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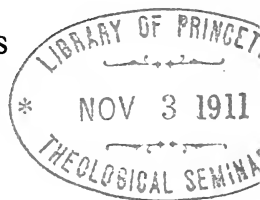
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Outline Studies In the New Testament

Philippians to Hebrews



By

WILLIAM G. MOOREHEAD

Professor in Xenia Theological Seminary.

"Other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours."



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Preface

THESE Outline Studies follow the same general plan of the author's book on Acts and five of the Epistles of Paul. The chief aim has been to point out briefly and as clearly as possible what is conceived to be the design and the fundamental truth of each of these inspired letters. Should they serve in any degree to open to the student of God's word some of the riches contained in these Scriptures none will rejoice more than the writer.

In the preparation of the Studies many volumes have been consulted. References in the text to authorities and books are scanty, chiefly because it seemed undesirable to burden the pages with them. Suffice it here to say that Commentaries, Dictionaries of the Bible, and helps of various kinds have been freely used.

WILLIAM G. MOOREHEAD.

Xenia Theological Seminary.

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<i>Grouping of the Epistles.</i>	<i>Place of Writing.</i>	<i>Summary of Doctrine.</i>
I. 1 and 2 Thessalonians.	Corinth.	Eschatology : Lord's Second Coming, Resurrec- tion, Rapture.
II. Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians.	Corinth, Ephesus, Macedonia.	Soteriology : Justification, Adop- tion, Sanctification, Life, Worship.
III. Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon.	Rome : First Imprisonment.	Christology : In Christ, like Christ, Complete in Christ.
IV. 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus.	Release : Second Imprison- ment, Death.	Ecclesiology : Pastor and People.
Hebrews.	Italy (?).	Christ Apostle and High Priest of our Confession.

Outline Studies in the New Testament

THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

Christianity was first introduced into eastern Europe about the middle of the first century by the Apostle Paul and his companions, Silas, Timothy, and Luke (Acts xvi). It was at Philippi the Gospel won its first triumphs, a place made famous by the decisive battle between the Republican and Imperial forces of Rome a little less than one hundred years before. Philippi was a Roman colony with all the rights and immunities that pertained to the capital itself. The colonists were Roman citizens; the ensigns of Roman rule, the S. P. Q. R. were conspicuously displayed; the officials bore the Roman titles of Prætors and Lictors (Acts xvi: 20, 35, 38); the inhabitants claimed the great name of Romans (Acts xvi: 21). In short, the colony was a miniature of the imperial city.

The circumstances attending the planting of the church in Macedonia were extraordinary. The vision of the man of Macedonia and his pathetic call, "Come over and help us"; the conversion of Lydia, the exorcism of the slave girl, the arrest of Paul and Silas, the dungeon, the midnight earthquake, and the con-

version of the jailer—all betoken the profound interest that the Lord had in the august movement. The Powers of the unseen world both good and bad confronted each other at Philippi and both manifested their deep concern in the issue. The Spirit of God and the spirit of the evil one here contended for the mastery. For, in a very vital sense, the destiny of Europe was involved in the struggle between Christianity and heathenism at Philippi. We know what the issue was, and rejoice in the glorious victory there achieved.

Of all the churches established by Paul's ministry this of Philippi seems to have cherished for him the most tender affection. Its membership probably was not numerous, and certainly it was very poor (2 Cor. viii: 1-3), yet it cared for the apostle and ministered to his wants as no other church did. Its members repeatedly sent personal gifts to him, as, *e. g.*, to Corinth (2 Cor. xi: 8, 9), and to Thessalonica (Phil. iv: 16). When they learned that he was a prisoner at Rome they sent one of their members, Epaphroditus, with supplies to him. The contribution no doubt was timely. The aged servant of Christ appears to have been in need of the comforts if not the necessities of life (Phil. ii: 25; iv: 18, 19). A prisoner, he could not supply his wants with his own hands as he had been wont to do, nor could he expect aid from the Roman Christians, for on them he had no claim. It is doubtful likewise whether he ever received help from churches where factions against himself existed. All the more grateful to him therefore must have been the

generous and unsolicited succour which came to him from his devoted people of Philippi. Out of a heart glowing with love and thanksgiving he writes them this letter, rejoicing most of all over the presence of divine grace which they exhibited and the self-sacrificing love that bound them to himself. How profoundly he was touched by the timely gift appears again and again in the letter: "But I rejoice in the Lord greatly, that now at length ye have revived your thought for me; wherein ye did indeed take thought, but ye lacked opportunity. Howbeit ye did well, that ye had fellowship with my affliction. And ye yourselves also know, ye Philippians, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church had fellowship with me in the matter of giving and receiving, but ye only. But I have all things, and abound: I am filled, having received from Epaphroditus the things that came from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God" (iv: 10-18, R. v). It must have sent a thrill of gladness into the responsive hearts of these noble Christians that they should thus have had "fellowship" with the great servant of Christ in his "affliction." To their credit and their love stands forever this splendid monument—the joyful recognition of their generosity in his time of need by one of the noblest and purest and greatest men that have ever lived, Paul the Apostle.

Of all the churches to which he writes this of Philippi appears to have been freest from error. If false teachers had sought to seduce them, as happened

with most of the other churches, it was with little or no result. The epistle is remarkable for being almost entirely devoid of censure of any kind. Their faults, if faults they had, were not such as to require reproof in this letter. The word sin is not found in it. What a comfort it must have been to the captive apostle that his children at Philippi walked in the truth, and remembered him !

A characteristic feature of the epistle is the spirit of deep and fervent joy that pervades it. It is strangely full of joy even in the midst of his adversities and dangers, like his midnight hymn from the depths of the Philippian dungeon. In most of his other epistles he writes with a sustained effort to instruct, to correct, to recover the lapsed, to pour out his indignation and his tears. Through them all a vein of sadness runs. In them we get glimpses of the sorrow that so often filled his soul, the loneliness he suffered, and the craving for sympathy so often denied him. But here all that is forgotten, or put aside. He rises sheer above his troubles and afflictions, and speaks out of the fullness of his joy and rest. Who that bears in mind the apostle's condition at Rome can read unmoved of his continual prayers on behalf of these saints, his sense of their uninterrupted fellowship with him, his joyful remembrance of their past course, his gladness over their present state, his confidence in their future, his eagerness to communicate to them his circumstances and his hopes and his tender yearning to see them ? Love, vigilant and constant, the love that is of God

and is Christlike, runs like a golden thread through it. There is no undertone of mistrust or fear or grief, as appears in most of the other epistles of this remarkable man.

And then the forgetfulness of self and the thoughtfulness of their comfort and peace, not his own—how strangely it contrasts with the mass of men. It reminds us of the love and care of Him who while on the cross thought of His enemies, of the thief, of His mother, of His disciples, and little of Himself. Fourteen times the word *joy* in some of its forms occurs. Let us read once more some of the familiar sentences: "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now"; "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any compassions and mercies, fulfill ye my joy——"; "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord"; "Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved"; "Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, Rejoice" (i: 3-5; ii: 1, 2; iii: 1; iv: 1, 4). It is the epistle of Christian joy.

Another thing worthy of note in the epistle is the somewhat prominent place given to women. It was "a man of Macedonia" who invited the apostle to cross into Europe, but the first convert was a woman, Lydia of Thyatira, a seller of purple. The incident is significant. It is a sort of prophecy of what the Gos-

pel would subsequently accomplish for women both in Asia and Europe. It was a slave girl whom Paul delivered from the "spirit of divination," a demon no doubt, by which she was possessed. Two others are mentioned, Euodia and Syntyche, whom Paul exhorts to be of the same mind in the Lord. They had laboured with him in the Gospel, and obviously were women of commanding influence at Philippi (iv : 2, 3). Woman's position was socially far superior in Macedonia to that held by women of Asia. At Thessalonica and Berea "chief women," and "Greek women of honourable estate" received the good tidings which the apostle announced (Acts xvii : 4, 12). They seem to have enjoyed a liberty, a degree of independence to which those of Asia Minor were largely strangers.

It was a characteristic feature of the Macedonians generally. Their independence and love of liberty, their tenacity of purpose and steadfastness in the presence of disaster and defeat were remarkable. Inferior to the pure Greeks in language and culture, they were immensely their superiors in the manly virtues and moral qualities, in self-reliance and perseverance. They were the Highlanders of Greece, and with the highlanders of most countries they possessed the limitations and the sturdy strength that commonly prevail among such people. Lightfoot describes them as the Piedmontes of eastern Europe, and does not hesitate to affirm that "they had that peculiarly English virtue of not knowing when they were beaten" (Bib. Essays, 248). The national trait appears even in the Christian assemblies gathered in Macedonia. There is

a stability and fidelity distinguishing the Philippians and Thessalonians, an unwavering attachment to their beloved apostle that contrasts very impressively with the fickleness of the Galatians and the turbulent and factional spirit of the Corinthians. How profoundly Paul was touched by their loyalty to him this epistle abundantly attests.

While it is mainly a letter of thanksgiving, in which the writer pours out the gladness of his heart without the reserve which he often imposed on himself, yet it is an apostolic writing, and is filled with truth which none but the Spirit of God could reveal. Being a familiar letter, such as a father might address to his children or a pastor to his flock, it does not lend itself readily to analysis. While certain features are quite prominent, as thanksgiving, information respecting the apostle himself, exhortations and admonitions, instructions and doctrinal teachings, yet these are so interwoven and so frequently overlap one another as to make analysis very difficult, if not almost impossible. However, some features are discernible that may helpfully be set out in analytical form.

I. ANALYSIS.

1. The Greeting (i : 1, 2). The epistle is addressed to the saints at Philippi with the "bishops and deacons."
2. Thanksgiving (i : 3-11).
 - (a) Their fellowship in the gospel (vs. 3-5).
 - (b) Their perseverance to complete redemption (v. 6).

- (c) Mutual partakers of grace and love (vs. 7, 8).
 - (d) Prayer for abounding love, discernment, blamelessness, and fruits of righteousness (vs. 9-11).
3. Tidings concerning himself (i: 12-26).
- (a) His imprisonment serves to further evangelization (vs. 12, 13).
 - (b) Stimulates the zeal of others (v. 14).
 - (c) Two kinds of preachers, loving and envious (vs. 15-17).
 - (d) His joy for the blessed outcome (vs. 18-20).
 - (e) His aim in life disclosed (v. 21).
 - (f) His perplexity (vs. 22-24).
 - (g) His confidence of being spared to them (vs. 25, 26).
4. Exhortation touching divers duties (i: 27-ii: 18).
- (a) Steadfastness and courage (i: 27-30).
 - (b) Unity and humility (ii: 1-11).
 - (c) Earnestness and zeal in developing Christian character (ii. 12-18).
5. Tidings concerning Timothy and Epaphroditus (ii: 19-30).
- (a) Timothy to be sent to them (v. 19).
 - (b) His loyalty commended (vs. 20-23).
 - (c) Paul hoping to visit them shortly (v. 24).
 - (d) Epaphroditus' sickness and recovery (vs. 25-27).

- (e) Sent to Philippi with high commendation (vs. 28-30).
6. Important instruction and urgent exhortation (iii-iv:9).
- (a) What Christians should do and be (iii: 1-3).
 - (b) What they should give up (vs. 4-6).
 - (c) How they may do it (vs. 7-11).
 - (d) What they are to strive after (vs. 12-16).
 - (e) What they are to expect (vs. 17-21).
 - (f) What they are to do (iv. 1-9).
7. Paul's joyful recognition of their kindness to him (iv: 10-23).

Looking back over the epistle four main principles are clearly discernible:—

1. The secret of a Christian's life, viz., Christ (i: 21).
2. The prime element of that life, viz., the mind of Christ (ii: 5).
3. The aim and object of the life, viz., Christlikeness (iii: 10).
4. The motive-power of the life, viz., Christ's strength (iv: 13).

Some things in the epistle are so fundamental and important as to demand a fuller examination than could be given them in an analysis. Accordingly, we are now to study with some care certain features of this Scripture.

1. In the address (i: 1, 2), the apostle joins to the

greeting of "all the saints" bishops and deacons. It is the only epistle in which such officers of the Christian Church are introduced into the address. Two main reasons have been assigned for it; they are specially mentioned because probably they were the official agents through whom the gifts had been sent to the apostle; or, because there was some disposition in the church to ignore the ministry and to assert individual independence and personal action. Of the two the first is the more likely. In the epistle there is little evidence of a factional spirit existing in the church of Philippi; on the contrary, its tenor betokens the absence of internal strife of any sort save in the instance of Euodia and Syntyche (iv: 2, 3). The title "bishop" is used interchangeably with "elder," the two denoting the same office (Acts xx: 17, 28; I Tim. iii: 1, 2; v: 17; Titus i: 5-7). "Grace and peace" he wishes for them all. It is the invariable order of the words in all Paul's epistles. Grace is put first because there can be no true peace without the possession of God's grace.

2. In tidings concerning himself (i: 12-26) the apostle gives most interesting information. He tells his brethren that his captivity, so far from being a hindrance, has in reality proved a help in the spread of the truth for which he suffered. His "bonds became manifest throughout the whole prætorian guard and to all the rest." No doubt he preached the gospel to his guards, and these in turn communicated it to their fellow soldiers so that the prætorium heard something of the good news of salvation through

Christ. It is not easy to determine just what is meant by the Prætorium (i : 13), whether the imperial guard or the imperial Palace guard. If taken in the wider sense as seems probable from Paul's whole statement, then we have a wide area indeed through which the knowledge of Christ had penetrated. For ought we know to the contrary Cæsar's household itself may have heard the glad tidings as iv : 22 intimates. Roman Christians were stimulated by his zeal to evangelize with greater vigour. Courage arouses courage. Genuine zeal is contagious. Even sectaries and self-seekers preached Christ. And amid it all Paul rejoiced. What though some only sought to add to his afflictions; if Christ was magnified, if His glorious redemption was brought to the knowledge of all Rome, the apostle was happy, whether he lived or died. He cherished the eager expectation of being set free, but with either alternative he would be perfectly contented. Death would usher him into the bliss of Christ's presence, and that would be infinite gain. One is impressed with his beautiful submissiveness. Cheerfully, uncomplainingly he waits the Master's will, and bides His time. Such a frame of mind is possible only when there is present the sublime singleness of purpose which ruled the apostle's life—"For to me to live is Christ" (i : 21).

The epistle thus affords a glimpse of the apostle's activity. He was as diligent in his Master's cause in the Roman imprisonment as when enjoying personal liberty, though of course restricted in his movements. Acts xxviii : 30, 31 records his unhindered service in

the gospel for two years. He was an "ambassador in bonds" (Ep. vi: 20), but still an ambassador. From the prison epistles we learn something of those who were associated with him in the Roman propaganda. Luke and Aristarchus had accompanied him from the East (Acts xxvii: 2), and the latter Paul describes as "my fellow prisoner" (Col. iv: 10). Epaphras of Colossæ, Tychicus of Ephesus, Mark the cousin of Barnabas (Col. iv: 10, R. v.), Onesimus the runaway slave whom Paul had begotten in his "bonds" (Phile. 10), Epaphroditus of Philippi, and Timothy were of the apostle's company, and no doubt greatly contributed to the spread of the gospel in the Imperial City. With such a band of devoted men gathered about him, men who knew the truth as witnessed for by Paul, men whose fidelity had been tried by the sharpest tests and who had stood firm under the trial, it is not surprising that the glad tidings were carried into the Prætorian Guard and into the immense *Familia* (household) of the Emperor himself.

3. A remarkable exhortation is found in i: 27—ii: 18.—The sum of it is the following: he urges Christians (1) to steadfastness and courage; (2), to unity and humility; (3), to earnestness and zeal in the development of Christian character; (4), to copy the wondrous example of Christ in lowliness and obedience.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus," exhorts the apostle. And he proceeds to explain what he means by "this mind"; "who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God—(counted it not a prize to be on an equality

with God, R. v.), but made Himself on no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." The voluntary humiliation of Jesus Christ is the most illustrious example of self-renunciation that even the inspired Paul could furnish. The introduction of this most difficult and profound subject is in no wise polemical. Nor is it intended to be a formal and dogmatic definition of the nature or the design of the Lord's incarnation. It is to the spirit and depth of His abasement that the apostle appeals. In this as in every other imitable example Christ furnishes the highest of all models of self-denial.

On this profound and mysterious passage is founded what is called Christ's *Kenosis*. The term means emptying, and is derived from verse 7, "but emptied Himself" (R. v.). The view now held by many as to Christ's humiliation is, that He laid aside His Divine attributes at His incarnation and entered the sphere of the finite as an unconscious babe; that He voluntarily surrendered His powers as the Son of God; that He thought and spoke as a man and merely as a man during the whole period of His humiliation. Some go so far as to affirm that while these self-imposed limitations lasted, there were many things He did not know and could not know. The late Adolph Saphir expressed thus the modern view of the *Kenosis*: "Things are now said of the Lord Jesus Christ by men within the Evangelical Churches that the older

Socinians would not have dared nor wished to say." A thorough examination of the passage would require a treatise; no more can be done here than to give what is firmly believed to be Paul's meaning.

The termini which the Apostle sets to the mysterious transaction in Christ's humiliation are—(1) "The form of God," and "equality with God," (2) and "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." How wide apart these termini are none can fail to see. The extent of the Lord's self-abasement is measured by the distance between His equality with God and His public execution on the cross as a condemned malefactor. Christ subsisted in the "form of God," Paul asserts. While *form* is not identical with nature or essence, it nevertheless implies and involves the possession of the Divine Essence. Dr. Gifford has shown that *form* in this place is inseparable from the Divine nature. In the contrastive phrase, "form of a servant," there is implied the assumption of human nature, and its outward lowly garb of servitude. Now this "Form of God" the Lord could not lay aside without ceasing to be God. This, we believe, He did not do. Is it possible for God to cease to be? *That* is unthinkable. But we are further told that He "counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped." It was this equality with God of which He emptied Himself, as the Synod of Antioch (A. D. 269) expressly interprets,— "On which account the same God and man Jesus Christ in all the church under heaven has been believed in as God having emptied Himself from being on an equality with

God, and as man of the seed of David according to the flesh" (quoted from Gifford's "Incarnation," pp. 73-4). We conceive the teaching of the passage to be this: The Lord Jesus Christ who subsisted in the form of God and was and is essentially Himself God, and who subsisted on an equality with God esteemed His equality with God not a thing to be grasped and retained; He surrendered it; He emptied Himself of it. The two expressions, beyond any reasonable doubt whatever, clearly reveal Paul's profound belief in the eternal and essential Deity of Christ. Taken together the two statements, "form of God," and "equality with God," teach that Christ preexisted in the form of God and was God's equal, therefore Himself God. The supreme glory was His, it belonged to Him equally with the Father. To it He refers when He speaks of the glory He had with the Father before the world was (John xvii: 5). In John viii: 58 Jesus says, "Before Abraham was, I am." The antithesis between the terms "was" and "am" is as strong and sharp as it can well be. There was a time when Abraham was not; there never was a time when the Son of God was not. But His words involve far more than priority of existence. If Jesus meant no more than that He existed before Abraham, He would have said, "Before Abraham was, I was." But this He does not say. His "I am" goes infinitely deeper; it connects Him, nay, identifies Him with the august title of Jehovah Himself, "I am that I am" (Ex. iii: 14). John xvi: 28 is an epitome of the doctrine of His person and mission, "I came forth from the Father, and am come

into the world: again, I leave the world, and go unto the Father." From God, into the world, back to God; preexistence, incarnation, glorification; oneness with the Father, procession from the Father, redemption wrought, exaltation ensuing.

The extent to which He humbled Himself is disclosed in the significant phrases, "form of a servant," "likeness of men," "fashion as a man." These presuppose His former dignity and glory. Underlying them is the majestic truth that antecedently He was immeasurably more and different. Had He not been God in His own being and title it would have been no humiliation to be a servant; that He was already. If the Lord were only a creature, no matter how high His rank in the scale of being, He was a servant, and nothing more. The highest creature in heaven, far from having to stoop in order to become a servant, can never rise above that condition. But Jesus must humble Himself to become a servant, must take the lowly form of man, and go down even to death if God's glory is to be retrieved and His love find free access to our lost race.

During the whole period of Christ's humiliation His essential glory was veiled so completely that there was nothing in His outward appearance to indicate His exalted rank. He said after Peter's splendid confession of Him as the Christ the Son of the Living God, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven" (Matt. xvi: 17); *i. e.*, a true knowledge of His mysterious personality was a matter of

revelation, not of sense perception in any wise. His advent was a birth, not a Theophany. As Jehovah He did not "bow the heavens and come down"; He was "made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them which were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. iv : 4).

And yet there is clear evidence that during the whole period of His humiliation His sovereign attributes as the Son of God and as the equal of God were neither abdicated nor suspended. "His *self-emptying* was not *self-extinction*, nor was the divine Being changed into a *mere* man. In His humanity He retained the consciousness of deity, and in His incarnate state carried out the mind which animated Him before His incarnation" (Vincent). Throughout the Gospel records there are gleams of His superhuman knowledge and the possession of almighty power. He knew men as no human may know his fellow (John ii : 24, 25). He knew the world of departed spirits as no mortal can know it (Luke xvi : 19-31). He knew the eternal Father as no creature can know Him (Matt. xi : 27). His power embraced the mastery over men, over sickness, over death, over demons, and over His own life (John x : 17, 18). Thus during His voluntary self-abasement He possessed and exercised when occasion demanded the divine attributes of omniscience and omnipotence. Nevertheless, "He emptied Himself, He humbled Himself." This was the mind that was in Christ Jesus.

As the reward of His perfect obedience Christ was exalted to supreme authority and dignity (cf. Acts

ii : 33). It is the august promotion He received when He had brought His great work of redemption to a final and triumphant conclusion. "Wherefore, God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name that is above every name," etc. Subjection to Him there must and shall be, but subjection is not reconciliation, bowing the knee to Him, as all must at length, is not the salvation of all. Christ shall be supreme in all the universe, and all things must bow beneath His sovereign authority.

Paul urges earnestness and zeal in the development of Christian character. We are to *work out* what God by His Spirit has already *worked in*. He imparts the power to will and to do, we are to unfold the new life implanted in our hearts. But God superintends and rules in it still, "he that hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (i : 6). He does not start us in the new life, then leave us to go on and get on as best we may. All through the dangerous journey till heaven is safely reached He presides and guides and aids and shields, making all things work together for good to them that love Him. The salvation we are to work out is intensely personal, "your own." In the central deeps of our being we live alone. One alone can fully understand us and efficiently help us—God; and He is pledged to work together with us for the same blessed end. The spirit in which it is wrought is one of self-distrust; "with fear and trembling" it is to be worked out. So doing, Christians become luminaries to those who sit in darkness, light-bearers and life holders.

4. Paul's spiritual history (iii-iv : 1).—It is certainly a very remarkable one. And yet it is not exclusively his own save in its intensity and its vivid contrasts. To a degree it is the experience of all Christians, for the history of the apostle's life as here briefly summed up is that of all the saved. His renunciation of what men most prize, his apprehension of something immeasurably nobler and better than the world can give, his eager yearning after the realization of a perfect ideal, a cherished hope, and his assurance that in due time it would be his in the deepest and truest sense, is likewise the life of every believer. He, too, lets go that he may grasp, gives up that he may win, refuses to look back that he may be filled and thrilled with what lies before. "Spiritual onwardness" was Paul's motto; it is no less that of every follower of Christ. But in the meantime vigilance must not be relaxed, for perils lurk on every side. Hence the apostle warns—"Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision" (v. 2). The danger was possible and even probable, but not actual in the case of these saints. The warning is levelled against the implacable foes of the apostolic church, the Judaizers. Like masterless and savage prowlers the presence of the Judaizers always meant mischief; their work was only evil; and their proud boast a lifeless formalism. Like three peals of a trumpet ring the thrice-repeated word, "beware!" In the first clause we have their character, in the second their conduct, in the third, their creed.

There are five noteworthy things made prominent in this chapter.

I. A great description (v. 3).—"For we are the circumcision, which worship in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." It is the description of a Christian, and it consists of four parts. (1) Christians are now the true circumcision (Rom. ii : 28, 29; Col. ii : 11). Theirs is a spiritual seal. All that the ancient Abrahamic rite signified and typified they enjoy. They are Abraham's children and are blessed with believing Abraham (Gal. iii : 9, 14, 29). They are those of whom the Lord Jesus prophesied when He said to the unbelieving Hebrews, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matt. xxi : 43). These are they who in the strange ways of the Lord are substituted for fallen Israel, and who are become Abraham's heirs and who are lifted into a place of privilege and blessing such as Israel never held. (2) They are spiritual worshippers—"worship by the Spirit of God" (R. v). The Mosaic worship, properly speaking, could be celebrated only at one place and according to a prescribed ritual. Christian worship may be presented anywhere and at any time, in a hut or a cathedral. If prompted by the Spirit of God, the songs of the saints, their prayers and thanksgivings, and their instructions and exhortations are acceptable and well-pleasing to God. The music may be anything but artistic (and all the better if so), their rhetoric faulty and their teaching biblical exclusively, as it should be; nevertheless, touched by the Spirit, the worship is spiritual. (3) They "rejoice in Christ Jesus." They know Him as their Prophet

who reveals the love and saving power of God for their redemption; as their Priest who atones for them and reconciles them to God; as their King who protects and delivers them. They glory in Christ; in His birth and its wonders; in His life and its blessings; in His death and its benefits; in His ascension and its pledges; in His return and its stupendous results. Not in themselves, nor of themselves, nor of their faith, much less of their works, do they glory; their sole cause and object of glory is Christ. (4) They have "no confidence in the flesh," neither in their own nor in anybody's else. No matter what proud boast human nature may utter or cherish, they know full well that in the storm and stress which come into every life "the flesh" is always defeated. Self-distrust is characteristic of true Christians.

2. The great renunciation (vs. 5-7).—Here is a remarkable cluster of high privileges, as men count them. Saul could boast of superior advantages and attainments. He was a Jew of pure extraction. No alien blood flowed in his veins. He could trace his lineage to Benjamin, the beloved son of Rachel, and to Abraham the illustrious father of the Hebrew race. His creed was as sound as his pedigree. He was an orthodox Pharisee. No Sadducean skepticism had a place in it; no rationalism was tolerated for an instant. He defended with all his might every tenet of strict Judaism, and persecuted all who received Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah. His legal righteousness was irreproachable, none could bring a charge against him as a violator of the letter of the law. Whatever

confidence in the flesh others might vaunt Paul could surpass them, "I more." Pride lies at the bottom of this confidence. A Puritan sums up all pride under four heads :

"Pride of race,
Pride of place,
Pride of face,
Pride of grace."

Boastful confidence in the flesh includes the four ; Paul could claim three of them as conspicuously his. He had the distinction of race and place and creed. Some doubt may be raised as to the fourth, his physical attractions. His detractors at Corinth described his "bodily presence" as "weak," *i. e.*, wanting in manliness and dignity, and his speech "of no account," either in matter or manner, perhaps in both (2 Cor. x : 10). In the apocryphal *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, which Professor Ramsay holds goes "back ultimately to a document of the first century," there is a plain unflattering description of the apostle that is worth reproducing here, for some striking traits in it :—"Bald-headed, bow-legged, strongly built, a man small in size, with meeting eyebrows, with a rather large nose, full of grace, for at times he looked like a man and at times he had the face of an angel." This is perhaps the oldest pen picture of the apostle on record.

But the things that men prize, and to which they cling with utmost tenacity Paul renounced. Pedigree, station, wealth, orthodox reputation—things of gain in the world—were repudiated, counted "loss." All

his advantages of birth, privilege, blamelessness of character, zeal and earnestness were reckoned profitless. When he won he was losing; the more he won of such things the more he lost, for Christ was thereby obscured and ignored. His gain was his loss, but his loss became at length his eternal and infinite gain. He "won Christ."

✓ 3. A great acquisition (vs. 8-11).—Here is a very cluster of possessions which Paul received in exchange for the things he renounced. The surpassing worth of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, union with Him who is the Lord of the worlds and the ages, the righteousness of God in the stead of that which is of the law and worthless, partnership with Christ in His sufferings, death, and resurrection, and a part in that glorious rising that peculiarly belongs to the saints of God. Gaining all this by the great renunciation, coming into ownership of all the heart craves, the mind conceives,—who would not say with Paul, "I count" all else but garbage, refuse, "dog's meat"? The language of verse 11 is very precise and emphatic. A literal translation of it is, "if by any means I may attain unto the out-resurrection which is from the dead." It is not a spiritual rising that is meant, as some strangely think, but participation in the glorious resurrection of the righteous—a resurrection totally distinct from that of the wicked both in character and time. His "if by any means" does not imply doubt or uncertainty so much as eagerness and yearning to have his part in it, just as his earnest striving to win the prize of the high calling (vs. 13, 14) and the

stern discipline of his body that he might not become a castaway (1 Cor. ix: 27) betoken uncompromising zeal and tenacity of purpose. If there be but one general and simultaneous resurrection for the dead, righteous and wicked alike, then Paul's longing for the out-resurrection becomes inexplicable or absurd. Obviously he expected one apart from the unrighteous, one that the Lord describes as "the resurrection of the just" (Luke xiv: 14), and for it he yearned with intense desire. It is the "better resurrection" (Heb. xi: 35), the "first resurrection" (Rev. xx: 5), that he seeks to attain. And to attain it he reckons all else as refuse.

The supreme worth of the knowledge of Christ Jesus outweighs and outbids everything beside. It is not simply that the scale dips. It is that the weight on the other side is not felt. When Paul has come to know Christ and is found in Him, he can joyfully affix the minus sign to all other things. For Christ is the "chiefest among ten thousand: yea, He is altogether lovely." "None but Christ, none but Christ," said Lambert as he lifted what remained of his hands in the martyr flames. To know Him, to be in Him, to be like Him, to be glorified with Him—what else and what more can one wish?

4. A great aspiration (vs. 12-14).—The apostle has not attained the majestic end for which Christ had seized him. He is not yet made perfect. Defect and incompleteness attach to his character. More than a quarter of a century had passed since the Saviour had arrested him and claimed him for Himself, and

used him for His purpose. In the meantime extraordinary experiences had been his. From the time of his miraculous conversion to this point the Holy Spirit had been his guide and helper; more than once the Lord had spoken to him as He rarely does to a mortal (Acts xxii : 17, 18; xxiii : 11); visions and revelations of the most stupendous sort had been vouchsafed him (2 Cor. xii : 1-4). If any Christian ever could rightfully claim perfection it was Paul. But here he emphatically disclaims it. He has not laid hold of that for which Christ had laid hold of him. Progress had been made indeed, progress unequalled by the vast majority of the saints. But more lay beyond than the past or the present contained, and towards that he bent all his powers, summoned all his energies, refusing to look back. A singular unity of purpose rules his activities: "This one thing I do." As Bengel beautifully expresses it, his eye stretches away over the course and draws on the hand, and the hand reaching before draws on the foot. Contentment with past achievements and successes is fatal to all progress. Looking back, lingering lovingly over past attainments is weakness. The principle is as true of nations as of individuals. Modern Greece fondly looks back on her splendid history and stands still. Italy long held her face steadfastly towards the mighty Republic and mightier Empire, and sank at length into "a geographical expression," as a cynical Frenchman said.

There is a river of Lethe in the city of God, and prize-winners must drink thereat, and forget the things

behind, that they may run as giants refreshed. "It would be better to forget our whole life, sins and all, than to look back with a sense of satisfaction." And then, what glorious inducements are held out to stimulate us, and keep us on the way; "the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus,"—that is the magnificent goal. Our call is from God, it comes to us in Christ, and it summons us to heaven. Eternal perfection and blessedness is the prize that awaits us. How many, alas, seek a corruptible crown; ours should be the one aim to secure an incorruptible (I Cor. ix : 24, 25).

5. A great expectation (vs. 20, 21).—"For our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we wait for a saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory, according to the working whereby He is able even to subject all things unto Himself" (R. v.). The word here rendered "citizenship" ("conversation") has in it the idea both of city and state. It is a heavenly home and a heavenly commonwealth to which Christians belong. Theirs is a glorious state and a blissful company. Their true country is not on earth. The census of the nation includes them, secures them their rightful privileges and imposes on them corresponding duties. But it does not own them. Their enrollment as citizens is in heaven. God will count them when "He writeth up the people" (Ps. lxxxvii : 6). As citizens of heaven they are ruled by heaven's laws and yield obedience to heaven's King. As heavenly citizens they have the

right of access to the Almighty Sovereign, and the right to claim His protection and His support. But they are not yet dwellers in the heavenly country, save by faith; they are unfit for the glorious state, because their bodies are redeemed only in promise and pledge. The epithet "vile," as applied to the bodies of the saints is unfortunate; nowhere else in the Bible is it so used. The bodies of God's children are not vile, for they are redeemed and shall be made to sparkle and blaze with the beauty and the glory of Christ's body. Accordingly, Christians wait for the return of the Saviour that the bodies of their humiliation may be fashioned anew—bodies of "incorruption," of "glory," of "power," and "spiritual" (I Cor. xv: 42-44). Then, and only then, shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. The quaint words of Richard Baxter express the confidence of all those who know the pain and sorrow and feebleness and decay of the "body of our humiliation," "My face will not wrinkle, nor my hair be gray; but this mortal shall have put on immortality."

The apostle closes this stupendous revelation of the Christian's future with a very tender appeal, "Therefore, my dearly beloved and longed-for ——" (iv: 1). Because you are citizens of the heavenly country; because you wait for the coming of the Lord; because your bodies are to be fashioned anew into the likeness of His glorious Body; *therefore*, stand fast in the Lord, firm in your ranks, like fellow-citizens with the glorified, the members of God's great family. And then the titles of endearment—they swell and deepen and

thrill, like the tones of a noble instrument—"my beloved, my longed-for, my joy, my crown, my beloved." But an instant before he was weeping as he wrote (iii: 18), but now he writes in very rapture, and seems to sing as he writes.

5. Things which Christians should do (iv. 4-9). They should practice forbearance (v. 5), "Let your moderation be known to all men"—rather, your gentleness, your yieldingness. It is self-restraint that is urged upon us. The forbearance we are to practice is that noble spirit which does not insist on what is its due, that does not stand on absolute right, but descends and complies. It is opposed to that rigour which never bends nor deviates, and which, as it pays the last farthing, uniformly exacts it. It is not weakness nor pliability—a reed in the wind—but the gracious disposition to yield where no principle is involved, where only ease or comfort or personal vantage are at stake. It is closely akin to the love that "seeketh not its own," that beareth all things, that doth not behave itself unseemly. The reason that enforces this duty is one of the strongest: "The Lord is at hand." He is coming ere long, and He will right every wrong, and reward every patient servant.

They should be instant in prayer (vs. 6, 7). One has paraphrased the sixth verse thus: "Be careful for nothing; be prayerful in everything; be thankful for anything." In the revision "careful" is replaced by the more accurate "anxious." The command is levelled against sinful worry, unbelieving anxiety, which at bottom is distrust of God's goodness and love

(Matt. vi : 25-32). God cares for the birds, the flowers; will He not for His children? The Saviour's cogent argument ought to banish all anxiety and settle the believer's mind in perfect peace. One evening Luther saw a little bird perching on a tree and taking up its rest for night, and he said: "That little bird has chosen its shelter, and is about to go to sleep in tranquillity: it has no disquietude, neither does it consider where it shall rest to-morrow night, but it sits in peace on that slender branch, leaving it to God to provide for it. Thus we ourselves refuse to trust in God, who so far from willing our condemnation, has given for us His own Son." God is on the throne of grace, and is ever accessible. His gifts are never exhausted and never lose their adaptation to our needy cases; therefore, "let your requests be made known unto God."

The blessed result of thus doing is assured: "and the peace of God that passeth all understanding shall guard your minds and hearts through Christ Jesus." The psalmist prayed down his ills, dreadful as they were (Ps. vi, cxvi) and then confidently said to himself, "return to thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee." He could rock himself to sleep on the assurance of God's faithfulness, and still the tumult of his spirit. Over against the "nothing" of care Paul sets the "everything" by prayer: over against anxiety, the knowledge-surpassing peace of God. "Thou wilt keep him in peace, peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee" (Isa. xxvi : 3, mar.).

They should meditate on high and holy things (v. 8).

Six things as objects worthy of earnest contemplation are mentioned and a summary of all praiseworthy virtues. They are descriptive terms of moral excellence; combined, they form Christian character of the noblest type. On them Christians are to think, to ponder and meditate that they may reproduce them in their lives. The mind takes the stamp of what it most constantly and eagerly contemplates. There is transforming power in prolonged contemplation. No man ever becomes a great criminal at a single bound. Crime is first conceived in the heart, then it is nurtured and rehearsed by the perverse mind, before it is executed by the hand (Jas. i : 14, 15). No man ever becomes eminent in sainthood in a moment. Christian character is a growth, not an accident. It is process and a product, not a fiat. Our thinking moulds us. A Tamil saying runs thus: "Think of Buddha, and you will become like Buddha." A far better saying is, Think of Christ, and you will become like Him. "But we all, with open (unveiled) face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. iii : 18). To think perpetually on business, on the condition of the money market, on politics, pleasure, books and reading even will not soon transform us into the blessed image of the Lord. "Think on these things."

THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

In the Epistle to the Colossians Paul mentions three cities of Asia Minor, to wit, Colossæ, Laodicea, and Hierapolis. The three belonged to Phrygia, and were located in the valley of the Lycus, a tributary of the famous Mæander. According to the late maps of Asia Minor, particularly those of Professor Ramsay, they lay in the form of a triangle, Colossæ and Laodicea being the base and Hierapolis the apex. The cities were contiguous to each other, Laodicea being about nine miles and Hierapolis about thirteen miles from Colossæ, while the distance between Hierapolis and Laodicea was only some six miles. The whole region is volcanic, and earthquakes have been frequent throughout its history. Laodicea suffered immensely from earthquakes, and seems finally to have been destroyed thereby. In A. D. 65 (probably),¹ a few years later than the writing of the Epistle to the Colossians, all three cities, but particularly Laodicea, were greatly damaged by an earthquake, and yet the latter disdained to seek help from the liberality of the Emperors, as many of the great cities of Asia had done. "As late as 1720, 12,000 people perished in a great convulsion of the region" (Moule). The pastures of the valley were rich and luxuriant, and flocks abounded; the wool there grown was noted for its superior quality,

¹ Lightfoot and Moule give the above date; Ramsay, A. D. 60.

and the dyes were as famous as those of its neighbour, Thyatira.

Of the three Colossæ was inferior in size and importance. Laodicea was rich and influential. Shortly before the Christian Era it was made the metropolis, or district-capital, of twenty-five towns of the surrounding territory (Moule). The Roman statesman and orator, Cicero, when governor of Cilicia (B. C. 52-50) often held court in its court-house. Its chief interest for us, however, arises from the fact that it is one of the seven churches of Asia Minor, and the last of the seven, that our Lord addressed through His servant, John (Rev. iii : 14-22). Hierapolis was noted for its hot mineral springs and their healing properties. In the time of the Roman Empire people from many parts of Asia and of Europe repaired thither to bathe and to seek cures for their maladies. But Hierapolis is celebrated mainly for the reason that, according to a well-founded tradition, Philip of Bethsaida settled there, and after his death his two virgin daughters who survived him for many years continued to dwell there, dying at length at an advanced age (Eusebius). From these Christians, from Aristion, from John the Presbyter, and from others, Papias, the native bishop of Hierapolis, about A. D. 130, gathered the materials for his work, now lost, entitled Expositions of the Lord's Discourses. Around the very brief report of some of Papias' work which the historian Eusebius has transmitted to us controversy still rages. It is enough here to say that two things are apparently established by this ancient pastor of Hierapolis, viz., the existence in

his day of writings by Matthew and Mark which were regarded by Christians as authoritative, and that his own writing was personal reminiscences of our Lord's words and works gathered from what he deemed authoritative sources.

Groups of Christians were found in the tree cities, how many in each is unknown, though it is likely the larger number pertained to Colossæ, and to these more particularly the epistle which we are now to study was addressed.

Paul had not evangelized in these cities. It is not known whether he ever visited the Lycus valley. In the epistle he reminds the Colossians that neither they nor those of Laodicea had seen his face, so, at least, his words seem, on a fair principle of interpretation, to suggest (cf. i : 7 ; ii : 1). From i : 7 ; iv : 12, 13 ; Phile. 23, the inference appears legitimate that the servant of Christ who preached the Gospel in this region was Epaphras whose zeal and devotion the apostle warmly commends. Another labourer either at Colossæ or at Laodicea, Archippus, is earnestly exhorted in iv : 17. It is not to be forgotten, however, that all these workers, Epaphras, Archippus, Philemon (probably the father of Archippus and husband of Apphia (Phile. 2) had been brought into contact with Paul at Ephesus and had learned the truth as it is in Jesus from the apostle. In Acts xix : 10 we are told that during Paul's sojourn there "all they who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks." The term Asia includes the Lycus valley as well as other territory adjacent to the proconsular capital.

Colossæ and its neighbouring towns lay on the highway to Ephesus, and no doubt the intercourse between these points was constant (cf. Acts xix: 26). The Colossians who heard and received the message of the Gospel at Ephesus carried it back to their home and published it among their friends and fellow citizens. A Christian church was the fruit of their testimony. In doctrine and general character it was Pauline, like the other sister churches in Proconsular Asia. No doubt Epaphras, Archippus and Philemon were mainly instrumental in founding the Christian assemblies in the cities of the Lycus valley.

During Paul's imprisonment at Rome a large liberty for intercourse with his friends seems to have been accorded him (cf. Acts xxviii: 30, 31). It was otherwise in his confinement at Cæsarea; inactivity of a compulsory sort appears to have been his situation there (Acts xxiv: 23). But at Rome even his preaching was subjected to no restraint. Though confined to his "own hired house" he kept up a constant intercourse, through his delegates, with his converts in various parts of the Empire. "The care of all the churches" was still his heavy burden. Even in the case of some that had never seen his face in the flesh, as this assembly at Colossæ, his solicitude was aroused and his pen warned, exhorted, argued, rebuked, comforted. It was probably Epaphras who brought to the apostle the unwelcome tidings that the faith of the Colossians was in danger of being perverted by false teaching. The gravity of the situation was such as to demand prompt attention.

The nature of the teaching which disturbed the church and threatened its life will appear when the contents of the epistle are under review. Some observations touching it may be here offered, as preliminary to a more careful study farther on. "The Colossian Heresy" was made up of a variety of elements, the more prominent being of Jewish sources. It was conglomerate, a mixture of philosophical speculation, Oriental Theosophy, Judaism, and asceticism. It had in it the germs of what in the second century became known as *Gnosticism*, one of the strangest and most fantastic productions of the human brain. Gnosticism attempted two impossible things: it sought to explain the mystery of creation, and the origin of evil. It attempted to account for finite existence by a chain of what it named Emanations, *i. e.*, a host of beings somewhat resembling angels, that formed a bridge between the world and God. These Emanations form a descending scale, grading from the highest to the lowest, from God to matter. It taught that the world was not made by the eternal God, but by some inferior being. It held that matter is essentially evil, and only evil; hence those who seek to escape from evil must repudiate matter and all material things. Accordingly, the system led to extreme austerities on the one hand, and uncurbed license on the other. It regarded Christ as a mere man, on whom, however, the great *Æon* descended at His baptism and left Him when on the cross He cried, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Such were some of the chief features of developed Gnosticism, that extravagant and extraor-

dinary heresy against which Irenæus, Tertullian, and Hyppolitus exerted the whole strength of their splendid minds. The heresy of the church at Colossæ certainly was not full-grown Gnosticism; but it had some of its elements in embryo. Already was it in the air, its winged seeds flying over Asia Minor, and dropping into congenial soil. The false doctrine taught among the Colossians had a philosophical character, it was distinguished for ascetic rules that went far beyond even the Mosaic Law, and it advocated the worship of angels. Ever has the human mind sought to penetrate into the unseen world and know something of its mysteries. The false teachers at Colossæ attempted to introduce men into those mysteries, and the system naturally brought on a species of angel worship. It inculcated extreme repression of the natural appetites, and it exalted the mortification of the body and the repression of its desires as one of the conditions of supreme knowledge. Its teachers were in some sense Judaists, but Judaists who combined in their teaching philosophy, theosophy, and ascetic mysticism. The system tended to limit the greatness and authority of Christ and the sufficiency of His redemption. It exalted man and his doings, it magnified the virtue of humility and self-abnegation, while at the same time it fostered pride and arrogance, and contempt for those whom it regarded as without the true knowledge and the power to practice austerities.

It is thought by some that there was a chief teacher of these views, a heresiarch whose intellectual gifts gave him preeminence over all others; ii: 4, 8, 16, 18

appears to indicate the presence and work of such a leader. At any rate, the errorists were busy sowing the seeds of speculation and false doctrine among these Christians, and the epistle is designed mainly to counteract the insidious teachings, and to settle the saints in steadfast adherence to the truth of God. It is a most interesting and instructive Scripture we are to study. Like the Bible generally, it is thoroughly "up to date," and it pours a flood of light on many of the odd fancies and erroneous notions of our own times.

A close resemblance between Ephesians and Colossians exists. All readers of the two epistles recognize it. The resemblance appears in the general structure, in the presence of the same words and form of expression, and often in the identity of thought in the two when the language differs. On the ground of the striking resemblance some have assumed a different authorship. It is argued that Colossians is a condensed recension of Ephesians, or the latter is but an expansion of the former. The assumption makes no account of the differences between the two, and yet these are as marked as the resemblances. Controversy is prominent in Colossians; it is almost wholly absent from Ephesians. In Colossians the apostle argues and warns against the dangers arising from a speculative philosophy and an austere ritualism. In Ephesians he is unfolding the glorious work of God in behalf of His church, the saved from among men. In the one there is the expression of a mind anxious and perturbed, struggling with the perils which had sprung up in the

church, and labouring to bring back the saints to the completeness and blessedness they have in Christ. In the other, there breathes the spirit of repose and tranquillity. Ephesians is general, designed for all God's people: Colossians is addressed to a single church. Certainly the two were written about the same time. In fact, it is uncertain which takes precedence in point of time. The words of Dr. Hort have weight: "We can hardly speak of one as prior to the other; both might be the products of the same state of mind. Practically, they were written together. If the needs of the Colossians called for special warnings, yet these warnings needed, as the basis for a fuller faith, some of the doctrinal matter so prominent in Ephesians." Findlay's happy term, "twins," accurately describes the contemporaneity of the two epistles.

A word may be said respecting the "epistle from Laodicea," mentioned in iv: 16. The apostle directs that there should be an interchange of letters between the two churches, that that from Laodicea should be read to the assembly of Colossæ. What letter is meant? Obviously, it was a letter which Paul had sent to Laodicea, and which the Colossians were to obtain from there. Is it extant? While the opinion that an apostolic letter may be lost is not *a priori* impossible, nevertheless, we may well decline to assume such loss where there is no necessity to do so. In this instance there is none. The "Circular hypothesis," first advanced by Archbishop Usher, accounts satisfactorily for all the phenomena. Briefly, it is this:

The Epistle to the Ephesians was written for a group of churches of which that of Ephesus was chief. Copies were made for each church and the address was filled in for each of those to whom the letter was intended. Hence, in some ancient copies there is a blank in the address, probably because it had not been inserted by the copyist. Laodicea was no doubt one of the assemblies for which a copy was prepared, and it was carried thither by the same messenger who bore the epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, Tychicus (Eph. vi: 21; Col. iv: 7). There is little doubt but that by the "epistle from Laodicea" Paul means this copy of his letter to the Ephesians.

The preposition "from" would scarcely be used of a letter addressed simply *to the Laodiceans* and belonging properly to them; it is quite appropriate for one intended to be transmitted from one place to another, as, *e. g.*, from Laodicea to Colossæ.

There is extant, however, a spurious document known as the "Epistle to the Laodiceans." It is a short composition in letter form, found, it is said, only in Latin manuscripts, the earliest known copy dating from the sixth century. Probably it was originally written in Greek. It is made up almost entirely of Pauline phrases, "strung together without any definite connection or any clear object, taken chiefly from the Epistle to the Philippians, but here and there one is borrowed from elsewhere, *e. g.*, from the Epistle to the Galatians." This description is entirely accurate, as any one will see who reads it with due care. "For more than nine centuries," says Lightfoot, "this forged

epistle hovered about the doors of the sacred canon." But it never was received by the church, and with the dawn of the Reformation, when the critical spirit was aroused and men carefully inspected all that presented itself as claiming their faith and allegiance, this ghost of a Pauline Epistle was forever scared away.

I. ANALYSIS.

Colossians may be conveniently divided into nine parts or sections, though some of these are subordinate to the doctrinal portions.

(a) Introduction (i: 1-14).

1. Address and greeting (vs. 1, 2).
2. Thanksgiving (vs. 3-8). For three things particularly does the apostle give thanks, for their faith in Christ, for their love to the saints, and for their hope of coming glory.
3. His prayer on their behalf (vs. 9-14). He asks for a full knowledge of the Divine will, for a walk that would be pleasing to God, for fruit-bearing, for strength patiently and joyfully to endure, and for thankfulness for the unspeakable blessings of redemption.

(b) The Redeemer and His glory (i: 15-23).

(The prayer glides naturally and almost insensibly into this matchless theme, the glorious Christ.) The august titles ascribed to Him are these: (a) Image of the Invisible God; (b) First-born of Creation; (c) Creator of all things; (d) Eternally preexistent;

(*e*) Upholder of all things. These constitute His essential glory as God. There follows His glory as the Redeemer: (*a*) Head of the body; (*b*) the Beginning; (*c*) First-born from the dead; (*d*) Preeminent; (*e*) Possessor of all fullness; (*f*) Reconciler and Peacemaker, Sanctifier and Saviour.

(*c*) Paul's mission (i : 24-29).

1. Its character—one of suffering (v. 24).
2. Its glory—revelation of God's mystery (vs. 25, 26).
3. Its supreme object—Christ in men (v. 27).
4. Its aim—perfection in Christ (v. 28).
5. Its support—the Divine power (v. 29).

(*d*) Paul's solicitude for the church (ii : 1-7).

1. For their unity in love (v. 2).
2. For their assured understanding (v. 2).
3. For their insight into the mystery of God, even Christ (vs. 2, 3).
4. For their security against delusions and snares (v. 4).
5. For their stability and order (vs. 6, 7).

(*e*) Believers' completeness in Christ (ii : 8-15).

1. The threatening danger (v. 8).
2. Christ's infinite fullness (v. 9).
3. In Him believers are complete (v. 10).
4. They have the true circumcision (v. 11).
5. They have the true baptism (v. 12).

6. They have the true life (v. 13).
7. They have the perfect deliverance (vs. 14, 15).

(*f*) Perilous errors named and described (ii : 8, 16-23).

1. Philosophy (v. 8).
2. Legalism (vs. 16, 17).
3. Angelolatry (vs. 18, 19).
4. Asceticism (vs. 20-23).

(*g*) The true Christian life (iii : 1-17).

1. Its source (vs. 1, 3).
2. Its characteristics, risen, heavenly, hidden, (vs. 1-3).
3. Its destiny, glory (v. 4).
4. Its twofold action; (*a*) mortification (vs. 5-9); (*b*) vivification (vs. 10-17); the old man with all his unholy deeds to be put off; the new man with his activities, virtues, and emotions to be put on.

(*h*) Christian behaviour in various relations (iii : 18-iv : 6).

1. In the family (iii : 18-21).
2. Masters and servants (iii : 22-iv : 1).
3. Prayer and social intercourse (iv : 2-6).

I. PERSONAL MATTERS AND MESSAGES (iv. 7-18.)

We may summarize the contents of the epistle thus :—

1. The glories of the Lord Jesus Christ, essential and official (i : 14-19).

2. Perfection of Christ's redemptive work (i : 20-29).
3. The calling, unity, and completeness of all true believers (ii : 1-7).
4. The perils of a worldly philosophy and carnal ritualism (ii : 8, 16-23).
5. Privilege of believers to be above the world (iii : 1-17).

The doctrines of salvation here fall somewhat into the background, but they are by no means absent. Guilt and redemption, sin and forgiveness are certainly taught, but not precisely in the same way nor with the like fullness of treatment as in Romans and Ephesians, for in Colossians these are discussed in close relation with the "heresy" that was invading this church.

There are two subjects which deserve careful attention because of their timely importance and fundamental character. These two subjects are, Christ's Preeminence (i : 9-20); and the description and refutation of the "heresy" (ii). The two are closely connected, for the supremacy of Christ was clouded if not repudiated by the sectaries who sought to impose a system of worship upon the Colossians which virtually antagonized and displaced the Lord Jesus from His august place both in the universe and particularly in redemption. It is these that lie at the basis of the epistle, to discuss these in his own masterly way, to bring back the church to Him in loving loyalty and hearty submission was Paul's prime object.

I. The power and glory of the Son of God (i : 9-20).—He is at once our Maker and Redeemer. He is

Creator of the universe and its supporter. By Him it came into being, and by Him it is maintained in being. He is, moreover, the Saviour of the whole body of the redeemed and their Head. He is preeminent. The section is rich in its descriptive titles of the Lord Jesus Christ. If language has any fixed and proper significance, if words and phrases mean anything, then He of whom Paul speaks is superhuman, super-angelic, the equal of God, Himself God.

The apostle begins with thanksgiving, then follows with intercession for the Colossian saints. It is his usual method of introducing his instructions and appeals (Rom. i: 8-12; Eph. i: 15-23; 1 Thess. i: 2-7, etc.). He devoutly thanks God for the presence in the church of the three distinguishing graces, faith, love, and hope (vs. 3-8). Of the three the chief place is given faith, for, as the martyr Polycarp long ago wrote, "Faith, which is the mother of us all, followed by hope whose precursor is love," is the grace that always has precedence in the Christian virtues. The prayer (vs. 9-14), is, in substance, that they may will and walk with God. That they may so do, Paul prays that they may "be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding"—wisdom, to discern the divine will, spiritual understanding, or insight, that they may apply to their daily life God's will, that He may have the rightful supremacy over them in all things. The essence of Christianity is to obey the Divine will. This was perfectly exhibited in the Lord Jesus. It is seen to be the controlling force, the master motive, in all believers. In doing it they

find man's chief end, their own highest happiness, and the most blessed liberty. Thereby they come to know Him, for "obedience is the organ of spiritual knowledge," "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself" (John vii : 17 ; cf. iii : 21). Thus is fulfilled the promise, "Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord" (Hos. vi : 3). "He that first begs, and then digs for knowledge, searching for her as for hid treasure (Prov. ii : 3, 4), he shall be sure of some daily comings in from Christ ; he shall understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." Thus doing, the saints will walk worthily of the Lord to all pleasing, meeting His wishes, anticipating His will, and enjoy communion with Him. Five times the word *all* is repeated (vs. 9, 10, 11) ; in vs. 10, 11, it is twice found, though rendered "every" once in v. 10. Its repeated use shows how comprehensive are the blessings for which he prays, and how profoundly the answer to his petitions must affect their lives.

All the prayers of the Bible are argumentative. The petitions are grounded on the revealed character of God, on some gracious promise, or on some happy experience. In Solomon's dedicatory prayer of the Temple (1 Kings viii), argument, reasoning with God, predominates ; and even our Lord's intercessory prayer (John xvii) is filled with the same remarkable feature. The like thing appears here. Christians are to give thanks to the Father because He has qualified them to be sharers in the inheritance of the saints, because He

has delivered them from the power of darkness and has translated them into the kingdom of the Son of His love, because, in short, He has redeemed and pardoned them. Already saved and brought in the Kingdom of God, destined to dwell forever in the unapproachable light, why should they not rejoice and express their joy by hearty thanksgiving? Like Israel in the olden time God has brought them out that He might bring them in (Deut vi: 23); out of darkness, into light; out of the despotism of Satan, into the blissful realm of God. "The Son of His love" is found nowhere else in the New Testament. It means certainly something more than that Christ is the supreme object of the Father's love: He is its worthy object no doubt; but He is also the representative and the depository of His love, in Him the infinite love is treasured, and by Him it is distributed. Accordingly, since Christ is the glorious Head of the Kingdom, love is enthroned in its centre. The Kingdom is what it is to its happy subjects because its King is the Son of the Father's love. This great truth surely furnishes ample ground for earnestness and confidence in prayer.

Moreover, in the Son we have our redemption. The term points to a rescue by ransom. The ransom is not here directly expressed, for the words, "through His blood" of the common version, are now generally omitted. It is thought they were inserted from Eph. i:7 where they are certainly genuine. They define exactly the price paid for the ransom, the Lord's death. The redemption secures the pardon of our

sins and acceptance with God. It is a present possession, a blessing which now "we have." With utmost precision the apostle ascribes our entire salvation to the work of Christ, and he insists that they alone enjoy it who are in vital union with Him, who are "in Christ." This fundamental truth leads him up to the theme upon which he seems to exhaust speech as a vehicle to convey the mighty revelation. It is the supreme subject of all Scripture, the joy and comfort of all believers—the Person and Redeeming work of the Lord Jesus Christ (vs. 15–20).

This matchless description of the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ falls into two parts, or rather, Christ is here viewed in His twofold relation to the universe and the Church of the redeemed. We have, first, His greatness as Head of Creation (vs. 15–17). Second, His greatness as Head of the Church, His Body (vs. 18–20). The section may be represented (following Findlay's analysis) thus :

I. Christ's Headship of Creation :—

- V. 15. (*a*) Who is the image of God the invisible, First-born of all creation :
- V. 16. (*b*) For in Him were created all things.
 - (*c*) In heaven and on the earth, the things visible and the things invisible—whether thrones, whether lordships, whether principalities, whether dominions —
- V. 17. (*d*) All through Him and unto Him have been created ;

(e) And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

II. Christ's Headship of the Body, the Church :—

V. 18. (a) And He is the Head of the body, the Church.

(b) Who is (the) Beginning, First-born out of the dead, that in all things He might become preeminent.

V. 19. (c) For in Him he was pleased that all the fullness should dwell.

V. 20. (d) And through Him to reconcile all things unto Him, having made peace through the blood of his cross.

(e) Through Him, whether the things on the earth, or the things in the heavens.

Here are groups and clusters of glories which the Spirit ascribes to our blessed Lord. The depth of them no one may hope to fathom, their height none can scale. For the majestic description embraces the universe, sweeps through time and eternity, goes down into the grave and into the invisible world, comes forth in the power of an endless life, even resurrection life, and exhibits the Man, Christ, as preeminent, superhuman, super-angelic, in short, as Himself the eternal Lord of all. Paul's weighty terms can by no dexterity of exegesis nor juggling of words be reduced and dwarfed so as to fit a creature. He who is all

that the inspired pen here portrays is no creature, He is God, "very God of very God." Some of the great titles here given our Lord deserve more lengthy study than can be devoted to them. A few words must suffice.

I. "Who is the image of the invisible God" (v. 15).—The reference is to Christ. But how, in what sense, is He the Image of God invisible? "Image" is far removed from imitation; it implies more than resemblance or similitude: it is even more exact and definite than likeness. It presupposes a prototype, that which it not only represents, but from which it is drawn (Trench Syn.). As applied to Christ it has much the same meaning as "effulgence of (His) glory, and the very image of His substance" (Heb. i: 3). In Heb. x: 1 a sharp contrast is drawn between image and shadow or external similarity, "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, not the very image of the things."—The shadow was only a dim, imperfect sketch of coming things; the image of them would be a full and accurate representation; "the things themselves, as seen." Owen writes, "Were He not the essential image of the Father in His own Divine person, He could not be the representative image of God unto us as He is incarnate." Christ both represents the Father and reveals Him. God the infinite is here called the Invisible. Nor is this the only place where He is thus described. In John i: 18, we are told, "No man hath seen God at any time" (cf. 1 John iv: 12). In 1 Tim. vi, the apostle speaks of Him as "dwelling in the light which no

man can approach unto ; whom no man hath seen, nor can see." The Lord Jesus Christ is His image in the sense that He perfectly represents Him and manifests Him, "The only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father hath declared Him" (the word for "declare" is the source of our English *exegesis*, so that we might almost read, hath interpreted, hath expounded Him). To Jesus Christ we are indebted for all we know of the Father. The revelation of the Father which He has made is too great and holy, too lofty and pure, too tender and self-denying, to have had its home in the bosom of a mere creature. He who has made us acquainted with the Invisible God is Himself the Image of God, the eternal Son who dwelt in His bosom from eternity, and who in His grace has come into the world of men to declare Him. He is the visible Image of the invisible Father ; not the "copy of an image," but, as an ancient Greek interpreter expresses it, "a living image" (Basil) of the living God. He who has seen Him has seen the Father.

2. "The first-born of every creature (of all creation)."—At first sight this title seems to bring Christ down to a level with creation ; as if we might paraphrase—He is first indeed of the creation, but likewise as being Himself a part of it, as having a beginning, even as created things have had. So Arians, Socians, Unitarians, skeptics generally interpret. God forbid that the Lord Christ should be thus dishonoured ! If Paul teaches such doctrine by this title, he is in flagrant contradiction with himself

both in this context and elsewhere in his epistles. "First-born" has nothing to do here with the origin of Christ as a Divine Person, for He never had such origin. His existence stretches across the measureless ages; "He is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." As Son of God He has no date, no reckoning. John's "in the beginning" (i:1) is timeless. And Paul's "first-born" denotes primarily the Saviour's rank, and His priority to creation. He is creation's Head and Sovereign. Jehovah called Israel His first-born (Ex. iv: 22), certainly not because the oldest people or the first nation of the world, but because of covenant relation with the Lord, because of special privileges, rights, and promises. Israel was God's first-born in rank and dignity, in purpose and destiny. In due time the title is bestowed upon an individual, a King, as in Ps. lxxxix: 27. A son of David Jehovah declares shall be made "my first-born, the highest of the kings of the earth. . . . And my covenant shall stand fast with him. . . . His throne as the days of heaven." Obviously, this First-born is more than Solomon, more than any son of David save One, the Messiah who is at once David's Son and Lord. Of this First-born we are told he is the Only-begotten (John i: 18), the "heir of all things" (Heb. i: 2), whose "throne shall endure as the sun" (Ps. lxxxix: 36). By First-born it is absolutely certain Paul does not mean to teach that our Lord is Himself a creature, because (1) the universe is the result of His creative power (v. 16); because, (2) He is before all things, *i. e.*, His existence antedates all time, all creation, hence is eternal (v. 17); because,

(3) by Him all things consist, *i. e.*, hold together, cohere in a system (v. 17). These great verses assert that, as to God, Jesus Christ is His Image; as to the universe, He is its Creator; as to creation's stability and perpetuity, He is its Sovereign and Upholder. Paul's doctrine negatives the unitarian conception of the Son of God; it negatives likewise Darwinian evolution. Here is no hint nor shade of a hint that a "tiny cell" was first created, or at most a few "primordial germs," and that through unnumbered ages and cycles by natural processes from these infinitesimal beginnings all things were developed and differentiated until now the earth and the universe too present us with endless varieties of organisms. Paul says that "In Him, and through Him, and unto Him, all things, visible and invisible, in the heavens and in the earth," were created. All the angelic hosts, all life in earth, vegetable and animal, all substances, atoms and molecules, all matter and all physical forces,—in short, the universe with all it contains is Christ's Divine handiwork. He is the primal Cause and the final Cause of it, for it is "through Him" and "unto Him." If organisms hold within them marvellous powers of development, of variability and adaptation to their environment, it is because Christ has thus constructed them. For the Christian who receives the Scripture as the very word of God the radical evolutionary hypothesis is unbelievable.

3. "And He is the head of the body, church" (v. 18).—Paul now passes from the contemplation of Christ's glory in the material creation to His glory in the new creation, the world of redemption. Here also

He has the preeminence. He is the Church's Founder, it is His creation (Matt. xvi: 18). The Redeemer and the redeemed form a body, a spiritual organism. His life is theirs likewise; He and they form the new Man, the glorified Man. Their interests are His; His glory He gives them (John xvii: 22; Rom. viii: 29). As He is the Head of the body all authority over it centres in Him. He needs no vicar, no intermediary. He Himself is sufficient, able to meet every exigency, to triumph over all hindrances and enemies, to supply all grace and strength.

4. "Who is the beginning"—the first in being, in power, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning of the creation of God (Rev. i: 8; iii: 14).—In His existence He is eternal, in His creative power He is the principle, source, and secret of life, whether in the universe or in the redeemed body. Each dates and derives from Him all it is and has.

5. "The first-born from the dead"—not merely "of the dead," but specifically "from the dead," for He came forth out of the realm of death, into the "power of an indissoluble life" (Heb. vii: 10).—The title First-born brings over with it all the glory that surrounds it in verse 15. He was the first to arise into the new and unchanging life; He is the pledge and sample of all who shall be raised at His shout (1 Thess. iv: 16, 17). As First-born from the dead Christ is the conqueror of death, the Master of the grave. At His victorious girdle swing the keys of death and of Hades (Rev. i: 18).

6. "For it pleased the Father that in Him should

all fullness dwell."—There are three explanations of this difficult verse, each grammatically tenable. (*a*) "For the whole fullness (of God) was pleased to dwell in Him." This interpretation personifies the term *fullness* in a manner unsupported by Pauline usage. It seems improbable that the word had become technical to such an extent in the apostolic age. Doctrinally, it is true; but in this connection it sounds strange and unnatural, aside from the main current of Paul's thought. (*b*) "For He (the Son) was pleased that all the fullness should dwell in Him." This view seems out of harmony with the context, for the course of thought is not so much Christ as the end in Himself both of creation and reconciliation as the bringing back of all things into harmony with God the Father. (*c*) "For it pleased the Father," etc.—which is the rendering of the vast majority of interpreters. "The Father" is supplied by the translators, but it appears both fitting and necessary, for this is most likely the exact sense of the apostle's words. The plenitude which dwelt in Christ is explained by the corresponding phrase, "For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (ii: 9). It is the totality of the Divine Powers and Attributes. The plenitude dwelt in Him during His humiliation, it dwells in Him now in His exaltation, and it dwelt in Him from all eternity. It is the indwelling in Him of this infinite fullness that clothes Him with the majestic attributes here given Him, that makes Him the unique personage He is, that enables Him to accomplish the matchless work of redemption and creation here ascribed to Him.

7. "And having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself" (cf. Eph. i: 9, 10).—Christ's act of reconciliation affects the universe. How, we do not know. How far sin's influence extends beyond the boundaries of our planet is not revealed, and speculation is worse than useless. Alford sums up the teaching of this verse thus: "All creation subsists in Christ: all creation therefore is affected by His act of propitiation: sinful creation is, in the strictest sense, *reconciled*, from being at enmity: sinless creation, ever at a distance from His unapproachable purity, is lifted into nearer participation . . . of Him, and thus is *reconciled*, though not in the strictest sense, yet in a very intelligible and allowable sense." The implied need, even in the angelic world, of the Son's work, would strongly appeal to the Colossians who were being led into a worship of these beings (cf. ii: 18). Let it be carefully noted that Paul does not here employ the words, "things under the earth," as He does in Phil. ii: 10. The world of evil spirits is not within the scope of Christ's reconciliation. The lost, alike angels and men, shall bow to His supreme authority, but this does not imply their reconciliation.

What a marvellous place is this to which the apostle exalts the Lord Jesus? He has the preeminence in the universe, for He is its Creator and upholder. His the preeminence likewise in redemption, for He is the Head of all the saved, He rose from the dead to secure their ultimate and everlasting victory over the grave. And by His sacrificial death He has reconciled believ-

ing sinners to God, the estranged worlds also, and will finally, in virtue of His perfect work, reunite and sum up in Himself in blessed unity all things (Eph. i: 9, 10).

This mighty exposition of the person and work of Christ has a direct bearing on the Colossian heresy. Since Christ holds so exalted a place in the universe, since He is the Head of the old and the new creations, since He superintends from His lofty seat all things in heaven and earth, since He is working out His divine plans for the complete salvation of His people and for the glory of God, then there is, there can be no need nor place for intermediaries, for subordinate beings, as angels, saints, priests as go-betweens, as vicars between Him and us. It was no Demiurge that made the world and that sustains it and its myriads of living organisms in being; it was the Son of God, the equal in power and glory of the Father. It is no inferior being who wrought reconciliation between the Eternal and the alienated children of men; it is none other than the same blessed Son of God. It is He also who sits on God's throne, who lives to intercede for us. Therefore, we may come boldly to the throne which now is one of grace and mercy, and obtain what we need and all we need. On His arm hangs the universe, His hand feeds all creatures. He rules the ages, and He saves the meek. He needs no assistant, we need no other helper.

II. Believers' completeness in Christ (ii: 8-23).— This is the second prominent feature of the epistle. The apostle now vindicates the perfect standing of

Christians, refutes the false doctrines of the heresy-mongers, and at the same time furnishes a description of the errors which were being industriously disseminated among the Colossians.

The substratum of the population of the three cities of Colossæ, Laodicea, and Hierapolis was Phrygian, a people among whom wild and orgiastic rites flourished. Their ancestral religion was a species of delirious fanaticism. The depraved cult of Cybele found a welcome home in Phrygia. The remarkable career of Apollonius of Tyana, a contemporary of the apostles, philosopher, ascetic, mystic, and miracle-worker, shows how well the soil of Asia Minor was prepared for the growth of all sorts of monstrous beliefs. The national predisposition of the Phrygians to religious extravagances and excesses died hard. It is even doubtful whether it ever ceased before Mohammedanism swept almost every vestige of Christianity from that region. Here Montanism, with its admixture of good and evil, of loyalty and fanaticism, with which Tertullian, one of the greatest of the Latin Fathers, identified himself, grew and flourished. Here also angel worship prevailed, particularly that of the archangel Michael, in whose honour one of the finest churches of the country was erected, concerning whose great deeds legend was busy from an early period, and of whom marvellous tales were told. It was related that there was a healing fountain in the Lycus valley which the enemies of the Christians determined to pollute and destroy. So they opened a canal from the river which should empty into the holy fountain, and dammed up

the river in order that the volume and force of the water should blot out the fountain. But Michael intervened to preserve the sacred pool. He stood on a rock beside the sanctuary, which at his command split open with a noise like thunder and a shock as of an earthquake, and thus the flood was diverted from the canal into the channel miraculously opened, and the holy fountain escaped pollution. The worship of the archangel became general. The council held at Laodicea about A. D. 363 stigmatized it as idolatrous. As late as A. D. 450 Theodoret wrote that "this disease long continued to infect Phrygia and Pisidia." It should be no surprise, therefore, that among a people so fickle and superstitious specious error should readily find lodgment even in apostolic times.

But what was the false teaching which Paul so sternly arraigns ?

I. A DECEITFUL PHILOSOPHY.

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (ii : 8). There was an imminent risk that such a disaster should happen, for the language is positive and definite—"Beware lest there shall be any one." The danger was, not merely that they should be despoiled, but that they should be made a spoil, led captives as deluded adherents and devotees. The system of error is described as a *philosophy*. It is the only place in the New Testament where the term is found. Pythagoras was the first to use it, and he out of modesty ; for he

felt that the name common at the time of "Wise" (*sophos*), ill became men whose knowledge was so limited and uncertain, and whose wisdom often was only folly. Therefore he chose the modest title of *Philosopher*, lover of wisdom, and *philosophy*, the love of wisdom. It is a comprehensive term, and may mean either good or bad. There is a philosophy which is every way commendable and desirable—one which recognizes the Supreme Creator and which seeks to understand the mysteries of His works. There is a philosophy which is not desirable—one that refuses to see Almighty God in anything of nature, that boasts of its agnosticism, if not of its infidelity. It is rationalistic. It sets man in the centre of all things, and is blind to the deepest truth of the universe. It exalts man, only to degrade him to a level with the beasts that perish. It never wearies of singing the praises of intellect and its achievements, yet shrinks not from declaring its belief that in "matter lies the promise and the potency of all life," that the human mind was "once latent in a fiery cloud." This philosophy may well be designated "a vain deceit." That of the deceivers at Colossæ was not exactly this; it was rather a theosophic speculation with a pretty large admixture of Jewish ritualism. But both that of antiquity and this of our modern era agree in this, that they make man the centre of all speculation, God being excluded or ignored. Paul's strong characterization of it is, "Philosophy, indeed! It is no better than an empty deceit." It may be set forth with "persuasive speech" (v. 4); its advocates be fluent and eloquent, their arguments logical and

convincing, the rhetoric brilliant, their learning great, but their system is a delusion, for it eliminates the essence of all truth, God.

Besides, it is merely human, is "after the tradition of men." It appeals to antiquity, but it can boast of no higher authority. It has been "handed on" from generation to generation, with all the changes, corruptions, and weaknesses, which such transmission must needs involve. Moreover, it is purely mundane, secular; it is "after the rudiments of the world." Its sphere is this world and life; it knows nothing of higher spiritual things. It is elementary and rudimentary, a kindergarten school, which may be excellent for children but which is childish for full-grown men. Above all, it is alien to Christ, is "not after Christ." This is the most serious charge that can be brought against the false teaching. It makes Him, the Son of God, less and lower than what He is. It was not based upon Christ, but was antagonistic to His person and work. It depreciated Him and undervalued His mediation. Any new doctrine may be safely tested by the estimation in which it holds the Lord Jesus, for all that is false and dangerous invariably strives to lower His rank, and to disparage the value of His sacrifice.

2. AN ENSNARING CEREMONIALISM.

"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days" (ii: 16). The term "judge" is equivalent to "take you to task." Let none impose on you his self-asserting authority. The new

teachers dictated to their followers what they should eat and drink, and this no doubt on philosophical and ascetic grounds. They may have taken Moses' system of dietetics (Lev. xi, xvii) as the basis of their prescriptions. It may be they insisted on a strict vegetable diet, prohibiting animal food as essentially defiling and degrading. They tried to make that a sin which God has not forbidden, "for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. xiv : 17). They sought to impose a sacred calendar on Christians, they designated certain days which should be kept as holy, days in themselves better and purer than other days, *e. g.*, feast days (so the R. V. gives holy day) new moon, *i. e.*, the Jewish feast of trumpets, and Sabbaths, certainly the seventh day or Jewish day of rest. Note that their calendar covers the weekly day of rest, the monthly feast ("new moon"), and the great annual festivals, *e. g.*, the Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. In short, it was a sort of revival of Judaism, a return to the beggarly elements which the Cross of Christ had both fulfilled and abolished. The effort was to fasten on their necks the intolerable yoke of ceremonialism. Legalism infallibly leads to ritualism of the worst sort. None ever give themselves to asceticism and mortifications of the body in order to secure greater holiness and a fuller acceptance with God who do not give up, in whole or in part, consciously or unconsciously, the completeness of redemption in Christ Jesus.

It was thus with the Colossians. Their hold on Christ the Head and the source of all good relaxed as

their attachment to forms and external observances increased. The reality gave way to the shadow, the substance was buried beneath multitudinous ceremonies, as always happens with ritualistic practices. Christ will suffer nothing to become His ally, much less His rival. He must be all or nothing. Why should men so readily run to wearisome rites for spiritual help? If we have the kernel, why seek to feed our starving natures on husks? If we may have Christ with His perfections, why turn back again to the weak and beggarly elements that cannot satisfy? To set the heart on anything except the blessed Lord Himself is disloyalty to Him.

3. WORSHIP OF ANGELS (v. 18).

According to the Scriptures angels hold a lofty place and discharge important functions in God's government of the world. They excel in strength, and execute the divine behests (Ps. ciii : 20, 21). The law was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator (Gal. iii : 19, cf. Acts vii : 53). They are ministering spirits sent forth to do service for the heirs of salvation (Heb. i : 14). They seem to be the agents of Divine Providence, and have a greater part in human affairs than is commonly assigned them. They rule and shape individual lives and the course of nations (Dan. iv : 1-18 ; ix-x ; Acts v : 17-24 ; xii : 1-19 ; xxvii : 21-26). In short, it is difficult if not impossible to define the influence which these superhuman creatures exert in the affairs of the world.

It is one thing to recognize the presence and influ-

ence of angels in human life, it is quite another thing to pay them divine homage. But this was actually done at Colossæ; it is now done by vast multitudes of nominal Christians. Instead of messengers sent to do God's will, they are worshipped as mediators; instead of attendants, they are made protectors of the individual, the city, or the nation. In Romanism the place which is held by angels and saints in the worship, and the love of millions is almost incredible. The ejaculatory prayers which one so often hears on the lips of the Italians are, in almost every instance, addressed to creatures, scarcely ever to the Lord Jesus Christ, or to the Father. The writer has often heard in Italy the appeal, "O Saint Anthony, save us." When asked what Anthony was meant, and why he should be invoked rather than some other saint, the answer was, "Saint Anthony of Padua, of course, for he has authority to bestow fourteen graces (favours) every day." The cry for help to *Maria Santissima* is universal. Nothing can happen in the devout Italian's life, no exigency or trouble can arise, without the invocation of the Virgin's succour. Peter and Paul are the tutelary divinities of Papal Rome, nor is there a town or a hamlet, a trade or an occupation but has its patron saint or guardian angel. So, too, each man, woman, and child has such guardian. The very brigands of the Abruzzi wear on their persons beneath their clothing the images of saints who are expected to protect them from the soldiers and police of the government.

The homage paid these creatures is justified on two

grounds: (a) "Voluntary humility." This phrase is confessedly difficult, but the meaning which commends itself to us is this; an affected humility; one that springs from the will, having no warrant for itself but the will; one that is assumed for a purpose, viz., that of robbing the believer of his prize. No doubt the defense of the practice was, that God is too transcendently holy and pure to be accessible; that sinners should not presume to approach into His august presence without an intermediary who is at once God's inferior and hence nearer us, as saints and angels are. (b) Pretended visions, and intercourse with invisible beings. The false teacher at Colossæ based his doctrine on what he had seen or thought he had seen of the invisible world. He claimed he had revelations from the spirit world; hence his teaching had a show of authority. It is remarkable that just such reasons are alleged in behalf of the worship of saints, and of spiritism. The devout Romanist prays to his guardian saint or angel that he may intercede for him with the infinite God. The *medium* claims to see and hear what others are deprived of, spirits and spirit voices.

At bottom, all this is sheer idolatry. It matters little whether I pray to Gabriel or Anthony of Padua, to the Madonna or to the Buddha, I am serving the creature rather than the Creator. I am exalting the creature into the place and seat of the Lord Jesus Christ. And thereby Christ is dishonoured. I do not "hold fast the Head from whom all the body, being supplied and knit together through the joints and bands, increaseth with the increase of God." The

profound remark of the Jansenist, Quesnel, is well worth recording: "Angels will always win the day over Jesus Christ despised and crucified if the choice of a mediator between us and God is left to the vanity of the human mind." The history of degenerate Christianity corroborates the truthfulness of the statement.

Angels sternly interdict worship of themselves. "See thou do it not: I am a fellow servant with thee and with thy brethren the prophets, and with them that keep the words of this book: worship God" (Rev. xxii: 8, 9).

4. ASCETICISM (VS. 20-22).

There was an effort to impose various observances and ordinances on these Christians. Bodily austerities took the place of simple faith and joy in the Lord. The vain philosophy of the errorists logically led to the sternest repression of the natural appetites and desires. They believed matter to be essentially evil. The body is the source of sin. It must be disciplined, denied, starved, flogged, if need be. The cry of the ascetic was, "Abstain, abstain, abstain!" Paul gives his very words: "Handle not, nor taste, nor touch" (R. v.). This seems to be the true order of the words. There is a gradual descent of language, a climax of prohibition. But as one has observed, "with a descent of language, there is an ascent of superstition." "Pride may be pampered while the flesh grows lean." Some of the most arrogant, intolerant of men were those who wore hair-shirts, who scrupu-

lously abstained from certain kinds of food, who scourged themselves with knotted thongs, and yet who burnt to ashes some of God's children. The self-complacent and scornful Pharisee of the parable is the type of this class (Luke xviii : 9-14).

Asceticism is utterly powerless to effect the object aimed at: it does not, it cannot sanctify the flesh. It has a show of wisdom. It is extravagant in its pretensions and loud in its promises. But it never fulfills them. The apostle here declares that it has no value against the indulgence of the flesh (v. 23). It, rather, stimulates the appetites and passions it is meant to extirpate. Asceticism has often proved to be a hot-bed of vice. Some of the vilest men have been found among those who advocated the strictest austerities. They denounced the holiest of human associations, and branded as sensual the purest relations. Marriage was degraded, celibacy glorified, the family disparaged, domestic life despised. And some of these foes of truth have been canonized!

Asceticism does not touch the seat of sin. All its strength is exerted against the body. Sin is of the soul, has its seat in the soul. So long as the heart is corrupt, no bodily restraints will make the life holy. There is one remedy alone for human sin, one that reaches to its roots, that ultimately will totally destroy it, viz., the blood of Christ (1 John i : 7).

The Colossian Heresy has thus been examined at some length. It seems needful to dwell on it in order to understand the full import of the epistle. Besides, it is by no means a dead heresy. The very things

against which Paul argues and warns and pleads are now cherished by multitudes of professing Christians. Legalism, ritualism, a deceitful philosophy, spurious revelations and visions, holy days and feasts—how rankly they flourish! An evolutionary hypothesis which excludes the supernatural; God shut out of His own universe; Demonology and Mariolatry; false prophets and soothsayers; will worship and necromancy; together with missionary zeal, devotion to the Person and finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and unquestioning confidence in the word of God—all these, and much more, are found side by side in our day and country, and struggle for the mastery. “Let no man judge you”; “Let no man rob you”—the appeal and challenge are as pertinent and needful in this twentieth century as in the first. The same dangers threaten and the same vigilance is required now as then. In fact, there is hardly a form of modern skepticism or mysticism, however extravagant, that does not have its counterpart or its germs in the apostolic age. It is this remarkable feature which invests the Scripture with such modernness. The errors and misbeliefs with which the New Testament deals are ever reproducing themselves. They reappear in every generation, to vex the soul of the righteous. Thank God, the righteous man has an unerring guide, an infallible standard of judgment, the Word of God. Let him adhere to it—*ruat cælum!*

Turn we now to the infinite perfections that are in Christ, perfections that meet every want, supply every lack, and that set the believer beyond the need of

earthly dependencies. "And ye are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power" (ii: 10). The word "complete" is emphatic. It is of the same derivation and of the like import as the term fullness in verse 9. To express its meaning more than one translation has been suggested, as, *e. g.*, "in Him ye are made full" (R. V.); "ye are perfect in Him"; "ye are filled full in Him"; "ye are in Him fulfilled." To be complete in Christ is to be finished, supplied as from an inexhaustible source, with all blessings and perfections. Men are as empty vessels in themselves; they are filled full in their union with Him, and have need of nothing. In Christ dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. He wields all the power of the Lord God; He is the Creator of the universe, and He holds all worlds and creatures in being; He is the Head of the body, the Church; He is the Head also of all principality and power; and He has the pre-eminence in all things. How can it be otherwise but that they who are in union with Him should be complete, finished, furnished, perfect? No more certainly does the parent stem pour its vital juices into the branches, filling them with life and foliage and fruit, than does the Lord Jesus quicken and enrich with His own fullness His members, His body. He gives them eternal life (John x: 28, 29). He gives them a spotless and divine righteousness, even the righteousness of God, so that therein they stand before God with the same measure of acceptance and holiness as Christ Himself (2 Cor. v: 21; 1 Cor. i: 30, 31). He delivers them from condemnation, gives them God's own

peace, and will at length clear them of every stain and taint of sin (Rom. v : 1 ; viii : 1 ; I John i : 7 ; Rev. vii : 13-17). Sin has blighted and dwarfed us. We are stunted in intellect, shrivelled in soul. We are enfeebled by our infirmities, hindered and cramped by our limitations. The most towering mind among the saints is but one-sided, partial, great only in certain directions, not universally nor symmetrically perfect. But they are in Christ, and therefore their absolute perfection is secured. God will fashion them at length into grandly unfolded souls, with faculties complete and powers full grown. He will swing their beings into as high forces as the finite can attain. They are to be conformed to the image of His Son. Their bodies of humiliation are to be fashioned anew into conformity with the glorious body of Christ Himself. They bear the image of the earthly now ; they shall bear the image of the heavenly by and by. What will that be but the completing, the finishing and fulfilling of their whole being even as God intends it shall be?

This is the inspired answer to the craving for perfection. It is the divine antidote for the devices and deceits of men who would persuade us that by mortifications of the body and ritualistic observances, by the invocation of saints and cries for angelic succour, we may free ourselves from sin. The Holy Spirit solemnly says to us, You have Christ : is He not enough? Can any creature, any human ordinance supplement His finished redemption? Can the highest angel, Michael or Gabriel ; can the most honoured saint,

Mary or Joseph, Paul or Peter, do for me what Christ has pledged His word to perform? "Ye are in Him complete, made full, finished and furnished forever." Be content with Christ!

THE EPISTLES TO THE THESSALONIANS

The primitive name of the city to which Paul addressed two epistles was Therma—so called from the warm mineral springs in its vicinity. It received its more recent name from *Thessalonica*, daughter of Philip of Macedon and sister of Alexander the Great. Her husband, Cassander, enlarged and beautified the place and called it after his royal wife, Thessalonica. The name originated, it is believed, from one of Philip's victories over his neighbours of Thessaly. Its modern name is but a shortened form of the ancient one—Salonica, or Saloniki. It has a population estimated at 70,000, a large portion of whom, perhaps one third, are Jews.

Thessalonica is situated on the Thermean gulf, and on the great military road, *Via Egnatia*, which connected Rome with its eastern dependencies. This highway led from the Adriatic seashore to Thessalonica, Philippi, and thence onward through Neapolis to the Bosphorus. The geographical situation of Thessalonica was central and commanding. Cicero describes it as "lying in the lap of our empire." It was along the great military highway Paul travelled from Philippi to Thessalonica and Berea. In entering Europe by this splendid road the apostle was brought more directly under the shadow of the Roman Empire than ever before. Along it officers of state, legionaries, envoys, and tributaries were constantly passing and

repassing. The Christian missionaries could hardly fail to encounter the representatives of the world-ruling city almost every hour of their journey, and they would be deeply impressed with its power and its splendour. Two towns of some importance lay between Philippi and Thessalonica, Amphipolis and Apollonia. These Paul and his companions "passed through," making no effort, it seems, to preach the Gospel to their inhabitants. For it was the prevailing policy of the apostles to establish the Church in radiating centres. It was first planted in Jerusalem, then it went ere long to the Syrian Antioch, thence to Cyprus, to the Pisidian Antioch, to Philippi, Thessalonica, Corinth, Ephesus, Rome. The smaller and less important places could be reached by the Gospel from the great centres where the Church was already established.

The record of the preaching of the Gospel in this centre is found in Acts xvii: 1-9, and in the two epistles addressed to the Thessalonians. The success attending the apostolic testimony was remarkable. Some converts were made from among the Jews, but far more from the Gentiles (Acts xvii: 4). Among the latter were women of rank and position. The first convert to Christianity in Macedonia was a woman, Lydia, at Philippi. Here also women "not a few" became Christians. The Thessalonian Church seems to have been composed very largely of Gentile believers. In 1 Thess. i: 9, Paul speaks as though the whole Church had been idolaters—"Ye turned from idols to God, to serve the living and true God."

It is somewhat difficult to determine the length of time Paul spent in the city. Acts xvii: 2 mentions his preaching "three Sabbath days." Obviously this was in the synagogue. On its face, the account in Acts makes Paul's sojourn one of only three weeks' duration. This might be but fourteen or fifteen days; or twenty-one, or at utmost, twenty-seven days. The number of days would depend upon the day of the week of his arrival. But of this there is no clue, and conjecture is useless. Three weeks seem an incredibly short time for the accomplishment of such marvellous results. But even if the statement be literally pressed, the achievements of the Gospel in Thessalonica are not impossible. We who witness the slow growth of Christianity on heathen soil are not to gauge the power of apostolic preaching by our experience and observation. Supernatural energy accompanied its proclamation by Paul in a way and to an extent not now enjoyed (1 Thess. i: 5-10; ii: 1-4). In the diffusion of the Gospel throughout the world it was needful that it should be so. The Lord wrought with His servants in those days by the exhibition of His almighty power, that His word might have free course, that His salvation might be known to the ends of the earth, and that His name might be glorified. History records instances in modern times of wonderful results following the testimony of the missionary, as for example, the work of Titus Coan, in the Sandwich Islands, and of Clough in India. But the time of the latter witness was much longer.

But it is not absolutely needful that we limit Paul's

sojourn to three weeks. The language of Luke in the Acts is indefinite enough to permit the view that it was in the synagogue that he preached those three Sabbath days, that he afterwards may have continued his labour at some other place in the city for a longer time. His words in 1 Thess. ii: 9—"labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you"—appear to suggest a longer stay than the three weeks. Besides, in Phil. iv: 16, he writes, "for even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again to my necessity." The distance between Philippi and Thessalonica is about one hundred miles. It is not probable that the Philippians would either have been able or felt bound to send supplies to the apostle twice in three weeks. Accordingly, the majority of interpreters limit the "three Sabbaths" to his work in the synagogue, and think that he spent much more time among the heathen population, perhaps as much as two months or more.

The Epistles to the Thessalonians were written from Corinth, not from Athens, as the King James version in its subscription asserts (see close of both epistles). The date "from Athens" appears to have arisen from a misapprehension or misapplication of Paul's words in 1 Thess. iii: 1. He was not at Athens when he wrote those words, as seems to be the inference by those who inserted the subscription referred to. It should be borne in mind that such subscriptions are not part of Scripture. They were inserted by copyists or by somebody else, and while generally accurate they are sometimes erroneous. The date of the epistles

is either A. D. 51-52, or 52-53. They were written therefore some twenty-two years after the ascension of the Saviour, within a couple of years of the death of the Emperor Claudius, some five years before Romans was written, and about seventeen years before the fall of Jerusalem.

These are the first apostolic letters Paul wrote. A peculiar interest on this account attaches to them. His last (2 Timothy) was sent from his prison in Rome shortly before his martyrdom. Fourteen or fifteen years lie between the two. And yet the same marks which distinguished the very last are found in the very first. In doctrinal teaching and in the energy of speech for which Paul is remarkable, and particularly in the prevision of the world's great crisis, in the antagonism between good and evil and its outcome, in the mighty conflict waged between Christ and Satan, and in the glorious victory He shall win over the adversary, the Thessalonian epistles and those addressed to Timothy are closely akin. The Blessed Hope, the Lord's coming, is prominent in both. The predictions of "The Man of Sin" (2 Thess. ii), and the prophecy of the "Last Times" (2 Tim. iii), are counterparts and complements, the two sides of the same dark events. He who wrote Thessalonians wrote also the letters to Timothy. Apostolic men introduced something absolutely new in letter writing. Roman and Greek literary men wrote letters on a multitude of topics in the middle of the first century. But how widely such epistles differ from those of the New Testament those acquainted with them well

know. There is an infinite distance between the address and greeting of the Scripture Epistles and the letters of heathen contemporaneous writers:—"Claudias Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix, greeting": "Paul and Silvanus and Timothy unto the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ; Grace be unto you and peace." The difference between these two forms of address measures the distance and the difference between paganism and Christianity.

Were Silas and Timothy joint authors with Paul in the composition of these epistles? Probably not. For, while the plural personal pronouns, *we*, *us*, *our*, very frequently occur, yet the singular *I* is found again and again, so that no argument can be drawn from the use of the plural form. Here is a sentence that seems decisive on the point: "Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us" (ii: 18; cf. iii: 1). Here the pronoun "we" is evidently restricted to Paul. Besides, 2 Thess. closes with this very personal greeting: "The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle; so I write." His autograph was the sign-manual of the authorship of his epistles. He thus authenticated each. It is not at all likely that he would have thus affixed his autograph to the epistle if he had only had a part in its composition, if Silvanus and Timothy were joint writers of it with himself. The two were associated with Paul only in the address, and their names are introduced because they were with him when he wrote the epistles, and they

were fellow missionaries with himself in preaching the Gospel at Thessalonica. Silas is named first because he was likely the older, and he was recognized at Jerusalem as a prophet (Acts xv : 32). We never hear of him after this time. Timothy remained with the apostle, a trusted and faithful friend, to the end.

I. The occasion of the writing of Thessalonians.—Several things required immediate attention in this very earnest but immature assembly of believers. As Paul was unable to visit them in person he addressed them in these letters and corrected what needed amendment, and gave instruction touching matters that perplexed and troubled them. There was a disposition on the part of some to neglect their daily work (1 Thess. iv : 11, 12 ; 2 Thess. iii : 10–12). Idleness is sharply rebuked. If Paul's comprehensive rule were observed, viz.—“this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat”—it would effectually settle many a strife between labour and capital, for it applies as well to employer as to employee. They were in danger of becoming discouraged and faint-hearted because of their sufferings as Christians, and he writes to quiet their fears and to pour fresh courage into their hearts (1 Thess. iii : 1–8). They were distressed by the death of some of their fellow believers ; they feared those who had fallen asleep should lose their part in the coming kingdom, and he corrects their error, and soothes their grief. They needed warning and exhortation as to the perils arising from their former life of unrestrained license, and from the impurities that are always associated with idolatrous

practices (iv : 1-8). Besides, Paul writes because the welcome tidings brought by Timothy had filled his soul with great joy (iii : 6-8).

The occasion of 2 Thess. was the strange mistake into which the saints had fallen, viz., that the day of the Lord had already set in, and yet deliverance had not come, suffering was still their lot (2 Thess. ii). This serious error must be at once corrected : hence 2 Thessalonians. A few months, no more than six, intervened between the two letters.

II. Characteristics of the epistles.—They are marked by great simplicity and affection. A strong bond united the apostle to these saints. They might be immature in their Christian experience, they might not be noted for depth of doctrine or of knowledge in divine things, nevertheless they were warm-hearted, enthusiastic, and devoted. Paul expresses his satisfaction with them and his comfort because of their faith and faithfulness. It is also noteworthy that the antagonism is different. The opposition is confined to unbelieving Jews. We hear nothing scarcely of heathen enmity, and nothing of Judaizers. Later epistles are full of Paul's conflict with Jewish Christian teaching which tended to graft Christianity upon Judaism. Here it is absent. This fact establishes the early date of these letters. They are earlier by five or six years than Galatians, by ten years than Colossians, by some ten years than Hebrews. It may be noted also that there are no direct quotations from the Old Testament in them. Paul is here addressing Gentile converts, and hence does not employ the older Scriptures to in-

struct, and to illustrate his teaching, for no doubt they were not familiar with them. He has allusions to them certainly, and he often employs words and phrases with which the Greek version of the Old Testament abounds, but direct citation there is none. The nearest approach occurs in his prediction of the Man of Sin (2 Thess. ii) which closely approximates Daniel's great revelation of this adversary, yet he does not quote the prophet of the Babylonian Exile.

III. Christian doctrine and church life.—The main object of the apostle in these epistles is not to teach doctrine, his aim is chiefly practical and hortatory; he deals with matters of present and vital interest to the Thessalonian saints. Hence the formal statement of doctrine is absent from these letters. The state of this church did not require such discussion, as did the churches of Galatia and Colossæ. Nevertheless, the system of truth embodied in Christianity is here found in all its essential features. Every cardinal doctrine of our holy faith appears in them. And the fact that these doctrines are introduced naturally and almost incidentally adds immensely to their weight and value. Some of them may be briefly pointed out.

1. The doctrine of the Trinity (i: 1-5).—The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are mentioned again and again, not as separate and distinct Deities, but as the one holy and supreme God who subsists in three Persons. Moreover, the functions of the Divine Persons in the great work of redemption are recognized, *e. g.*, the Father chooses and calls men into eternal life; the Son atones for their guilt; the Holy

Spirit applies redemption to them, secures their fellowship with God through Christ and their personal holiness.

(1) Of God the Father.—He is the true object of worship (1 Thess. i: 9). He chose the saints for salvation (2 Thess. ii: 16). He called them through the Gospel (2 Thess. ii: 14). The apostolic message is God's (1 Thess. ii: 13). He gives believers the Spirit (1 Thess. iv: 8). He loves and comforts His people (2 Thess. ii: 16).

(2) The doctrine of Christ.—It is very prominent, is indeed central in these Scriptures. He is called Lord. More than forty times is this supreme title given Him, and the inference from many of them is unmistakable that Paul regarded the Lord Jesus as Divine in the truest and highest sense, the equal of the Father. The Old Testament language about Jehovah is applied to Him (1 Thess. v: 2). He is God's Son (i: 10); He is united with the Father as the mysterious source of life both for the living and the dead (i: 1; ii: 14; iv: 16). He is one with the Father as the supreme object of prayer, and with the Father He bestows temporal and spiritual good (iii: 11-13; 2 Thess. ii: 16, 17). His vicarious death is affirmed (1 Thess. v: 9, 10). His resurrection is taught (iv: 14); and it is by His power sleeping saints are to be raised from the dead, and living believers be transformed (iv: 16, 17). His second advent is taught in the most explicit and repeated form. It is affirmed in every chapter of the first epistle, while 2 Thess. ii is almost wholly devoted to it. We are even told that

the conversion of these Thessalonian Christians was to serve the living God and to wait for His Son from heaven. The Christology of the New Testament is found either revealed in full or in germ in these letters. Later Scripture contains nothing different and nothing that is essentially new on this subject.

(3) The doctrine of the Spirit.—His personality, His work, and His gifts are distinctly brought to view in these epistles (i: 5, 6; iv: 8; v: 19; 2 Thess. ii: 13). From these and the like passages we learn that it is by the Spirit the preaching of the Gospel is made effective to salvation; that the Spirit is given to all Christians to enable them to conquer evil, to rejoice even under persecution, that their sanctification may be secured, and we are taught that He may be hindered in His work.

2. Redemption.—All the essential features of salvation are here made prominent on both the Divine and the human sides.

(a) Election (i: 4; 2 Thess. ii: 13).

(b) Our salvation is through the Lord Jesus Christ (v: 9).

(c) Salvation is brought to men through the Gospel (ii: 4, 9, 13).

(d) It is received by faith (i: 3; ii: 13; 2 Thess. i: 3).

(e) Conversion (i: 9, 10).

(f) Sanctification (iv: 1-7; v: 22; 2 Thess. ii: 13).

(g) Resurrection of the body (iv: 13-18).

3. Eternal punishment of the ungodly and impenitent is here taught (2 Thess. i: 5-10).—Besides, some four times express mention is made of Satan (ii: 18;

iii: 5; 2 Thess. ii: 9; iii: 3 (R. v.). 2 Thess. ii is devoted almost entirely to the mystery of lawlessness, to the coming apostasy, and to the Man of Sin whose blasphemous career should be cut short by the personal advent of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus the epistles are not silent on the darker themes of revelation, Satan, sin, and judgment.

4. The moral and social teaching.—This limits itself to what more closely concerned these Christians. The apostle deals with that which required his instructions or his censure, with what prevailed among them and threatened their characters and their testimony, with habits and tendencies which hindered their peace and growth, and endangered their spiritual well-being. Hence his teaching on this point is intensely practical and personal. Yet it is neither narrow nor trivial nor temporary: it is broad and comprehensive, is living and universal, applicable to believers in all times and places. There is a manifoldness, a universality in scripture that no other writing possesses. The Spirit of God who is the real author of the Bible combines a variety of ends and aims in what He is pleased to communicate to men. To tie up any book of the holy word to a special class and to a particular time is a fatal mistake. Paul's great word to the Romans holds through all time, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom. xv: 4). So likewise does Peter's: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation" (2 Pet. i: 20).

(1) They formed a church.—Both letters are addressed “unto the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ.” They belonged to a unique society. This is their supreme distinction. Of no other organization whatsoever can such a union be affirmed. Of other merely human associations however compactly bound together and however formidable their resources it would be impious to describe them as “in God,” and “in the Lord Jesus Christ.” The union implies the ground of their existence as a saved body, the exhaustless source of their supplies, their security and blessedness, and their final glorification. It implies that they are a separated company, called out from their fellow men, consecrated to the Living God, to be in fellowship with Him and with His Son, and named and anointed for eternal bliss. It implies that they have parted company with the sins and associations of their former lives, that they belong to God and are to live for Him and with Him. This was absolutely new teaching. Heathenism had nothing like it, knew nothing like it. The Christian Church was an enigma, a puzzle, to the wisest of the heathen. Since the Christians had no temple nor altar nor image, their heathen contemporaries stigmatized them as “atheists.” Since they repudiated the maxims and the practices of the world, they were held to be “haters of the human race” (Tacitus). Disliked, calumniated, and persecuted, they nevertheless were joyful and happy. They were in very truth “strangers and pilgrims in the earth”—the chosen and called of God.

(2) They had a stated ministry (v : 12, 13).—A class of men, marked off from the body of believers, laboured among them “in the Lord, and admonished them.” Aristarchus and Secundus, who accompanied Paul from Macedonia on his way to Jerusalem (Acts xx : 4), may have been ministers in the church.

(3) They kept a watchful and loving oversight over each other, and shielded the holy name they bore from unworthy and unruly members (v : 14, 15 ; 2 Thess. iii : 6, 14, etc.).

(4) They practiced a new virtue, *purity* (iv : 1-8).—They drew a deeply-scored line around the citadel of the soul that the awful abominations of their heathen neighbours might not taint nor stain them.

(5) They exalted work, manual labour, into a sphere of dignity and honour (iv : 11, 12 ; 2 Thess. iii : 7-15).—The apostle’s teaching is, that they should be ambitious to be quiet, to do their own business, to work with their own hands. He exhorts them with impassioned earnestness, even by our Lord Jesus Christ, to eat their own bread, not that of other people. It is well-known that in Greece, with all its pretensions to democracy, the aristocratic class despised those who worked with their own hands. “Tradesmen and mechanics were held to be incapable of true philosophy or spiritual religion or refined thought.” In Rome the position of the labouring classes was equally bad, if not worse. Wage-earners were regarded as but little removed from slaves. Bishop Alexander quotes from the Politics of Aristotle (who long lived in Macedonia and knew it well) a sentence that shows how thoroughly that keen

dialectician disliked day labourers—"These are those who live, as their name denotes, by their hands!" Contrast with this aristocratic insolence Paul's noble words, "to work with your own hands"—with his touching allusion to his own stained and horny hands, "These hands ministered unto my necessities and to them that were with me" (Acts xx: 34). It is profoundly significant that the first Apostolic Epistle ennobles honest toil, and crowns the daily worker with such dignity as he never before enjoyed. Now this teaching was absolutely new and unprecedented in all heathendom. It was revolutionary. But it is in exact accord with the sublime fact that our Lord Jesus was Himself a carpenter, was often covered no doubt with the dust and shavings of His trade; with the other fact that His greatest apostle was a tent-maker, and supported himself with noble dignity and honourable independence. The Gospel has glorified work.

It is demonstrated that the great truths of Christianity are incorporated in these two earliest epistles of Paul. Turner dates them at A. D. 50-1; Harnack at A. D. 48-9. If the commonly accepted date of Christ's resurrection and ascension be admitted, viz., A. D. 33, then only some sixteen or eighteen years lie between it and these epistles. If, however, an earlier date be taken for His death, viz., A. D. 30, still the time is lengthened to little more than twenty years. Accordingly, the notion of a gradual evolution of Christian doctrine is excluded. It is simply impossible that such evolution should be consummated in so short a

space of time. The time-limit effectually bars the hypothesis. The only logical and honest conclusion from the known facts in the case is, that the saving truths of Christianity are a *revelation*, not an evolution at all. The argument is mightily strengthened by the fact that these same truths were preached by the apostle years before he addressed the Thessalonians. We are even told that immediately after his conversion he proclaimed Jesus "as the Son of God," that he "proved that this is the Christ" (Acts ix: 20, 22; cf. xxii: 14, 15; xxvi: 16-18). It is certain that these great doctrines formed the core of Paul's teaching within less than ten years, nay in less than eight years of the Resurrection. All the main features of the Christian system were preached from Pentecost onward. Christianity is not a development, a growth; it is a revelation from God.

IV. ANALYSIS.

I Thessalonians.

(*a*) The address (i: 1).—The apostle associates with himself his fellow labourers and companions of travel, Silas and Timothy. In several of his subsequent epistles he joins others with himself as here.

(*b*) Thanksgiving (i: 2-10).—His ground for this remarkable expression of gratitude to God is solid and ample. He thanks God for the inseparable and abiding Christian graces, faith, love and hope, which these saints so preeminently exhibited; for their election of God; for their fellowship and following with the apostle and with the Lord; for their model character; for

their missionary activity. Note how graphic is the word, "sounded out": they proclaimed the word of the Lord as by the ringing peal of a trumpet; for their serving and waiting.

(*c*) Nature and method of apostolic ministry (ii: 1-12).—It was successful; courageous; honest and guileless; faithful and true; unselfish and tender; blameless, irreproachable; transcendent in aim.

(*d*) The spirit in which this ministry was received (ii: 13-16).—They received it as the word of God, as a bond of union with other believers, as patiently enduring suffering for the Gospel's sake.

(*e*) Paul's solicitude for these saints (ii: 17-iii).—It appears in his desire to visit them; his love for them; his joy because of their steadfastness; his prayer for them.

(*f*) Various duties enjoined (iv: 1-12).—This section has to do with Christian conduct, with the behaviour of saints in their relations with each other and with the world around them. They are to walk so as to please God, to live upright and pure lives, free from every taint of unchastity, for God has called them and all His people unto holiness, not to uncleanness; they are to walk in brotherly love, in honesty and integrity, and in quiet industry.

(*g*) Resurrection of the body and associated events (iv: 13-v: 11).—The order of these events is, advent of the Lord; resurrection of sleeping saints; change of living believers; rapture of all in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; the unexpectedness of the advent, necessity of watchfulness and readiness.

(*h*) Various exhortations (v : 12-28); as, esteem for their ministers; mutual care and encouragement; joy, prayer, thanksgiving, obedience; his prayer for them, request and greetings.

2 THESSALONIANS

1. Address and thanksgiving (i : 1-4).
2. Retribution for persecutors and ungodly (i : 5, 6, 8, 9).
3. Rest for the persecuted (i : 7, 10).
4. Prayer for them (vs. 11, 12).
5. Revelation of the Man of Sin (ii : 1-12).
6. Words of comfort and prayer (ii : 13-17; iii : 1-5).
7. Discipline for the disorderly (iii : 6-15).
8. Conclusion (iii : 16-18).

Three great subjects are made very conspicuous in these epistles. These are, Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Resurrection and Rapture of the Church, and the Revelation of the Man of Sin. Each appears to demand some special attention, for they are the prominent features of these Scriptures. To the study of them we now address ourselves.

1. The coming of the Lord.—By this is meant the literal and personal return of the Lord Jesus to the world. It is not deemed needful to prove that by the Lord's coming Paul in these letters does not mean either the destruction of Jerusalem, nor any like providential event, nor the advent of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, nor the conversion of sinners, nor the death of saints, but solely Christ's visible and bodily appearing on our earth. Few if any will be disposed

to interpret the texts bearing on the subject in the sense above indicated. All will doubtless admit that the apostle means the one supreme event of the future, Christ's glorious advent. How deeply this hope of His coming entered into the lives of the Thessalonian Christians and served to form their character, how it was in fact the predominant principle with them, the attentive reading of these letters abundantly proves. Their conversion to God is intimately bound up with it. They laid hold of the great fact that God gave up His Son to die for them, that He raised Him from the dead and exalted Him to His own right hand in the heavens. But equally with these fundamental truths of the Gospel, they laid hold of the other central Christian fact that Jesus is soon to come again, and they patiently waited for Him. Round this Blessed Hope their affections clustered. With longing eyes and straining desires they waited for Him. The apostle, far from reproofing their expectation, sets the seal of his own approbation to it, joins himself with them in it, tells them that at Christ's coming they are to be His joy and crown, that he and they shall be glorified together then, and be forever with the Lord. Nor are these epistles peculiar in this regard. The New Testament throbs with the same living hope of Christ's advent. More than three hundred times is it mentioned; one verse out of every thirty of the book is devoted to it. It is made to bear on all our relations in life, it touches every sphere in which we move, it guards and stimulates us, it comforts and warns us, fills and thrills us with its glorious promises and assurances. The

modern church seems to have forgotten the hope, to have ignored it in its teaching, and to have substituted death for the coming. Men delude themselves with the fond belief that by advancing civilization, the spread of education, by the achievements of science, the marvels of invention, and the work of the church, the world will be subdued, the evils be suppressed, the antagonisms destroyed, the devil bound, and the golden age be introduced. Busy, enormously busy as men are with social, commercial, educational, and religious problems ; absorbed with reforms and plans for the extirpation of abounding evils, they have little disposition and less time to inquire into events which prophetic Scripture announces. Accordingly, the doctrine of the Lord's coming, so preeminent in the hope of the Apostolic church is now largely thrust aside, or becomes, what it was never intended to be, a theme of debate and a subject of acrid controversy. Where in all the world is there a church now of whose members it can be truthfully said, " they turned unto God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven " ? Christians are waiting for many things, few of them are looking and longing for Christ's return. They wait for the multiplication of agencies and organizations, for societies and ministers and missionaries and money—how many are waiting for Christ Himself ?

Primitive Christians expected the speedy return of the Lord. The language of Paul in these epistles seems to denote that they looked for Him during their lifetime. Were they mistaken ? Some say they were.

Some go so far as to affirm that the apostle himself confidently expected the advent before his own death. This, it is said, was his belief when he wrote Thessalonians. But as Christ did not come, he changed his mind about it, and in later years gave up his earlier hope. In other words, Paul in his earlier life was mistaken as to this glorious event, but he subsequently corrected his error. 1 Thess. iv: 15, 17 seems to lend support to the view, particularly the words "We who are alive and remain"—terms which distinguish between living and sleeping saints. Among the living Paul includes himself. The inference is that he believed the advent to be so near that he would not die, that, on the contrary, he would be found at that time among the living. Five or six years after writing this he used the same words (1 Cor. xv: 51). And five or six years after Corinthians was written he practically employed the same language (Phil. iii: 20, 21). He was a prisoner in Rome when he addressed the Philipians, uncertain as to what the outcome of his trial would be, and yet he could associate himself with all believers in the blessed hope, saying, "Who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation":—"our body." In 1 Thess. v: 10, he writes, "Who died for us that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him." Here also he includes himself with the company of the redeemed, whether living or dead. But still further, in 2 Thess. ii, he emphatically tells these Christians that certain events must precede the Lord's coming, viz., the Apostasy, the Man of Sin, and the removal of the mysterious check on this Man

of Sin. How much time should elapse ere all these things should be accomplished he does not intimate, nay, he does not know; "for yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night," suddenly, unlooked for, because totally unknown as to its exact date.

Beyond peradventure, Paul did not know but that he might see the Lord's advent in his lifetime; he might die before it; he knew certain events must take place before He should come; but all the same, he waited for Him and yearned for His appearing with all the intensity of his great soul. What inference must be drawn from his attitude and teaching on the point? This, beyond doubt, that as the date of the advent is absolutely concealed (Mark xiii: 32); as the events preceding it might all be accomplished in the apostle's lifetime; as the Lord Himself had bidden him and His people to wait and watch just because they knew not the day nor the hour; Paul did watch and wait. He was neither mistaken about it, nor did he change his mind. Nor has there been a single generation of Christians from that day to this in which the return of Christ was not possible from our point of view. For, in the Scripture it is viewed rather in space than in time, in juxtaposition rather than in succession. In Scripture it is always impending because its exact date is unrevealed and unknowable. Such a state of uncertainty must of necessity prompt to waiting and watching for Him. "The whole doctrine would not even have the least practical significance, if the longing for Christ's return were not every moment

active, because viewing the event also as continually possible" (Olshausen). "His (the apostle's) aim is to rouse the expectation of the Thessalonians, and so to hold all the pious in suspense, that they shall not count on any delay whatever" (Calvin). "Each several generation, at whatever period existing, occupies during that period the position of those who shall be alive at the Lord's coming" (Bengel). Paul was not in error in eagerly waiting for Christ, nor are we. He died, and so may we. But he has not ceased to wait for the blissful day when the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout to wake those who sleep in Him. He waits for his body of glory; he will never get it till Christ comes. He has changed his place of waiting, not the waiting itself. And so shall we should the Lord not come until we shall have fallen asleep.

2. The resurrection and rapture of the saints (iv: 13-18).—The occasion of this precious and consoling word of the Lord was grief. Death had visited the flock at Thessalonica since Paul left them. His words are both striking and suggestive—"fall sleep," or, perhaps better, "are falling asleep." The verb is a present participle and denotes continuous action, what is now going on. Death had already invaded the Christian brotherhood; and some of the members had died, and some were dying; and this had aroused in the survivors a painful fear lest such had lost their share in the Lord's approaching advent. It would seem this contingency had not been thought of till it arose, so vivid was the expectation of Christ's speedy

return. So these children of the heavenly King were grieving over their dead with a hopeless sorrow. Despair was characteristic of the world at the time. The books supply quotations from the heathen writers which abundantly confirm Paul's words as to the "others who have no hope." Let but one suffice; "Suns may set and return; when once our brief day has set we must sleep one everlasting night" (Cattullus). Ephesians ii: 12 gives even a blacker picture than this of 1 Thess. iv: 13: "Christless, churchless, hopeless, godless, and homeless." Matthew Arnold has painted that heathen age in the most forbidding but truest colours:—

" On that hard Pagan world disgust
 And secret loathing fell;
 Deep weariness and sated lust
 Made human life a hell."

Breathing such an atmosphere of hopelessness and still ignorant of the fullness of Christ's redemption the sorrow of these saints is not surprising. But the Spirit of God turns their grief into joy. The glorious revelation as to the triumphant future of both dead and living Christians contained in this section of the epistle dispelled their gloom and comforted their hearts as it has millions since.

To the Christian death is "sleep." Occasionally death had this name in non-Christian writers, but chiefly as a figure of speech. Our Lord Jesus was the first to make it a standing name for death in the dialect of His church. The beautiful term indicates more

than one idea, *e. g.*, that of rest, of refreshment, and mainly of brevity. We sleep but for a brief period, and then rise to conscious activity. Death to the believer is only temporary; it will last no longer than Christ delays His coming. For aught we know, the fresh earth now covering the resting-place of a departed saint of God will not be grass-grown before the mighty summons of the Son of God will awaken the sleeping one and raise him to immortal life even in his body. How this glad word "sleep" must have thrilled the souls of the Thessalonian mourners!

Let it be likewise noted that the certainty of the resurrection of believers rests on the central truth of Christ's resurrection; "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also who sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." The preposition "in" here is unfortunate. Never once does Paul use the name Jesus as the One with whom Christians are united. "In," denoting oneness, union, invariably stands joined with the name Christ, Lord, or Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Lord's human name, and designates His manhood, pertains to the Man. We are not united with Him in this character, we cannot be. We are one with Him only in His Messianic and Mediatorial office (cf. 1 Cor. xii: 12; Eph. i: 22, 23). The Greek preposition here is the one commonly translated *by* or *through*. Accordingly, the sense is—"fallen asleep through Jesus," as the R. V. has it in the margin. The words thus rendered may be connected either with what follows, *viz.*, "God will through Jesus bring with Him," which is awkward and redundant;

or with those that precede—"those who have fallen asleep through Jesus, God will bring with Him," perhaps the most satisfactory explanation of the terms. The meaning, then, is that death neither sunders nor suspends the believer's relation to Christ. Whether alive in the body or resting in the grave he belongs to the Lord. His death is precious in the sight of the Lord (Ps. cxvi: 15). We may indeed read the words—"Even so them also who are laid to sleep through Jesus will God bring with Him." Through His victory over death those in their graves are only lying in their beds; they rest there in sure hope of a blessed awakening. As certainly as He died and rose again, so surely shall they rise. But the argument is strengthened when it is remembered that Paul does not merely assert the fact of the resurrection, basing it on the fact of Christ's, but he also most positively affirms the sleeping believer's participation in the Lord's Advent and in all the blessings which are to accompany the Advent. He shall be brought with Christ. We are one with Christ in His death, in His resurrection, and in His coming.

There follows the sublime announcement of the order and method of the resurrection: "For, this we say unto you by the word of the Lord." It does not appear that Paul here refers to any previous disclosure of Scripture, nor to some traditional saying of the Lord. It is rather a direct and specific revelation given him to communicate to the church at the time. The parallel passage in 1 Cor. xv: 51 confirms this view. "Behold, I show you a mystery"—something

hitherto concealed but is now made known by the Spirit for the help and comfort of the Lord's people. The disclosure here is, that believers living at the time of the advent shall have no precedence of them that sleep. The dead in Christ shall rise first before any change of living saints shall take place. If there is to be any priority at all it will be in favour of the dead; these are raised before anything is done for the living; they are to have the foremost place in the majestic events of the Lord's coming. This precious "word of the Lord" assuages their grief and dries their tears (cf. Rev. xxi: 4).

The description of the advent is very brief but it is transcendently grand. Several things are told us of it which deserve our serious and attentive study. (1) It will be personal and visible: "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven." He is now at God's right hand in the heavens (Acts vii: 55; Heb. i: 3). Thence He shall come forth. No phantom or apparition will it be, but an actual and visible descent to the earth. The same Person who ascended is He who will descend. (2) It will be with a mighty voice of command: "With a shout." This word is peculiar and distinctive. It occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It is one used by an officer to his troops, or by a sea-captain to his crew. It confines itself to a particular class; it is addressed to a distinct company, hence is neither universal nor indiscriminate. It is a *signal shout* to Christ's own people and to no others. It will single out from among the dead those who sleep in Him, and pass all others by; it will be heard

and understood and obeyed by the saints and by no others. For Paul is here dealing with Christians alone; the wicked do not enter the circle the apostle addresses. The like significant fact appears also in the great resurrection chapter (1 Cor. xv). Christians only are the subjects of that great Scripture. The wicked dead will certainly be raised, and the living nations be judged. In other Scripture this is taught (John v : 28, 29; Matt. xxv : 31ff., etc.). But here God's people alone are in view. The Divine almighty shout singles out Christ's own from among the dead, and quickens them into life. It is not an inarticulate burst of sound that is meant, as a peal of thunder or the loud report of some powerful explosive, as is by some imagined: it is an articulate sound, a true vocable, for it is the utterance of the Lord's own voice. Jesus says, "The hour cometh in which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth." At the tomb of Lazarus He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." The Lord Christ will utter His voice, will call from above to His sleeping people (cf. Ps. 1 : 3-6), and they shall hear and obey the call and come forth in incorruptible and glorious bodies. At His irresistible command they shall rise. Round this planet shall that mighty shout ring, penetrating every grave, piercing even the ocean's depths, and it will stir into life and call out into the eternal fellowship of the Lord the whole vast host of the saintly dead. (3) "With the voice of the archangel." In only one other place is archangel mentioned (Jude 9). The word seems to denote, not chief angel, but chief or ruler of the angels.

Michael has this distinguishing title, but whether he is meant or another is unknown. Certainly he is to be distinguished from the Lord. Angels will accompany the Advent (2 Thess. 1:7; Matt. xxiv:30, 31, etc.). They will have their part to fulfill in the tremendous events of that day. The voice of the archangel may be employed to summon the heavenly hosts and marshal the innumerable company of the redeemed, for "they shall gather His elect together from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." An army associated with royalty gives an impression of power and grandeur. How exalted is this Divine Personage whose advent is attended by such a retinue—the marshalled legions of the skies! (4) "With the trumpet of God." It is God's trumpet because employed in His heavenly service. The trumpet was often associated with Old Testament Theophanies, particularly with the descent on Sinai, "when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder" (Ex. xix:16, 19; Heb. xii:19). It is very probable that the expression, "the trumpet of God," correlates itself with that of Sinai, not with the trumpets used to gather the children of Israel to the feasts. In 1 Cor. xv:52 it is called "the last trump"; but the apostle immediately adds the assurance, "the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." It is the "last" because it sounds its awful peal in connection with the end. The trumpet, like the voice of the archangel, is but an instrument of God to accomplish His glorious purposes. Through both these the de-

scending Lord executes His sovereign will in the resurrection of His sleeping and the change of His living saints. These two, with the majestic "shout," betoken no obscure, mystical or spiritual advent which may be questioned after it has occurred. Our globe itself will attest the reality of the event, will no doubt tremble and quake and thrill through all its mighty bulk (cf. Rev. vi: 12-17). "We are to recognize three particulars, following each other in rapid succession—the commanding shout of the King Himself, the voice of the archangel summoning the other angels, and the trump of God which awakens the dead and collects believers" (Riggenbach). (5) Resurrection—"and the dead in Christ shall rise first." The emphasis rests on the last word—*first*, before anything else is done;—so little danger is there that those who die before the Lord comes will suffer loss; they will be the first to share in the glad triumph of their Redeemer. Immediately thereafter, living believers will be fashioned anew in their bodies, and so made fit to dwell with Christ in glory: "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump" (1 Cor. xv: 51, 52; Phil. iii: 20, 21). Just what all is involved in this physical transformation is not disclosed and speculation is worse than useless. Of some things touching it we may be quite sure. It will be the identical body and spirit of those then living that will be changed. It will be so complete and perfect that while the identity will be preserved it will be forever freed from all that is earthy, mortal; it will be a "body of glory," like the

glorious body of the Son of God. Incorruption and immortality will be the vesture of the saved and glorified. All this and infinitely more than we can imagine or conjecture will be their portion. (6) Assumption of both classes—"shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air." *Together with* implies full association. Sundered as the saints will be at the Lord's return, some in their graves, others alive, and all scattered over the whole earth, they then shall be reunited nevermore to part. This is the rapture-caught away in clouds¹ to meet the Lord in the air. What becomes of them and of the Lord whom they encounter in the air? Do they abide there? No; their stay in the air is but brief, momentary. There are only two other places in the New Testament where the phrase "to meet" occurs (Matt. xxv : 6; Acts xxviii : 15),² and in both of them the party met continues to advance still in the direction in which he was moving previously (Lillie). Augustine perceived this; "it is as He is coming, not abiding, that we shall go to meet Him." Christ does not return to heaven with His saints; He comes on with them to the earth. As an ancient writer expresses it, "we shall be caught away to meet Christ, that all may come with the Lord to battle."³ (7) Perpetual enjoyment of the Lord's society—"And so shall we ever be with the Lord." The intercourse thus begun shall have an endless duration. "They

¹ The Greek text is without the article.

² The word in a somewhat different form is found in Matt. viii : 34; xxv : 1; John xii : 13.

³ Quoted from Ambrosiaster by Lillie.

shall go no more out." It will be the glad fulfillment of His prayer, "that they also whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am" (John xvii : 24). What a home-coming it will be! "Wherefore, comfort one another with these words."

Thus one of the earliest apostolic documents sets the seal of divine authority to the doctrine of the resurrection of the saints' bodies. Paul's teaching is in complete accord with Old Testament promise (Job xiv : 7-12; xix : 25-27; Ps. xvi : 8-11; Dan. xii : 2), and with Jesus (Luke xiv : 14; xx : 35, 36; John xi : 25). The resurrection is essential to human perfection. The soul is not the whole of man. The notion is unscriptural and false that the body is a mere appendage to the soul, a sort of garment or shell worn temporarily and cast off at death forever. Man is not *pure spirit*. He was never intended to be such. He was created an incorporate spirit, and the spirit separate from the body consciously lives and no doubt is happy in the presence of Christ, but this is not its perfect state. Indeed, it cannot enjoy the highest bliss while separate from the body. Prof. James Orr's words are none too strong: "The soul in separation from the body is in a state of imperfection and mutilation. When the human being loses one of his limbs, we regard him as a mutilated being. Were he to lose all his limbs, we would regard him as worse mutilated still. So, when the soul is entirely denuded of its body, though consciousness and memory yet remain, it must still be regarded—and in the Bible is regarded—as subsisting in an imperfect condition, a condition of enfeebled life,

diminished powers, restricted capacities of action—a state, in short, of deprivation.” The children of God will not be absolutely perfect in their being until they have the resurrection body. This is the Biblical doctrine of immortality. It is a mistake to speak alone of the immortality of the soul. Scripture does not thus represent our hope. It uniformly joins this idea with both soul and body. We shall be like Christ only in resurrection (Phil. iii:20, 21; 1 John iii:2; 2 Cor. v:1-5).

3. The man of sin (2 Thess. ii:1-12).—This remarkable prophecy foretells the appearing of a strong and impious enemy of God and of all good. With few but most graphic strokes the extraordinary character, unparalleled wickedness, sudden awful doom of this adversary, together with the conditions which make his advent possible, are portrayed. Nor is this the only Scripture which predicts the coming of such a foe. The prophet Daniel deals largely with the same dark theme (vii, viii, xi), and John both in his first epistle and in the Apocalypse draws a full-length portrait of a like enemy. That the three prophets, Daniel, Paul, and John, have in mind one and the same powerful adversary, is capable of complete demonstration. It is with the prediction of Paul in this passage we are now chiefly to deal.

First, note the names and titles given him. He is called the “Man of Sin.”¹ He is one of whom sin is the distinguishing feature; whose inner element and

¹Or “lawlessness,” the reading preferred by Westcott and Hort. Weymouth as above.

outer characteristic is sin, and nothing but sin; who has his being, plans, and activities in sin and nothing else; who as the living embodiment of it is known and recognized as the Man of Sin. "The son of perdition." Perdition is no less distinctive of him than sin. He not only leads others to perdition, he goes thither himself; it is his portion and heritage. To one other alone in all the Bible is this frightful designation given, Judas Iscariot, who like his great prototype, the Man of Sin, "went to his own place." He is described as one "who opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or that is worshipped." He is the antagonist of God. He is God's foe, who, Titan-like, uplifts himself against whatever, Divine or human, has hitherto challenged the adoration and obedience of mankind. *Treason against God* is his uncommon crime. This is none other than Antichrist, of whom John solemnly avers, "He is the Antichrist, even he that denieth the Father and the Son" (1 John ii: 22). He is also called "The Lawless One." He is one who is impatient of every restraint, hostile to all authority, the enemy of all order—who puts himself above law, or outside of law, or against law—the lawless one.

Second, note the amazing powers which are ascribed to him. His "coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceit of unrighteousness." In Daniel he has "eyes like the eyes of a man," "understands dark sentences," and "he practices and prospers." In the Revelation, by his Prime Minister, the false prophet, "he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down

from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth." He has horns, and horns are the symbols of power. He has diadems on his horns, and diadems are badges of regal dominion.

He is described as "the deceiver" and the "liar," as one who shall intoxicate men with a "strong delusion," and daze them with his signs and lying wonders. He is represented as a consummate flatterer, a brilliant diplomatist, a superb strategist, a sublime hypocrite. For he is the Antichrist, the Vice-Christ, *alter Christus*, the rival of the Son of God and His adversary. He assumes and presumes to be God, shows himself as God, and demands from men the homage which they give to the Almighty; and he takes this blasphemous place and challenges this adoration through the strange witchery of his stupendous powers. For to him Satan will give his power and throne and great authority (Rev. xiii : 2).

Third, note the conditions of the appearing of this Man of Sin. Two things precede and condition his coming. The *first* is apostasy: "It (the day of the Lord) cannot come except there be a falling away first, and the Man of Sin be revealed." Obviously, the falling away is a defection from the truth of God, and from the faith of Christ. It is religious, not political or social apostasy that is meant. In the incipient stage it was present in Paul's day; "for the mystery of lawlessness doth already work." The wickedness existed already in germ in the apostle's lifetime, but the germs were of continuous and insidious

activity and growth; these would gather into them kindred elements, and combine and ripen at length into that terrible manifestation—the Man of Sin. No one can read attentively the New Testament writings, particularly of the apostles, without being aware of the secret and stealthy working of this leaven of lawlessness in the primitive church. Paul again and again refers to it, deploras it, foresees its huge development. In 1 Tim. iv: 1–3, he speaks of what is to take place in the “latter times”; in 2 Tim. iii, of its more perilous manifestation in the “last days.” The possibilities of human sin are enormous and monstrous. This epistle was written but a short time before the colossal criminal, Cæsar Nero, ascended the imperial throne, and Paul lived long enough to witness how near in his own day that frightful monster came to filling out his lurid picture of the Antichrist. How immensely the “mystery of lawlessness” has grown since all know who are but slightly acquainted with the Church’s history, or who even now look with intelligent eyes on the ominous condition of Christendom. The falling away is not the result of the presence of the Man of Sin; it precedes and prepares the way for his advent. The apocalypse of the Antichrist will be the unveiling of the mystery of lawlessness already working: it will then be known as now in its secret and subtle energies it cannot be. It is at length to culminate in open and avowed apostasy, and then Antichrist’s road is ready and his path made straight. The *second* thing is, a certain check or hindrance which must be removed before he can appear. Paul speaks of it as both mascu-

line and neuter, "what restraineth," "he who now restraineth." The Thessalonians knew what this was; we do not, and it becomes us to move cautiously in seeking its interpretation. An undefined restraint held back the full disclosure of this mystery. It was working stealthily, but was held in by a strong, unnamed hand. What this was, many have sought to explain. Some of the views are hardly worth even mentioning, so far afield they are. Others have a semblance of probability, but do not commend themselves to the careful and judicious mind. There are three, however, that may be adverted to because they commend themselves to many reverent students of prophecy. The first is this: the restraint is the Roman Empire, and the restrainer is the head of that complex and powerful system, the Emperor. Hence we have the explanation of Paul's use of the masculine and neuter genders in his description of the check; the one applying to the impersonal power, the State, the other to the individual head, the Emperor. This was the view of the great majority of the early Fathers, *e. g.*, Tertullian, Augustine, and Chrysostom; of many likewise in modern times. So deeply convinced were the primitive Fathers of the correctness of the view that they regarded the Empire as the one effective barrier against the advent of the Antichrist, and they even prayed that it might be preserved and perpetuated. Those who hold that the Man of Sin is identical with the Papacy hold also that the restraint is the Roman State. It is a very significant fact that when the Western Empire fell, in the fifth century, the Bishop

of Rome began to put forth his enormous claims of headship and supremacy. In almost exactly two hundred years from the deposition of Augustulus (A. D. 476), the Pope had assumed the Tiara, the symbol of his political and ecclesiastical dignity and authority. Hence a Roman Catholic writer does not shrink from saying, "A secret hand chased the Emperors from the Eternal City to give it to the head of the Eternal Church" (De Maistre). The remarkable correspondence between the fall of the Empire and the rise of the Papacy is startling. The decline and fall of the one and the gradual development of the other until universal supremacy became Rome's audacious pretension are matters of history.

But Romanism, bad as it is, does not yet measure up to the Scripture portrait of the Antichrist. What all it may become in the future is beyond human ken. The Empire with its imperial head cannot be proved to be the hindrance of which the apostle speaks.

A second opinion is, that the restraining power is the fabric of civil society, the divinely constituted authority of the State. The name given to the Man of Sin seems to justify this view. He is called the "Lawless One" in whom all law is discarded, all moral order is dethroned. "When the unseen yet withholding influence of the civil power with its moral and divine order of things is powerless to restrain increasing lawlessness, then the end is near, is come" (Luthardt). It is out of a revolutionary condition of society, out of shattered states and disrupted kingdoms, that Antichrist has his rise. History affords at least one illus-

trious example of the malignant process through which the world will travel to the Man of Sin—the French Revolution. There was first the preparatory stage, in which widespread attacks were made on religious faith and existing institutions; the revolution followed which overthrew state and church, society and religion, royalty, nobility, clergy, laws, customs, everything; and then out of this social chaos came Napoleon and his empire.

There can be no question but that much truth lies in this explanation; indeed, it almost amounts to a demonstration. Nevertheless, it does not account for Paul's peculiar terms, "that which restraineth," and "he who restraineth."

A third view is, the Spirit of God and the Christian church constitute the check which holds back the appearing of the Man of Sin. Not until the full complement of the chosen of God in this dispensation is achieved, not until apostasy has become predominant, and the church has been swept away from its ground of testimony, completely *Laodiceanized*, will the advent of the adversary take place.

It is perhaps in a combination of the second and third of these opinions that the truth is found. But, whatever the hindrance is, one thing the prediction puts beyond question, viz., that upon its removal the mighty foe immediately enters on the scene of action. Let it be further observed, that the removal is not gradual, but sudden. The terms describing his coming permit of no other interpretation. He has a "coming" and an "apocalypse," like the Son of God Him-

self. No mortal knows when the obstruction will be taken away—*that* is God's secret. But so soon as it goes, then the tide of godlessness with Antichrist its head will sweep in.

But who is this Man of Sin, or what? Has there appeared in the field of history any person or any system that verifies the prediction? Many sober-minded interpreters find the fulfilment of this great prophecy in Popery, gathered up into the person of the supreme Pontiff, or in the Papal hierarchy the head of which is the occupant of the Papal chair. The Reformers as a body entertained this view. It was held by some even in pre-Reformation times. And there is no little verisimilitude in it. The marks of correspondence between the prediction and the Papacy are extraordinary, almost conclusive. In its marvellous origin and history; in its near relation to the old Roman Empire as its heir and successor—for as Wylie says, "the Papacy is the ghost of Peter crowned with the shadowy diadem of the old Cæsars;" in its wide departure from the truth of God; in its idolatry, persecuting spirit, daring assumptions and blasphemous pretensions, the Papacy, it must be confessed, strikingly resembles the Man of Sin. No one can compare the two without feeling the force of Richard Baxter's quaint remark, "If the Pope be not Antichrist, he has bad luck to be so like him." But, wonderful as the parallelism is and traceable to almost any length, nevertheless the Papacy does not fill up nor complete the titanic portrait of the final adversary which the prophetic word furnishes us. Rather, this

system belongs to the apostasy that precedes and issues in the revelation of the Man of Sin. Rather, it is to be identified with the mystic Babylon of the Apocalypse, the dreadful symbol of ecclesiastical apostasy and corruption. Babylon is one thing, the "Beast" is quite another. But the Beast is the Antichrist, the Man of Sin; hence must be distinguished from Babylon.

The Antichrist is a person, an individual man, the man of prophecy. Whatever in human speech betokens personality and personal action is employed by the prophets to designate a man, a single being. According to Daniel, he is "the king" who overthrows three other kings, obtains the supremacy over the kingdom, exalts and magnifies himself above all, speaks stout words against the Most High, persecutes the saints, and thinks to change the times and the law. According to Paul, he is one who "opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped"; who "sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." He is "the man of sin," "the son of perdition," names which at once fasten on him the idea of a person. "The terse personal language of Paul," writes John Eadie, "fore-pictures one human being, as really as the phrase son of perdition described from the lips of our Lord the fate of Judas, the traitor." This man, wholly given over to sin, practicing lawlessness, demanding and receiving from deluded mortals the homage which belongs alone to the living God, this blasphemous creature is the personal antagonist of the Lord Jesus

Christ, is the counter-christ. Both, the Lord Jesus and the Antichrist, are individual persons, both have an apocalypse, both have a coming. The one, Christ, has life and glory to bestow; the other, ruin and perdition.

The preterist interpreters, *i. e.*, those who hold that the prophecy had its fulfillment in the Apostolic age, or shortly thereafter, pitch on the Roman Emperor Nero as the object of the prophecy both in this epistle and in the Apocalypse. He was the first persecutor of Christians as head of the State; he was a monster in crime and sensuality, and his ruthless and causeless slaughter of Christ's disciples made the profoundest impression on the Church. But there are insuperable objections to this opinion. Two only need be mentioned. Nero committed suicide. Both Paul and John (Rev. xix: 20) positively affirm that the great Foe, the Antichrist, is destroyed by the personal and almighty power of the Son of God. According to these inspired witnesses the enemy dies, not by his own hand nor by the hand of man at all, but by Jesus Christ alone. If Nero was the Man of Sin, then these two New Testament prophets have fatally blundered, and their witness to a supreme fact in revelation is overthrown by history. Besides, the evidence is accumulating that the Apocalypse dates at A. D. 93-96, as Iræneus the Great so positively asserted. Many whose judgment on this point is of the greatest value and weight now in whole or in part accept the Domitian date.¹ If such is the true date of the book, then

¹Ramsey, Orr, Harnack, etc. "Critical opinion appears to be steadily returning to the traditional" date, A. D. 90-96, Purves.

John's prediction of the Divine judgment on the Beast post-dates Nero's death by some twenty-five or more years; therefore, Nero was not the object of the prophecy nor could be.

It is important to note that in the apostles' days a new cult had sprung up, the worship of the Emperor. It was Cæsar worship, and appears to have been in full practice when Paul wrote his epistles. Never has the world witnessed so blasphemous pretensions and so abject prostration of the human spirit. The Roman Senate actually decreed divine honours to the Emperors, and yet some of them were the basest and vilest of mankind, *e. g.*, Nero, Caligula, Domitian, and the low-born, ferocious Galerius. As Dr. Orr says, "it was the worship of the Beast." Vespasian (A. D. 76-79) when dying is reported to have said, with exquisitely fine irony, "Woe's me! I think I am turning god!" Some think it was this deification of the Emperors which suggested the character of the Man of Sin as drawn by Paul in verse 4—his exaltation "above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." But the like spirit was found in men long before Nero was born, *e. g.*, in Pharaoh of Moses' time, in Antiochus Epiphanes, and others. Nor is it at all difficult to believe that the same sort of insane and inane worship may again be seen. When the restraining check has been withdrawn and diabolism has full sway, the Man of Sin will imperiously demand and receive the homage which belongs alone to Almighty God. It is but one hundred and eleven years since atheism in France

(1793) reached such a proud pitch of impiety that a courtesan, Demoiselle Candelle, of the Opera, "bourne on palanquin shoulder high," was carried into the Cathedral of Notre Dame, and worshipped as the goddess of reason! And this was done in Paris and by the National Convention of the French people. In spite of our modern civilization and culture, nay, because of it, if humanity once again throws off all law and moral restraint, as Scripture affirms it will, then the deification of the worst and most blasphemous of mortals of all history will not only be a possibility but an actual fact.

The doom of the Man of Sin is brought about by supernatural agency. He will be destroyed by the Lord Jesus Christ—"Whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of His mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of His coming" (R. v., cf. Isa. xi:4). The phrase, "manifestation of His coming," expresses in the strongest possible way the final and total overthrow of the adversary by the personal coming of Christ. "The brightness," of A. v. hardly gives the exact meaning of the term. In five other places it is found, in all of which it is translated "appearing," and in one of them (2 Tim. i:10), it is used of the Saviour's first advent. By the appearing of His coming the enemy will be brought to nought. Christ's manifested presence will suffice to overwhelm him. In the hour of our Lord's deepest humiliation in the Garden, the multitude, led by Judas, the other "son of perdition," went backward and fell to the ground by the majestic presence of the Son of God and by the word of His

power. In the last days of the Church's deepest humiliation when Antichrist is practicing and prospering (Dan. viii : 12), in that supreme and awful time, the appearing of Christ's coming will be enough to end forever the reign of wickedness, and destroy the destroyers of the earth. "It is enough that He be present, and all these things perish. He will stay the deception simply by appearing" (Chrysostom). The Man of Sin falls before the "first gleam of His advent" (Bengel).

Is this to be the final issue of the age? The science, discoveries, culture; the energy and achievements of our modern era—are they all to terminate in world-wide godlessness and the Man of Sin? A forbidding outlook; one utterly repugnant to all our anticipations and our hopes. One whose love for man is deathless, whose power is matchless, has said: "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of man" (Luke xvii : 26). How was it in the days of Noah? The whole world in revolt against God, and piety reduced to a family of eight souls! "Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot"; and how was it then? Corruption had culminated, godlessness was at the flood (Luke xvii : 28-30).

There are principles and tendencies at work in our modern society which if left unchecked will ere long make the advent of the Antichrist not only possible but certain. The lawless drift is already on us, precursor of worse to come. Who does not perceive that the axe is already aimed at the chief hoops that bind together the staves of the civil polity? The restlessness under restraint, the revolt against authority and

law, the spread of socialism, the growth of agnosticism, the assaults on the Bible, the chief anchor of all true religion, the prevalence of materialism, fostered as it is by the science and commercialism of our time, the enormous greed of those who have and who want still more, the deep, ominous growl of those who have not, who want and will have—all this betokens the breaking down of the barriers, and the speedy advent of the great adversary.

It is curious how the feeling of an impending crisis takes hold of thoughtful men who differ most widely in their views of revealed truth. More than fifty years ago Chalmers wrote: "As far as we can read into the prophecies of the time that is before us, we feel as if there was to be the arrest of a sudden and unlooked-for visitation to be laid on the ordinary processes of nature and history, and that the millennium is to be ushered in, in the midst of judgments and desolations and frightful convulsions, which will uproot the present fabric of society and shake the framework of its machinery to pieces" (Evidences i: 372).

D'Israeli said in 1874: "The great crisis of the world is nearer than some suppose." Prof. Goldwin Smith wrote more recently: "There is a general feeling abroad that the stream of history is drawing near a climax now; and there are apparent grounds for the surmise. There is everywhere in the social frame an untoward unrest, which is usually a sign of fundamental change within."

The Frenchman spoke well, perhaps better than he who lately said, "I think I hear the galloping of the man on horseback."

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

FIRST TIMOTHY, SECOND TIMOTHY, TITUS

These Scriptures belong to the fourth group of Paul's acknowledged writings. They are commonly called Pastoral because addressed to ministers in charge of important Christian churches. Timothy had the oversight of the great church at Ephesus (1 Tim. i:3), while Titus was stationed in Crete, "to set in order the things that are wanting" (i:5).

Some difficult questions confront one who sits down to a careful study of these three epistles. One relates to their authorship. Are they of Paul, as each of them attests, or are they forgeries? Another pertains to their date—when were they written? Each of these inquiries involves the other. It is impossible to discuss the authorship without likewise determining, or trying to determine, the time of their composition. For, with our present light it seems impossible to fit these epistles into the record of the Acts. Acts closes with Paul's Roman imprisonment, with his activity in his own hired house (xxviii:30, 31). There appears to be no possibility of adjusting the historical situation that these epistles present with Paul's history as given by Luke. Accordingly, it is believed by the great majority of intelligent Bible students that Paul suffered two imprisonments at Rome; that he was

delivered from his captivity about A. D. 63—the captivity which Luke describes in Acts xxviii, and that afterwards he spent some few years in his great work as the apostle of the Gentiles, that he was again arrested, carried to Rome, and suffered death near the imperial city, probably on the Ostian Way, as tradition tells. Now, if two Roman imprisonments are admitted, most if not all the difficulties are satisfactorily explained. But if not, the Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles cannot be successfully maintained.

It is not the purpose of these studies to vindicate the genuineness and authenticity of the books of the New Testament. Our field lies apart from the discussion of these important matters. And yet some proof must be given in support of our belief in the Pauline authorship of these letters. This is necessary since of all the epistles of the New Testament, no others save perhaps one or two, are so vigorously contested as these. In fact, the majority of the liberal and rationalistic school of interpreters deny they were written by Paul, though some of that party admit a Pauline kernel, *i. e.*, the writer, who was later than Paul, probably used some “fragments,” or rough notes of the apostle in the composition of these epistles. Who this later writer was, or how he came into possession of Paul’s “notes” out of which he constructed his letters and attached Paul’s name to them, does not appear.

A brief summary of the grounds on which the apostolic authority of the Pastoral Epistles rests is here submitted. (1) They are attested by antiquity. Clement

of Rome probably (A. D. 96), certainly Polycarp of Symrna (A. D. 110), Ignatius of Antioch (A. D. 110), Irenæus (c. A. D. 180), Tertullian (c. A. D. 200), Clement of Alexandria (c. A. D. 180), Justin Martyr probably (c. A. D. 150), Theophilus of Antioch (c. A. D. 168), Ep. of ch. of Lyon and Vienne (A. D. 177), are some of the early witnesses who recognize these epistles, who quote from or refer to them, as Scripture. They are found with Paul's other epistles in the Syriac Version (c. A. D. 130), in the Old Latin Version (c. A. D. 150), and in the Muratorian Canon (c. A. D. 170). Thus, from the close of the first century to the beginning of the third, Christian writers both of the East and the West, in Syria, Asia Minor, Italy, Egypt, and North Africa; in the first translations made of the New Testament, and in the first catalogue containing a list of its books which has come down to us; over the whole field of the primitive Church, the testimony to the genuineness and authenticity of these letters is practically unanimous. Marcion the heretic (c. A. D. 140) rejected them on dogmatic grounds, and yet Dr. Lock of Oxford asserts that Marcion was acquainted with them (Hast. Dic. Bi., article *in loc.*). Tatian also, another heretic, refused to receive them as Scripture, yet he is said to quote from Titus (c. A. D. 160). Scholars, such as Hippolytus, Athanasius, Eusebius, Jerome, Augustine, the peers of those of our own time, unhesitatingly received these epistles as authentic and as a part of holy Scripture. These men lived and bore their splendid witness at a time much nearer the formation of the canon than do we; they were cognizant of the

questions touching disputed books, they were familiar with the objections urged against certain portions of the New Testament, and yet they fully accepted these. If their judgment is to be reversed, most weighty and conclusive reasons for such procedure must be offered. In the opinion of the vast majority of evangelical scholars no adequate reasons have been presented, nor are likely to be. Until they are, believers in the integrity and authority of Scripture will do well to adopt Dante's words—*guarda, e passa*—"look, and pass on!"

(2) The internal evidence corroborates the historical just adduced. In the first place, each of these epistles expressly asserts that the writer is Paul, the apostle of Jesus Christ (1 Tim. i:1; 2 Tim. i:1; Titus i:1). He would be a bold impostor indeed who should thus forge the name of this great and honoured servant of Christ to give currency to so base a fraud. Believing Christians must have the clearest and most positive proof ere they can be persuaded that these three precious documents bear on their foreheads a hideous and blasphemous lie! Such proof has not hitherto been produced.

In the second place, the personal and historical references indicate that Paul was the author. In 1 Tim. i:13-16, he speaks of himself as once a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious, a description which finds an almost exact parallel in his words before Agrippa and Festus (Acts xxvi:9-11). In the same chapter (i:20) he tells Timothy that, in the exercise of his Apostolic authority he had delivered two men unto Satan—just as he had done in the case

of the incestuous person at Corinth (1 Cor. v: 5). He reminds this young pastor that he was well acquainted with his teaching, manner of life, persecutions and afflictions which came to him at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra (2 Tim. iii: 10-12). This appeal to Timothy's knowledge of certain facts in Paul's life exactly accords with the record of Acts xiv: 8-19; xvi: 1-3. Moreover, his intimate acquaintance with Timothy's family at Lystra, with the godly training in the Scriptures which he had received from his grandmother Lois and his mother Unice and his knowledge of the Old Testament thus acquired is further and strong proof that he who recalls them and writes them down is none other than Paul. Then, too, the familiar names of Paul's beloved friends and fellow workers here meet us, as Timothy, Titus, Luke, Apollos, Priscilla and Aquila, Mark, Tychicus, Trophimus, Demas—names that recur in two of the epistles, and that are found in Paul's other epistles and in the Acts. The writer is moving in Apostolic circles exclusively. But there are also some new names found nowhere else, as Crescens (2 Tim. iv: 10), Artemas, Zenas (Titus iii: 12, 13). Those whose greetings he sends Timothy are Romans, Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, and Claudia (2 Tim. iv: 21); for Paul was a prisoner at Rome when he wrote his second letter to Timothy, and no doubt these persons were with him at the time. Two plain and unmistakable inferences may be deduced from the names introduced into these letters, (1) that they were written by an apostle and in Apostolic times; and the writer could be no other than Paul;

(2) that they were written late in his life and on the threshold of his death. Is it said, A forger could have used these names to give greater credit to his forgery? All one needs to say of such an hypothesis is that it may be employed to overturn all ancient history and expunge all records, so that we may believe absolutely nothing, or just so much as we please. On such a principle of negation, all human testimony may be annulled and all records of the past may be wiped out.

In the third place, Paul's distinctive doctrine of grace is as prominent here as in his other writings. It but needs to mention a few specimens as evidence of the statement. Note the sovereignty of grace in salvation (1 Tim. i: 14; vi: 12; Titus ii: 11, iii: 4-7; 2 Tim. i: 9; ii: 10, 19). Salvation is obtained through redemption by the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Tim. i: 15; ii: 5, 6; Titus ii: 14). It is imparted by the Holy Spirit (Titus iii: 5, 6); and secures justification before God, and makes us heirs to the hope of eternal life (Titus iii: 7). The familiar Pauline phrase, "in Christ" is of frequent occurrence (1 Tim. i: 14; iii: 13; 2 Tim. i: 1, 9, 13; ii: 1; iii: 12, 15). The Lord's coming as the object of the believer's hope is the same as that of earlier epistles (1 Tim. vi: 14; 2 Tim. iv: 1, 2; Titus ii: 11-15). The doctrine of grace, in short, is identical with that of Paul in all his epistles. So, likewise, are the exhortations to various Christian duties and relations, as, *e. g.*, obedience to civil authorities, reciprocal duties of husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, and

brethren in the household of faith, are strikingly akin to those of Paul's other letters, are, indeed, in spirit and temper the same.

Furthermore, the intellectual strength, the ardent love, the deep earnestness, and the burning intensity of Paul are obviously all present in the pastoral letters. Although written late in his life, there is no abatement of his zeal and faithfulness; his loyalty and devotion to the truth of God suffer no decay or diminution, they remain with unflagging energy to the close. All through these epistles we see the mental vigour, the sober common sense, the practical and sagacious advice, the ardent piety, the self-sacrificing spirit, the heavenly mindedness of the apostle to the Gentiles. Now, contrast these epistles with others written near the close of the first century, or at the opening of the second; letters written by devout and able men; written to Christian communities and churches; on themes akin to those treated in the pastoral; as, *e. g.*, the epistle of Barnabas, so-called, which some date as early as A. D. 70-79 (Lightfoot, Humphreys); Clement of Rome (A. D. 96); Polycarp, Ignatius, etc., and one at once perceives the immeasurable distance between them and the Pastoral Epistles. You are in another world of literature when you pass from these of Paul to those of the good men above mentioned. It would require the equal of Paul to forge such letters as these. But Paul's equal was not found in the first century, nor in the second, nor in the twentieth, though some now tax him with blunders and errors who would have been eloquently dumb in his presence! To at-

tribute them to some unknown fraudulent impostor instead of to Paul "is a caricature of criticism."

There are, however, peculiarities in these epistles which give them a very distinct character, and which set them off in a class by themselves. The peculiarities relate (1) to language; (2) to the errors denounced; (3) the advanced form of organization in the church. These are the main difficulties on which the denial of Paul's authorship of these letters rests. But even a cursory examination of them brings one face to face with the question of their date. When were they written?—Before or during Paul's first captivity at Rome? Then the difficulties indicated above become inexplicable. With the light we now have these letters cannot be fitted into the closing chapters of Acts, nor into some of the prison epistles, *e. g.*, Philippians and Colossians. We are persuaded that almost all the difficulties disappear when we recognize two imprisonments, with a few years intervening between them.

The apostle reached Rome the first time about A. D. 61. He remained there a prisoner two whole years (Acts xxviii: 30). Thence he wrote Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. In each of these he specifically mentions his "bonds" (Eph. iii: 1; Phil. i: 7; Col. iv: 18; Phile. 9). But in 1 Tim. and in Titus there is no hint that he was a prisoner at the time of writing. On the contrary, every indication points to his enjoyment of liberty. In 1 Tim. iii: 14, 15, he expects to visit his friend "shortly," language which only a free man could properly use (cf.

iv : 13). In Tit. iii. Paul directs his fellow worker to meet him at Nicopolis, "for I expect to winter there." This could not be the language of a prisoner. If Nicopolis of Epirus is meant, as many suppose, then Paul was not at Rome at all when he wrote ; he was perhaps in Macedonia or Achaia. Nor was he a prisoner, for he plans his own movements with complete freedom. The conclusion is, that during Paul's four years of captivity (two at Cæsarea, Acts xxiv : 27, two at Rome, xxviii : 30), the Pastoral Epistles were not written. Nor could they have been before his arrest at Jerusalem ; their contents forbid the supposition. For, in 1 Tim. i : 3 he wishes Timothy to remain at Ephesus. There are but two visits to Ephesus recorded in Acts. The first was very brief (Acts xviii : 19-22). The second lasted three years (xix : 31). But instead of directing him to remain at Ephesus he sent Timothy on before him into Macedonia, where he purposed also going (xix : 22). Besides, he foretold and forewarned the elders of Ephesus of the rise among them of errorists and heretics (xx : 29, 30). The Epistles to Timothy most clearly attest the presence of these evil-workers at Ephesus. But this must have happened after Paul's prediction to the elders else we have the singular anomaly of the fact being present before the prediction !

The only satisfactory solution of these and the like difficulties is this : Paul was released from his Roman captivity, as he confidently expected (Phil. i : 25 ; ii : 24 ; Phile. 22). Else, what possible explanation can there be of Tit. i : 5 ?—"For this cause left I thee in

Crete"—implying that the apostle himself had been in the island. The only mention of Crete in Acts is in xxvii:7. But he neither preached nor organized churches at that time. Nor is there any place in Acts where this visit to Crete could be inserted. Again, he left Trophimus at Miletus sick (2 Tim. iv:20). When Paul was at Miletus on his way to Jerusalem (Acts xx:17), he did not leave him there; Trophimus accompanied him (xxi:29). Therefore, the apostle must have been twice at Miletus, and some years separate the two visits.

It was Paul's cherished wish to visit Spain (Rom. xv:24, 28). If ancient testimony is allowed any weight, he fulfilled this wish. Clement of Rome, writing about the end of the first century, says Paul journeyed to the "utmost bound of the west." This expression does not mean Italy, but the Columns of Hercules (straits of Gibraltar), which marked the utmost western bounds of the old world. The Muratori Fragment (c. A. D. 170) expressly says that Paul on leaving the city (Rome) went to Spain. He could not have gone thither before his first imprisonment, so it must have been thereafter. Eusebius, Chrysostom, and Jerome all attest it. Eusebius says that at the end of the two years, it was currently reported, Paul went forth again upon the ministry of preaching; and in a second visit to the city ended his life by martyrdom under Nero, and that during this imprisonment he wrote the Second Epistle to Timothy. We may conclude, therefore, that the apostle was liberated about A. D. 63; that he went forth once more a free man;

that he probably visited Spain, then the East; that he wrote 1 Timothy and Titus while free, probably about A. D. 65-66; that he was again arrested and imprisoned in Rome whence he wrote 2 Timothy, about A. D. 67. Three or four years intervene between his release and the second arrest. Eight or more years lie between his farewell address to the elders of Ephesus and his death.

Here, then, is ample time for the development of new conditions at Ephesus, and perhaps other places of Asia Minor, for the growth of the erroneous and insidious teachings to which the Pastoral Epistles refer. What was the nature of the heresies? They consisted partly of philosophical speculations, but mainly of Jewish fables (Tit. i:14; 1 Tim. i:4; iv:7; 2 Tim. iv:4). Incipient Gnosticism was already infecting some of the church at Colossæ (Col. ii). The same evil appears also in these letters, as the peculiar expression, "oppositions of knowledge falsely so called" (1 Tim. vi:20) indicates. There were those who boasted of the possession of a mysterious and recondite knowledge, such as the commonalty of Christians were ignorant of. Besides, we see in these epistles the presence also of Jewish teachings regarding "genealogies," "the law," etc., which Paul stigmatizes as foolish, unprofitable, vain (Tit. iii:9), and denounces all such teachers of the law as "understanding neither what they say nor whereof they affirm." Then, too, a rigid asceticism was being taught, just as in the Colossian church. The errors which the apostle denounces are those of the first century, not at all

those of the second when Gnosticism flourished. Almost the same conditions are found here as in the Epistle to the Colossians. Hence the argument drawn from the heresies described in denial of their authenticity falls to the ground.

As to the advanced form of church organization something will be said further on in this study.

That there are peculiarities of style and diction is freely admitted. Here many new words are found, and uncommon forms of expression occur. But the subjects treated largely account for the peculiarities. Nor are such linguistic differences unusual with Paul. Humphreys notes that the first group of Paul's epistles (1, 2 Thess.), contains fifteen phrases not common to his other epistles; the second group (Rom., 1, 2 Cor., Gal.), contains 118; the third group (Eph., Phil., Col., Phile.), forty-eight; the fourth or pastoral group, fifty-one such phrases. He was not the slave of a rigid lexical uniformity. His vocabulary was large and varied. When we take into account the subjects dealt with by the apostle, the versatility of his master mind, the historical situations out of which most of his epistles sprang, the argument against these letters founded on the style and diction dissolves into thin air. It is pertinent to ask, as Schaff does, "why a forger should have chosen so many new words when he might have confined himself much more closely to the vocabulary of the other Epistles of Paul?" There exists an example in point, the apocryphal "Epistle to the Laodiceans." "For more than nine centuries this forged epistle hovered about the doors of the

sacred canon" (Lightfoot). This document is composed almost entirely of words, phrases, and sentences taken chiefly from Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, with slight pillage from Galatians and Ephesians. It was repudiated because of its glaring plagiarism. Nothing would have been easier than for the forger of the Pastoral Letters to have pieced out his composition from Paul's writings. But the Pastoral Epistles are far enough removed from such clumsy procedure. The fact of so many new and virile words and phrases is proof, not of fabrication, but of genuineness. The order of time of the epistles is, 1 Tim., Titus, 2 Tim.

TIMOTHY

This devoted friend of Paul and servant of Christ was probably a native of Lystra (Acts xvi : 1, 2). He first heard the good news of salvation from Paul when he visited the cities of Lycaonia (Acts xiv : 6, 7). The seed fell into prepared soil (2 Tim. i : 5 ; iii : 14, 15). He had been trained from a child in the knowledge of the Scriptures by his mother and grandmother. But he was of mixed parentage, the son of a Jewess and of a Greek father. Him Paul circumcised in deference to Jewish prejudice. This the apostle could well do without sacrificing any principle. But when the Jewish party at Jerusalem demanded that Titus should submit to the rite, not as a concession to weaker brethren, but as a condition of salvation, Paul inter-

posed his imperative, "No, not for an hour" (Gal. ii: 3-5). How helpful Timothy became to the apostle, what wealth of affection he poured out upon him, how fully and constantly he trusted him, what sweet fellowship he had with him, and how comforted he was by his presence amid the scenes of his stormy, suffering ministry, we know from his letters to the young evangelist. He refused Mark as a colabourer because not sure of him; he chose Timothy because he discerned in him docility, fidelity, and steadfastness; and he never repented his choice. Timothy was one of the magnificent compensations Paul enjoyed for the cruel treatment he received at Lystra (Acts xiv: 19).

TITUS

All we know of this companion of Paul is derived from the epistles. He is never mentioned in the Acts. It has been conjectured that his name Titus was a second name of some one of Paul's friends—a notion with no basis of fact. Attempts have been made to identify him with Titus Justus (Acts xviii: 7, R. v.) but this also is mere guessing. We know that he was a pure Greek (Gal. ii: 3). His home seems to have been Antioch of Syria, but whether this was his birthplace we do not know. He accompanied Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem for the adjudication of the serious questions which had arisen in the church of Antioch. He must have been grown at the time,

perhaps twenty years of age. Nothing is said of him in connection with Paul's second missionary journey, which followed soon after the adjournment of the Council at Jerusalem (Acts xv: 36). It was during this tour that Timothy received his call to the ministry with Paul. It is likely that when Paul and Silas set out from Antioch on their mission to the Gentiles, Titus was left behind. But on the third journey the apostle appears to have taken both the young men with him, for they were with him at Ephesus, and proved to be most efficient and helpful in the great work in the pro-consular capital. It was to Titus the very difficult and delicate task was committed of composing the troubles that were distracting the church of Corinth (2 Cor. ii: 13; xii: 18; vii: 6, 7, 13, 15). Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians proves how successfully Titus had accomplished his mission—with how much prudence and tact he had conducted and concluded it. We rightly infer that he was an able and gifted man. Bishop Lightfoot hardly does him justice in his fine article on Titus' "Mission to the Corinthians" (Bib. Essays, p. 281). Paul certainly would never have sent him to Crete, one of the hardest fields, had he not possessed real aptitude for just such trying situations. The apostle had the eye and the intellect of a great general. He read and knew men, and his estimate of them and of their capabilities was never at fault. The fidelity, devotion, and ability which he discerned in these young men, Timothy and Titus, amply justified his choice of them as companions and fellow workers in the field of truth. Where-

ever they were sent, and upon whatsoever errand, they seem never to have disappointed his expectations, nor to have committed mistakes which he must painfully rectify. When his end was fast approaching, he called the faithful Timothy to his side, and sent Titus to Dalmatia, the ancient Illyricum, perhaps to the neighbourhood of Nicopolis where the apostle had expected to winter (Tit. iii : 12), but which purpose was no doubt frustrated by his arrest and imprisonment at Rome. Down to the close of this heroic life Timothy and Titus are found faithful and true.

ANALYSIS.

First Timothy.

The epistle falls into two parts :—Part I (i–iii : 13). Part II (iii : 14–vi).

(a) Part I (chaps. i–iii : 13). In this section the following subdivisions may be noted :

1. The greeting (i : 1, 2).
2. Charge to Timothy (i : 3–11). The charge involves these duties, viz., to arrest the false teaching, to warn certain men of their ignorant and dangerous perversions of the Gospel, and to teach the true nature of the law and its relation to the Gospel.
3. The charge enforced by Paul's personal experience (i : 12–17). He had been blasphemously wicked, but grace saved him, mercy put him into

the ministry, and grace can save the worst of men.

4. Charge to be faithful in view of error (i : 18-20).
5. Public worship (ii).

(a) Duty and scope of prayer (ii : 1, 2).

(b) Encouragement so to pray (ii : 3, 4).

(c) Medium of acceptable prayer (ii : 5-7).

(d) Conditions of acceptable prayer (ii : 8).

(e) Behaviour of women in public worship (ii : 9-15).

6. Ministers and officers of the church (iii : 13).

(a) Bishops—their qualifications (iii : 1-7).

(b) Deacons (iii : 8-13). The qualifications and the duties of these Christian officers relate to their personal character, their domestic and social relations.

(b) Part II (chaps. iii : 14-vi). Advice and exhortations to Timothy.

1. Conduct in respect of the church and its head (iii : 14-16).

2. Prophecy of serious departure from the truth (iv : 1-5).

3. Minister's course in such case (iv : 6-16).

4. His conduct as to various classes (v, vi).

(a) Men, old and young (v : 1); women, old and young, widows (v : 2-16); elders (ministers) (v : 17-22); personal duties (v : 23-25); servants (vi : 1, 2).

(b) Denunciation of false teachers (vi : 3-10).

(c) Solemn appeal to faithfulness, diligence, and fidelity (vi : 11-21).

The contents of this epistle may be briefly summed up in three chief topics: First, a pure Gospel; second, a pure worship; third, a faithful ministry. It is a charge to a pastor who is placed in a difficult situation, whose field of labour has been invaded by manifold enemies. What he is to do in such case, how he is to do, the spirit and temper he is to cherish and display, his resources and supplies, his defense and his attacks on the adversaries, his encouragement and his incentives, his relations to God and to men—all these are brought out in this Scripture in the most masterly manner. 1 Timothy, as indeed 2 Timothy and Titus also, is surprisingly modern. The perils that threatened Timothy's work in Ephesus confront every pastor the world over. The characteristic features of the first century, as these are reflected in the Pastoral Epistles, are reproduced in our twentieth century, only on vastly larger scale. The resemblances between the state of things then and now are very close. The parallelism might be traced to almost any length. Let some of the correspondences be noted. Timothy is to warn against "fables and endless genealogies" (myths and tiresome pedigrees), against "profane and old wives' fables," all which find their counterpart in Mormonism, Anglo-Israelism, and Millennial Dawnism. He is told that "some would depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils," which has its fulfillment in modern necromancy (spiritism). Then, too, the "questionings," "disputings," "oppositions of science falsely so-called," are all encountered in a godless evolution, in destructive

criticism, and in Christian Science. "The itching ears," the "turning away the ears from the truth," the "heaping up of false teachers"—all this is found everywhere and all about us. The "profane and vain babblings," "vain jangling," are an exact picture of the crowds of religious pretenders who claim divine authority for themselves and their fanatical vagaries, who dare challenge men with the proud title of "Healer," "Elijah," "John the Baptist," "Mother Revealer," even Immanuel Himself! The confusion, egotism, and impiety perhaps have never before been surpassed. The good sense of men was shocked when the Roman Emperor was deified, sometimes by the act of the Roman Senate, but this commonly happened only when the august head of the state was dead. But now a kind of deification is claimed by living men and women. Timothy was told by Paul that the heresies and errors would be urged under the guise of godliness, but beneath the godliness there would lurk the hope of gain (1 Tim. vi : 5); that men would teach what they ought not "for filthy lucre's sake" (Tit. i : 10, 11). Greed and egotism lie at the bottom of most of the shams and delusions of our modern time.

Two men said in those days "that the resurrection is past already" (2 Tim. ii : 17, 18). Now multitudes reject the doctrine altogether and substitute for it *death*, and what then takes place. Error then "did eat as doth a gangrene"; it does no less now. A single false doctrine suffices to corrupt the faith of the individual or of the community. It "eats." "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this

seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His: and, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from all iniquity" (2 Tim. ii: 19). This strong anchor will hold. We do well to cling to it.

ANALYSIS.

Second Timothy.

- I. Greeting (i: 1, 2).
- II. Exhortation to faithfulness and zeal (i: 3-ii).
 1. Thanksgiving for Timothy's faith and gifts (i: 3-7). Paul puts very high honour on his home training in the Scriptures.
 2. Appeal for brave adherence to the Gospel message (i: 8-18). (*a*) On ground of Christ's work; (*b*) on Paul's sufferings; (*c*) by two examples, one of warning, one of encouragement.
 3. Appeal for steadfastness, endurance (ii: 1-13). Appeal illustrated by life of soldier, of athlete, of farmer.
 4. Personal and ministerial conduct (ii: 14-26).
 - (*a*) As to false and true teaching (ii: 14-19).
 - (*b*) As to mixed character of visible church (ii: 20, 21).
 - (*c*) As to personal purity (ii: 21, 22).
 - (*d*) As to opposers (ii: 23-26).
- III. Conduct in view of increasing difficulties (iii).
 1. Grievous times foretold and described (iii: 1-9).

2. Paul's example of fidelity and suffering to be followed (iii : 10-13).
 3. God-inspired Scriptures the ground of security and efficiency (iii : 14-17).
- IV. The last words of the apostle (iv).
1. Final appeal (iv : 1-18); based on (*a*) the Lord's coming (vs. 1-5); (*b*) on Paul's near execution (vs. 6-8).
 2. Scattering of friends, longing for fellowship (iv : 9-18).
 3. Last farewell (iv : 19-22).

This is the last epistle Paul wrote, hence a peculiar interest and value attaches to it. When he wrote it he was facing death at the hands of the Roman executioner. He was charged with crimes and misdemeanours, though just what the specific indictment was is conjectural. It may have been sedition, or complicity in the burning of Rome, or treason against the State. We may be sure that, recognized as a leader of the Christians, he would have to plead to serious charges indeed, perhaps that of teaching the supreme Kingship of Jesus (cf. Acts xvii : 7). His trial appears to have had two stages, a preliminary hearing, and a final one at which sentence was pronounced. "At my first defense no man stood with me, but all forsook me" (iv : 16). But he had just written, "Only Luke is with me." Did Luke also forsake him? We cannot believe it. It is likely Luke was not present when the preliminary examination took place, that he arrived between that and the writing of this letter. The accused had no advocate, nor defender, nor friend at

court. Yes, but he had—the invisible, almighty Son of God, who stood by him. Accusers he had in plenty, no doubt; one particularly, Alexander the coppersmith, more virulent and hostile than any other. Who he was is unknown. He may have been the Alexander whom the Jews put forward to address the mob at Ephesus, or the Alexander the heretic of 1 Tim. i : 20. It is likely the accuser was at Rome, that he was an unscrupulous and powerful adversary, and hence Paul warned Timothy to beware of him on his arrival at the capital (iv : 15).

The result of the first examination was favourable, he was “delivered out of the mouth of the lion” (iv : 17). Nevertheless, he felt sure that the final issue would be his death (iv : 6–8). He seems, however, to have anticipated some delay in the final disposition of his case, and so he urges Timothy to come to him with all speed, and to bring with him the cloak he left at Troas, and the parchments. He occupied a gloomy, damp prison, probably the “Well Dungeon,” or the wretched Mamartine, as tradition relates; and he would need heavier clothing.¹ But there was probably

¹ William Tindale wrote from his prison at Vilvorde, Holland (1536), the following words which are a pathetic reminder of Paul's:—“Your lordship . . . will request the procureur to be kind enough to send me from my goods, which he has in possession, a warmer cap, for I suffer extremely from cold in the head, being afflicted with a perpetual catarrh, which is considerably increased in the cell. A warmer coat also, for that which I have is very thin; also a piece of cloth to patch my leggings; my shirts are also worn out. He has also a woollen shirt of mine, if he will be kind enough to send it. . . . I wish also his permission to have a candle in the evening, for it is

little delay. He received his sentence, death by the lictor's axe, or by the sword; and he went to his heavenly rest probably before his friend and fellow worker reached him.

Life has its rich compensations. If the child of God loses in one direction, he gains in another. "All they which are in Asia be turned away from me," he writes, not in bitterness but in sorrow. Two men had distinguished themselves by their desertion, Phygellus and Hermogenes. They were leaders in the cowardly act, and their unbrotherly and unsaintly conduct found imitators. Men who should have stood by him in this his supreme hour of need, shunned him, either ashamed of his chain or afraid lest suspicion might fall on them. There was one very illustrious exception, Onesiphorus. His name means "help-bringer." Right nobly did he show his sympathy and seek to help, for he "diligently sought me out and found me." How significant and beautiful are the words, "and found me." It was not easy; the prisons no doubt were crowded with the proscribed Christians; access was difficult, and he ran great personal risk who sought to find so notable a prisoner as Paul the apostle. But Onesiphorus did not quail. He nobly proved his right to bear the name of *Help-bearer*.

wearisome to sit alone in the dark. But above all, I entreat and beseech your clemency to be urgent with the procureur, that he may kindly permit me to have my Hebrew Bible, Hebrew Grammar, and Hebrew Dictionary, that I may spend my time with that study. And in return, may you obtain your dearest wish, provided always that it be consistent with the salvation of your soul" (Condit, "Hist. Eng. Bible," pp. 136-7).

Paul gratefully remembers his loving ministry, and prays for his "house," prays that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day (i: 16-18). He will have the blessing promised by our Lord in the memorable saying, "I was in prison, and ye visited me."

One of the eccentricities of exegesis is connected with this incident. As "the house" and "household" (iv: 19) only are mentioned it is inferred that Onesiphorus was dead at the time, and as Paul prays for him, the epistle "probably bears witness to the practice of prayer to God for mercy to the dead." It is not surprising that this interpretation should prevail with Roman Catholics—one expects to find this and much more of the same sort—but it is a surprise when it is encountered in reputable writers, as Bishop Hervey and Dean Alford. The words above quoted are from the article on 2 Tim. by Dr. Lock of Oxford in Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible, which will not surprise those who are familiar with that work. The supposition is entirely gratuitous. Onesiphorus may have been absent from Ephesus when Paul wrote, as he had been shortly before when he had visited the apostle. He may have been on the homeward journey which meant many days of travel. It is admitted on all hands that the apostle's last imprisonment was very brief, and if this friend had died at his home in Ephesus or elsewhere, it is not likely that Paul should have heard of it, specially when he says that those in Asia had turned away from him, thus cutting off all communication. If praying for the dead is to be Scripturally defended its advocates must seek other

texts than this. That the practice has no countenance either in the Old or the New Testament is certain. Yet on this practice, so utterly foreign and repugnant to the whole tenor and analogy of the Bible, there rests the doctrine of Purgatory with all its abuses, deceptions and fraudulent revenues, on account of which the Italians have nicknamed the Romish Church, *La Santa Bottega*—the Holy Shop.

Two transcendent duties are solemnly pressed upon Timothy by the apostle. The first is, supreme devotion to the Lord's service. This is urged with reiterated insistence and emphasis. "Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands" (i: 6). It is the ministerial gift that is meant. The figure is a vivid one: Stir thy gift into a flame; kindle the glowing coals lest they smoulder out. One's zeal is always in danger of languishing, one's ardour ever runs the risk of cooling, even of dying. The fire needs constant replenishing. "Preach the word; be instant (apply thyself) in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine" (iv: 1-5). Here is the briefest possible treatise on Homiletics; here is *in nuce* the sum and substance of genuine preaching. Here is the answer to the old homiletical questions, "What?" "When?" "How?" "Why?" *The Word*: God's message in all its majestic comprehensiveness and massiveness. Woe to the preacher who preaches his own message, not God's! *In season, out of season*: take opportunity, make opportunity! *Reprove, rebuke, exhort*: convict

of sin, expose sin, persuade against sin. Do all this with meekness, patience, love, teaching. Do it, and weary not in doing it, for men will go back from the truth, will turn away their ears, will seek the gratification of their wishes and their lusts. Three impressive motives are urged in support of this apostolic charge: Christ's appearing and kingdom, when all accounts must be finally settled; declension from the sound doctrine; Paul's approaching martyrdom. Faithfully, heroically, untiringly, and with the profound sense of personal responsibility, the preacher is to fill up and fill out his ministry, round it and complete it, as the messenger of God, the servant of Jesus Christ. The words, "rightly dividing the word of truth" (ii: 15), are very significant. The figure may be that of the sacrificial division of victims for the altar, or the distribution of bread, or, better, farmers who cut their furrows straight (Theodoret). Great is the power in such right division of the word of truth—cutting straight, wisely distributing.

The second duty is, Guard the deposit! "That good thing which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us" (i: 14; cf. 1 Tim. vi: 20). What is the deposit? Broadly, it may be answered, the Faith, that glorious system of doctrine which is revealed to men by the blessed Lord Himself through His Spirit, and which is designed to illuminate, sanctify and save. It is the message of the Gospel contained in the Scriptures of truth, as 2 Tim. iii: 14-17 clearly denotes. This precious body of truth is in perpetual danger. It has foes, powerful

and tireless. Paul's appeal is, Guard it from spiritual thieves, from corrupters and perverters. The apostle reminds Timothy that from a child he had known the holy Scriptures, "which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." The words "holy Scriptures," point to a written revelation: "sacred writings" is the rendering of both the British and American revisions. In John v:47 Jesus uses the term writings to describe the revelation given through Moses, and both there and here in Timothy the use of the word appears to mark the specific form and the general scope of the record. The Old Testament is here in view, and respecting it Paul says that it is sacred, and that it is able to make wise unto salvation through faith in Christ to whom it bears explicit witness. Hence our Lord said to the Jews, "Ye search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Me" (John v:39). So, too, after His resurrection He, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke xxiv:27, 44). The Scriptures have this wonderful capacity of making wise unto salvation because they reveal Christ, lead to Him, and bring the believing soul to trust in Him. The reason which Paul assigns for this amazing capacity is this: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (2 Tim. iii:16, 17). Fifty-one times the word translated *scripture* in this

great passage is found in the New Testament and in every instance it denotes the Old Testament Canon, save perhaps in one, viz., 2 Peter iii : 16. In this last text Peter recognizes Paul's epistles as being Scripture, and ranks them with the acknowledged books of the Old Testament. The term carries with it exactly the same definite meaning as does our English *Scripture*. With the sacred writers it is a technical term, appropriated to designate the writings which were believed to be from God. The Revision changes the reading of King James : "Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching," etc. As the words "all Scripture" are without the article the adjective is taken in a distributive sense, and translated *every*. But the revisers violate their own rule in many cases, as, *e. g.*, Col. i : 9-11 where the adjective *all* occurs five times with nouns that have not the article, and in four of them the revision has "all," in one alone *every*. "All Scripture" means every portion of the "sacred writings" in which Timothy had been instructed, and hence must needs signify the whole of Scripture, so that the old version expresses Paul's thought as exactly as does the revision, if not even more exactly.

But this is unimportant. More serious is the transference of the predicate ("is given by inspiration of God"), and joining it with the subject, as the revisers have done. For, the statement of the apostle is left indefinite and ambiguous. We are not altogether certain whether or not there may be Scripture not inspired of God, or whether only such inspired Scripture is profitable. But is there not many a writing profit-

able for doctrine (teaching) which is not commonly held to be inspired? Why the two words, "inspired of God" and "profitable," which are united and are made predicates in the old version, are separated in the new, the first being united with the subject while the second is left as the predicate, and the conjunction *and* turned into *also*, does not appear, nor is any adequate reason given for such procedure. In precisely similar grammatical constructions the revisers have not ventured to follow their own precedent. Heb. iv : 13 is a case in point: "But all things are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do." Here is the subject, "all things," and two predicates, "naked and open." Moreover, the verb is wanting as in 2 Tim. iii : 16. To be consistent the revisers should have rendered ; "all things naked are also open," etc. But the absurdity is so pronounced they did not dare to do so, as Tregelles pointed out many years ago. Another instance parallel with this is 1 Tim. iv : 4, where we should translate, if the example of the revisers is to be followed, thus: "Every good creature of God is also nothing to be rejected." In both these instances the revision follows almost exactly the old version, because they did not dare render them as they have done that of 2 Tim. iii : 16. Why was the change made in this latter case? One declines to conjecture, but Tregelles states that Dr. Pye Smith defended the reading adopted by the revision because he thus avoided "the difficulty which this text presented to his theory maintained during one part of his life in opposition to the authority of the book of Canticles."

Did some similar "theory" influence the revisers in their change in 2 Tim. iii:16? It may be proper to recall that one of the English company of revisers, Dr. Vance Smith, was a very pronounced Unitarian, and that he has left it on record that "it is contrary to fact that the doctrines of popular Theology remain unaffected, untouched by the results of the Revision" (quoted from Burgon's *Revision Revised*, p. 205).

This new translation of 2 Tim. iii:16 is not only uncertain and ambiguous. It is weak, unlike Paul's clear and ringing statements of fundamental truth. Is it at all probable that the apostle wrote such a mere truism as this?—"every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable"? Need any be told, need any apostle tell us, that every inspired Scripture is also useful? How much more pointed and powerful is the old rendering:—"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God"; and since it is so, "it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof," etc. All Scripture and every part of Scripture is useful because God-inspired, not God-inspired because useful. This is the deep significance of the passage, and this, it seems to us, is what Paul says.

Once again it should be remarked that nowhere else in the New Testament have the revisers separated two adjectives that are joined by the copulative *and*, and tied one to the subject and left the other as a predicate. This they have done in one solitary case (2 Tim. iii:16). They have united the single Greek word, *God-inspired*, with *every Scripture*, and left the other term, *profitable*, to do service as a predicate alone. Let one be heard here who has the right to speak on

the point (Middleton): "I do not recollect any passage in the New Testament in which two adjectives, apparently connected by the copulative, were intended by the writer to be so unnaturally disjoined. He who can produce such an instance, will do much towards establishing the plausibility of a translation, which otherwise must appear, to say the least of it, to be forced and improbable."

The apostle ascribes a divine source to the whole Scripture, and to every part of it. He describes it as "given by inspiration of God"—a single word in the original and found nowhere else in the New Testament. It is difficult to turn it into English by one term; indeed, it seems impossible to do so, hence five words are used for it in the old version, three in the new. It has been rendered "God-breathed," but this, suggestive as it is, does not altogether express its meaning. "Filled with the breath of God" is its comprehensive meaning (Cremer *sub voce*). Hence Scripture is called "living oracles" (Acts vii: 38). Peter describes it thus: "For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. i: 21, R. V.). Thus also an ancient doctor of the church exhorted: "Look carefully into the Scriptures which are the true utterances of the Holy Spirit. Observe that nothing of an unjust or counterfeit character is written in them" (Clement of Rome, c. A. D. 96, Ep. Cor. c. 45). No wonder Paul said it is profitable, is able to save, and it can supply the man of God with all that his individual well-being and his ministry require.

THE EPISTLE TO TITUS

The Epistle to Titus dates at about the same time as the first to Timothy. Its general tone clearly indicates that when written Paul was a free man and master of his own movements. Where written is uncertain, probably in Macedonia.

Titus' field of labour was a difficult one. The Cretans were a rude, half-civilized people. The terms in which the apostle speaks of them are severe but not unjust. Quoting from one of "their own prophets," Epimenides, he calls them incessant liars, evil beasts, slow bellies (i: 12). Calvin's rendering is, "Cretans are always liars, are wild beasts, do-nothing gluttons." On their avarice Dean Alford cites Livy, Plutarch, and Polybius. On their ferocity and fraud there is the like testimony. As to their mendacity it is enough to say that the term *cretanize* meant to lie. A hard field certainly, but one in which the Gospel had already found entrance, in which it was making conquest, and in which faithful churches were already planted. These Titus was to organize and train; other churches were to be established, and error and errorists were to be confuted and repelled.

ANALYSIS.

1. Greeting (i: 1-4).
2. Titus' mission in Crete (i: 5, 6).

3. Duties and qualifications of bishops (i: 7-11).
4. Character of Cretans (i: 12-16).
5. Rules of behaviour for various classes (ii: 1-15).
 - (a) Old and young (ii: 1-6).
 - (b) Ministers (ii: 7, 8).
 - (c) Servants (9, 10).
 - (d) Christians, holy living and eager watching (ii: 11-15).
6. Sundry commands (iii: 1-8).
 - (a) Obedience to rulers (iii: 1, 2).
 - (b) What we were (iii: 3).
 - (c) What we are through grace (iii: 4-7).
 - (d) Fidelity enjoined (iii: 8).
7. Directions and instructions to Titus (iii: 9-15).
 - (a) Behaviour towards errors and heretics (iii: 9-11).
 - (b) Instructions to Titus as to Paul, Zenas, Apollos (iii: 12, 13).
 - (c) Faithful service enjoined (iii: 14).
 - (d) Salutations (iii: 15).

Chapter ii: 11-14 proves that when Paul was nearing the close of his eventful life the Blessed Hope animated him as it did when he wrote to the saints of Thessalonica. Amid all his vicissitudes, in the face of exigencies and perils, with opposition and hostility against the infant Church and its preachers deepening and intensifying on every side, the hope of the speedy coming of the Lord Jesus Christ cheered and upheld him and all apostolic believers. Paul never thought

of changing his mind, of correcting his attitude towards this supreme event, this consummation of all Christian hope, Christ's return. Note how comprehensive this expression of Christian position is: We look *back* on the salvation grace has brought us; we look *round* on present duty; we look *forward* to the coming glory. Grace first brings salvation; it does not send it, it brings it personally by the Lord Jesus. Then grace teaches, (1) to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. (2) It bids us live soberly, with due self-control, having the reins of our natures well in hand and ruled by a strong hand; to live uprightly as regards those around us; and godly as to the glorious future awaiting us. There is the kingdom within, the kingdom around, the kingdom to come. The children and heirs of such indescribable glories should live as God's princes, as a heavenly aristocracy should. The mighty motive to such saintly living is, the Blessed Hope, the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Some further distinctive features of the Pastoral Epistles may be mentioned.

I. Church organization.—In Romans and in 1 Corinthians much is said of the gifts, both ordinary and extraordinary, which the primitive Church so richly enjoyed. In the Pastoral Letters the extraordinary gifts are in abeyance; organization is more prominent. The miraculous gifts are disappearing to some extent. Those common to believers generally, those that are to remain so long as the Church remains, are insisted on with marked emphasis. Faith, hope, love, gifts of

teaching and of ruling, fitness for responsible positions, faithfulness, sobriety, good judgment and steadfastness—these and the like Christian graces hold the same place in the instructions and exhortations of these epistles as in Paul's earlier writings.

(1) Bishops (1 Tim. iii : 1-7 ; Tit. i : 5-9).—In these passages we have a lengthy account of the duties and qualifications of this office. The term "bishop" denotes *overseer*, and is so translated in the margin of the Revision. It indicates one who has the oversight of a company of Christians, who is responsible for the faith and order thereof, who is himself to be an example and pattern for those committed to his care. The bishop is mentioned in Acts xx : 28 ; Phil. i : 1. In the former passage he has oversight of the flock of God, he has his appointment, at least recognition, by the Holy Spirit. His duties and fitness for the office are carefully stated. (a) We have his positive qualifications (1 Tim. iii : 1, 2). He must be blameless, *i. e.*, irreproachable so far as his personal character is concerned. He must be the husband of one wife,—a controverted statement. We may dismiss the view that he must be a married man, as Russian ecclesiastics and Mormons hold. The numeral *one* forbids this interpretation. So also the opinion of many that he is forbidden to contract a second marriage. What appears to be the true meaning is, he must not be a bigamist, or polygamist, whether as having more than a wife living with him, or a divorced wife still living. The notorious looseness of practice both among Jews and heathen of the time made such a rule imperative.

Scripture does not countenance "clerical celibacy." (b) The negative qualifications (v. 3). The things here mentioned strike one as strange in relation to a Christian minister but we should remember that these were men but lately brought out of paganism where such vices were common enough and where no strong public opinion frowned upon them, as with us. (c) His home life (vs. 4, 5). (d) His relation to the office itself and the public (vs. 6, 7). One qualification is very noticeable, "apt to teach." It is expanded in Tit. i: 9, thus: "Holding to the faithful word which is according to the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in the sound doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers" (R. V.).

(2) Elders (Tit. i: 5; cf. Acts xiv: 23; xv: 6, 22; I Tim. v: 17, 19).—In I Tim. v: 17, there are not two classes of elders, but one class. They are all rulers. Such of them as rule well are worthy of abundant honour, particularly those who labour in word and doctrine. These are not a distinct class, but a select portion of the same class. It appears certain that in the apostolic churches each congregation had a plurality of elders, that such body of elders exercised government in the congregation, and that among the elders there were those who laboured in word and doctrine, *i. e.*, they were ministers of the Gospel.

The question here confronts us, Are two offices, distinct and separate, meant by the words *bishop* and *elder*? The answer must be in the negative. They are but two names for one office. This is evident, first, from the fact that the terms are interchangeable. In

Acts xx: 17 Paul called to him "the elders of the church"; but in verse 28 of the same chapter these elders are called bishops. In Tit. i: 5 we read of elders; but in verse 7, these same elders are bishops. Obviously, they are convertible terms. Second, the qualifications and duties for the one office are identical with those of the other. In fact, there is no distinction made between them whatever. If one set of duties belonged to the bishop, another to the elder, or if we had two differing descriptions of these officers and of their functions, the question would be settled. But nothing of the sort appears in the whole New Testament. But, third, elders and bishops are distinguished from deacons. Paul mentions bishops and deacons in Phil. i: 1. He clearly distinguishes between bishops and deacons in 1 Tim. iii. But he never does between bishops and elders. We may conclude, therefore, that a bishop was an elder, and an elder was a bishop. The elder did not need to be ordained to become a bishop; he was a bishop *de facto*. Furthermore, there were several elders or bishops in connection with one church, *e. g.*, Ephesus, Philippi, and in Crete (Tit. i: 5). It is probable that in each local church one of the elders acted as president (*primus inter pares*). And it is quite possible that it is to this chief officer of the body of elders "the angel" of Rev. ii: 1 refers.

As to the appointment of bishops (or elders) over churches, it must suffice here to say that Titus was directed by Paul to "appoint" them in every city (Tit. i: 5). It is inferred from 1 Tim. v: 22 that Timothy was authorized to do the same in Ephesus.

But this does not prove that the Christian congregation had no voice in their selection. The analogous case of the choice of the seven in Acts vi indicates that the right of the Christian people was not ignored. The seven were chosen by the body of believers, and they were then "set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them" (Acts vi: 6). It is a matter of history that in the second century, and even later, the people had a voice in the selection of their bishops.

Some legitimate inferences may be drawn from these facts. (1) The bishop was purely a congregational officer, not at all a *diocesan*, as he is now known. (2) The bishop of the primitive church made no claim to *apostolical succession*. Dr. James Orr affirms that there is no hint of such a thing even in the letters of Ignatius (A. D. 110). "Had the idea existed, so keen a defender of episcopacy could not have passed it over." (3) He had no *sacerdotal functions*. In all the accounts of bishops and elders in the New Testament there is not so much as the shadow of a hint of such a thing. (4) The government of the churches was entrusted to a body of presbyters, who were indifferently named elders and bishops. These officers exercised their functions in the local church, not at all in a province or diocese.

(3) Deacons (1 Tim. iii: 8-10, 12, 13).—The first mention of deacons is in Phil. i: 1. The seven of Acts vi are not named deacons, nor do the functions of at least two of them, viz., Stephen and Philip, correspond to the office of deacon. Stephen was a

preacher of great power, and Philip was an evangelist (Acts viii; xxi: 8). It is possible that the seven formed the basis for the appointment of deacons in the churches, but no definite information is given us touching the matter. From the description of his duties in Timothy, the deacon had something more to do than to attend to the finances and other business features of the people. That women had some part in the management of the church seems evident from the fact that Phœbe was a deaconess of the church of Cenchrea (Rom. xvi: 1). Besides, there is significance in the way Paul mentions women in the heart of his instructions as to deacons (1 Tim. iii: 11). It appears certain that those women had some sort of functions analogous to those of deacons, else he would not have put them into his teaching as he has done.

From all this it appears clear that in the apostolic church there were but two classes of ministers, presbyters (elders and bishops), and deacons, and not three as later prevailed in churches of Episcopal polity. Moreover, we see from the Pastoral Epistles that, advanced as organization in the churches was, there is in that fact no ground for the argument which would relegate them to a post-apostolic age. In fact, the entire church order brought out in these letters is found in the Acts and Paul's earlier epistles. Accordingly, the attempt to prove their non-Pauline authorship on this score is a failure.

II. Widows (1 Tim. v: 3, 4, 5, 9, 16).—The teaching as to this class of Christians is explicit and discriminating. From the beginning of the Christian

church widows received the most charitable attention (Acts vi). The disinterested and self-sacrificing labours of the saintly Dorcas seem to have been confined mainly to the widows of Joppa (Acts ix: 36-43). In the Pastoral Letters advance is noticeable in the treatment of widows. The church had grown wonderfully in the period between A. D. 35 and 65. The numbers of dependent persons, and particularly of widows, must at the latter date have been immensely larger than at the earlier. Regulations as to their maintenance were a necessity. Accordingly, the apostle carefully prescribes the rules to be observed in their treatment. A distinction is to be made between the younger and the older widows. Only those who have reached the age of sixty are to be enrolled among the church's wards. Younger widows are advised to marry. Other women who are able are to support the widows dependent upon them (v. 16). There is not the slightest hint that there was an "order" of widows at the time Paul wrote these epistles. How judicious and yet tender, how careful yet how loving and gracious does the Lord who spoke through His servant deal with the poor, the helpless, and the widow. Paganism, in the loftiest heights it ever reaches never thus spreads its mantle of protection over the forsaken and the dependent. He alone who calls Himself the Husband of the widow, the Father of the fatherless, ever loves and helps as here described.

III. Prophecy.—Two predictions are noteworthy (1 Tim. iv: 1-5; 2 Tim. iii: 1-5). Both relate to Christendom and both announce coming perils for the

professing church. Dates attach to each of these predictions. In the first it is described as "the latter times," a time subsequent to the apostle and running down towards the end of the age. In the second it is "the last days," the days immediately preceding the advent of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. xxiv; 2 Thess. i: 7-10; Rev. xix). The first indicates that the defection will be partial, "some shall depart from the faith"; the second is far more general, almost universal. Both have marked features. In the first there is submission to evil spirits and doctrines of demons, to certain forms of asceticism, and to fables and myths, celibacy as superior to wedlock, and abstinence from certain foods. The features of the second are far darker and more ominous. Here the defection predicted in the first has deepened into open revolt and defiance of God and His truth and will. The descriptive epithets applied to the rebels in 2 Tim. iii: 1-5 plainly tell that the end is fast coming on, that the predicted apostasy (2 Thess. ii: 3, 4) is becoming history: "Self-lovers, money-lovers, railers, unfilial, unholy, unnatural, implacable, slanderers . . . traitors . . . having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof."

How near we may be to this last and worst stage of declension existing conditions only too mournfully attest.

IV. The five faithful sayings.—These are peculiar to the Pastoral Epistles. They are here merely noted with the main idea of each as given by Humphreys:—

Christ's coming—the way of sin's forgiveness (1 Tim. i: 15).

Christ's ministry—the way of noble service (1 Tim. iii: 1).

Christ's life—the way of spiritual progress (1 Tim. iv: 9).

Christ's world—the way of honourable work (Tit. iii: 8).

Christ's strength—the way of successful suffering (2 Tim. ii: 11).

THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON

This short but exquisitely beautiful epistle was written from Rome during Paul's first imprisonment, and it belongs to the same group with Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. In it the apostle expresses his confident expectation of speedy release and restoration to his friends (v. 22). Two epistles were carried from Rome to their respective destinations, the one by Tychicus to the Colossians, and the other by Onesimus to Philemon of Colossæ who was a Christian and obviously a man of some note. The object of the letter to Philemon is explained by its contents. Onesimus a slave of Philemon had run away from his master and found his way to Rome. Doubtless he felt that he would be safer in the great city than elsewhere in the whole empire, hence sought its shelter. That he was guilty of some serious offense appears certain from vs. 11, 18; but just what his guilt was is not made plain; likely it was theft. It may be he had stolen money from Philemon. Certain it is he was "unprofitable" to his master because dishonest and unfaithful. A fugitive slave, a thousand miles from home, haunted with constant fear of detection and arrest, Onesimus at length was brought within the circle of Paul's powerful influence and was led into a saving acquaintance of Christ (v. 10). Him Paul sent back to Philemon with this letter, in which with utmost

courtesy of language and in the spirit of Christ Himself the apostle commends the Christian servant to the Christian master, "no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much rather to thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord. . . . Receive him as myself . . . as my very heart" (vs. 12-17). Never was there such a "fugitive slave law" penned as this! The relation between master and servant is hereby transfigured, and both become brethren in the Lord with no difference and no disparity in their state and standing with the Son of God—freemen alike!

Human slavery in the Apostolic age was universal. All who were able held their fellow men in bondage and the laws of the empire, the institutions and customs of society and public opinion served to tighten the chains of the enslaved and to absolve the master no matter how despotic his rule or how inhuman his treatment of his slaves. At Rome and throughout Italy where immense numbers of slaves were held the authority of the owner was absolute. Probably the same absolute power obtained in the provinces. In his hands was the law of life and death. In the case of the murder of a master by a slave, Roman law provided that the entire company of slaves pertaining to the murdered man should be put to death. History records an instance of such procedure. In the year A. D. 61, the year of Paul's arrival in the capital, a senator, Pedanius Secundus, Prefect of the city, had been murdered by one of his slaves; and the law called for the death of *four hun-*

dred persons. "The Roman populace, wonderful to relate, was roused to horror, and attempted a rescue. The Senate, gravely debating the case, resolved that the execution must proceed; it was a matter of public safety. Then the roads were lined with troops, and the doom was carried out to the end." In Phrygia to which region it is believed Onesimus belonged, a proverb, current from ancient times, runs on this wise: "A Phrygian is schooled by the whip." "A runaway slave could not lawfully be received or harboured. The master was entitled to pursue him wherever he pleased, and it was the duty of all authorities to give him aid." In short, a slave was mere property, with no rights that he could claim or enforce, and he was so entirely under the control of his owner that he might be sold, scourged, or put to death, without trial or recourse.

But while Paul and his fellow apostles never interfered with existing institutions civil or domestic, though deeply conscious of the enormous wrongs everywhere prevailing, they set Christian master and servant into new and brotherly relations, so that the evils were obliterated, peace, the very peace of God, sweetly dwelt between owner and owned. In Christian households the slaves were practically free, and were regarded as members of the family, children of their masters because all were children of God.

This is one of the most straightforward and manly letters ever penned. The subject was a difficult one. The question of slavery must often have been in the apostle's mind, and he knew how utterly repugnant to

all the principles of Christianity the system was. And yet how humanely and tenderly he deals with it! Onesimus must be sent back to Philemon, for he was his servant, had been unfaithful and dishonest, and while Paul might command, he only entreats as one Christian with another. He even offered to repay any money that Onesimus might owe. But throughout the letter it is manifest that this converted runaway was dear to Paul; he would have kept him with him did not the obligation and the right both of Onesimus and Philemon require his return.

This is in reality the first anti-slavery petition ever written and presented. It is not a proclamation of emancipation. Paul makes no effort whatever to reconstruct the social order. He does not aim to revolutionize society. He knew that Christianity would in process of time change the whole face of human society. He could patiently wait for it to do the work which, if he and his fellow apostles should attempt, would evoke all Rome's power to crush them and the infant church. Accordingly, Paul lays here broad and deep the foundation of a new relation between master and servant, a relation in which, while there is subordination of the one to the other, there is also a common brotherhood to be acknowledged and an equality before God to be maintained. Christianity would melt the fetters from the enslaved by the fervour of its love. Men's method commonly is, to strike them off by armed revolution. The letter, besides, shows what the apostle was in little things. In Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians we see what he was as

to fundamental truth, and his own Apostolic authority and mission. Here his gentlemanliness, his courtesy and broad sympathies are revealed. How many philanthropists in their private life are proud, hard, self-seeking: in theory full of love for humanity, in fact full of selfishness. In Paul the same love that burned with such ardour for Jew and Gentile, for great churches, here burns for a fugitive slave.

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

The reading and study of this great Scripture serves to create the impression that it is the profoundest epistle of the New Testament. Its grasp of the subject with which it deals, its comprehensiveness and its minuteness of detail, its massive arguments and illustrations invest it with peculiar interest. It is at once clear and logical, though often condensed to the point of sententiousness. Its exhortations are most fervid, its appeals most searching, and its eloquence sustained and lofty. Withal, it is unique in its structure and method. It has features which mark it off from the other New Testament epistles. It is without address. It begins like an essay or treatise, but it ends like an epistle. It closes each exposition or topic with the practical application instead of reserving it for the end, as do the other longer epistles. It copiously cites from the Old Testament, but its quotations are made exclusively from the Septuagint or Greek translation. It never quotes directly from the Hebrew Bible as the other Biblical writers often do. Its mode of introducing quotations is somewhat peculiar. It does not use the common formula, *e. g.*, "It is written," "Scripture saith," etc. The term Scripture is not found in it, "the word," or "the word of God" takes its place.

The form employed is, "he (*i. e.*, God) saith," "the Holy Ghost saith," "one in a certain place testifieth," "he hath spoken." Except in one passage (iv: 7), the human writer of Scripture is nowhere mentioned—"Saith in David."

It is anonymous. The writer seems to be at pains to conceal his identity, and he has succeeded in sinking himself out of sight in his writing. Notwithstanding the prolonged research of erudite men, and in spite of ingenious reasoning and plausible arguments and shrewd guesses, the writer of Hebrews remains in impenetrable obscurity. Origen's view of the authorship has never been displaced by anything better: "The thoughts are Paul's, but the phraseology and composition are by some one else. . . . Not without reason have the ancient men handed down the epistle as Paul's, but who wrote the epistle is known only to God." By "who wrote the epistle," Origen appears to mean, who composed it, not who was Paul's amanuensis. The central doctrine here unfolded is identical with Paul's general teaching as to sin and salvation. And yet the style and diction, the method and structure, differ from those of his acknowledged epistles. But its anonymous character does not invalidate its canonicity. The book of Job and some of the Psalms are likewise anonymous: nobody knows who wrote them, though there are guesses in plenty. But this fact does not for a moment stagger the faith of a believer in the Divine inspiration of these sections of the Bible. The contents of Hebrews constitute the voucher for its inspiration. No one can study the

epistle with open mind and sympathetic spirit—no one can go down into its depths, or even try to—without being profoundly convinced that this, like the other books of the New Testament, is from God the Holy Spirit. On its very face the epistle bears the Divine *Imprimatur*. For the writer, whoever he was, had a piercing insight into the very heart of ancient Judaism, as his masterful exposition of its true meaning so manifestly displays.

The epistle was written to Christian Hebrews. They were probably a definite community which had long existed (xiii : 7 R. v. ; v : 12 ; xii : 18–24). They had suffered imprisonment and loss of goods (x : 32–34), but had not as a community endured bloody persecution (xii : 4). A crisis was impending which threatened painful separation from their former associations and the destruction of what was precious to all Israelites (x : 25 ; xii : 27 ; xiii : 13, 14). These allusions point to Christians of Palestine. If the removing of the things shaken, mentioned in xii : 27, refers to the Mosaic institutions, the inference appears legitimate that those thus addressed lived in Palestine, possibly in Jerusalem. To no other Hebrews is the rebuke so applicable, viz., “for when by reason of the time ye ought to be teachers,” etc., (v : 12). From the first these Christian Jews had heard the Gospel message, had witnessed and felt its power, and had rejoiced in the pardon and the assurance which it brings to believing souls. Accordingly, it seems certain that they belonged to Palestine. It is likely also that the writer had in view some congregation consisting of Christian

Jews whose location exposed them to trials and the danger of lapsing from the faith. It cannot be proved that he addressed the church at Jerusalem, though to no other place could the epistle be more fittingly sent. This was the original centre of Christianity, its church was the mother of all the churches. It was the most prominent and influential of all the churches in the world. It was in this church that the vital question which had arisen at Antioch touching the relation of Gentile believers to the law of Moses was definitely settled. The Jews of Jerusalem were more strenuously attached to the Mosaic ritual and Hebrew hopes than others. Nor were the Christian Hebrews of the holy city less devoted to Moses, as the Epistle of James and the Acts disclose. James, the pastor at Jerusalem, said to Paul, on the occasion of the latter's last visit, "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are who believe; and they are all zealous of the law" (Acts xxi: 20, 21). A powerful pressure was constantly exerted on these Christian Jews to draw them back into the bosom of Judaism, and this epistle was written in great part to prevent such disaster. Moreover, it appears clear to many that the readers of the epistle had the temple and its services under their eye (ix; x; xiii: 9-17). If this be true, then the conclusion is legitimate that believing Jews of Palestine, perhaps of Jerusalem, are those addressed. Its place of composition is unknown. The phrase, "they of Italy salute you," may mean either that the writer was in Italy, or that certain Italians were with him. Nor can the date be determined with any certainty. Some-

where between A. D. 63-67 it was written, perhaps nearer the first than the second of these dates.

ANALYSIS.

The epistle is somewhat difficult of analysis because, while there are marked divisions in it, these overlap and run into each other, forming thus a compact unity. The junctures are so close and the articulation of the various parts is so logically perfect that partition is almost impossible. One feels as if he were endeavouring to dissect a living organism when he seeks to sever part from part in this marvellous Scripture. Nevertheless, there are certain well defined branches in the treatment of the general subject that are easily discerned, and that, pointed out, may help to a clearer understanding of the structure of the epistle and the conduct of the argument and demonstration. A broad division is this :

- I. The doctrinal discussion (chaps. i-x : 18).
- II. The practical application (x : 19-xiii).

A more particular analysis is the following :

- (a) Chaps. i-vii :—Theme, Christ the True Priest.
- (b) Chaps. viii-x : 18 :—Theme, Perfect Offering of the True Priest.
- (c) Chaps. x : 19-xiii :—Theme, Trials and Triumphs of Faith in the One True Priest and His Perfect Offering.

The writer of Hebrews delights in striking contrasts and comparisons. His arguments and expositions are largely composed of these. He uses them not alone to illustrate and enforce his teaching, but they enter

into his plan, and in many instances they form the essential truth of the profound doctrines he unfolds. Some of the contrasts may be pointed out:—

1. Chaps. i, ii:—Contrast between the Son and angels.
2. Chap. iii: 1–11:—Contrast between the Son and Moses.
3. Chaps. iii: 12–iv: 13:—Contrast between entering the rest of Canaan and the rest of God.
4. Chaps. iv: 14–v: 10:—Contrast between Christ and Aaron.
5. Chap. v: 11–14:—Contrast between Babyhood and Maturity.
6. Chap. vi:—Contrast between Apostasy and faithfulness.
7. Chap. vii:—Contrast between Melchizedek and Aaronic priesthoods.
8. Chap. viii:—Contrast between the Old Covenant and the New.
9. Chaps. ix, x: 18:—Contrast between offerings of the law and offering of Christ.
10. Chap. x: 19–39:—Contrast between punishment under the law and under the Gospel.
11. Chap. xi:—The nature and action of faith.
12. Chap. xii:—Contrast between earthly and heavenly congregations and cities.

The contrasts made between the persons and things mentioned above are very marked and explicit, save in one case, that, viz., of No. 11—the nature and action of faith. And yet there seems to be a suppressed

antithesis even in this case, viz., that of a living and operative faith as opposed to a mere profession which says but never does nor dares.

There are five noteworthy exhortations in Hebrews. Each of them is based on Israelitish history, and the five mark successive stages in the history.

1. Chapter ii: 1-4:—Sinai and its impressive scenes.—Extraordinary and solemn were the phenomena that accompanied the giving of the Law at Sinai (Ex. xix: 10-18; Heb. xii: 18-21). But the Gospel message is more abundantly and convincingly confirmed. By as much as the salvation is great because wrought and brought by the Lord Christ, because it was faithfully transmitted to us by trustworthy eye-witnesses, and because it is attested by God Himself with mighty signs and wonders and gifts of the Holy Spirit, by so much is enhanced the tremendous peril of neglecting it. "For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"—Sinai and Calvary, the law and the Gospel, are here sharply confronted with each other.

2. Chapter iii: 7-19:—The wilderness journey.—Israel in the wilderness and their fall through unbelief, Christians in the world exposed to similar dangers—this is the point of comparison and the basis of the powerful appeal. The people of God then hardened their hearts, provoked the Lord to anger, and tempted Him; hence were excluded from the promised rest. "The deceitfulness of sin," "an evil heart of unbelief,"

and "disobedience" led them to depart from the living God. We are exposed to the like sin and doom. "Take heed," "hold fast," "exhort one another"—this is the earnest exhortation now. "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end, while it is said, "To-day if ye will hear His voice harden not your hearts as in the provocation."

3. Chapter iv: 1-11:—Canaan and its rest.—The significant names of it are, "His rest" (v. 1); "my rest" (vs. 3, 5); "rest" (vs. 3, 9). Both Canaan and heaven are meant, the one, the shadow, the other, the eternal reality. When Israel under the leadership of Joshua conquered Canaan and "possessed their possessions," they entered into rest. The Wilderness with its sins and judgments, its disasters and sorrows, was behind them. Their days of weary marching and counter-marching were over. At last they were *home*. But Canaan with its fruits was not God's rest. It was only a faint image of it. Into that rest many of them failed to enter through unbelief (v. 6). It still lies open, awaiting entrance. We enter it by faith (v. 3). We are exultantly assured "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God" (v. 9). It is a Sabbath rest, like that of God when creation was finished (v. 4), like the series of rests appointed the chosen people, the weekly Sabbath, the seventh-year Sabbath, the great Jubilee Sabbath of the fiftieth year. The full import of these significant seasons, the glorious prophecies hidden in each of them, when full redemption shall be ours, when creation itself shall be delivered

from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God (Rom. viii: 21), when every debt shall be discharged and the alienated inheritance be fully and forever restored, when God Himself shall be our God and dwell with us in blissful, unbroken communion—then shall we indeed know the eternal Sabbatism that remaineth for the people of God. And so the exhortation is, “Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.”

4. Chapter x: 18–39:—The temple, the sprinkled blood, and the Lord’s faithfulness are the basis of this strong appeal. There is, first the liberty of access to believers into the holiest by the blood of Jesus (vs. 19–25). The symbolism is that of the Temple at Jerusalem, the shed blood, and the rent veil.

Christians, whether of Jewish or Gentile extraction, have boldness to enter into the holiest, and to draw near to God. This liberty of access rests on three firm grounds: (1) The blood of Jesus. His atonement forever avails to open the new and living way and fit us, sinners as we are, by its precious application, to stand before God accepted and redeemed. (2) The Great High Priest over the house of God. This also is the Lord Jesus, who ever liveth to make intercession for us, and who accordingly is able to save to the uttermost all who come to God through Him. (3) God’s faithfulness—“He is faithful that promised.” He can never break His plighted word, for He has by two immutable things, His promise and His oath, given us the strongest possible encouragement and as-

surance that we shall be saved (vi: 17-20). We can conceive of no more valid grounds than these on which to urge Christians to hold fast the confession of their faith firmly and unwaveringly to the end.

Then the exhortation is enforced by the dreadful doom of apostasy (x: 26-31). "If we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a fearful looking for of judgment, and a fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversaries." To "sin willfully" does not describe a single act of sin, but a state. It means to apostatize from Christ and to abjure the faith in Him which alone saves. It refers to those who deliberately, definitely, and finally turn away from Christ, and go back to Judaism or to the world. For such the apostle says there remains nothing but overwhelming judgment and devouring wrath. Apostasy is the blackest sin men commit. For it involves a deliberate and scornful trampling upon the Son of God: a profanation of His sacrificial blood, counting it a common thing, the blood of an ordinary man, in no way able to save: insulting the Spirit of grace, blaspheming the whole work of grace and exhibiting it as a deception and a lie. Below this awful deep there is not a lower. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Fearful, because exposed, without possibility of escape or of atonement, to the wrath of the eternal righteousness. It will then be "too late to cry for mercy when it is the time of justice."

We are urged to hold fast by the hope of the Lord's

second advent (x: 32-39). These Christian Hebrews had endured a great fight of afflictions, had identified themselves with other Christian sufferers, had taken joyfully the spoiling of their goods. Let them hold fast their confidence and their hope. "Cast not away therefore your boldness, which hath great recompense of reward." The Lord is coming, and at His appearing they shall enter into joy unspeakable and full of glory. It will not be long—"for yet a little while—how short, how short!—He that cometh shall come, and shall not tarry."

5. Chapter xii: 18-25:—The old covenant and the new; the earthly city and the heavenly; the Hebrew congregation and the Church of the first-born.—Again the imagery is taken solely from Israelitish things and scenes: the Sinai covenant with its terrible sanctions, the Jerusalem of the land and its people—Judaism, in short, with all its wonderful story. With all this Christianity stands in sharpest contrast. We Christians are not come to the mount that can be touched, to the blackness and darkness and tempest, but we are come to Zion, city of the living God, to a vast host of angels, to a heavenly citizenship, to God Himself, to saints made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator, and to His peace-speaking blood. What indescribable dignities and honours—what amazing privileges are these! "See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh."

These five exhortations span a large portion of Israel's history. They start with Sinai and end with Jerusalem, and through them all the apostle finds the deepest and most intensely vital truth, truth that

touches the diversified phases of Christian life and experience. Sinai, the Wilderness, Land of Promise, the Sprinkled Blood, the Holy City. It is another and a marvellously illuminated Pilgrim's Progress. There is first, the great salvation. Then the pilgrim life succeeds, with its defeats and victories, with the Delectable Mountains and Beulah Land and their ecstatic visions and glorious hopes. But these are balanced by frightful combats and horrible temptations and crafty snares and cunning wiles whereby the pilgrim's feet are constantly imperilled. But faith in the efficacy of atoning blood, faith in the unchangeable promise of the living God, triumphs over all antagonisms and hindrances until at length the Celestial City is entered amid songs of joy and shouts of welcome.

DESIGN.

The scope of Hebrews is ascertained, like other books, by its contents. Surveying the wide field of this magnificent epistle one becomes persuaded that there are several lines of truth traceable in it. For there is a manifoldness and comprehensiveness in it, as there is likewise in other books of Scripture. In this short writing the Spirit of revelation combines a variety of ends and aims that we may know the things freely given us of God. Four such lines are now to be traced that a distinct apprehension of its purposes may be had. The four may be here set down: I. A preventive of apostasy. II. The typical character of the Mosaic Institutions. III. Christianity a finality. IV. Nature and action of faith.

I. Hebrews is designed to be a preventive of apostasy. Already this feature of Hebrews has been mentioned, but it demands a closer and more extended scrutiny. Jewish Christians of the apostolic age were exposed to peculiar temptations to renounce the Lord Jesus, to abandon the Gospel and to return to the faith of the great body of their nation. All their lives previous to their conversion they had been taught to reverence the Mosaic institutions as of Divine origin and authority, and to believe that in them Jehovah Himself spoke to His chosen people, and through them Israel had communion with Him. The infinite superiority of Judaism over paganism, the exalted advantages and distinctive privileges pertaining to the Jew, the splendid ceremonies of the temple, the promises made to the fathers, and the hopes and destiny of the race so emphatically foretold by the prophets—all these and much more exerted a most potent influence over them, and strongly tended to draw them away from Christ. We can understand the peculiar force of such influences when we remember the mental torture some of the Reformers of the sixteenth century endured. They had caught the light of truth, they understood the doctrine of the cross, they realized that the church of their fathers, the church in which they themselves had been born and nurtured, had profoundly corrupted the Christian faith and had buried the glorious Gospel of the grace of God beneath multitudinous ordinances and observances of human device, had brought the people of God into a bondage as thorough and relentless as

paganism itself. But how loath were many of these men to whom God by His word and Spirit had spoken, to abandon it. How fondly their hearts clung to it. It was a bad, unholy mother, that old church, it might be; but still it was the mother. And when they finally broke with it and went forth, like Abraham not knowing whither they went, anathematized by the Pope and hated by a pitiless priesthood, how often and wistfully did they look back to the old home and sigh for return, if return had been possible. The feeling is natural because perfectly human; nor is it altogether evil. Out of it the noblest and purest patriotism springs. But loyalty to Christ and His eternal truth transcends this and every other merely human feeling. Thus it was with many Christians in Palestine. Israel's magnificent history of more than twelve centuries, starting with Abraham the father and founder of the race, "the friend of God"; Israel's radiant galaxy of the very greatest men, lawgiver, conqueror of Canaan, priests, judges, kings, prophets, poets, warriors, patriots, statesmen; Israel's covenant relation with Jehovah, and the mighty future promised the chosen race; Israel's exalted morality, her unsurpassed system of laws religious, civil, criminal, and even sanitary and dietetic—is it any wonder that the heart of a Hebrew throbbed with exultation and hope when he thought of it all? Is it surprising that such a people and such a history had for him a strange fascination, a supreme attraction? Moreover, orthodox Israelites were persecuting Christians. They did everything within their power short of murder to

withdraw their brethren who had embraced the faith of the Gospel. To persecutions and threats they added arguments, remonstrances, entreaties derived mainly from the excellency of Mosaism. They had the priesthood, the temple, altars, victims; they had the covenants and promises, the Oracles of God, and the splendid ritual. Of none of these things could Christians boast. They were without temple, priest, and altar. And so in the eye of the Jew Christianity with its simple worship, its lowly places of assembly, its stern refusal to recognize race distinctions and social rank, must sink in comparison. Accordingly, Hebrews deals with the whole question of backsliding and with the peril of renouncing Jesus Christ.

As already intimated, the earnest exhortations with which it abounds indicates this supreme object of the epistle. Its appeal is, "hold fast," be firm and steady even to the end. It is seen also in the ominous examples it cites as to the terrible results of drawing back, and the fearful doom which inevitably awaits the apostate.

In chap. ii: 1, it is written, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that we heard, lest haply we drift away from them" (R. V.). The excellent King James is here somewhat faulty, for it says, "lest we should let them slip," as if they were seeking to escape us. But the danger is, not that the things of the Gospel should prove unstable—they are eternal—but that we should break their ties and drift away. Or, to change the figure, a leaky memory and a plastic conscience are treacherous and unsafe.

In iii: 12, we read, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." This warning may be regarded as the keynote of the epistle; it is the chord that rules the strain. Unbelief is the vicious root of apostasy from the living God. Unbelief has its seat in the heart, and it poisons the whole being, slays the soul itself. It was unbelief that strewed the desert with the carcasses of that generation, and that rounded over them the sand-heaps. It was unbelief that excluded all Israel from entrance into the land of promise save Caleb and Joshua. "They could not enter in because of unbelief." How personal and direct, how freighted with solemn warning are the repeated expressions and exhortations in this third chapter of the epistle: "Harden not your hearts," "take heed," "hear His voice," "exhort one another while it is called to-day." It is a gracious danger-signal which the Lord Himself flashes in the very faces of Christian Jews, and of us as well. For the peril of apostasy is no less possible to us Gentile believers than to them. Perhaps not in half a millennium has there been such imminent peril of apostasy from the living God as in our day and generation. In the bosom of Christendom itself there is a deep, swift current, a stream of tendency, away from the very central truth of God. To us as to them comes the cogent appeal, "take heed," "hold fast," "exhort one another."

Chapter iv: 14, "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the

Son of God, let us hold fast our profession (confession).” The summons to faithfulness here rests on a different basis from that of iii. That springs from the fatality of unbelief as seen in the wilderness; this on the priesthood of our Lord. Since our Priest is Jesus the perfect Man who is able to sympathize with us in all our trials and temptations, since He is the Son of God, Himself God, He is able effectively to help and deliver, therefore let us hold fast our confession. He is genuinely human, He has had personal experience of all that comes into human life, for He was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin; He is the Son of God, supreme in dignity, authority, and power; “He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him” (vii: 25). This is the motive to strengthen and urge us to hold fast our confession.

Chapter x: 23, “Let us hold fast the profession (confession) of our faith without wavering; for He is faithful that promised.” The exhortation here rests on two weighty considerations: the perfect sacrifice of Christ, our Great High Priest; and the faithfulness of God who has promised eternal salvation through Him. The Revision has hope instead of faith, and rightly it would seem, from the fact that faith appears in verse 22, hope in verse 23, and love in verse 24. Christians make the confession of their hope when they acknowledge the Lord Jesus with a true heart. They maintain it by steadfastly adhering to it, by cultivating it, by rejoicing in it, and by preventing its wavering.

Other hortatory teaching of the epistle is found more emphatic even than that already pointed out.

One example occurs in vi: 4-6. In a Scripture which abounds with the most tender appeals and the most fearful threats none is so dark and so hopeless as this. "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 shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame." The Revised Version reads, "And then fell away," in place of the somewhat faulty, "if they shall fall away." All the verbs are in the past tense. The statement is hypothetical, but the possibility of its becoming a reality seems to be implied in this solemn language. Wonderful attainments are ascribed to these suppositional persons; attainments and gifts such as seem to mark them off as genuine believers. So the majority of interpreters regard the passage. Notwithstanding, let two things be noted as to the terms of the description: (1) Great as are their experiences and possessions, not a word is said either of their faith or their love. If they actually possessed these two marks of regeneration, the question would be settled—saved people we should undoubtedly call them. In the absence of faith and love, the things alleged of them may be chiefly intellectual, together with the "common operations of the Spirit." Instance in point is Balaam who was endowed with extraordinary gifts, whom Jehovah inspired to prophesy, and yet he "loved the hire of wrong-doing" and miserably

perished. Judas Iscariot belongs to the same class. To those who shall say to Jesus in the great day, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works?"—His stern words will be, "I never knew you; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. vii: 21-23). Gifts of the highest order whether natural or acquired, may distinguish even unsaved men. Bunyan rightly said, "I saw that there was a way to hell from the very gates of heaven." (2) The term "crucify" is a present tense and denotes what these suppositional persons are actually doing. So long as they thus do, the apostle's tremendous word stands like a mountain of iron—"impossible!" They can find no repentance and restoration to God. Jesus is exalted "to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins" (Acts v: 31). If He is renounced, in effect again crucified to them, return is impossible, their doom is sealed. But if it be proper to ask it—if they should cease to crucify to themselves the Son of God, if they could and would give up this fatal attitude towards Christ—would not restoration be possible? If, however, the present tense, "crucify," denotes continuous and persistent action, then renewal is impossible; apart from Him there is no repentance, their fate is settled.

Now this utter hopelessness of the willful apostate is introduced by the writer as a preventive against the doom described, the suicide of the soul. The following verses clearly exhibit that such is his aim. He does not expect the Hebrews to commit the awful sin

against which he so passionately warns. He is persuaded better things of them, things that accompany salvation, though he thus speaks. But he inserts the warning that they may be steadfast, unmovable, to the end.

Chapter x: 26-31 is another stern admonition parallel with vi: 4-6. Here once more the apostle describes a final renunciation and repudiation of the Lord Christ, and the merciless judgment that must follow. Helpless and hopeless they must remain who deliberately and finally desert the Saviour. "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment." Mercy abused and insulted turns at length into wrath. "If men have insulted God, poured contempt upon His Son, counted the blood of the covenant as an unworthy thing, grieved and quenched the Holy Spirit, what can possibly remain of a remedial kind? . . . What remains after *God* has been exhausted?" (Parker). But here again the object is to prevent the ruin so frightfully portrayed. "Cast not away therefore your confidence." "We are not of them that draw back to perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."

Chap. xii: 14-17, "Follow peace . . . and holiness . . . looking diligently lest any man . . . as Esau." This impressive example of Esau's contemptuous indifference to the great rights and privileges of the covenant is designed to forestall the like criminal behaviour on the part of Christians. Three times the word *lest* occurs in the passage, and

it marks a threefold danger to be carefully shunned. Believers are diligently to inspect their own tendencies and lovingly to guard those of the brotherhood *lest* any fall short of God's grace; *lest* something arise to embitter and pollute; "*lest* there be any fornicator or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright." It is the Christian household that is here in view, and tenderly does the Spirit urge to watchfulness and circumspection. Beginnings of backsliding are to be feared and resisted. Baneful elements must be excluded, else the infection may spread to the whole community, and their holiness unto the Lord be forfeited. To arouse earnest solicitude in this behalf Esau's mournful case is cited. He is called "profane," that is, a man devoted to sensual and earthly pursuits, a secular-minded man, to whom a single meal of lentils (Gen. xxv : 34), was worth far more than the birthright which embraced not only the rights of primogeniture but the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant. Afterwards Esau bitterly regretted his profane act, but it was too late. He could neither undo his own deed nor his father's. The covenant privileges which he so shamefully sold had irrevocably gone from him. The past was irreparable. "In former days he might have had it without tears; afterwards he was rejected however sorely he wept. Let us use the time" (Bengel).

Thus a somewhat wide survey of the epistle leads to the conviction that one chief aim of it is to furnish the Hebrew Christians with the strongest motives to persevere in the faith and to hold their course firm and

steady to the end. Their lot was difficult. Their position exposed them to hardships and sufferings. Not otherwise is it with believers now. Hindrances and oppositions confront us as they did those of the apostolic age. But all this is not accidental. These things are paternal chastisements, and a proof of sonship, common to all sons (xii : 7-10), even to the Son of God Himself (xii : 2). The writer sets before them and before us the noble worthies of former days, the great cloud of witnesses who inherit the promises, and he bids them and us to run the race out to the glorious goal as did they. Above all, he sets before us the supreme example of Jesus, "who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

II. Typical character of the Mosiac Institutions.— This is a prominent feature of the epistle. It may be read as a commentary on the true significance of ancient Judaism. The writer constantly finds the germs of the New Testament dispensation in the rites of Moses. All the prominent features of that system are graphically reviewed, and at his touch each of them becomes instinct with life and glows with a profound meaning. The thoughts spring from the heart of the Old Testament. The language is largely drawn from thence. The imagery is taken bodily from the tabernacle, the priesthood, the altar, and the sacrifices of Israel. Remarkable is the extent to which the writer employs the older Scriptures in the conduct of his theme. Four times he quotes from Genesis, three

times each from Exodus and Deuteronomy and from ten of the Psalms. He sometimes uses the same quotation more than once that his argument may be strengthened and enforced, *e. g.*, he quotes the one hundred and tenth Psalm four times, the second, the fortieth, and the ninety-fifth twice each. He also cites from 2 Samuel, Proverbs, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Habakkuk, and Haggai. Some thirty-eight times are the words of the Old Testament introduced to confirm his doctrine, to illustrate his thoughts, and to enforce his exhortations. Besides these distinct quotations there are many references to the Old Testament history and teaching, as *e. g.*, chap. xi, in which the names of the heroes of faith from Abel to Samuel are enrolled. To the writer of Hebrews the Scriptures of the Old Testament are not merely trustworthy because authentic; they are absolute truth, God's truth, and therefore authoritative. For this apostle, whoever he was, the word of Jehovah is in all things final. Besides, for him that word is instinct with life, filled even with the breath of God, and therefore it is living and energetic, and sharper than any two-edged sword (iv: 12, 13). The word of God is identical with the divine operations it describes (vii: 18). It is on this infallible word that the epistle rests. It takes up the Mosaic ordinances and out of them as pre-ordained types it exhibits the glory of the Messiah and His redemption. The parallelism between Judaism and Christianity as here traced is remarkable both as to extent and internal likeness. Hebrews is a standing protest against the shallow criticism which seeks to

sunder the two Testaments, which refuses to see Messianic prophecies in the Old, that brushes aside all typical teaching as visionary and unwarranted, which in brief empties the older Scripture of all its value as a witness for Christ and His Gospel.

The covenant of Sinai whereby the Hebrew people were constituted a theocracy was but the harbinger of the new covenant (viii: 6-13). The provisions of the old covenant contemplated mainly the possession of the earthly inheritance and the enjoyment of the divine protection and favour, so long as the chosen people remained obedient. But it was temporary and preparatory. The new covenant rests on three "better" things—a better ministry, a better covenant (that is, better in its terms and provisions), and better promises (viii: 6). The old could boast of nothing more than the symbol of the divine presence; the new pledges the abiding indwelling of the Spirit in God's people (viii: 10-12).

The Tabernacle was "a figure for the time then present," rather, *a parable* (see Greek); an acted parable, an outline or sketch of good things to come, not the very things themselves. But Christ is "a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (viii: 2; ix: 24). The wilderness sanctuary with its furniture and services was no more than a shadow of the true and the eternal.

History gives Melchizedek a very small niche (Gen. xiv: 18-20; Ps. cx: 4), three verses in the record of Genesis and one in that oath of God of which

the Psalmist speaks. Hebrews vii draws out at length the striking parallelism between the priesthood of Melchizedek and of Christ. The summing up of the argument is in verse 21: "The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." Instantly at the touch of this verse Melchizedek becomes transparent, and a greater Priest is seen shining through him; he almost disappears in the person of the Messiah.

The high priest of Israel was merely an emblem of our Great High Priest (ii : 17 ; iv : 14, 15 ; ix : 11, 12).

The sacrifices under the Mosaic Law were only symbols of the one perfect offering of the Son of God (ix : 24-28).

The rest of Canaan was but a figure of the better rest, the true Sabbath-keeping, which remains for the people of God (iv : 3, 9).

The earthly Jerusalem was but an imperfect image of the heavenly city, and the congregation but a dim reflection of the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven (xii : 18-23).

In short, the writer finds that Jesus Christ, in the dignity of His person, in the majesty of His offices, and in the perfection of His redeeming work is the substance of Tabernacle and Temple, of altar, victim, and priest, of covenant and people. According to this epistle Judaism as a system was a Messianic prophecy; it was a kind of kindergarten school in which God by a splendid series of object lessons taught His people that in due time One would appear who should make good every promise and prophecy—the Prophet of whom

Moses was but a faint type ; the Priest of whom Aaron was merely a shadow ; the Offering of which those under the law were but dim and distant adumbrations.

The marvellous correspondence between Judaism and Christianity, as it is developed in this epistle, is neither accidental nor fortuitous. God is the author of both, hence the vital connection between them. But Judaism was fashioned to prefigure Christianity, not Christianity to resemble Judaism. The antitype is not constructed to correspond with the type, but the type is constructed to bear the likeness of the antitype. It is because of the antitype that the type exists. Mosaism, being a rough draft of Christianity, presupposed its existence. Had Judaism been an end in itself, had it possessed no relation to Christianity, it could never have been the subject of apostolic exposition. But the New Testament writers do treat it as a prophetic system, and they find in it the germs of future and more glorious revelations of the grace of God. Under the handling of the inspired writer of our epistle "shell and husk, in which the precious kernel is hidden, fall away one after another until at length the kernel itself, the Christ, appears personally" (Herder). Judaism had great truths lodged in it, for it was from God. But when it has served the purposes for which it was given it disappears to give place to what is more excellent and enduring.

III. The epistle presents the Christian faith as perfect and final.—It is commonly said that the aim of Hebrews is, to demonstrate the superiority of Chris-

tianity to Judaism. The statement is very true. But there is a larger view which includes this, and much more. It is this: The epistle aims to prove, and actually does prove, that the new covenant established by the Lord Jesus Christ is perfect and therefore final. There is in it neither defect nor weakness; there is in it nothing of decay or of transitoriness; therefore, it is the last and most complete expression of God's love and saving power. This great truth is worked out by the apostle by a series of magnificent and impressive contrasts and comparisons. The Mosaic economy drew a vast number of sketches and outlines it never filled in because it could not. It left them incomplete, unfinished, because it had not the power to perfect them. It had many institutions which failed to fulfill their own manifest aim. It made many promises it could not realize. The inherent weakness of the system is summed up in this comprehensive sentence: "The law made nothing perfect" (vii: 19). On the other hand, whatever Christ touches as the Mediator and Surety of the new covenant, He perfects forever. Hence Christianity with its supreme revelations is a finality.

Moreover, Christianity is the legitimate and divinely intended result of Judaism. It is its flower, its crown. Judaism is like the root; Christianity is the tree sprung from the root, full-grown and laden with the richest fruit. This could not have been had not that been. As the New Testament rests on the Old, grows out of it in the deepest and truest sense, so Christ who is the essence and the heart of Christianity is the per-

fect realization of all that Judaism taught and promised. He fills in every incomplete sketch and outline, He perfects what it pledged but could never give, what its ordinances failed to do He achieves. In Christ priesthood reaches its worthiest ends, its absolute perfection. Christ's is the perfect offering. Before Him sacrifices were impotent to meet the needs of men, and the Divine claims. "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." "But this man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God" (x:4, 12). After Him no other offering need be made, nor can be made. By Him "it is finished." Accordingly, the new covenant is the better, even the final covenant, because it rests on the better ministry and the better promises of the Mediator, Jesus Christ the Son of God. This, it is believed, is the very core of the Epistle to the Hebrews. And this appears to be the transcendent aim the apostle had before him as he wrote.

The demonstration of this central truth as developed in the epistle is carried on by a series of contrasts and comparisons, as already noted. It will appear that the apostle deals with the Mosaic system as a whole, and that his treatment covers its essential elements, and that he proves beyond peradventure that Christ is the perfect and hence the final revelation of God to men. All the glories of our Saviour are exhibited in the epistle. Here is His essential glory, that which was His by virtue of His dignity as the eternal Son of God, Himself God. Here likewise is His moral glory,

that, namely, which He displayed during His earthly life and ministry, the perfections which marked His entire course from His birth to His death on the cross. Here, too, are His official glories, those which pertain to Him as the Mediator, and as He is now seated at the right hand of God in the heavens, the glorified Son of Man. All these glorious beams are caught by the apostle and gleam on every page of this Scripture. Let it be ours so to open our minds that some of the resplendent rays may enter and enlighten.

(a) Comparison between the prophets and the Son as to revelation (i : 1-3).—In various parts and in many forms God spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets. It is to Israel and Israel's prophets mainly reference is made. The prophets are those who served God in the work of revelation, those who spake from God (2 Peter i : 21). Theirs was a genuine message from the Lord, the real Speaker being the Lord alone. But in the end of the days He hath spoken to us by His Son. The Son is the last and the greatest messenger of God to men. He is constituted Heir of all things; by Him the time-worlds were made; He is the effulgence of the Father's glory, and the very image of His substance. The term *glory* is not the external radiance or halo that surrounds the divine nature, it is that nature itself, the very essence of Deity. Now, Jesus is emphatically declared to be the outshining splendour of that glorious Being, the very image of that infinite Substance. No more precise and positive language could be employed to as-

sert the Divinity of the Son and His equality with God than this. Moreover, He made purification of sins, put them away forever by the one offering of Himself without spot, and He is now seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high, as the fit reward of His finished work. Besides, through all time, through all eternity He sustains the organic body of the universe; He upholds all things by His word which expresses and conveys His almighty power.

By reason of His exalted character, and because of His redemptive work, He is now at God's right hand where no created being ever can be as is He. Christ is here set forth in three stages of His great history; preexistence; incarnation; exaltation. In His person He outranks all God's human messengers. Christ's message is not exactly set in contrast with the messages of the prophets, but is rather compared with those, and the inference is that by as much as He is the superior of the prophets, by as much as He speaks in the Messianic times, by as much as He is exalted to the throne of God, by so much is He the greatest of all messengers to men, and the last to be sent. In the truest and the highest sense He is the "seal" of all the prophets.

(*b*) Contrast between Christ and angels (i : 4-14). Seven quotations from the Old Testament are found in this section. Two of them are applied to angels, four to Messiah, one to God the unchangeable. But the seven demonstrate the infinite superiority of Jesus our Lord to angels, and they link Him indissolubly with Jehovah Himself. Since, therefore, Christ is the

author of the new covenant of redemption, since He has by His blood brought all believers into saved relations with God, His new covenant founded on His perfect work is final.

(1) There is contrast between the name and the dignity of the Lord and the place and name which angels hold. The Son is better than angels, *i. e.*, is more exalted in dignity and honour, because He has inherited a more excellent name than they. The contrast shows the Son's superiority to all beings, even the highest, especially to the angels. No name, however resplendent, even of the mightiest angel, can for a moment vie with His, for His is surrounded with unapproachable splendour. Specifically, the more excellent name is *Son* :—"Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee." The quotation is from the second Psalm. It is the text adduced often in the New Testament to prove Jesus' Messiahship (v : 5 ; Acts xiii : 33). Ps. cx : 3 is thus translated by the Septuagint : "From the womb, before the morning star, I have begotten Thee." Those ancient scholars seem to have understood the verse as pointing back to a date before the first star came into being, as absolutely timeless. Paul applies the words, "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee," to Christ's resurrection from the dead (Acts xiii : 33), but in Romans i : 4, he teaches that Christ's Sonship was "declared" by His resurrection. The resurrection of the Lord was indeed the most convincing evidence of His divine Sonship, though that event, vital as it is, did not constitute Jesus God's Son. For both at the baptism and the Trans-

figuration, the Father's voice was heard in attestation of the relation, "Thou art My Son." Christ's Sonship is dateless, timeless. In this supreme relation no angel however mighty can be a sharer. "To which of the angels ever said He ——?" The answer must be negative: He never thus addressed an angel. (2) Contrast between Christ and angels as to homage (i:6, 7). "And again, when He bringeth the first begotten into the world, He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him." The Revision, as also the margin of the old version, is certainly right: "And when again He bringeth in the first-born into the world," etc. "Again" does not introduce another quotation but indicates a second bringing in, the Lord's second advent. The quotation, with a slight grammatical change is from the ninety-seventh Psalm, seventh verse, not from the Septuagint addition to Deut. xxxii: 43, as R. v. margin reads.¹ Angels are bidden to worship the Son. They sang their midnight song of joy at His first advent, they will adore Him as supreme as will all creation when He shall come again in His majesty and glory. As worshippers they recognize Christ's divine sovereignty, themselves as His inferiors and subjects. Moreover, angels are God's servants, agents who do His bidding, executors of His will: "And of

¹ If Bleek, Farrar and others are right in holding that the author of Heb. quotes from the Alexandrian Codex of the Sept., v. 6 cannot be taken from Deut. xxxii: 43, for that recension reads "Sons of God" instead of "Angels of God." It is thought that the addition in Deut. was taken from Ps. xcvi: 7—and if so, it is originally this Psalm that Hebrews quotes.

the angels He saith, Who maketh His angels spirits (winds), and His ministers a flame of fire." The words are quoted from Ps. civ : 4. Angels are the mighty and intelligent forces by whom the divine purposes are executed. They were used for the inauguration of the first covenant (ii : 2 ; Acts vii : 53 ; Gal. iii : 19). And they were concerned in Israel's life and history as the chosen people, as the Old Testament attests. Like the two great natural forces of wind and fire angels interpose in human affairs and carry the Lord's purposes into effect. But no such language as this is employed of the Son of God. God doth not make Him anything, He says—"Thy throne, O God."—Angels are merely ministering spirits, sent forth to do service to the heirs of salvation (v. 14.) (3) Contrast between Christ and angels as to Rulership. "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom" (vs. 8, 9). The throne is eternal. He who sits on it receives the divine title, God. And here, God anoints God with the oil of gladness. Manifestly the Occupant of this exalted throne is the Lord Jesus, the Anointed; it is He who sways a sceptre of universal dominion. Angels have no such seat of supreme authority, they are only messengers, servants, creatures; this Sovereign is God. To no one of the angels did God ever say, "Sit thou on My right hand, until I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet" (Ps. cx : 1). This same passage is cited by the Saviour in its Messianic sense (Matt. xxii : 41-44 ; by Peter, Acts ii : 34 ; by Paul, 1 Cor. xv : 25). In all these passages

this great gift of power is made by the Father to the Son, and it is the Son's investiture of universal and unchallenged rule over all creatures and all their actions. No angel, however puissant and glorious, has such authority, or ever will have. It is the Son alone who fills this august seat of power. Once more, we are expressly told that Jesus alone rules in the Messianic age: "For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak" (ii: 5). Here is a double contrast, viz., this world, and the future world; angels and Christ. The present world or more properly, the present age, is that in which angels had much to do. The intimation is, that it was under their management, as God's agents. And that is true of the Mosaic economy. But the age to come is the Messianic age, which will be directly under the rulership of Christ, when "all things shall be put under His feet." That age is, partly present, and partly future. The undisputed sway of Jesus will be only when He comes again and takes unto Himself His great power and reigns in righteousness over the whole world. So that the doctrine is that Christ now in heaven is on the eternal throne with the Father, and that He is to rule in undisturbed power in the age to come. In both senses, angels hold an immeasurably lower place, are themselves servants and subjects of His. They are not enthroned, and they will not rule in the Messianic age when Christ becomes all and in all.

(c) Contrast between Christ and Moses (iii: 1-6). The contrast here respects the position or rank of

Moses and the Lord Jesus respectively. Both alike have to do with "the house of God." By "house" is meant an order or economy established of God and including God's people. The expression, "His house," twice used in the section (vs. 2, 5), does not mean Moses' house, for the words are cited from Num. xii:7—"My servant Moses . . . who is faithful in all mine house." It is God's house. There is a measure of resemblance noted between the two here contrasted, that, viz., of faithfulness. This characterized each of them. Moses was indeed faithful in God's house. His whole history illustrates his fidelity, save perhaps the one instance when he forgot his place in "the house," and acted in such fashion as to forfeit entrance into Canaan (Num. xx). But that is not remembered in this Scripture; his devotion alone is. Likewise, Christ was faithful to Him that appointed Him to His position in the "house." The vast difference and distance between the two lies in their rank. Moses was a servant in God's house, Christ is a Son. The word for servant is not that which the margin of the Revision commonly gives as "bond-servant," but is one that denotes a nobler and more intimate service, such as a freeman renders. Moses was such a servant, loved and honoured of his Master, nevertheless, he was a servant, and nothing more. Now a servant has no natural rights in the house. He cannot command, his place is to obey the orders of his master. The son has these rights. The servant may not be the possessor of a single article in the house, but the son is the heir, and all things belong to him by a natural

right. The servant may have no kinship with the house, he may belong to another race, his origin be of a foreign family, of alien blood. But the son is the same with the father in blood, in nature, dignity, and name. It is nature and rank which marks the immense distance that separates our Saviour and Moses. Jesus is the Son "over His own house." He built the house, both that in which Moses served, and that in which He Himself acts as the great High Priest. He is the Heir; He rules, orders, supersedes, modifies, as it pleases Him. Moses' service might have been vastly more successful, his usefulness might have been doubled, his years protracted to centuries, yet, with all this, he would have ever remained a servant in God's house, he never could have risen to the rank of the Son. By as much as the Son and Heir transcends in nature and name the servant, by as much as the Builder of the house hath more honour than the house, by so much does Jesus the Son of God exceed Moses in power and glory. To Him "the house" and all pertaining to it, even Moses himself, belongs. Therefore, as the Builder and Master of the house of God, Jesus inaugurates the new covenant, which is perfect and final, thereby setting aside the old. Accordingly, Christians are bidden "consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Jesus who was faithful to Him that appointed Him" (iii: 1, 2). Bengel with his deep insight into Scripture says: As apostle, Jesus pleads the cause of God with us; as High Priest, He pleads our cause with God. The two functions are bound up in the great office of Mediator. Christ combines in

Himself the two offices of Moses and Aaron, and both in Him are made perfect. "Wherefore . . . consider Him."

(*d*) Contrast between Christ and Aaron as to priesthood.—A few brief observations preliminary to this prime feature of Hebrews may not be inappropriate. Priesthood is a real office, embracing very specific duties and functions. The office belongs to the realm of grace, presupposing, as it does, sin and the divine purpose to remove it. The two great priests of the Old Testament were Melchizedek and Aaron. No others that ever bore the name rank with them, except, of course, our Lord Jesus Christ; and of the two Melchizedek is the greater. There are two reasons why these are to be considered the chiefs: First, because they are the *first* in their respective orders. Melchizedek was not only the head of his priestly order, but he had no successor. It began and terminated with him (vii: 3). The Levites and common priests, Aaron's sons, depended for their official existence on Aaron. Apart from him they could have no official character. Second, because the priesthood of Christ is typified by both. The priestly office in both these heads of priestly orders is summed up and completed in Him. In fact, it was in virtue of Christ's priesthood that Melchizedek and Aaron were inducted into the office. They were called and consecrated in order to be types, adumbrations of Him in whom the priesthood has its source, its perfection, and its permanence. The priesthood of these two men is combined and completed in our Lord Jesus, according to He-

brews. For while Christ is of the order of Melchizedek, He exercises the office after the pattern of Aaron. This is the key to the teaching of the epistle on this subject, and to ignore the latter feature is to do injustice to this Scripture, and to give but a partial exposition of its comprehensive argument. If we confine Christ's priestly functions to the Melchizedek type alone, we deprive His sacrificial death of priestly character altogether. But the epistle undoubtedly views it as priestly action. The term "offer," in connection with His death, certainly includes both ideas of victim and priest. In offering Himself for the sins of His people Christ fulfilled the type of Aaron, and in continuing His priestly work in the heavenly sanctuary, He is the Melchizedek priest. So that, the conclusion seems legitimate that in one aspect of His work He accomplished the Aaronic type, and in another He fulfilled that of Melchizedek. Accordingly, He was a true Priest in His sacrificial death, and He is no less a true Priest in heaven. But what does priesthood involve? What are its duties and functions? Several important elements enter into it, some of which are here mentioned.

(1) Priesthood implies *choice*.—Not only is the office of divine institution, but the priest himself is selected and appointed of God. "For every high priest, being taken from among men, is appointed for men in things pertaining to God. . . . And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but when he is called of God, as was Aaron" (v: 1, 4). The priest was not chosen or elected by the people, much less

was he self-appointed. Divine selection severed him from those in whose behalf he was to act. "So Christ also glorified not Himself to be made a high priest, but He that spake unto Him, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee" (v: 5). Our great Priest came not into the world unsent. He received His commission from God, the fountain of all sovereignty. He came into the world bearing heavenly credentials; "He hath anointed Me . . . He hath sent Me" (Luke iv: 18), He announced at the opening of His ministry.

(2) Priesthood implies *representation*.—"The high priest represented the whole people. All Israelites were reckoned as being in him" (Vitringa). The priest's representative character appears, (1) from his bearing the tribal names upon his shoulders and over his heart; (2) his committing heinous sin involved the people in his guilt: "If the anointed priest shall sin so as to bring guilt on the people" (Lev. iv: 3, R. v. The Septuagint reads, "to make the people sin"). The anointed priest was the high priest. When he sinned, the people sinned. His official action was reckoned their action. The whole nation was involved in the transgression of their representative. The converse appears to be just as true. When he did officially what was right before the Lord, the Congregation of Israel was reckoned as having done the same. Such was the deep significance of the transactions on the Day of Atonement (Lev. xvi). It was for the Congregation as a corporate body that Aaron carried the blood of the sin-offering into the

Most Holy Place and sprinkled it seven times on and before the mercy-seat. It was the nation's sins he symbolically put upon the head of the scapegoat which bore them away into a land of forgetfulness. Heb. v: 1, "Every high priest . . . is ordained for men," *i. e.*, for their benefit, in their behalf. He acts for them and in their interest.

(3) Priesthood implies the *offering of sacrifice*.—This was the chief function of the priest, "to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins" (v: 1). He would be no priest who should have nothing to offer. Without a sacrifice, he would be like a king without a kingdom, or a prophet without a message or a mission. His offerings have respect unto God. He is "ordained for men in things pertaining to God." God is the object of his sacrifice. He seeks thereby to propitiate Him, to meet His claims, to satisfy His justice and holiness.

(4) Priesthood implies *intercession*.—Intercession is grounded on atonement. There can be no effective advocacy on behalf of the guilty until provision is made for the removal of the guilt and for the pardon of the sinner. In the priestly service of Israel the sprinkling of the blood of the sin-offering on the mercy-seat served to cover the guilt of the people from the face of God, and at the same time it was an appeal to Him to forgive and bless His people according to the covenant promise. So we read that after Aaron had thus sprinkled the blood of propitiation he came forth from the sanctuary to bless Israel (Lev. ix: 22-24; cf. Num. vi: 22-27; 1 Chron. xxiii: 13;

Deut. xxi: 5). Aaron lifted up his hands, "the very hands that had been wet with blood, and blessed the people. It was as if he was pouring over them all the grace and peace that flow from the blood of Jesus" (Bonar). The Scriptures expressly combine Christ's intercession and His sacrificial death (1 John ii: 1, 2). In Heb. ix: 24, He is said to appear before the face of God for us (see Greek). He presents Himself before God as our representative. All that the Son of God incarnate is, and all that He did on earth, He is and did for His people; so that the infinite dignity of His person and the value of His perfect redemptive work combine and unite in His effective intercession. These are some of the elements of the priestly office. We are now to study the contrast and the comparison of Christ's priesthood with the Aaronic.

1. Difference of *order*.—Israel's high priest must be of Aaron's order. Christ as Priest is of the order of Melchizedek (vi: 20). Chap. vii: 1-3 gives some information of this great priest. Gen. xiv: 18-20 and Ps. cx: 4 contain all that the Old Testament records of him. We are told that he was king of Salem (perhaps Jerusalem), and priest of the Most High God. Then the apostle goes on to interpret the significance of his name and the silence of the record as to his family, genealogy, and priestly character. There has been much conjecture who Melchizedek was, all of which is worthless, because it is all mere idle speculation. He has been identified with Shem, with Enoch, with the Holy Spirit, and with Christ

Himself in His pre-incarnate state. He was none of these. Let it suffice to say that his rank was of the highest, for he combined in himself the greatest offices found among men. He was a king whose rule was just, even as he was personally righteous. His kingdom was distinguished for righteousness and as a consequence peace was both promoted and established. He was priest of God Most High. He held thus a double office, royal sovereignty and a divinely recognized priesthood. Besides, he stood alone in these high dignities: "Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life." All this surprising language must be understood in relation to Melchizedek's royal priesthood. In his priestly office he was without predecessor and without successor. In the priesthood of Israel everything depended on the register of descent. The Hebrew priest must have a clear and clean genealogical record. He whose genealogy was uncertain or defective, whose lineage was not pure, was barred (Ezra ii : 61, 62 ; Neh. vii : 63, 64). But Melchizedek's priesthood depends on no tables of descent. His priesthood, in so far as the history goes, began and ended in himself. He stands absolutely alone in the office, and we think of him and know him only as a priest, always a priest. Hence the apostle says, he "abideth a priest continually." "Like a portrait he is always the same ; he follows us about with his eyes, a king and a priest, always alone, with no ancestry of priesthood before him, and none succeeding to his priesthood after him, always living—so Scripture

shows him, and so continually in its pages we behold him" (Davidson). Therefore he is "made like unto the Son of God." He is a fitting type of our Great High Priest, Jesus Christ; he is indeed the one pre-eminent Old Testament priestly type, outranking all others that held the office:—(1) because Melchizedek was a royal priest; and Christ likewise is the divine Priest-King; (2) because he stands alone in his office; and Christ also is the sole occupant of His priestly dignities, without predecessor or successor therein; (3) because he abideth a priest continually. Eternity casts its shadow over Melchizedek. In the Genesis record and in the one hundred and tenth Psalm he ever remains a priest of God Most High. None knows whence he came, who he was, where or when he was born, where or when he died. As priest he hath "neither beginning of days nor end of life." So likewise Christ's great Priesthood is eternal, for it is bound up with His person as the Son of God who is described in Isa. ix: 6 as "Father of eternity"; (4) because he is a universal priest. He blessed Abraham, father and founder of the Hebrew race; he blessed no doubt also his own people. He was priest both to Jew and Gentile, as likewise is our Priest, Jesus Christ. Christ is of Melchizedek's "order"; a priest after this pattern or manner. He is not after the order of Aaron, for in such case He could be Priest only to the Hebrew people, as Aaron was. But now being of the order of Melchizedek He holds a higher and nobler priesthood because it is universal, perfect, and efficient.

2. Superiority of Melchizedek to Abraham.—His greatness and superiority appears in two significant actions: first, he received tithes of Abraham; the patriarch gave him the tenth of the spoils (v. 4). The word used for "tenth of the spoils" is significant; "chief spoils," the top of the heap, the cream, as we say. It was the very best of all that Abraham gave. Second, Melchizedek in turn gave to the patriarch his priestly benediction. "And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better." This does not mean that Melchizedek was a better man than Abraham as to character or conduct, but that as priest standing for God and acting as by His behest he gave him the blessing. Thus, Abraham to whom were given the promises, whom such a halo of glory surrounds, the head and fount of Israel, the heir of the world (Rom. iv : 13), the friend of God, recognizes Melchizedek's superior claims and his own inferiority.

3. Melchizedek's superiority to the Levitical priests (vs. 5-10).—This appears from two important facts: (a) Levi virtually paid tithes to this priest of God Most High when Abraham his progenitor gave him the tenth of the chief spoils. Accordingly, Levi to whom tithes are due by law himself paid them to Melchizedek: hence his inferiority in the priestly realm is rightfully inferred. (b) The Levitical priests are mortal; they die. But it is witnessed that Melchizedek lives; his priesthood inheres in a personality that never dies, whether in his own unique history or in Christ of whom he was an illustrious type. Besides, neither he nor his antitype Christ received the priest-

hood by law or by succession, but solely by the appointment of God. Hence the immeasurable superiority of this priesthood over that of the Levitical order.

4. Displacement of the Levitical priesthood by the Melchizedek priesthood of Christ (vs. 11-19).—The central truth in this section seems to be this: The inability of the Levitical priesthood and all connected with it to meet the claims of God and human needs. That priestly ministry lay at the base of the whole Mosaic system. The law depended on it for its execution, even for its existence. If "perfection," *i. e.*, reconciliation of sinful men with God, had been achieved by the law as administered by Israel's priests, then no change would have been either required or needed. The Aaronic ministry would have lasted while sun and moon endure. But a complete change has been made both as to priesthood and the law imposed upon it, and this because the one was carnal, fleshly, and the other weak and unprofitable. Neither of these could bring peace with God, peace of conscience, nor holiness of heart. Therefore, the Levitical priesthood and the legal constitution resting upon it have been set aside, and in their place there has been introduced and established the Melchizedek priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom God Himself has borne witness, "Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek," and who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, as were Aaron and his successors, but after the power of an indissoluble life. The demonstration is complete, final. The

dying priests of Aaron's order must give place to a nobler priest, an undying Mediator, the Lord Christ who alone has the right to say to His people as He said to His servant John in Patmos, "Fear not; I am the first and the last and the Living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades" (Rev. i: 17, 18). Christ can have no successor as priest; He "ever liveth."

5. The Melchizedek priesthood rests on the oath of God (vs. 20-22).—The Aaronic priests in no case were inducted into the high office with an oath: Jesus Christ was. This is full of meaning. When Jehovah accompanies His word or His act by His own solemn oath we may well rest assured that infinite value attaches thereto, that eternity is bound up with that to which He swears, that it must abide unchallenged and unchangeable forever. This is true touching Christ's priesthood; eternity is stamped upon it, and the covenant which rests upon His priesthood is also eternal (xiii: 20). The want of the oath in the case of the Levitical priesthood indicates its temporary and provisional character. But let it be noted also that the priesthood and covenant correspond. Jesus as High Priest inducted into His office by the Divine oath, becomes the surety of the covenant. He is its guarantor and upholder. Not one provision or promise or blessing contained in it will fail. He will make forever good its whole content to His people. He stands pledged so to do, for He is our Surety; His glorious endorsement stands written over all the terms of the "better covenant," and He, Maker of the worlds

and the ages, God's own glorious High Priest, cannot fail.

6. Christ the Great High Priest secures perfect salvation (vs. 23-25).—These verses describe His power to save to the uttermost all who draw near to God through Him. And this for two reasons: (*a*) unlike the Aaronic priests whom death triumphed over, He abides forever; (*b*) He ever lives to intercede for His people. Through His intercession they are kept when tempted, enabled to hold fast the confession of their faith, to endure, and even to rejoice in manifold sufferings. Blessed it is beyond the power to express that the gracious One, now seated at the right hand of the heavenly Majesty, thinks of His struggling people on earth and runs to their help by His all-prevailing intercession. In the term translated "uttermost" there is a wealth of meaning and assurance difficult to express: completely, perfectly, out and out, unto finality, it might be rendered. And so Paul could fling abroad his mighty challenge: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? . . . Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom. viii: 33, 34).

7. Summary of Christ's priestly perfections (vs. 26-28).—These are exhibited in three distinguishing marks: (1) in His fitness for the office (v. 26): "For such a high priest became us, holy, harmless (guileless), undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." *Holy* in His relations with God; *harmless*, guileless in His relations with men;

undefiled in His personal and official character; *separated* from sinners and from sin both in His earthly life and now in His heavenly existence where He continues to exercise His priestly functions. Such a High Priest it is becoming we sinners should have, One who though He was descended from an impure race of ancestors brought no stain of sin into the world with Him; though He long conversed with sinners and grappled with fierce temptations, yet received no taint; He was undefiled and undefilable. (2) The ministry of such a Priest transcends that of the Levitical order (v. 27). Daily Israel's priests must offer sacrifices for sins, for their own and for their fellows'. But Jesus made one offering, complete and perfect in itself forever, when He gave Himself for us. (3) In His Person He transcends the Aaronic priesthood (v. 28). They had infirmity, died one by one through the generations. Christ lives, is accepted and approved of God, for He acts by virtue of the almighty Oath; He is the Son of God; He is perfected for evermore.

Thus the apostle has demonstrated the absolute truthfulness of his thesis, viz., the infinite perfection of Christ's priesthood.

(e) Contrast between the Old Covenant and the New (viii: 1-13).—The writer introduces this fresh contrast by fixing the attention of the reader on the chief point of the discussion, viz., the High Priesthood of Christ; His place of ministry, the heavenly sanctuary; the finality of His offering, for He "sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the

heavens"; the character of His ministry appears in the better covenant which He makes (vs. 1-5). These verses are not a summary of the preceding discussion; they are introductory to what follows.

A covenant is commonly defined to be an agreement between two parties who bind themselves by certain conditions with a view of attaining some object. The Scriptures make mention of covenants between men, *e. g.*, that of Abraham and Abimelech (Gen. xxi: 32), and that of Joshua and the Gibeonites (Josh. ix); between God and men, *e. g.*, God and Noah (Gen. ix: 8-17); God and Abraham (Gen. xvii). Where a covenant is made between God and men God always imposes the conditions and He institutes the agreement; men have nothing to do with either its proposal or its conditions. "A covenant between God and men cannot possibly have any other meaning than that He will be their God and they His People" (viii: 10). In the Greek language the term for covenant has sometimes the idea of covenant properly as such, and sometimes that of testament or will (*e. g.*, ix: 16, 17), in which places it certainly means will or testament. The covenants drawn out at some length in this chapter are based exclusively on the idea of pact or agreement, the feature of testament being absent.

By the two covenants of course is meant, that made between God and Israel at Sinai (Ex. xxiv: 4-8), and that instituted through the death of Jesus. The former is described at length in Ex. xix-xxiv: the latter in Matt. xxvi: 28 as "the blood of the new

covenant," and in 1 Cor. xi : 25 as the "cup of the new covenant in My blood." Jeremiah describes this latter covenant in its characteristic features in xxxi : 31-34. The passage is here quoted in full. The antithesis between the two is most marked.

1. The mediators of the two covenants.—A mediator is one whose office it is to reconcile parties at variance and to bring them into friendship and peace. The mediator of the Sinai covenant was Moses (Gal. iii : 19; Deut. v : 5, 22, 23, 31). He was an honoured servant of God, and the greatest man Israel has produced, perhaps the greatest of our race. But he was only a man, often erring, always weak and dependent. The mediator of the new is Christ the Lord, the One who has revealed it (i : 1; ii 1; iii : 1). By as much as the Son transcends in dignity and authority the servant, by so much is His covenant better than that inaugurated through Moses.

2. The first was initiated by blood of animal sacrifices (ix : 19, 20; Ex. xxiv : 1-8).—But Jesus the Mediator ratifies the new covenant by the shedding of His own blood (ii : 11; ix : 15, 16; x : 29; Matt. xxvi : 28). Like the epistles of Paul this Scripture attaches supreme importance to the blood of Christ. By it eternal redemption has been obtained for us (ix : 12); by it the conscience is cleansed from dead works (ix : 14), and service to the living God secured; by it believers enter the heavenly sanctuary, accepted and saved forever (x : 19). It is this precious blood which has inaugurated, ratified, and forever secured all the provisions of the new covenant for the people of God.

Not one word of the "better promises" contained in it will fail of being realized and enjoyed. The red seal of redemption stamped upon it by the Son of God Himself can never be invalidated. Through all eternity it will hold. If the first had been faultless there would have been neither need nor place for a second. But the first was imperfect, faulty. Therefore another and better was provided, of which Jeremiah gives the characteristics. It was when Judah and Israel were both in exile that Jeremiah spoke, and the exile was proof of the inefficiency of the old covenant; it was virtually broken and ready to vanish. A better was announced, and is now in full operation—the new covenant of Christ with His people.

3. The first covenant was mainly legal, one that imposed duties and denounced failures and infractions of its terms. The second covenant is evangelical, spiritual. In the first God said, "Thou shalt," "Thou shalt not": in the second, He says, "I will" (vs. 10-12). The first was inscribed on tables of stone: the second on the tables of the heart (2 Cor. iii: 2-8). The first was suited to the childhood of the chosen people, to minors: the second belongs to Christians, who have reached their majority (Gal. iv: 1-7). "I will put my laws into their mind, and on their heart also will I write them"—in their minds, that they may know them; in their hearts, that they may love, cherish and delight in them.

4. The new covenant provides for universal knowledge of the Lord (v. 11), "And they shall not teach every man his neighbour (*fellow-citizen*, as the critical texts

give it) and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest." The first was chiefly external, consisting of written statutes and prescriptions; hence requiring to be taught to men by those appointed to such office, as priests and prophets. But the second is written in the heart, is like a universal principle of the mind, and known to all who are the happy possessors of it. No priest or prophet is needed to teach it to them (cf. I John ii: 27).

5. The new covenant announces forgiveness of unrighteousness and the oblivion of sins and iniquities (v. 12), "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness," etc. This divine forgiveness so unconditionally promised lies at the base of the other promises of the new covenant. So the apostle himself regards it (x: 16, 17). The first was defective exactly in this, it could not take away sins (ix: 9: x: 4, 11). Beautiful and most comforting are God's words, "I will remember no more." He is the only Being who can forget forever, and He will obliterate all memory of His people's sins, these He will forever blot out. A new covenant implies that the first is invalidated, is expiring of old age. It is displaced by the second and perfect which is unchangeable because perfect.

(f) Contrast and comparison between the Aaronic offerings and Christ's (ix: 6-x: 18).—Offering sacrifice is an essential function of the priestly office. We are even told that for this purpose every priest is appointed, that it was necessary our High Priest present an offering to God (viii: 3). He is no priest who has

no sacrifice to offer. Accordingly, this sublime section we are now to study is devoted to the offerings respectively of Israel's priests on the one hand, and to the one efficient offering of the Son of God on the other. Let it be carefully noted that here is both contrast and comparison. For while there is the sharpest antithesis between the two as to inherent value, there is also a striking parallelism. The priestly ministry of our Lord corresponds precisely with that of Aaron. Indeed, the Lord as Priest followed closely the model of Aaron, particularly in his ministry of the Great Day of Atonement. Hence Christ fulfills the double priestly type of the Old Testament, viz., Melchizedek and Aaron. He is of the order of the first, He exercises His office after the pattern of the second.

1. Aaron must first offer for his own sins and for his household before he could present the sacrifice for the people (ix : 7 ; cf. vii : 27 ; Lev. ix : 8).—This fact indicates the inherent weakness of the Levitical priesthood. The priest was a sinner, his house sinful, and before he can act at all in behalf of the congregation his sins and those of his house must be covered by the blood of atonement. We are not told distinctively that he made confession of his guiltiness over the victim's head, but that he did so is certain if priestly example at the time of the second temple is proof. He laid both his hands on the head of his offering, and confessed : " Ah, Jehovah ! I have committed iniquity ; I have transgressed ; I have sinned—I and my house. Oh, then, Jehovah, I entreat Thee, cover over the iniquities, the transgressions, and the sins which I have

committed, transgressed, and sinned before Thee—I and my house, even as it is written in the law of Moses, Thy servant: For, on that day will He cover over for you to make you clean; from all your transgressions before Jehovah ye shall be cleansed.”¹ But Christ the Lord was absolutely sinless, both personally and officially (vii : 26; ix : 14); He offered Himself “without spot (blemish) unto God.” Jesus was personally and essentially what Aaron was ceremonially after his confession and offering, without sin. Moreover, the victim of Aaron was to be a male, without blemish, the most perfect to be had (Lev. iv : 3). As Jesus combined in Himself the typical character both of Israel’s priest and his sin-offering, He is without sin in Himself and in His sacrifice. He is Priest, Offering, and Altar in Himself. All that Aaron was and did as priest was but a thin shadow of the great reality, Jesus Christ.

2. Aaron exercised his ministry in the earthly sanctuary, the tabernacle of this world (ix : 1); the holy place made with hands (ix : 24).—The Tabernacle of the wilderness was a temporary provision designed to meet the needs of God’s people. It was displaced by the temple erected by Divine direction at Jerusalem. But the temple was an exact copy of the older sanctuary, with the same compartments, the Court, the Holy Place, and the Most Holy Place. The services likewise at each were identical. Both disappeared when they had served the end for which they were built. In this worldly (“cosmical”) house Aaron

¹ Edersheim.

served. Beautiful as it was, profoundly significant in its structure and appointments, it was nevertheless of the earth, earthy. It was no more than a shadow thrown forward by the perfect sanctuary with its glorious priest. In the "greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building" Christ hath entered, *i. e.*, into heaven itself, having obtained eternal redemption for us (ix : 11, 12, 24). He now ministers before the face of God amid the glory and the bliss of heaven. He is there because He has effected a real atonement. He is there as the representative of His people. As Aaron on the Day of Expiation went into the most holy place as the representative of all Israel, and ministered in the presence of God in their behalf, so Christ, having made purification of sins by the sacrifice of Himself (i : 3) entered into heaven, the supreme abode of God, as the advocate and forerunner of all the saved. Our interests are as much His concern now as when on earth He moved among His disciples teaching, guiding, and shielding them. According to the plain teaching of the epistle, heaven is certainly a place, a real locality, as truly as earth itself is.

3. Aaron carried the "blood of others," alien blood, into the holy of holies (ix : 25).—This means of course the blood of brute beasts, that of goats and calves (ix : 12). It was blood not his own he sprinkled on and before the mercy-seat. It was foreign blood. It had no affinity with the blood that flowed in Aaron's veins and in the veins of the Hebrews. The distance between a brute and a man is infinite. The only pos-

sible value which could attach to animal sacrifice arose from divine appointment and typical significance. Life given for life is the first great lesson taught. Blood, life, alone can make atonement for human sin (Lev. xvii: 11)—“For it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the life” (R.V.). Besides, all sacrifice offered by Divine command had a prophetic element in it; it spoke unmistakably of the one perfect and all-sufficient offering which the Son of God in due time should make, by which all sin of all the saved should be forever expiated and put away. Even if Aaron could have presented his own blood to God, it would have been of no avail. “None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: (for the redemption of their soul is costly, and must be let alone for ever”) (Ps. xlix: 7, 8).

The unrivalled excellence of Christ's sacrifice lies in this, that He offered His own blood (v. 12). He Himself was the Lamb without blemish and without spot, whose blood Peter describes as *precious* (1 Peter i: 19). It is precious because the life of a sinless and perfect Man; preeminently, because the blood of the Son of God who is the effulgence of the Father's glory, and the very image of His substance. This stupendous fact, viz., that the blood which redeems is that of One who is both God and man, Jehovah's Fellow and our Brother, invests Christ's offering of Himself to God with infinite worth. Accordingly, we read in Paul's address to the Ephesian elders (Acts xx: 28) . . . “Feed the Church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood.” This

is a very startling statement, and it is not surprising that copyists and scribes of the olden time sought to soften the tremendous thought—"God's Blood"! Hence the "various readings" of the words. But the two oldest known manuscripts, viz., the Vatican and Sinaitic, have the words as they are in King James. If we read Lord¹ instead of God, the truth is still the same; the blood that redeems is blood Divine.

4. The Levitical sacrifices sanctified to the purifying of the flesh (ix: 13).—Christ's offering cleanses the conscience from dead works, (v. 14). The comparison is drawn between the purifying efficacy respectively of the sacrifices under the law, and that of Christ. "The comparison is twofold—first, as to the comparative effectiveness of the two; and second, as to the spheres within which they are respectively effectual." Both serve; but the power of each is vastly different. The writer names the principal sin-offerings of the Mosaic ritual, viz., the goat, the bull, the ashes of a heifer. The bull refers to the sacrifice which Aaron, on the Day of Atonement, offered for himself and his house: the goat was for the sins of the congregation (Lev. xvi). The third was the provision made for the removal of defilement, and was instituted in the wilderness (Num. xix). When one had contracted defilement by touching a dead body, or a grave, or even a bone, he could be purified only by being sprinkled by the "water of separation."

¹ American revision: margin of English R. V. Two of the latest Greek texts, Weymouth's (1892), and Nestle's (1898), have *God*; so also Wescott and Hort (1881).

Thereby he was restored to full communion with the congregation. While in defilement, he was separated from it, and all he came in contact with was likewise rendered unclean. Now all this sheds light on the expression, "sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh." All the Mosaic sacrifices could effect was of an external sort; they removed ceremonial disabilities, they restored the unclean to fellowship, they kept the chosen people in covenant relation with God. This seems to be the force of the word, "sanctifieth," *i. e.*, cleanses. They rendered the flesh ceremonially pure, so that fellowship in the worship of God in the sanctuary was maintained and made acceptable. We are expressly told in this epistle that the Mosaic offerings could not take away sins; hence, their value lay mainly in their power to cleanse from defilements of the flesh, and in their prophecy of the great sacrifice which our Lord should finally offer.

In contrast with this, we read, "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge (cleanse) your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" The force of "how much more" seems to be this: premis—the blood of animal sacrifices and the water of purification did something; did sanctify and cleanse the flesh: conclusion—How much more the blood of Christ. The contrast lies both in the power of each, and the sphere of their respective action. One is, animal blood, the other, Christ's; the former has to do with the flesh; the latter with the conscience, with sin's presence and effects.

But what is meant by Christ's offering Himself through the Eternal Spirit? What Spirit is meant? The Holy Spirit, not a few think. But there are serious objections to this view. First, nowhere else in the New Testament is He called eternal. Of course, as a Divine Person, the Holy Spirit is eternal; but the adjective is not applied to Him elsewhere. Second, the phrase, "through the eternal Spirit," qualifies "offered Himself unto God": it does not qualify "without spot"; for, Christ was personally and officially without blemish. Third, the words will not bear the explanation that it was by the impulse of the Spirit Christ offered Himself, for it is expressly said the Son did it through His own will (x: 7, 9). His own voluntary action is an essential element in His atoning sacrifice. Fourth, the absence both of the qualifying term *Holy*, and the article, can hardly be explained on this view.

On the whole, it appears preferable to understand the words as referring to Christ's own Divine Spirit, His Deity. In two other places such reference is unquestionable, viz., Rom. i: 4; 1 Tim. iii: 16. In contradistinction from animal sacrifices in which the death was a matter of constraint, and unconscious, the Lord Jesus, through the energy of His own eternal Spirit, consciously and freely offered Himself to God as the substitute and sin-bearer of His people. Now this view seems to be most pertinent to the apostle's argument. The blood of animals cannot take away sin. The sacrifice of a mere man, however perfect and spotless, would have been of no value in behalf of

sinner. But the offering of Christ possesses surpassing worth because it was made by the Son of God, Jehovah's equal. Beyond doubt, the Holy Spirit cooperated with Jesus in His death as in His life, but the point here appears to be the Son's own free and deliberate action. Never was Christ more active than in His atoning sacrifice. Hence the force of the significant preposition, *through*. By the agency of His Divine nature, He offered Himself to God. There is deep significance in the statements of Scripture as to His free action in death, *e. g.*, "He gave himself" (Gal. ii: 20; Eph. v: 2, 25). Matthew's strong word is: "He dismissed his spirit" (xxvii: 50), and John's is quite similar, "He delivered up his spirit" (xix: 30). The act was voluntary, free. "No man taketh it (My life) away from Me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John x: 18). Over His own life and death Christ had absolute control. Of no mere man can so much be said; of no creature, not even of the highest angel. We die because we *must*. Over the whole race death reigns, except in the one case of our Lord Jesus. He held His life and His death in His own right. No creature, man or angel, could wrest it from Him. His death was voluntary, yet a necessity, if the children of men were ever to be saved. Animals were offered to God; Jesus Christ offered Himself through His own eternal Spirit.

His offering purges (cleanses) the conscience from dead works, *i. e.*, from works that pollute it and bind on it the sense of guilt and that lead to eternal death.

The conscience of all who trust in Christ is satisfied because they know God is satisfied. Christ's death is the ground both of our justification and sanctification. Mark the contrast: Let the silver trumpets herald in the Day of Atonement, let its inspired solemnities be all fulfilled; and, though the nation is legally, ceremonially cleansed thereby, this has not met the needs nor silenced the fears of a single contrite soul; the most holy place is still inaccessible. But in Christ every Divine claim against the guilty is met and removed, sin is put away, and the way into the Divine Presence is wide open. "Let us draw near in full assurance of faith having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water" (x: 19-25).

5. The Levitical Atonement availed but for one year (ix: 7, 25; cf. Lev. xvi: 34). Christ's is eternally efficacious (ix: 12, 24-26; x: 12).—The most sacred and impressive of all Hebrew sacrifices was that made on the Day of Atonement. It was the one supreme effort to realize remission of sins and reconciliation with God. But the transactions of that Day were powerless to effect this. When the tenth day of the seventh month came round each year the same fasting, confession, laying of the people's sins on the head of the Scapegoat, and the entrance of the high priest into the most holy place where he sprinkled the blood on and before the mercy-seat seven times, must be repeated. This fact demonstrates the impotency of the Levitical system to atone for sins.

But Christ's one offering has forever secured this

transcendent boon. He has obtained eternal redemption for all believers. Note how often we meet in this section of the epistle with the expression, "once," "once for all" (vii: 27; ix: 12, 26, 28; x: 10, 12). In all these places, save one, the same term occurs—"once for all." The apostle's conclusion is summed up in these grand words: "But He, when He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God." It is with a finished atonement we have now to do. It can never be repeated; to its saving efficacy nothing can ever be added; from its unmeasured worth nothing can ever be subtracted. Alone, complete, accepted, eternal, Christ's glorious atonement stands forever.

6. The Levitical offerings could not take away sin (x: 1-4, 11).—The one offering of Christ does in very truth secure remission of sins and perfect reconciliation with God. It actually makes Jehovah and the sinner *at one*. "But now once in the end of the ages hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (ix: 26). "For by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified" (x: 14). Here is the apostle's conclusion again: "Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin" (x: 18). He atoned for the sins even of those who lived and died before His advent, for the Old Testament saints were not saved by the blood of goats and calves any more than men are saved now thereby. Christ's death has a retrospective effect. It redeemed the Old Testament saints as certainly as it redeems believers in New Testament times. Hence we read,

“And for this cause He is the mediator of the new covenant, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance” (ix: 15). The phrase, “redemption of the transgressions” is elliptical. It means redemption from the penalty due to transgressions. These had been committed under the first covenant, *i. e.*, by those who lived before the Saviour’s advent. Animal blood did not atone for their sins nor ransom their souls. They were saved *on credit*. The propitiation for their sins, as for ours, was made by Christ’s offering of Himself. This fact attaches an awful significance to the Cross. All the sins of all the redeemed, from Adam and Eve down to the very last of their descendants who shall be saved, met in the Cross, were laid on that blessed head, were expiated by that precious blood.

7. Aaron and his successors in office *stood daily* ministering, and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices (x: 11). But Christ when He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, *sat down* (x: 12).—The Aaronic priests always stood at their work; they never sat down. Indeed, no seats were provided for them either in the tabernacle or in the temple. For their work was never done. In one unceasing round of service they were evermore engaged. For the law—that whole system of Moses—made nothing perfect. Jewish altars were always wet with sacrificial blood. The altar fires were never allowed to go out. Incense, the light, and shewbread in the holy place, must be

kept going. It was all a weary, profitless go-round.

But Jesus finished transgression, made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness by His offering made once for all, and then He *sat down*. Four times in the epistle is this glorious fact mentioned (i: 3; viii: 1; x: 12; xii: 2). His atoning work has been brought to a final, satisfactory, and triumphant conclusion. He is now seated.

Hebrews may be fitly described as a treatise on perfection. Two words very often occur in it, "better," found some twelve times, and "perfect," some nine times. They are its key. The Holy Spirit is engaged in setting before the saints of God the great truth that in Jesus Christ we have God's best gifts: a better covenant, a better hope, a better resurrection: for in Him we have all that is perfect, and He will in His grace perfect us forever and ever.

It is instructive to mark how the inspired writer removes one thing after another that we may have an unobstructed sight of the Redeemer. In chaps. i, ii, the *angels* take their appointed places that Christ may fill the vision. In iii, iv, *Moses* and *Joshua* are set aside that the great Deliverer and Captain, our Lord Jesus, may have His own place. For Jesus does for us the initiative work of Moses and the consummating work of Joshua. He delivers us from spiritual Egypt, He brings us into the Rest of God. In v, vi, vii, the *Aaronic priesthood* is displaced to make room for our Melchizedek High Priest that we may behold in Him the riches and the glory of the true priestly character.

In viii, the New Covenant displaces the old that we may see how richly it is stored with the grace and the love and the mercy of the blessed God. In ix, x, the sacrifices and altars and services of the old sanctuary are set aside to let in the one all-sufficient offering, the one supreme altar on which the Lamb of God lay. In xii, the system established at Sinai, the earthly Jerusalem, and the earthly congregation are all removed, to bring in the heavenly covenant, the heavenly assembly and the celestial city. Here, the Spirit lays aside one thing after another that Christ in His fullness and majesty may be seen, and then we are bidden gaze on Him, "consider Him."

According to Hebrews, all that Christ touches He perfects. The moment He touches the priesthood He perfects it: the moment He touches the altar, He perfects it: the moment He touches the Sanctuary, He perfects it: the moment He touches a sinner, He perfects him. Then, too, eternity is imparted to all He touches. His throne is forever and ever (i). His house is forever and ever (iii). His salvation is for eternity (v, vi). His priesthood is unchangeable (vii). His covenants everlasting (viii). His Kingdom cannot be moved (xii). An empty sepulchre, and a filled throne: an open heaven, an Apostle and High Priest: a Saviour and Brother—this, and far more, Hebrews discloses to us. If we stand in the law, we are in a world of shadows. If we are found in Christ, we stand amid eternal realities and perfections: "And there I stand, poor worm," as old Gambold said.

IV. The doctrine of faith (xi).—Faith holds a con-

spicuous place in Hebrews, as chaps. iii, iv, vi, x: 19-39 attest. But in these sections it is the faith common to the New Testament as a whole that is spoken of. It is saving faith that is meant, faith as contrasted with unbelief. It is a single and somewhat peculiar phase of faith that is presented in chapter xi.

1. What is the faith here illustrated?—Verse 1 reads: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." It reads much like a definition. Many say it is a definition. But, is it? With very slight differences the American, the English, and the Bible Union revisions render thus: "Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen." The English revisers have "the proving of things not seen," with "test" as an alternative. Diodati's Italian has "demonstration," and one meets here and there the term "persuasion," which appeals strongly to the writer. There can be little doubt that this translation is preferable to King James' version. It is not so much a definition of the principle of faith that is given us as a declaration of its powers and action. The apostle does not mean to tell us what faith, in its essence is, but, rather, what faith does. Faith is a confident assurance and a settled conviction respecting things hoped for though unseen. It is the soul's eye that sees the invisible. It is the soul's hand that grasps the promised blessings and makes them its very own. Faith lays hold on what is future but sure and brings it into the life of the believer, so that in the presence and power of it he lives and walks. Faith in this chapter is *far-sightedness*.

It sees and it foresees. It pierces into the unseen, it seizes the promised riches of God and makes them a present reality, and therefore the life of the believer may become opulent with noble deeds because ruled and stimulated by a master motive.

Let us not read the chapter as though it was a song sung in praise of Abel, Enoch, Abraham, and the other men and women whose names are here enrolled. It is not this: it is an anthem of praise to the victorious faith these worthies exhibited. Faith made them what they were and all they were. Faith made the things promised a present reality, a living power, in their lives. Accordingly, a magnificent testimony has been borne to these elders (v. 2). Had they been destitute of this conquering faith, had they not had its far-sightedness, they had differed little if at all from the common level of men. They would have lived and died and sunk into the obscurity which has swallowed up their contemporaries. Their faith has immortalized them.

2. The faith of the Antediluvian saints (vs. 4, 5, 7).—Three of the "World's gray fathers" are named, Abel, Enoch, Noah. The first exhibited his faith in worship. He came to God as a sinner; he stood on the ground of atonement; he offered life in substitution of his own forfeited life. God testified His approval of his worship, pronounced him righteous, accepted his gifts, and now enrolls him among His saved. Nearly six thousand years have passed since Abel's brutal murder, but his faith still speaks. Millions have heard the voice of it, and have been helped. Being dead Abel yet speaks.

The second, Enoch, showed his faith in Divine companionship. He walked with God (Gen. v: 22, 24); he pleased God. Paul brings the two together thus: "Ye received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God" (1 Thess. iv: 1). Enoch's faith beheld the Invisible, not with an occasional glimpse, but by an uninterrupted vision, a blessed habit of soul. He walked with God. He spent the days with Him. God and Enoch were companions, inseparable, daily. For three hundred years and more, Enoch walked with God, and then walked out of the world into heaven, for God must have His companion with Himself. He changed his place, he did not change his company. Two men have gone to glory without passing through the gates of death, Enoch and Elijah. Two other men will be hurled in the Lake of fire *alive*, the Beast and the False Prophet (Rev. xix: 20).

The third, Noah, believed God when the whole world was against him. His was an unwavering faith in a time of colossal wickedness and universal apostasy. In Noah's day the godly were reduced to a minority of eight souls. History surrounds the name of Athanasius with immortal lustre, and rightly. For in a time when Arianism was dominant in the Christian Church this man of God stood forth with magnificent courage in defense of the truth; and men paid his championship a noble tribute. They said, *Athanasius contra mundum*—Athanasius against the world. But there were multitudes of faithful men who loyally supported the dauntless bishop of Alexandria in the struggle for the Divine rights of Christ the Lord.

There was not one who stood with Noah and his house, save God. All the rest of the race were in rebellion against the Almighty. "And God said to Noah, The end of all flesh is come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence through them: and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make thee an ark" (Gen. vi).

"Moved with fear," "wary," as the margin suggestively reads, Noah obeyed the awful mandate and began the building of the ark. Mark how many things may have conspired to lead him to disobey. First, the uniformity and inviolability of nature's laws would certainly defeat the predicted calamity. There never had been a flood so vast as this threatened cataclysm in the world's history, and there would not be one in the future. Such catastrophe as Noah anticipated was contrary to the observation and experience of the race. Nature holds her unalterable way through the ages, and it is altogether unlikely she will vary a hair's breadth from her prescribed track. Miracles are "unthinkable." So men may have reasoned with the patriarch, so might he have been disposed to reason himself.

Moreover, the task set him was enormous. To build a ship of the ark's dimensions in our time with the endless recourses now at men's command is a huge undertaking. What must it have been in that primitive age? Besides, he must build it at a distance from any large body of water. So far as can be determined Noah's home was in Mesopotamia, miles and miles, no doubt, from the Mediterranean and the Persian gulf.

Neither the Euphrates nor the Tigris could float the ark. What folly to build it at all?—particularly to build it on land high and dry? What would be thought of the sanity of the man who should construct an immense water craft amid the hills of Ohio or on the broad plains of Kansas? Once more, his was a work of long duration. Some interpreters hold that the process of making the ark lasted for the greater part of the one hundred and twenty years of the race's probation (Gen. vi : 3). Peter's reference to the long-suffering of God that waited in the days of Noah while the ark was preparing appears to support this view. But however this may be, certain it is that the preparing of the materials, the construction, and the storing of the vessel with sufficient food for all housed in it must have required a period of many years. And during the whole time Noah must submit with what patience he might to the derision and the sneers of his ungodly neighbours. But in spite of their scoffs, in the face of the constancy of nature's laws, against the universal opinion of his contemporaries, against even his own reason and judgment, it may be, his faith held steady and firm. He could only work and wait. This he did in sublime obedience to the voice of God. He so firmly believed the divine warning that his faith neither wavered nor staggered before the mighty difficulties. His faith was "wary," far-sighted and long-sighted. And he was rewarded at length in his triumphant salvation from a drowning world. Thereby he condemned the world of unbelief, and became the heir of "the righteousness which is according to faith."

3. Hebrew Heroes of Faith:—Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses.—In verse 32 the writer groups together a number of men who were distinguished for their faith—Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephtha, David, Samuel. In fact, he brings the record of Israelitish men of faith down to the Maccabean struggle against the Syrian antichrist, Antiochus Epiphanes (vs. 37, 38). Altogether, it is a remarkable list he gives. Some of these worthies were the intellectual peers of earth's greatest men, but not a word is said of their mental ability or of their splendid gifts. It is their faith alone that is conspicuous, for God cares more for the childlike trust of His people than for acuteness of mind. Faith not genius is precious with Him.

Abraham:—"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went" (v. 8). His destination was not revealed to him when the call came. All that was told him was, "Get thee out of thy country . . . unto a land that I will shew thee" (Gen. xii : 1). The land might be distant, the way to it difficult and dangerous, the people unfriendly, for he knew nothing of what lay before him, but he obeyed. He went out blindfold, "not knowing whither he went." But the God of glory led him by the hand, over him was the Almighty's shield (Gen. xv : 1). The surprising thing in it all is Abraham's faith, a victorious, onlooking and outlooking faith that laid hold on things not seen, and that feared nothing but God. He believed God, he

looked for the promised city of God. And so he was content to be a stranger and sojourner in his own land (Gen. xxiii : 4 ; Acts vii) without so much as a foot of it his own. Did the promise of the inheritance fail ? Was it no more than what is called life's illusiveness ? —one thing promised, another thing given. It is true he got something better for himself, and his descendants became the owners and the heirs of the land ; but after all the realization of the promise by the patriarch himself was only postponed. His faith looked on to the future, saw Messiah's day and was glad ; saw the final consummation when both he and his seed shall come into full possession of everything embraced in the covenant. Abraham looked on to resurrection and the heirship of the world. This made his faith the fine thing it was. Fairbairn quotes a curious exposition of the Jewish Rabbis on God's word to Abraham, " I will give thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger." " But it appears that Abraham and the other patriarchs did not possess that land ; therefore it is of necessity that they should be raised up to enjoy the good promises, else the promises of God should be in vain and false." If this be thought fanciful, let the inspired statement of this epistle be admitted as something free from fancy (xi : 17-19). The passage here referred to unmistakably implies that Abraham knew of the doctrine of resurrection, and that he was persuaded that if Isaac was slain, God would surely raise him up again. A greater than the Rabbis, a greater than Abraham, said, " I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the

God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Jesus' teaching is, that the relation of the believer to God carries with it a *whole* immortality, body and soul alike. This involves resurrection. What may not the patriarchs have in the day when redemption is complete and all promises are made forever good? Abraham's faith triumphed over love of country and kin and home, over the strange delay of the promise, over apparent bankruptcy in the land of promise, over apparent antagonism to the fulfillment of the promise, over virtual death of his only son, for his faith was far-sighted, long-sighted. It rested with supreme security in the things unseen and hoped-for.

Jacob (v. 21):—"By faith Jacob when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff." Two acts of faith are ascribed to the dying patriarch. He blessed the two sons of Joseph. It was as one of the heads of the covenant and as the prince with God that Jacob pronounced his benediction on the lads. He could not distinguish them by sight, for he could not see; he distinguished them by faith, and set Ephraim before Manasseh the elder, crossing his hands to do so, guiding them wittingly. He forecast their separate destinies and different degrees of eminence in the kingdom of God. Joseph thought his father mistaken, and sought to uncross his hands, but the patriarch gently put aside the interference, for he was gazing into the future and seeing the unseen. He "Worshipped upon

the top of his staff." ¹ The words are taken from the Septuagint reading of Gen. xlvii : 31. It is a beautiful picture—this aged servant of God bowing low in devout adoration over the staff that had been with him in the stirring events of his checkered life. It may have been the same with which long before he had passed over the Jordan (Gen. xxxii : 10); now it serves him as he prepares to go forth upon the journey from which he will not return. His faith guided his hands, his eyes, and his spirit. He saw the invisible.

Joseph (v. 22):—"By faith Joseph when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones." Here once more the faith that looks far beyond present circumstances asserts itself. There is a prophetic element in faith, and Joseph's was of this nature. He foresaw the coming exodus of his people, and he must not remain behind even in his body. He made his brethren take oath that they would carry his remains with them when they set forth for Palestine (Gen. l : 25). It was done as he wished (Josh. xxiv : 32). As if he said, You are going from Egypt, and when you go take me with you, I must not be left behind. For to him Egypt was the world, over it God's sore

¹A curiosity of translation is connected with these words. The Donay English Bible (Roman Catholic) reads: "By faith Jacob . . . adored the top of his rod." In the notes the translators say, "his rod, *i. e.*, the sceptre of Joseph"; and they go on to justify from it the worship of images. Of course they follow the Vulgate, but take no notice of Jerome's rendering of the corresponding text in Gen. xlvii : 31—"Israel worshipped God, turning to the bed's head." Neither the Vulgate nor the Donay translate accurately the *lxx*; they omit the preposition "upon," which determines the nature of Jacob's act. He worshipped God, not a bit of wood.

judgments impended, and Joseph will not be there even in his inanimate clay. His tomb might have been with the Pharaohs, his sarcophagus might have rested in one of the Pyramids. But he refused. To the Land of Promise, of Revelation, of Resurrection, and of the promised Deliverer, he must go, and rest and wait with the other men of God, his ancestors. For Joseph seems to have gotten hold of the magnificent truth that his body was God's as well as his soul, and that if it was precious to Him, it must be precious likewise to Joseph himself.

Moses (vs. 23-28):—Four very noteworthy things concerning faith appear in these verses. The first is the faith exhibited by Moses' parents, Amram and Jochebed. Something connected with the personal appearance of their child arrested their attention and stimulated their faith and hope, so that they braved the king's cruel decree, "they were not afraid of the king's commandment." All fathers and mothers see or think they see in the faces of their children something that is uncommon, something that betokens a noble future. For love's eyes are strong and clear, and they magnify. Alas, that fond and hopeful love should so often mistake! But in the case of the child Moses there was ample ground for faith's far-sightedness, and for love's proudest dream. In Ex. ii: 2, he is described as a "goodly child"; here, as "a proper child"; Stephen says he was "beautiful to God" (Acts vii: 20, Greek). There was a certain beauty in his face that awakened faith, and that disclosed somehow God's purpose in respect to the child.

Tradition, antedating the Christian era, busied itself with Moses' beauty. It reported that when but three years old "every one was surprised at the beauty of his countenance; that passers-by stood to look at him, and labourers left their work to steal a glance." Faith read the divine writing in Moses' face as a presage of his illustrious career, and his parents were not disobedient to the gracious disclosure.

Moses' faith won three signal victories. The first triumph was over the world's attractions, wealth, power and splendour. He renounced a princely position in the proudest Court of that olden time, and deliberately identified himself with a nation of slaves. This he did by faith, because he knew they were the people of God and a mighty future was theirs. "For he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." Then, his faith triumphed over the world's enmity. He faced its wrath and malignity; he feared not the fury of Egypt's monarch; for "endured as seeing him who is invisible." His faith caught sight of the eternal realities. He saw the Lord God of Israel by his living faith, and in the presence and power of the absorbing vision he endured and conquered. Finally, he provided for himself and for the Hebrew people the appointed means of safety, the paschal lamb and the sprinkled blood. By faith he had an answer for God's claims upon him and the people. Through faith the whole nation was sheltered by atoning blood from the tremendous judgment of the Avenger. What an invincible thing faith is! Love has been called, "The greatest thing in the

world." The strongest thing in the world is faith. "It has an eagle's eye and lion's heart." It has a lion's heart to confront dangers and difficulties, and an eagle's eye to descry the unseen glories and the sure victory. The heroism of faith is a wonderful thing. It is profusely illustrated in verses 33-38. It may suffer indescribable tortures and agonies, as often it has, but it is unconquerable, invincible. Some were tortured (*tympanized, i. e.*, stretched on a wheel as the drumhead), "that they might obtain a better resurrection," as were the mother and her seven sons who were put to death one after the other, and in sight of each other, by the Syrian monster, Antiochus Epiphanes (2 Macc. vii). Some were stoned, as Zechariah (2 Chron : xxiv) and Jeremiah, according to tradition. Some were sawn asunder, as was Isaiah under Manasseh. Some were slain with the sword, as Urijah, (Jer. xxvi : 23), and James the brother of John (Acts xii). They might have rustled in silks and velvets and luxuriated in the palaces of princes had they denied God and believed the world's lie. Instead, they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, themselves accounted no better than goats or sheep, nay, they like these reckoned fit only for the slaughter. The world thought them unworthy to live here, while God thought them worthy to live with Him in glory.

These all received not the fulfillment of the promise. They could not be made perfect until completed redemption was had, and until all of the redeemed were with them gathered together in Christ Jesus. Then will be the Home-coming, entrance into the heavenly

country and city for which they and we alike "pant and yearn."

"God is not ashamed to be called their God." The world often is ashamed of them. Sometimes, alas! they are ashamed of each other. But God is not! That is honour indeed.



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