to be used about it, whence the divine oracle was given out in a way of charge and admonition, as we have well rendered the word. And we may observe,

Obs. IV. That our utmost care and diligence in the consideration of the mind of God, is required in all that we do about his worship.—There is nothing wherein men for the most part are more careless. Some suppose it belongs unto their own wisdom to order things in the worship of God, as it seems most meet unto them ; an apprehension that I shall leave this world in admiration of, that ever it should befall the minds of so many good and honest men as it hath done. But the power of prejudice is inexpressible. Some think they are no farther concerned in these things, than only to follow the traditions of their fathers. This, to the community of Christians, is the only rule of divine worship. To suppose that it is their duty to inquire into the way and manner of the worship of God, the grounds and reasons of what they practise therein, is most remote from them. It was Moses that had the command to take care about the making of the tabernacle, and not the people. There was nothing left unto them, but to do and observe what he had appointed. And it is true, when God first reveals the way of his worship immediately from himself, as he did first by Moses, and last of all by his Son Jesus Christ, the people have nothing to do therewith, but only to observe and do what is appointed, as our Saviour expressly declares, Matt. xxviii. 20. But when his worship is so revealed and declared, there is not the meanest person who professeth obedience unto him, who is exempted from this command of taking most diligent care about the due discharge of their duty herein. And this care and diligence is necessary,

First. From the aptness and proneness of the minds of men to run into pernicious extremes in this matter. For,

1. The generality of men have been stupidly negligent herein, as if it were a matter wherein they were not at all concerned. What is provided for them, what is proposed to them, what comes in the ordinary way to which they have been accustomed, whatever it be, that they follow. And as they take it on light grounds, so they observe it with slight spirits. And this hath been the true cause of

that inundation of profaneness which is come on the Christian world. For when once men come to such a want of concern in the worship of God, as to engage in it they know not well why, and to perform it they know not how, all manner of impiety will ensue in their lives, as is manifest in experience beyond the evidence of a thousand arguments.

2. Many in all ages have been prone to indulge their own imaginations and inventions in the disposal of divine worship. And this bitter root hath sprung up into all the superstition and idolatry, that the earth is filled withal at this day. From these two poisoned springs, hath proceeded that woeful apostasy from Christ and evangelical worship, which the world groans under. Wherefore our utmost care and diligence is required herein.

Secondly. The concernment of the glory of God calls for the same care in like manner. It were no hard thing to demonstrate, that the principal way and means whereby God expects that we should give glory to him in this world, is by a due observance of the divine worship that he hath appointed. For herein do we in an especial manner ascribe to him the glory of his sovereignty, of his wisdom, of his grace and holiness, when in his worship we bow down our souls under his authority alone, when we see such an impress of divine wisdom on all his institutions, as to judge all other ways folly in comparison of them, when we have experience of the grace represented and exhibited in them, then do we glorify God aright. And without these things, whatever we pretend, we honour him not in the solemnities of our worship. But we return.

In the charge given to Moses two things are observable. 1. The time when it was given him. 2. The charge itself.

1. The time when it was given. *Μελλων επιτελειν την σκηνην*, ‘when he was about to make the tabernacle.’ *Μελλων*, expresseth that which is immediately future. He was in procinctu, in readiness for that work; just as it were taking it in hand, and going about it. This made the divine warning seasonable. It was given him on the entrance of his work, that it might make an effectual impression on his mind. And it is our duty on an entrance into any work we are called to, to charge our consciences with a divine admonition. What immediate revelation was to Moses, that the written word is to us. To charge our consciences with rule from it, and with its authority, will preserve us in whatever may fall out in the way of our duty, and nothing else will do it.

Επιτελειν, is *perficere*, ‘to accomplish,’ ‘to perfect,’ ‘to finish.’ But it includes here the beginning, as well as the end of the work, which he was to perfect. The same with *ποιησαι*, Acts vii. 44, where this whole passage is somewhat otherwise expressed to the same purpose. *Καθως διαταξατο ο λαλων τω Μωση ποιησαι αυτην κατα τον τυπον ον εωρακει*, ‘as he appointed who spake to Moses’ (which was God himself, as our apostle here declares, in the second person, the great angel of the covenant) ‘that he should make it according to the pattern which he saw.’ Wherefore *επιτελειν*, compriseth the whole service of Moses, in making, framing, and finishing the tabernacle.

The warning and charge itself is, that he should make all things

according to the pattern shown him in the mount. What this pattern was; how it was shown to Moses, and how he was to make all things according to it, are all of them things not easy to be explained.

In general, it is certain, that God intended to declare hereby, that the work which Moses had to do, the tabernacle he was to erect, and the worship thereof, was not, either in the whole, or in any part of it, or in any thing that belonged to it, a matter of his own invention or contrivance, nor what he set on by chance, but an exact representation of what God had instructed him in, and shown to him. This was the foundation of all the worship of God under the Old Testament, and the security of the worshippers. Hence, at the finishing of this work, it is eight times repeated in one chapter, that all things were done as God commanded Moses. And herein was that truth fully consecrated to the perpetual use of the church in all ages, that the will and command of God is the sole reason, rule, and measure, of all religious worship.

For the pattern itself, expositors generally agree, that on the top of the mount, God caused to appear to Moses, the form, fashion, dimensions, and utensils of that tabernacle which he was to erect. Whether this representation was made to Moses by the way of internal vision, as the temple was represented to Ezekiel, or whether there was an ethereal fabric proposed to his bodily senses, is hard to determine. And this *תבנית*, 'exemplar,' or 'pattern,' our apostle here calls heavenly things. For to prove that the priests served only to the resemblance and shadow of heavenly things, he produceth this testimony, that Moses was to make all things according to the pattern shown him in the mount. And this pattern, with all that belonged to it, is called heavenly things, because it was made to appear in the air on the top of the mount, with respect to that which was to be made beneath. Or it may be called heavenly, because it was the immediate effect of the power of God, who worketh from heaven. But supposing such an ethereal tabernacle represented to Moses, yet it cannot be said that it was the substance of the heavenly things themselves, but only a shadow or representation of them. The heavenly things themselves, in the mind of God, were of another nature, and this pattern on the mount was but an external representation of them. So that here must be three things intended.

1. The heavenly things themselves.

2. The representation of them on the mount.

3. The tabernacle made by Moses in imitation thereof. Wherefore this tabernacle and its worship, wherein the Levitical priests administered their office, was so far from being the substance of the heavenly things themselves, as that they were but a shadow, of that shadow of them which was represented in the mount.

I know not that there is any thing in this exposition of the words that is contrary to the analogy of faith, or inconsistent with the design of the apostle. But withal I must acknowledge, that these things seem to me exceedingly difficult, and such as I know not how fully to embrace, and that for the reasons following.

1. If such a representation were made to Moses in the mount, and

that be the pattern intended, then the tabernacle, with all its ministry, was a shadow thereof. But this is contrary to our apostle in another place, who tells us that indeed all legal institutions were only a shadow, but withal that the substance or body was of Christ, Col. ii. 17. And it is the body that the shadow doth immediately depend on and represent. But according to this exposition, this figure or appearance made in the mount, must be the body or substance which those legal institutions did represent. But this figure was not Christ. And it is hard to say, that this figure was the body which the tabernacle below was the shadow of, and that body was the shadow of Christ. But that Christ himself, his mediation and his church, that is, his mystical body, were not immediately represented by the tabernacle, and the service of it, but somewhat else that was a figure of them, is contrary to the whole dispute of the apostle in this place, and the analogy of faith.

2. I do not see how the priests could minister in the earthly tabernacle as an example and shadow of such an ethereal tabernacle. For if there were any such thing, it immediately vanished after its appearance; it ceased to be any thing, and therefore could not be any longer a heavenly thing. Wherefore, with respect thereunto, they could not continue to serve to the example of heavenly things, which were not.

3. No tolerable account can be given of the reason or use of such a representation. For God doth not dwell in any such tabernacle in heaven, that it should be thought to represent his holy habitation. And as to that which was to be made on the earth, he had given such punctual instructions to Moses, confirming the remembrance and knowledge of them in his mind by the Holy Spirit, by whom he was acted and guided, as that he needed no help from his imagination, in the view of the representation of such a fabric.

4. Whatever Moses did, it was for a testimony to the things which were to be spoken afterwards, ch. iii. 5. But these were the things of Christ and the gospel, which therefore he was to have an immediate respect to.

5. The sense of the words must be determined from the apostle himself. And it is evident,

1. That the heavenly things, to the resemblance of which the legal priests did minister, and the pattern shown to Moses in the mount, were the same. Hereon depends the whole force of his proof from this testimony.

2. These heavenly things, he expressly tells us, were those which were consecrated, dedicated to God, and purified by the sacrifice of the blood of Christ, ch. ix. 23.

3. That Christ by his sacrifice did dedicate both himself, the whole church and its worship to God. From these things it follows,

4. That God did spiritually and mystically represent to Moses, the incarnation and mediation of Christ with the church of the elect, and its spiritual worship, which was to be gathered thereby. And moreover he let him know how the tabernacle, and all that belonged thereunto, did represent him and them.

For the tabernacle that Moses made was a sign and figure of the

body of Christ. This we have proved in the exposition of the second verse of this chapter, and it is positively affirmed by the apostle, Col. ii. 17. For therein would God dwell really and substantially, Col. ii. 9, 'In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.' And the tabernacle was but to represent this habitation of God in Christ. Therefore did he dwell therein typically by sundry pledges of his presence, that he might represent the real substantial inhabitation of the Godhead in the body, or human nature of Christ. This therefore was the *αρχετυπος*, whereunto the tabernacle was to be framed, and this was that which was shown to Moses on the top of the mount. These were the heavenly things, which they served to the resemblance and shadow of. It is therefore most probable and most agreeable to the mystery of the wisdom of God in these things, that before the building of the tabernacle below, God did show to Moses what was to be signified and represented thereby, and what he would introduce when that was to be taken away. He first showed the true tabernacle, then appointed a figure of it, which was to abide and serve the worship of the church, till that true one was to be introduced, when this was to be taken down and removed out of the way, which is the substance of what the apostle designeth to prove.

It will be said, that what was shown unto Moses in the mount, was only *חבנית* and *τυπος*, as here, that is, a likeness, similitude, and type of other things. This therefore could not be Christ himself and his mediation, which are the substance of heavenly things, and not a resemblance of them.

I answer, *First*. All representations of Christ himself, antecedent unto his actual exhibition in the flesh, (as his appearance in human shape of old,) were but resemblances and types of what should be afterwards.

Secondly. His manifestation unto Moses, is so called, not that it was a type of any other things above, but because it was the prototype of all that was to be done below.

1. This was the foundation of the faith of the church of Israel in all generations. Their faith in God was not confined unto the outward things they enjoyed, but on Christ in them, and represented by them. They believed that they were only resemblances of him and his mediation, which when they lost the faith of, they lost all acceptance with God in their worship. The relation of their ordinances unto him, their expression of him, as their prototype and substance, was the line of life, wisdom, beauty, glory, and usefulness that ran through them all. This being now taken away, they are all as a dead thing. When Christ was in them, they were the delight of God, and the joy of the souls of his saints. Now he hath unclothed himself of them, and left them to be rolled up as a vesture, as a monument of the garments he thought meet to wear in the immature age of the church, they are of no more use at all. Who now can see any beauty, any glory in the old temple administrations, should they be revived? Where Christ is, there is glory, if we have the light of faith to discern it; and we may say of every thing where he is not, be it ever so pom

pous unto the eyes of flesh, Ichabod ; where is the glory of it, or it hath no glory.

Jude tells us of a contest between Michael and the devil about the body of Moses, ver. 9. It is generally thought that the devil would have hindered the burial of it, that in process of time it might have been an occasion of idolatry among that people. But that which was signified hereby, was the contest he made to keep the body of Moses, the whole system of Mosaical worship and ceremonies, from being buried, when the life and soul of it was departed. And this hath proved the ruin of the Jews unto this day.

2. Consider the progress of these heavenly things ; that is, of Jesus Christ, and all the effects of his mediation in grace and glory.

1. The idea, the original pattern or exemplar of them, was in the mind, the counsel, the wisdom, and will of God, Eph. i. 5—9.

2. Hereof God made various accidental representations, preparatory for the full expression of the glorious eternal idea of his mind. So he did in the appearance of Christ in the form of human nature to Abraham, Jacob, and others ; so he did in the pattern he showed to Moses in the mount, which infused a spirit of life into all that was made to a resemblance unto it. So he did in the tabernacle and temple, as will be more fully declared afterwards.

3. He gave a substantial representation of the eternal idea of his wisdom and grace, in the incarnation of the Son, in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwelt substantially, and in the discharge of his work of mediation.

4. An exposition of the whole is given us in the gospel, which is God's means of instructing us in the eternal counsels of his wisdom, love, and grace, as revealed in Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. iii. 18.

The actings of faith with respect to these heavenly things, do begin where the divine progress of them doth end, and end where it begins. Faith, in the first place, respects and receives the revelation of the gospel, which is the means of its receiving and resting in Christ himself. And through Christ our faith is in God, 1 Pet. i. 20, as the eternal spring and fountain of all grace and glory.

VER. 6.—*Νυνι δε διαφορωτερας τετευχε λειτουργιας, ὅσω και κρειττονος εστι διαθηκης μεσιτης, ἣτις επι κρειττοσιν επαγγελιαις νενοθηται.*

There is no material difference in any translators, ancient or modern, in the rendering of these words ; their signification in particular will be given in the exposition.

VER. 6.—*But now he hath obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.*

In this verse beginneth the second part of the chapter, concerning the difference between the two covenants, the old and the new, with

the preeminence of the latter above the former, and of the ministry of Christ above the high priests on that account. The whole church-state of the Jews, with all the ordinances and worship of it, and the privileges annexed to it, depended wholly on the covenant that God made with them at Sinai. But the introduction of this new priesthood whereof the apostle is discoursing, did necessarily abolish that covenant, and put an end to all sacred ministrations that belonged to it. And this could not well be offered to them, without the supply of another covenant, which would excel the former in privileges and advantages. For it was granted among them, that is, was the design of God to carry on the church to a perfect state, as hath been declared on ch. vii. Wherefore we would not lead it backward, nor deprive it of any thing it had enjoyed, without provision of what was better in its room. This therefore the apostle undertakes to declare. And he doth it after his wonted manner, from such principles and testimonies as were admitted among themselves.

Two things to this purpose he proves by express testimonies out of the prophet Jeremiah.

1. That besides the covenant made with their fathers in Sinai, God had promised to make another covenant with the church, in his appointed time and season.

2. That this other promised covenant should be of another nature than the former, and much more excellent as to spiritual advantages to them who were taken into it.

From both these fully proved, the apostle infers the necessity of the abrogation of that first covenant, wherein they trusted, and to which they adhered, when the appointed time was come. And hereon he takes occasion to declare the nature of the two covenants in sundry instances, and wherein the differences between them did consist. This is the substance of the remainder of this chapter.

This verse is a transition from one subject to another; namely, from the excellency of the priesthood of Christ above that of the law, to the excellency of the new covenant above the old. And herein also the apostle artificially compriseth and confirmeth his last argument, of the preeminence of Christ, his priesthood and ministry, above those of the law. And this he doth from the nature and excellency of that covenant whereof he was the mediator in the discharge of his office.

There are two parts of the words.

I. An assertion of the excellency of the ministry of Christ. And this he expresseth by way of comparison, 'He hath obtained a more excellent ministry:' and after, declareth the degree of that comparison, 'by how much also.'

II. He annexeth the proof of this assertion, in that he is the mediator of a better covenant, established on better or more excellent promises.

In the first of these, there occur these five things.

1. The note of its introduction, 'But now.'

2. What is ascribed in the assertion to the Lord Christ, and that is a 'ministry.'

3. How he came by that ministry, 'He hath obtained it.'

4. The quality of this ministry, it is better or more excellent than the other.

5. The measure and degree of this excellency, 'By how much also : ' all which must be spoken to, for the opening of the words.

1. The introduction of the assertion is by the particles, *νυνι δε*, 'but now. *Νυν*, 'now,' is a note of time, of the present time. But there are instances where these adverbial particles thus conjoined, do not seem to denote any time or season, but are merely adversative, Rom. vii. 17; 1 Cor. v. 11, vii. 14. But even in those places there seems a respect to time also, and therefore I know not why it should be here excluded. As therefore there is an opposition intended to the old covenant, and the Levitical priesthood, so the season is intimated of the introduction of that covenant, and the better ministry wherewith it was accompanied. 'Now,' at this time, which is the season that God hath appointed for the introduction of the new covenant and ministry. To the same purpose the apostle expresseth himself, treating of the same subject, Rom. iii. 26, 'to declare,' *εν τω νυνι καιρω*, 'at this instant season,' now the gospel is preached, 'his righteousness.' For,

Obs. I. God in his infinite wisdom gives proper times and seasons, to all his dispensations to and towards the church.—So the accomplishment of these things was in the fulness of times, Eph. i. 10; that is, when all things rendered it seasonable and suitable to the condition of the church, and for the manifestation of his own glory. He hasteneth all his works of grace in their own appointed time, Isa. lx. 22. And our duty it is, to leave the ordering of all the concerns of the church in the accomplishment of promises, to God in his own time, Acts i. 7.

2. That which is ascribed to the Lord Christ is *λειτουργια*, a 'ministry.' The priests of old had a ministry, they ministered at the altar, as in the foregoing verse. And the Lord Christ was a minister also; so the apostle had said before, he was *λειτουργος των αγιων*, ver. 2, 'a minister of the holy things.' Wherefore he had a liturgy, a ministry, a service committed to him. And two things are included herein.

1st. That it was an office of ministry that the Lord Christ undertook. He is not called a minister with respect to one particular act of ministration; so are we said to minister to the necessity of the saints, which yet denotes no office in them that do so. But he had a standing office committed to him, as the word imports. In that sense also he is called *διακονος*, a minister in office, Rom. xv. 8.

2dly. Subordination to God is included herein. With respect to the church, his office is supreme, accompanied with sovereign power and authority; he is Lord over his own house. But he holds his office in subordination to God, being faithful to him that appointed him. So the angels are said to minister to God, Dan. vii. 10; that is, to do all things according to his will, and at his command. So had the Lord Christ a ministry. And we may observe,

Obs. II. That the whole office of Christ was designed to the accom-

plishment of the will and dispensation of the grace of God.—For these ends was his ministry committed to him. We can never sufficiently admire the love and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, in undertaking this office for us. The greatness and glory of the duties which he performed in the discharge thereof, with the benefits we receive thereby, are unspeakable, being the immediate cause of all grace and glory. Yet we are not absolutely to rest in them, but to ascend by faith to the eternal spring of them. This is the grace, the love, the mercy of God, all exerted in a way of sovereign power. These are every-where in the Scripture represented as the original spring of all grace, and the ultimate object of our faith, with respect to the benefits which we receive by the mediation of Christ. His office was committed to him of God, even the Father, and his will did he do in the discharge of it. Yet also,

Obs. III. The condescension of the Son of God to undertake the office of the ministry on our behalf, is unspeakable, and for ever to be admired.—Especially will it appear so to be, when we consider who it was who undertook it, what it cost him, what he did and underwent in the pursuance and discharge of it, as it is all expressed, Phil. ii. 6—8. Not only what he continueth to do in heaven at the right hand of God, belongeth to this ministry, but all that he suffered also on the earth. His ministry in the undertaking of it, was not a dignity, a promotion, a revenue, Matt. xx. 28. It is true, it is issued in glory, but not till he had undergone all the evils that human nature is capable of undergoing. And we ought to undergo any thing cheerfully for him who underwent this ministry for us.

Obs. IV. The Lord Christ, by undertaking this office of the ministry, hath consecrated and made honourable that office unto all, that are rightly called unto it, and do rightly discharge it.—It is true his ministry and ours are not of the same kind and nature; but they agree in this, that they are both of them a ministry unto God, in the holy things of his worship. And considering that Christ himself was God's minister, we have far greater reason to tremble in ourselves, on an apprehension of our own insufficiency for such an office, than to be discouraged with all the hardships and contests we meet withal in the world, upon the account of it.

3. The general way whereby our Lord Christ came unto this ministry, is expressed, *τετευχε*, 'he obtained it.' *Τετευχε* is either sorte contingo, 'to have a lot or portion,' or to have any thing befall a man, as it were by accident; or assequor, obtineo, to 'attain,' or obtain any thing which before we had not. But the apostle designeth not to express in this word, the especial call of Christ, or the particular way whereby he came unto his ministry, but only in general, that he had it, and was possessed of it, in the appointed season, which before he had not. The way whereby he entered on the whole office and work of his mediation, he expresseth by *κεκληρονομηκε*, ch. i. 4, he had it by 'inheritance,' that is, by free grant and perpetual donation, made unto him as the Son. See the exposition on that place.

There were two things that concurred unto his obtaining this ministry.

1. The eternal purpose and counsel of God, designing him thereunto;

an act of the divine will, accompanied with infinite wisdom, love, and power. 2. The actual call of God, whereunto many things did concur, especially his unction with the Spirit above measure, for the holy discharge of his whole office. Thus did he obtain this ministry, and not by any legal constitution, succession, or carnal rite, as did the priests of old. And we may see, that,

Obs. V. The exaltation of the human nature of Christ, into the office of this glorious ministry, depended solely on the sovereign wisdom, grace, and love of God. When the human nature of Christ was united unto the divine, it became, in the person of the Son of God, meet and capable to make satisfaction for the sins of the church, and to procure righteousness and life eternal for all that do believe. But it did not merit that union, nor could do so. For as it was utterly impossible that any created nature, by any act of its own, should merit the hypostatical union; so it was granted unto the human nature of Christ, antecedently unto any act of its own in way of obedience unto God. For it was united unto the person of the Son by virtue of that union. Wherefore, antecedently unto it, it could merit nothing. Hence its whole exaltation, and the ministry that was discharged therein, depended solely on the sovereign wisdom and pleasure of God. And in this election and designation of the human nature of Christ unto grace and glory, we may see the pattern and example of our own. For it was not upon the consideration or foresight of the obedience of the human nature of Christ, that he was predestinated and chosen unto the grace of the hypostatical union, with the ministry and glory which depended thereon, but of the mere sovereign grace of God; how much less could a foresight of any thing in us, be the cause why God should choose us in him, before the foundation of the world, unto grace and glory!

4. The quality of this ministry, thus obtained, as unto a comparative excellency, is also expressed, *διαφορωτερας*, ‘more excellent.’ The word is used only in this Epistle, in this sense, ch. i. 4, and in this place. The original word denotes only a difference from other things; but in the comparative degree, as here used, it signifies a difference with a preference, or a comparative excellency. The ministry of the Levitical priests, was good and useful in its time and season. This of our Lord Jesus Christ so differed from it, as to be better than it, and more excellent, *πολλω αμεινον*. And,

5. There is added hereunto, the degree of this preeminence, so far as it is intended in this place, and the present argument, in the word *οσω*, ‘by how much.’ So much more excellent, by how much. The excellency of his ministry above that of the Levitical priests, bears proportion with the excellency of the covenant whereof he was the mediator, above the old covenant wherein they administered; whereof afterwards.

So have we explained the apostle’s assertion, concerning the excellency of the ministry of Christ. And herewith he closeth his discourse which he had so long engaged in, about the preeminence of Christ in his office above the high priests of old. And indeed, this being the very hinge whereon his whole controversy with the Jews did depend,

he could not give it too much evidence, nor too full a confirmation. And as unto what concerns ourselves at present, we are taught thereby, that,

Obs. VI. It is our duty and our safety to acquiesce universally and absolutely in the ministry of Jesus Christ.—That which he was so designed unto, in the infinite wisdom and grace of God; that which he was so furnished for the discharge of, by the communication of the Spirit unto him in all fulness; that which all other priesthoods were removed to make way for, must needs be sufficient and equal for all the ends unto which it is designed. It is said, this is that which all men do; all that are called Christians, do acquiesce in the ministry of Jesus Christ. But if it be so, why do we hear the bleating of another sort of cattle? What mean those other priests, and reiterated sacrifices, which make up the worship of the church of Rome? If they rest in the ministry of Christ, why do they appoint one of their own to do the same things that he hath done, namely, to offer sacrifice unto God?

The proof of this assertion lies in the latter part of these words, ‘By how much he was the mediator of a better covenant, established on better promises.’ The words are so disposed, that some think the apostle intends not to prove the excellency of the covenant, from the excellency of his ministry therein. But the other sense is more suited unto the scope of the place, and the nature of the argument which the apostle presseth the Hebrews withal. For on supposition that there was indeed another, and that a better covenant to be introduced and established, than that which the Levitical priests served in, which they could not deny; it plainly follows, that he on whose ministry the dispensation of that covenant did depend, must of necessity be more excellent in that ministry, than they who appertained unto that covenant which was to be abolished. However, it may be granted, that these things do mutually testify unto, and illustrate one another. Such as the priest is, such is the covenant; such as the covenant is in dignity, such is the priest also.

In the words there are three things observable.

1. What is in general ascribed unto Christ, declaring the nature of his ministry; ‘He was a mediator.’

2. The determination of his mediatory office, unto the new covenant; ‘of a better covenant.’

3. The proof or demonstration of the nature of this covenant as unto its excellency; ‘it was established on better promises.’

1. His office is that of a mediator, *μεσιτης*, one that interposed between God and man, for the doing of all those things whereby a covenant might be established between them, and made effectual. Slichtingius on the place, gives this description of a mediator, ‘*Mediatorem fæderis esse nihil aliud est, quam Dei esse interpretem, et internumtium in fædere cum hominibus pangendo; per quem scilicet et Deus voluntatem suam hominibus declaret, et illi vicissim divinæ voluntatis notitiâ instructi ad Deum accedant, cumque eo reconciliati, pacem in posterum colant.*’ And Grotius speaks much to the same purpose.

But this description of a mediator, is wholly applicable unto Moses, and suited unto his office in giving of the law, see Exod. xx. 19. Deut. v. 27, 28. What is said by them, doth indeed immediately belong unto the mediatory office of Christ, but it is not confined thereunto, yea, it is exclusive of the principal parts of his mediation. And whereas, there is nothing in it, but what belongs unto the prophetic office of Christ, which the apostle here doth not principally intend, it is most improperly applied as a description of such a mediator as he doth intend. And therefore when he comes afterwards to declare in particular, what belonged unto such a mediator of the covenant as he designed, he expressly placeth it in his death for the redemption of transgressions, Heb. ix. 15, affirming that for 'that cause he was a mediator.' But hereof there is nothing at all in the description they give us of this office. But this the apostle doth in his, elsewhere, 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6. 'There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all.' The principal part of his mediation, consisted in the giving himself a ransom, or a price of redemption for the whole church. Wherefore, this description of a mediator of the New Testament, is feigned only to exclude his satisfaction, or his offering himself unto God in his death and blood-shedding, with the atonement made thereby.

The Lord Christ, then, in his ministry, is called *μεσιτης*, the 'mediator' of the covenant, in the same sense as he is called, *εγγυος*, the 'surety;' whereof, see the exposition on ch. vii. 22. He is in the new covenant, the mediator, the surety, the priest, the sacrifice, all in his own person. The ignorance and want of a due consideration hereof, is the great evidence of the degeneracy of Christian religion.

Whereas this is the first general notion of the office of Christ, that which compriseth the whole ministry committed unto him, and containeth in itself, the especial offices of king, priest, and prophet, whereby he dischargeth his mediation, some things must be mentioned, that are declarative of its nature and use. And we may unto this purpose, observe,

1. That unto the office of a mediator, it is required, that there be different persons concerned in the covenant, and that by their own wills, as it must be in every compact of what sort soever. So saith our apostle, 'a mediator is not of one, but God is one,' Gal. iii. 20; that is, if there were none but God concerned in this matter, as it is in an absolute promise or sovereign precept, there would be no need of, no place for a mediator, such a mediator as Christ is. Wherefore, our consent in and unto the covenant, is required in the very notion of a mediator.

2. That the persons entering into covenant, be in such a state and condition, as that it is no way convenient or morally possible, that they should treat immediately with each other, as to the ends of the covenant. For if they are so, a mediator to go between is altogether needless. So was it in the original covenant with Adam, which had no mediator. But in the giving of the law, which was to be a covenant between God and the people, they found themselves utterly insufficient for an immediate treaty with God, and therefore desired that they

might have an internuntius to go between God and them, to bring his proposals, and carry back their consent, Deut. v. 23—27. And this is the voice of all men, really convinced of the holiness of God, and of their own condition; such is the state between God and sinners. The law and the curse of it did so interpose between them, that they could not enter into any immediate treaty with God, Ps. v. 3—5. This made a mediator necessary, that the new covenant might be established, whereof we shall speak afterwards.

3. That he who is this mediator, be accepted, trusted, and rested in on both sides, or by both the parties mutually entering into covenant. And absolute trust must be reposed in him, so that each party may be everlastingly obliged in what he undertaketh on their behalf; and such as admit not of his terms, can have no benefit by, no interest in the covenant. So was it with the Lord Christ in this matter. On the part of God, he reposed the whole trust of all the concernments of the covenant in him, and absolutely rested therein. ‘Behold,’ saith he of him, ‘my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth,’ or ‘is well pleased,’ *εν ᾧ εὐδοκησα*, Matt. iii. 17. When he undertook this office, and said, ‘Lo I come to do thy will O God,’ the soul of God rested in him, Exod. xxiii. 21; John v. 20—22. And to him he gives an account at last, of his discharge of this thing, John xvii. 4. And on our part, unless we resign ourselves absolutely unto an universal trust in him, and reliance on him, and unless we accept of all the terms of the covenant as by him proposed, and engage to stand unto all that he hath undertaken on our behalf, we can have neither share nor interest in this matter.

4. A mediator must be a middle person between both parties entering into covenant, and if they be of different natures, a perfect, complete mediator ought to partake of each of their natures in the same person. The necessity hereof, and the glorious wisdom of God herein, I have elsewhere at large demonstrated, and shall not, therefore, here again insist upon it.

5. A mediator must be one who voluntarily, and of his own accord, undertaketh the work of mediation. This is required of every one who will effectually mediate between any persons at variance, to bring them unto an agreement on equal terms. So it was required that the will and consent of Christ should concur in his susception of this office; and that they did so, himself expressly testifieth, Heb. x. 5—10. It is true, he was designed and appointed by the Father unto this office, whence he is called his servant, and constantly witnesseth of himself, that he came to do the will and commandment of him that sent him. But he had that to do in the discharge of this office, which could not according unto any rules of divine righteousness, be imposed on him without his own voluntary consent. And this was the ground of the eternal compact that was between the Father and the Son, with respect unto his mediation, which I have elsewhere explained. And the testification of his own will, grace and love in the susception of this office, is a principal motive unto that faith and trust which the church placeth in him, as the mediator between God and them. Upon this his voluntary undertaking, doth the soul of God rest in him, and he reposeth the whole trust in him, of accomplishing his will and

pleasure, or the design of his love and grace in this covenant, Isa. liii. 10—12. And the faith of the church, whereon salvation doth depend, must have love unto his person inseparably accompanying of it. Love unto Christ is no less necessary unto salvation, than faith in him. And as faith is resolved into the sovereign wisdom and grace of God in sending him, and his own ability to save to the uttermost, those that come to God by him; so love ariseth from the consideration of his own love and grace, in his voluntary undertaking of this office, and the discharge of it.

6. In this voluntary undertaking to be a mediator, two things were required.

First. That he should remove and take out of the way, whatever kept the covenanters at distance, or was a cause of enmity between them. For it is supposed that such an enmity there was, or there had been no need of a mediator. Therefore in the covenant made with Adam, there having been no variance between God and man, nor any distance, but what necessarily ensued from the distinct natures of the Creator and a creature, there was no mediator. But the design of this covenant, was to make reconciliation and peace. Hereon therefore depended the necessity of satisfaction, redemption, and the making of atonement by sacrifice. For man having sinned and apostatized from the rule of God, making himself thereby obnoxious unto his wrath, according unto the eternal rule of righteousness, and in particular unto the curse of the law, there could be no new peace and agreement made with God, unless due satisfaction were made for those things. For although God was willing in infinite love, grace, and mercy, to enter into a new covenant with fallen man, yet would he not do it unto the prejudice of his righteousness, the dishonour of his rule, and the contempt of his law. Wherefore none could undertake to be a mediator of this covenant, but he that was able to satisfy the justice of God, glorify his government, and fulfil the law. And this could be done by none but him, concerning whom it might he said, that God purchased his church with his own blood.

Secondly. That he should procure and purchase, in a way suited unto the glory of God, the actual communication of all the good things prepared and proposed in this covenant; that is, grace and glory, with all that belong unto these, for them, and on their behalf, whose surety he was. And this is the foundation of the merit of Christ, and of the grant of all good things unto us for his sake.

7. It is required of this mediator, as such, that to the parties mutually concerned, he give assurance of, and undertake for, the accomplishment of the terms of the covenant, undertaking on each hand for them.

First. On the part of God towards men, that they shall have peace and acceptance with him, in the sure accomplishment of all the promises of the covenant. This he doth only declaratively, in the doctrine of the gospel, and in the institution of the ordinances of evangelical worship. For he was not a surety for God, nor did God need any, having confirmed his promise with an oath, swearing by himself, because he had no greater to swear by.

Secondly. On our part, he undertakes unto God for our acceptance

of the terms of the covenant, and our accomplishment of them, by his enabling us thereunto.

These things, among others, were necessary unto a full and complete mediator of the new covenant, such as Christ was. And,

Obs. VII. The provision of this mediator between God and man, was an effect of infinite wisdom and grace; yea, it was the greatest and most glorious external effect that they ever did, or ever will, produce in this world. The creation of all things at first out of nothing, was a glorious effect of infinite wisdom and power. But when the glory of that design was eclipsed by the entrance of sin, this provision of a mediator, one whereby all things were restored and retrieved into a condition of bringing more glory to God, and securing for ever the blessed estate of them whose mediator he is, is accompanied with more evidences of the divine excellencies than that was; see Eph. i. 10.

Two things are added in the description of this mediator.

1. That he was a mediator of a covenant.
2. That this was a better covenant than another, which respect is had unto, whereof he was not the mediator.

1. He was the mediator, *διαθηκης*, of a covenant. And two things are supposed herein.

First. That there was a covenant made or prepared between God and man; that is, it was so far made, as that God who made it, had prepared the terms of it, in a sovereign act of wisdom and grace. The preparation of the covenant, consisting in the will and purpose of God graciously to bestow on all men the good things which are contained in it, all things belonging unto grace and glory, as also to make way for the obedience which he required herein, are supposed unto the constitution of this covenant.

Secondly. That there was need of a mediator, that this covenant might be effectual unto its proper ends, of the glory of God, and the obedience of mankind, with their reward. This was not necessary from the nature of a covenant in general; for a covenant may be made and entered into between different parties, without any mediator, merely on the equity of the terms of it. Nor was it necessary from the nature of a covenant between God and man, as man was first created of God. For the first covenant between them was immediate, without the interposition of a mediator. But it became necessary, from the state and condition of them with whom this covenant was made, and the especial nature of this covenant. This the apostle declares, Rom. viii. 3, 'For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.' The law was the moral instrument, or rule of the covenant, that was made immediately between God and man: but it could not continue to be so after the entrance of sin, that is, so as that God might be glorified thereby, in the obedience and reward of men. Wherefore, he sent his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, that is, provided a mediator for a new covenant. The persons with whom this covenant was to be made, being all of them sinners, and apostatized from God, it became not the holiness or righteousness of God, to treat immediately with them any more. Nor would it have answered

his holy ends so to have done. For if, when they were in a condition of uprightness and integrity, they kept not the terms of that covenant which was made immediately with them, without a mediator, although these terms were holy, just, good, and equal, how much less could any such thing be expected from them in their depraved condition of apostasy from God, and enmity against him? It therefore became not the wisdom of God to enter anew into covenant with mankind, without security that the terms of the covenant should be accepted, and the grace of it made effectual. This we could not give; yea, we gave all evidences possible unto the contrary, in that God saw that every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually, Gen. vi. 5. Wherefore it was necessary there should be a mediator, to be the surety of this covenant. Again, the covenant itself was so prepared in the counsel, wisdom, and grace of God, as that the principal, yea indeed, all the benefits of it were to depend on what was to be done by a mediator and could not otherwise be effected. Such were satisfaction for sin, and the bringing in of everlasting righteousness, which are the foundation of this covenant.

2. To proceed with the text, this covenant whereof the Lord Christ is the mediator, is said to be *καρτερονος διαθηκης*, 'a better covenant.' Wherefore, it is supposed that there was another covenant, whereof the Lord Christ was not the mediator. And in the following verses there are two covenants, a first and a latter, an old and a new, compared together. We must therefore consider what was that other covenant, than which this is said to be better: for upon the determination thereof depends the right understanding of the whole ensuing discourse of the apostle. And because this is a subject wrapt up in much obscurity, and attended with many difficulties, it will be necessary that we use the best of our diligence, both in the investigation of the truth, and in the declaration of it, so as that it may be distinctly apprehended. And I shall first explain the text, and then speak to the difficulties which arise from it.

First. There was an original covenant made with Adam, and all mankind in him. The rule of obedience and reward that was between God and him, was not expressly called a covenant, but it contained the express nature of a covenant. For it was the agreement of God and man concerning obedience and disobedience, rewards and punishments. Where there is a law concerning these things, and an agreement upon it, by all parties concerned, there is a formal covenant. Wherefore it may be considered two ways.

1. As it was a law only; so it proceeded from, and was a consequent of, the nature of God and man, with their mutual relation unto one another. God being considered as the Creator, Governor, and Benefactor of man: and man as an intellectual creature, capable of moral obedience; this law was necessary, and is eternally indispensable.

2. As it was a covenant; and this depended on the will and pleasure of God. I will not dispute whether God might have given a law unto men, that should have had nothing in it of a covenant properly so called as is the law of creation unto all other creatures, which hath no rewards nor punishments annexed unto it. Yet this God calls a cove-

nant also, inasmuch as it is an effect of his purpose, his unalterable will and pleasure, Jer. xxxiii. 20, 21. But that this law of our obedience should be a formal complete covenant, there was moreover some things required on the part of God, and some also on the part of man. Two things were required on the part of God to complete this covenant, or he did so complete it by two things.

First. By annexing unto it promises and threatenings of reward and punishment; the first of grace, the other of justice.

Secondly. The expression of these promises and threatenings in external signs: the first, in the tree of life; the latter, in that of the knowledge of good and evil. By these did God establish the original law of creation as a covenant, gave it the nature of a covenant. On the part of man, it was required that he should accept of this law, as the rule of the covenant which God made with him. And this he did two ways.

1. By the innate principles of light and obedience concreated with his nature. By these he absolutely and universally assented unto the law, as proposed with promises and threatenings, as good, holy, just, what was meet for God to require, what was equal and good unto himself.

2. By his acceptance of the commands concerning the tree of life, and that of the knowledge of good and evil, as the signs and pledges of this covenant. So was it established as a covenant between God and man, without the interposition of any mediator. This is the covenant of works, absolutely the old, or first covenant that God made with men. But this is not the covenant here intended. For,

1st. The covenant called afterwards the first, was διαθήκη, a 'testament.' So it is here called. It was such a covenant as was a testament also. Now, there can be no testament, but there must be death for the confirmation of it, ch. ix. 16. But in the making of the covenant with Adam, there was not the death of any thing, whence it might be called a testament. But there was the death of beasts in sacrifice in the confirmation of the covenant at Sinai, as we shall see afterwards. And it must be observed, that although I use the name of a covenant, as we have rendered the word διαθήκη, because the true signification of that word, will more properly occur unto us in another place; yet I do not understand thereby a covenant properly and strictly so called, but such a one as hath the nature of a testament also, wherein the good things of him that makes it, are bequeathed unto them for whom they are designed. Neither the word used constantly by the apostle in this argument, nor the design of his discourse, will admit of any other covenant to be understood in this place. Whereas, therefore, the first covenant made with Adam was in no sense a testament also, it cannot be here intended.

2dly. That first covenant made with Adam, had, as unto any benefit to be expected from it, with respect unto acceptance with God, life, and salvation, ceased long before, even at the entrance of sin. It was not abolished or abrogated by any act of God, as a law, but only was made weak and insufficient to its first end, as a covenant. God had provided a way for the salvation of sinners, declared in the first promise. When this is actually embraced, that first covenant ceaseth

towards them, as unto its curse, all its concerns as a covenant, and obligation unto sinless obedience, as the condition of life, because both of them are answered by the mediator of the new covenant. But as unto all those who receive not the grace tendered in the promise, it doth remain in full force and efficacy, not as a covenant, but as a law, and that because neither the obedience it requires, nor the curse which it threatens, are answered. Thence, if any man believeth not, the wrath of God abideth on him. For its commands and curse, depending on the necessary relation between God and man, with the righteousness of God as the Supreme Governor of mankind, they must be answered and fulfilled. Wherefore, it was never abrogated formally : but as all unbelievers are still obliged by it, and unto it must stand or fall, so it is perfectly fulfilled in all believers, not in their own persons, but in the person of their surety. ' God sending forth his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and condemning sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us,' Rom. viii. 3, 4. But as a covenant obliging unto personal, perfect, sinless obedience, as the condition of life, to be performed by themselves, so it ceased to be, long before that introduction of the new covenant which the apostle speaks of, that was promised in the latter days. But the other covenant here spoken of, was not removed or taken away, until this new covenant was actually established.

3dly. The church of Israel was never absolutely under the power of that covenant, as a covenant of life. For from the days of Abraham, the promise was given unto them and to their seed. And the apostle proves that no law could afterwards be given, or covenant made, that should disannul that promise, Gal. iii. 17. But had they been brought under the old covenant of works, it would have disannulled the promise. For that covenant and the promise, are diametrically opposite. And moreover, if they were under that covenant, they were all under the curse, and so perished eternally, which is openly false. For it is testified of them, that they pleased God by faith, and so were saved. But it is evident that the covenant intended, was a covenant wherein the church of Israel walked with God, until such a time as this better covenant was solemnly introduced. This is plainly declared in the ensuing context, especially in the close of the chapter, where, speaking of this former covenant, he says, it was become old, and so ready to disappear. Wherefore, it is not the covenant of works made with Adam, that is intended, when this other is said to be a better covenant.

Secondly. There were other federal transactions between God and the church, before the giving of the law on Mount Sinai. Two of them there were into which all the rest were resolved.

1. The first promise given to our first parents immediately after the fall. This had in it the nature of a covenant, grounded on a promise of grace, and requiring obedience in all that received the promise.

2. The promise given and sworn to Abraham, which is expressly called the covenant of God, and had the whole nature of a covenant in it, with a solemn outward seal appointed for its confirmation and establishment. Hereof we have treated at large on the sixth chapter.

Neither of these, nor any transaction between God and man that may be reduced to them, as explanations, renovations, or confirmations of them, are the first covenant here intended. For they are not only consistent with the new covenant, so as that there was no necessity to remove them out of the way for its introduction, but did indeed contain in them the essence and nature of it, and so were confirmed therein. Hence the Lord Christ himself is said to be a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers, Rom. xv. 8. As he was the mediator of the new covenant, he was so far from taking off from, or abolishing those promises, that it belonged to his office to confirm them. Wherefore,

Thirdly. The other covenant or testament here supposed, whereunto that whereof the Lord Christ was the mediator, is preferred, is none other but that which God made with the people of Israel on Mount Sinai. So it is expressly affirmed, ver. 9, 'The covenant which I made with your fathers in the day I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt.' This was that covenant which had all the institutions of worship annexed to it, ch. ix. 1—3, whereof we must treat afterwards more at large. With respect hereunto it is, that the Lord Christ is said to be the mediator of a better covenant, that is, of another distinct from it, and more excellent.

It remains to the exposition of the words, that we inquire what was this covenant, whereof our Lord Christ was the mediator, and what is here affirmed of it. This can be no other in general but that which we call the covenant of grace. And it is so called in opposition to that of works, which was made with us in Adam. For these two, grace, and works, do divide the ways of our relation to God, being diametrically opposite, and every way inconsistent, Rom. xi. 6. Of this covenant the Lord Christ was the mediator from the foundation of the world, namely, from the giving of the first promise, Rev. xiii. 8. For it was given on his interposition, and all the benefits of it depended on his future actual mediation. But here ariseth the first difficulty of the context, and that in two things. For,

1. If this covenant of grace was made from the beginning, and if the Lord Christ was the mediator of it from the first, then where is the privilege of the gospel state in opposition to the law, by virtue of this covenant? seeing that under the law also, the Lord Christ was the mediator of that covenant, which was from the beginning.

2. If it be the covenant of grace which is intended, and that be opposed to the covenant of works made with Adam, then the other covenant must be that covenant of works so made with Adam, which we have before disproved.

The answer hereunto, is in the word here used by the apostle concerning this new covenant, *νενομοθετηται*, whose meaning we must inquire into. I say therefore, that the apostle doth not here consider the new covenant absolutely, and as it was virtually administered from the foundation of the world, in the way of a promise. For as such it was consistent with that covenant made with the people in Sinai. And the apostle proves expressly, that the renovation of it made to Abraham, was no way abrogated by the giving of the law, Gal. iii. 17.

There was no interruption of its administration made by the introduction of the law. But he treats of such an establishment of the new covenant, as wherewith the old covenant made at Sinai was absolutely inconsistent, so that it was therefore to be removed out of the way. Wherefore he considers it here as it was actually completed, so as to bring along with it all the ordinances of worship which are proper to it, the dispensation of the Spirit in them, and all the spiritual privileges wherewith they are accompanied. It is now so brought in as to become the entire rule of the church's faith, obedience, and worship in all things.

This is the meaning of the word *νενομοθετηται*, 'established,' say we. But it is reduced into a fixed state of a law or ordinance. All the obedience required in it, all the worship appointed by it, all the privileges exhibited in it, and the grace administered with them, are all given for a statute, law, and ordinance to the church. That which before lay hid in promises, in many things obscure, the principal mysteries of it being a secret hid in God himself, was now brought to light; and that covenant, which had invisibly in the way of a promise, put forth its efficacy under types and shadows, was now solemnly sealed, ratified, and confirmed in the death and resurrection of Christ. It had before the confirmation of a promise, which is an oath; it had not the confirmation of a covenant, which is blood. That which before had no visible outward worship, proper and peculiar to it, is now made the only rule and instrument of worship to the whole church, nothing being to be admitted therein, but what belongs to it, and is appointed by it. This the apostle intends by *νενομοθετηται*, the 'legal establishment' of the new covenant, with all the ordinances of its worship. Hereon the other covenant was disannulled and removed, and not only the covenant itself, but all that system of sacred worship whereby it was administered. This was not done by the making of the covenant at first. Yea all this was superinduced into the covenant, as given out in a promise, and was consistent therewith. When the new covenant was given out only in the way of a promise, it did not introduce a worship and privileges expressive of it. Wherefore it was consistent with a form of worship, rites, and ceremonies, and those composed into a yoke of bondage which belonged not to it. And as these being added after its giving, did not overthrow its nature as a promise, so they were inconsistent with it, when it was completed as a covenant. For then all the worship of the church was to proceed from it, and to be conformed to it. Then it was established. Hence it follows, in answer to the second difficulty, that as a promise, it was opposed to the covenant of works; as a covenant, it was opposed to that in Sinai. This legalizing, or authoritative establishment of the new covenant, and the worship thereunto belonging, did effect this alteration.

In the last place, the apostle tells us whereon this establishment was made, and that is *ἐπὶ κρείττοσιν ἐπαγγελίαις*, 'on better promises.' For the better understanding hereof, we must consider somewhat of the original and use of divine promises, in our relation to God. And we may observe,

First. That every covenant between God and man, must be founded on and resolved into promises. Hence essentially a promise and a covenant are all one, and God calls an absolute promise founded on an absolute decree, his covenant, Gen. ix. 11. And his purpose for the continuation of the course of nature to the end of the world he calls his covenant with day and night, Jer. xxxiii. 20. The being and essence of a divine covenant lies in the promise. Hence are they called the covenants of promise, Eph. ii. 12. Such as are founded on and consist in promises. And it is necessary that so it should be. For,

1. The nature of God who maketh these covenants requireth that so it should be. It becometh his greatness and goodness in all his voluntary transactions with his creatures, to propose that to them, wherein their advantage, their happiness and blessedness doth consist. We inquire not how God may deal with his creatures as such; what he may absolutely require of them on the account of his own being, his absolute essential excellencies, with their universal dependence on him. Who can express or limit the sovereignty of God over his creatures? All the disputes about it are fond. We have no measures of what is infinite. May he not do with his own what he pleaseth? Are we not in his hands as clay in the hands of the potter? And whether he make or mar a vessel, who shall say to him, What doest thou? He giveth no account of his matters. But on supposition that he will condescend to enter into covenant with his creatures, and to come to agreement with them according to the terms of it, it becometh his greatness and goodness to give them promises as the foundation of it, wherein he proposeth to them the things wherein their blessedness and reward doth consist. For, 1st. Herein he proposeth himself to them as the eternal spring and fountain of all power and goodness. Had he treated with us merely by a law, he had therein only revealed his sovereign authority and holiness; the one in giving of the law, the other in the nature of it. But in promises he revealeth himself as the eternal spring of goodness and power. For the matter of all promises is somewhat that is good; and the communication of it depends on sovereign power. That God should so declare himself in his covenant, was absolutely necessary to direct and encourage the obedience of the covenanters. And he did so accordingly, Gen. xvii. 1, xv. 1. 2dly. Hereby he reserves the glory of the whole to himself. For although the terms of agreement which he proposeth between himself and us, be in their own nature holy, just, and good, which sets forth his praise and glory, yet if there were not something on his part, which hath no antecedent respect to any goodness, obedience, or desert in us, we should have wherein to glory in ourselves, which is inconsistent with the glory of God. But the matter of those promises wherein the covenant is founded, is free, undeserved, and without respect to any thing in us, whereby it may, in any sense, be procured. And so in the first covenant, which was given in a form of law, attended with a penal sanction, yet the foundation of it was in a promise of a free and undeserved reward, even of the eternal enjoyment of God, which no goodness or obedience in the creature could possibly merit the attain-

ment of. So that if a man should by virtue of any covenant be justified by works, though he might have whereof to glory before men, yet could he not glory before God, as the apostle declares, Rom. iv. 2, and that because the reward proposed in the promise, doth infinitely exceed the obedience performed.

2. It was also necessary on our part, that every divine covenant should be founded and established on promises. For there is no state wherein we may be taken into covenant with God, but it is supposed we are yet not arrived at that perfection and blessedness whereof our nature is capable, and which we cannot but desire. And therefore, when we come to heaven, and the full enjoyment of God, there shall be no use of any covenant any more, seeing we shall be in eternal rest in the enjoyment of all the blessedness whereof our nature is capable, and shall immutably adhere to God without any farther expectation. But whilst we are in the way, we have still some parts, yea some principal parts of our blessedness to desire, expect, and believe. So in the state of innocency, though it had all the perfection which a state of obedience according to law was capable of, yet did not the blessedness of eternal rest, for which we were made, consist therein. Now, whilst it is thus with us, we cannot but be desiring and looking after that full and complete happiness, which our nature cannot come to rest without. This, therefore, renders it necessary, that there should be a promise of it given as the foundation of the covenant, without which we should want our principal encouragement to obedience. And much more must it be so in the state of sin and apostasy from God. For we are now not only most remote from our utmost happiness, but involved in a condition of misery, without a deliverance from which, we cannot be any ways induced to give ourselves up unto covenant obedience. Wherefore, unless in the covenant we are prevented with promises of deliverance from our present state, and the enjoyment of future blessedness, no covenant could be of use or advantage unto us.

3. It is necessary from the nature of a covenant. For every covenant that is proposed unto men, and accepted by them, requires somewhat to be performed on their part, otherwise it is no covenant. But where any thing is required of them that accept of the covenant, or to whom it is proposed, it doth suppose that somewhat be promised on the behalf of them by whom the covenant is proposed, as the foundation of its acceptance, and the reason of the duties required in it. All this appears most evidently in the covenant of grace, which is here said to be established on promises; and that on two accounts. For,

First. At the same time that much is required of us in the way of duty and obedience, we are told in the Scripture, and find it by experience, that of ourselves we can do nothing. Wherefore, unless the precept of the covenant be founded in a promise of giving grace and spiritual strength unto us, whereby we may be enabled to perform those duties, the covenant can be of no benefit or advantage to us. And the want of this one consideration, that every covenant is founded in promises, and that the promises give life unto the precepts of it, hath perverted the minds of many to suppose an ability in ourselves of yielding obedience unto those precepts, without grace antecedently received to enable us thereunto, which overthrows the nature of the new covenant.

Secondly. As was observed, we are all actually guilty of sin before this covenant was made with us. Wherefore, unless there be a promise given of the pardon of sin, it is to no purpose to propose any new covenant terms unto us. For 'the wages of sin is death;' and we having sinned must die, whatever we do afterwards, unless our sins be pardoned. This, therefore, must be proposed unto us as the foundation of the covenant, or it will be of none effect. And herein lies the great difference between the promises of the covenant of works, and those of the covenant of grace. The first were only concerning things future, eternal life and blessedness upon the accomplishment of perfect obedience. Promises of present mercy and pardon it stood in need of none, it was not capable of. Nor had it any promises of giving more grace, or supplies of it; but man was wholly left unto what he had at first received. Hence the covenant was broken. But in the covenant of grace, all things are founded in promises of present mercy, and continual supplies of grace, as well as of future blessedness. Hence it becomes to be 'ordered in all things, and sure.' And this is the first thing that was to be declared, namely, that every divine covenant is established on promises.

Secondly. These promises are said to be better promises. The other covenant had its promises peculiar to it, with respect whereunto this is said to be established on better promises. It was indeed principally represented under a system of precepts, and those almost innumerable. But it had its promises also, into the nature whereof we shall immediately inquire. With respect, therefore, to them is the new covenant, whereof the Lord Christ was the mediator, said to be established on better promises. That it should be founded in promises, was necessary from its general nature as a covenant, and more necessary from its especial nature as a covenant of grace. These promises are said to be 'better promises' with respect to those of the old covenant. But this is so said as to include all other degrees of comparison. They are not only better than they, but they are positively good in themselves, and absolutely the best that God ever gave, or will give to the church. And what they are we must consider in our progress. And sundry things may be observed from these words.

Obs. VIII. There is infinite grace in every divine covenant, inasmuch as it is established on promises.—Infinite condescension it is in God, that he will enter into covenant with dust and ashes, with poor worms of the earth. And herein lies the spring of all grace, from whence all the streams of it do flow. And the first expression of it is in laying the foundation of it in some undeserved promises. And this was that which became the goodness and greatness of his nature, the means whereby we are brought to adhere to him in faith, hope, trust, and obedience, till we come to the enjoyment of him. For that is the use of promises, to keep us in adherence to God, as the first original and spring of all goodness, and the ultimate satisfactory reward of our souls, 2 Cor. vii. 1.

Obs. IX. The promises of the covenant of grace are better than those of any other covenant; as for many other reasons, so especially because the grace of them prevents any condition or qualification on our part.—I do not say the covenant of grace is absolute without

conditions, if by conditions we intend the duties of obedience which God requireth of us in and by virtue of that covenant: but this I say, the principal promises thereof, are not in the first place remunerative of our obedience in the covenant, but efficaciously assumptive of us into covenant, and establishing or confirming in the covenant. The covenant of works had its promises, but they were all remunerative, respecting an antecedent obedience in us; (so were all those which were peculiar to the covenant of Sinai.) They were indeed also of grace, in that the reward did infinitely exceed the merit of our obedience. But yet they all supposed it, and the subject of them was formally reward only. In the covenant of grace it is not so. For sundry of the promises thereof, are the means of our being taken into covenant, of our entering into covenant with God. The first covenant absolutely was established on promises, in that when men were actually taken into it, they were encouraged to obedience by the promises of a future reward. But these promises, namely of the pardon of sin, and writing of the law in our hearts, which the apostle expressly insisteth on as the peculiar promises of this covenant, do take place and are effectual, antecedently to our covenant obedience. For although faith be required in order of nature, antecedently to our actual receiving of the pardon of sin, yet is that faith itself wrought in us by the grace of the promise; and so its precedency to pardon respects only the order that God hath appointed in the communication of the benefits of the covenant, and intends not that the pardon of sin is the reward of our faith.

This entrance hath the apostle made into his discourse of the two covenants, which he continues to the end of the chapter. But the whole is not without its difficulties. Many things in particular will occur to us in our progress, which may be considered in their proper places. In the meantime, there are some things in general which may be here discoursed, by the determination of which much light will be communicated to what doth ensue.

First, therefore, the apostle doth evidently in this place dispute concerning two covenants, or two testaments, comparing the one with the other, and declaring the disannulling of the one by the introduction and establishment of the other. What these two covenants, in general, are, we have declared, namely, that made with the church of Israel at Mount Sinai, and that made with us in the gospel; not as absolutely the covenant of grace, but as actually established in the death of Christ, with all the worship that belongs to it.

Here then ariseth a difference of no small importance, namely, whether these are indeed two distinct covenants, as to the essence and substance of them, or only different ways of the dispensation and administration of the same covenant. And the reason of the difficulty lieth herein. We must grant one of these three things.

1. That either the covenant of grace was in force under the Old Testament; or,

2. That the church was saved without it, or without any benefit by Jesus Christ, who is the mediator of it alone; or,

3. That they all perished everlastingly. And neither of the two latter can be admitted.

Some indeed in these latter days have revived the old Pelagian imagination, that before the law men were saved by the conduct of natural light and reason, and under the law by the directive doctrines, precepts, and sacrifices thereof, without any respect to the Lord Christ, or his mediation in another covenant. But I shall not here contend with them, as having elsewhere sufficiently refuted these imaginations. Wherefore, I shall take it here for granted, that no man was ever saved but by virtue of the new covenant and the mediation of Christ therein.

Suppose then that this new covenant of grace was extant and effectual under the Old Testament, so as the church was saved by virtue thereof and the mediation of Christ therein, how could it be that there should at the same time be another covenant between God and them, of a different nature from this, accompanied with other promises and other effects?

On this consideration it is said, that the two covenants mentioned, the new and the old, were not indeed two distinct covenants, as to their essence and substance, but only different administrations of the same covenant, called two covenants from some different outward solemnities and duties of worship attending of them. To clear this, it must be observed,

1. That by the old covenant, the original covenant of works made with Adam and all mankind in him, is not intended. For this is undoubtedly a covenant different in the essence and substance of it from the new.

2. By the new covenant, not the new covenant absolutely and originally as given in the first promise, is intended; but in its complete gospel administration, when it was actually established by the death of Christ, as administered in and by the ordinances of the New Testament. This, with the covenant of Sinai, were, as most say, but different administrations of the same covenant.

But on the other hand, there is such express mention made, not only in this, but in sundry other places of the Scripture also, of two distinct covenants or testaments, and such different natures, properties, and effects ascribed to them, as seem to constitute two distinct covenants. This therefore we must inquire into; and shall first declare what is agreed to by those who are sober in this matter, though they differ in their judgments about this question, Whether two distinct covenants, or only a twofold administration of the same covenant, be intended. And indeed there is so much agreed on, as that what remains seems rather to be a difference about the expression of the same truth, than any real contradiction about the things themselves. For,

1. It is agreed that the way of reconciliation with God, of justification and salvation, was always one and the same, and that from the giving of the first promise, none was ever justified or saved but by the new covenant, and Jesus Christ the mediator thereof. The foolish imagination before mentioned, that men were saved before the giving of the law by following the guidance of the light of nature, and after giving of the law, by obedience to the directions thereof, is rejected by all that are sober, as destructive of the Old Testament and of the New.

2. That the writings of the Old Testament, namely, the law, psalms, and prophets, do contain and declare the doctrine of justification and salvation by Christ; this the church of old believed, and walked with God in the faith thereof. This is undeniably proved, in that the doctrine mentioned is frequently confirmed in the New Testament, by testimonies taken out of the Old.

3. That by the covenant of Sinai, as properly so called, separated from its figurative relation to the covenant of grace, none was ever eternally saved.

4. That the use of all the institutions whereby the old covenant was administered, was to represent and direct to Jesus Christ and his mediation.

These things being granted, the only way of life and salvation by Jesus Christ under the Old Testament and the New is secured, which is the substance of the truth wherein we are now concerned. On these grounds we may proceed with our inquiry.

The judgment of most reformed divines is, that the church under the Old Testament, had the same promise of Christ, the same interest in him by faith, remission of sins, reconciliation with God, justification and salvation by the same way and means, that believers have under the New. And whereas the essence and the substance of the covenant consists in these things, they are not to be said to be under another covenant, but only a different administration of it. But this was so different from that which is established in the gospel after the coming of Christ, that it hath the appearance and name of another covenant. And the differences between these two administrations may be reduced to the ensuing heads.

First. It consisted in *the way and manner* of the declaration of the mystery of the love and will of God in Christ; of the work of reconciliation and redemption, with our justification by faith. For herein the gospel, wherein life and immortality are brought to light, doth in plainness, clearness, and evidence, much excel the administration and declaration of the same truths under the law. And the greatness of the privilege of the church herein is not easily expressed. For hereby 'with open face we behold the glory of God in a glass, and are changed into the same image,' 2 Cor. iii. 18. The man whose eyes the Lord Christ opened, Mark viii. 23, 24, represents these two states. When he first touched him, his eyes were opened, and he saw, but he saw nothing clearly, whence, when he looked, he said, 'I see men as trees walking,' ver. 24. But on his second touch, he saw every man clearly, ver. 25. They had their sight under the Old Testament, and the object was proposed to them, but at a great distance, with such an interposition of mists, clouds, and shadows, as that they saw men like trees walking, nothing clearly and perfectly. But now, under the gospel, the object, which is Christ, being brought near to us, and all clouds and shadows being departed, we do or may see all things clearly. When a traveller, in his way on downs or hills, is encompassed with a thick mist and fog, though he be in his way, yet he is uncertain, and nothing is presented to him in its proper shape and distance; things near seem to be afar off, and things afar off to be near, and every thing hath, though not a false, yet an uncertain appear-

ance. Let the sun break forth and scatter the mists and fogs that are about him, and immediately every thing appears quite in another shape to him, so as indeed he is ready to think he is not where he was. His way is plain, he is certain of it, and all the region about lies evident under his eye, yet is there no alteration made but in the removal of the mists and clouds that interrupted his sight. So was it with them under the law. The types and shadows in which they were inclosed, and which were the only medium they had to view spiritual things in, represented them not to them clearly and in their proper shape. But they being now removed by the rising of the Sun of righteousness with healing in his wings, in the dispensation of the gospel, the whole mystery of God in Christ is clearly manifested to them that do believe. And the greatness of this privilege of the gospel above the law, is inexpressible; whereof, as I suppose, we must speak somewhat afterwards..

Secondly. In the *plentiful communication of grace* unto the community of the church. For now it is that we receive grace for grace, or a plentiful effusion of it by Jesus Christ. There was grace given in an eminent manner unto many holy persons under the Old Testament, and all true believers had true, real, saving grace, communicated unto them. But the measures of grace in the true church under the New Testament, do exceed those of the community of the church under the Old. And therefore, as God winked at some things in them, as polygamy and the like, which are expressly and severely interdicted under the New, nor are consistent with the present administrations of it, so are sundry duties, as those of self-denial, readiness to bear the cross, to forsake houses, lands, and habitations, more expressly enjoined unto us than unto them. And the obedience which God requireth in any covenant, or administration of it, is proportionable to the strength which the administration of that covenant doth exhibit. And if those who profess the gospel do content themselves without any interest in this privilege of it, if they endeavour not for a share in that plentiful effusion of grace, which doth accompany its present administration, the gospel itself will be of no other use unto them, but to increase and aggravate their condemnation.

Thirdly. In the *manner of our access unto God*. Herein much of all that is called religion doth consist. For hereon doth all our outward worship of God depend. And in this the advantages of the gospel administration of the covenant, above that of the law, is in all things very eminent. Our access now to God is immediate by Jesus Christ, with liberty and boldness, as we shall afterwards declare. Those under the law were immediately conversant in their whole worship, about outward typical things, the tabernacle, the altar, the ark, the mercy-seat, and the like obscure representations of the presence of God. Besides, the manner of the making the covenant with them at Mount Sinai, filled them with fear, and brought them into bondage, so as they had comparatively a servile frame of spirit, in all their holy worship.

Fourthly. In the *way of worship required under each administration*. For under that which was legal, it seemed good unto God to appoint

a great number of outward rites, ceremonies, and observances; and these, as they were dark in their signification, as also in their use and ends, so were they, by reason of their nature, number, and severe penalties, under which they were enjoined, grievous and burdensome to be observed. But the way of worship under the gospel is spiritual, rational, and plainly subservient unto the ends of the covenant itself, so as that the use, ends, benefits, and advantages of it, are evident unto all.

Fifthly. In the extent of the dispensation of the grace of God. For this is greatly enlarged under the gospel. For under the Old Testament it was, upon the matter, confined unto the posterity of Abraham according to the flesh. But under the New Testament it extends itself unto all nations under heaven.

Sundry other things are usually added by our divines unto the same purpose. See Calvin. Institut. lib. ii. cap. 11. Martyr. Loc. Com. loc. 16. sect. 2. Bucan. loc. 22. &c.

The Lutherans, on the other side, insist on two arguments to prove, that not a twofold administration of the same covenant, but that two covenants substantially distinct, are intended in this discourse of the apostle.

First. Because in the Scripture they are often so called, and compared with one another, and sometimes opposed unto one another; the first and the last, the new and the old.

Secondly. Because the covenant of grace in Christ is eternal, immutable, always the same, obnoxious unto no alteration, no change or abrogation; neither can these things be spoken of it with respect unto any administration of it, as they are spoken of the old covenant.

To state our thoughts aright in this matter, and to give what light we can unto the truth, the things ensuing may be observed.

First. When we speak of the old covenant, we intend not the covenant of works made with Adam, and his whole posterity in him, concerning which there is no difference or difficulty, whether it be a distinct covenant from the new or not.

Secondly. When we speak of the new covenant, we do not intend the covenant of grace absolutely, as though that were not in being and efficacy, before the introduction of that which is promised in this place. For it was always the same as to the substance of it from the beginning. It passed through the whole dispensation of times before the law, and under the law, of the same nature and efficacy, unalterable, everlasting, ordered in all things and sure. All who contend about these things, the Socinians only excepted, do grant that the covenant of grace considered absolutely, that is, the promise of grace in and by Jesus Christ, was the only way and means of salvation unto the church, from the first entrance of sin. But for two reasons it is not expressly called a covenant, without respect unto any other things, nor was it so under the Old Testament. When God renewed the promise of it unto Abraham, he is said to make a covenant with him, and he did so, but it was with respect unto other things, especially the proceeding of the promised Seed from his loins. But absolutely, under the Old Testament, it consisted only in a promise, and as such

only is proposed in the Scripture, Acts ii. 39; Heb. vi. 14—16. The apostle indeed says, that the covenant was confirmed of God in Christ, before the giving of the law, Gal. iii. 17. And so it was not absolutely in itself, but in the promise and benefits of it. The *νομοθεσία*, or full legal establishment of it, whence it became formally a covenant unto the whole church, was future only, and a promise under the Old Testament. For it wanted two things thereunto.

1. It wanted its solemn confirmation and establishment by the blood of the only sacrifice which belonged unto it. Before this was done in the death of Christ, it had not the formal nature of a covenant or a testament, as our apostle proves, ch. ix. 15—23. For neither, as he shows in that place, would the law given at Sinai have been a covenant, had it not been confirmed with the blood of sacrifices. Wherefore, the promise was not before a formal and solemn covenant.

2. This was wanting, that it was not the spring, rule, and measure of all the worship of the church. This doth belong unto every covenant, properly so called, that God makes with the church, that it be the entire rule of all the worship that God requires of it, which is that which they are to restipulate in their entrance into covenant with God. But so the covenant of grace was not under the Old Testament. For God did require of the church many duties of worship that did not belong thereunto. But now, under the New Testament, this covenant, with its own seals and appointments, is the only rule and measure of all acceptable worship. Wherefore, the new covenant promised in the Scripture, and here opposed unto the old, is not the promise of grace, mercy, life, and salvation, by Christ absolutely considered, but as it had the formal nature of a covenant given unto it, in its establishment by the death of Christ, the procuring cause of all its benefits, and the declaring of it to be the only rule of worship and obedience unto the church. So that although by the covenant of grace, we oft-times understand no more but the way of life, grace, mercy, and salvation by Christ; yet, by the new covenant, we intend its actual establishment in the death of Christ, with that blessed way of worship which by it is settled in the church.

Thirdly. Whilst the church enjoyed all the spiritual benefits of the promise, wherein the substance of the covenant of grace was contained, before it was confirmed and made the sole rule of worship unto the church, it was not inconsistent with the holiness and wisdom of God, to bring it under any other covenant, or prescribe unto it what forms of worship he pleased. It was not so, I say, upon these three suppositions.

1. That this covenant did not disannul or make ineffectual the promise that was given before, but that that doth still continue the only means of life and salvation. And that this was so, our apostle proves at large, Gal. iii. 17—19.

2. That this other covenant, with all the worship contained in it, or required by it, did not divert from, but direct and lead unto the future establishment of the promise, in the solemnity of a covenant by the ways mentioned. And that the covenant made in Sinai, with all its ordinances, did so, the apostle proves likewise in the place before mentioned, as also in this whole Epistle.

3. That it be of present use and advantage unto the church in its present condition. This the apostle acknowledgeth to be a great objection against the use and efficacy of the promise under the Old Testament, as unto life and salvation; namely, to what end, then, serves the giving of the law? whereunto he answers, by showing the necessity and use of the law unto the church in its then present condition, Gal. iii. 17.

Fourthly. These things being observed, we may consider that the Scripture doth plainly and expressly make mention of two testaments or covenants, and distinguish between them in such a way, as what is spoken can hardly be accommodated unto a twofold administration of the same covenant. The one is mentioned and described, Exod. xxiv. 3—8; Deut. v. 2—5; namely, the covenant that God made with the people of Israel in Sinai; and which is commonly called the covenant, where the people under the Old Testament are said to keep or break God's covenant, which for the most part is spoken with respect unto that worship which was peculiar thereunto. The other is promised, Jer. xxxi. 31—34, xxxii. 40, which is the new gospel covenant as before explained, mentioned Matt. xxvi. 28; Mark xiv. 24. And these two covenants or testaments are compared one with the other, and opposed one unto another, 2 Cor. iii. 6—9; Gal. iv. 24—26; Heb. vii. 22, ix. 15—19.

These two we call the old and the new testament. Only it must be observed, that in this argument, by the old testament, we do not understand the books of the Old Testament, or the writings of Moses, the psalms and the prophets, or the oracles of God committed then to the church. I confess they are once so called, 2 Cor. iii. 14, 'The vail remaineth untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament,' that is, the books of it. Unless we shall say that the apostle intendeth only the reading of the things which concern the old testament in the Scripture. For this old covenant or testament whatever it be, is abrogated and taken away, as the apostle expressly proves. But the word of God in the books of the Old Testament abideth for ever. And those writings are called the Old Testament, or the books of the Old Testament, not as though they contained in them, nothing but what belongeth to the old covenant, for they contain the doctrine of the New Testament also. But they are so termed, because they were committed to the church whilst the old covenant was in force, as the rule and law of its worship and obedience.

Fifthly. Wherefore we must grant two distinct covenants, rather than a twofold administration of the same covenant merely, to be intended. We must, I say, do so, provided always that the way of reconciliation and salvation was the same under both. But it will be said, and with great pretence of reason, for it is that which is the sole foundation they all build on, who allow only a twofold administration of the same covenant, that this being the principal end of a divine covenant, if the way of reconciliation and salvation be the same under both, then indeed are they for the substance of them but one. And I grant that this would inevitably follow, if it were so equally by virtue of them both. If reconciliation and salvation by Christ were to be obtained, not only under the old covenant, but by virtue thereof, then it

must be the same for substance with the new. But this is not so; for no reconciliation with God, nor salvation, could be obtained, by virtue of the old covenant, or the administration of it, as our apostle disputes at large, though all believers were reconciled, justified, and saved by virtue of the promise, whilst they were under that covenant. As, therefore, I have shown in what sense the covenant of grace is called the new covenant, in this distinction and opposition, so I shall propose sundry things which relate to the nature of the first covenant, which manifest it to have been a distinct covenant, and not a mere administration of the covenant of grace.

First. This covenant, called the old covenant, was never intended to be of itself the absolute rule and law of life and salvation unto the church, but was made with a particular design, and with respect unto particular ends. This the apostle proves undeniably in this Epistle, especially in the chapter foregoing, and those two that follow. Hence it follows, that it could abrogate or disannul nothing, which God at any time before had given, as a general rule unto the church. For that which is particular, cannot abrogate any thing that was general, and before it; as that which is general doth abrogate all antecedent particulars, as the new covenant doth abrogate the old. And this we must consider in both the instances belonging hereunto. For,

First. God had before given the covenant of works, or of perfect obedience, unto all mankind, in the law of creation. But this covenant at Sinai did not abrogate or disannul that covenant, nor any way fulfil it; and the reason is, because it was never intended to come in the place or room thereof, as a covenant, containing an entire rule of all the faith and obedience of the whole church. God did not intend in it to abrogate the covenant of works, and to substitute this in the place thereof; yea, in sundry things it reinforced, established, and confirmed that covenant. For,

1. It revived, declared, and expressed, all the commands of that covenant in the decalogue. For that is nothing but a divine summary of the law, written in the heart of man at his creation. And herein the dreadful manner of its delivery or promulgation, with its writings in tables of stone, are also to be considered. For in them the nature of that first covenant, with its inexorableness, as unto perfect obedience, was represented. And because none could answer its demands, or comply with it therein, it was called the ministration of death causing fear and bondage, 2 Cor. iii. 7.

2. It revived the sanction of the first covenant, in the curse or sentence of death, which it denounced against all transgressors. Death was the penalty of the transgression of the first covenant, 'In the day thou eatest, thou shalt die the death.' And this sentence was revived and represented anew in the curse wherewith this covenant was ratified: 'Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them,' Deut. xxvii. 26; Gal. iii. 10. For the design of God in it was to bind a sense of that curse on the consciences of men, until He came by whom it was taken away, as the apostle declares, Gal. iii. 14—16.

3. It revived the promise of that covenant, that of eternal life upon perfect obedience. So the apostle tells us, that Moses thus describeth the righteousness of the law, that 'the man which doth these things shall live by them,' Rom. x. 5, as he doth, Lev. xviii. 5. Now this is no other, but the covenant of works revived. Nor had this covenant of Sinai any promise of eternal life annexed unto it, as such, but only the promise inseparable from the covenant of works which it revived, saying, Do this and live. Hence it is, that when our apostle disputeth against justification by the law, or by the works of the law, he doth not intend the works peculiar unto the covenant of Sinai, such as were the rites and ceremonies of the worship then instituted; but he intends also the works of the first covenant, which alone had the promise of life annexed unto them.

And hence it follows also, that it was not a new covenant of works established in the place of the old, for the absolute rule of faith and obedience unto the whole church; for then would it have abrogated and taken away that covenant, and all the force of it, which it did not.

Secondly. The other instance is in the promise. This also went before it, neither was it abrogated or disannulled by the introduction of this covenant. This promise was given unto our first parents immediately after the entrance of sin, and was established as containing the only way and means of the salvation of sinners. Now, this promise could not be abrogated by the introduction of this covenant, and a new way of justification and salvation be thereby established. For the promise being given out in general for the whole church, as containing the way appointed by God for righteousness, life, and salvation, it could not be disannulled or changed, without a change and alteration in the counsels of Him, with whom is no variableness or shadow of turning. Much less could this be effected by a particular covenant, such as that was, when it was given as a general and eternal rule.

Secondly. But whereas there was an especial promise given unto Abraham, in the faith whereof he became the father of the faithful, he being their progenitor, it should seem that this covenant did wholly disannul or supersede that promise, and take off the church of his posterity from building on that foundation, and to fix them wholly on this new covenant now made with them. So saith Moses, 'The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us alive here this day,' Deut. v. 3. God made not this covenant on Mount Sinai, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but with the people then present, and their posterity, as he declares, Deut. xxix. 14, 15. This therefore should seem to take them off wholly from that promise made to Abraham, and so to disannul it. But that this it did not, nor could do, the apostle strictly proves, Gal. iii. 17—22. Yea, it did divers ways establish that promise, both as first given, and as afterwards confirmed with the oath of God unto Abraham, two especially.

1. It declared the impossibility of obtaining reconciliation and peace with God, any other way but by the promise. For representing the commands of the covenant of works, requiring perfect sinless obedience, under the penalty of the curse, it convinced men that this was

no way for sinners to seek for life and salvation by. And herewith it so urged the consciences of men, that they could have no rest nor peace in themselves, but what the promise would afford them, whereunto they saw a necessity of betaking themselves.

2. By representing the ways and means of the accomplishment of the promise, and of that whereon all the efficacy of it, unto the justification and salvation of sinners, doth depend. This was the death, blood-shedding, oblation, or sacrifice of Christ the promised seed. This all its offerings and ordinances of worship directed unto; as his incarnation, with the inhabitation of God in his human nature, was typified by the tabernacle and temple. Wherefore it was so far from disannulling the promise, or diverting the minds of the people of God from it, that by all means it established it, and led unto it. But,

Thirdly. It will be said, as was before observed, that if it did neither abrogate the first covenant of works, and come in the room thereof, nor disannul the promise made unto Abraham, then unto what end did it serve, or what benefit did the church receive thereby? I answer,

1. There hath been, with respect unto God's dealing with the church, *οικονομία των καιρων*, a certain dispensation and disposition of times and seasons, reserved unto the sovereign will and pleasure of God. Hence, from the beginning he revealed himself, *πολυτροπως* and *πολυμερως*, 'as seemed good unto him,' ch. i. 1. And this dispensation of times had a *πληρωμα*, 'a fulness,' assigned unto it, wherein all things, namely, that belong unto the revelation and communication of God unto the church, should come to their height, and have as it were the last hand given unto them. This was the sending of Christ as the apostle declares, Eph. i. 10, 'that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might bring all unto an head in Christ.' Until this season came, God dealt variously with the church, *εν ποικιλη σοφια*, 'in manifold or various wisdom,' according as he saw it needful and useful for it, in that season which it was to pass through, before the fulness of times came. Of this nature was his entrance into the covenant with the church at Sinai, the reasons whereof we shall immediately inquire into. In the meantime, if we had no other answer to this inquiry, but only this, that in the order of the disposal or dispensation of the seasons of the church, before the fulness of times came, God in his manifold wisdom saw it necessary for the then present state of the church in that season, we may well acquiesce therein. But,

2. The apostle acquaints us in general with the ends of this dispensation of God, Gal. iii. 19—24, 'Wherefore then serveth the law? it was added, because of the transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made, and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not of one, but God is one. Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law,

shut up unto the faith, which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster, to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.' Much light might be given unto the mind of the Holy Ghost in these words, and that in things not commonly discerned by expositors, if we should divert unto the opening of them. I will at present only mark from them what is unto our present purpose.

There is a double inquiry made by the apostle with respect unto the law, or the covenant of Sinai.

1. Unto what end in general it served. 2. Whether it were not contrary to the promise of God. Unto both these, the apostle answereth from the nature, office, and work of that covenant. For there were, as hath been declared, two things in it.

1st. A revival and representation of the first covenant of works, with its sanction and curse.

2dly. A direction of the church unto the accomplishment of the promise. From these two doth the apostle frame his answer unto the double inquiry, laid down.

First. Unto the first inquiry, unto what end it served? he answers, it was added because of transgressions. The promise being given, there seems to have been no need of it; why then was it added to it at that season? 'it was added because of transgressions.' The fullness of time was not yet come wherein the promise was to be fulfilled, accomplished, and established, as the only covenant wherein the church was to walk with God; or the seed was not yet come, as the apostle here speaks, to whom the promise was made. In the meantime, some order must be taken about sin and transgression, that all the order of things appointed of God, might not be overflowed by them. And this was done two ways by the law.

1. By reviving the commands of the covenant of works, with the sanction of death, it put an awe on the minds of men, and set bounds unto their lusts, that they should not dare to run forth into that excess to which they were naturally inclined. It was therefore 'added because of transgressions,' that in the declaration of God's severity against them, some bounds might be fixed unto them; for the knowledge of sin is by the law.

2. To shut up unbelievers, and such as would not seek for righteousness, life, and salvation by the promise, under the power of the covenant of works, and curse attending it. It concluded, or shut up all under sin, saith the apostle, Gal. iii. 22. This was the end of the law, for this end was it added, as it gave a revival unto the covenant of works.

Secondly. Unto the second inquiry, which ariseth out of this supposition, namely, that the law did convince of sin, and condemn for sin, which is, whether it be not then contrary to the grace of God? the apostle, in like manner, returns a double answer, taken from the second use of the law before insisted on, with respect unto the promise. And,

1. He says, that although the law doth thus rebuke sin, convince of sin, and condemn for sin, so setting bounds unto transgressions

and transgressors, yet did God never intend it as a means to give life and righteousness, nor was it able so to do. The end of the promise was to give righteousness, justification, and salvation, all by Christ, to whom and concerning whom it was made. But this was not the end for which the law was revived in the covenant of Sinai. For although in itself it requires a perfect righteousness, and gives a promise of life thereon, 'he that doth these things he shall live in them;' yet it could give neither righteousness nor life, unto any in the state of sin; see Rom. viii. 3, x. 4. Wherefore the promise and the law having divers ends, they are not contrary to one another.

2. The law, saith he, had a great respect unto the promise, and was given of God for this very end, that it might lead and direct men unto Christ, which is sufficient to answer the question proposed at the beginning of this discourse, about the ends of this covenant, and the advantage which the church received thereby.

What hath been spoken, may suffice to declare the nature of this covenant in general; and two things do here evidently follow, wherein the substance of the whole truth contended for by the apostle doth consist.

1. That whilst the covenant of grace was contained and proposed only in the promise, before it was solemnly confirmed in the blood and sacrifice of Christ, and so legalized or established as the only rule of the worship of the church, the introduction of this other covenant on Sinai did not constitute a new way or means of righteousness, life, and salvation; but believers sought for them by the covenant of grace alone, as declared in the promise. This follows evidently upon what we have discoursed, and it secures absolutely that great fundamental truth, which the apostle in this and all his other epistles so earnestly contendeth for; namely, that there neither is, nor ever was, either righteousness, justification, life, or salvation, to be attained by any law, or the works of it, (for this covenant at Mount Sinai comprehended every law that God ever gave unto the church,) but by Christ alone, and faith in him.

2. That whereas, when this covenant was introduced in the pleasure of God, there was prescribed with it a form of outward worship, suited to that dispensation of times, and to the then present state of the church; so, upon the introduction of the new covenant in the fulness of times, to be the rule of all intercourse between God and the church, both that covenant and all its worship must be disannulled. This is that which the apostle proves with all sorts of arguments, manifesting the great advantage of the church thereby. These things, I say do evidently follow on the preceding discourses, and are the main truths contended for by the apostle.

Fourthly. There remaineth one thing more only to be considered, before we enter on the comparison between the two covenants, here directed unto by the apostle. And this is, how this first covenant came to be an especial covenant unto that people; wherein we shall manifest the reason of its introduction at that season. And unto this end sundry things are to be considered concerning that people, and the church of God in them, with whom this covenant was made, which will farther evidence both the nature, use, and necessity of it.

First. This people were the posterity of Abraham unto whom the promise was made, that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. Wherefore, from among them was the promised seed to be raised up in the fulness of time, or its proper season. From among them was the Son of God to take on him the seed of Abraham. To this end sundry things were necessary.

1. That they should have a certain abiding place or country, which they might freely inhabit, distinct from other nations, and under a rule or sceptre of their own. So it is said of them, 'that the people should dwell alone, and not to be reckoned among the nations,' Num. xxiii. 9, and 'the Sceptre was not to depart from them until Shiloh came,' Gen. xlix. 10. For God had regard unto his own glory in his faithfulness, as unto his word and oath given unto Abraham, not only that they should be accomplished, but that their accomplishment should be evident and conspicuous. But if this posterity of Abraham, from among whom the promised seed was to rise, had been, as it is at this day with them, scattered abroad on the face of the earth, mixed with all nations, and under their power, although God might have accomplished his promise really in raising up Christ from among some of his posterity, yet could it not be proved or evidenced that he had so done, by reason of the confusion and mixture of the people with others. Wherefore God provided a land and country for them, which they might inhabit by themselves, and as their own, even the land of Canaan. And this was so suited unto all the ends of God towards that people, as might be declared in sundry instances, that God is said, to 'have espied this land out for them,' Ezek. xx. 6. He chose it out as most meet for his purpose, towards that people, of all lands under heaven.

2. That there should be always kept among them, an open confession and visible representation of the end for which they were so separated from all nations of the world. They were not to dwell in the land of Canaan, merely for secular ends, and to make, as it were, a dumb show: but as they were there maintained and preserved to evidence the faithfulness of God, in bringing forth the promised seed in the fulness of time; so there was to be a testimony kept up among them unto that end of God whereunto they were preserved. This was the end of all their ordinances of worship, of the tabernacle, priesthood, sacrifices, and ordinances, which were all appointed by Moses on the command of God, for a 'testimony of those things which should be spoken afterwards,' Heb. iii. 5. These things were necessary in the first place, with respect unto the ends of God towards that people.

Secondly. It becomes not the wisdom, holiness, and sovereignty of God, to call any people into an especial relation unto himself, to do them good in an eminent and peculiar manner, and then to suffer them to live at their pleasure, without any regard unto what he had done for them. Wherefore, having granted unto this people, those great privileges of the land of Canaan, and the ordinances of worship relating unto the great end mentioned, he moreover prescribed unto them laws, rules, and terms of obedience, whereon they should hold and enjoy

that land, with all the privileges annexed unto the possession thereof. And these are both expressed, and frequently inculcated in the repetition and promises of the law. But yet, in the prescription of these terms, God reserved to himself the sovereignty of dealing with them. For, had he left them to stand or fall, absolutely by the terms prescribed unto them, they might and would have utterly forfeited both the land, and all the privileges they enjoyed therein. And had it so fallen out, then the great end of God in preserving them a separate people until the seed should come, and in presenting a representation thereof among them, had been frustrated. Wherefore, although he punished them for their transgressions, according to the threatenings of the law, yet would he not bring the *קללה*, or 'curse of the law' upon them, and utterly cast them off, until his great end was accomplished, Mal. iv. 4—6.

Thirdly. God would not take this people off from the promise, because his church was among them, and they could neither please God, nor be accepted with him, but by faith therein. But yet they were to be dealt withal, according as it was meet. For they were generally a people of a hard heart, and stiff-necked, lifted up with an opinion of their own righteousness and worth above others. This, Moses endeavoureth, by all manner of reasons and instances to the contrary, to take them off from, in the book of Deuteronomy. Yet was it not effected among the generality of them, nor is it to this day. For, in the midst of all their wickedness and misery, they still trust to, and boast of their own righteousness, and will have it, that God hath an especial obligation unto them on that account. For this cause God saw it necessary, and it pleased him to put a grievous and heavy yoke upon them, to subdue the pride of their spirits, and to cause them to breathe after deliverance. This, the apostle Peter calls a yoke which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear, Acts xv. 10, that is, with peace, ease, and rest; which, therefore, the Lord Christ invited them to seek for, in himself alone, Matt. xi. 29, 30. And this yoke that God put on them, consisted in these three things.

1. In a multitude of precepts, hard to be understood, and difficult to be observed. The present Jews reckon up six hundred and thirteen of them, about the sense of most of which they dispute endlessly among themselves. But the truth is, since the days of the pharisees, they have increased their own yoke, and made obedience unto their law, in any tolerable manner, altogether unpracticable. It were easy to manifest, for instance, that no man under heaven ever did, or ever can keep the Sabbath, according to the rules they give about it in their Talmuds. And they generally scarce observe one of them themselves. But in the law, as given by God himself, it is certain, that there were a multitude of arbitrary precepts, and those in themselves, not accompanied with any spiritual advantages, as our apostle shows, ch. ix. 9, 10, only they were obliged to perform them, by a mere sovereign act of power and authority.

2. In the severity wherewith the observance of all those precepts were enjoined them. And this was the threatening of death. For he that despised Moses' law, died without mercy, and every trans-

gression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward. Hence was their complaint of old, 'Behold we die, we perish, we all perish; whosoever cometh near unto the tabernacle of the Lord, shall die; shall we be consumed with dying?' Num. xvii. 12, 13. And the curse solemnly denounced against every one that confirmed not all things written in the law, was continually before them.

3. In a spirit of bondage unto fear. This was administered in the giving and dispensation of the law, even as a spirit of liberty and power is administered in and by the gospel. And as this respected their present obedience, and manner of its performance, so in particular, it regardeth death not yet conquered by Christ. Hence our apostle affirms, that through fear of death, they were all their lifetime subject unto bondage. This state God brought them into, partly to subdue the pride of their hearts trusting in their own righteousness, and partly to cause them to look out earnestly after the promised deliverer.

Fourthly. Into this estate and condition, God brought them by a solemn covenant, confirmed by mutual consent between him and them. The tenure, force, and solemn ratification of this covenant is expressed, Exod. xxiv. 3—8. Unto the terms and conditions of this covenant, was the whole church obliged indispensably on pain of extermination, until all was accomplished, Mal. iv. 4—6. Unto this covenant belonged the decalogue, with all precepts of moral obedience, thence educated. So also did the laws of political rule, established among them, and the whole system of religious worship, given unto them. All these laws were brought within the verge of this covenant, and were the matter of it. And it had especial promises and threatenings annexed unto it as such, whereof none did exceed the bounds of the land of Canaan. For even many of the laws of it, were such as obliged nowhere else. Such was the law of the Sabbatical year, and all their sacrifices. There was sin and obedience in them, or about them, in the land of Canaan, none elsewhere. Hence,

Fifthly. This covenant thus made with these ends and promises, did never save nor condemn any man eternally. All that lived under the administration of it, did attain eternal life, or perished for ever, but not by virtue of this covenant formally as such. It did indeed revive the commanding power and sanction of the first covenant of works, and therein, as the apostle speaks, was the ministry of condemnation, 2 Cor. iii. 9. For, 'by the deeds of the law can no flesh be justified.' And on the other hand, it directed also unto the promise, which was the instrument of life and salvation unto all that did believe. But as unto what it had of its own, it was confined unto things temporal. Believers were saved under it, but not by virtue of it. Sinners perished eternally under it, but by the curse of the original law of works. And,

Sixthly. Hereon occasionally fell out the ruin of that people; their table became a snare unto them, and that which should have been for their welfare, became a trap, according to the prediction of our Saviour, Ps. lxxix. 22. It was this covenant that raised and ruined them: it raised them to glory and honour when given of God; it ruined them

when abused by themselves, contrary to express declarations of his mind and will. For although the generality of them were always wicked and rebellious, breaking the terms of the covenant which God made with them, so far as it was possible they should, whilst God determined to reign over them until the appointed season; and although they repined under the burden of it, yet they would have this covenant to be the only rule and means of righteousness, life, and salvation, as the apostle declares, Rom. ix. 31—33, x. 3. For, as we have often said, there were two things in it, both which they abused unto other ends than what God designed them.

1. There was the renovation of the rule of the covenant of works for righteousness and life. And this they would have to be given unto them for those ends, and so sought for righteousness by the works of the law.

2. There was ordained in it a typical representation of the way and means whereby the promise was to be made effectual, namely, in the mediation and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which was the end of all their ordinances of worship. And the outward law thereof, with the observance of its institution, they looked on as their only relief when they came short of exact and perfect righteousness. Against both these pernicious errors, the apostle disputes expressly in his epistle unto the Romans and the Galatians, to save them, if it were possible, from that ruin into which they were casting themselves. Hereon the elect obtained, but the rest were hardened. For hereby they made an absolute renunciation of the promise, wherein alone, God had enwrapped the way of life and salvation.

This is the nature and substance of that covenant which God made with that people; a particular temporary covenant it was, and not a mere dispensation of the covenant of grace.

That which remains for the declaration of the mind of the Holy Ghost in this whole matter, is to declare the differences that are between those two covenants, whence the one is said to be better than the other, and to be built upon better promises.

Those of the church of Rome, do commonly place this difference in three things.

1. In the promises of them; which in the old covenant were temporal only; in the new, spiritual and heavenly.

2. In the precepts of them; which under the old, required only external obedience, designing the righteousness of the outward man; under the new, they are internal, respecting principally the inner man of the heart.

3. In their sacraments; for those under the Old Testament, were only outwardly figurative, but those of the New, are operative of grace.

But these things do not express much, if any thing at all, of what the Scripture placeth this difference in. And besides, as by some of them explained, they are not true, especially the two latter of them. For I cannot but somewhat admire, how it came into the heart or mind of any man to think or say, that God ever gave a law or laws, precept or precepts, that should respect the outward man only, and the regulation of external duties. The thought of it is contrary unto

all the essential properties of the nature of God, and meet only to ingenerate apprehensions of him, unsuited unto all his glorious excellencies. The life and foundation of all the laws under the Old Testament was, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul,' without which no outward obedience was ever accepted with him. And for the third of the supposed differences, neither were the sacraments of the law so barely figurative, but that they did exhibit Christ unto believers; for they all drank of the spiritual rock, which rock was Christ; nor are those of the gospel so operative of grace, but that without faith, they are useless unto them that do receive them.

The things wherein this difference doth consist, as expressed in the Scripture, are partly circumstantial, and partly substantial, and may be reduced unto the heads ensuing.

I. These two covenants differ in the circumstance of *time*, as to their promulgation, declaration, and establishment. This difference the apostle expresseth from the prophet Jeremiah in the ninth verse of this chapter, where it must be more fully spoken unto. In brief, the first covenant was made at the time that God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, and took its date from the third month after their coming up from thence, Exod. xix. and xxiv. From what is reported in the latter place, wherein the people give their actual consent to the terms of it, it began its formal obligation as a covenant. And we must afterwards inquire when it was abrogated and ceased to oblige the church. The new covenant was declared and made known in the latter days, Heb. i. 1, in the dispensation of the fulness of time, Eph. i. 10. And he took date as a covenant, formally obliging the whole church, from the death, resurrection, ascension of Christ, and sending of the Holy Ghost. I bring these all into the epoch of this covenant, because, though principally it was established by the first, yet it was not absolutely obligatory as a covenant, until after the last of them.

II. They differ in the circumstance of *place* as to their promulgation, which the Scripture also taketh notice of. The first was declared on Mount Sinai, the manner whereof, and the station of the people in receiving the law, I have in my Exercitations unto the first part of this Exposition, at large declared, and thither the reader is referred, Exod. xix. 18. The other was declared on Mount Sinai, and the law of it went forth from Jerusalem, Isa. ii. 2. This difference, with many remarkable instances from it, our apostle insists on, Gal. iv. 24–26. 'These are the two covenants, the one from Mount Sinai, which gendereth unto bondage, which is Agar.' That is, Agar the bondwoman, whom Abraham took before the heir of promise was born, was a type of the old covenant given on Sinai, before the introduction of the new, or the covenant of promise. For so he adds; 'For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth unto Jerusalem that now is, and is in bondage with her children.' This mount Sinai, when the old covenant was given, and which was represented by Agar, is in Arabia, cast quite out of the verge and confines of the church. And it answereth, or is placed in the same series, rank, and order with Jerusalem, namely, in the opposition of the two covenants. For as the new covenant, the

covenant of promise giving freedom and liberty, was given at Jerusalem in the death and resurrection of Christ, with the preaching of the gospel which ensued thereon; so the old covenant that brought the people into bondage, was given at Mount Sinai in Arabia.

III. They differ in the manner of their promulgation and establishment. There were two things remarkable that accompanied the solemn declaration of the first covenant.

1. The dread and terror of the outward appearance on Mount Sinai, which filled all the people, yea Moses himself, with fear and trembling, Heb. xii. 18—21; Exod. xix. 16, xx. 18, 19. Together herewith, was a spirit of fear and bondage administered unto all the people, so as that they chose to keep at a distance and not draw nigh unto God, Deut. v. 23—27.

2. That it was given by the ministry and disposition of angels, Acts vii. 53; Gal. iii. 19. Hence the people were in a sense, put in subjection to angels, and they had an authoritative ministry in that covenant. The church that then was, was put into some kind of subjection to angels, as the apostle plainly intimates, Heb. ii. 5. Hence the worshipping or adoration of angels began among the people, Col. ii. 18. Which some, with an addition unto their folly and superstition, would introduce into the Christian church, wherein they have no such authoritative ministry as they had under the old covenant.

Things are quite otherwise in the promulgation of the new covenant. The Son of God in his own person, did declare it. This he spake from heaven, as the apostle observes, in opposition unto the giving of the law on the earth, Heb. xii. 25, yet did he speak on the earth also; the mystery whereof himself declares, John iii. 13. And he did all things that belong unto the establishment of this covenant, in a spirit of meekness and condescension, with the highest evidence of love, grace, and compassion, encouraging and inviting the weary, the burdened, and the heavy laden to come to him. And by his Spirit, he made his disciples to carry on the same work, until the covenant was fully declared, Heb. ii. 3; see John i. 17, 18. And the whole ministry of angels in the giving of this covenant, was merely in a way of service and obedience unto Christ, and they owned themselves the fellow-servants only of them that have the testimony of Jesus, Rev. xix. 10. So that this world to come, as it was called of old, was no way put in subjection unto them.

IV. They differ in their mediators. The mediator of the first covenant was Moses. 'It was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator,' Gal. iii. 19. And this was no other but Moses, who was a 'servant in the house of God,' Heb. iii. 6. And he was a mediator, as designed of God, so chosen of the people, in that dread and consternation which befel them, upon the terrible promulgation of the law. For they saw that they could no way bear the immediate presence of God, nor treat with him in their own persons. Wherefore they desired that there might be an internuntius, a mediator between God and them, and that Moses might be the person, Deut. v. 25—27. But the mediator of the new covenant, is the Son of God himself. For 'there is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all,' 1 Tim. ii. 5.

He who is the Son, and the Lord over his own house, graciously undertook in his own person to be the mediator of this covenant; and herein it is unspeakably preferred before the old covenant.

V. They differ in their subject-matter, both as unto precepts and promises, the advantage being still on the part of the new covenant. For,

First. The old covenant, in the preceptive part of it, renewed the command of the covenant of works, and that on their original terms. Sin it forbade, that is, all and every sin, in matter and manner, on the pain of death, and gave the promise of life unto perfect sinless obedience only. Whence the decalogue itself, which is a transcript of the law of works, is called the covenant, *Exod. xxxiv. 28*. And besides this, as we observed before, it had other precepts innumerable, accommodated unto the present condition of the people, and imposed on them with rigour. But in the new covenant, the very first thing that is proposed, is the accomplishment and establishment of the covenant of works, both as unto its commands and sanction, in the obedience and suffering of the mediator. Hereon the commands of it, as unto the obedience of the covenanters, are not grievous, the yoke of Christ being easy, and his burden light.

Secondly. The old testament, absolutely considered, had,

1. No promise of grace, to communicate spiritual strength, or to assist us in obedience; nor,

2. Any promise of eternal life, no otherwise but as it was contained in the promise of the covenant of works, 'The man that doth these things, shall live in them;' and,

3. It had promises of temporal things in the land of Canaan inseparable from it. In the new covenant all things are otherwise, as will be declared in the exposition of the ensuing verses.

IV. They differ, and that principally, in the manner of their dedication and sanction. This is that which gives any thing the formal nature of a covenant or testament. There may be a promise, there may be an agreement in general, which hath not the formal nature of a covenant or testament; and such was the covenant of grace before the death of Christ. But it is the solemnity and manner of the confirmation, dedication, and sanction of any promise or agreement, that gives it the formal nature of a covenant or testament. And this is by a sacrifice, wherein there is both blood-shedding and death ensuing thereon. Now this, in the confirmation of the old covenant, was only the sacrifice of beasts, whose blood was sprinkled on all the people, *Exod. xxiv. 5—9*. But the New Testament was solemnly confirmed by the sacrifice and blood of Christ himself, *Zech. ix. 11*; *Heb. x. 29, xiii. 20*. And the Lord Christ dying as the mediator and surety of the covenant, he purchased all good things for the church, and as a testator bequeathed them unto it. Hence he says of the sacramental cup, that it is the new testament in his blood, or the pledge of his bequeathing unto the church all the promises and mercies of the covenant, which is the New Testament, or the disposition of his goods unto his children. But because the apostle expressly handleth this difference between these two covenants, *ch. ix. 18—19*, we must thither refer the full consideration of it.

VII. They differ in the priests that were to officiate before God in

the behalf of the people. In the old covenant, Aaron and his posterity alone were to discharge that office; in the new, the Son of God himself is the only priest of the church. This difference, with the advantage of the gospel state thereon, we have handled at large in the exposition of the chapter foregoing.

VIII. They differ in the sacrifices, whereon the peace and reconciliation with God which is tendered in them, doth depend. And this also must be spoken unto in the ensuing chapter, if God permit.

IX. They differ in the way or manner of their solemn writing or enrolment. All covenants were of old, solemnly written in tables of brass or stone, where they might be faithfully preserved for the use of the parties concerned. So the old covenant, as to the principal fundamental part of it, was engraven in tables of stone which were kept in the ark, *Exod. xxxi. 18; Deut. ix. 10; 2 Cor. iii. 7.* And God did so order it in his providence, that the first draught of them should be broken, to intimate that the covenant contained in them, was not everlasting nor unalterable. But the new covenant is written in the fleshly tables of the hearts of them that do believe, *2 Cor. iii. 3; Jer. xxxi. 33.*

X. They differ in their ends. The principal end of the first covenant was to discover sin, to condemn it, and to set bounds unto it. So, saith the apostle, 'It was added because of transgressions.' And this it did several ways.

1. By conviction; for the knowledge of sin is by the law; it convinced sinners, and caused every mouth to be stopped before God.

2. By condemning the sinner, in an application of the sanction of the law unto his conscience.

3. By the judgments and punishments wherewith on all occasions it was accompanied. In all it manifested and represented the justice and severity of God. The end of the new covenant is, to declare the love, grace, and mercy of God, and therewith to give repentance, remission of sin, and life eternal.

XI. They differed in their effects. For the first covenant, being the ministration of death and condemnation, it brought the minds and spirits of them that were under it, into servitude and bondage, whereas spiritual liberty is the immediate effect of the New Testament. And there is no one thing wherein the Spirit of God doth more frequently give us an account of the difference between these two covenants, than this of the liberty of the one, and the bondage of the other; see *Rom. viii. 15; 2 Cor. iii. 17; Gal. iv. 1—4, 24, 25, 30, 31; Heb. ii. 14, 15.* This therefore we must a little explain. Wherefore the bondage which was the effect of the old covenant, arose from several causes concurring unto the effecting of it.

1. The renovation of the terms and sanction of the covenant of works, contributed much thereunto. For the people saw not how the commands of that covenant could be observed, nor how its curse could be avoided. They saw it not, I say, by any thing in the covenant of Sinai, which therefore gendered unto bondage. All the prospect they had of deliverance was from the promise.

2. It arose from the manner of the delivery of the law, and God's entering thereon into covenant with them. This was ordered on purpose to fill them with dread and fear. And it could not but do so, whenever they called it to remembrance.

3. From the severity of the penalties annexed unto the transgression of the law. And God had taken upon himself, that where punishment was not exacted according to the law, he himself would cut them off. This kept them always anxious and solicitous, not knowing when they were safe or secure.

4. From the nature of the whole ministry of the law, which was the ministration of death and condemnation, 2 Cor. iii. 6, 7, 9, which declared the desert of every sin to be death, and denounced death unto every sinner, administering by itself no relief unto the minds and consciences of men. So was it the letter that killed them that were under its power.

5. From the darkness of their own minds in the means, ways, and causes, of deliverance from all these things. It is true, they had a promise before of life and salvation, which was not abolished by this covenant, even the promise made unto Abraham. But this belonged not unto this covenant. And the way of its accomplishment, by the incarnation and mediation of the Son of God, was much hidden from them, yea from the prophets themselves who yet foretold them. This left them under much bondage. For the principal cause and means of the liberty of believers under the gospel, ariseth from the clear light they have into the mystery of the love and grace of God in Christ. This faith and knowledge of his incarnation, humiliation, sufferings, and sacrifice, whereby he made atonement for sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness, is that which gives them liberty and boldness in their obedience, 2 Cor. iii. 17, 18. Whilst they of old were in the dark as unto these things, they must needs be kept under much bondage.

6. It was increased by the yoke of a multitude of laws, rites, and ceremonies imposed on them, which made the whole of their worship a burden unto them, and unsupportable, Acts xv. 10.

In and by all these ways and means, there was a spirit of bondage and fear administered unto them. And this God did, thus he dealt with them, to the end that they might not rest in that state, but continually look out after deliverance.

On the other hand, the new covenant gives liberty and boldness, the liberty and boldness of children, unto all believers. It is the Son in it that makes us free, or gives us universally all that liberty which is any way needful for us, or useful unto us. For where the Spirit of God is, there is liberty, namely, to serve God not in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the spirit. And it is declared, that this was the great end of bringing in the new covenant, in the accomplishment of the promise made unto Abraham, namely, 'that we, being delivered from the hands of all our enemies, might serve God without fear all the days of our lives,' Luke i. 72—75. And we may briefly consider wherein this deliverance and liberty by the new covenant doth consist, which it doth in the things ensuing.

1. In our freedom from the commanding power of the law, as to sin-

less perfect obedience, in order to righteousness and justification before God. Its commands we are still subject to, but not in order to life and salvation. For to those ends it is fulfilled in and by the mediator of the new covenant, who is 'the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth,' Rom. x. 4.

2. In our freedom from the condemning power of the law, and the sanction of it in the curse. This being undergone and answered by him, who was made a curse for us, we are freed from it, Rom. vii. 6; Gal. iii. 13, 14. And therein also are we delivered from the fear of death, Heb. ii. 15, as it was penal, and an entrance into judgment or condemnation, John v. 24.

3. In our freedom from conscience of sin, Heb. x. 2. That is, conscience disquieting, perplexing, and condemning our persons, the hearts of all that believe being sprinkled from an evil conscience by the blood of Christ.

4. In our freedom from the old system of Mosaic worship, in all the rites, and ceremonies, and ordinances of it; and what a burden this was, the apostles do declare, Acts xv. and our apostle at large in his epistle to the Galatians.

5. From all the laws of men in things appertaining to the worship of God, 1 Cor. vii. 23. And by all these, and the like instances of spiritual liberty, doth the gospel free believers from that spirit of bondage to fear, which was administered under the old covenant.

It remains only that we point at the heads of those ways whereby this liberty is communicated to us under the new covenant. And it is done,

First. Principally by the grant and communication of the Spirit of the Son, as a spirit of adoption, giving the freedom, boldness, and liberty of children, John i. 12; Rom. viii. 15—17; Gal. iv. 6, 7. From hence the apostle lays it down as a certain rule, that where the Spirit of God is, there is liberty, 2 Cor. iii. 17. Let men pretend what they will, let them boast of the freedom of their outward condition in this world, and of the inward liberty or freedom of their wills, there is indeed no true liberty where the Spirit of God is not. The ways whereby he giveth freedom, power, a sound mind, spiritual boldness, courage, and contempt of the cross, holy confidence before God, a readiness for obedience and enlargedness of heart in duties, with all other things wherein true liberty doth consist, or which any way belongs to it, I must not here divert to declare. The world judges that there is no bondage, but where the Spirit of God is; for that gives that conscientious fear of sin, that awe of God in all our thoughts, actions, and ways, that careful and circumspect walking, that temperance in things lawful, that abstinence from all appearance of evil, wherein they judge the greatest bondage on the earth to consist. But those who have received him, do know that the whole world doth lie in evil, and that all those to whom spiritual liberty is a bondage, are the servants and slaves of Satan.

2. It is obtained by the evidence of our justification before God, and the causes of it. With respect to this, men were greatly in the dark under the first covenant, although all stable peace with God doth

depend thereon. For it is in the gospel, that the 'righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith,' Rom. i. 17. Indeed the righteousness of God without the law, is witnessed by the law and the prophets, Rom. iii. 21; that is, testimony is given to it in legal institutions, and the promises recorded in the prophets; but these things were obscure to them, who were to seek for what was intended, under the veils and shadows of priests and sacrifices, atonements and expiations. But our justification before God in all the causes of it, being now fully revealed and made manifest, it hath a great influence into spiritual liberty and boldness.

3. By the spiritual light which is given to believers into the mystery of God in Christ. This the apostle affirms to have been hid in God from the beginning of the world, Eph. iii. 9. It was contrived and prepared in the counsel and wisdom of God from all eternity. Some intimation was given of it in the first promise, and was afterwards shadowed out by sundry legal institutions. But the depth, the glory, the beauty and fulness of it was hid in God, in his mind and will, till it was fully revealed in the gospel. The saints under the old testament believed that they should be delivered by the promised Seed, that they should be saved for the Lord's sake, that the Angel of the covenant would save them, yea, that the Lord himself would come to his temple; and they diligently inquired into what was fore-signified concerning the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. But all this while their thoughts and conceptions were exceedingly in the dark, as to those glorious things which are made so plain in the new covenant, concerning the incarnation, mediation, sufferings, and sacrifice of the Son of God, concerning the way of God's being in Christ reconciling the world to himself. Now as darkness gives fear, so light gives liberty.

4. We obtain this liberty by the opening of the way into the holiest, and the entrance we have thereby with boldness to the throne of grace. This also the apostle insists on peculiarly in sundry places of his ensuing discourse, as ch. ix. 8; x. 19—22.; where it must be spoken to, if God permit, at large. For a great part of the liberty of the New Testament doth consist herein.

5. By all the ordinances of gospel worship. How the ordinances of worship under the Old Testament did lead the people into bondage, hath been declared. But all those of the New Testament, through their plainness in signification, their immediate respect to the Lord Christ, with their use and efficacy to guide believers in their communion with God, do all conduce to our evangelical liberty. And of such importance is our liberty in this instance of it, that when the apostle saw it necessary for the avoiding of offence and scandal, to continue the observance of one or two legal institutions, in abstinence from some things in themselves indifferent, they did it only for a season, and declared that it was only in case of scandal, that they would allow this temporary abidgment of the liberty given us by the gospel.

XII. They differ greatly with respect to the dispensation and grant of the Holy Ghost. It is certain, that God did grant the gift of the Holy Spirit under the Old Testament, and his operations during that

season, as I have at large elsewhere declared. But it is no less certain, that there was always a promise of his more signal effusion, on the confirmation and establishment of the new covenant. See in particular that great promise to this purpose, Joel ii. 28, 29, as applied and expounded by the apostle Peter, Acts ii. 17, 18; yea, so sparing was the communication of the Holy Ghost under the Old Testament, compared with his effusion under the New, as that the evangelist affirms, 'that the Holy Ghost was not yet, because that Jesus was not yet glorified,' John vii. 39, that is, he was not yet given in that manner in which he was to be given, on the confirmation of the new covenant. And those of the church of the Hebrews who had received the doctrine of John, yet affirmed that they had not so much as heard whether there were any Holy Ghost or not, Acts xix. 2, that is, any such gift and communication of him, as was then proposed as the chief privilege of the gospel. Neither doth this concern only the plentiful effusion of him, with respect to those miraculous gifts and operations where-with the doctrine and establishment of the new covenant was testified unto and confirmed; however, that also gave a signal difference between the two covenants. For the first covenant was confirmed by dreadful appearances and operations effected by the ministry of angels; but the new, by the immediate operation of the Holy Ghost himself. But this difference principally consists herein, that under the New Testament, the Holy Ghost hath graciously condescended to bear the office of the comforter of the church. That this unspeakable privilege is peculiar to the New Testament, is evident from all the promises of his being sent as a comforter, made by our Saviour, John xiv. 15, 16, especially that, wherein he assures his disciples, that unless he went away, in which going away, he confirmed the new covenant, the comforter would not come, but if he so went away, he would send him from the Father, ch. xvi. 7. And the difference between the two covenants which ensued hereon, is inexpressible.

XIII. They differ in the declaration made in them, of the kingdom of God. It is the observation of Austin, that the very name of the kingdom of heaven, is peculiar unto the New Testament. It is true, God reigned in and over the church under the Old Testament; but his rule was such, and had such a relation unto secular things, especially with respect unto the land of Canaan, and the flourishing condition of the people herein, as that it had an appearance of a kingdom of this world. And that it was so, and was so to be, consisting in empire, power, victory, wealth, and peace, was so deeply fixed in the minds of the generality of the people, that the disciples of Christ themselves, could not free themselves of that apprehension, until the New Testament was fully established. But now in the gospel, the nature of the kingdom of God, where it is, and where it consists, is plainly and evidently declared, unto the unspeakable consolation of believers. For whereas it is now known and experienced to be internal, spiritual, and heavenly, they have no less assured interest in it, and advantage by it, in all the troubles which they may undergo in this world, than they could have in the fullest possession of all earthly enjoyments.

XIV. They differ in their substance and end. The old covenant was

typical, shadowy, and removeable, Heb. x. 1. The new covenant is substantial and permanent, as containing the body, which is Christ. Now, consider the old covenant comparatively with the new; and this part of its nature, that it was typical and shadowy, is a great debase-ment of it. But consider it absolutely, and the things wherein it was so, were its greatest glory and excellency. For in these things alone, was it a token and pledge of the love and grace of God. For those things in the old covenant which had most of bondage in their use and practice, had most of light and grace in their signification. This was the design of God in all the ordinances of worship belonging unto that covenant, namely, to typify, shadow, and represent the heavenly substantial things of the new covenant, or the Lord Christ, and the work of his mediation. This the tabernacle, ark, altar, priests, and sacrifices, did do, and it was their glory that so they did. However, compared with the substance in the new covenant, they have no glory.

XV. They differ in the extent of their administration, according unto the will of God. The first was confined unto the posterity of Abraham according to the flesh, and unto them especially in the land of Canaan, Deut. v. 3, with some few proselytes that were joined unto them, excluding all others from the participation of the benefits of it. And hence it was, that whereas the personal ministry of our Saviour himself, in preaching of the gospel, was to precede the introduction of the new covenant, it was confined unto the people of Israel, Matt. xv. 24. And he was the minister of the circumcision, Rom. xv. 8; such narrow bounds and limits had the administration of this covenant affixed unto it by the will and pleasure of God, Ps. cxlvii. 19, 20. But the administration of the new covenant is extended unto all nations under heaven, none being excluded on the account of tongue, language, family, nation, or place of habitation. All have an equal interest in the rising sun. The partition wall is broken down, and the gates of the new Jerusalem are set open unto all comers upon the gospel invitation. This is frequently taken notice of in the Scripture; see Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 15; John xi. 51, 52, xii. 32; Acts xi. 18, xvii. 30; Gal. v. 6; Eph. ii. 11—16, iii. 8—10; Col. iii. 10, 11; 1 John ii. 2; Rev. v. 9. This is the grand charter of the poor wandering Gentiles. Having wilfully fallen off from God, he was pleased in his holiness and severity to leave all our ancestors for many generations to serve and worship the devil. And the mystery of our recovery was hid in God from the foundation of the world, Eph. iii. 8—10. And although it was so foretold, so prophesied of, so promised under the Old Testament, yet such was the pride, blindness, and obstinacy of the greatest part of the church of the Jews, that its accomplishment was one great part of that stumbling-block whereat they fell; yea, the greatness and glory of this mystery was such, that the disciples of Christ themselves comprehended it not, until it was testified unto them, by the pouring out of the Holy Ghost, the great promise of the new covenant, upon some of those poor Gentiles, Acts xi. 18.

XVI. They differ in their efficacy. For the old covenant made nothing perfect—it could effect none of the things it did represent, nor introduce that perfect or complete state, which God had designed for

the church. But this we have at large insisted on in the exposition of the foregoing chapter.

XVII. They differ in their duration ; for the one was to be removed, and the other to abide for ever, which must be declared on the ensuing verses.

It may be other things of a like nature may be added unto these that we have mentioned, wherein the difference between the two covenants doth consist ; but these instances are sufficient unto our purpose. For some, when they hear that the covenant of grace was always one and the same, of the same nature and efficacy under both Testaments, that the way of salvation by Christ was always one and the same, are ready to think that there was no such great difference between their state and ours as is pretended. But we see that on this supposition, that covenant which God brought the people into at Sinai, and under the yoke whereof they were to abide until the new covenant was established, had all the disadvantages attending it which we have insisted on. And those who understand not how excellent and glorious those privileges are, which are added unto the covenant of grace, as to the administration of it by the introduction and establishment of the new covenant, are utterly unacquainted with the nature of spiritual and heavenly things.

There remaineth yet one thing more, which the Socinians give us occasion to speak unto, from these words of the apostle, that ‘ the new covenant is established on better promises.’ For from hence they do conclude, that there were no promises of life, under the Old Testament, which, in the latitude of it, is a senseless and brutish opinion. And,

1. The apostle in this place, intends only those promises whereon the New Testament was legally ratified, and reduced into the form of a covenant, which were, as he declares, the promises of especial pardoning mercy, and of the efficacy of grace in the renovation of our natures. But it is granted that the other covenant was legally established on promises which respected the land of Canaan. Wherefore, it is granted, that as to the promises whereby the covenants were actually established, those of the new covenant were better than the other.

2. The old covenant had express promises of eternal life. ‘ He that doth these things shall live in them. ‘ It was indeed with respect unto perfect obedience that it gave that promise ; however, that promise it had, which is all that at present we inquire after.

3. The institution of worship which belonged unto that covenant, the whole ministry of the tabernacle as representing heavenly things, had the nature of a promise in them ; for they all directed the church to seek for life and salvation in and by Jesus Christ alone.

4. The question is not, what promises are given in the law itself, or the old covenant formally considered as such ; but what promise they had who lived under that covenant, and which were not disannulled by it. For we have proved sufficiently, that the additions of this covenant, did not abolish or supersede the efficacy of any promise that God had before given unto the church. And to say that the first pro-

mise, and that given unto Abraham, confirmed with the oath of God, were not promises of eternal life, is to overthrow the whole Bible, both Old Testament and New. And we may observe from the foregoing discourses,

Obs. X. That although one state of the church hath had great advantages and privileges above another, yet no state had whereof to complain, while they observed the terms prescribed unto them.—We have seen in how many things, and those most of them of the highest importance, the state of the church under the new covenant, excelled that under the old, yet was that in itself a state of unspeakable grace and privileges; for,

1. It was a state of near relation unto God, by virtue of a covenant. And when all mankind had absolutely broken covenant with God by sin, to call any of them into a new covenant relation with himself, was an act of sovereign grace and mercy. Herein were they distinguished from the residue of mankind, whom God suffered to walk in their own ways, and ‘winked at their ignorance,’ while they perished all in the pursuit of their foolish imaginations. A great part of the book of Deuteronomy is designed to impress a sense of this upon the minds of the people; and it is summarily expressed by the Psalmist, Psal. cxlvii. 19, 20; and by the prophet, ‘We are thine, thou never barest rule over them; thy name was not called upon by them,’ Isa. lxiii. 19.

2. This covenant of God was in itself, holy, just, and equal. For, although there was in it an imposition of sundry things burdensome, they were such as God in his infinite wisdom saw necessary for that people, and such as they could not have been without. Hence, on all occasions, God refers it even unto themselves, to judge whether his ways towards them were not equal, and their own unequal; and that it was not only just, but attended with promises of unspeakable advantages to be enjoyed by them, above all other people whatever.

3. God dealing with them in the way of a covenant, whereunto the mutual consent of all parties covenanting is required, it was proposed unto them for their acceptance, and they did accordingly willingly receive it, Exod. xxiv.; Deut. v., so as that they had not whereof to complain.

4. In that state of discipline wherein God was pleased to hold them, yet they enjoyed the way of life and salvation in the promise; for as we have shown at large, the promise was not disannulled by the introduction of this covenant. Wherefore, although God reserved a better and more complete state for the church under the New Testament, having ‘ordained better things for us, that they without us should not be made perfect;’ yet was that other state in itself good and holy, and sufficient to bring all believers unto the enjoyment of God.

Obs. XI. The state of the gospel, or of the church under the New Testament, being accompanied with the highest spiritual privileges and advantages that it is capable of in this world, two things do thence follow.

1. The great obligation that is on all believers unto holiness and fruitfulness in obedience unto the glory of God. We have herein the

utmost condescension of divine grace, and the greatest effects of it that God will communicate on this side glory. That which all these things tend unto, that which God requireth and expecteth in consequence of them, is the thankful and fruitful obedience of them that are made partakers of them. And they who are not sensible of this obligation, are strangers unto the things themselves, and are not able to discern spiritual things, because they are to be spiritually discerned.

2. The heinousness of their sin by whom this covenant is neglected or despised, is hence abundantly manifest. This the apostle particularly asserts and insists upon, ch. ii. 2, 3, x. 28, 29.

VER. 7.—*Εἰ γὰρ ἡ πρώτη ἐκείνη ἦν ἀμεμπτος, οὐκ αὖ δευτερας ἐζητειτο τοπος.*

VER. 7.—*For if that first (covenant) had been blameless, then should no place have been sought for the second.*

IN this verse, and so also in those that follow unto the end of this chapter, the apostle designeth a confirmation of what he had before asserted and undertaken to prove. And this was, that there is a necessity of a new and better covenant, accompanied with better promises, and more excellent ordinances of worship, than the former. Hereon it follows, that the first was to be disannulled and abolished, which was the main thesis he had to prove. And there are two parts of his argument to this purpose. For, First, he proveth, that on the supposition of another better covenant to be introduced, it did unavoidably follow, that the first was to be abolished, as that which was not perfect, complete, or sufficient unto its end, which he doth in this verse. Secondly, he proves in the verses following, that such a new, better covenant was to be introduced.

What he had before confirmed in sundry particular instances, he summarily concludes in one general argument in this verse, and that built on a principle generally acknowledged. And it is this, All the privileges, all the benefits and advantages of the Aaronical priesthood and sacrifices, do all belong unto the covenant whereunto they were annexed, a chief part of whose outward administrations consisted in them. This the Hebrews neither could, nor did question. The whole of what they pleaded for, the only charter and tenure of all their privileges, was the covenant that God made with their fathers at Sinai. Wherefore that priesthood, those sacrifices, with all the worship belonging unto the tabernacle or temple, was necessarily commensurate unto that covenant. While that covenant continued, they were to continue; and if that covenant ceased, they were to cease also. These things were agreed between the apostle and them.

Hereon he subsumes, But there is mention of another covenant to be made with the whole church, and to be introduced long after the making of that at Sinai. Neither could this be denied by them. However, to put it out of controversy, the apostle proves it by an express testimony of the prophet Jeremiah. In that testimony, it is peculiarly declared, that this new covenant that was promised to be introduced

in the latter days, should be better and more excellent than the former, as is manifest from the promises whereon it is established; yet in this verse, the apostle proceeds no further, but unto the general consideration of God's promising to make another covenant with the church, and what would follow thereon.

From this supposition the apostle proves, that the first covenant is imperfect, blameable, and removeable; and the force of his inference depends on a common notion or presumption, that is clear and evident in its own light. And it is this, Where once a covenant is made and established, if it will serve unto and effect all that he who makes it doth design, and exhibit all the good which he intends to communicate, there is no reason why another covenant should be made. The making of a new, for no other ends or purposes but what the old was every way sufficient for, argues lightness and mutability in him that made it. Unto this purpose doth he argue, Gal. iii. 21, 'If there had been a law given, that could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.' Could the first covenant have perfected and consecrated the church, could it have communicated all the grace and mercy, that God intended to indulge unto the children of men, the wise and holy Author of it would have had no thought about the introduction and establishment of another. It would have been no way agreeable unto his infinite wisdom and faithfulness so to do. Wherefore the promise hereof doth irrefragably prove, that both the first covenant, and all the services of it, were imperfect, and therefore to be removed and taken away.

Indeed, this promise of a new covenant, diverse from that made at Sinai, or not like unto it, as the prophet speaks, is sufficient of itself to overthrow the vain pretences of the Jews wherein they are hardened to this day. The absolute perpetuity of the law and its worship, that is of the covenant at Sinai, is the principal fundamental article of their present faith, or rather unbelief. But this is framed by them in direct opposition unto the promises of God. For let it be demanded of them, whether they believe that God will make another covenant with the church, not according to the covenant which he made with their fathers at Sinai; if they shall say they do not believe it, then do they plainly renounce the prophets and the promises of God given by them. If they do grant it, I desire to know of them, with what sacrifices this new covenant shall be established; by what priest, with what worship, it shall be administered. If they say that they shall be done by the sacrifices, priests, and worship of the law, they deny what they granted before, namely that it is a new and another covenant. For the sacrifices and priests of the law, cannot confirm or administer any other covenant, but that which they belong and are confined unto. If it be granted that this new covenant must have a new mediator, a new priest, a new sacrifice, as it is undeniable it must, or it cannot be a new covenant, then must the old cease and be removed that this may come into its place. Nothing but obstinacy and blindness can resist the force of this argument of the apostle.

The general design of the apostle in this verse being cleared, we may consider the words more particularly. And there are two things in them.

1. A positive assertion included in a supposition; 'if the first covenant had been blameless,' had not been defective; that is, it was so.

2. The proof of this assertion; if it had not been so, 'place would not have been sought for a second,' which that there was he proves in the following verses.

In the first part of the words there is, 1. A causal conjunction rendering a reason, 'for.' 2. The subject spoken of, 'that former covenant.' 3. What is affirmed of it, as the affirmation is included in a negative supposition, 'it was not blameless.'

1. The conjunction, *γαρ*, 'for,' sheweth that the apostle intends the confirmation of what he had before discoursed. But he seems not to refer only unto what he had immediately before affirmed, concerning the better promises of the New Testament, but unto the whole argument that he hath in hand. For the general reason which here he insists upon, proves all that he had before delivered concerning the imperfection of the Levitical priesthood, and the whole worship of the first covenant depending thereon.

2. The subject spoken of is *ἡ πρώτη ἐκείνη*, 'that first;' that is, *πρωτέρα διαθήκη*, 'that former covenant.' The covenant made with the fathers at Sinai, with all the ordinances of worship thereunto belonging, whose nature and use we have before declared.

3. Hereof it is said *εἰ ἀμεμπτος ἦν*, Vul. Lat. *Si culpâ vacasset*. And so we, 'if it had been faultless.' I am sure the expression is a little too harsh in our translation, and such as the original word will not bear, at least doth not require. For it seems to intimate, that absolutely there was something faulty or blameworthy in the covenant of God. But this must not be admitted. For besides that the Author of it, which was God himself, doth free it from any such charge or imputation, it is in the Scripture everywhere declared to be good, just, and holy. There is, indeed, an intimation of a defect in it. But this was not with respect to its own particular end, but with respect to another general end, whereunto it was not designed. That which is defective, with respect unto its own particular end whereunto it is ordained, or which it is designed to accomplish, is really faulty. But that which is or may be so, with respect unto some other general end, which it was never designed to accomplish, is not so in itself. This the apostle discourseth concerning, Gal. iii. 19—22. We must therefore state the signification of the word, from the subject-matter that he treats about in this place: and this is the perfection and consummation, or the sanctification and salvation of the church. With respect hereunto alone it is, that he asserts the insufficiency and imperfection of the first covenant. And the inquiry between him and the Hebrews, was not, whether the first covenant was not in itself good, just, holy, and blameless, every way perfect with respect unto its own especial ends; but whether it were perfect and effectual unto the general ends mentioned. This it was not, saith the apostle, and proves it undeniably from the promise of the introduction of another general covenant, for the effecting of them. Whereas therefore, to be not *ἀμεμπτος*, is either to have some fault or vice accompanying of

any thing and adhering unto it, whereby it is unsuited to or insufficient for its own proper end ; or that whereunto somewhat is wanting with respect unto another general end which is much to be desired, but such as it was never designed to accomplish : as the art of arithmetic, if it be perfectly taught, is sufficient to instruct a man in the whole science of numeration ; if it be not, it is faulty as unto its particular end. But it is no way sufficient unto the general end of making a man wise in the whole compass of wisdom, a thing far to be preferred before its particular end, be it never so perfect in its own kind. And it is in the latter sense only that the apostle affirms that the first covenant was not *αμεμπτος*, or ‘ blameless.’ If it had been such, as unto which nothing more was required or needful perfectly to complete and sanctify the church, which was the general end God aimed at, it had been absolutely perfect. But this it was not, in that it never was designed for the means of it. To the same purpose he argues, ch. vii. 11, 19. And with respect unto this end it is said that the law was weak, Rom. viii. 3 ; Gal. iii. 21 ; Acts xiii. 38, 39.

In brief, that which the apostle designeth to prove is, that the first covenant was of that constitution, that it could not accomplish the perfect administration of the grace of God unto the church, nor was ever designed to that end, as the Jews then falsely, and their posterity also still foolishly, imagine it to have done.

The ensuing words in this verse, include the general proof of his assertion concerning the insufficiency of the first covenant, unto the ends of God towards the church, *ουκ αν δευτερας εξητειτο τοπος*. His argument is plainly this, ‘ The promise of a new covenant doth unavoidably prove the insufficiency of the former, at least unto the ends for which the new one is promised.’ For otherwise unto what end serves the promise and covenant promised ? But there is some difficulty in the manner of the expression, *ουκ αν δευτερας εξητειτο τοπος*, ‘ the place of the second had not been sought ;’ so the words lie in the original. But the place of the second is no more but the second taking place ; the bringing in, the introduction and establishment of it. And this is said to be sought, but improperly and after the manner of men. When men have entered into a covenant which proves insufficient for some end which they intend, they take counsel and seek after other ways and means, or an agreement and covenant on such other terms, as may be effectual unto their purpose. Wherefore this signifies no alteration, no defect in the wisdom and counsel of God, as unto what is now to be done, but only the outward change which he would now effect in the introduction of the new covenant. For as such changes among men are the issue of the alteration of their minds, and the effect of new counsels, for the seeking out of new means for their end ; so is this outward change, in the taking away of the old covenant and introduction of the new, represented in God ; being only the second part of his counsel or purpose, ‘ which he had purposed in himself before the foundation of the world.’ And we may hence observe,

Obs. I. That whatever God had done before for the church, yet he

ceased not in his wisdom and grace, until he had made it partaker of the best and most blessed condition whereof in this world it is capable. —He found out place for this better covenant.

Obs. II. Let those unto whom the terms of the new covenant are proposed in the gospel, take heed to themselves, that they sincerely embrace and improve them, for there is neither promise nor hopes of any farther or fuller administration of grace.

VER. 8.—*Μεμφομενος γαρ αυτοις λεγει Ιδου, ημεραι ερχονται, λεγει Κυριος, και συντελεσω επι τον οικον Ισραηλ και επι τον οικον Ιουδα διαθηκην καινην.*

VER. 8.—*For finding fault with them, (complaining of them,) he saith, Behold the days come, saith the Lord, and I will make (when I will make) a new covenant with the house of Israel, and the house of Judah.*

IN this verse the apostle entereth upon the proof of his argument laid down in that foregoing. And this was, that the first covenant was not *αμεμπτος*, ‘unblamable,’ or every way sufficient for God’s general end, because there was room left for the introduction of another, which was done accordingly. Of this covenant so to be introduced, he declareth, in the testimony of the prophet afterwards, two things.

1. The qualification of it, or its especial adjunct; it was new, ver. 8.

2. A description of it, 1st. Negative, with respect unto the old, ver. 9; 2dly. Positive in its nature and effectual properties, ver. 10—12. From all which he inferreth the conclusion which he was contending for, enforced with a new consideration confirming it, ver. 13, which is the sum of the last part of this chapter.

There are two general parts of this verse.

1. The introduction of the testimony, to be improved from the occasion of it, as expressed by the apostle.

2. The testimony itself, which he insists on.

First. The first is in these words, ‘for finding fault with them, he saith.’ Wherein we have. 1. The note of connexion. 2. The ground whereon the testimony is built. 4. The true reading of the words is to be considered.

1. There is the causal conjunction *γαρ*, ‘for,’ which gives them connexion unto the foregoing verse. That which is designed, is the confirmation of the foregoing argument. This is the proof of the assertion, that place was sought for another covenant, which evinced the insufficiency of the former, ‘for;’ and the reason it intimates doth not consist in the word wherewith it is joined, ‘finding fault with them;’ but respects those following, *he saith*: ‘for he saith, the days come,’ which directly prove what he had affirmed.

2. There is the ground intimated, of what is affirmed in the ensuing testimony. For the new covenant was not to be introduced absolutely without the consideration of any thing foregoing; but because the first was not *αμεμπτος*, or ‘unblamable.’ Therefore the apostle shows,

that God brought it in, in a way of blame. He did it *μεμφομενος*, 'finding fault with them.'

3. These words may be diversely distinguished and read. For placing the note of distinction thus, *μεμφομενος γαρ, αυτοις λεγει*, the sense is, 'for finding fault, complaining, blaming; he saith to them;' so that the expression, *μεμφομενος*, 'finding fault,' respects the covenant itself. Piscator was the first that I know of, who thus distinguished the words, who is followed by Slichtingius and others. But place the note of distinction at *αυτοις*, as it is by most interpreters and expositors, and then the sense of the words is rightly expressed in our English translation; 'for finding fault with them,' (that is, the people) he saith;' and *αυτοις* may be regulated either by *μεμφομενος* or *λεγει*.

The reasons for fixing the distinction in the first way, are, 1. Because *μεμφομενος*, 'finding fault,' answers directly to *ουκ αμεμπτος*, 'was not without fault.' And this contains the true reason why the new covenant was brought in. And, 2. It was not God's complaint of the people, that was any cause of the introduction of the new covenant, but of the old covenant itself, which was insufficient to sanctify and save the church.

But these seem not of force to change the usual interpretation of the words. For,

1. Although the first covenant was not every way perfect, with respect to God's general end towards his church, yet it may be it is not so safe to say, that God complained of it. When things or persons change the state and condition wherein they were made or appointed of God, he may complain of them, and that justly. So when men filled the world with wickedness, it is said, that 'he repented him at his heart that he made man upon the earth.' But when they abide unaltered in the state wherein they were made by him, he hath no reason to complain of them; and so it was with the first covenant. So our apostle disputes about the law, that all the weakness and imperfection of it arose from sin, where there was no reason to complain of the law, which in itself was holy, just, and good.

2. God doth in this testimony actually complain of the people, namely, that they brake his covenant, and expresseth his indignation thereon, 'he regardeth them not.' But there is not in this testimony, nor in the whole context or prophecy whence it is taken, nor in any other place of Scripture, any word of complaint against the covenant itself, though its imperfection as to the general end of perfecting the church-state, be here intimated.

3. There is an especial remedy, expressed in the testimony, against the evil which God complains of, or finds fault with in the people. The complaint against them was, that they continued not in his covenant. This is expressly provided against in the promise of this new covenant, ver. 10. Wherefore,

4. God gives this promise of a new covenant, together with a complaint against the people, that it might be known to be an effect of free and sovereign grace. There was nothing in the people to procure it, or to qualify them for it, unless it were that they had wickedly broken the former. And we may hence observe,

Obs. I. God hath oftentimes just cause to complain of his people when yet he will not utterly cast them off.—It is mere mercy and grace that the church at all seasons lives on; but in some seasons, when it falls under great provocations, they are signalized.

Obs. II. It is the duty of the church to take deep notice of God's complaints of them.—This indeed is not in the text, but ought not to be passed by, on this occasion of the mention of God's complaining, or finding fault with them. And God doth not thus find fault only when he speaks immediately by new revelations, as our Lord Jesus Christ found fault with, and rebuked his churches, in the revelation made to the apostle John, but he doth it continually by the rule of the word. And it is the especial duty of all churches, and of all believers, to search diligently into what God finds fault withal, in his word, and to be deeply affected therewith, so far as they find themselves guilty. Want hereof is that which hath laid most churches in the world under a fatal security. Hence they say, or think, or carry themselves, as though they were 'rich and increased in goods, and had need of nothing,' when indeed 'they are wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.' To consider what God blames, and to affect our souls with a sense of guilt, is that trembling at his word which he so approves of. And every church that intends to walk with God to his glory, ought to be diligent in this duty. And to guide them herein, they ought carefully to consider,

1. The times and seasons that are passing over them. God brings his church under variety of seasons; and in them all, requires especial duties from them, as those wherein he will be glorified in each of them. If they miss it herein, it is that which God greatly blames and complains of. Faithfulness with God in their generation, that is, in the especial duties of the times and seasons wherein they live, is that which Noah and David, and other holy men, are commended for. Thus there are seasons of the great abounding of wickedness in the world, seasons of great apostasy from truth and holiness, seasons of judgment and of mercy, of persecution and tranquillity. In all these and the like, God requireth especial duties of the church, whereon his glory in them doth much depend. If they fail here, if they are not faithful as to their especial duty, God in his word finds fault with them, and lays them under blame. And as much wisdom is required hereunto, so I do not judge that any church can discharge its duty in any competent measure, without a due consideration of it. For in a due observance of the times and seasons, and an application of ourselves to the duties of them, consists that testimony which we are to give to God and the gospel, in our generation. That church which considers not its especial duty in the days wherein we live, is fast asleep, and it may be doubted whether, when it is awaked, it will find oil in its vessel or not.

2. The temptations which are prevalent, and which unavoidably we are exposed unto. Every age and time hath its especial temptations. And it is the will of God, that the church should be exercised with them and by them; and it were easy to manifest, that the darkness and ignorance of men, in not discerning the especial temptations of the age wherein they have lived, or neglecting of them, have been

always the great causes and means of the apostasy of the church. Hereby hath superstition prevailed in one age, and profaneness in another, and false and noxious opinions in a third. Now, there is nothing that God requires more strictly of us, than that we should be wakeful against present prevalent temptations, and chargeth us with guilt where we are not so. And those who are not awake with respect unto those temptations which are at this day prevalent in the world, are far enough from walking before God unto all well-pleasing. And sundry other things of the like nature might be mentioned unto the same purpose.

Obs. III. God often surpriseth the church with promises of grace and mercy.—In this place, where God complaineth of the people, findeth fault with them, charging them for not continuing in his covenant, and declares that, as unto any thing in themselves, he regarded them not, it might be easily expected that he would proceed unto their utter casting off and rejection. But instead hereof, God surpriseth them as it were with the most eminent promise of grace and mercy that ever was made, or could be made, unto them. So he doth in like manner, Isa. vii. 13, 14, xliii. 22—25. And this he will do,

1. That he may glorify the riches and freedom of his grace. This is his principal end in all his dispensations towards his church. And how can they be made more conspicuous, than in the exercise of them then, when a people are so far from all appearance of any desert of them, as that God declares his judgment that they deserve his utmost displeasure?

2. That none who have the least remainder of sincerity, and desire to fear the name of God, may utterly faint and despond at any time, under the greatest confluence of discouragements. God can come in, and will oftentimes, in a way of sovereign grace, for the relief of the most dejected sinners. But we must proceed with our exposition.

Secondly. The second thing contained in this verse, is the testimony itself insisted on. And there is in the testimony,

1. The author of the promise declared in it, 'he saith;' as afterwards 'saith the Lord.'

2. The note of its introduction, signalizing the thing intended, 'Behold.'

3. The time of the accomplishment of what is here foretold, and here promised, 'the days come wherein.'

4. The thing promised is a covenant, concerning which is expressed, 1st. He that makes it: 'I;' 'I will make.' 2d. Those with whom it is made, 'the house of Israel, and the house of Judah.' 3d. The manner of its making, *συντελεσω*. 4th. The property of it; it is a new covenant.

First, He who gives this testimony, is included in the word *λεγει*, 'he saith.' 'For finding fault with them, he saith.' He who complains of the people for breaking the old covenant, promiseth to make the new. So in the next verse it is expressed, 'Saith the Lord.' The ministry of the prophet was made use of in the declaration of these words and things, but they are properly his words from whom they are by immediate inspiration.

Obs. IV. 'He saith,' that is, *נאם יהוה*, 'saith the Lord,' is the formal

object of our faith and obedience.—Hereunto are they to be referred, herein do they acquiesce, and in nothing else will they so do. All other foundations of faith, as Thus saith the pope, or Thus saith the church, or Thus said our ancestors, are all but delusions. Thus saith the Lord, gives rest and peace.

Secondly. There is the note of introduction calling unto attendance, *הנה, ιδου*, 'Behold.' That to which our attention is thus called, is always found eminent, either in itself, or in some of its circumstances; for the word calls for more than ordinary diligence, in the consideration of, and attention unto, what is proposed. And it was needful to signalize this promise; for the people unto whom it was given were very difficultly drawn from their adherence unto the old covenant, which was inconsistent with that now promised. And there seems to be somewhat more intimated in this word, besides a call unto especial attention. And that is, that the thing spoken of is plainly proposed unto them concerned, so as that they may look upon it and behold it clearly and speedily. And so is this new covenant, here proposed so evidently and plainly, both in the entire nature and properties of it, that unless men wilfully turn away their eyes, they cannot but see it.

Obs. V. Where God placeth a note of observation and attention, we should carefully fix our faith and consideration.—God sets not any of his marks in vain. And if upon the first view of any place or thing so signalized, the evidence of it doth not appear unto us, we have a sufficient call unto farther diligence in our enquiry. And if we are not wanting unto our duty, we shall discover some especial impression of divine excellency or another, upon every such thing or place.

Obs. VI. The things and concerns of the new covenant, are all of them objects of the best of our consideration.—As such are they here proposed, and what is spoken of the declaration of the nature of this covenant in the next verse, is sufficient to confirm this observation.

Thirdly. The time is prefixed for the accomplishment of this promise, *ימים באים*, *ἡμεραι ερχονται*, 'the days come.' Known unto God are all his works from the foundation of the world, and he hath determined the times of their accomplishment. As to the particular precise times or seasons of them, while they are future, he hath reserved them unto himself, unless where he hath seen good to make some especial revelation of them. So he did of the times of the sojourning of the children of Israel in Egypt, of the Babylonish captivity, and of the coming of the Messiah after the return of the people, Dan. ix. But from the giving of the first promise, wherein the foundation of the church was laid, the accomplishment of it is frequently referred unto the latter days; see our Exposition on ch. i. 1. Hence under the Old Testament, the days of the Messiah were called the world to come, as we have shown ch. ii. 5. And it was a periphrasis of him, that he was *ὁ ερχομενος*, Matt. xi. 3, 'He that was to come.' And the faith of the church was principally exercised in the expectation of his coming. And this time is here intended. And the expression in the original is in the present tense, *ἡμεραι ερχονται*, from the Hebrew, *ימים באים*, 'the days coming,' not the days that come, but the days come. And two things are denoted thereby.

1. The near approach of the days intended. The time was now hastening apace, and the church was to be awakened unto the expectation of it; and this, accompanied with their earnest desires and prayers for it, which were the most acceptable part of the worship of God, under the Old Testament.

2. A certainty of the thing itself was hereby fixed in their minds. Long expectation they had of it, and now stood in need of new security, especially considering the trial they were falling into, in the Babylonish captivity. For this seemed to threaten a defeat of the promise, in the casting away of the whole nation. The manner of the expression is suited to confirm the faith of them that were real believers among them, against such fears. Yet we must observe, that from the giving of this promise unto the accomplishment of it, was near six hundred years. And yet about ninety years after, the prophet Malachi, speaking of the same season, affirms, that 'the Lord whom they sought, should suddenly come unto his temple,' Mal. iii. 1.

Obs. VII. There is a time limited and fixed for the accomplishment of all the promises of God, and all the purposes of his grace towards the church; see Hab. ii. 3, 4. And the consideration hereof is very necessary unto believers in all ages.

1. To keep up their hearts from desponding, when difficulties against their accomplishment do arise, and seem to render it impossible. Want hereof hath turned aside many from God, and caused them to cast their lot and portion into the world.

2. To preserve them from putting themselves on any irregular ways for their accomplishment.

3. To teach them to search diligently into the wisdom of God, who hath disposed times and seasons as unto his own glory, so unto the trial and real benefit of the church."

Fourthly. The subject-matter of the promise given, is διαθήκη καινή, 'a covenant,' ברית. The Seventy rendered it by διαθήκη, 'a testament.' And that is more proper in this place than a covenant. For if we take 'covenant' in a strict and proper sense, it hath indeed no place between God and man. For a covenant strictly taken, ought to proceed on equal terms, and a proportionate consideration of things on both sides. But the covenant of God is founded on grace, and consists essentially in a free undeserved promise. And therefore ברית, 'a covenant,' is never spoken of between God and man, but on the part of God it consists in a free promise, or a testament. And a testament, which is the proper signification of the word here used by the apostle, is suited unto this place, and nothing else. For,

1. Such a covenant is intended, as is ratified and confirmed by the death of him that makes it. And this is properly a testament. For this covenant was confirmed by the death of Christ, and that both as it was the death of the testator, and as it was accompanied with the blood of a sacrifice, whereof we must treat afterwards at large, if God will.

2. It is such a covenant, as wherein the covenanter, he that makes it, bequeathed his goods unto others in the way of a legacy. For this is done by Christ herein, as we must also declare afterwards. Wherefore

our Saviour calls this covenant the new testament in his blood. This the word used by the apostle doth properly signify, and it is evident that he intends not a covenant absolutely and strictly so taken. With respect hereunto, the first covenant is usually called the old testament. For we intend not thereby the books of Scripture, or oracles of God, committed unto the church of the Jews, (which yet, as we have observed, are once called the Old Testament, 2 Cor. iii. 14,) but the covenant that God made with the church of Israel at Sinai, whereof we have spoken at large. And this was called a testament for three reasons.

First. Because it was confirmed by death; that is, the death of the sacrifices that were slain and offered at its solemn establishment. So saith our apostle, 'The first testament was not dedicated without blood,' ch. ix. 15. But there is more required hereunto; for even a covenant properly and strictly so called, may be confirmed with sacrifices. Wherefore,

Secondly. God did therein make over, and grant unto the church of Israel, the good things of the land of Canaan, with the privileges of his worship.

Thirdly. The principal reason of this denomination, 'the old testament,' is taken from its being typically significative of the death and legacy of the great Testator, as we have shown.

We have treated somewhat before concerning the nature of the new testament, as considered in distinction from, and opposition unto the old. I shall here only briefly consider what concurreth unto the constitution of it, as it was then future, when this promise was given, and as it is here promised. And three things do concur hereunto.

1st. A recapitulation, collection, and confirmation of all the promises of grace that had been given unto the church from the beginning, even all that was spoken by the mouth of the holy prophets that had been since the world began, Luke i. 70. The first promise contained in it the whole essence and substance of the covenant of grace. All those afterwards given unto the church on various occasions, were but explications and confirmations of it. In the whole of them, there was a full declaration of the wisdom and love of God in sending his Son, and of his grace unto mankind thereby. And God solemnly confirmed them with his oath, namely, that they should be all accomplished in their appointed season. Whereas therefore the covenant here promised included the sending of Christ for the accomplishment of those promises, they are all gathered into one head therein. It is a constellation of all promises of grace.

2dly. All these promises were to be reduced into an actual covenant or testament two ways.

1. In that, as unto the accomplishment of the grace principally intended in them, they received it in the sending of Christ; and as to the confirmation and establishment of them for the communication of grace unto the church, they received it in the death of Christ, as a sacrifice of agreement or atonement.

2. They are established as the rule and law of reconciliation and peace between God and man. This gives them the nature of a covenant. For a covenant is the solemn expression of the terms of peace between various parties, with the confirmation of them.

3dly. They are reduced into such form of law, as to become the only rule of the ordinances of worship and divine service, required of the church. Nothing unto these ends is now presented unto us, or required of us, but what belongeth immediately unto the administration of this covenant, and the grace thereof. But the reader must consult what hath been discoursed at large unto this purpose on the 6th verse.

And we may see from hence, what it is that God here promiseth and foretellet, as that which he would do in the days that were coming. For whereas they had the promise before, and so virtually the grace and mercy of the new covenant, it may be inquired what is yet wanting that should be promised solemnly under the name of a covenant. For the full resolution of this question, I must, as before, refer the reader unto what hath been discoursed at large about the two covenants, and the difference between them, on ver. 6. Here we may briefly name some few things, sufficient unto the exposition of this place. As,

First. All those promises which had before been given out unto the church from the beginning of the world, were now reduced into the form of a covenant, or rather of a testament. The name of a covenant is indeed sometimes applied unto the promises of grace, before or under the Old Testament. But ברית, the word used in all those places, denoteth only a free, gratuitous promise, Gen. ix. 9, xvii. 4. But they were none of them, nor all of them together, reduced into the form of a testament, which they could not be but by the death of the testator. And what blessed privileges and benefits were included herein, hath been shown before, and must yet further be insisted on, in the exposition of the ninth chapter, if God permit.

Secondly. There was another covenant superadded unto the promises, which was to be the immediate rule of the obedience and worship of the church. And according unto their observance of this superadded covenant, they were esteemed to have kept or broken covenant with God. This was the old covenant in Sinai, as hath been declared. Wherefore the promises could not be in the form of a covenant unto the people, inasmuch as they could not be under the power of two covenants at once, and those, as it afterwards appeared, absolutely inconsistent. For this is that which our apostle proves in this place, namely, that where the promises were brought into the form, and had the use of a covenant unto the church, the former covenant must needs disappear, or be disannulled. Only they had their place and efficacy to convey the benefits of the grace of God in Christ unto them that did believe; but God here foretellet, that he will give them such an order and efficacy in the administration of his grace, as that all the fruits of it by Jesus Christ shall be bequeathed and made over unto the church in the way of a solemn covenant.

Thirdly. Notwithstanding the promises which they had received, yet the whole system of their worship sprang from, and related unto the covenant made at Sinai. But now God promiseth a new state of spiritual worship, relating only unto the promises of grace, as brought into the form of a covenant.

Obs. VIII. The new covenant, as collecting into one all the pro-

mises of grace given from the foundation of the world, accomplished in the actual exhibition of Christ, and confirmed in his death, by the sacrifice of his blood, and thereby becoming the sole rule of new spiritual ordinances of worship suited thereunto, was the great object of the faith of the saints of the Old Testament, and is the great foundation of all our present mercies.

All these things were contained in that new covenant, as such, which God here promiseth to make. For,

First. There was in it a recapitulation of all promises of grace. God had not made any promise, any intimation of his love or grace unto the church in general, nor unto any particular believer, but he brought it all into this covenant, so as that they should be esteemed, all and every one of them, to be given and spoken unto every individual person that hath an interest in this covenant. Hence all the promises made unto Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with all the other patriarchs, and the oath of God whereby they were confirmed, are all of them made unto us, and do belong unto us no less than they did unto them to whom they were first given, if we are made partakers of this covenant. Hereof the apostle gives an instance in the singular promise made unto Joshua, which he applies unto believers, ch. xiii. 5. There was nothing of love nor grace in any of them, but was gathered up into this covenant.

Secondly. The actual exhibition of Christ in the flesh, belonged unto this promise of making a new covenant; for without it, it could not have been made. This was the desire of all the faithful from the foundation of the world; this they longed after, and fervently prayed for continually. And the prospect of it was the sole ground of their joy and consolation. 'Abraham saw his day, and rejoiced.' This was the great privilege, which God granted unto them that walked uprightly before him; such an one, saith he, 'shall dwell on high, his place of defence shall be the munition of rocks: bread shall be given him, his waters shall be sure: thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty, they shall behold the land that is very far off,' Isa. xxxiii. 16, 17. That prospect which they had by faith of the King of saints in his beauty and glory, though yet at a great distance, was their relief and their reward in their sincere obedience. And those who understand not the glory of this privilege of the new covenant, in the incarnation of the Son of God, or his exhibition in the flesh, wherein the depths of the counsels and wisdom of God in the way of grace, mercy, and love, opened themselves unto the church, are strangers unto the things of God.

Thirdly. It was confirmed and ratified by the death and blood-shedding of Christ, and therefore included in it the whole work of his mediation. This is the spring of the life of the church; and until it was opened, great darkness was upon the minds of believers themselves. What peace, what assurance, what light, what joy, depend hereon, and proceed from it, no tongue can express.

Fourthly. All ordinances of worship do belong hereunto. What is the benefit of them, what are the advantages which believers receive by them, we must declare, when we come to consider that comparison that the apostle makes between them, and the carnal ordinances of the

law, ch. ix. Whereas, therefore, all these things were contained in the new covenant, as here promised of God, it is evident how great was the concern of the saints under the Old Testament, to have it introduced, and how great also ours is in it, now it is established.

Fifthly. The Author or Maker of this covenant is expressed in the words, as also those with whom it was made. The first is included in the person of the verb, 'I will make:' 'I will make, saith the Lord.' It is God himself that makes this covenant, and he takes it upon himself so to do. He is the principal party covenanting. 'I will make a covenant;' God hath made a covenant. 'He hath made with me an everlasting covenant.' And sundry things are we taught therein.

1. The freedom of this covenant, without respect unto any merit, worth, or condignity in them with whom it is made. What God doth, he doth freely, *ex mera gratia et voluntate*. There was no cause, without himself, for which he should make this covenant, or which should move him so to do. And this we are eminently taught in this place, where he expresseth no other occasion of his making this covenant, but the sins of the people in breaking that which he formerly made with them. And it is expressed on purpose to declare the free and sovereign grace, the goodness, love, and mercy, which alone were the absolute springs of this covenant.

2. The wisdom of its contrivance. The making of any covenant to be good and useful, depends solely on the wisdom and foresight of them by whom it is made. Hence, men do often make covenants, which they design for their good and advantage, but they are so ordered for want of wisdom and foresight, that they turn unto their hurt and ruin. But there was infinite wisdom in the constitution of this covenant, whence it is, and shall be, infinitely effective of all the blessed ends of it. And they are utterly unacquainted with it, who are not affected with a holy admiration of divine wisdom in its contrivance. A man might comfortably spend his life in the contemplation of it, and yet be far enough from finding out the Almighty in it unto perfection. Hence is it that it is so divine a mystery in all the parts of it, which the wisdom of the flesh cannot comprehend. Nor without a due consideration of the infinite wisdom of God in the contrivance of it, can we have any true or real conceptions about it; *έκας έκας εστε βεβηλοι*, profane unsanctified minds, can have no insight into this effect of divine wisdom.

3. It was God alone who could prepare and provide a surety for this covenant; considering the necessity there was of a surety in this covenant, seeing no covenant between God and man could be firm and stable without one, by reason of our weakness and mutability. And considering of what a nature this surety must be, even God and man in one person, it is evident that God himself alone must make this covenant. And the provision of this surety, doth contain in it the glorious manifestation of all the divine excellencies, beyond any act or work of God whatever.

4. There is in this covenant a sovereign law of divine worship, wherein the church is consummated, or brought into the most perfect estate, whereof in this world it is capable, and established for ever. This law could be given by God alone.

5. There is ascribed unto this covenant such an efficacy of grace, as nothing but Almighty power can make good and accomplish. The grace here mentioned in the promises of it, directs us immediately unto its author. For who else but God, can write the divine law in our hearts, and pardon all our sins? The sanctification or renovation of our natures, and the justification of our persons, being promised herein, seeing infinite power and grace are required unto them, he alone must make this covenant, with whom all power and grace do dwell. 'God hath spoken once, twice have I heard this, that power belongeth unto God; also, unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy,' Ps. lxii. 11, 12.

6. The reward promised in this covenant, is God himself, 'I am thy reward.' And who but God can ordain himself to be our reward?

Obs. IX. All the efficacy and glory of the new covenant, do originally arise from, and are resolved into, the Author and supreme Cause of it, which is God himself. And we might consider, unto the encouragement of our faith, and the strengthening of our consolation,

1. His infinite condescension in making and entering into covenant with poor, lost, fallen, sinful man. This no heart can fully conceive, no tongue can express; only we live in hope to have yet a more clear prospect of it, and to have a holy admiration of it unto eternity.

2. His wisdom, goodness, and grace, in the nature of that covenant, which he hath condescended to make and enter into. The first covenant he made with us in Adam, which we brake, was in itself good, holy, righteous, and just; it must be so, because it was also made by him. But there was no provision made in it, absolutely to preserve us from that woeful disobedience and transgression which would make it void, and frustrate all the holy and blessed ends of it. Nor was God obliged so to preserve us, having furnished us with a sufficiency of ability for our own preservation, so as we could no way fall, but by a wilful apostasy from him. But this covenant is of such a nature, that the grace administered in it shall effectually preserve all the covenanters unto the end, and secure unto them all the benefits of it. For,

3. His power and faithfulness are engaged unto the accomplishment of all the promises of it. And these promises do contain every thing that is spiritually and eternally good or desirable unto us. 'O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!' How glorious art thou in the ways of thy grace towards poor sinful creatures, who had destroyed themselves! And,

4. He hath made no created good, but himself only, to be our reward.

The persons with whom this covenant is made, are also expressed: 'the house of Israel, and the house of Judah.' Long before the giving of this promise, that people were divided into two parts. The one of them, in way of distinction from the other, retained the name of Israel. These were the ten tribes which fell off from the house of David, under the conduct of Ephraim, whence they are often also in the prophets called by that name. The other, consisting of the tribe of Judah, properly so called, with that of Benjamin and the greatest part of Levi, took the name of Judah; and with them, both the promise and the church remained in a peculiar manner. But whereas they all origi-

nally sprang from Abraham, who received the promise and sign of circumcision for them all, and because they were all equally in their forefather brought into the bond of the old covenant, they are here mentioned distinctly, that none of the seed of Abraham might be excluded from the tender of this covenant. Unto the whole seed of Abraham according to the flesh it was, that the terms and grace of this covenant were first to be offered. So Peter tells them in his first sermon, that the promise was unto them, and to their children who were there present, that is, the house of Judah, and to them that are afar off, that is, the house of Israel in their dispersions, Acts ii. 39. So again he expresth the order of the dispensation of this covenant with respect to the promise made to Abraham, Acts iii. 25, 26, 'Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed: unto you first, God having raised his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you;' namely, in the preaching of the gospel. So our apostle, in his sermon unto them, affirmed that it was necessary that the word should be first spoken unto them, Acts xiii. 46. And this was all the privilege that was now left unto them. For the partition wall was now broken down, and all obstacles against the Gentiles taken out of the way. Wherefore, this house of Israel, and of Judah, may be considered two ways.

First. As that people were the whole entire posterity of Abraham.

Secondly. As they were typical, and mystically significant of the whole church of God. Hence alone it is that the promises of grace under the Old Testament are given unto the church under those names, because they were types of them who should really and effectually be made partakers of them.

In the first sense, God made this covenant with them, and this on sundry accounts.

1. Because He, in and through whom alone it was to be established and made effectual, was to be brought forth amongst them of the seed of Abraham, as the apostle plainly declares, Acts iii. 25.

2. Because all things that belonged unto the ratification of it, were to be transacted amongst them.

3. Because in the outward dispensation of it, the terms and grace of it was first in the counsel of God to be tendered unto them.

4. Because by them, by the ministry of men of their posterity, the dispensation of it was to be carried unto all nations, as they were to be blessed in the seed of Abraham; which was done by the apostles and other disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ. So the law of the Redeemer went forth from Sion. By this means the covenant was confirmed with many of them for one week, before the calling of the Gentiles, Dan. ix. 27. And because these things belonged equally unto them all, mention is made distinctly of the house of Israel, and the house of Judah. For the house of Judah was, at the time of the giving of this promise, in the sole possession of all the privileges of the old covenant, Israel having cut themselves off by their revolt from the house of David, and for their sins being also cast out amongst the heathen. But God, to declare that the covenant he designed, had no respect unto

those carnal privileges which were then in the possession of Judah alone, but only to the promise made unto Abraham, equals all his seed with respect unto the mercy of this covenant.

In the second sense, the whole church of elect believers, is intended under these denominations, being typified by them. These are they alone, being of twain, namely, Jews and Gentiles made one, with whom the covenant is really made and established, and unto whom the grace of it is actually communicated. For all those with whom this covenant is made, shall as really have the law of God written in their hearts, and their sins pardoned, according unto the promise of it, as the people of old were brought into the land of Canaan, by virtue of the covenant made with Abraham. These are the true Israel and Judah prevailing with God, and confessing unto his name.

Obs. X. The covenant of grace in Christ, is made only with the Israel of God, the church of the elect.—For by the making of this covenant with any, the effectual communication of the grace of it unto them, is principally intended. Nor can that covenant be said to be made absolutely with any, but those whose sins are pardoned by virtue thereof, and in whose hearts the law of God is written, which are the express promises of it. And it was with respect unto those of this sort among that people, that the covenant was promised to be made with them. See Rom. ix. 24—33, xi. 7. But in respect of the outward dispensation of the covenant, it is extended beyond the effectual communication of the grace of it. And in respect thereunto, did the privilege of the carnal seed of Abraham lie.

Obs. XI. Those who are first and most advanced as to outward privileges, are oftentimes last and least advantaged by the grace and mercy of them. Thus was it with these two houses of Israel and Judah. They had the privilege and preeminence above all nations of the world, as unto the first tender, and all the benefits of the outward dispensation of the covenant; yet, though the number of them was as the sand of the sea, a remnant only was saved. They came behind the nations of the world as unto the grace of it. And this by reason of their unbelief, and the abuse of the privileges granted unto them. Let not those, therefore, who now enjoy the greatest privileges, be high-minded, but fear.

The manner of making this covenant, is expressed by *συντελεσω*, *perficiam*, *consummabo*, I will ‘perfect, or consummate.’ In the Hebrew it is only *וּכְרַחֵם*, *pangam*, *feriam*, ‘I will make;’ but the apostle renders it by this word, to denote that this covenant was at once perfected and consummated, to the exclusion of all additions and alterations. Perfection and unalterable establishment, are the properties of this covenant. ‘An everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure.’

4. As to its distinguishing character, it is called a *new* covenant; so it is with respect unto the old covenant made at Sinai. Wherefore, by this covenant, as here considered, is not understood the promise of grace given unto Adam absolutely; nor that unto Abraham, which contained the substance and matter of it, the grace exhibited in it, but

not the complete form of it as a covenant. For if it were only the promise, it could not be called a new covenant with respect unto that made at Sinai. For so it was before it, absolutely two thousand five hundred years, and in the person of Abraham, four hundred years at the least. But it must be considered, as before described, in the establishment of it, and its law of spiritual worship. And so it was prophesied of by Jeremiah, eight hundred years after that in Sinai. Howbeit, it may be called a new covenant in other respects also. As first, because of its eminency. So it is said of an eminent work of God, ‘Behold I work a new thing in the earth;’ and its duration and continuance, as that which shall never wax old, is denoted thereby.

VER. 9.—Οὐ κατὰ τὴν διαθήκην ἣν ἐποίησα τοῖς πατράσιν αὐτῶν, ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐπιλαβομένου μου τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῶν, ἐξαγαγεῖν αὐτοὺς ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου· ὅτι αὐτοὶ οὐκ ἐνεμείναν ἐν τῇ διαθήκῃ μου, κα’ γὰρ ἡμελησα αὐτῶν, λέγει Κύριος.

For the quotation and translation of these words out of the prophet Jeremiah, the reader may consult the Exercitations in the first volume, Exercitation V. בְּרִית, the apostle in this place renders by ἐποίησα, and in this place only: the reason whereof, we shall see afterwards. אֲשֶׁר־הִמָּחַהּ הִפְרוּ אֶת־בְּרִיתִי, ‘which my covenant they brake,’ rescinded, dissipated; the apostle renders αὐτοὶ οὐκ ἐνεμείναν ἐν τῇ διαθήκῃ μου, and they ‘continued not in my covenant.’ For not to abide faithful in covenant, is to break it. וְאֲנִי בִעַלְתִּי בָם, and I was ‘a husband unto them,’ or rather, ‘a Lord over them;’ in the apostle, κα’ γὰρ ἡμελησα αὐτῶν, ‘and I regarded them not.’ On what reason and grounds the seeming alteration is made, we shall inquire in the exposition.

Οὐ κατὰ τὴν διαθήκην, non secundum testamentum; secundum illud testamentum, and so the Syriac, לֹא אֵךְ הִי דִּיתִיקָא, ‘not according unto that testament;’ others, fædus and illud fædus. Of the different translations of this word by a testament and a covenant, we have spoken before.

Ἦν ἐποίησα, Syr. דִּיתִיבַת, ‘which I gave;’ quod feci, ‘which I made;’ τοῖς πατράσιν, for συν τοῖς πατράσιν, ‘with the fathers,’ for that is required to be joined to the verb ἐποίησα. And therefore the Syriac, omitting the preposition, turns the verb into ‘gave;’ gave to the fathers, which is proper, אֶת אֲבוֹתָם, cum patribus eorum.

Οὐκ ἐνεμείναν, Vulg. non permanserunt; others, perstiterunt. So the Syriac, לֹא קָיָו, ‘they stood not,’ they continued not. Maneo is used to express stability in promise and covenants; ut tu dictis Albani maneres, and tu modo promissis maneas. So is permaneo in officio, in armis, in amicitia, ‘to continue stedfast unto the end.’ Wherefore, it is as well so rendered, as by persisto; ἐμμένω is so used by Thucydides, ἐμμένειν ταῖς διαθήκαις, ‘to abide firm and constant in covenants.’ And ἐμμενής is he who is firm, stable, constant in promises and engagements.

Κα’ γὰρ ἡμελησα, ego neglexi, despexi, neglectui habui; Syr. כִּסְפִּי, ‘I despised, I neglected, I rejected them.’ Ἀμελεω is curæ non habeo,

negligo, contemno; a word denoting a casting out of care with contempt.

VER. 9.—*Not according to that covenant which I made with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.*

The greatest and utmost mercies that God ever intended to communicate to the church, and to bless it withal, were inclosed in the new covenant. Nor doth the efficacy of the mediation of Christ, extend itself beyond the verge and compass thereof. For he is the mediator and surety, only of this covenant. But now God had before made a covenant with his people, a good and holy covenant it was, such as was meet for God to prescribe, and for them thankfully to accept of. Yet, notwithstanding all the privileges and advantages of it, it proved not so effectual, but that multitudes of them with whom God made that covenant, were so far from obtaining the blessedness of grace and glory thereby, as that they came short, and were deprived of the temporal benefits that were included therein. Wherefore, as God hereon promiseth to make a new covenant with them, seeing they had forfeited and lost the advantage of the former, yet if it should be of the same kind therewith, it might also in like manner prove ineffectual. So must God give, and the church receive, one covenant after another, and yet the ends of them never be obtained.

To obviate this objection, and the fear that thence might arise, God, who provideth not only for the safety of his church, but also for their comfort and assurance, declares beforehand unto them, that it shall not be of the same kind with the former, nor liable to be frustrated as to the ends of it, as that was.

And there are some things remarkable herein.

1. That the preface unto the promise of this new covenant, is a blame charged on the people, finding fault with them, blaming them, charging them with sin against the covenant that he had made with them.

2. Yet this, namely, that the people were not steadfast in it and unto the terms of it, was not the whole ground and reason of making this new covenant. For had it been so, there would have no more been needful to re-instate them in a good condition, but only that God should pardon their former sins, and renew the same covenant unto them again, and give them another venture or trial thereon. But inasmuch as he would do so no more, but will make another covenant of another nature with them, it is evident that there was some defect in the covenant itself; it was not able to communicate those good things with which God designed to bless the church.

3. These two things, being the only reason that God gives, why he will make this new covenant, namely, the sins of the people, and the insufficiency of the first covenant to bring the church into that blessed state which he designed for them; it is manifest that all his dealings with them, for their spiritual and eternal good, are of mere sovereign

grace, and such as he hath no motive unto, but in and from himself alone. There are sundry things contained in these words.

First. An intimation that God had made a former covenant with his people. *Την διαθηκην ἣν ἐποίησα.* There is in these verses a repetition three times of making covenant; and in every place in the Hebrew, the same words are used, *ברית ברית*. But the apostle changeth the verb in every place. First, He expresseth it by *συντελεισω*, ver. 8, and in the last place, by *διαθησομαι*, which is most proper, ver. 10, *τιθεναι* and *διατιθεναι διαθηκην*, are usual in other authors; here he useth *ἐποίησα*, in reference unto that covenant which the people brake, and God disannulled. And it may be he did so, to distinguish their alterable covenant, from that which was to be unalterable, and was confirmed with greater solemnity. God made this covenant, as others of his outward works, which he resolved to alter, change, or abolish at the appointed season. It was a work whose effects might be shaken, and which might itself afterwards be removed; so he speaks, ch. xii. 27. The change of the things that are shaken, is *ὡς πεποιημενων*, ‘as of things that are made,’ made for a season; so made as to abide and endure for an appointed time only; such were all the things of this covenant, and such was the covenant itself. It had no criteria æternitatis upon it, no evidences of an eternal duration. Nothing hath so, but what is founded in the blood of Christ. He is *אביעד*, ‘the everlasting Father,’ or the immediate author and cause of every thing that is or shall be everlasting in the church. Let men labour and contend about other things whilst they please; they are all shaken and must be removed.

Obs. I. The grace and glory of the new covenant, are much set off and manifested, by the comparing of it with the old.—This is done here by God on purpose for the illustration of it. And it is greatly made use of in this Epistle, partly to prevail with us to accept of the terms thereof, and to abide faithful therein; and partly, to declare how great is their sin, and how sore will be the destruction of them, by whom it is neglected or despised. As these things are insisted on in other places, so are they the subject of the apostle’s discourse, ch. xii. from ver. 15 to the end.

Obs. II. All God’s works are equally good and holy in themselves, but as unto the use and advantage of the church, he is pleased to make some of them means of communicating more grace than others. Even this covenant, which the new was not to be like unto, was in itself good and holy, which these with whom it was made, had no reason to complain of. Howbeit, God had ordained that by another covenant, he would communicate the fulness of his grace and love unto the church. And if every thing that God doth, be improved in its season, and for its proper ends, we shall have benefit and advantage by it, though he hath yet other ways of doing us more good, whose seasons he hath reserved unto himself. But this is an act of mere sovereign goodness and grace, that whereas any have neglected or abused mercies and kindnesses that they have received, instead of casting them off on that account, God takes this other course, of giving them such mercies as shall not be so abused. This he did by the introduction of

the new covenant in the room of the old, and this he doth every day. So Isa. lvii. 16—18. We live in days wherein men variously endeavour to obscure the grace of God, and to render it unglorious in the eyes of men, but he will for ever be admired in them that do believe.

Obs. III. Though God makes an alteration in any of his works, ordinances of worship, or institutions, yet he never changeth his intention, or the purpose of his will. In all outward changes there is with him no variableness nor shadow of turning. Known unto him are all his works from the foundation of the world; and whatever change there seems to be in them, it is all effected in pursuance of the unchangeable purpose of his will concerning them all. It argued not the least change or shadow of turning in God, that he appointed the old covenant for a season, and for some certain ends, and then took it away, by making another that should excel it both in grace and efficacy.

Secondly. It is declared with whom this former covenant was made *πατράσιν αὐτῶν*, ‘with their fathers.’ Some Latin copies read, *cum patribus vestris*, ‘with your fathers.’ But having spoken before of the house of Judah, and of the house of Israel, in the third person, he continueth to speak still in the same. So likewise is it in the prophet, *אבותם*, ‘their fathers.’

Their fathers, their progenitors, were those that this people always boasted of. For the most part I confess that in their claim from them, they rose higher than to those here principally intended, namely, unto Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the twelve patriarchs. But in general, their fathers it was whereof they made their boast; and desired no more, but only what might descend unto them in the right of these fathers. And unto these God here sends them, and that for two ends.

1. To let them know that he had more grace and mercy to communicate unto the church, than ever those fathers of theirs were made partakers of. So would he take them off from boasting of them, or trusting in them.

2. To give warning by them, to take heed, how they behaved themselves under the tender of his new and greater mercy. For the fathers here intended were those with whom God made the covenant at Sinai. But it is known, and the apostle hath declared at large in the third chapter of this Epistle, how they brake and rejected this covenant of God, through their unbelief and disobedience, and so perished in the wilderness. These were those fathers of the people with whom the first covenant was made, and so they perished in their unbelief. A great warning this was unto those that should live when God would enter into the new covenant with his church, lest they should perish after the same example. But yet was it not effectual towards them. For the greatest part of them rejected this new covenant, as their fathers did the old, and perished in the indignation of God.

Obs. IV. The disposal of mercies and privileges as unto times, persons, seasons, is wholly in the hand and power of God. Some he granted unto the fathers, some to their posterity, and not the same to

both. It is our wisdom to improve what we enjoy, not to repine at what God hath done for others, or will do for them that shall come after us. Our present mercies are sufficient for us, if we know how to use them. He that wanteth not a believing heart, shall want nothing else.

Thirdly. Who these fathers with whom God made this covenant were, is farther evident from the time, season, and circumstances of the making of it.

1. For the time of it, it was done *εν ημερα*, that is, *εκεινη*, 'in that day.' That 'a day' is taken in the Scripture for an especial time and season wherein any work or duty is to be performed, is obvious unto all. The reader may see what we have discoursed concerning such a day on the third chapter. And the time here intended, is often called the day of it, Ezek. xx. 6, 'In the day I lifted up my hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt;' at that time or season. A certain, determinate, limited time, suited with means unto any work, occasion, or duty, is so called a day. And it answereth unto the description of the time of making the new covenant given in the verse foregoing; 'behold the days are coming,' the time or season approacheth. It is also used in a way of eminency; a day or a signal eminent season, Mal iii. 2, 'Who may abide the day of his coming?' the illustrious glory and power that shall appear, and be exerted at his coming. 'In the day,' is, at that great eminent season so famous throughout all their generations.

This day or season is described from the work of it, *επιλαβομενου μου της χειρος αυτων*. *ῥηπιπ*, 'that I firmly laid hold.' And *επιλαμβανω*, is, 'to take hold of,' with a design of helping or delivering: and sundry things are intimated, as the way and manner of the deliverance of that people at that time.

1. The woeful helpless condition that they were in then in Egypt. So far were they from being able to deliver themselves out of their captivity and bondage, that like children they were not able to stand or go, unless God took them, and led them by the hand. So he speaks, Hos. xi. 3, 'I taught them to go, taking them by the arms.' And certainly never were weakly froward children so awkward to stand and go of themselves, as that people were to comply with God in the work of their deliverance. Sometimes they refused to stand, or to make a trial of it. Sometimes they cast themselves down after they were set on their feet; and sometimes with all their strength they went backwards as to what God directed them unto. He that can read the story of their deliverance with any understanding, will easily discern what pains God was at with that people, to teach them to go when he thus took them by the hand. It is therefore no new thing that the church of God should be in a condition of itself neither able to stand nor go. But yet if God will take them by the hand for their help, deliverance shall ensue.

2. It expresseth the infinite condescension of God towards this people in that condition, that he would bow down to 'take them by the hand.' In most other places, the work which he then accomplished, is ascribed unto 'the lifting up, or stretching out of his hand,' Ezek. xx. 6. See the description of it, Deut. iv. 34, xxvi. 8. It was towards their enemies a work of mighty power, of the lifting up of his

hand ; but towards them, it was a work of infinite condescension and patience : ‘a bowing down to take them by the hand.’ And this was the greatest work of God. For such was the frowardness and unbelief, so multiplied were the provocations and temptations of that people, that if God had not held them fast by the hand, with infinite grace, patience, forbearance, and condescension, they had inevitably ruined themselves. And we know in how many instances they endeavoured frowardly and obstinately to wrest themselves out of the hand of God, and to have cast themselves into utter destruction. Wherefore, this word, ‘when I took them by the hand,’ for the end mentioned, compriseth all the grace, mercy, and patience, which God exercised towards that people, while he wrought out their deliverance, by lifting up his hand amongst and against their adversaries. And indeed, no heart can conceive, no tongue can express, that infinite condescension and patience which God exerciseth towards every one of us, whilst he holds us by the hand to lead us unto rest with himself. Our own hearts, in some measure, know with what waywardness and frowardness, with what wanderings from him, and withdrawing from his holy conduct, we exercise, and are ready to weary his patience continually. Yet do not mercy and grace let go that hold which they have taken on us. Oh, that our souls might live in constant admiration of that divine grace and patience, which they live upon ; that the remembrance of the times and seasons wherein, if God had not strengthened his hand upon us, we had utterly destroyed ourselves, might increase that admiration daily, and enliven it with thankful obedience !

3. The power of this work intended is also included herein ; not directly, but by consequence. For, as was said, when God took them by the hand by his grace and patience, he lifted up the hand of his power by the mighty works which he wrought among their adversaries. What he did in Egypt at the Red Sea, in the wilderness, is all included herein. These things made the day mentioned eminent and glorious. It was a great day wherein God so magnified his name and power in the sight of all the world.

4. All these things had respect to, and issued in, that actual deliverance which God then wrought for that people. And this was the greatest mercy which that people ever were, or ever could be made partakers of, in that condition wherein they were under the Old Testament. And to the outward part of it, consider what they were delivered from, and what they were led into, and it will evidently appear to be as great an outward mercy as human nature is capable of. But besides, it was gloriously typical, and representative of their own and the whole church’s spiritual deliverance from sin and hell, from our bondage to Satan, and a glorious traduction into the liberty of the sons of God. And therefore did God engrave the memorial of it on the tables of stone, ‘I am the Lord thy God which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.’ For what was typified and signified thereby, is the principal motive to obedience throughout all generations. Nor is any moral obedience acceptable to God, that doth not proceed from a sense of spiritual deliverance.

And these things are here called over in this promise of giving a new covenant; partly to remind the people of the mercies which they had sinned against, and partly to remind them that no concurrence of outward mercies and privileges, can secure our covenant relation to God, without the special mercy which is administered in the new covenant, whereof Jesus Christ is the mediator and surety.

Thus, great on all accounts was the day, and the glory of it, wherein God made the old covenant with the people of Israel, yet had it no glory in comparison of that which doth excel. The light of the Sun of glory was on this day, 'sevenfold as the light of seven days,' Isa. xxx. 26. A perfection of light and glory was to accompany that day, and all the glory of God's work and his rest therein, the light of seven days, was to issue in it.

From the things we have observed, it is fully evident both what was the covenant that God made, and who were the Fathers with whom it was made. The covenant intended is none other but that made at Sinai, in the third month after the coming of the people out of Egypt, Exod. xix. 1, which covenant, in the nature, use, and end of it, we have before described. And the fathers were those of that generation, those who came out of Egypt; and solemnly, in their own persons, they and their children entered into the covenant, and took on them to do all that was required therein, whereon they were sprinkled with the blood of it, Exod. xxiv. 3—8; Deut. v. 27. It is true all the posterity of the people to whom the promise was now given, were bound and obliged by that covenant, no less than those who first received it; but those only are intended in this place, who actually in their own persons entered into covenant with God. Which consideration will give light to what is affirmed, that they brake this covenant or continued not in it.

A comparison being intended between the two covenants, this is the first general part of the foundation of it with respect to the old.

The second part of it is in the event of making this covenant; and this is expressed both on the part of man and God, or in what the people did towards God, and how he carried it towards them thereon.

First. The event on the part of the people is in these words, 'Because they continued not in my covenant,' *ὅτι αυτοὶ οὐκ ἐνεμεῖναν ἐν τῇ διαθήκῃ μου*. אשר, 'which,' in the original, is expressed by *ὅτι*, which we render, 'because;' *ὅτι*, as it is sometimes a relative, sometimes a redditive, 'which,' or 'because.' If we follow our translation, 'because,' it seems to give a reason why God made a covenant with them, not like the former, namely, because they continued not in the former, or brake it. But this indeed was not the reason of it. The reason I say, why God made this new covenant not according to the former, was not because they abode not in the first. This could be no reason of it, nor any motive to it. It is therefore mentioned only to illustrate the grace of God, that he would make this new covenant, notwithstanding the sin of those who brake the former; as also the excellency of the covenant itself, whereby those who are taken into it, shall be preserved from breaking of it by the grace which it doth administer. Wherefore I had rather render *ὅτι* here by 'which,' as we render אשר, in the prophet, 'which my covenant,'

or 'for,' for they abode not. And if we render it 'because,' it respects not God's making a new covenant, but his rejecting them for breaking the old.

That which is charged on them is, that *οὐκ ἐνεμείναν*, 'they continued not,' they abode not in the covenant made with them. This God calls his covenant; 'they continued not in my covenant;' because he was the author of it, the sole contriver and proposer of its terms and promises. *הסירו*, 'they brake,' 'they rescinded,' removed it, made it void. The Hebrew word expresseth the matter of fact, what they did, they brake or made void the covenant: the word used by the apostle, the manner how they did it, namely, by not continuing faithful in it, not abiding by the terms of it. The use of the word *μὲνω*, and *ἐμμενω*, to this purpose hath been before declared. And what is intended hereby, we must inquire.

1. God made this covenant with the people in Sinai, in the authoritative proposition of it to them, and thereon the people solemnly accepted of it, and took it on themselves to observe, do. and fulfil the terms and conditions of it, Exod. xix. 8, especially ch. xxiv. 3, 7, 'The people answered with one voice, All the words which the Lord hath said, we will do. And all that the Lord hath said, we will do and be obedient.' So Deut. v. 27. Hereupon the covenant was ratified and confirmed between God and them, and thereon the blood of the covenant was sprinkled on them, Exod. xxiv. 8. This gave that covenant its solemn ratification.

2. Having thus accepted of God's covenant, and the terms of it, Moses, ascending again into the mount, the people made the golden calf. And this fell out so suddenly after the making of the covenant, that the apostle expresseth it by, 'they continued not in it,' they made haste to break it. He expresseth the sense of the words of God hereon, Exod. xxxii. 7, 8, 'Go, get thee down, for thy people which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves. They have turned aside greatly out of the way which I commanded them; they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.' For therein they brake the covenant, wherein God had in a peculiar manner assumed the glory of that deliverance to himself.

3. Wherefore the breaking of the covenant, or their not continuing in it, was first and principally the making of the molten calf. After this indeed, that generation added many other sins and provocations, before all things proceeded so far, that God swore in his wrath that they should never enter into his rest. This fell out on their professed unbelief, and murmuring at the return of the spies, Num. xiv. ; whereof we have treated at large on ch. iii. Wherefore this expression is not to be extended to the sins of the following generation, neither in the kingdom of Israel, nor in that of Judah, although they variously transgressed against the covenant, disannulling it so far as it lay in them. But it is the sin of them who personally first entered into covenant with God, that is reflected on. That generation with whom God made that first covenant, immediately brake it, continued not in it.

And therefore let that generation look well to themselves to whom this new covenant shall be first proposed. And it so fell out, that the unbelief of that first generation who lived in the first days of the promulgation of the new covenant, hath proved an occasion of the ruin of their posterity to this day. And we may observe,

Obs. V. That sins have their aggravations from mercies received.—This was that which rendered this first sin of that people of such a flagitious nature in itself, and so provoking to God, namely, that they who contracted personally the guilt of it, had newly received the honour, mercy, and privilege of being taken into covenant with God. Hence is that threatening of God with respect hereunto, ‘Nevertheless in the day that I visit, I will visit their sin upon them,’ *Exod. xxxii. 34.* He would have a remembrance of this provoking sin in all their following visitations. Let us therefore take heed how we sin against received mercies, especially spiritual privileges, such as we enjoy by the gospel.

Obs. VI. Nothing but effectual grace will secure our covenant-obedience one moment.—Greater motives unto obedience, or stronger outward obligation thereunto, no people under heaven could have, than this people had newly received, and they had publicly and solemnly engaged themselves thereunto. But ‘they quickly turned out of the way.’ And therefore in the new covenant is this grace promised in a peculiar manner, as we shall see on the next verse.

Secondly, The acting of God towards them hereon is also expressed *Κα’γω ημελησα αυτων*, ‘And I regarded them not.’ There seems to be a great difference in the translation of the words of the prophet, and these of the apostle taken from them. In the former place we read, ‘Although I was a husband to them,’ in this, ‘I regarded them not.’ And hereby the utmost difference that can be objected against the rendering of these words by the apostle, is represented. But there was no need of rendering the words in the prophet, *ואנכי בעלתי בם*, ‘Although I was a husband to them,’ as we shall see. Howbeit many learned men have exceedingly perplexed themselves and others, in attempting a reconciliation between these passages or expressions, because they seem to be of a direct contrary sense and import. I shall therefore premise some things which abate and take off from the weight of this difficulty, and then give the true solution of it. And to the first end we may observe,

1. That nothing of the main controversy, nothing of the substance of the truth, which the apostle proves and confirms by this testimony, doth any way depend on the precise signification of these words. They are but occasional as to the principal design of the whole promise, and therefore the sense of it doth not depend on their signification. And in such cases liberty in the variety of expositions may be safely used.

2. Take the two different senses which the words as commonly translated do present, and there is nothing of contradiction, or indeed the least disagreement between them. For the words, as we have translated them in the prophet, express an aggravation of the sin of the people. They broke my covenant, ‘although I was’ (that is, therein)

‘a husband to them,’ exercising singular kindness and care towards them. And as they are rendered by the apostle, they express the effect of that sin so aggravated. ‘He regarded them not;’ that is, with the same tenderness as formerly; for he refused to go with them as before, and exercised severity towards them in the wilderness until they were consumed. Each way the design is, to show that the covenant was broken by them, and that they were dealt withal accordingly.

But expositors do find or make great difficulties herein. It is generally supposed, that the apostle followed the translation of the LXX. in the present copy whereof the words are so expressed; but how they came to render בעלה, by ημελησα, they are not agreed. Some say the original copies might differ in some letters from those we now enjoy. Therefore it is thought they might read as some think, בהלה, neglexi, or בעלה, fastidivi, ‘I neglected or loathed them.’ And those who speak most modestly, suppose that the copy which the LXX. made use of, had one of these words instead of בעלה, which yet is the truer reading. And because this did not belong to the substance of the argument which he had in hand, the apostle would not depart from that translation which was then in use amongst the Hellenistical Jews.

But the best of these conjectures are uncertain, and some of them by no means to be admitted. Uncertain it is that the apostle made any of his quotations out of the translation of the LXX.; yea, the contrary is certain enough, and easily demonstrated. Neither did he write this Epistle unto the Hellenistical Jews, or those who lived in or belonged unto their dispersions, wherein they made use of the Greek tongue, but unto the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judea, principally, and in the first place, who made no use of that translation. He expressed the mind of the Scripture, as he was directed by the Holy Ghost, in words of his own. And the coincidence of these words with those in the present copies of the LXX. hath been accounted for in our Exercitations.

Dangerous it is, as well as untrue, to allow of alterations in the original text, and then upon our conjectures, to supply other words into it, than what are contained in it. This is not to explain, but to corrupt the Scripture. Wherefore one learned man (Pocock, in Miscellan.) hath endeavoured to prove, that בעלה, by all rules of interpretation, in this place must signify ‘to despise and neglect,’ and ought to have been so translated. And this he confirms from the use of it in the Arabic language. The reader may find it in the place referred to, with great satisfaction.

My apprehensions are grounded on what I have before observed and proved. The apostle, neither in this, nor in any other place, doth bind up himself precisely unto the translation of the words, but infallibly gives us the sense and meaning, and so he hath done in this place. For whereas בעל signifies ‘a husband,’ or to be a husband or a lord, ב being added unto it in construction, as it is here, בעלה במ, it is as much as jure usus sum maritali, ‘I exercised the right, power, and authority of a husband towards them,’ ‘I dealt with them as a husband with a wife that breaketh covenant;’ that is, saith the apostle, ‘I regarded them not,’ with the love, tenderness, and affec-

tion of a husband. So he dealt indeed with that generation which so suddenly brake covenant with him. He provided no more for them as unto the enjoyment of the inheritance; he took them not home unto him in his habitation, his resting-place in the land of promise, but he suffered them all to wander, and bear their whoredoms in the wilderness, until they were consumed. So did God exercise the right, and power, and authority, of a husband towards a wife that had broken covenant. And herein, as in many other things in that dispensation, did God give a representation of the nature of the covenant of works, and the issue of it.

Thirdly. There is a confirmation of the truth of these things in that expression, *λεγει Κυριος*, 'saith the Lord.' This assertion is not to be extended unto the whole matter, or the promise of the introduction of the new covenant. For that is secured with the same expression, ver. 8, *λεγει Κυριος*, 'saith the Lord.' But it hath a peculiar *παθος* in it, being added in the close of the words, *נאם ייחוד*, and respects only the sin of the people, and God's dealing with them thereon. And this manifests the meaning of the preceding words, to be God's severity towards them. 'I used the authority of a husband, I regarded them not as a wife any more, said the Lord.' Now, God thus uttereth his severity towards them, that they might consider how he will deal with all those who despise, break, or neglect his covenant. 'So,' saith he, 'I dealt with them,' and so shall I deal with others who offend in a like manner. This was the issue of things with them, with whom the first covenant was made. They received it, entered solemnly into the bonds of it, took upon themselves expressly the performance of its terms and conditions, were sprinkled with the blood of it, but they continued not in it, and were dealt withal accordingly. God used the right and authority of a husband, with whom a wife breaketh covenant: he neglected them, shut them out of his house, he deprived them of their dowry or inheritance, and slew them in the wilderness.

On this declaration, God promiseth to make another covenant with them, wherein all these evils should be prevented. This is the covenant which the apostle designs to prove better and more excellent than the former. And this he doth principally from the Mediator and surety of it, compared with the Aaronical priests, whose office and service belonged wholly unto the administration of that first covenant. And he confirms it also from the nature of this covenant itself, especially with respect unto its efficacy and duration. And hereunto this testimony is express, evidencing how this covenant is everlasting, by the grace administered in it, preventive of that evil issue to which the former came by the sin of the people. Hence, he says of it, *ου κατα την*, 'not according unto it,' a covenant agreeing with the former neither in promises, efficacy, nor duration. For what is principally promised here, namely, the giving of a new heart, Moses expressly affirms, that it was not done in the administration of the first covenant. It is neither a renovation of that covenant, nor a reformation of it, but a covenant utterly of another nature, by the introduction and establishment of which, that other was to be abolished, abrogated, and taken away, with all the divine worship and service which

was peculiar thereunto. And this was that which the apostle principally designed to prove and convince the Hebrews of. And from the whole we may observe sundry things.

Obs. VII. No covenant between God and man ever was, or ever could be stable and effectual as unto the ends of it, that was not made and confirmed in Christ.—God first made a covenant with us in Adam. Then there was nothing but the mere defectibility of our natures as we were creatures, that could render it ineffectual. And from thence did its failure proceed. In him we all sinned, by breach of covenant. The Son of God had not then interposed himself, nor undertaken on our behalf. The apostle tells us, that in him all things consist; without him, they have no consistency, no stability, no duration. So was this other covenant immediately broken. It was not confirmed by the blood of Christ. And those who suppose, that the efficacy and stability of the present covenant doth depend solely on our own will and diligence, had need not only to assert our nature free from that depravation which it was brought under when this covenant was broken, but also from that defectibility that was in it before we fell in Adam. And such as, neglecting the interposition of Christ, do betake themselves unto imaginations of this kind, surely know little of themselves, and less of God.

Obs. VIII. No external administration of a covenant of God's own making, no obligation of mercy on the minds of men, can enable them unto steadfastness in covenant obedience, without an effectual influence of grace from and by Jesus Christ.—For we shall see in the next verses, that this is the only provision which is made in the wisdom of God, to render us steadfast in obedience, and to render his covenant effectual unto us.

Obs. IX. God, in making a covenant with any, in proposing the terms of it, retains his right and authority to deal with persons according to their deportment in and towards that covenant.—They brake my covenant, and I regarded them not.

Obs. X. God's casting men out of his special care upon the breach of his covenant, is the highest judgment that in this world can fall on any persons.

And we are concerned in all these things. For although the covenant of grace be stable and effectual unto all who are really partakers of it, yet as unto its external administration, and our entering into it by a visible profession, it may be broken, unto the temporal and eternal ruin of persons and whole churches. Take heed of the golden calf.

VER. 10—12.—Ὅτι αὐτὴ ἡ διαθήκη, ἣν διαθήσομαι τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰσραὴλ μετὰ τὰς ἡμέρας ἐκεῖνας, λέγει Κύριος, δίδους νόμους μου εἰς τὴν διανοίαν αὐτῶν, καὶ ἐπὶ καρδίας αὐτῶν ἐπιγράψω αὐτοὺς· καὶ ἐσομαι αὐτοῖς εἰς Θεόν, καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐσονται μοι εἰς λαόν. Καὶ οὐ μὴ διδάξωσιν ἕκαστος τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ, λέγων· Γνωθὶ τὸν Κύριον· ὅτι πάντες εἰδησοῦσι με, ἀπὸ μικροῦ αὐτῶν ἕως μεγάλου αὐτῶν· ὅτι ἰλέως ἐσομαι ταῖς ἀδικίαις αὐτῶν, καὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν, καὶ τῶν ἀνομιῶν αὐτῶν, οὐ μὴ μνησθῶ ἐτι.

The design of the apostle, or what is the general argument which

he is in pursuit of, must still be borne in mind, while considering the testimonies which he produceth in the confirmation of it. His design is to prove, that the Lord Christ is the mediator and surety of a *better* covenant, than that wherein the service of God was managed by the high priests according to the law. For hence it follows, that his priesthood is greater and far more excellent than theirs. To this end he doth not only prove that God promised to make such a covenant, but also declares the nature and properties of it, in the words of the prophet. And so, by comparing it with the former covenant, he manifests its excellency above it. In particular, in this testimony, the imperfection of that covenant is demonstrated from its issue. For it did not effectually maintain peace and mutual love between God and the people; but being broken by them, they were thereon rejected of God. This rendered all the other benefits and advantages of it, useless. Wherefore, the apostle insists from the prophet, on those properties of this other covenant, which infallibly prevent the like issue, securing the people's obedience for ever, and so the love and relation of God unto them as their God.

Wherefore, these three verses give us a description of that covenant whereof the Lord Christ is the mediator and surety, not absolutely and entirely, but as unto those properties and effects of it, wherein it differs from the former, so as infallibly to secure the covenant relation between God and the people. That covenant was broken, but this shall never be broken, because provision is made in the covenant itself against any such event.

And we may consider in the words,

1. The particle of introduction *ὅτι*, answering to the Hebrew כִּי.
2. The subject spoken of, which is *διαθήκη*, with the way of making it, *ἣν διαθήσομαι*, 'which I will make.'
3. The author of it, the Lord Jehovah;—I will, saith the Lord.
4. Those with whom it was to be made,—the house of Israel.
5. The time of making it,—after those days.
6. The properties, privileges, and benefits of this covenant, which are of two sorts.

First. Of sanctifying, inherent grace; described by a double consequent.

1. Of God's relation unto them, and theirs to him;—I will be their God, and they shall be my people, ver. 10.

2. Of their advantage thereby, without the use of such other aids as formerly they stood in need of, ver. 11.

Secondly. Of relative grace, in the pardon of their sins, ver. 12. And sundry things of great weight will fall into consideration under these several heads.

VER. 10.—*For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, After those days, saith the Lord, I will give my laws into their mind, and write them upon their hearts; and I will be unto them a God, and they shall be to me a people.*

First. The introduction of the declaration of the new covenant is by

the particle $\delta\tau\iota$. The Hebrew כי which is rendered by it, is variously used, and is sometimes redundant. In the prophet some translate it by an exceptive, *sed*; some by an illative, *quoniam*. And in this place, $\delta\tau\iota$ is rendered by some *quamobrem*, ‘wherefore;’ and by others *nam*, or *enim*, as we render it by ‘for.’ And it doth intimate a reason of what was spoken before, namely, that the covenant which God would now make, should ‘not be according to that,’ like to that which was before made and broken.

Secondly. The thing promised is a covenant, in the prophet ברית , here $\delta\iota\alpha\theta\eta\kappa\eta$: and the way of making it in the prophet אכרת , which is the usual word whereby the making of a covenant is expressed. For signifying ‘to cut,’ ‘to strike,’ ‘to divide,’ respect is had in it to the sacrifices wherewith covenants were confirmed. Thence also were *fædus percutere*, and *fædus ferire*. See Gen. xv. 9, 10, 18. עש , or עם , that is, *cum*, which is joined in construction with it, Gen. xv. 18; Deut. v. 2. The apostle renders it by $\delta\iota\alpha\theta\eta\sigma\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$, and that with a dative case, without a preposition, $\tau\omega\ \omicron\iota\kappa\omega$, ‘I will make,’ or ‘confirm’ unto. He had used before $\sigma\upsilon\upsilon\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\sigma\omega$, to the same purpose.

We render the words ברית and $\delta\iota\alpha\theta\eta\kappa\eta$ in this place by a ‘covenant,’ though afterwards the same word is translated by a testament.’ A covenant properly is a compact or agreement on certain terms mutually stipulated by two or more parties. As promises are the foundation and rise of it, as it is between God and man; so it compriseth also precepts or laws of obedience which are prescribed to man on his part to be observed. But in the description of the covenant here annexed, there is no mention of any condition on the part of man, of any terms of obedience prescribed to him, but the whole consists in free gratuitous promises, as we shall see in the explication of it. Some hence conclude that it is only one part of the covenant that is here described. Others observe from hence, that the whole covenant of grace, as a covenant, is absolute, without any conditions on our part, which sense Estius on this place contends for. But these things must be farther inquired into.

First. The word *berith* used by the prophet, doth not only signify a covenant or compact properly so called, but a free, gratuitous promise also. Yea, sometimes it is used for such a free purpose of God with respect to other things, which in their own nature are incapable of being obliged by any moral condition. Such is God’s covenant with day and night, Jer. xxxiii. 20, 25. And so he says, that he made his covenant, not to destroy the world by water any more, ‘with every living creature,’ Gen. ix. 10, 11. Nothing therefore can be argued for the necessity of conditions to belong to this covenant from the name or term whereby it is expressed in the prophet. A covenant properly is $\sigma\upsilon\upsilon\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\sigma\omega$, but there is no word in the whole Hebrew language of that precise signification.

The making of this covenant is declared by ברית . But yet neither doth this require a mutual stipulation, on terms and conditions prescribed to an entrance into covenant. For it refers to the sacrifices wherewith covenants were confirmed. And it is applied to a mere gratuitous promise, Gen. xv. 18: ‘In that day did God make a covenant with Abraham, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land.’

As to the word *διαθήκη*, it signifies a covenant improperly; properly it is a testamentary disposition. And this may be without any conditions on the part of them, to whom any thing is bequeathed.

Secondly. The whole of the covenant intended is expressed in the ensuing description of it. For if it were otherwise, it could not be proved from thence, that this covenant was more excellent than the former; especially as to security, that the covenant relation between God and the people should not be broken or disannulled. For this is the principal thing which the apostle designs to prove in this place, and the want of an observation thereof, hath led many out of the way in their exposition of it. If therefore this be not an entire description of the covenant, there might yet be something reserved essentially belonging thereunto which might frustrate this end. For some such conditions might yet be required in it, as we are not able to observe, or could have no security that we should abide in the observation of them. And thereon this covenant might be frustrated of its end, as well as the former, which is directly contrary to God's declaration of his design in it.

Thirdly. It is evident that there can be no condition previously required, to our entering into, or participation of the benefits of this covenant, antecedent to the making of it with us. For none think there are any such with respect to its original constitution; nor can there be so in respect of its making with us, or our entering into it. For,

1. This would render this covenant inferior in a way of grace to that which God made with the people in Horeb. For he declares that there was not any thing in them that moved him either to make that covenant, or to take them into it with himself. Every-where he asserts this to be an act of his mere grace and favour. Yea, he frequently declares, that he took them into covenant, not only without respect to any thing of good in them, but although they were evil and stubborn. See Deut. vii. 8; ix. 4, 5.

2. It is contrary to the nature, ends, and express properties of this covenant. For there is nothing that can be thought, or supposed to be such a condition, but it is comprehended in the promise of the covenant itself. For all that God requireth in us, is proposed as that which he himself will effect by virtue of this covenant.

Fourthly. It is certain that in the outward dispensation of the covenant, wherein the grace, mercy, and terms of it are proposed to us, many things are required of us in order to a participation of the benefits of it. For God hath ordained, that all the mercy and grace that is prepared in it, shall be communicated to us ordinarily in the use of outward means, wherewith a compliance is required of us in the way of duty. To this end hath he appointed all the ordinances of the gospel, the word and sacraments, with all those duties public and private, which are needful to render them effectual to us. For he will take us ordinarily into this covenant in and by the rational faculties of our natures, that he may be glorified in them and by them. Wherefore these things are required of us, in order to the participation of the benefits of this covenant. And if therefore any one will call our attendance to such duties the condition of the covenant, it is not to be contended about, though properly it is not so. For,

1. God doth work the grace of the covenant, and communicate the mercy of it, antecedently to all ability for the performance of any such duty; as it is with elect infants.

2. Amongst those who are equally diligent in the performance of the duties intended, he makes a discrimination, preferring one before another. Many are called, but few are chosen; and what hath any one that he hath not received?

3. He actually takes some into the grace of the covenant, whilst they are engaged in an opposition to the outward dispensation of it. An example of this grace he gave in Paul.

Fifthly. It is evident that the first grace of the covenant, or God's putting his law in our hearts, can depend on no condition on our part. For whatever is antecedent thereunto, being only a work or act of corrupted nature, can be no condition whereon the dispensation of spiritual grace is superadded. And this is the great ground of them who absolutely deny the covenant of grace to be conditional; namely, that the first grace is absolutely promised, on which, and on the exercise of which, the whole of it doth depend.

• *Sixthly.* To a full and complete interest in all the promises of the covenant, faith on our part, from which evangelical repentance is inseparable, is required. But whereas these also are wrought in us by virtue of that promise and grace of the covenant which are absolute, it is a mere strife about words to contend whether they may be called conditions or not. Let it be granted on the one hand, that we cannot have an actual participation of the relative grace of this covenant in adoption and justification, without faith or believing; and on the other, that this faith is wrought in us, given to us, bestowed on us, by that grace of the covenant which depends on no condition in us as unto its discriminating administration; and I shall not concern myself what men will call it.

Seventhly. Though there are no conditions properly so called of the whole grace of the covenant, yet there are conditions in the covenant, taking that term in a large sense, for that which by the order of divine constitution precedeth some other things, and hath an influence to their existence. For God requireth many things of them whom he actually takes into covenant, and makes partakers of the promises and benefits of it. Of this nature is that whole obedience which is prescribed unto us in the gospel, in our walking before God in uprightness; and there being an order in the things that belong hereunto, some acts, duties, and parts of our gracious obedience, being appointed to be means of the farther additional supplies of the grace and mercies of the covenant, they may be called conditions required of us in the covenant, as well as duties prescribed unto us.

Eighthly. The benefits of the covenant are of two sorts: 1. The grace and mercy which it doth collate. 2. The future reward of glory which it doth promise. Those of the former sort are all of them means appointed of God, which we are to use and improve unto the obtaining of the latter, and so may be called conditions required on our part. They are only collated on us, but conditions as used and improved by us.

Ninthly. Although *διαθηκη*, the word here used, may signify, and be rightly rendered a covenant, in the same manner as *ברית* doth, yet that which is intended is properly a testament, or a testamentary disposition of good things. It is the will of God in and by Jesus Christ, his death and blood-shedding, to give freely unto us the whole inheritance of grace and glory. And under this notion the covenant hath no condition, nor are any such either expressed or intimated in this place.

Obs. I. The covenant of grace, as reduced into the form of a testament, confirmed by the blood of Christ, doth not depend on any condition or qualification in our persons, but in a free grant and donation of God, and so are all the good things prepared in it.

Obs. II. The precepts of the old covenant, are all turned into promises under the new.—Their preceptive commanding power is not taken away, but grace is promised for the performance of them. So the apostle, having declared that the people brake the old covenant, adds that in the new, grace shall be supplied for all the duties of obedience that are required for us.

Obs. III. All things in the new covenant, being proposed unto us by the way of promise, it is by faith alone that we may attain a participation of them. For faith only is the grace we ought to exercise, the duty we ought to perform, to render the promises of God effectual to us, Heb. iii. 1.

Obs. IV. Sense of the loss of an interest in, and participation of, the benefits of the old covenant, is the best preparation for receiving the mercies of the new.

Thirdly. The Author of this covenant is God himself. ‘I will make it, *λεγει Κυριος*, saith the Lord.’ This is the third time that this expression, ‘saith the Lord,’ is repeated in this testimony. The work expressed in both the parts of it, the disannulling of the old covenant, and the establishment of the new, is such as calls for this solemn interposition of the authority, veracity, and grace of God. ‘I will do it, saith the Lord.’ And the mention hereof is thus frequently inculcated, to beget a reverence in us of the work which he so emphatically assumes unto himself. And it teacheth us, that,

Obs. V. God himself, in and by his own sovereign wisdom, grace, goodness, all-sufficiency, and power, is to be considered as the only cause and author of the new covenant. Or the abolishing of the old covenant, with the introduction and establishment of the new, is an act of the mere sovereign wisdom, grace, and authority of God. It is his gracious disposal of us, and of his own grace; that whereof we had no contrivance, nor indeed the least desire.

Fourthly. It is declared with whom this new covenant is made; *τω οικω Ισραηλ*, ‘with the house of Israel,’ ver. 8. They are called distinctly the house of Israel, and the house of Judah. The distribution of the posterity of Abraham into Israel and Judah, ensued upon the division that fell among the people in the days of Rehoboam. Before they were called Israel only. And as before they were mentioned distinctly, to testify that none of the seed of Abraham should be absolutely excluded from the grace of the covenant, however they were

divided among themselves; so here they are all jointly expressed by their ancient name of Israel, to manifest that all distinctions on the account of precedent privileges, should be now taken away, that 'all Israel might be saved.' But we have shown before, that the whole Israel of God, or the church of the elect, are principally intended hereby.

Fifthly. The time of the accomplishment of this promise, or making of this covenant, is expressed, *μετα τας ημερας εκεινας*, 'after those days.' There are various conjectures about the sense of these words, or the determination of the time limited in them. Some suppose respect is had unto the time of giving the law on Mount Sinai. Then was the old covenant made with the fathers. But 'after those days' another should be made. But whereas 'that time,' 'those days,' were so long past before this prophecy was given out by Jeremiah, namely, about eight hundred years, it was impossible but that the new covenant, which was not yet given, must be after those days. Wherefore it was to no purpose so to express it that it should be after those days, seeing it was impossible that otherwise it should be.

Some think that respect is had unto the captivity of Babylon, and the return of the people from thence. For God then showed them great kindness, to win them unto obedience. But neither can this time be intended; for God then made no new covenant with the people, but strictly obliged them unto the terms of the old, Mal. iv. 3—5. But when this new covenant was to be made, the old was to be abolished and removed, as the apostle expressly affirmeth, ver. 13. The promise is not of new obligation, or new assistance unto the observance of the old covenant, but of making a new one quite of another nature, which then was not done.

Some judge that these words, 'after those days,' refer unto what went immediately before, 'and I regarded them not:' which words include the total rejection of the Jews. After those days, wherein both the house of Judah and Israel shall be rejected, I will make a new covenant with the whole Israel of God. But neither will this hold the trial. For,

1. Supposing that expression, 'and I regarded them not,' to intend the rejection of the Jews, yet it is manifest, that their excision and cutting off absolutely, was not in nor for their non-continuance in the old covenant, or not being faithful therein, but for the rejection of the new when proposed unto them. Then they fell by unbelief, as the apostle fully manifests, ch. iii. of this Epistle, and Rom. xi. Wherefore the making of the new covenant cannot be said to be after their rejection, seeing they were rejected for their refusal and contempt of it.

2. By this interpretation, 'the whole house of Israel,' or all the natural posterity of Abraham, would be utterly excluded from any interest in this promise. But this cannot be allowed. For it was not so *de facto*, a remnant being taken into covenant; which though but a remnant in comparison of the whole, yet in themselves so great a multitude, as that in them the promises made unto the fathers were confirmed. Nor on this supposition would this prediction of a new covenant have been any promise unto them, or any of them, but rather

a severe denunciation of judgment. But it is said expressly, that God would make this covenant with them, as he did the former with their fathers, which is a promise of grace and mercy.

Wherefore 'after those days,' is as much as 'in those days,' an indeterminate season for a certain. So 'in that day,' is frequently used in the prophets, Isa. xxiv. 21, 22; Zech. xii. 11. A time therefore certainly future but not determined, is all that is intended in this expression, 'after those days.' And herewith most expositors are satisfied. Yet is there, as I judge, more in the words.

'Those days' seem to me to comprise the whole time allotted unto the economy of the Old Testament, or dispensation of the old covenant. Such a time there was appointed unto it in the counsel of God; during this season, things fell out as described, ver. 9. The certain period fixed unto these days, is called by our apostle the time of reformation, ch. ix. 10. 'After those days,' that is, in or at their expiration, when they were coming unto their end, whereby the first covenant waxed old and decayed, God would make this covenant with them. And although much was done towards it before those days came absolutely unto an end, and did actually expire, yet is the making of it said to be after those days, because being made in the wane and declension of them, it did by its making, put a full and final end unto them.

This in general was the time here designed for the making and establishing of the new covenant. But we must yet farther inquire into the precise time of the accomplishment of this promise. And I say, the whole of it cannot be limited unto any one season absolutely, as though all that was intended in God's making of this covenant, did consist in any one individual act. The making of the old covenant with the fathers, is said to be 'in the day wherein God took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt.' During the season intended, there were many things that were preparatory to the making of that covenant, or to the solemn establishment of it. So was it also in the making of the new covenant. It was gradually made and established, and that by sundry acts preparatory for it, or confirmatory of it. And there are six degrees observable in it.

1. The first peculiar entrance into it was made by the ministry of John the Baptist. Him had God raised to send under the name, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to prepare the way of the Lord, Mal. iv. Hence is his ministry called the beginning of the gospel, Mark i. 1, 2. Until his coming, the people were bound absolutely and universally unto the covenant in Horeb, without alteration or addition in any ordinance of worship. But his ministry was designed to prepare them, and to cause them to look out after the accomplishment of this promise of making the new covenant, Mal. iv. 4—6. And those by whom his ministry was despised, did 'reject the counsel of God against themselves;' that is, unto their ruin; and made themselves liable to that utter excision, with the threatenings whereof the writings of the Old Testament are closed, Mal. iv. 6. He, therefore, called the people off from resting in, or trusting unto the privileges of the first covenant, Matt. iii. 8—10, preached unto them a doctrine of repentance, and

instituted a new ordinance of worship, whereby they might be initiated into a new state or condition, a new relation unto God. And in his whole ministry he pointed at, directed, and gave testimony unto him, who was then to come to establish this new covenant. This was the beginning of the accomplishment of this promise.

2. The coming in the flesh and personal ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ himself, was an eminent advance and degree therein. The dispensation of the old covenant did yet continue. For he himself, as made of a woman, was made under the law, yielding obedience unto it, observing all its precepts and institutions. But his coming in the flesh laid an axe to the root of that whole dispensation. For therein the main end that God designed thereby towards that people was accomplished. The interposition of the law was now to be taken away, and the promise to become all unto the church. Hence, upon his nativity this covenant was proclaimed from heaven, as that which was immediately to take place, Luke ii. 13, 14. But it was more fully and evidently carried on in and by his personal ministry. The whole doctrine thereof was preparatory unto the immediate introduction of this covenant. But especially by the truth which he taught, by the manner of his teaching, by the miracles which he wrought, in conjunction with an open accomplishment of the prophecies concerning him, there was evidence given that he was the Messiah, the mediator of the new covenant. Herein was a declaration made of the person in and by whom it was to be established; and, therefore, he told them that unless they believed it was he who was so promised, they should die in their sins.

3. The way for the introduction of this covenant being thus prepared, it was solemnly enacted and confirmed in and by his death. For herein he offered that sacrifice to God by which it was established. And hereby the promise properly became *διαθήκη*, a testament, as our apostle proves at large, ch. ix. 14—16. And he declares in the same place, that it answered those sacrifices whose blood was sprinkled on the people and the book of the law, in the confirmation of the first covenant, which things must be treated of afterwards. This was the centre wherein all the promises of grace did meet, and from whence they derived their efficacy. From henceforward the old covenant, and all its administrations, having received their full accomplishment, did abide only in the patience of God, to be taken down and removed out of the way in his own time and manner. For really, and in themselves, their force and authority did then cease, and was taken away; see Eph. ii. 14—16; Col. ii. 14, 15. But our obligation unto obedience, and the observance of commands, though formally and ultimately it be resolved into the will of God, yet immediately it respects the revelation of it, by which we are directly obliged. Wherefore, although the causes of the removal of the old covenant had already been applied thereunto; yet the law and its institutions were still continued, not only lawful, but useful to the worshippers, until the will of God concerning their abrogation was fully declared.

4. This new covenant had the complement of its making and establishment in the resurrection of Christ. For in order hereunto, the

old was to have its perfect end. God did not make the first covenant, and therein revive, represent, and confirm the covenant of works with the promise annexed unto it, merely that it should continue for such a season, and then die of itself, and be arbitrarily removed. But that whole dispensation had an end, which was to be accomplished, and till that end was accomplished, it was not consistent with the wisdom or righteousness of God to remove it, or to take it away. Yea, nothing of it could be removed, until all was fulfilled. It was easier to remove heaven and earth, than to remove the law, as unto its right and title to rule the souls and consciences of men, before all was fulfilled. And this end had two parts.

1st. The perfect fulfilling of the righteousness which is required. This was done in the obedience of Christ, the surety of the new covenant, in the stead of them with whom the covenant was made.

2dly. That the curse of it should be undergone. Until this was done, the law could not quit its claim unto power over sinners. And as this curse was undergone in the suffering, so it was absolutely discharged in the resurrection of Christ. For the pains of death being loosed, and he delivered from the state of the dead, the sanction of the law was declared to be void, and its curse answered. Hereby did the old covenant so expire, as that the worship which belonged unto it, was only for a while continued in the patience and forbearance of God towards that people.

5. The first solemn promulgation of this new covenant, so made, ratified, and established, was on the day of Pentecost, seven weeks after the resurrection of Christ. And it answered the promulgation of the law on mount Sinai, the same space of time after the delivery of the people out of Egypt. From this day forward the ordinances of worship, and all the institutions of the new covenant, became obligatory unto all believers. Then was the whole church absolved from any duty with respect unto the old covenant, and the worship of it, although it was not manifest as yet in their consciences.

6. The question being stated about the continuance of the obligatory force of the old covenant, the contrary was solemnly promulged by the apostles under the infallible conduct of the Holy Ghost, Acts xv.

These were the articles, or the degrees of the time intended in that expression, ‘after those days;’ all of them answering the several degrees whereby the old vanished and disappeared.

The circumstances of the making of this covenant being thus cleared, the nature of it in its promises is next proposed unto us. And in the exposition of the words, we must do these two things: 1. Inquire into the general nature of these promises. 2. Particularly and distinctly explain them.

First. The general nature both of the covenant, and of the promises whereby it is here expressed, must briefly be inquired into, because there are various apprehensions about them. For some suppose that there is an especial efficacy towards the thing mentioned, intended in these promises, and no more; some judge that the things themselves, the event and end are so promised.

In the first way Slichtingius expresseth himself on this place, ‘Non

ut olim curabo leges meas in lapideis tantum tabulis inscribi, sed tale fœdus cum illis feriam ut meæ leges ipsis eorum mentibus et cordibus inculpantur.—Apparet hæc verba intra vim et efficaciam accipienda esse, non vero ad ipsum inscriptionis effectum necessariò porrigenda, qui semper in libera hominis potestate positus est; quod ipsum docent et sequentia Dei verba v. 12. Quibus ipse Deus causam seu modum ac rationem hujus rei aperit, quæ ingenti illius gratia ac misericordia populo exhibenda continetur. Hoc futurum dicit ut populus tanto ardore sibi serviat suasque leges observet.—Sensus ergo est; tale percutiam fœdus quod maximas et sufficientissimas vires habebit populum meum in officio continendi.’

And another, ‘I will, instead of these external carnal ordinances and observances, give them spiritual commands for the regulating of their affections, precepts most agreeable unto all men, (made) by the exceeding greatness of that grace and mercy. In this, and many other particulars, I shall incline their affections willingly to receive my law.’

The sense of both is, that all which is here promised, consisteth in the nature of the means, and their efficacy from thence, to incline, dispose, and engage men unto the things here spoken of; but not to effect them certainly and infallibly in them to whom the promise is given. And it is supposed, that the efficacy granted, ariseth from the nature of the precepts of the gospel, which are rational, and suited unto the principles of our intellectual natures. For these precepts, enlivened by the promises made unto the observance of them, with the other mercies wherewith they are accompanied in God’s dealing with us, are meet to prevail on our minds and wills unto obedience; but yet when all is done, the whole issue depends on our own wills, and their determination of themselves one way or other.

But these things are not only liable unto many just exceptions, but do indeed overthrow the whole nature of the new covenant, and the text is not expounded, but corrupted by them; wherefore, they must be removed out of the way. And,

1. The exposition given, can no way be accommodated unto the words, so as to grant a truth in their plain literal sense. For whereas God says, he will ‘put his laws in their mind, and write them in their heart, and they shall all know him,’ which declares what he will effectually do; the sense of their exposition is, that indeed he will not do so, only he will do that which shall move them, and persuade them to do that themselves, which he hath promised to do himself, and that whether they ever do so or not. But if any one concerning whom God says that he will write his law in his heart, have it not so written, be it on what account it will, suppose it be that the man will not have it so written, how can the promise be true, that God will write his law in his heart? It is a sorry apology to say, that God, in making that promise, did not foresee the obstruction that would arise, or could not remove it when it did so.

2. It is the event, or the effect itself, that is directly promised, and not any such efficacy of means as might be frustrated. For the weakness and imperfection of the first covenant was evidenced hereby, that those with whom it was made continued not in it. Hereon God neg-

lected them, and the covenant became unprofitable, or at least unsuccessful as unto the general end, of continuing the relation between God and them, of his being their God, and they being his people. To redress this evil, and prevent the like for the future, that is, effectually to provide that God and his people may always abide in that blessed covenant relation, he promiseth the things themselves, whereby it might be secured. That which the first covenant could not effect, that God promised to work in and by the new.

3. It is nowhere said nor intimated in the Scripture, that the efficacy of the new covenant, and the accomplishment of the promises of it, should depend on and arise from the suitableness of its precepts unto our reason or natural principles, but it is universally and constantly ascribed unto the efficacy of the Spirit and grace of God, not only enabling us unto obedience, but enduing us with a spiritual, supernatural, vital principle, from which it may proceed.

4. It is true, that our own wills, or the free actings of them, are required in our faith and obedience; whence it is promised, that we shall be willing in the day of his power. But that our wills are left absolutely herein unto their own liberty and power, without being inclined and determined by that grace of God, is that Pelagianism which hath long attempted the church, but which shall never absolutely prevail.

5. The putting the laws of God in our minds, and the writing of them in our hearts, that we may know him and fear him always, is promised in the same way and manner as is the forgiveness of sin, ver. 12. And it is hard to affix such a sense unto that promise, as that God will use such and such means, that our sins may be pardoned, which yet may all of them fail.

6. As this exposition is no way suited unto the words of the text, nor of the context, or scope of the place; so indeed it overthrows the nature of the new covenant, and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ which comes thereby. For,

1st. If the effect itself, or the thing mentioned, is not promised, but only the use of means, left unto the liberty of men's wills whether they will comply with them or not, then the very being of the covenant, whether it shall ever have any existence or not, depends absolutely on the wills of men, and so may not be. For it is not the proposal of the terms of the covenant, and the means whereby we may enter into it, that is called the making of this covenant with us, but our real participation of the grace and mercy promised in it. This alone gives a real existence unto the covenant itself, without which it is not a covenant; nor without it, is it properly made with any.

2dly. The Lord Christ would be made hereby the Mediator of an uncertain covenant. For if it depends absolutely on the wills of men, whether they will accept of the terms of it, and comply with it or not it is uncertain what will be the event, and whether ever any one will do so or not; for the will being not determined by grace, what its actings will be, is altogether uncertain.

3dly. The covenant can hereon in no sense be a testament, which our apostle afterwards proves that it is, and that irrevocably ratified

by the death of the testator. For there can, on this supposition, be no certain heir unto whom Christ did bequeath his goods, and the inheritance of mercy, grace, and glory. This would make this testament inferior unto that of a wise man, who determines in particular unto whom his goods shall come.

4thly. It takes away that difference between this and the former covenant, which it is the main scope of the apostle to prove; at least it leaves the difference to consist only in the gradual efficacy of outward means, which is most remote from his purpose. For there were by the old covenant means supplied to induce the people unto constant obedience, and those in their kind powerful. This is pleaded by Moses in almost the whole book of Deuteronomy. For the scope of all his exhortations unto obedience, is to show, that God had so instructed them in the knowledge of his will by giving the law, and had accompanied his teachings with so many signal mercies, such effects of his mighty power, goodness, and grace, that the covenant, being accompanied with such promises and threatenings, in which life and death, both temporal and eternal, were set before them, their obedience was made so reasonable and necessary, that nothing but profligacy in wickedness could turn them from it. To this purpose are discourses multiplied in that book. And yet notwithstanding all this, it is added, that God had not circumcised their hearts to fear him and obey him always, as it is here promised. The communication of grace effectual, producing infallibly the good things proposed and promised in the minds and hearts of men, belonged not unto that covenant. If therefore there be no more in the making of the new covenant, but only the adding of more forcible outward means and motives, more suitable unto our reasons, and meet to work on our affections, it differs only in some unassignable degrees from the former. But this is directly contrary unto the promise in the prophet, that it shall not be according unto it, or of the same kind, no more than Christ, the high priest of it, should be a priest after the order of Aaron.

5. It would on this supposition follow, that God might fulfil his promise of putting his laws in the minds of men, and writing them in their hearts, and yet none have the law put into their minds, nor written in their hearts; which things are not reconcileable by any distinction, unto the ordinary reason of mankind.

Wherefore we must grant, that it is the effect, the event in the communication of the things promised, that is ascribed unto this covenant, and not only the use and application of means unto their production. And this will yet further appear in the particular exposition of the several parts of it. But yet before we enter thereon, two objections must be removed, which may in general be laid against our interpretation.

1st Obj. This covenant is promised as that which is future, to be brought in at a certain time, after those days, as hath been declared. But it is certain, that the things here mentioned, the grace and mercy expressed, were really communicated unto many, both before and after the giving of the law, long ere this covenant was made. For all who truly believed and feared God, had these things effected in them by

grace; wherefore their effectual communication cannot be esteemed a property of this covenant, which was to be made afterwards.

Ans. This objection was sufficiently prevented, in what we have already discoursed concerning the efficacy of the grace of this covenant before itself was solemnly consummated. For all things of this nature that belong unto it, do arise and spring from the mediation of Christ, or his interposition on the behalf of sinners. Wherefore this took place from the giving of the first promise, the administration of the grace of this covenant did therein and then take its date. Howbeit, the Lord Christ had not yet done that whereby it was solemnly to be confirmed, and that whereon all the virtue of it did depend. Wherefore this covenant is promised now to be made, not in opposition unto what grace and mercy were derived from it both before and under the law, nor as unto the first administration of grace from the mediator of it; but in opposition unto the covenant of Sinai, and with respect unto its outward solemn confirmation.

2d. Obj. If the things themselves are promised in the covenant, then all those with whom this covenant is made, must be really and effectually made partakers of them. But this is not so; they are not all actually sanctified, pardoned, and saved, which are the things here promised.

Ans. The making of this covenant may be considered two ways.

1. As unto the preparation and proposition of its terms and conditions.
2. As unto the internal stipulation between God and the souls of men. In this sense alone, God is properly said to make this covenant with any. The preparation and proposition of laws is not the making of the covenant. And therefore all with whom this covenant is made, are effectually sanctified, justified, and saved.

Secondly. These things being premised, as it was necessary they should be, unto the right understanding of the mind of the Holy Ghost, I shall proceed unto the particular parts of the covenant, as here expressed; namely, in the blessed properties and effects of it, whereby it is distinguished from the former.

The two first expressions are of the same nature and tendency, 'I will put my laws in their mind, and write them in their hearts.' In general it is the reparation of our nature, by the restoration of the image of God in us, that is, our sanctification, which is promised in these words. And there are two things in the words both doubly expressed.

1. The subject wrought upon which is the mind and the heart.
2. The manner of producing the effect mentioned in them, and that is by putting and writing. And,
3. The things by these means so communicated, which is the laws of God.

I. The subject spoken of, is the mind and heart. When the apostle treats of the depravation and corruption of our nature, he placeth them, *εν τη διανοια*, and *εν τη καρδια*, Eph. iv. 18, that is, in 'the mind and the heart.' These are, in the Scripture, the seat of natural corruption, the residence of the principle of alienation from the life of God which is in us. Wherefore the renovation of our natures consists

in the rectifying and curing of them, in the furnishing them with contrary principles of faith, love, and adherence unto God. And we may observe, that,

Obs. VI. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ in the new covenant, in its being, existence, and healing efficacy, is as large and extensive to repair our natures, as sin is, in its residence and power, to deprave them. This is the difference about the extent of the new covenant, and the grace of it. Some would have it to extend unto all persons in its tender, and in a conditional proposition, but not unto all things, as unto its efficacy in the reparation of our natures. Others assert, that it extends unto all the effects of sin in the removal of them, and the cure of our natures thereby; but that as to persons, it is really extended unto none, but to those in whom these effects are produced, whatever be its outward administration, which was also always limited; unto this opinion I do subscribe.

First. The first thing mentioned is the mind, *εις την διανοιαν*; קרב the apostle renders by *διανοια*, 'the inward part.' The mind is the most secret inward part or power of the soul. And the prophet expresseth it by 'the inward part,' because it is the only safe and useful repository of the laws of God. When they are there laid up, we shall not lose them, neither men nor devils can take them from us. And he also declares, wherein the excellency of covenant obedience doth consist. It is not in the conformity of our outward actions unto the law, though this also be required therein; but it principally lieth in the inward parts, where God searcheth for, and regardeth truth in sincerity, Ps. li. 6. Wherefore *διανοια* is 'the mind and understanding,' whose natural depravation is the spring and principle of all disobedience, the cure whereof is here promised in the first place. In the outward administration of the means of grace, the affections, and, if I may so speak, the more outward part of the soul, are usually first affected and wrought upon. But the first real effect of the internal promised grace of the covenant, is on the mind, the most spiritual and inward part of the soul. This in the New Testament is expressed by the renovation of the mind, Rom. xii. 1; Eph. iv. 23. And the 'opening of the eyes of our understandings,' Eph. i. 17, 18; God shining into our hearts, to 'give us the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ,' 2 Cor. iv. 6. Hereby the enmity against God, the vanity, darkness, and alienation from the life of God, which the mind naturally is possessed and filled withal, are taken away and removed; of the nature of which work I have treated at large elsewhere. For the law of God in the mind, is the saving knowledge of the mind and will of God, whereof the law is the revelation communicated unto it, and implanted in it.

2. The way whereby God in the covenant of grace thus works on the mind, is expressed by *διδους*; so the apostle renders נתיי, 'and I will give.' *Διδους*, 'giving,' may by an enallage be put for *δωσω*, 'I will give.' So is it expressed in the next clause, *επιγραψω*, in the future tense, 'I will write.' The word in the prophet is, 'I will give;' we render it, 'I will put.' But there are two things intimated in the word. 1st. The freedom of the grace promised; it is a mere grant,

gift, or donation of grace. 2nd. The efficacy of it. That which is given of God unto any is received by them, otherwise it is no gift. And this latter is well expressed by this word used by us, 'I will put,' which expresseth an actual communication, and not a fruitless tender. This the apostle renders emphatically, *διδους*; that is, *εμὶ*, 'this is that which I do, am doing in this covenant;' namely, freely giving that grace whereby my laws shall be implanted in the minds of men.

To show in general, before we proceed to the nature of this work, so far as is necessary unto the exposition of the words, we may here consider what was observed in the third place, namely, what it is that is thus promised to be communicated, and so carry it on with us unto the other clause of this promise.

That which is to be put into this spiritual receptacle, is in those words, *τους νομους μου*, 'my laws,' in the plural number. Expositors inquire what laws are here intended, whether the moral law only, or others also. But there is no need of such inquiry. There is a metonymy of the subject and effect in the words. It is that knowledge of the mind and will of God, which is revealed in the law, and taught by it, which is promised. The laws of God therefore are here taken largely, for the whole revelation of the mind and will of God. So doth *חורר*, originally signify doctrine or instruction. By what way or revelation soever God makes known himself and his will unto us requiring our obedience therein, it is all comprised in that expression, my laws.

From these things we may easily discern the nature of that grace, which is contained in this first branch of the first promise of the covenant. And this is the effectual operation of his Spirit, in the renovation and saving illumination of our minds, whereby they are habitually made conformable unto the whole law of God, that is, the rule and the law of our obedience in the new covenant, and enabled unto all acts and duties that are required of us. And this is the first grace promised and communicated unto us by virtue of this covenant, as it was necessary that so it should be. For, 1. The mind is the principal seat of all spiritual obedience. 2. The proper and peculiar actings of the mind in discerning, knowing, judging, must go before the actings of the will and affections, much more before all outward practices. 3. The depravation of the mind is such by blindness, darkness, vanity, and enmity, that nothing can inflame our souls, or make an entrance towards the reparation of our natures, but an internal, spiritual, saving operation of grace upon the mind. 4. Faith itself is principally ingenerated by an infusion of saving light into the mind, 2 Cor. iv. 4, 6. So,

Obs. VII. All the beginnings and entrances into the saving knowledge of God, and thereon of obedience unto him, are effects of the grace of the covenant.

Secondly. The second part of this first promise of the covenant, is expressed in these words, *και επι καρδιας αυτων επιγραψω αυτους*, 'and will write them upon their hearts,' which is that which renders the former part actually effectual. Expositors generally observe, that re-

spect is had herein unto the giving of the law on Mount Sinai, that is, in the first covenant. For then the law, that is, the ten words, was written in tables of stone. And although the original tables were broken by Moses when the people had broken the covenant, yet would not God alter that dispensation, nor write his laws any other way, but commanded new tables of stone to be made, and wrote them therein. And this was done, not so much to secure the outward letter of them, as to represent the hardness of the hearts of the people unto whom they were given. God did not, God would not, by virtue of that covenant, otherwise dispose of his law. And the event that ensued hereon, was, that they brake these laws, and abode not in obedience. This event God promiseth to obviate and prevent under the new covenant, and that by writing these laws now in our hearts, which he wrote before only in tables of stone; that is, he will effectually work that obedience in us which the law doth require, for he 'worketh in us both to will and to do of his own good pleasure.' The heart, as distinguished from the mind, compriseth the will and the affections: and they are compared unto the tables wherein the letter of the law was engraven. For as by that writing and engraving, the tables received the impression of the letters and words, wherein the law was contained, which they did firmly retain and represent, so as that although they were stones still in their nature, yet were they nothing but the law in their use; so by the grace of the new covenant, there is a durable impression of the law of God on the wills and affections of men, whereby they answer it, represent it, comply with it, and have a living principle of it abiding in them. Wherefore, as this work must necessarily consist of two parts, namely, the removal out of the heart of whatever is contrary unto the law of God; and the implanting of principles of obedience thereinto; so it comes under a double description or denomination in the Scripture. For sometimes it is called a 'taking away of the heart of stone,' or 'circumcising the heart;' and sometimes the 'giving of an heart of flesh,' 'the writing of the law in our hearts,' which is the renovation of our natures into the image of God in righteousness and the holiness of truth. Wherefore in this promise, the whole of our sanctification, in its beginning and progress, in its work upon our whole souls, and all their faculties, is comprised. And we may observe,

Obs. VIII. The work of grace in the new covenant passeth on the whole soul in all its faculties, powers, and affections, unto their change and renovation.—The whole was corrupted, and the whole must be renewed. The image of God was originally in and upon the whole, and on the loss of it the whole was depraved; see 1 Thess. v. 23.

Obs. IX. To take away the necessity and efficacy of renewing, changing, sanctifying grace, consisting in an internal, efficacious operation of the principles, habits, and acts of internal grace and obedience, is plainly to overthrow and reject the new covenant.

Obs. X. We bring nothing to the new covenant but our hearts, as tables to be written in, with the sense of the insufficiency of the precepts and promises of the law, with respect to our own ability to comply with them.

Thirdly. The last things in the words, is the relation that ensues hereon between God and his people: *Και εσομαι αυτοις εις Θεον, και αυτοι εσονται μοι εις λαον*, 'I will be unto them a God, and they shall be my people.' This is indeed a distinct promise by itself, summarily comprising all the blessings and privileges of the covenant. And it is placed in the centre of the account given of the whole, as that from whence all the grace of it doth spring, wherein all the blessings of it do consist, and whereby they are secured. Howbeit, in this place it is peculiarly mentioned, as that which hath its foundation in the foregoing promise. For this relation, which implies mutual acquiescency in each other, could not be, and never would have been, if the minds and hearts of them who are to be taken into it were not changed and renewed. For neither could God approve of, and rest in his love towards them, while they were enemies unto him in the depravation of their natures, nor could they find rest or satisfaction in God, whom they neither knew nor loved.

This is the general expression of any covenant-relation between God and men; 'He will be unto them a God, and they shall be a people unto him.' And it is frequently made use of with respect unto the first covenant, which yet was disannulled. God owned the people therein for his peculiar portion, and they avouched him to be their God alone.

Nor can this be spoken of God and any people, but on the ground of an especial covenant. It is true, God is the God of all the world, and all people are his, yea, he is a God unto them all. For as he made them, so he sustains, rules, and governs them in all things, by his power and providence. But with respect hereunto, God doth not freely promise that he will be a God unto any, nor can so do. For his power over all, and his rule of all things, is essential and natural unto him, so as it cannot otherwise be. Wherefore, as thus declared, it is a peculiar expression of an especial covenant relation. And the nature of it is to be expounded by the nature and properties of that covenant which it doth respect.

Two things we must therefore consider, to discover the nature of this relation. 1. The foundation of it. 2. The mutual actings in it by virtue of this relation.

First. Unto the manifestation of the foundation of it, some things must be premised.

1. Upon the entrance of sin, there continued no such covenant relation between God and man, as that by virtue thereof he should be their God, and they should be his people. God continued still in the full enjoyment of his sovereignty over men, which no sin, nor rebellion, nor apostasy of man, could in the least impeach. And man continued under an obligation unto dependence on God, and subjection unto his will in all things. For these cannot be separated from his nature and being, until final judgment be executed, after which God rules over them only by power, without any respect unto their wills or obedience. But that especial relation of mutual interest, by virtue of the first covenant, ceased between them.

2. God would not enter into any other covenant with sinful fallen

man, to be a God unto them, and to take them to be a peculiar people unto him immediately in their own persons, nor was it consistent with his wisdom and goodness so to do. For if man was not steadfast in God's covenant, but brake and disannulled it when he was sinless^a and upright, only created with a possibility of defection, what expectations could there be that, now he was fallen, and his nature wholly depraved, any new covenant should be of use unto the glory of God, or advantage of man? To enter into a new covenant, that must necessarily be broken, unto the aggravation of the misery of man, became not the wisdom and goodness of God. If it be said, God might have made a new covenant immediately with man, in such a manner as to secure their future obedience, and to make it firm and stable; I answer, it would not have become the divine wisdom and goodness, to have dealt better with men after their rebellion and apostasy than before, namely on their own account. He did, in our first creation, communicate unto our nature all that grace, and all those privileges, with which in his wisdom he thought meet to endow it, and all that was necessary to make them who were partakers of it everlastingly blessed. To suppose that on its own account alone, he would immediately collate more grace upon our nature, is to suppose him singularly well pleased with our sin and rebellion. This then God would not do. Wherefore,

3. God^a provided in the first place that there should be a mediator, a sponsor, an undertaker, with whom alone he would treat about a new covenant, and so establish it. For there were, in the contrivance of his grace and wisdom concerning it, many things necessary unto it, that could no otherwise be enacted and accomplished. Nay, there was not any one thing, in all the good which he designed unto mankind in this covenant, in a way of love, grace, and mercy, that could be communicated unto them, so as that his honour and glory might be advanced thereby, without the consideration of this mediator, and what he undertook to do. Nor could mankind have yielded any of that obedience unto God, which he would require of them, without the interposition of this mediator on their behalf. It was therefore with him that God first made this covenant.

How it was needful that this mediator should be God and man in one person; how he came to undertake for us, and in our stead; what was the especial covenant between God and him, as unto the work which he undertook personally to perform; have according unto our poor weak measure and dark apprehension of these heavenly things, been declared at large in our Exercitations on this Epistle, and yet more fully in our Discourse of the mystery and glory of the Person of Christ. Wherefore, as unto this new covenant, it was first made with Jesus Christ, the surety of it and undertaker in it. For,

1. God neither would, nor, *salvâ justitiâ, sapientiâ et honore*, could, treat immediately with sinful rebellious men on terms of grace for the future, until satisfaction was undertaken to be made for sins past, or such as should afterwards fall out. This was done by Christ alone, who was therefore the *πρωτον δεκτικον* of this covenant, and all the grace of it; see 2 Cor. v. 19, 20; Gal. iii. 13, 14; Rom. iii. 25.

2. No restipulation of obedience unto God could be made by man, that might be a ground of entering into a covenant, intended to be firm and stable. For whereas we had broken our first covenant engagement with God, in our best condition, we were not likely, of ourselves, to make good a new engagement of a higher nature than the former. Who will take the word or the security of a bankrupt for thousands, who is known not to be worth one farthing; especially if he have wasted a former estate in luxury and riot, continuing an open slave to the same lusts? wherefore it was absolutely necessary, that in this covenant there should be a surety to undertake for our answering and firm standing unto the terms of it. Without this, the event of this new covenant, which God would make as a singular effect of his wisdom and grace, would neither have been glory to him, nor advantage to us.

3. That grace, which was to be the spring of all the blessings of this covenant unto the glory of God, and salvation of the church, was to be deposited in some safe hand, for the accomplishment of these ends. In the first covenant, God at once committed unto man that whole stock of grace, which was necessary to enable him unto the obedience of it. And the grace of reward which he was to receive upon the performance of it, God reserved absolutely in his own hand; yea, so as that perhaps man did not fully understand what it was. But all was lost at once, that was committed unto our keeping, so as that nothing at all was left to give us the least relief as unto any new endeavours. Wherefore God will now secure all the good things of this covenant, both as to grace and glory, in a third hand, in the hand of a mediator. Hereon the promises are made unto him, and the fullness of grace is laid up in him, John i. 14; Col. i. 17—19, ii. 2; Eph. iii. 8; 2 Cor. i. 20, 21.

4. As he was the mediator of this covenant, God became his God, and he became the servant of God in a peculiar manner. For he stood before God in this covenant, as a public representative of all the elect. See our exposition of Heb. i. 5, 8, ii. 13. God is a God unto him in all the promises he received on the behalf of his mystical body; and he was his servant in the accomplishment of them, as the pleasure of the Lord was to prosper in his hand.

5. God being in this covenant a God and Father unto Christ, he became by virtue thereof our God and Father, John xx. 17; Heb. ii. 12, 13. And we became heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ; and his people, to yield him all sincere obedience. And these things may suffice briefly to declare the foundation of that covenant relation which is here expressed. Wherefore,

Obs. XI. The Lord Christ, God and man, undertaking to be the mediator between God and man, and a surety on our behalf, is the spring and head of the new covenant, which is made and established with us in him.

Secondly. The nature of this covenant relation, is expressed on the one side and the other: 'I will be unto them a God, and they shall be to me a people.'

1st. On the part of God it is, *καὶ ἐσομαι αὐτοῖς εἰς Θεόν*, 'I will be

unto them a God ;' or, as it is elsewhere expressed, 'I will be their God.' And we must make a little inquiry into this unspeakable privilege, which eternity only will fully unfold.

1. The person speaking is included in the verb, *καὶ εἶπαί*, 'I will be ;' I Jehovah who make this promise. And herein God proposeth unto our faith, all the glorious properties of his nature. 'I who am that I am, Jehovah,' goodness and being itself, and the cause of all being and goodness to others ; infinitely wise, powerful, righteous, &c. I that am all this, and in all that I am, will be unto them a God. Here lies the eternal spring of the infinite treasures of the supplies of the church, here and for ever. Whatever God is in himself, whatever these properties of his nature extend to, in it all, God hath promised to be our God, Gen. xvii. 1, 'I am God Almighty, walk before me.' Hence, to give establishment and security unto our faith, he hath in his word revealed himself by so many names, titles, properties, and that so frequently ; in order that we may know him who is our God, what he is, and what he will be to us. And the knowledge of him as so revealing himself, is that which secures our confidence, faith, hope, fear, and trust. The Lord will be a refuge for the oppressed a refuge in time of trouble ; and they that know thy name, will put their trust in thee, Ps. ix. 9, 10.

2. What he promiseth is, that he will be a God unto us. Now, although this compriseth absolutely every thing that is good, yet may the notion of being a God unto any, be referred unto two general heads. 1. An all-sufficient preserver ; and 2. An all-sufficient rewarder : so himself declares the meaning of this expression, Gen. xvii. 1, xv. 1. I will be all this unto them, to whom I am a God in the way of preservation and recompence, Heb. xi. 6.

3. The declared rule and measure of God's actings towards us as our God, is the promises of the covenant both of mercy, grace, pardon, holiness, perseverance, protection, success, and spiritual victory in this world, and of eternal glory in the world to come. In and by all these things will he, in all that he is in himself, be a God unto those whom he takes into this covenant.

4. It is included in this part of the promise, that they who take him to be their God, they shall say, 'Thou art my God,' Hos. ii. 23, and carry it towards him according to what infinite goodness, grace, mercy, power, and faithfulness do require.

And we may observe,

Obs. XII. As nothing less than God becoming our God could relieve, help, and save us, so nothing more can be required thereunto.

Obs. XIII. The efficacy, security, and glory of this covenant, depend originally on the nature of God, immediately and actually on the mediation of Christ. It is the covenant that God makes with us in him as the surety thereof.

Obs. XIV. It is from the engagement of the properties of the divine nature, that this covenant is ordered in all things and sure. Infinite wisdom hath provided it, and infinite power will make it effectual.

Obs. XV. As the grace of this covenant is inexpressible, so are the obligations it puts upon us unto obedience.

2dly. The relation of man unto God, is expressed in these words, *καὶ αὐτοὶ εἰσὶν μοι εἰς λαόν*, 'and they shall be unto me a people,' or, 'they shall be my people.' And two things are contained herein.

1. God's owning of them to be his in a peculiar manner, according to the tenor and promise of this covenant, and dealing with them accordingly. *Λαὸς περιουσίος*, 1 Pet. ii. 5, 'a peculiar people.' Let others take heed how they meddle with them, lest they entrench on God's propriety. Jer. ii. 3.

2. There is included in it that which is essentially required unto their being his people, namely, the profession of all subjection or obedience unto him, and all dependencie upon him. Wherefore, this also belongs unto it, namely, their avouching this God to be their God, and their free engagement unto all that obedience, which in the covenant he requireth. For although this expression, 'And they shall be unto me a people,' seem only to denote an act of God's grace, assuming of them into that relation unto himself; yet it includes their avouching him to be their God, and their voluntary engagement of obedience unto him as their God. When he says, 'Ye are my people;' they also say, 'Thou art my God, Hos. ii. 23, yet is it to be observed,

Obs. XVI. That God doth as well undertake for our being his people, as he doth for his being our God. And the promises contained in this verse, do principally aim at that end, namely, the making of us to be a people unto him.

Obs. XVII. Those whom God makes a covenant withal, are his in a peculiar manner. And the profession hereof is that which the world principally maligneth in them, and ever did so from the beginning.

VER. 11.—And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.

The second general promise, declaring the nature of the new covenant, is expressed in this verse. And the matter of it is set down, 1. Negatively, in opposition unto what was in use, and necessary under the first covenant. 2. Positively, in what should take place in the room of it, and be enjoyed under this new covenant, and by virtue of it.

First. In the former part we may observe,

1. The vehemency of the negation in the redoubling of the negative particle, *οὐ μὴ*, 'they shall by no means do so,' that shall not be the way and manner with them, whom God makes this covenant withal. And this is designed to fix our minds on the consideration of the privilege which it enjoyed under the new covenant, and the greatness of it.

2. The thing thus denied, is teaching *διδάξωσιν*, not absolutely, but as unto a certain way and manner of it. The negation is not universal as to teaching, but restrained unto a certain kind of it, which was in use, and necessary under the old covenant. And this necessity was either from God's institution, or from practice taken up among themselves, which must be inquired into.

3. The subject-matter of this teaching, or the matter to be taught,

was the knowledge of God, *γνωθι τον Κυριον*, 'know the Lord.' The whole knowledge of God prescribed in the law, is here intended. And this may be reduced unto two heads, 1. The knowing of him, and the taking him thereon to be God, to be God alone, which is the first command. 2. The knowledge of his mind and will, as to the obedience which the law required in all the institutions and precepts thereof; all the things which God revealed for their good, Deut. xxix. 29, 'Revealed things belong unto us and to our children, that we may do all the words of this law.'

4. The manner of the teaching whose continuation is denied, is exemplified in a distribution into teachers, and them that are taught; *ἐκαστος τον πλησιον, και ἐκαστος τον αδελφον*, 'every man his neighbour, and every man his brother.' And herein, 1. The universality of the duty, 'every one,' is expressed; and therefore, it was reciprocal. Every one was to teach, and every one was to be taught, wherein yet respect was to be had unto their several capacities. 2. The opportunity for the discharging of the duty, is also declared from the mutual relation of the teachers, and them that are taught; 'every one his neighbour and his brother.'

Secondly. The positive part of the promise consists of two parts.

1. The thing promised, which is the knowledge of God, *παντες ειδησουσι με*, 'they shall all know me.' And this is placed in opposition unto what is denied; 'they shall not teach one another, saying, Know the Lord.' But this opposition is not as unto the act or duty of teaching, but as unto the effect, or saving knowledge itself. The principal efficient cause of our learning the knowledge of God under the new covenant, is included in this part of the promise. This is expressed in another prophet and promise, 'they shall be all taught of God.' And the observation hereof, will be of use unto us in the exposition of this text.

2. There is added the universality of the promise, with respect unto them with whom this covenant is made; *απο μικρου αυτων εως μεγαλου αυτων*, 'all of them from the least unto the greatest.' A proverbial speech, signifying the generality intended without exception, Jer. viii. 10, 'Every one, from the least unto the greatest, is given unto covetousness.'

This text hath been looked on as attended with great difficulty and much obscurity, which expositors generally rather conceal, than remove. For from the vehement denial of the use of that sort or kind of teaching, which was in use under the Old Testament, some have apprehended and contended, that all outward stated ways of instruction under the New Testament, are useless and forbidden. Hereon, by some, all the ordinances of the church, the whole ministry and guidance of it, hath been rejected; which is in sum, that there is no such thing as a professing church in the world. But yet those who are thus minded, are no way able to advance their opinion, but by a direct contradiction unto this promise, in their own sense of it. For they endeavour in what they do, to teach others their opinion, and that not in the way of a public ordinance, but every one his neighbour, which if any thing, is here denied in an especial manner. And the truth is,

that if all outward teaching be absolutely and universally forbidden, as it would quickly fill the world with darkness and brutish ignorance, so if any one should come to the knowledge of the sense of this, or any other text of Scripture, it would be absolutely unlawful for him to communicate it unto others. For to say, 'Know the Lord,' or the mind of God in this text, either to neighbour or brother, would be forbidden. And of all kinds of teaching, that by a public ministry in the administration of the ordinances of the church, which alone is contended against from these words, seems least to be intended. For it is private, neighbourly, brotherly instruction only, that is expressed. Wherefore, if on a supposition of the prohibition of such outward instruction, any one shall go about to teach another, that the public ordinances of the church, are not to be allowed as a means of teaching under the New Testament, he directly falls under the prohibition here given in his own sense, and is guilty of the violation of it. Wherefore, these words must necessarily have another sense, as we shall see they have, in the exposition of them, and that plain and obvious.

Howbeit, some learned men have been so moved with this objection, as to affirm, that the accomplishment of this promise of the covenant, belongs unto heaven, and the state of glory. For therein alone, they say, we shall have no more need of teaching in any kind. But as this exposition is directly contrary unto the design of the apostle, as respecting the teaching of the new covenant and the testator thereof, when he intends only that of the old, and exalts the new above it; so there is no such difficulty in the words as to force us to carry the interpretation of them into another world. Unto the right understanding of them, sundry things are to be observed.

1. That sundry things seem in the Scripture oftentimes to be denied absolutely, as unto their nature and being, when indeed they are so only comparatively, with respect unto somewhat else which is preferred before them. Many instances might be given hereof. I shall direct only to one that is liable to no exception, Jer. vii. 22, 23. 'I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices; but this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people, and walk in all the ways that I commanded you, that it may be well unto you.' The Jews of that time, preferred the ceremonial worship by burnt-offerings and sacrifices, above all moral obedience, above the great duties of faith, love, righteousness, and holiness. And not only so, but in a pretended diligent observance thereof, they countenanced themselves in an open neglect and contempt of moral obedience; placing all their confidence for acceptance with God in these other duties. To take them off from this vain ruining presumption, as God, by sundry other prophets, declared the utter insufficiency of these sacrifices and burnt-offerings by themselves, to render them acceptable unto him, and then prefers moral obedience above them; so here he affirms, that he commanded them not. And the instance is given in that time, wherein it is known, that all the ordinances of worship by burnt-offerings and sacrifices, were solemnly instituted. But a comparison is made between ceremonial

worship, and spiritual obedience; in respect whereof, God says, he commanded not the former, namely, so as to stand in competition with the latter, or to be trusted unto in the neglect of it, wherein the evils and miscarriages reprov'd, did consist. So our blessed Saviour expounds this and the like passages in the prophets, as a comparison between the lowest instances of the ceremonial law, such as tithing of mint and cummin, with the great duties of love and righteousness. 'These things,' saith he, speaking of the latter, 'you ought to have done,' that is, principally and in the first place have attended unto, as those which the law chiefly designed. But what then shall become of the former? why, saith he, 'them also you ought not to leave undone;' in their proper place, obedience was to be yielded unto God in them also. So is it in this present case; there was an outward teaching of every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, enjoined under the Old Testament. This the people trusted unto and rested in, without any regard unto God's teaching by the inward circumcision of the heart. But in the new covenant, there being an express promise of an internal effectual teaching of the Spirit of God, by writing his law in our hearts, without which, all outward teaching is useless and ineffectual, it is here denied to be of any use. That is, it is not so absolutely, but in comparison of, and in competition with this other effectual way of teaching and instruction. Even at this day, we have not a few, who set these teachings in opposition unto one another; whereas, in God's institution, they are subordinate. And hereon, rejecting the internal efficacious teaching by the Spirit of God, they betake themselves only to their own endeavours, in the outward means of teaching, wherein for the most part, there are none more negligent than themselves. But so it is, that the ways of God's grace are not suited to, but always lie contrary to the corrupt reasonings of men. Hence, some reject all the outward means of teaching by the ordinances of the gospel, under a pretence, that the inward teaching of the Spirit of God, is all that is needful or useful in this kind. Others, on the other hand, adhere only to the outward means of instruction, despising what is affirmed concerning the inward teaching of the Spirit of God, as a mere imagination. And both sorts run into these pernicious mistakes, by setting those things in opposition, which God hath made subordinate.

2. The teaching intended, whose continuance is here denied, is that which was then in use in the church; or rather was to be so when the new covenant state was solemnly to be introduced. And this was twofold. 1. That which was instituted by God himself; and 2. That which the people had superadded in the way of practice.

First. The first of these is expressed in various places, particularly in Deut. vi. 6—9. 'And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thy heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign on thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them on the posts of thy house, and on thy gate.' Add hereunto

the institution of fringes for a memorial of the commandments, which was one way of saying, 'Know the Lord,' Num. xv. 38, 39. Two things may be considered in these institutions. 1. What is natural and moral, included in the common mutual duties of men, one towards another. For of this nature is that of seeking the good of others, by instructing them in the knowledge of God, wherein their chief happiness doth consist. 2. That which is ceremonial, as the manner of this duty, is described in sundry instances, as those of frontlets and fringes, writing on posts and doors. The first of these is to abide for ever. No promise of the gospel doth evacuate any precept of the law of nature; such as that of seeking the good of others, and that their chief good, by means and ways proper thereunto, is. But as to the latter, which the Jews did principally attend to and rely on, it is by this promise, or the new covenant quite taken away.

Secondly. As to the practice of the church of the Jews, in these institutions, it is not to be expressed what extremes they ran into. It is probable that about the time spoken of in this promise, which is that of the Babylonian captivity, they began that intricate, perplexed way of teaching which afterwards they were wholly addicted to. For all of them who pretended to be serious, gave up themselves to the teaching and learning of the law. But herewithal they mixed so many vain curiosities and traditions of their own, that the whole of their endeavour was disapproved of God. Hence, in the very entrance of their practice of this way of teaching, he threatens to destroy all them that attended to it, Mal. ii. 12, 'The Lord will cut off the master and the scholar out of the tabernacles of Jacob.' It is true, we have not any monuments or records of their teaching all that time, neither what they taught, nor how; but we may reasonably suppose, it was of the same kind with what flourished afterwards, in their famous schools derived from these first inventors. And of such reputation were those schools among them, that none was esteemed a wise man, or to have any understanding of the law, who was not brought up in them. The first record we have of the manner of their teaching, or what course they took therein, is in the Mishna. This is their interpretation of the law, or their sayings one to another, 'Know the Lord.' And he that shall seriously consider but one section or chapter in that whole book, will quickly discern of what kind and nature their teaching was. For such an operose, laborious, curious, fruitless work, there is not another instance to be given of, in the whole world. There is not any one head, doctrine, or precept of the law, suppose it be of the sabbath, of sacrifices, or offerings, but they have filled it with so many needless, foolish, curious, superstitious questions and determinations, as that it is almost impossible that any man, in the whole course of his life, should understand them, or guide his course according to them. These were the burdens that the pharisees bound for the shoulders of their disciples, till they were utterly weary, and fainted under them. And this kind of teaching had possessed the whole church then, when the new covenant was solemnly to be introduced, no other being in use. And this is absolutely intended in this promise, as that which was utterly to cease. For God would take away the law, which in itself

was a burden, as the apostles speak, 'which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear.' And the weight of that burden was unspeakably increased, by the expositions and additions whereof this teaching consisted. Wherefore the removal of it is here proposed in the way of a promise, evidencing it to be a matter of grace and kindness to the church. But the removal of teaching in general, is always mentioned as a threatening and punishment.

Wherefore the denial of the continuation of this teaching may be considered two ways.

1. As it was external, in opposition to, and comparison of, the effectual internal teaching by the grace of the new covenant; so it is laid aside, not absolutely but comparatively, and as it was solitary.

2. It may be considered in the manner of it, with especial respect to the ceremonial law, as it consisted in the observance of sundry rites and ceremonies. And in this sense it was utterly to cease; above all with respect to the additions which men had made to the ceremonial institutions wherein it did consist. Such was their teaching by writing parts of the law on their fringes, frontlets, and doors of their houses; especially as these things were enlarged, and precepts concerning them multiplied, in the practice of the Jewish church. It is promised concerning these things, that they shall be absolutely removed as useless, burdensome, and inconsistent with the spiritual teaching of the new covenant. But as to that kind of instruction, whether by public stated preaching of the word, or that which is more private and occasional, which is subservient to the promised teaching of the Spirit of God, and which he will and doth make use of, in and for the communication of the knowledge itself here promised, there is nothing intimated that is derogatory to its use, continuance, or necessity. A supposition thereof would overthrow the whole ministry of Jesus Christ himself, and of his apostles, as well as the ordinary ministry of the church.

And these things are spoken in exposition of this place, taken from the meaning and intention of the word 'teaching,' or the duty itself, whose continuance and farther use is denied. But yet, it may be, more clear light into the mind of the Holy Spirit may be attained, from a due consideration of what it is that is so to be taught. And this is, 'know the Lord.' Concerning which, two things may be observed.

1. That there was a knowledge of God under the Old Testament, so revealed as that it was hidden under types, wrapt up in veils, expressed only in parables and dark sayings. For it was the mind of God, that as to the clear perception and revelation of it, it should lie hid, till the Son came from his bosom to declare him, to make his name known, and to bring life and immortality to light. Yea, some things belonging hereunto, though virtually revealed, yet were so compassed with darkness in the manner of their revelation, that the angels themselves did not clearly and distinctly look into them. But that there were some such great and excellent things concerning God and his will laid up in the revelation of Moses and the prophets, with their institutions of worship, they did understand. But the best and wisest of them knew also, that notwithstanding their best and utmost inquiry, they could not comprehend the time, nature, and state of the

things so revealed. For 'it was revealed unto them, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister,' in their revelation of those things, 1 Pet. i. 12. And as our apostle informs us, Moses in his ministry and institutions, 'gave testimony unto the things which were to be spoken' (that is clearly) 'afterwards,' Heb. iii. 5. This secret hidden knowledge of God, principally concerned the incarnation of Christ, his mediation and suffering for sin, with the call of the Gentiles thereon. These, and such like mysteries of the gospel, they could never attain the comprehension of. But yet they stirred up each other diligently to inquire into them, as to what they were capable of attaining, saying one to another, 'Know the Lord.' But it was little that they could attain to, 'God having provided some better things for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.' And when that church ceased to make this the principal part of their religion, namely, a diligent inquiry into the hidden knowledge of God, in and by the promised Seed, with a believing desire and expectation of its full manifestation, contenting themselves with the letter of the word, looking on types and shadows as things present and substances, they not only lost the glory of their profession, but were hardened into an unbelief of the things signified to them in their real exhibition. Now this kind of teaching, by mutual encouragement to look into the veiled things of the mystery of God in Christ, is now to cease at the solemn introduction of the new covenant, as being rendered useless by the full, clear revelation and manifestation of them made in the gospel. 'They shall no more,' that is, they shall need no more to teach, so to teach this knowledge of God, for it shall be made plain to the understanding of all believers. And this is that which I judge to be principally intended by the Holy Ghost, in this part of the promise, as that which the positive part of it doth so directly answer to.

2. The knowledge of the Lord may be here taken, not objectively and doctrinally, but subjectively, for the renovation of the mind in the saving knowledge of God. And this neither is, nor can be communicated to any by external teaching alone, in respect whereunto it may be said comparatively to be laid aside, as was intimated before.

We have, I hope, sufficiently freed the words from the difficulties that seem to attend them, so as that we shall not need, with many ancient and modern expositors, to refer the accomplishment of this promise to heaven; nor yet with others, to restrain it to the first converts in Christianity, who were miraculously illuminated, much less so to interpret them, as to exclude the ministry of the church in teaching, or any other effectual way thereof. Somewhat may be observed of the particular expressions used in them.

1. There is in the original promise the word $\pi\alpha\varsigma$, $\epsilon\tau\iota$, amplius, 'no more.' This is omitted by the apostle, yet so, as that it is plainly included in what he expresseth. For the word denotes the time and season, which was limited to that kind of teaching which was to cease. This season being to expire at the publication of the gospel, the apostle affirms absolutely, then they shall not teach, what the prophet before declared with the limited season now expired, 'they shall do so no more.'

2. The prophet expresseth the subject spoken of indefinitely, $\alpha\omega\varsigma$

אִם רֵעוּ, 'a man his neighbour, a man his brother,' that is, any man. The apostle by the universal *ἐκαστος*, 'every man,' which is also reducible to any one; every one that is, or may be called to this work, or hath occasion or opportunity for it. For of this teaching the rule is ability and opportunity. He that can do it, and hath an opportunity for it.

3. That which they taught, or intended in that expression, 'Know the Lord,' is the same with what is promised in the latter part of the verse, where it must be spoken to. Some things, according to our method and design, may be observed from the exposition of these words.

Obs. XVIII. The instructive ministry of the Old Testament, as it was such, and as it had respect to the carnal rites thereof, was a ministry of the letter, and not of the Spirit, which did not really effect in the hearts of men the things which it taught. The spiritual benefit which was obtained under it, proceeded from the promise, and not from the efficacy of the law or of the covenant made at Sinai. For as such, as it was legal and carnal, and had respect only to outward things, it is here laid aside.

Obs. XIX. There is a duty incumbent on every man to instruct others, according to his ability and opportunity, in the knowledge of God; the law whereof being natural and eternal, is always obligatory on all sorts of persons.—This is not here either prohibited or superseded, but only it is foretold, that as to a certain manner of the performance of it, it should cease. That it generally ceaseth now in the world, is no effect of the promise of God, but a cursed fruit of the unbelief and wickedness of men. The highest degree in religion which men now aim at, is but to attend unto and learn by the public teaching of the ministry. And, alas! how few are there who do it conscientiously unto the glory of God, and the spiritual benefit of their own souls! The whole business of teaching and learning the knowledge of God, is generally turned into a formal spending, if not mispense of so much time. But as for the teaching of others according to ability and opportunity, or endeavouring to acquire abilities, or seeking for opportunities thereof, it is not only for the most part neglected, but despised. How few are there who take any care to instruct their own children and servants! but to carry this duty farther according unto opportunities of instructing others, is a thing that would be looked on almost as madness in the days wherein we live. We have far more, that mutually teach one another sin, folly, yea villany of all sorts, than the knowledge of God, and the duty we owe to him. This is not what God here promiseth in a way of grace, but what he hath given up careless, unbelieving professors of the gospel unto, in a way of vengeance.

Obs. XX. It is the Spirit of grace alone as promised in the new covenant, which frees the church from a laborious, but ineffectual way of teaching.—Such was that in use among the Jews of old; and it is well if somewhat not much unlike it do not prevail among many at this day. Whoever he be who in all his teaching doth not take his encouragement from the internal, effectual teaching of God, under the

covenant of grace, and bends not all his endeavours to be subservient thereunto, hath but an Old Testament ministry, which ceaseth as unto any divine approbation.

Obs. XXI. There was a hidden treasure of divine wisdom, of the knowledge of God, laid up in the mystical revelations and institutions of the Old Testament, which the people were not then able to look into, nor to comprehend.—The confirmation and explanation of this truth, is the principal design of the apostle in this whole Epistle. This knowledge, those among them that feared God, and believed the promises, stirred up themselves and one another, to look after and to inquire into, saying unto one another, ‘Know the Lord;’ howbeit their attainments were but small, in comparison of what is contained in the ensuing promise.

Obs. XXII. The whole knowledge of God in Christ, is both plainly revealed and savingly communicated, by virtue of the new covenant, unto them who do believe, as the next words declare.

The positive part of the promise remaineth unto consideration. And two things must be inquired into: 1. Unto whom it is made. 2. What is the subject-matter of it.

First. Those unto whom it is made, are so expressed in the prophet, כולם למקטנם ועד גדולם. The expression of them absolutely, and then by a distribution, is emphatical. The former the apostle renders in the plural number, as the words are in the original, πάντες αὐτῶν. But the terms of the distribution he rendereth in the singular number, which increaseth the emphasis, ἀπο μικροῦ αὐτῶν ἕως μεγάλου αὐτῶν. The proposition is universal, as to the modification of the subject πάντες, ‘all;’ but in the word αὐτῶν, ‘of them,’ it is restrained unto those alone with whom this covenant is made. The distribution of them is made in a proverbial speech, ‘from the least to the greatest,’ used in a peculiar manner by Jeremiah, ch. vi. 13, viii. 10, xxxi. 34, xlii. 1, xlv. 12. It is only once more used in the Old Testament, and not elsewhere, Jonah iii. 5. And it may denote either the universality, or the generality of them that are spoken of, so as none be particularly excluded or excepted, though all absolutely be not intended. Besides, several sorts and degrees of persons are intended. So there ever were, and ever will be, naturally, politically, and spiritually, in the church of God. None of them, upon the account of their difference from others on the one hand or the other, be they the least or the greatest, are excepted or excluded from the grace of this promise. And this may be the sense of the words, if only the external administration of the grace of the new covenant be intended. None are excluded from the tender of it, or from the outward means of the communication of it in the full, plain revelation of the knowledge of God.

But whereas it is the internal, effectual grace of the covenant, and not only the means, but the infallible event thereon, not only that they shall be all taught to know, but that they shall all actually know the Lord, all individuals are intended; that is, that whole church, all whose children are to be taught of God, and so to learn as to come unto him by saving faith in Christ. So doth this part of the promise

hold proportion with the other, of writing the law in the hearts of the covenanters. As unto all these it is promised absolutely, that they shall know the Lord.

But yet, among them, there are many distinctions and degrees of persons, as they are variously differenced by internal and external circumstances. There are some that are greatest, and some that are least, and various intermediate degrees between them. So it hath been, and so it ever must be, whilst the natural, acquired, and spiritual abilities of men have great variety of degrees among them, and while men's outward advantages and opportunities do also differ. Whereas therefore it is promised, that they shall all of them know the Lord, it is not implied that they shall all do so equally, or have the same degree of spiritual wisdom and understanding. There is a measure of saving knowledge due unto, provided for all in the covenant of grace, such as is necessary unto the participation of all other blessings and privileges of it. But in the degrees hereof, some may and do very much excel others. And we may observe,

Obs. XXIII. There are, and ever were, different degrees of persons in the church, as unto the saving knowledge of God.—Hence is that distribution of them into fathers, young men, and children, 1 John ii. 13, 14. All have not one measure, all arrive not to the same stature; but yet as to the ends of the covenant, and the duties required of them in their walk before God, they that have most have nothing over, nothing to spare; and they that have least, shall have no lack. Every one's duty it is to be content with what he receives, and to improve it unto the uttermost.

Obs. XXIV. Where there is not some degree of saving knowledge, there no interest in the new covenant can be pretended.

Secondly. The thing promised, is the knowledge of God: 'They shall all know me.' No duty is more frequently commanded than this is, nor any grace more frequently promised; see Deut. xxix. 6; Jer. xxiv. 7; Ezek. xi. 10, xxxvi. 23, 26, 27, for it is the foundation of all other duties of obedience, and of all communion with God in them. All graces as unto their exercise, as faith, love, and hope, are founded therein. And the woeful want of it, which is visible in the world, is an evidence how little there is of true evangelical obedience among the generality of them that are called Christians. And two things may be considered in this promise. 1. The object, or what is to be known. 2. The knowledge itself, of what kind and nature it is.

The first is God himself, *Εἰδῆσουσι με*. 'They shall know me,' saith the Lord. And it is so not absolutely, but as unto some especial revelation of himself. For there is a knowledge of God, as God, by the light of nature. This is not here intended, nor is it the subject of any gracious promise, but is common unto all men. There was moreover, a knowledge of God by revelation under the old covenant, but attended with great obscurity in sundry things of the highest importance. Wherefore, there is something farther intended, as is evident from the antithesis between the two states herein declared. In brief, it is the knowledge of him as revealed in Jesus Christ, under the New Testament. To show what is contained herein doctrinally, were

to go over the principal articles of our faith, as declared in the gospel. The sum is, to 'know the Lord,' is to know God as he is in Christ personally, as he will be unto us in Christ graciously, and to know what he requires of us and accepts in us through the beloved. In all these things, notwithstanding all their teachings and diligence therein, the church was greatly in the dark under the Old Testament. But all these things are more clearly revealed in the gospel.

2. The knowledge of these things, is that which is promised. For notwithstanding the clear revelation of them, we abide in ourselves unable to discern them, and receive them. For such a spiritual knowledge is intended as renews the mind, being accompanied with faith and love in the heart. This is that knowledge which is promised in the new covenant, and which shall be wrought in all them who are interested therein. And we may observe,

Obs. XXV. The full and clear declaration of God, as he is to be known of us in this life, is a privilege reserved for and belonging unto the days of the New Testament.—Formerly, it was not made: and more than is now made, is not to be expected in this world. And the reason hereof is, because it was made by Christ. See the exposition on ch. i. 1, 2.

Obs. XXVI. To know God as he is revealed in Christ, is the highest privilege, whereof in this life we can be made partakers.—For this is life eternal, that we may know the Father, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, John xvii. 3.

Obs. XXVII. Persons destitute of this saving knowledge, are utter strangers unto the covenant of grace.—For this is a principal promise and effect of it, wherever it doth take place.

VER. 12.—*For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.*

THIS is the great fundamental promise and grace of the new covenant. For though it be last expressed, yet, in order of nature, it precedeth the other mercies and privileges mentioned, and is the foundation of the collation or communication of them unto us. This the causal $\delta\tau\iota$, whereby the apostle rendereth $\kappa\alpha\iota$ in the prophet, doth demonstrate. What I have spoken saith the Lord, shall be accomplished, 'for I will be merciful,' &c. without which there could be no participation of the other things mentioned. Wherefore not only an addition of new grace and mercy, is expressed in these words, but a reason also is rendered why, or on what grounds, he would bestow on them those other mercies.

'The house of Israel and Judah,' with whom this covenant was made in the first place, and who are spoken of, as representatives of all others who are taken into it, and who thereon become the Israel of God, were such as had broken and disannulled God's former covenant by their disobedience; 'which my covenant they brake.' Nor is there any mention of any other qualification, whereby they should be prepared for, or disposed to an entrance into this new covenant. Wherefore the first thing in order of nature that is to be done unto this end,

is the free pardon of sin. Without a supposition hereof, no other mercy can they be made partakers of. For while they continue under the guilt of sin, they are also under the curse. Wherefore a reason is here rendered, and that the only reason, why God will give unto them the other blessings mentioned, ‘for I will be merciful.’

Obs. XXVIII. Free, sovereign, and undeserved grace in the pardon of sin, is the original spring and foundation of all covenant mercies and blessings. Hereby, and hereby alone, is the glory of God, and the safety of the church, provided for. And those who like not God’s covenant on those terms, as none do by nature, will eternally fall short of the grace of it. Hereby all glorying, and all boasting in ourselves, is excluded, which was that which God aimed at in the contrivance and establishment of this covenant, Rom. iii. 27; 1 Cor. i. 29—31. For this could not be, if the fundamental grace of it did depend on any condition or qualification in ourselves. If we let go the free pardon of sin, without respect unto any thing in those that receive it, we renounce the gospel. Pardon of sin is not merited by antecedent duties, but is the strongest obligation unto future duties. He that will not receive pardon, unless he can one way or other deserve it, or make himself meet for it, or pretends to have received it, and finds not himself obliged unto universal obedience by it, neither is nor shall be partaker of it.

In the promise itself we may consider, 1. Who it is made unto. 2. What it is that is promised.

First. The first is expressed in the pronoun *αὐτῶν*, ‘their,’ three times repeated. All those absolutely, and only those with whom God makes this covenant, are intended. Those whose sins are not pardoned, do in no sense partake of this covenant, it is not made with them. For this is the covenant that God makes with them, that ‘he will be merciful unto their sins,’ that is, unto them in the pardon of them. Some speak of a universal conditional covenant made with all mankind. If there be any such thing, it is not that here intended. For they are all actually pardoned with whom this covenant is made. And the indefinite declaration of the nature and terms of the covenant, is not the making of a covenant with any. And what should be the condition of this grace here promised of the pardon of sin? It is, say they, that men repent and believe, and turn to God, and yield obedience unto the gospel. If so, then men must do all these things, before they receive the remission of sins: yes. Then must they do them while they are under the law, and the curse of it, for so are all men whose sins are not pardoned. This is to make obedience unto the law, and that performed by men whilst under the curse of it, to be the condition of gospel mercy, which is to overthrow both the law and gospel.

But then, on the other hand, it will follow, they say, that men are pardoned before they do believe, which is expressly contrary unto the Scripture. I answer, 1. The communication and donation of faith unto us, is an effect of the same grace whereby our sins are pardoned, and they are both bestowed on us by virtue of the same covenant. 2. The application of pardoning mercy unto our souls, is, in order of

nature, consequent unto believing, but in time they go together. 3. Faith is not required unto the procuring of the pardon of our sins, but unto the receiving of it: 'that they may receive the remission of sins.' But that which we shall observe from hence is, that,

Obs. XXIX. The new covenant is made only with them, who effectually and eventually are made partakers of the grace of it.—'This is my covenant that I will make with them, I will be merciful unto their unrighteousness,' &c. Those with whom the old covenant was made, were all of them actual partakers of the benefits of it; and if they are not so with whom the new is made, it comes short of the old in efficacy, and may be utterly frustrated. Neither doth the indefinite proposal of the terms of the covenant, prove that the covenant is made with any who enjoy not the benefits of it. Indeed this is the excellency of this covenant, and so it is here declared, that it doth effectually communicate all the grace and mercy contained in it unto all and every one with whom it is made; with whomsoever it is made, his sins are pardoned.

Secondly. The subject-matter of this promise, is the pardon of sin. And that which we have to consider for the exposition of the words, is, 1. What is meant by sins. 2. What by the pardon of them. 3. What is the reason of the peculiar expression in this place.

First. Sin is spoken of with respect unto its guilt especially, so is it the object of mercy and grace. Guilt is the desert of punishment, or the obligation of the sinner unto punishment, by and according to the sentence of the law. Pardon is the dissolution of that obligation. Sin is here expressed by three terms, *ἀδικία*, *ἁμαρτία*, *ἀνομία*, 'unrighteousness,' 'sin' and 'transgression,' as we render the words. In the prophet there is only *חַטָּאָה* and *עֲוֹן*; *פֶּשַׁע* is wanting. But they are elsewhere all three used, where mention is made of the pardon of sin, or the causes of it. As, 1. In the declaration of the name of God with respect thereunto, *Exod. xxxiv. 7.* *נִשְׂא עֵוֹן וּפֶשַׁע וְחַטָּאָה*, 'pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin.' 2. In the confession of sin for the removal of it, by the expiatory sacrifice, *Lev. xvi. 21.* *אֵת כָּל עֲוֹנוֹת רֵאֵאִי כָּל פִּשְׁעֵיהֶם לְכָל חַטָּאתָם*, 'all their iniquities, all their transgressions, in all their sins.' 3. In the expression of the forgiveness of sin in justification, *Ps. xxxii. 1, 2.* Wherefore the apostle might justly make up the expression, and general enumeration of sins, here defective in the prophet, seeing it is elsewhere so constantly used to the same purpose, and on the like occasion.

Nor are those terms needlessly multiplied, but sundry things we are taught thereby. As, 1. That those whom God graciously takes into covenant, are many of them antecedently obnoxious unto all sorts of sins. 2. That in the grace of the covenant there is mercy provided for the pardon of them all, even of them from which they could 'not be justified by the law of Moses,' *Acts xiii. 39.* And that, 3. Therefore none should be discouraged from resting on the faithfulness of God, in this covenant, who are invited unto a compliance therewith.

But there is yet more intended in the use of these words. For they do distinctly express all those respects of sin in general, by which the conscience of a sinner is affected, burdened, and terrified; as also

whereon the equity of the curse and punishment for sin doth depend.

The first is *ἀδικία*, ‘unrighteousness;’ *ταῖς ἀδικίαις αὐτῶν*. This is usually taken for sins against the second table, or the transgression of that rule of righteousness amongst men, which is given by the moral law. But here, as in many other places, it expresseth a general affection of sin with respect unto God. A thing unequal and unrighteous it is, that man should sin against God his sovereign Ruler and Benefactor. As God is the supreme Lord and Governor of all, as he is our only Benefactor and Rewarder, as all his laws and ways towards us are just and equal, the first notion of righteousness in us is the rendering unto God what is due unto him, that is, universal obedience unto all his commands. Righteousness towards man is but a branch springing from this root; and where this is not, there is no righteousness amongst men, whatever is pretended. If we give not unto God the things that are God’s, it will not avail us to give unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s, nor unto other men what is their own. And this is the first consideration of sin, that renders the sinner obnoxious unto punishment, and manifests the equity of the sanction of the law. It is an unrighteous thing. Herewith the conscience of the sinner is affected, if he be convinced of sin in a due manner. The original perfection of his nature consisted in this righteousness towards God, by rendering his due unto him in a way of obedience. This is overthrown by sin, which is therefore both shameful and ruinous, which distresseth the conscience when awakened by conviction.

The second is *ἁμαρτία*; *τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν*. This is properly a missing of, an ‘erring from, that end’ and scope which it is our duty to aim at. There is a certain end for which we were made, and a certain rule proper unto us whereby we may attain it. And this end being our only blessedness, it is our interest, as it was in the principles of our natures, to be always in a tendency towards it. This is the glory of God, and our eternal salvation in the enjoyment of him. Thereunto the law of God is a perfect guide. To sin, therefore, is to forsake that rule, and to forego therein our aim at that end. It is to place itself and the world as our end, in the place of God and his glory, and to take the imaginations of our hearts for our rule. Wherefore, the perverse folly that is in sin, in wandering away from the chief good as our end, and the best guide as our rule, embracing the greatest evils in their stead, is *ἁμαρτία*, rendering punishment righteous, and filling the sinner with shame and fear.

The third is *ἀνομία*; *τῶν ἀνομιῶν αὐτῶν*. We have no one word in our language properly to express the sense hereof, nor is there so in the Latin. We render it ‘transgression of the law.’ *Ἀνομος* is a ‘lawless person;’ whom the Hebrews call a son of Belial; one who owns no yoke nor rule. And *ἀνομία* is ‘a voluntary unconformity unto the law.’ Herein the formal nature of sin consists, as the apostle tells us, 1 John iii. 4. And this is that which in the first place passeth on the conscience of a sinner. Wherefore, as all sorts of particular sins are included in these multiplied names of sin; so the general nature of sin, in all its causes and respects, terrifying the sinner, and manifesting

the righteousness of the curse of the law, are declared and represented by them. And we may learn,

Obs. XXX. That the aggravations of sin are great and many, which the consciences of convinced sinners ought to have regard unto.

Obs. XXXI. There is grace and mercy in the new covenant provided for all sorts of sins, and all aggravations of them, if this grace and mercy be received in a due manner.

Obs. XXXII. Aggravations of sin do glorify grace in pardon.—Therefore doth God here so express them, that he may declare the glory of his grace in their remission.

Obs. XXXIII. We cannot understand aright the glory and excellency of pardoning mercy, unless we are convinced of the greatness and vileness of our sins, in all their aggravations.

Secondly. That which is promised with respect unto these sins, is two ways expressed, 1. *ἰλεως εσομαι*, ‘I will be merciful;’ 2. *ου μη μνησθω επι*, ‘I will remember no more.’ It is pardon of sin that is intended in both these expressions; the one respecting the cause of it, the other its perfection and assurance. And two things are considered to be in the pardon of sin.

1. A respect unto the mediator of the covenant, and the propitiation for sin made by him. Without this, there can be no remission, nor is any promised.

2. The dissolution of the obligation of the law, binding over the guilty sinner unto punishment. These are the essential parts of evangelical pardon, and respect is had in these words unto them both.

1. *Ἰλεως*, which we translate ‘merciful,’ is ‘propitious,’ ‘gracious,’ through a propitiation. But the Lord Christ is the only *ἱλαστηριον*, or propitiation under the New Testament, Rom. iii. 25; 1 John ii. 2. And he died, *εις το ἱλασκεσθαι*, to propitiate God for sin; to render him propitious unto sinners, Heb. ii. 17; in him alone God is *ἰλεως*, merciful unto our sins.

2. The law, with the sanction of it, was the means appointed of God to bring sin to a judicial remembrance and trial. Wherefore, the dissolution of the obligation unto punishment, arising from the law, which is an act of God the supreme Rector and Judge of all, belongeth unto the pardon of sin. This is variously expressed in the Scripture; here by ‘remembering sin no more.’ The assertion whereof is fortified by a double negative. Sin shall never be called legally to remembrance. But the whole doctrine of the pardon of sin, I have so largely handled in the Exposition of Ps. cxxx. that I must not here again resume the same argument.

VER. 13.—*Εν τῷ λεγειν καινην, πεπαλαιωκε την πρωτην· το δε παλαιουμενον και γηρασκον, εγγυς αφανισμον.*

IN the foregoing verses, the apostle had proved, in general, the insufficiency of the old covenant, the necessity of the new, the difference between the one and the other, with the preference of the latter above the former, in all confirming the excellency of the priesthood of Christ

above that of Aaron. In this last verse of the chapter, he maketh an especial inference from one word in the prophetic testimony, wherein the main truth which he endeavoured to confirm with respect unto these Hebrews, was asserted. It was their persuasion, that of what sort soever this promised covenant should be, yet the former was still to continue in force, obliging the church unto all the institutions of worship thereunto appertaining. Hereon depended the main controversy that the apostle had with them; for he knew that this persuasion was destructive to the faith of the gospel, and would, if pertinaciously adhered unto, prove ruinous unto their own souls. Wherefore, the contrary hereunto, or the total cessation of the first covenant, he presseth on them, with all sorts of arguments, as from the nature, use, and end of it, from its insufficiency to consecrate or make perfect the state of the church; from the various prefigurations, and certain predictions of the introduction of another covenant, priesthood, and ordinances of worship, which were better than those that belonged unto it, and inconsistent with them, with many other cogent evidences to the same purpose. Here he fixeth on a new argument in particular, to prove the necessity and certainty of its abolition; and hereby, according to his wonted manner, he makes a transition unto his following discourses, wherein he proves the same truth from the distinct consideration of the use and end of the institutions, ordinances, and sacrifices belonging unto that covenant. This he pursues unto the 24th verse of the tenth chapter, and so returns unto the parænetical part of the Epistle, making due applications of what he had now fully evinced.

VER. 13.—*In that he saith a new (covenant,) he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old, is ready to vanish away.*

A double argument the apostle here maketh use of, 1. From a special word or testimony. 2. From a general maxim of truth in all kinds.

In the former we may consider, 1. The testimony he makes use of. 2. The inference unto his own purpose which he makes from it.

1. The first consisteth in the adjunct of this other promised covenant. It is by God himself called new; *εν τω λεγειν καινην*, ‘in that, or whereas it is said a new,’ or in that he calleth it, a new. So it is expressly in the prophet, ‘Behold I will make a new covenant.’ Thus every word of the Holy Ghost, though but occasional unto the principal subject spoken of, is a sufficient evidence of what may be deduced from it. And by this kind of arguing we are taught, that the word of God is full of holy mysteries, if with humility, and under the conduct of his Holy Spirit, we do, as we ought, diligently inquire into them. This therefore he layeth down as the foundation of his present argument, that God himself doth not call this promised covenant another covenant, or a second, nor only declare the excellency of it, but signally calls it a new covenant.

2. That which he infers from hence, is, that *πεπαλαιωκε την πρωτην*, ‘he hath made the first old.’ The force of the argument doth not lie

in this, that he calleth the second new; but that he would not have done so, had not he made the first old. For *πεπαλαιωκε* is of an active signification, and denotes an authoritative act of God upon the old covenant, whereof the calling the other new, was a sign and evidence. He would not have done so, but that he had made the other old: for with respect thereunto this is called new. But yet it was the designation of the new covenant, that was the foundation of making the other old.

The word respecting the time past, we must inquire what time it doth refer unto. And this must be either the time of the prediction and promise of the new covenant, or the time of its introduction and establishment. And it is the first season that is intended. For the introduction of the new covenant did actually take away and abolish the old, making it to disappear; but the act of God here intended, is only his making it old in order thereunto. And he did this upon and by the giving of this promise, and afterwards by various acts, and in various degrees.

First. He did it by calling the faith of the church from resting in it, through the expectation of the bringing in of a better in the room of it. This brought it under a decay in their minds, and gave it an undervaluation unto what it had before. They were now assured, that something much better would in due time be introduced. Hence, although they abode in the observance of the duties and worship it required, it being the will of God that so they should do, yet this expectation of and longing after the better, covenant now promised, made it decay in their minds and affections. So did God make it old.

Secondly. He did it by a plain declaration of its infirmity, weakness, and insufficiency for the great ends of a perfect covenant between God and the church. Many things unto this purpose might have been collected out of the nature of its institution and promises, from the first giving of it, as is done by our apostle in his present discourses. But these things were not clearly understood by any in those days; and as to the most, the veil was on them that they could not see at all unto the end of the things that were to be done away. But now when God himself comes positively to declare by that prophet, that it was so weak and insufficient, and that therefore he would make another, a better covenant with them; this made it old, or declared it to be in a tendency unto a dissolution.

Thirdly. From the giving of this promise, God did variously by his providence break in upon and weaken its administration, which by its decaying age was more and more manifested. For,

1. Immediately after the giving of this promise, the Babylonian captivity gave a total intercision and interruption unto the whole administration of it, for seventy years. This having never before fallen out from the making of it on Mount Sinai, was an evident token of its approaching period, and that God would have the church to live without it.

2. Upon the return of the people from their captivity, neither the temple, nor the worship of it, nor any of the administrations of the covenant, nor the priesthood, were ever restored unto their pristine beauty and glory. And whereas the people in general were much

distressed at the apprehension of its decay, God comforts them, not with any intimation that things under that covenant should ever be brought into a better condition, but only with an expectation of His coming amongst them, who would put an utter end unto all the administrations of it, Hag. ii. 6—9. And from that time forwards, it were easy to trace the whole process of it, and to manifest how it continually declined towards the end.

Thus did God make it old, by variously disposing of it unto its end; and to give an evidence thereof, called the other covenant which he would make, 'a new one.' And it did not decay of itself. For no institution of God 'will ever wax old of itself;' will ever decay, grow infirm, or perish, unless it be 'disannulled by God himself.' Length of time will not consume divine institutions, nor can the sins of men abate their force. He only that sets them up, can take them down. And this is the first argument of the apostle, taken from this testimony, to prove that the first covenant was to be abolished. But whereas it may be questioned, whether it directly follows or not, that it must be taken away because it is made old, he confirms the truth of his inference by a general maxim, which hath the nature of a new argument also. 'Now,' saith he, 'that which decayeth and waxeth old, is ready to vanish away.' Old is significative of that which is to have an end, and which draws towards its end. Every thing that can wax old hath an end; and that which doth so, draws towards that end. So the Psalmist affirming that the heavens themselves shall perish, adds as a proof thereof, they shall wax old as a garment; and then none can doubt but they must have an end, as unto their substance or their use.

1. There is in the words, the notation of the subject, *το δε*, 'but that,' or that, whatever it be. The general rule gives evidence unto the former inference, 'whatever it be that waxeth old.'

2. The description of it in a double expression, *παλαιουμενον* and *γηρασκον*. The words are generally supposed to be synonymous, and to be used for emphasis only. We express the first by decay, 'that which decayeth,' to avoid the repetition of the same word, we having no other to express 'waxing old, or 'made old,' by. But *παλαιουμενον*, is not properly that which decayeth, it is that which hath the effect passively of *πεπαλαιωκε*, that which is made old; and it properly respecteth things. Things are said to be made old, not persons. But the other word *γηρασκον*, respects persons, not things. Men, and not inanimate things, are said *γηρασκειν*. Wherefore, although the apostle might have used a pleonasm to give emphasis unto his assertion, and to aver the certainty of the end of the old covenant; yet nothing hinders, but that we may think that he had respect unto the things and persons that belonged unto its administration.

That which is affirmed of this subject of the proposition, is, that it is *εγγυς αφανισμου*, 'near unto a disappearance,' that is an abolition, and taking out of the way. The proposition is universal, and holds absolutely in all things, as is evident in the light of nature. Whatever brings things to a decay and age, will bring them to an end; for decay and age are the expression of a tendency to an end. Let an

angel live ever so long, he waxeth not old, because he cannot die. 'Waxing old' is absolutely opposed unto an eternal duration, Ps. cii. 26, 27.

It being the removal of the old covenant, and all its administrations, that is respected, it may be inquired why the apostle expresseth it by *αφανισμος*, 'a disappearance or vanishing out of sight.' And respect may be had herein, 1. To the glorious outward appearance of the administration of it. This was that which greatly captivated the minds and affections of those Hebrews unto it. They were carnal themselves, and these things, the fabric of the temple, the ornaments of the priests, the order of their worship, had a glory in them, which they could behold with their carnal eyes and cleave unto with their carnal affections. 'The ministration of the letter was glorious.' All this glory, saith the apostle, shall shortly disappear, shall vanish out of your sight, according to the prediction of our Lord Jesus Christ, Matt. xxiv. 2. To the gradual removal of it. It departed as a thing will by its removal out of our sight. We by little and little lose the prospect of it, until it utterly disappear. How it was made so to disappear, at what time, in what degrees, by what acts of divine authority, must be spoken unto distinctly elsewhere. All the glorious institutions of the law, were at best as stars in the firmament of the church, and therefore were all to disappear at the rising of the Sun of righteousness.

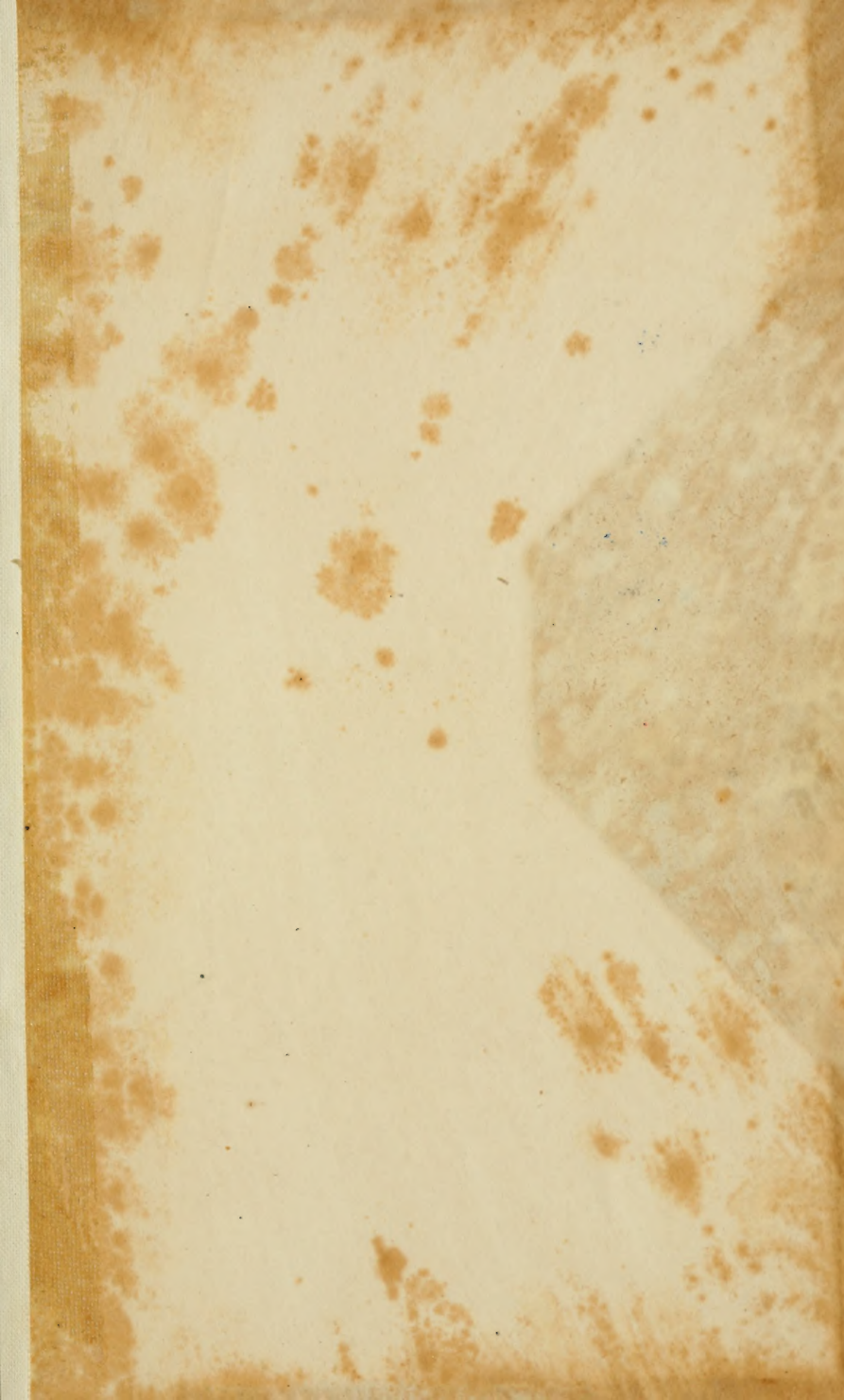
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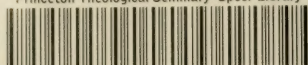




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