

A COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS

Dr. John Gill D.D.

WHO IS DR. JOHN GILL

John Gill (23 November 1697 – 14 October 1771) was an English Baptist pastor, biblical scholar, and theologian who held to a firm Calvinistic soteriology. Born in Kettering, Northamptonshire, he attended Kettering Grammar School where he mastered the Latin classics and learned Greek by age 11. He continued self-study in everything from logic to Hebrew, his love for the latter remaining throughout his life.

Pastoral Work

His first pastoral work was as an intern assisting John Davis at Higham Ferrers in 1718 at age 21. He became pastor at the Strict Baptists church at Goat Yard Chapel, Horselydown, Southwark in 1719. His pastorate lasted 51 years. In 1757 his congregation needed larger premises and moved to a Carter Lane, St. Olave's Street, Southwark. This Baptist church was once pastored by Benjamin Keach and would later become the New Park Street Chapel and then the Metropolitan Tabernacle pastored by Charles Spurgeon.

Works

In 1748, Gill was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity by the University of Aberdeen. He was a profound scholar and a prolific author. His most important works are:

- The Doctrine of the Trinity Stated and Vindicated (London, 1731)
- The Cause of God and Truth (4 parts, 1725-8), a retort to Daniel Whitby's Five Points.
- An Exposition of the New Testament (3 vols., 1746-8), which with his Exposition of the Old Testament (6 vols., 1748-63) forms his magnum opus
 - A Collection of Sermons and Tracts
 - A Dissertation Concerning the Antiquity of the Hebrew Language, Letters, Vowel-Points, and Accents (1767)
 - A Body of Doctrinal Divinity (1767)
 - A Body of Practical Divinity (1770)

Gill also edited and re-published the works of **Rev. Tobias Crisp, D.D.** (1600-1643).

NOTE:

We have not included the Greek, Hebrew or Latin text in the interest of economy.

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Presentation and Dedication

This new edition of Dr. John Gills commentary is presented and dedicated to the students, pastors and teachers of Christ-Centered Church Inc. Ministries, Philippines, under the care of William Ola Poloc, its founder and senior pastor (Bishop) on the, 16th January 2020, by David Clarke, founder of Trojan Horse International (TULIP) Inc.

Brief History of the Baguio Christ-Centered Churches Ministries Inc.

Pstr William O. Poloc Sr. was released from the New Bilibid prison in August 2002, where he graduated with a Degree in Theology, and started prison ministries in his hometown Baguio City, with his wife and the aid of a certain missionary from UK, by name David Clarke, the founder of Trojan Horse International. In December 2002 they were able to baptize 22 inmates in Baguio City Jail, 9 inmates in Benguet Provincial jail, along with William's wife Beth Poloc and Josephine Ortis, along with her daughter Karen Basoon, who had all confessed their faith in the lord Jesus Christ. David Clarke returned to the UK in 2003 after his mission.

Later, God gave them a burden to open a church within the city so as to reach out to their families, relatives and the families of my co inmates who are still incarcerated at the New Bilibid Prison.

By His grace the Baguio Christ-Centered Church Inc. stood up. As years go by God continued to bless the church by drawing more souls into it. He also bless us with a bible school to train ministers unable to study in an expensive bible schools. Graduates of our school were sent out to reach lost souls and augment Christ Centered mission churches to different places around the archipelago. As a result, by God's grace and providence Christ Centered Churches were established to the different places in the country.



God's work here in the Northern Philippines bloomed most especially here in the city of Baguio. The Baguio Christ-Centred Church is the mother church of all the Christ Centered Churches in the Philippines namely; The Pilot-Christ-Centred Church, The Kamog Christ-Centred Church, The Christ-Centered-Church Theological School(TULIP), The Christ-Centred Radio Ministry, The Christ-Centred Jail Ministries etc.). We'll, we are

truly blessed by these works He has entrusted to us. To God be the glory!

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Christ-Centered Ministries Philippines

Personal note from the publisher

It is noted and remarked that this date of publication is the Golden Jubilee ¹(Leviticus 25:8-13 King) of conversion of David Clarke, which took place on, 16th January 1971.

<http://www.Biertonparticularbaptists.co.uk>



David Clarke is the sole remaining member of Bierton Particular Baptists who was called by the Lord and sent by the church to preach the gospel in 1982. The doctrinal foundation of Trojan Horse Mission are those of the Bierton Particular Baptists Articles of religion.

View the Wikipedia Entry for Bierton and view [None Conformist Place of Worship](#)

¹ 8 And thou shalt number seven Sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven Sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years.

| | | | |
|----------------------------|----|---------------------------|----|
| WHO IS DR. JOHN GILL | 2 | Hebrews 3:10 | 34 |
| INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS | 7 | Hebrews 3:11 | 35 |
| INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS 1 | 8 | Hebrews 3:12 | 35 |
| COMMENTARY HEBREWS I | 9 | Hebrews 3:13 | 36 |
| Hebrews 1:1 | 9 | Hebrews 3:14 | 36 |
| Hebrews 1:2 | 10 | Hebrews 3:15 | 37 |
| Hebrews 1:3 | 11 | Hebrews 3:16 | 37 |
| Hebrews 1:4 | 12 | Hebrews 3:17 | 37 |
| Hebrews 1:5 | 12 | Hebrews 3:18 | 37 |
| Hebrews 1:6 | 13 | Hebrews 3:19 | 38 |
| Hebrews 1:7 | 14 | INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS 4 | 38 |
| Hebrews 1:8 | 14 | COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS IV | 39 |
| Hebrews 1:9 | 15 | Hebrews 4:1 | 39 |
| Hebrews 1:10 | 16 | Hebrews 4:2 | 40 |
| Hebrews 1:11 | 16 | Hebrews 4:3 | 40 |
| Hebrews 1:12 | 16 | Hebrews 4:4 | 41 |
| Hebrews 1:13 | 17 | Hebrews 4:5 | 41 |
| Hebrews 1:14 | 17 | Hebrews 4:6 | 41 |
| INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS II | 17 | Hebrews 4:7 | 41 |
| COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS II | 19 | Hebrews 4:8 | 42 |
| Hebrews 2:1 | 19 | Hebrews 4:9 | 42 |
| Hebrews 2:2 | 19 | Hebrews 4:10 | 42 |
| Hebrews 2:3 | 20 | Hebrews 4:11 | 43 |
| Hebrews 2:4 | 20 | Hebrews 4:12 | 43 |
| Hebrews 2:5 | 21 | Hebrews 4:13 | 44 |
| Hebrews 2:6 | 21 | Hebrews 4:14 | 45 |
| Hebrews 2:7 | 22 | Hebrews 4:15 | 46 |
| Hebrews 2:8 | 22 | Hebrews 4:16 | 46 |
| Hebrews 2:9 | 23 | INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS 5 | 47 |
| Hebrews 2:10 | 24 | COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS V | 48 |
| Hebrews 2:11 | 24 | Hebrews 5:1 | 48 |
| Hebrews 2:12 | 25 | Hebrews 5:2 | 48 |
| Hebrews 2:13 | 25 | Hebrews 5:3 | 48 |
| Hebrews 2:14 | 26 | Hebrews 5:4 | 49 |
| Hebrews 2:15 | 27 | Hebrews 5:5 | 49 |
| Hebrews 2:16 | 27 | Hebrews 5:6 | 50 |
| Hebrews 2:17 | 28 | Hebrews 5:7 | 50 |
| Hebrews 2:18 | 28 | Hebrews 5:10 | 51 |
| INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS 3 | 29 | Hebrews 5:11 | 51 |
| COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS III | 30 | Hebrews 5:12 | 52 |
| Hebrews 3:1 | 30 | Hebrews 5:13 | 52 |
| Hebrews 3:2 | 31 | Hebrews 5:14 | 53 |
| Hebrews 3:3 | 31 | INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS 6 | 53 |
| Hebrews 3:4 | 32 | COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS VI | 55 |
| Hebrews 3:5 | 32 | Hebrews 6:1 | 55 |
| Hebrews 3:6 | 32 | Hebrews 6:2 | 56 |
| Hebrews 3:8 | 34 | Hebrews 6:3 | 57 |
| Hebrews 3:9 | 34 | Hebrews 6:5 | 57 |
| | | Hebrews 6:6 | 58 |

| | | | |
|----------------------------|----|----------------------------|-----|
| Hebrews 6:7 | 59 | Hebrews 8:5 | 85 |
| Hebrews 6:8 | 59 | Hebrews 8:6 | 86 |
| Hebrews 6:9 | 60 | Hebrews 8:7 | 87 |
| Hebrews 6:10 | 60 | Hebrews 8:8 | 87 |
| Hebrews 6:11 | 61 | Hebrews 8:9 | 88 |
| Hebrews 6:12 | 61 | Hebrews 8:10 | 89 |
| Hebrews 6:13 | 62 | Hebrews 8:11 | 90 |
| Hebrews 6:14 | 62 | Hebrews 8:12 | 90 |
| Hebrews 6:15 | 62 | INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS 9 | 91 |
| Hebrews 6:16 | 63 | COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS IX | 93 |
| Hebrews 6:17 | 63 | Hebrews 9:1 | 93 |
| Hebrews 6:18 | 64 | Hebrews 9:2 | 93 |
| Hebrews 6:19 | 65 | Hebrews 9:3 | 95 |
| Hebrews 6:20 | 66 | Hebrews 9:5 | 96 |
| INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS 7 | 66 | Hebrews 9:6 | 98 |
| COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS VII | 68 | Hebrews 9:7 | 99 |
| Hebrews 7:1 | 68 | Hebrews 9:9 | 99 |
| Hebrews 7:2 | 69 | Hebrews 9:10 | 100 |
| Hebrews 7:3 | 70 | Hebrews 9:11 | 100 |
| Hebrews 7:4 | 71 | Hebrews 9:12 | 101 |
| Hebrews 7:5 | 72 | Hebrews 9:13 | 101 |
| Hebrews 7:6 | 72 | Hebrews 9:14 | 102 |
| Hebrews 7:7 | 72 | Hebrews 9:15 | 103 |
| Hebrews 7:8 | 73 | Hebrews 9:16 | 104 |
| Hebrews 7:10 | 73 | Hebrews 9:17 | 104 |
| Hebrews 7:11 | 73 | Hebrews 9:18 | 105 |
| Hebrews 7:12 | 74 | Hebrews 9:19 | 105 |
| Hebrews 7:13 | 74 | Hebrews 9:20 | 106 |
| Hebrews 7:14 | 75 | Hebrews 9:22 | 106 |
| Hebrews 7:15 | 75 | Hebrews 9:23 | 106 |
| Hebrews 7:16 | 75 | Hebrews 9:24 | 107 |
| Hebrews 7:17 | 76 | Hebrews 9:25 | 108 |
| Hebrews 7:18 | 76 | Hebrews 9:26 | 108 |
| Hebrews 7:19 | 77 | Hebrews 9:27 | 109 |
| Hebrews 7:20 | 77 | Hebrews 9:28 | 109 |
| Hebrews 7:21 | 78 | INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS 10 | 110 |
| Hebrews 7:22 | 79 | COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS X | 112 |
| Hebrews 7:23 | 79 | Hebrews 10:1 | 112 |
| Hebrews 7:24 | 79 | Hebrews 10:2 | 113 |
| Hebrews 7:25 | 80 | Hebrews 10:3 | 113 |
| Hebrews 7:26 | 81 | Hebrews 10:4 | 114 |
| Hebrews 7:27 | 81 | Hebrews 10:5 | 114 |
| Hebrews 7:28 | 82 | Hebrews 10:7 | 115 |
| INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS 8 | 82 | Hebrews 10:8 | 116 |
| COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS VIII | 83 | Hebrews 10:9 | 116 |
| Hebrews 8:1 | 83 | Hebrews 10:10 | 116 |
| Hebrews 8:2 | 84 | Hebrews 10:11 | 116 |
| Hebrews 8:3 | 84 | Hebrews 10:12 | 117 |
| Hebrews 8:4 | 85 | Hebrews 10:13 | 117 |

| | | | |
|----------------------------|-----|----------------------------|-----|
| Hebrews 10:14 | 117 | Hebrews 11:28 | 147 |
| Hebrews 10:15 | 117 | Hebrews 11:29 | 147 |
| Hebrews 10:16 | 118 | Hebrews 11:30 | 148 |
| Hebrews 10:17 | 118 | Hebrews 11:31 | 148 |
| Hebrews 10:19 | 118 | Hebrews 11:32 | 149 |
| Hebrews 10:20 | 119 | Hebrews 11:33 | 150 |
| Hebrews 10:22 | 120 | Hebrews 11:34 | 150 |
| Hebrews 10:23 | 120 | Hebrews 11:35 | 151 |
| Hebrews 10:24 | 121 | Hebrews 11:36 | 152 |
| Hebrews 10:25 | 121 | Hebrews 11:37 | 152 |
| Hebrews 10:26 | 122 | Hebrews 11:38 | 153 |
| Hebrews 10:27 | 122 | Hebrews 11:39 | 154 |
| Hebrews 10:28 | 123 | Hebrews 11:40 | 154 |
| Hebrews 10:29 | 123 | INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS 12 | 155 |
| Hebrews 10:30 | 124 | COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS XII | 157 |
| Hebrews 10:31 | 124 | Hebrews 12:1 | 157 |
| Hebrews 10:32 | 125 | Hebrews 12:2 | 158 |
| Hebrews 10:33 | 125 | Hebrews 12:3 | 159 |
| Hebrews 10:34 | 125 | Hebrews 12:4 | 160 |
| Hebrews 10:35 | 126 | Hebrews 12:5 | 160 |
| Hebrews 10:36 | 127 | Hebrews 12:6 | 161 |
| Hebrews 10:37 | 127 | Hebrews 12:7 | 161 |
| Hebrews 10:38 | 128 | Hebrews 12:8 | 162 |
| Hebrews 10:39 | 128 | Hebrews 12:9 | 162 |
| INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS 11 | 129 | Hebrews 12:10 | 162 |
| COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS XI | 131 | Hebrews 12:11 | 163 |
| Hebrews 11:1 | 131 | Hebrews 12:12 | 164 |
| Hebrews 11:3 | 133 | Hebrews 12:13 | 164 |
| Hebrews 11:4 | 133 | Hebrews 12:14 | 164 |
| Hebrews 11:5 | 134 | Hebrews 12:15 | 165 |
| Hebrews 11:6 | 136 | Hebrews 12:16 | 166 |
| Hebrews 11:7 | 136 | Hebrews 12:17 | 167 |
| Hebrews 11:8 | 137 | Hebrews 12:18 | 167 |
| Hebrews 11:9 | 138 | Hebrews 12:19 | 168 |
| Hebrews 11:10 | 138 | Hebrews 12:20 | 168 |
| Hebrews 11:12 | 138 | Hebrews 12:21 | 169 |
| Hebrews 11:14 | 139 | Hebrews 12:22 | 169 |
| Hebrews 11:15 | 140 | Hebrews 12:23 | 170 |
| Hebrews 11:16 | 140 | Hebrews 12:24 | 172 |
| Hebrews 11:17 | 141 | Hebrews 12:25 | 173 |
| Hebrews 11:18 | 142 | Hebrews 12:26 | 173 |
| Hebrews 11:19 | 142 | Hebrews 12:27 | 174 |
| Hebrews 11:20 | 143 | Hebrews 12:28 | 174 |
| Hebrews 11:21 | 143 | Hebrews 12:29 | 175 |
| Hebrews 11:22 | 144 | INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS 13 | 175 |
| Hebrews 11:23 | 144 | COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS XIII | 177 |
| Hebrews 11:24 | 145 | Hebrews 13:1 | 177 |
| Hebrews 11:25 | 145 | Hebrews 13:2 | 177 |
| Hebrews 11:26 | 146 | Hebrews 13:3 | 178 |
| Hebrews 11:27 | 146 | | |

Hebrews 13:4
 Hebrews 13:5
 Hebrews 13:6
 Hebrews 13:7
 Hebrews 13:8
 Hebrews 13:9
 Hebrews 13:10
 Hebrews 13:12
 Hebrews 13:13
 Hebrews 13:14
 Hebrews 13:15
 Hebrews 13:16
 Hebrews 13:17
 Hebrews 13:18
 Hebrews 13:19
 Hebrews 13:21
 Hebrews 13:22
 Hebrews 13:23
 Hebrews 13:24
 Hebrews 13:25

FURTHER PUBLICATIONS

A BODY OF DOCTRINAL DIVINITY

THE BIERTON CRISIS

MARY, MARY QUITE CONTRARY

BIERTON STRICT AND PARTICULAR

BAPTISTS 2ND EDITION

ARTICLES

WHAT VERSION AUTHORISED OR REVISED

WHAT HAPPENED IN A.D. 70

THE FINAL DECADE BEFORE THE END

THE PAROUSIA 2ND EDITION

178 INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS

179

180

180

181

181

182

183

184

184

184

185

186

186

187

188

189

190

190

191

191

191

192

193

193

194

195

196

197

198

That this epistle was written very early appears from hence, that it was imitated by Clement of Rome, in his epistle to the Corinthians, who took whole sentences out of it; and therefore it could not be a new work, as Eusebius {a} observes: it has been denied to be authentic by some heretics, as the Marcionites and Arians, but has been generally received as such by the orthodox: some indeed doubted of it, because it was not received by the Roman church, as an epistle of the Apostle Paul {b}; though others, who have thought it was not his, as Origen, yet looked upon it as genuine {c}. It has been ascribed to different persons, as to Barnabas, to Apollos, to Luke the Evangelist, and to Clement of Rome, but without any just reason. Clement of Alexandria, a very ancient writer, asserts it to be the Apostle Paul's {d}; and his name stands in the title of it, in all R. Stephens's exemplars, and in all Beza's copies, excepting one, and so it does in the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions; and that it is his, is highly probable from the agreement there is between this, and other epistles of his; compare Heb 1:2,3 with Col 1:15,16 and Heb 5:12-14 with 1Co 3:1,2 and Heb 12:1 with 1Co 9:24 and Heb 13:7,17 with 1Th 5:11,12, and Heb 13:9 with Eph 4:14 and Heb 13:18 with 2Co 1:12 and Heb 13:20 with Ro 15:13 16:20 1Th 5:23 and many other places; and also from the order and method of it, first treating of doctrines, and then proceeding to practical exhortations, which is the common form of Paul's epistles: to which may be added various circumstances; as that it was written from Italy, where Paul was a prisoner; and the mention the author of it makes of his bonds, and of Timothy, as well known unto him, who was Paul's companion; besides, the token of his epistles appears in this, namely, his usual salutation to the churches; see Heb 13:23-25. But above all, the testimony of the Apostle Peter is greatly in favour of its being his, 2Pe 3:15,16 from whence it clearly appears, that the Apostle Paul did write an epistle to the Hebrews; for to them Peter wrote; see 1Pe 1:1 2Pe 3:1 and what epistle could it be but this? and what Peter refers to is to be found in it; see Heb 10:25,36,37 and which is written with great wisdom; in none of Paul's epistles is there a greater discovery of his knowledge of divine mysteries than in this; and in it also are things hard to be understood, Heb 5:11. The common objections to its being his are, its not bearing his name, the diversity of its style, and the author of it seeming to be not an apostle, but a disciple of the apostle's: as to his not setting his name to

it, the reasons might be, because he was the apostle of the Gentiles, and not so much of the Jews; and because of the prejudice of the Jews against him, both believers, and unbelievers; wherefore had his name been to it, it might have prevented the usefulness of it to the one, and have stirred up the rage of the other: as to the difference of style, different subjects require a different style; and yet in many things there is a likeness, as before observed: and as to the author's not being an apostle, which is concluded from Heb 2:3 the word "us" there is to be understood of the believing Hebrews, the disciples of the apostle, and not inclusive of the author, by a figurative way of speaking often used by Paul; and besides, the apostle received a confirmation of the Gospel from Ananias, who might have been an hearer of Christ, though he was at first taught it by Christ himself; add to this, that whoever was the writer of it, it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, and when several of the apostles were living, and therefore he could never design by those words to put himself in a succeeding generation. The persons to whom this epistle was written were Hebrews, or Jews; so called, as some think, from the name of Abraham, the father of them; or, as others, from his passing over the river Euphrates, when he came out of Chaldea into Palestine. So Abram the Hebrew, in Ge 14:13 is by the Septuagint rendered, *~perathv ~*, "one that passes over", taking it to come from the word *^rbe ^*, which signifies to "pass over"; with this compare Jos 24:3 and this is the opinion of some of the Jewish Rabbins {e}; though it seems rather that they were called so from Heber, who lived at the time of the confusion of languages; see Ge 10:21 Nu 24:24 . And this is the sense of many Jewish writers, ancient and modern, of Josephus {f}, of Jonathan ben Uzziel {g}, of R. Nehemiah {h}, of Aben Ezra {i}, and Kimchi {k}, and others; see Gill on "2Co 11:22" . And these were the Hebrews that dwelt in the land of Judea, and particularly at Jerusalem; nor were they the unbelieving inhabitants of those parts, but believers in Christ, who were embodied in a Gospel church state, It was a tradition of the ancients {l}, that this epistle was written originally in Hebrew, and was translated into Greek, either by Luke the Evangelist, or by Clement of Rome. But for this there is no foundation; no Hebrew copy can be produced; Munster's edition of it in Hebrew is a translation from the Greek, in which it was, no doubt, originally written, that being the common language, and well known to the Jews; and which appears from the citations in it out of the Old Testament, which

are made, not from the Hebrew text, but from the Greek version; and besides, had it been written in Hebrew, the writer would not have interpreted the Hebrew words, Melchizedek and Salem, as he does, in Heb 7:1,2 . The time of its writing was before the destruction of Jerusalem, which in this book is signified by the coming of the Lord, and the day approaching; and after Timothy was released from prison, and some time within the two years of his own imprisonment at Rome; when he hoped for a release, as his epistles to the Philippians and to Philemon show. Dr. Lightfoot places it in the year 62, and in the eighth of Nero. And the occasion and design of it is, to set forth the superior excellency of Christ to angels and men, to Moses, to Joshua, to Aaron, and his sons, and the preferableness of his priesthood and sacrifice to the Levitical priesthood and its sacrifices; to teach the Hebrews the true knowledge of the mysteries of their law; to point out to them the design, use, and abrogation of its ceremonies; and to prepare them for what afflictions and persecutions they would be called to endure for Christ; and to exhort them to perseverance, and to strengthen them against apostasy, as well as to instruct them in the various duties of religion.

{a} Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 38.

{b} Ib. c. 3. & l. 6. c. 20.

{c} Eccl. Hist. l. 6. c. 25.

{d} Ib. c. 14.

{e} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 42. fol. 37. 3. Jarchi in Gen. x. 21. & xiv. 13.

{f} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 4.

{g} Targum in Gen. x. 21.

{h} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 42. fol. 37. 3.

{i} In Gen. x. 21. & in Jonam, l. 9.

{k} Sopher Shorashim, rad. *^rbe ^*

{l} Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 6. c. 14. Hieronymi Catalog. Script. Eccl. sect. 15. fol. 91. Tom. 1.

INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS 1

The intention of this epistle being to demonstrate the superior excellency of the Gospel revelation to the legal one, the apostle begins with the divine author of it, in which they both agree, and observes that in other things they differ. The revelation under the law was made in times past, the Gospel revelation in these last days; the former was made to the Jewish fathers that were of old, the latter to the then present apostles; the one was made at sundry times, and in divers manners,

the other was made at once, and in one way; the one was made by the prophets of the Lord, the other by his own son, Heb 1:1,2 and therefore the latter must be the more excellent; in proof of which the author enlarges on the character of the Son of God, with respect to his person, office, and glory; showing that he is heir of all things, the Maker of the worlds, of the same nature and glory with his Father; is omnipotent, and upholds all things by the word of his power; is the High Priest of his people, who has made satisfaction for their sins, and purged them from them, and is now at the right hand of God, Heb 1:2,3 He goes on to prove that he is more excellent than the angels, by a variety of arguments, and these supported by testimonies from the Scriptures; as that he has a more excellent name than any of them, being called the Son of God, Heb 1:4,5 which is proved from Ps 2:7 2Sa 7:12-16 that he is the object of the worship of angels, Heb 1:6 which is required of them, Ps 97:7 that he is their Maker and Creator, Heb 1:7 which appears from Ps 104:4 that he has an everlasting kingdom, is a righteous King, and is richly anointed above his fellows, Heb 1:8,9 which is the sense of some passages in Ps 45:6,7 and that he is the founder and former of the heavens, and of the earth, and will endure when they shall not, Heb 1:10-12 which is confirmed by testimonies out of Ps 102:25-27 that he sits at the right hand of God, where none of the angels were ever admitted, Heb 1:13 as is clear from Ps 110:1-7 and besides, the angels, as they are ministers made by him, they are sent out from him to wait on his people, the heirs of salvation, and minister to them, and therefore he must be greater than they, Heb 1:14 .

Hebrews 1

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

2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high:

4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he

hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

12 And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.

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

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

COMMENTARY HEBREWS I

Hebrews 1:1

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners

The apostle begins the epistle with an account of the revelation God has made of his mind and will in former times: the author of this revelation is God, not essentially, but personally considered, even God the Father, as distinguished from his Son in the next verse; for the rev-

elation under the Old Testament is divine, as well as that under the New; in this they both agree, in whatsoever else they differ: and this revelation was made at several times, at different seasons, and to different persons; and consisted of a variety of things relating to doctrine and worship, and concerning the Messiah, his person and office; of whom, at different times, there were gradual discoveries made, both before and after the giving of the law, from the beginning of the world, or the giving forth of the first promise, and in the times of the patriarchs, of: Moses, David, Isaiah, and other prophets: and this was delivered in various manners; sometimes by angels; sometimes in a dream; at other times by a vision; and sometimes by Urim and Thummim: and this he

spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets;

by Moses, and other succeeding prophets, as David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah, Zechariah, Malachi, and others; who were sent to the Jewish fathers, the ancestors of the people of the Jews, to whom they prophesied and declared the will of God, as they were moved and inspired by the Holy Ghost: and the apostle suggests, by this way of speaking, that it was a long time since God spake to this people; for prophecy had ceased ever since the times of Malachi, for the space of three hundred years; and this time past includes the whole Old Testament dispensation, from the beginning to the end of it, or of prophecy in it.

Hebrews 1:2

Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son

This is the Gospel revelation, or the revelation in the Gospel dispensation; which though it comes from the same author the other does, yet in many things differs from it, and is preferable to it; and indeed the general design of this epistle is to show the superior excellency of the one to the other; the former was delivered out in time past, but this “in these last days”; the Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, and several other copies, read, “in the last of these days”: perfectly agreeable to the phrase (Mymyh tyrxab), used in (Genesis 49:1) (Numbers 24:14) (Isaiah 2:2) to which the apostle refers, and in which places the days of the Messiah are intended; and it is a rule with the Jews F13, that wherever the phrase, “the last days”, is mentioned, the days of the Messiah are designed: and they are to be understood not of the last days of the natural world, but of, the Jewish world and state; indeed the times of the Messiah, or

Gospel dispensation, may be called the last days of the natural world, according to the tradition of the house of Elias; which teaches, that the duration of the world will be six thousand years, and divides it into three parts, the last of which is assigned to the Messiah, thus; two thousand years void, (or without the law,) two thousand years the law, and two thousand years the days of the Messiah F14: but it is best to understand this of the last days of the Mosaic economy, or Jewish dispensation; for the Messiah was to come before the Jewish civil and church states were dissolved; before the sceptre departed from Judah, and before the second temple was destroyed; and he was to come at the end, or toward the close of both these states; and which is called the end, or ends of the world, (Habakkuk 2:3) (Hebrews 9:26) (1 Corinthians 10:11) and quickly after Jesus, the true Messiah was come, an end was put to both these: from whence it may be observed, that the Messiah must be come; that the Mosaic economy, and Jewish worship, will never be restored again; that the Gospel revelation being made in the last days, ought to be regarded the more, it being the last revelation God will ever make. Moreover, this differs from the former in this respect, that was made to the fathers, this “to us”; meaning either the apostles in particular, or the Jews in general, to whom the apostle is writing: this shows that the Gospel revelation was first made to the Jews; and it being made to them personally, they were under great obligation to regard it; and that God had not cast off his people; and that though he had greatly indulged their fathers, he had showed greater favour to them, having provided some better thing for them: and there is a difference between these two revelations in the manner in which they were made; the former was at sundry times, and in divers manners, the latter was made at once, and in one way; that was delivered out in parts, and by piece meal, this the whole together; the whole mind and will of God, all his counsel, all that Christ heard of the Father; it is the faith that was once, and at once, delivered to the saints; and it has been given out in one way, by the preaching of the word: to which may be added, that formerly God spoke by many persons, by the prophets, but now by one only, “by his Son”; who is so not by creation, nor by adoption, nor by office, but by nature; being his own Son, his proper Son, begotten of him, of the same nature with him, and equal to him; and so infinitely preferable to the prophets: he is a Son, and not a servant, in whom the Father is, and he in the Father, and in whom the Spirit is without measure; and God is said to speak

by him, or in him, because he was now incarnate; and what he says from God should be attended to, both on account of the dignity of his person, as the Son of God, and because of the authority he came with as Mediator: whom he hath appointed heir of all things; which must be understood of him not as God, and Creator; for as such he has a right to all things; all that the Father has are his; the kingdom of nature and providence belongs to him, he being the Former and Maker of all things; but as Mediator, who has all things committed to him, to subserve the ends of his office; and has a kingdom appointed him, and which he will deliver up again the word all may refer either to persons or things; to persons, not angels, good or bad, though both are subject to him, yet neither are called his inheritance; but elect men, who are his portion, and the lot of his inheritance; and to things relating to these persons, and for their use and service, in time, and to all eternity; as all temporal things, and all spiritual ones, the blessings and promises of the covenant of grace, the gifts and graces of the Spirit, and eternal glory and happiness, the saints' inheritance, who are joint heirs with Christ.

By whom also he made the worlds;

this is said in agreement with the notions of the Jews, and their way of speaking, who make mention of three worlds, which they call, the upper world (the habitation of God), the middle world (the air), and the lower world F15 (the earth); and sometimes they call them the world of angels (where they dwell), the world of orbs (where the sun, moon, and stars are), and the world below F16 (on which we live); and it is frequent in their writings, and prayer books F17, to call God (Mymlweh lk Nwbr) , "Lord of all worlds"; (See Gill on Hebrews 11:3), these God made by his Son, not as an instrument, but as an efficient cause with him; for by him were all things made, whether visible or invisible; and the preposition "by" does not always denote instrumentality, but sometimes efficiency; and is used of God the Father himself, and in this epistle, (Hebrews 2:10) .

FOOTNOTES:

F13 Kimchi & Aben Ezra in Isa. ii. 2.

F14 T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 97. 1.

F15 Tzeror Hammor, fol. 1. 4. & 3. 2, 3. Caphtor, fol. 79. 1.

F16 Tzeror Hammor, fol. 83. 2. Caphtor, fol. 90. 1.

F17 Seder Tephillot, fol. 5. 2. & 40. 2. Ed. Amstelod.

Hebrews 1:3

Who being the brightness of his glory

Or "of glory"; of God the Father, the God of glory, and who is glory itself; so called on account of his glorious nature and perfections and because of the glorious manifestations of them in his works of creation and providence, and in the various dispensations of his grace, and especially in his Son; and because he is the author of all glory, in the creatures, in the whole world, in Christ as man and Mediator, and in his own people. Now Christ is the "brightness" of this, as he is God; he has the same glorious nature and perfections, and the same glorious names, as Jehovah, the Lord of glory and the same glory, homage, and worship given him: the allusion is to the sun, and its beam or ray: so some render it "the ray of his glory"; and may lead us to observe, that the Father and the Son are of the same nature, as the sun and its ray; and that the one is not before the other, and yet distinct from each other, and cannot be divided or separated one from another: so the phrase (hyrqr Nyz) , "the brightness of his glory"; is used of the divine Being, in the Chaldee paraphrases F18; see the Apocrypha.

`` For she is the brightness of the everlasting light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of his goodness." (Wisdom 7:26)

And the express image of his person;

this intends much the same as the other phrase; namely, equality and sameness of nature, and distinction of persons; for if the Father is God, Christ must be so too; and if he is a person, his Son must be so likewise, or he cannot be the express image and character of him; (See Gill on Colossians 1:15).

And upholding all things by the word of his power;

the Syriac version renders it, "by the power of his word", to the same sense, only inverting the words. The Targumist on (2 Chronicles 2:6) uses a phrase very much like this, of God, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain; because, adds he, (hytrwbg erdb alk lybo) , "he bears", or "sustains all things by the arm of his power"; and the words are to be understood not of the Father, upholding all things by his essential and powerful Word, his Son; but of the Son himself, who upholds all creatures he has made; bears up the pillars of the universe; preserves every creature in its being, and supports it, and supplies it with the necessaries of life; rules and governs all, and providentially orders and disposes of all things in the world, and that by his all powerful will; which makes it manifest, that he is truly

and properly God, and a very fit person to be a priest, as follows:

when he had by himself purged our sins;

the Arabic and Ethiopic versions seem to refer this to God the Father, as if he, by Christ, made the expiation of sin, and then caused him to sit down at his right hand; but it belongs to the Son himself, who of himself, and by himself alone, and by the sacrifice of himself, made atonement for the sins of his people; which is meant by the purgation of them: he took their sins upon himself, and bore them, and removed them far away, and utterly abolished them, which the priests under the law could not do: and when he had so done,

he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

by "Majesty" is meant God the Father, to whom majesty belongs; who is clothed with it, and which is before him: and his "right hand" designs his power, greatness, and glory, and is expressive of the high honour Christ, as man, is possessed of; for his sitting here denotes the glorious exaltation of him in human nature, after his sufferings, and death, and resurrection from the dead; and shows that he had done his work, and was accepted, and was now enjoying rest and ease, honour and glory, in which he will continue; and the place of his session, as well as of the habitation of God, at whose right hand he sits, is on high, in the highest heavens.

FOOTNOTES:

F18 Targum in 2 Sam xxii. 13. & in Cant. v. 10.

Hebrews 1:4

Being made so much better than the angels

Christ is so much better than the angels, as the Creator, than the creature; as an independent being, than a dependent one; as he that blesses, than he that is blessed; as he that is worshipped, than he that worships: as a king, than his subjects; as a master, than his servants; and as he that sends, than he that is sent: and Christ may be said to be "made so", when he was manifested and declared to be so; and he was actually preferred to them, and exalted above them in human nature, after he had expiated the sins of his people, and when he was set down at the right hand of God, as in the latter part of the preceding verse, with which these words stand connected; for in his state of humiliation, and through his sufferings and death, he was made lower than they; but when he was risen from the dead, and ascended to heaven, he was placed at the right hand of God, where none

of them ever was, or ever will be: besides, the phrase, "being made", signifies no more than that "he was"; and so the Syriac version renders it, "and he was so much better than the angels"; and so the Ethiopic version, "he is so much better": and this is observed, to prove him to be more excellent than any creature, since he is preferred to the most excellent of creatures; and to show, that the Gospel dispensation is superior to the legal dispensation, which was introduced by the ministration of angels; and to take off the Jews from the worship of angels, to which they were prone: and this doctrine of his could not be well denied by them, since it was the faith of the Jewish church, that the Messiah should be preferred to the angels: for in their ancient writings they say of him, he shall be exalted above Abraham, he shall be lifted up above Moses, and be higher than the ministering angels F19; and that he is above them, appears from what follows,

as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they;

which is that of the Son of God, a name peculiar to him; and which belongs to him in such a sense as it does not to angels, as is evident from the following verse: and though this name is not founded on his office, as Mediator, but arises from his nature and relation to God; yet he was declared to be the Son of God, and it was made manifest, that this name of right belonged to him, upon the discharge of his office, at his resurrection and ascension to heaven; and therefore he is said to obtain it by inheritance; or he appeared to inherit it of right, and that it was his possession for evermore.

FOOTNOTES:

F19 Tanchuma spud Huls. p. 321.

Hebrews 1:5

For unto which of the angels said he at any time

That is, he never said to any of the angels what he has said to Christ; namely, what follows,

thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee

for though angels are called the sons of God, (Job 1:6) (2:1) (38:7) yet are never said to be begotten by him; or, with this clause annexed to it, "this day have I begotten thee"; nor are they ever so called in a proper sense, or in such sense as Christ is: this is said to Christ, and of him, in (Psalms 2:7) and that agreeably to the

sense of the Jewish church at this time, or the apostle would never have produced it to the Hebrews in such a manner; and not only the whole psalm in general, but this verse in particular, is owned by Jewish writers F20, both ancient and modern, to belong to the Messiah. Christ is the Son of God, not by Creation, nor by adoption, nor by office, but by nature; he is the true, proper, natural, and eternal Son of God; and as such is owned and declared by Jehovah the Father, in these words; the foundation of which relation lies in the begetting of him; which refers not to his nature, either divine or human: not to his divine nature, which is common with the Father and Spirit; wherefore if his was begotten, theirs must be also, being the same undivided nature, common to all three; much less to his human nature, in which he is never said to be begotten, but always to be made, and with respect to which he is without Father; nor to his office, as Mediator, in which he is not a Son, but a servant; besides, he was a Son, previous to his being a prophet, priest, and King; and his office is not the foundation of his sonship, but his sonship is the foundation of his office; or by which that is supported, and which fits him for the performance of it: but it has respect to his divine person; for as, in human generation, person begets person, and like begets like, so it is in divine generation; though care must be taken to remove all imperfection from it, as divisibility and multiplication of essence, priority and posteriority, dependence, and the like; nor can the modus, or manner of it, be conceived, or explained by us: the date of it, today, designs eternity, as in (Isaiah 43:13), which is one continued day, an everlasting now; and this may be applied to any time and case, in which Christ is declared to be the Son of God; as at his incarnation, his baptism, his transfiguration on the Mount, and his resurrection from the dead, as in (Acts 13:33) (Romans 1:4) and at his ascension to heaven, when he was made Lord and Christ, and his divine sonship more manifestly appeared; which seems to be the time, and case, more especially referred to here. And again, I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a Son: which words are taken from (2 Samuel 7:14) and the sense is, not that he should be his son by adoption; or that he would be instead of a father to him; or that he should be as dear to him as a son is to a father; but that he was really and properly so; and he would make it manifest, and own him as such, as he did at Jordan's river, upon the Mount, and at his resurrection and ascension; though the words are spoken of Solomon, as a type of Christ, they properly belong to the antitype, who

is greater than Solomon.

FOOTNOTES:

F20 Zohar in Numb. fol. 82. 2. Maimon. in Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. 1. & Abarbinel, Mashmia Jeshua, fol. 37. 4. & 38. 1.

Hebrews 1:6

And again, when he bringeth the first begotten into the world;

&c.] By "the first begotten" is meant Christ. This is a name given him in the Old Testament, and is what the Hebrews were acquainted with, and therefore the apostle uses it; it is in (Psalms 89:27) from whence it seems to be taken here, and which the ancient Jews F21 acknowledge is to be understood of the Messiah; who, as the Son of God, is the only begotten of the Father, and was begotten from eternity, as before declared, and before any creature had a being, and therefore called the firstborn of every creature, (Colossians 1:15) and is sometimes styled the first begotten from the dead; he rose the first in time, and is the first in causality and dignity: and he may be called the firstborn, with respect to the saints, who are of the same nature with him, and are partakers of the divine nature, and are adopted into the family of God, though they are not in the same class of sonship with him; and the bringing of him into the world may refer to his second coming, for this seems agreeable from the natural order of the words, which may be rendered, "when he shall bring again" that is, a second time, and from (Psalms 97:1-12) from whence the following words are cited; and from the glory he shall then have from the angels, who will come with him, and minister to him; and not to his resurrection from the dead, when he was exalted above angels, principalities, and powers; though, as we read the words, they seem to regard his first coming in to this habitable world, at his incarnation and birth, when he was attended with angels, and worshipped by them, according to the order of God the Father, as follows:

he saith, and let all the angels of God worship him;

these words are cited from (Psalms 97:7) where the angels are called Elohim, gods. So Aben Ezra on the place observes, that there are some (meaning their doctors) who say, that "all the gods are the angels"; and Kimchi says, that the words are not imperative, but are in the past tense, instead of the future,

all the angels have worshipped him;

that is, they shall worship him; as they have done, so they will do. According to our version, they are called

upon to worship God's firstborn, his only begotten Son, with a religious worship and adoration, even all of them, not one excepted; which shows, that Christ, as the first begotten, is the Lord God, for he only is to be served and worshipped; and that if angels are to worship him, men ought; and that angels are not to be worshipped, and that Christ is preferable to them; and the whole sets forth the excellency and dignity of his person. Philo the Jew F23 often calls the Logos, or Word of God, his first begotten.

FOOTNOTES:

F21 Shemot Rabba, sect. 19. fol. 104. 4.

F23 De Agricultura, p. 195. De Confus. Ling. p. 329, 341. Somniis, p. 597.

Hebrews 1.7

And of the angels he saith

Or "to the angels", as in the following verse, "to the Son", which stands opposed to this; and the words said to them, or of them, are found in (Psalms 104:4)

who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire:

this cannot be understood of the wind and lightning, and of God's making these his messengers and ministers to do his will; for such a sense is not suitable to the scope of the psalm, from whence they are taken, nor to the order of the words in which they stand; for it is not said he makes spirits, or winds, his angels, and flaming fire his ministers, but the reverse; and is contrary to the design of the apostle in citing them, which is to show the superiority of Christ to angels, of whom it is said, that they are made spirits: they are "spirits", created ones, and so differ from God the Creator: they are incorporeal ones, and so differ from men; they are immaterial, and so die not; they are spiritual substances subsisting in themselves: and they are "made" such by God the Father, and by the Son the Lord Jesus Christ, within the six days of the creation, and all at once; for it is not to be supposed that the Lord is daily making them; and this proves the Son to be God, as well as more excellent than the angels; unless this is to be understood of the daily disposal of them in providence, in causing winds, thunder, lightning, and the like. Some choose to supply the word with "as", and read, who maketh his angels as winds; for invisibility, velocity, power, and penetration: "and his ministers as a flame of fire"; and these are the same with the angels, for they are ministers to God; they attend his presence; are ready to perform any

service for him; they sing his praise, and are his chariots in which he rides: and they are ministers to Christ; they attended at his incarnation: were solicitous for his preservation, ministered to him in distress, assisted at his resurrection, and accompanied him in his ascension, and will be with him at his second coming: and they are as a flame of fire, so called from their great power, force, and swiftness; and from their burning love, and flaming zeal, hence named seraphim; and because they are sometimes the executioners of God's wrath, and will descend in flaming fire, when Christ shall be revealed from heaven: angels sometimes appear in fiery forms; the chariots and horses of fire, by which Elijah was carried up to heaven, were no other than angels, in such forms: so the Jews F24 say of the angels,

``all the angels, their horses are horses of fire, and their chariots fire, and their bows fire, and their spears fire, and all their instruments of war fire."

And they have a notion, that an angel is half water, and half fire {y}.

FOOTNOTES:

F24 Sepher Jetzirah, p. 16. Ed. Rittangel.

F25 T. Hieros. Roshhashana, fol. 58. 1.

Hebrews 1:8

But unto the Son, he saith

What he does not to angels, and which sets him infinitely above them; which shows him to be a Prince and King, and not a servant, or minister; and which even ascribes deity to him:

thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever:

this, with what follows in this verse, and the next, is taken out of (Psalms 45:6 Psalms 45:7) which psalm is not spoken of Solomon, to whom many things in it will not agree; he was not fairer than other men; nor was he a warrior; nor was his throne for ever and ever; and much less a divine person, and the object of worship; but the Messiah, and so the ancient Jews understand it: the Targum applies it to him, and mentions him by name in (Hebrews 1:2) and some of their modern writers F26 affirm it is said of the Messiah; though Aben Ezra seems doubtful about it, saying, it is spoken concerning David, or Messiah his Son, whose name is so, (Ezekiel 37:25) . Deity is here ascribed to the Son of God; he is expressly called God; for the words will not bear to be rendered, "thy throne is the throne of God, or

thy throne is God”; or be supplied thus, “God shall establish thy throne”: nor are the words an apostrophe to the father, but are spoken to the king, the subject of the psalm, who is distinguished from God the Father, being blessed and anointed by him; and this is put out of all doubt by the apostle, who says they are addressed “to the Son”, who is not a created God, nor God by office, but by nature; for though the word “Elohim” is sometimes used of those who are not gods by nature; yet being here used absolutely, and the attributes of eternity, and most perfect righteousness, being ascribed to the person so called, prove him to be the true God; and this is the reason why his throne is everlasting, and his sceptre righteous, and why he should be worshipped, served, and obeyed. Dominion and duration of it are given to him; his throne denotes his kingly power, and government; which is general, over angels, good and bad; over men, righteous and wicked, even the greatest among them, the kings and princes of the earth: and special, over his church and people; and which is administered by his Spirit and grace in the hearts of his saints; and by his word and ordinances in his churches; and by his powerful protection of them from their enemies; and will be in a glorious manner in the latter day, and in heaven to all eternity; for his throne is for ever, and on it he will sit for ever: his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; he will have no successor in it, nor can his government be subverted; and though he will deliver up the kingdom to the Father, it will not cease.

A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom;

the sceptre is an ensign of royalty; and a sceptre of righteousness, or rightness, is expressive of the justice of government; the Syriac version renders it, “a sceptre stretched out”; which is a sceptre of mercy, as the instance of Ahasuerus stretching out his sceptre to Esther shows; and such is the Gospel of Christ, which holds forth and declares the mercy, grace, and love of God to men through Christ; and which may be called a sceptre of righteousness, since it reveals and directs to the righteousness of Christ, and encourages to works of righteousness; but here it designs the righteous administration of Christ’s kingly office; for just and true are, have been, and ever will be his ways, as King of saints.

FOOTNOTES:

F26 Kimchi & R. Sol. ben Melech in loc. & R. Abraham Seba, Tzeror Hammor, fol. 49. 2.

Hebrews 1:9

Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity

Christ loves righteous persons and righteous works, faithfulness and integrity, and a just administration of government, everything that is holy, just, and good; which has appeared in the whole course of his life on earth, in working out a righteousness for his people, and in encouraging righteousness in them, which he leads them in the way of; and his love of justice will still more appear at the last day, when he will judge the world in righteousness, and give the crown of righteousness to proper persons: and he hates iniquity; or “unrighteousness”, as the Alexandrian copy and another read; as being contrary to his nature, both as God and man, and to the righteous law of God; which has appeared by his inveighing against it, and dehorting from it; by his severity exercised towards delinquents; by his suffering for it, and abolishing of it; and by chastising his own people on account of it; and his abhorrence of it will still more appear at the day of judgment, when all workers of iniquity, professors and profane, will be bid to depart from him:

therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows:

the anointer is the God of Christ; that is, God the Father, who is the God of Christ, as man; and is so called, because he prepared and formed the human nature of Christ, and supported it under all its sufferings, and has glorified it; and as such Christ prayed unto him, believed in him, loved him, and obeyed him: the anointed is the Son of God, the Son spoken to, and is called God in the preceding verse; though he is not anointed as God, but as Mediator, to be prophet, and priest, and King: what he is anointed with is not material oil, but spiritual, the Holy Ghost, as it is explained in (Acts 10:38) called the oil of gladness, in allusion to the use of oil at feasts and weddings, for the delight and refreshment of the guests; and because of the spiritual effects of joy and gladness, both on Christ, as man, and on his people. Now Christ was anointed as Mediator from all eternity; that is, he was invested with his office as such; and at his conception and birth he was filled with the Holy Ghost; who also descended on him at his baptism, after which he went about doing good, and healing diseases; but here it seems to refer to the time of his ascension, when he was declared to be Lord and Christ, the anointed one; and received gifts for men, the fulness of the Spirit without measure, and with which he was anointed above his “fellows”; by whom are meant, not the angels, nor the

kings and princes of the earth; but the saints, who are so called, because they are of the same nature, and are of the same family, and are partakers of the same spirit, and grace; and having received the unction from him, are also kings, priests, and prophets, and will be companions with him to all eternity. Now the reason of his being anointed, or exalted, and made Lord and Christ, is, because he loves righteousness; see (Philippians 2:7 Philippians 2:8) or rather, because he is anointed with the Holy Spirit without measure, therefore he loves righteousness; for the words may be rendered, "thou lovest righteousness--because God, thy God, hath anointed thee".

Hebrews 1:10

And thou Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth

The person here addressed, as the Lord or Jehovah, and as the Maker of the heavens and the earth, is the same with the Son spoken to, and of, before; for the words are a continuation of the speech to him, though they are taken from another psalm, from (Psalms 102:25-27). The phrase, "thou, Lord" is taken from (Psalms 102:12) and is the same with, "O my God", (Psalms 102:24) and whereas it is there said, "of old", and here, in the beginning, the sense is the same; and agreeably to the Septuagint, and the apostle, Jarchi interprets it by (hlyx-tm) , "at", or "from the beginning"; and so the Targum paraphrases it, (zywrv Nm) , "from the beginning", that the creatures were created that in the beginning of the creation, which is the apostle's meaning; and shows the eternity of Christ, the Lord, the Creator of the earth, who must exist before the foundation of the world; and confutes the notion of the eternity of the world: and the rounding of it shows that the earth is the lower part of the creation; and denotes the stability of it; and points out the wisdom of the Creator in laying such a foundation; and proves the deity of Christ, by whom that, and all things in it, were made:

the heavens are the works of thine hands:

there are more heavens than one; there are the airy heaven, and the starry heaven, and the heaven of heavens, the third heaven; and they were created the beginning, as the earth was, (Genesis 1:1) and are the immediate work of Christ; they were made by himself, not by the means of angels, who were not in being till these were made; nor by any intermediate help, which he could not have, and which he did not need: the phrase

is expressive of the power of Christ in making the upper parts of the creation, and of his wisdom in garnishing them, in which there is a wonderful display of his glory; and the whole serves to set forth the dignity and excellency of his person.

Hebrews 1:11

They shall perish

That is, the heavens and the earth; not as to the substance of them, but as to the quality of them; the present form and fashion of them shall pass away; the curse will be removed from them, and they will be renewed and purified, but the substance of them will continue; otherwise there would be no place, either for the righteous or the wicked,

But thou remainest;

without any change or alteration, neither in his natures, divine or human, as God or man, nor in his office as Mediator; as a priest, he has an unchangeable priesthood, and ever lives to make intercession; as a King, his kingdom is an everlasting one, and of it there will be no end; and as a prophet, he will be the everlasting light, of his people.

They all shall wax old as doth a garment;

garments in time wax old, and lose their beauty and usefulness, unless when a miracle is wrought, as in the case of the children of Israel in the wilderness. Now the heavens, and the light thereof, are as a garment and a curtain, (Psalms 104:2) and these, together with the earth, will in time come to their end of usefulness, in the present form of them; see (Isaiah 51:6).

Hebrews 1:12

And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up

In order to lay them aside, and make no use of them in the manner they now are; just as clothes, when they are grown old, or out of fashion, are folded up, and laid aside from use at present, or are put into another form. In the Hebrew text it is, "as a vesture shalt thou change them"; but the sense is the same, for a garment is changed by folding it, or turning it; agreeably to which Jarchi interprets the Hebrew phrase thus,

``as a man turns his garment to put it off;''

the Vulgate Latin version reads as the Hebrew does, and one of the manuscripts of New College, Oxford.

And they shall be changed;

as to their form and use, not as to their being; for a change, and an annihilation, are two things:

but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail;

which is expressive of the immutability of Christ, in his nature and perfections, in his person, and offices, in the virtue of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; and of his duration or continuance, in opposition to the fading and transitory nature of the heavens and earth, and of all outward enjoyments: and this may serve to take off the heart from the one, and set it upon the other; and to strengthen our faith in Christ, and encourage us to expect a continuance of blessings from him; all supplies of grace now, and eternal glory hereafter.

Hebrews 1:13**But to which of the angels said he at any time**

That is, he never said to any of them in his council, or covenant; he never designed to give them any such honour, as hereafter expressed; he never promised it to them, or bestowed it on them; he never called up any of them to so high a place, or to such a dignity:

sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool;

yet this he said to his Son, (Psalms 110:1) for to him, the Messiah, are they spoken, and have had their fulfilment in him: (See Gill on Matthew 22:44); and therefore he must be greater than the angels.

Hebrews 1:14**Are they not all ministering spirits**

Servants to God, to Christ, and to his people, and therefore must be inferior to the Son of God. The phrase is Rabbinical; frequent mention is made in Jewish writings F1 of (trvh ykalm) , “the angels of ministry”, or “the ministering angels”; this is their common appellation with the Jews; and the apostle writing to such, uses a like phrase, well known to them, and appeals to them, if the angels were not such spirits.

Sent forth to minister for them who shall be the heirs of salvation?

the persons they minister to, and for, are those, who shall be the heirs of salvation; that is, of eternal glory, which will be possessed by the saints, as an inheritance: hence it belongs to children, being bequeathed to them by their Father, and comes to them through the death of Christ, of which the Spirit is the earnest; and this shows that it is not of works, and that it is of an eternal duration, and takes in all kind of happiness: and of this the saints are heirs now; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, “who are heirs of salvation”; nor should it be

rendered, “who shall be heirs”, but rather, “who shall inherit salvation”; for this character respects not their heirship, but their actual inheriting of salvation: and the ministry of angels to, and for them, lies in things temporal and spiritual, or what concern both their bodies and their souls; in things temporal, in which they have often been assisting, as in providing food for their bodies, in curing their diseases, in directing and preserving them in journeys, in saving and delivering them from outward calamities, in restraining things hurtful from hurting them, and in destroying their enemies; in things spiritual, as in making known the mind and will of God to them, in comforting them, and suggesting good things to them, and in helping and assisting them against Satan’s temptations; and they are present with their departing souls at death, and carry them to heaven, and will gather the elect together at the last day. And they are “sent forth” to minister to them in such a way; they are sent forth by Christ, the Lord and Creator of them, who therefore must be superior to them; they do not take this office upon themselves, though, being put into they faithfully and diligently execute it, according to the will of Christ: and this shows the care of Christ over his people, and his kindness to them, and the great honour he puts upon them, to appoint such to minister to them; and since they are of so much use and service, they ought to be respected and esteemed, though not worshipped.

FOOTNOTES:

F1 T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 12. 2. & 14. 1, 2. & 16. 1. Tanaith, fol. 11. 1. & Megilia, fol. 15. 2. & in Zohar passim.

INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS II

In this chapter the apostle, from the superior excellency of Christ, by whom the Gospel revelation is come, discoursed of in the preceding, urges the believers he writes to, to a more diligent attention to the Gospel, and the doctrines of it; to which he adds another motive inducing thereunto, lest those things should be let slip, and be lost, Heb 2:1 and then, by another argument from the less to the greater, that if the law, which was given by angels, could not be broken with impunity, then how should such escape divine punishment that neglected and despised the Gospel, which is a doctrine of salvation, was delivered by the Lord himself, and confirmed by various testimonies and miracles, Heb 2:2-4. And besides the Gospel dispensation is not put into the hands of angels, but into the hands of Christ, to whom

all things are subject, which is proved out of Ps 8:4-6 and which proof shows, that though Christ, on account of his sufferings and death, was for a while made lower than the angels, yet being now crowned with glory and honour, he is above them, and they are subject to him, since all things are, Heb 2:5-9. And this anticipates an objection that might be taken from hence against what the apostle had asserted in the foregoing chapter, concerning the superiority of Christ to angels; and this leads him on to observe the reason of the sufferings and death of Christ, and also of his incarnation; that the moving cause of Christ's sufferings and death was the grace and good will of God; that he did not suffer for himself, but for others, for everyone of those described in the context; that inasmuch as he was the surety of those persons, it was agreeable to the justice of God, and it could not be otherwise, but he must be made perfect through suffering; and this was the way to bring many sons to glory, Heb 2:9,10 and as for his incarnation, or his becoming man, that was necessary, that the sanctifier and the sanctified might be of the same nature, that he might be able to call them brethren and children, Heb 2:11-13 as he does, for which are cited Ps 22:22 18:2 Isa 8:18 and because the children he engaged to bring to glory were partakers of flesh and blood; and also that he might be capable of dying, and by dying destroy the devil, and deliver his timorous people, who, through fear of death, lived in a continual state of bondage, Heb 2:14,15 for which reason he did not take upon him the nature of angels, but of the seed of Abraham, Heb 2:16 And besides, it was necessary he should be in all things like unto his brethren, that he might be merciful to them, and faithful to God, and be in a state and condition capable of sympathizing with them, and succouring them under their temptations, which he was able to do by suffering through temptation himself, Heb 2:17,18.

Hebrews 2.1

1 Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

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

3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord,

and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;

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

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

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

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

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

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

10 For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

11 For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,

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

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

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

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

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

17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

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

COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS II

Hebrews 2:1

Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed

This is an inference from the apostle's discourse in the preceding chapter; since he, by whom God has spoke in these last days, is his Son, who is infinitely above the angels, they being his creatures, and worshippers of him, and ministers to him, and his; therefore the greater regard should be had to the Gospel spoken by him: even to the things which we have heard; which are no other than the truths of the Gospel, which had been preached unto them, and which were heard by the apostles, who had preached them to them; and they had heard them from them, or from Christ himself, and were what their forefathers had desired to hear, and which the carnal ear has not heard; for there is an internal and an external hearing of the Gospel. Now it becomes the hearers of it to give heed, or attend unto it, to beware of that which is pernicious and hurtful, and to regard that which is good and profitable; and this giving heed takes in a close consideration of Gospel truths, a diligent inquiry into them, a valuable esteem of them, a strict adherence to them, and a watchfulness to retain what is heard, and to conform unto it: and this was to be done "more earnestly" than their forefathers had, or than they themselves had; or this may be put for the superlative degree, and signify, that they should give the most earnest heed; for they had the most abundant reason to give heed, since what they heard was not from Moses, and the prophets, to whom they did well to take heed, but from Christ the Son of God, who was greater than they: "lest at any time we should let them slip": and this either respects persons; and so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "lest we should run out"; and the Syriac version, "lest we should fall"; and the Arabic version, "lest we should fall from honesty": which may intend partial slips and falls, to which the people of God are subject; and which are

oftentimes owing to inadvertency to the word; for the Gospel, duly attended to, is a preservative from falling: or it may respect things, even the doctrines of the Gospel, lest we should let them slip out of us, through us, or besides us: the metaphor seems to be taken either from leaking vessels, which let out what is put into them; or to strainers, which let the liquor through, and it falls on the ground, and cannot be gathered up, and so becomes useless; and which is expressive of unprofitable hearing of the word, through inattention, negligence, and forgetfulness, and the irrecoverableness of it, when it is gone: the Gospel may be lost to some that hear it, as to any real benefit and advantage by it; and some who hear the Gospel may be lost and perish; but the grace of the Gospel can never be lost.

Hebrews 2:2

For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast

This is a description of the law, from whence the apostle argues to a stricter regard to the Gospel, as from the lesser to the greater: this is called "the word", and a terrible one it was; it was a voice of words, which they that heard entreated they might hear no more; it was the word "spoken" with an articulate voice, and was heard by the Israelites, and it was spoken "by angels". Jehovah the Father's voice was never heard; when he came to give the law, ten thousand angels came along with him; and the ministry of these he used in the delivery of the law; by them he spoke it; they formed in the air the voices heard; it was ordained by them, and given by the disposition of them; see (Acts 7:53) (Galatians 3:19). To which agree those words of Herod, spoken to the Jews, recorded by Josephus F2; that we learn of God, (di' angelwn) , "by angels", the best of doctrines, and the most holy things in the law. And this was "steadfast"; firm, and sure, being the word of God, which cannot pass away, until it be fulfilled: it was confirmed by terrible signs attending it, and by the people's assent unto it; the penalty of it is sure and certain, in case of disobedience; and as to the form and ministration of it, it remained until Christ, the end of it, came; and as to the matter of it, so far as of a moral nature, it still remains: the judicial and ceremonial parts of it are abrogated; and the whole of it is abolished, as in the hands of Moses, and as a covenant of works, and as to the curse and condemnation of it, and with respect to justification by it; but it still continues as a cursing law to all that are under it; and as a means of conviction to sinners in the hands of the Spirit; and as a rule of walk and conversation to saints, as in the hands of Christ:

and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward;

every precept of the law had a penalty annexed to it; and every breach of it was punished as that penalty required; and that according to the strict justice of God, and the just demerit of sin; and none escaped, but suffered the punishment due to the violation of the precept either in themselves, or in their surety; so steadfast and immovable was this law.

FOOTNOTES:

F2 Antiqu. l. 15. c. 5. sect. 3.

Hebrews 2:3

How shall we escape

The righteous judgment of God, and eternal punishment:

if we neglect so great salvation?

as the Gospel is, which is called salvation; in opposition to the law, which is the ministration of condemnation; and because it is a declaration of salvation by Christ; and is the means of bringing it near, and of the application of it in conversion, and so is the power of God unto it: and it is a "great" salvation; the Gospel which reveals it is great, for the author of it is Christ; it has been confirmed by miracles, and attended with great success; and has in it great things, great mysteries, and exceeding great and precious promises: and the salvation which it declares is great; it is the produce of great wisdom; it is wrought by a great person, by a Saviour, and a great one, and who is the great God, and our Saviour; it has been procured at great charge and expense, even at the expense of the blood and life of the Son of God; and has been obtained through great difficulties; and is the salvation of the soul, the more noble part of man; and it is a complete and everlasting one: to "neglect" this, is to be careless of it; to condemn it, and to despise the ministers of it; and to make anything else but Christ the way of salvation: and the danger such are in is very great; it is not possible that they should escape divine vengeance, since their sin is so great, and attended with such aggravating circumstances; for it is a contempt of the grace and wisdom of God in providing such a Saviour, and a trampling under foot the Son of God, and a counting his blood as a common thing; and besides, there is no more sacrifice for sin, they can have nothing to atone for it; and that God, whom they offend hereby, is both omniscient and omnipotent, and there will be no escaping out of his hands: to which must be added, that this Gospel of salvation is that

which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord;

by the Lord Jesus Christ himself; the Gospel was preached by him, and he was extraordinarily qualified for it; and he spake it as never man did: it was preached by John indeed, and by all the prophets before him, and to the Israelites in the wilderness, and to Abraham before them, and even to Adam in Eden's garden, which was the first time it was spoken; but then it was spoken to him by the Lord; by the Word of the Lord, the essential Word, the Son of God, as the ancient Chaldee paraphrases, which express the sense of the old Jewish church, show {c}: besides, it began most fully and clearly to be preached by him in the days of his flesh, so as it never was preached before, nor since; grace and truth, the doctrines of grace and truth came by him, in all their fulness and glory: and

was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;

the Gospel is in itself firm and stable; nor did the words of Christ need any confirmation, who is truth itself, the "Amen", and faithful witness; but in condescension to human weakness, and by reason that Christ, as man, was not everywhere, and that by the mouth of more witnesses it should be established, he sent forth his apostles to preach it; who heard it from him, and they published it to the Jews first, as these were to whom the apostle writes, and then to the Gentiles. And though the apostle had it first by revelation from Christ himself, (Galatians 1:11 Galatians 1:12) it was confirmed to him by Ananias.

FOOTNOTES:

F3 Targum Onkelos & Jon. in Gen. iii. 8. & Hieros. in v. 9.

Hebrews 2:4

God also bearing them witness

The apostles of Christ; God testifying to their mission and commission, and the truth of the doctrine they preached:

both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles;

such as taking up serpents without hurt, healing the sick, causing the lame to walk, and raising the dead, and casting out devils, and the like; all which were for the confirmation of the Gospel preached by them: a sign, wonder, or miracle, for these signify the same thing, is a marvellous work done before men, by the power of God, to confirm a divine truth; God is the sole author of miracles; and they were done in the first ages of Chris-

tianity, when they were necessary, to give evidence of the truth of it, and to establish men in it; and these were various, as before observed: and gifts of the Holy Ghost; such as besides gifts of healing and working miracles, gifts of foretelling things to come, discerning of spirits, speaking with divers kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues, (1 Corinthians 12:8 1 Corinthians 12:9 1 Corinthians 12:10) according to his own will; either according to the will of God, who bore testimony by these miracles and gifts; or according to the will of the Holy Spirit, who distributed them to men severally as he pleased, (1 Corinthians 12:11) .

Hebrews 2:5

For unto the angels

Though angels were concerned in the giving of the law, and were frequently employed under the former dispensation, in messages to men, and in making revelations of God's mind and will to them, yet to them

hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak:

by which is meant, not the future state of eternal glory and happiness in heaven, as opposed to this world, and the present state of things; though there may be much truth in this sense, as that the present world is in subjection to angels, and the world to come is not; the present world is much in subjection, though it is not put into subjection, to evil angels, who usurp a power over it, hence Satan is called the god and prince of this world; and it is in some sense in subjection to good angels, as they are used by God in the execution of his providential care and government, in influencing and assisting at the councils of princes, in inflicting God's judgments on kingdoms and nations, and in the special care of his own people: but the world to come, as opposed to this, is not at all subject to them; they are employed in carrying the souls of departed saints thither, and shall be with them there, and join with them in their service; but they will not be as kings, nor even as children, but as servants; much less is heaven at their dispose to give to whomsoever they please; it is only in this sense in subjection to Christ, the Prince of life, who has power to give eternal life to as many as the Father has given to him: but it is not of this world the apostle is speaking; he is speaking of something now, which bears this name, and in proof of it cites a passage out of (Psalms 8:1-9) where mention is made of sheep, and other things, which cannot refer to the world of glory: rather it de-

signs the new heavens and new earth at the resurrection, and day of judgment, for these will not be put in subjection to angels; though of these the apostle is not speaking in the context: it seems therefore to intend the Gospel, and the Gospel dispensation and church state, in opposition to the Jewish state, and legal dispensation, which was called a world, and had in it a worldly sanctuary, and worldly ordinances, which is now at an end; and at the end of which Christ came, and then another world took place, here called "the world to come", as the times of the Messiah are frequently called by the Jews (abh Mlwe) , "the world to come", the Gospel dispensation, the apostle was treating of in the preceding verses, in distinction from the law, the word spoken by angels; for the Gospel was not spoken by them, but by the Lord: the Gospel state is very properly the world to come, with respect to the Old Testament saints, who were looking for it, and in which old things are past away, and all things are become new; angels desire to look into the mysteries of it, and learn from the church the manifold wisdom of God; but not they, but men, are the dispensers of the doctrines of it; and Christ, he is the Head, King, Governor, and Father of this new world: so instead of "everlasting Father", the Septuagint render the clause (pathr tou mellontov aiwnov) , in (Isaiah 9:6) "the Father of the age", or "world to come"; and hence mention is made in the Jewish writings of (axyvmd ytad amle) , "the world to come of the Messiah" F4.

FOOTNOTES:

F4 Targum in 1 Kings iv. 33.

Hebrews 2:6

But one in a certain place testified

That is, David, for he is the penman of the psalm, out of which the following words are taken; and though his name is not mentioned by the apostle, nor the particular place, or the psalm pointed at, as in (Acts 13:33 Acts 13:35) yet this was not through ignorance of either, nor out of disrespect to the penman; but because the apostle is writing to Jews, who were conversant with the Scriptures, and knew full well who said the words, and where they were: and it is usual with the Jews to cite passages in this manner; and the form by which the passage is introduced, by the word testified, is quite agreeable to their way of citing Scripture, of which there is another instance in (Hebrews 7:17) and I think that this form is only used in this epistle to the Hebrews, with which they were acquainted: it is common with them to say, (hdyeh hrwth) , "the law testified" F5, as

it is said in such or such a place; and here the apostle produces a passage, as a witness and testimony of the truth of what he had said, that the Gospel dispensation is not put in subjection to angels, but to the Messiah: the passage stands in (Psalms 8:4) which psalm belongs to the times of the Messiah, as appears from the non-application of it to others; and from the application of a passage in it to the children in his time, (Matthew 21:16) by Christ himself, and of the passage here by the apostle; nor in any other time was the name of the Lord excellent in all the earth, with which the psalm begins and concludes:

Saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?

this is not to be understood of mankind in general: not of man in a state of innocence; there were no babes nor sucklings in paradise, nor enemies to restrain; "Enosh", the word for man, signifies a frail mortal man, which Adam then was not; nor could he be called the son of man; nor can it so well suit with him, to be said to be made a little lower than the angels, and then crowned with glory and honour: nor of man as fallen, for all things are not subjected unto him; but of Christ, with whom everything agrees, as the name by which he is called, "Enosh", a frail man; for he was a man encompassed with infirmities; of no note and esteem among men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs; was subject to death, and did die; and is often called the son of man: what is said of him suits with him, as that God was "mindful of him"; which may be expressive of his love and delight in, and choice of his human nature, to be taken into union with his divine person; and of his counsel and covenant in preparing it for him; and of his uniting it to his person; and of his providential care of it, and great affection for it; of his unction of it, and of his great regard to it in its sufferings, by supporting it, and in raising it from the dead: and also that he "visited" him; not in a way of wrath, but of favour, with his presence, with the gifts and graces of his Spirit, with divine supports, and spiritual peace and joy; all which in itself it was not deserving of, nor could it claim; and therefore these things are spoken of as favours, and in a way of admiration.

FOOTNOTES:

F5 T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 37. 1. Maimon. Hilchot Yesode Hattorsh, 3. 7. sect. 6. & Melachim, c. 11. sect. 1. Vid. Aben Ezra in Lev. xvi. 8.

Hebrews 2:7

Thou madest him a little lower than the angels

In the Hebrew text it is, "than Elohim", which some render, "than God"; but it is rightly rendered by the apostle, "than angels"; and so the Targum, Jarchi, Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, interpret it. Christ was made a little lower than the angels, through the assumption of the human nature, which is inferior to angels, especially the corporeal part of it, and in this Kimchi makes the lessening to be; and more especially as that was assumed by Christ, with the infirmities of it; and by reason of the straits and indigencies he was brought into in it; besides, he was in it made under the law, which was given by angels, and to some parts of which they are not subject; and sometimes he stood in need of the ministry and support of angels, and had it; particularly he was made lower than they, when he was deprived of the gracious presence of God, and in the time of his sufferings and death; and which seem chiefly to be respected, as appears from (Hebrews 2:9) and the word "little" may not so much intend the degree of his humiliation, as the duration of it; for it may be rendered, "a little while"; in which sense it is used in (Acts 5:34) as the Hebrew word (jem) is in (Psalms 37:10) and so may respect the time of his suffering death; and at most the time from his incarnation to his resurrection; for he could not continue long in this low estate, which is matter of joy to us; he could not be held by the cords of death, but must rise, and be exalted above angels, as he is: and he was made so low by God, Jehovah the Father, whose name is excellent in all the earth, (Psalms 8:1) he preordained him to this low estate; he prepared a body for him, and had a very great hand in his sufferings and death; though neither of these were contrary to his will:

thou crownest him with glory and honour;

with that glory he had with the Father before the world was, and which followed upon his sufferings and death; for through them he entered into it, and upon his resurrection had it, and he is ascended on high, where he has the honour to sit at the right hand of God, which none of the angels have; and therefore is now above them, though once for a while below them, and they are now subject to him:

and didst set him over the works of thy hands:

over angels, principalities, and powers; over the kings of the earth, and all the inhabitants of it, and all things in it, and made him higher than the heavens, and gave him a name above every name.

Hebrews 2:8

Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet

Good angels, men and devils, all things in heaven, earth, and sea; see (1 Peter 3:22)

for in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him;

there is no one person or thing that is not subject to Christ; the subjection is the most universal, either voluntary or involuntary; whether they will or not, they are, and must be subject; God has left nothing but what he has put under his power:

but now we see not yet all things put under him;

this seems to be an objection, and even a contradiction to what is before said; which may be removed by observing, that though this general subjection is not seen by us, it does not follow that it is not; and though it is not as yet visible, yet it will be: and besides, the apostle's sense may be, that no such general subjection to any mere man has ever been seen and known; as not to Solomon, nor Ahasuerus, nor Cyrus, nor Alexander the great, nor Julius, nor Augustus Caesar, nor any other; and this he may observe, to show the non-application of this passage to any but to Jesus Christ; and this sense is confirmed by what follows.

Hebrews 2:9

But we see Jesus

Not with bodily eyes, but with the eyes of the mind, and understanding; that he is Jesus, as the Syriac version reads; and that he is designed in the above words; and that he has all things made subject unto him; and that he was humbled, and now exalted, as follows:

who was made a little lower than the angels;

in his state of humiliation; (See Gill on Hebrews 2:7)

for the suffering of death:

this clause may be considered either as connected with the preceding; and then the sense is, that Jesus became lower than the angels, by, or through suffering death; in that respect he was lower than they, who die not; this proved him to be in a condition below them, and showed how pertinent the above words were to him, and how they were fulfilled in him: or with the following; and then the meaning is, that because Jesus suffered death in the room and stead of his people; humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross, when he was very low indeed, therefore he is

crowned with glory and honour;

see (Philippians 2:8 Philippians 2:9) and (See Gill on Hebrews 2:7).

that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man;

that is, Christ was made a little lower than the angels by becoming man, and assuming a body frail and mortal, that he might die for his church and people: to "taste death", is a Jewish phrase, often to be met with in Rabbinical writings; (See Gill on Matthew 16:28) and signifies the truth and reality of his death, and the experience he had of the bitterness of it, it being attended with the wrath of God, and curse of the law; though he continued under it but for a little while, it was but a taste; and it includes all kinds of death, he tasted of the death of afflictions, being a man of sorrows all his days, and a corporeal death, and what was equivalent to an eternal one; and so some think the words will bear to be rendered, "that he by the grace of God might taste of every death"; which rendering of the words, if it could be established, as it is agreeable to the context, and to the analogy of faith, would remove all pretence of an argument from this place, in favour of the universal scheme: what moved God to make him lower than the angels, and deliver him up to death, was not any anger towards him, any disregard to him, or because he deserved it, but his "grace", free favour, and love to men; this moved him to provide him as a ransom; to preordain him to be the Lamb slain; to send him in the fullness of time, and give him up to justice and death: the Syriac version reads, "for God himself through his own grace tasted death for all"; Christ died, not merely as an example, or barely for the good of men, but as a surety, in their room and stead, and that not for every individual of mankind; for there are some he knows not; for some he does not pray; and there are some who will not be saved: the word "man" is not in the original text, it is only (уперъ пантовъ) , which may be taken either collectively, and be rendered "for the whole"; that is, the whole body, the church for whom Christ gave himself, and is the Saviour of; or distributively, and be translated, "for everyone"; for everyone of the sons God brings to glory, (Hebrews 2:10) for everyone of the "brethren", whom Christ sanctifies, and he is not ashamed to own, and to whom he declares the name of God, (Hebrews 2:11 Hebrews 2:12) for everyone of the members of the "church", in the midst of which he sung praise, (Hebrews 2:12) for every one of the "children" God has given him, and for whose sake he took part of flesh and blood, (Hebrews 2:13 Hebrews 2:14) and for everyone

of the “seed” of Abraham, in a spiritual sense, whose nature he assumed, (Hebrews 2:16) .

Hebrews 2:10

For it became him, for whom are all things

This is not a periphrasis of Christ, who died, but of God the Father, who delivered him to death; and who is the final cause of all things, in nature, and in grace, all things being made for his pleasure and for his glory; and he is the efficient cause of all things, as follows:

and by whom are all things;

all the works of creation, providence, and grace:

in bringing many sons to glory;

not to worldly glory, but to the heavenly glory, which they are undeserving of; and which was long ago prepared for them; is at present hid; is weighty, solid, durable, yea, eternal: the persons whom God, of his rich grace, brings to this, are “sons”; who are predestinated to the adoption of children; are regenerated by the Spirit of God; believe in Christ; and have the spirit of adoption given them, and so being children, are heirs of glory: and these are “many”; for though they are but few, when compared with others, yet they are many, considered by themselves; they are many that God has ordained to eternal life, and given to Christ, and for whom he has given himself a ransom, and whom he justifies; and accordingly there are many mansions of glory provided for them in their Father’s house, whose act it is to bring them thither: he has chosen them to this glory, and prepared it for them; he sent his Son to redeem them; he reveals his Son in them, the hope of glory; he calls them to his eternal glory, and makes them meet for it, and gives them an abundant entrance into it: and

him it became--to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings;

Christ is “the Captain of salvation”, and is so called, because he is the author of it; and he is the Prince and Commander of these sons, who are committed to his charge, and are under his care; and is their guide and leader; and who is gone before them to prepare their mansions of glory for them: and he is made “perfect through sufferings”; he suffered all that the law and justice of God could require; and hereby he became perfectly acquainted with the sufferings of his people, and a perfect Saviour of them; and in this way went to glory himself: and it “became” God the Father, the first cause, and last end of all things, since he had a design to bring all his adopted sons to glory, that his own Son should

perfectly suffer for them; this was agreeable to, and becoming the perfections of his nature, his wisdom, his veracity, his justice, grace, and mercy.

Hebrews 2:11

For both he that sanctifieth

Not himself, though this is said of him, (John 17:19) nor his Father, though this also is true of him, (Isaiah 8:13) but his people, the sons brought to glory, whose salvation he is the Captain of; they are sanctified in him, he being made sanctification to them; and they have their sanctification from him, all their grace and holiness; and they are sanctified by him, both by his blood, which expiates their sins, and removes the guilt of them, and by his Spirit, working internal principles of grace and holiness in them, who are by nature, and in their unregenerate state, guilty and unclean:

and they who are sanctified;

the sons brought to glory; they are not naturally holy, nor so of themselves, they are made holy; all that are sons are made holy; whom God adopts into his family, he regenerates: sanctification is absolutely necessary to their being brought to glory; and between the sanctifier and the sanctified there is a likeness, as there ought to be: they are

all of one:

they are both of one God and Father, Christ’s God is their God, and his Father is their Father; they are of one body, Christ is the head, and they are members; they are of one covenant, Christ is the surety, Mediator, and messenger of it, and they share in all its blessings and promises; they are of one man, Adam, Christ is a Son of Adam, though not by ordinary generation, they descend from him in the common way; they are all of one nature, of one blood; Christ has took part of the same flesh and blood with them:

for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren;

Christ, and these sons that are sanctified, stand in the relation of brethren to each other; Christ is the firstborn among many brethren; he is a brother born for the day of adversity, and one that sticks closer than a brother: and this relation is founded both upon the incarnation of Christ, who thereby became his people’s “Goel”; or near kinsman, yea, brother, (Song of Solomon 8:1) and upon their adoption unto his Father’s family, which is made manifest by their regeneration, and by their doing his Father’s will under the influence of his grace and Spirit, (Matthew 12:49 Matthew 12:50

) and this relation Christ owns; he called his disciples brethren, when God had raised him from the dead, and given him glory; and so he will call all his saints, even the meanest of them, in the great day, (Matthew 28:10) (25:40) , and “he is not ashamed” to do it; he does not disdain it, though he is God over all, and the Son of God, and is also in his human nature made higher than the heavens; which shows the wonderful condescension of Christ, and the honour that is put upon the saints; and may teach them not to despise the meanest among them: such a relation the Jews own will be between the Messiah and the Israelites. The Targumist on (Song of Solomon 8:1) paraphrases the words thus;

“when the King Messiah shall be revealed to the congregation of Israel, the children of Israel shall say unto him, Come, be thou with us, (xal) , for “a brother”, or “be thou our brother”.”

Nor can they say this will reflect any discredit upon Christ, when they make such a relation to be between God and them. The Israelites, they say F6, are called, (hbqhl Myxa) “the brethren of the holy blessed God”; in proof of which they often produce (Psalms 122:8) as being the words of God to them; and again, interpreting those words in (Leviticus 25:48) “one of his brethren may redeem him”, this, say F7 they, is the holy blessed God.

FOOTNOTES:

F6 Zohar in Exod. fol. 23. 3. & in Lev. fol. 3. 3. & 9. 3. & 32. 2.

F7 Tzeror Hammor, fol. 106. 3.

Hebrews 2:12

Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren

These words, with the following clause, are cited from (Psalms 22:22) as a proof of what the apostle had before asserted; and that this psalm is to be understood, not of the Jewish nation, or people of Israel, nor of Esther, nor of David, but of the Messiah, appears from the title of it, “Aijeleth, Shahr”, which signifies “the morning hind”; from the particular account of Christ’s sufferings in it; from his several offices herein pointed to; from the conversion of the Gentiles it prophesies of; and from several passages cited from hence, and applied to Christ; see (Matthew 27:35 Matthew 27:39 Matthew 27:43 Matthew 27:46) . And these are the words of Christ addressed to his Father; whose name he prom-

ises to declare to his brethren; meaning not the Jews, in general, his brethren according to the flesh; but his disciples and followers, particularly the twelve apostles, and the five hundred brethren to whom he appeared after his resurrection; and indeed all the saints and people of God may be included: and by his name he would declare to them, is not meant any particular name of his, as Elohim, El-shaddai, Jehovah, or the like; but rather he himself, and the perfections of his nature, which he, the only begotten Son, lying in his bosom, has declared; though the Gospel seems chiefly to be designed; see (John 17:6 John 17:26) and this Christ declared with great exactness and accuracy, with clearness and perspicuity, and with all integrity and fidelity: he spoke it out plainly, and concealed no part of it; as he received it from his Father, he faithfully made it known to his people; this is expressive of Christ’s prophetic office, of his preaching of the Gospel, both in his own person, and by his ministers:

in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee;

or “a hymn”; this is to be understood not of the church above, but of the church below; and not of the synagogue of the Jews, but of the disciples of Christ, and of his singing an hymn to God, with and among them, as he did at the institution of the supper, (Matthew 26:30) for though the number of the apostles was but small, yet they made a congregation or church, and which was a pure and glorious one. With the Jews F8, ten men made a congregation.

FOOTNOTES:

F8 Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 1. sect. 6.

Hebrews 2:13

And again, I will put my trust in him

These words are taken not from (Isaiah 8:17) where, in the Septuagint version, is a like phrase; for they are not the words of the Messiah there, but of the prophet; and besides, the apostle disjoins them from the following words, which stand there, by saying, “and again”; but they are cited from (Psalms 18:2) in which psalm are many things which have respect to the Messiah, and his times; the person spoken of is said to be made the head of the Heathen, to whom unknown people yield a voluntary submission, and the name of God is praised among the Gentiles, (Psalms 18:43 Psalms 18:49) . The Targum upon it makes mention of the Messiah in (Psalms 18:32) and he is manifestly spoken of under

the name of David, in (Psalms 18:50) and which verse is applied to the Messiah, by the Jews, both ancient and modern F9: and these words are very applicable to him, for as man he had every grace of the Spirit in him; and this of faith, and also of hope, very early appeared in him; he trusted in God for the daily supplies of life, and that he would help him in, and through the work of man's salvation; see (Psalms 22:9 Psalms 22:10) (Isaiah 50:7-9) he committed his Spirit into his hands at death, with confidence, and believed he would raise his body from the dead; and he trusted him with his own glory, and the salvation of his people: and this is a citation pertinent to the purpose, showing that Christ and his people are one, and that they are brethren; for he must be man, since, as God, he could not be said to trust; and he must be a man of sorrows and distress, to stand in need of trusting in God.

And again, behold I and the children which God hath given me;

this is a citation from (Isaiah 8:18) in which prophecy is a denunciation of God's judgments upon Israel, by the Assyrians, when God's own people among them are comforted with a promise of the Messiah, who is described as the Lord of hosts; who is to be sanctified, and be as a sanctuary to the saints, and as a stone of stumbling to others; and the prophet is ordered to bind and seal up the doctrine among the disciples, at which he seems astonished and concerned, but resolves to wait; upon which Christ, to encourage him, speaks these words; for they are not addressed to God, as the Syriac version renders them, "behold I and the children, whom thou hast given me, O God"; in which may be observed, that the saints are children with respect to God, who has adopted them, and with respect to Christ, who is their everlasting Father; that they were given to Christ as his spiritual seed and offspring, as his portion, and to be his care and charge; and that this is worthy of attention, and calls for admiration, that Christ and his people are one, and that he is not ashamed to own them before God and men.

FOOTNOTES:

F9 Echa Rabbati, fol. 50. 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 47. 3.

Hebrews 2:14

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood

By the children are meant, not the children of this

world, or the men of it; nor the children of the flesh, or Abraham's natural seed; nor visible professors of religion; nor the apostles of Christ only; but all the children of God, the children given to Christ; all the sons that are brought to glory: these "are partakers of flesh and blood"; of human nature, which is common to them all, and which is subject to infirmity and mortality; and the sense is, that they are frail mortal men: and this being their state and case,

he also himself took part of the same;

Christ became man also, or assumed an human nature like theirs; this shows that he existed before his incarnation, who of himself, and by his own voluntary act, assumed an individual of human nature into union with his divine person, which is expressive of wondrous grace and condescension: Christ's participation of human nature, and the children's, in some things agree, in others they differ; they agree in this, that it is real flesh and blood they both partake of; that Christ's body is not spiritual and heavenly, but natural as theirs is; and that it is a complete, perfect, human nature, and subject to mortality and infirmity like theirs: but then Christ took his nature of a virgin, and is without sin; nor has it any distinct personality, but from the moment of its being subsisted in his divine person: and now the true reason of Christ's assuming such a nature was on account of the children, which discovers great love to them, and shows that it was with a peculiar view to them that he became man; hence they only share the special advantages of his incarnation, sufferings, and death: and his end in doing this was,

that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death,

that is, the devil; the devil is said to have the power of death, not because he can kill and destroy men at pleasure, but because he was the first introducer of sin, which brought death into the world, and so he was a murderer from the beginning; and he still tempts men to sin, and then accuses them of it, and terrifies and affrights them with death; and by divine permission has inflicted it, and will be the executioner of the second death. The apostle here speaks in the language of the Jews, who often call Samael, or Satan, (twmh Kalm), "the angel of death", in their Targums F11, Talmud F12, and other writings F13; and say, he was the cause of death to all the world; and ascribe much the same things to him, for which the apostle here so styles him: and they moreover say F14, that he will cease in the time to come; that is, in the days of the Messiah: and who being come, has

destroyed him, not as to his being, but as to his power; he has bruised his head, destroyed his works, disarmed his principalities and powers, and took the captives out of his hands, and saved those he would have devoured: and this he has done by death; “by his own death”, as the Syriac and Arabic versions read; whereby he has abolished death itself, and sin the cause of it, and so Satan, whose empire is supported by it.

Hebrews 2:15

And deliver them, who through fear of death

This is another end of Christ’s assuming human nature, and dying in it, and thereby destroying Satan, that he might save some out of his hands:

[who] were all their lifetime subject to bondage;

meaning chiefly God’s elect among the Jews; for though all men are in a state of bondage to the lusts of the flesh, and are Satan’s captives; yet this describes more particularly the state of the Jews, under the law of Moses, which gendered unto bondage; which they being guilty of the breach of, and seeing the danger they were exposed to on that account, were subject, bound, and held fast in and under a spirit of bondage: and that “through fear of death”; through fear of a corporeal death; through fear of chastisements and afflictions, the forerunners of death, and what sometimes bring it on; and through fear of death itself, as a disunion of soul and body, and as a penal evil; and through fear of what follows it, an awful judgment: and this the Jews especially were in fear of, from their frequent violations of the precepts, both of the moral, and of the ceremonial law, which threatened with death; and this they lived in a continual fear of, because they were daily transgressing, which brought on them a spirit of bondage unto fear: and, as Philo the Jew F15 observes, nothing more brings the mind into bondage than the fear of death: and many these, even all the chosen ones among them, Christ delivered, or saved from sin, from Satan, from the law, and its curses, from death corporeal, as a penal evil, and from death eternal; even from all enemies and dangers, and brought them into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

FOOTNOTES:

F15 Quod omnis Probus Liber, p. 868.

Hebrews 2:16

For verily he took not on him the nature of angels

Good angels; for they are all along spoken of in this book; and it would have been impertinent to have said this of evil angels: and this is to be understood not of a denying help and assistance to the angels; for though they have not redemption from Christ, which they needed not, yet have they help from him; they are chosen in him, and are gathered together under him; and he is the head of them, and they are upheld and sustained by him in their being, and well being: but of a non-assumption of their nature; there was no need of it with respect to good angels, and there was no salvation designed for evil ones; and to have assumed the nature of angels, would have been of no service to fallen man; an angelic nature is not capable of death, which was necessary to atone for sin, save men, and destroy Satan: this negative proposition is very strongly put, “he never took”, as the Vulgate Latin version more rightly renders it; at no time, in no place; nor is it said in any place of Scripture that he did; this is a certain truth, and not to be disputed. The Syriac and Arabic versions render it, “he took not of, or from angels”; he took not any individual from among them:

but he took on him the seed of Abraham;

not all his posterity, but some individual, as the word seed is sometimes used, (Genesis 4:25) (15:3) . Christ assumed human nature as derived from Abraham; for the Messiah was to spring from Abraham, and is promised, as that seed of his, in whom all nations should be blessed; and he was particularly promised to the Jews, the seed of Abraham, to whom the apostle was writing; and it was with a view to Abraham’s spiritual seed, the children of the promise, that Christ partook of flesh and blood: the word here used signifies to catch hold of anyone ready to perish, or to lay hold on a person running away, and with great vehemence and affection to hold anything fast, that it be not lost, and to help persons, and do good unto them; all which may be observed in this act of Christ’s, in assuming an individual of human nature, in Abraham’s line, into union with his divine person; whereby he has saved those that were gone out of the way, and were ready to perish, and done them the greatest good, and shown the strongest affection to them: and from hence may be learned the deity and eternity of Christ, who was before Abraham, as God, though a son of his as man; and his real humanity, and that it was not a person, but a seed, a nature he assumed; and also the union and distinction of natures

in him: and Christ's taking human, and not angelic nature, shows the sovereignty of God, and his distinguishing grace and mercy to men.

Hebrews 2:17

Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren

The adopted sons of God, who were brethren before Christ's incarnation, being from all eternity predestinated to the adoption of children: Christ's incarnation was in time, and after that many of the brethren existed; and it was only for their sakes that he assumed human nature; and therefore it was proper he should be like them in that nature, in all things: in all the essentials of it; it was not necessary that he should have it by natural generation; nor that it should have a subsistence in itself as theirs: and in all the properties and affections of it, that are, not sinful; for it did not behove him to be like them in sin, nor in sickness, and in diseases of the body: and in all temptations; though in some things his differ from theirs; none of his arose from within; and those from without could make no impression on him: and in sufferings, that there might be a conformity between the head and members; though there is in some things a difference; his sufferings were by way of punishment, and were attended with wrath, and were meritorious, which cannot be said of theirs; but that he should have an human nature, as to its essence and perfection, like to theirs, was necessary: it was proper he should be truly and really man, as well as truly God,

that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest;

he could not be an high priest, offer sacrifice for sin, and make intercession, unless he was man; nor could he be a "merciful" and compassionate one, sympathize with his people in their sorrows, temptations, and sufferings, unless he was like them in these; nor would he be a "faithful", that is, a true and lawful one otherwise, because every high priest is taken from among men:

in things [pertaining] to God;

in things in which God has to do with his people, as to preside in his name over them, to declare his will unto them, and bless them; and in things in which the people have to do with God, to offer to God a sacrifice for their sins, to present this sacrifice to him, to appear in his presence for them, to carry in their petitions, and plead their cause as their advocate:

to make reconciliation for the sins of the people;

of God's covenant people, the people he has chosen for himself, and given to his Son; and whom Christ saves from their sins, by making satisfaction for them, to the law and justice of God, which is here meant by reconciliation: and in order to this, which could not be done without blood, without sufferings and death, it was proper he should be man, and like unto his brethren: the allusion seems to be to the two goats on the day of atonement, one of which was to be slain, and the other let go; which were to be, as the Jews say F16, (Nywv) , "alike", in colour, in stature, and in price; and so were the birds to be alike in the same things, that were used at the cleansing of the leper F17: and the Jews tell us F18, that the high priest was to be greater than his brethren, in beauty, in strength, in wisdom, and in riches; all which is true of Christ.

FOOTNOTES:

F16 Misna Yoma, c. 6. sect. 1.

F17 Misna Negaim, c. 14. sect. 5.

F18 T. Bab. Horayot, fol. 9. 1. Maimon. Cele Hamikdash, c. 5. sect. 1.

Hebrews 2:18

For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted

By Satan, at his entrance on his public ministry, and a little before his death; which was done, not by stirring up sin in him, for he had none, nor by putting any into him, which could not be done, nor could Satan get any advantage over him; he solicited him one thing and another, but in vain; though these temptations were very troublesome, and disagreeable, and abhorrent to the pure and holy nature of Christ, and so must be reckoned among his sufferings, or things by which he suffered: and as afflictions are sometimes called temptations, in this sense also Christ suffered, being tempted, with outward poverty and meanness, with slight and neglect from his own relations, and with a general contempt and reproach among men: he was often tempted by the Jews with ensnaring questions; he was deserted by his followers, by his own disciples, yea, by his God and Father; all which were great trials to him, and must be accounted as sufferings: and he also endured great pains of body, and anguish of mind, and at last death itself. And so

he is able to succour them that are tempted;

as all the saints, more or less, are, both with Satan's temptations, and with afflictions in the world, which God suffers to befall them, on various accounts; partly

on his own account, to show his grace, power, and faithfulness in supporting under them, and in delivering out of them; and partly on his Son's account, that they might be like unto him, and he may have an opportunity of succouring them, and sympathizing with them; and also on their own account, to humble them, to try their faith, to excite them to prayer and watchfulness, and to keep them dependent on the power and grace of God: and these Christ succours, by having and showing a fellow feeling with them; by praying for them; by supporting them under temptations; by rebuking the tempter, and delivering out of them: and all this he is able to do; he must be able to succour them as he is God; and his conquering Satan is a convincing evidence to the saints of his ability; but here it intends his qualification, and fitness, and readiness to help in such circumstances, from the experience he himself has had of these things.

INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS 3

The apostle having discoursed, in the preceding chapters, concerning the dignity of Christ's person, and his wondrous grace in the assumption of human nature, and suffering in the room and stead of his people, exhorts the Hebrews in this to a serious consideration of him, attention to him, and faith in him, and constancy in it; the arguments he uses to engage them to these things are taken from the grace and benefit they themselves were partakers of through him, from the office in which he was, and his faithfulness to his Father in the discharge of it, Heb 3:1,2 which is illustrated in the case of Moses, who was faithful in the house of God, and whom Christ excelled, and therefore was worthy of more honour; partly, because he is the builder of the house; and partly, because he is a Son in it, when Moses was only a servant; which house is Christ's own, and consists of true and steadfast believers in him, Heb 3:2-6, wherefore the exhortation to regard him is renewed, enforced, and expressed in the words of the Holy Ghost, Heb 3:7-11 which are taken out of Ps 95:7-11 and applied to the present case: hence the apostle cautions against unbelief, as being a great evil in itself, and bad in its consequence, causing persons to depart from the living God, Heb 3:12, in order to prevent which he advises to a daily exhortation of each other to their duty, that so they might not be hardened in sin through the deceitfulness of it, Heb 3:13 and the rather it became them to be concerned to hold fast their faith in Christ to the end, since this is the grand evidence of being a partaker of him, Heb 3:14. And then the exhortation

in the above passage of Scripture is recited, Heb 3:15 to show, that though not all the persons spoken of, yet some did provoke the Lord by their unbelief, and unbecoming carriage, Heb 3:16 wherefore, by the example of punishment being inflicted on such, of which instances are given in the forefathers of these people, such as their carcasses falling in the wilderness, and their not entering into the land of Canaan, which they could not, because God swore they should not, being grieved and provoked by them, and because of their unbelief, they are dissuaded from the same evils, lest they should be punished in like manner, Heb 3:17-19.

Hebrews 3

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

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

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

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

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

6 But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS III

Hebrews 3:1

Wherefore, holy brethren

The apostle calls the Hebrews “brethren”, not because they were of the same natural stock and lineage, but because they were in the same spiritual relation; they all had the same Father, belonged to the same family, were the adopted sons of God, the brethren of Christ, of one another, and of the apostle; and they were “holy”, not by birth, nor by their external separation from other nations, but through sanctification of the Spirit; and they were so by profession, and in the opinion of the apostle:

partakers of the heavenly calling;

by which is meant not any business, or employment of life; nor a call to any office in church or state; nor a mere external call by the ministry of the word; but an internal special call of grace, to the enjoyment of

the blessings of grace here, and to glory hereafter; and which is not according, to works, but according to the grace of God, and is by powerful, efficacious, and irresistible grace: and this is said to be “heavenly”, because the grace by which the saints are called is from heaven, and it is to heaven they are called; and the means of their calling, the Gospel, is from heaven; and this epistle epithet is used to show the excellency of their calling, and to distinguish it from all others: and this the Hebrews are said to be “partakers of”; which shows, that God had not utterly cast off that people, and yet that they were not the only persons that enjoyed the grace of the effectual calling, they were but partners with others; and that the saints are alike sharers in this blessing, they are called in one hope of their calling; and it denotes the truth and reality of it: the duty they are exhorted to is,

to consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;

the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, read, only “Jesus”; who is called “the apostle”, because he was sent of God to preach the Gospel, work miracles, and do the will of God, particularly to obtain redemption and salvation for his people, which mission does not suppose any inequality of persons, or change of place, or any compulsion or disrespect to Christ, but love to men; and is to be understood of him as in office as Mediator, and shows his authority, and that he was no impostor. The high priest among the Jews was, on the day of atonement, considered as (xylv), “an apostle”, or “messenger” F19; for so the elders of the sanhedrim address him on that day, saying,

“Lord high priest, we are the messengers of the sanhedrim, and thou art (wnyxwlv), “our apostle”, or “messenger”, and the messenger of the sanhedrim.”

And it follows here, and “the high priest of our profession”; which may be understood either objectively, whom they professed, both by words or deeds; for a profession of him should be public, visible, and sincere; or efficiently, he being the author, sum, and substance of the religion, faith, and Gospel which was professed by them: and he is to be “considered” in the greatness and dignity of his person, as the Son of God; and in his wondrous grace and love in assuming human nature, and dying for his people; and in the relations he stands

in to them as a Father, husband, brother, friend; and in his several offices, as Mediator, and particularly as sent of God, to be the Saviour of sinners; and as the high priest, who has offered himself a sacrifice, and ever lives to make intercession; and all this to encourage the saints to hold fast their profession of him.

FOOTNOTES:

F19 Misn. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 5.

Hebrews 3:2

Who was faithful to him that appointed him

Or “made him”; Christ, as man, was made, but not as God; nor is the apostle speaking of the divine nature of Christ, but of his offices: wherefore this phrase designs the constitution and settlement of him in office; which may take in the eternal appointment of him as Mediator; the open promise of him in time; his mission, unction, and attestation from God; and his manifestation and declaration as such, at his ascension and session at God’s right hand, when he was made Lord and Christ. Now, as Mediator, he had a trust reposed in him; as the persons of all God’s elect, and a fulness of all grace for them; the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and eternal life and happiness; and also the glory of God in their salvation: which trust he has faithfully discharged as an apostle, and high priest; in a declaration of the whole will of God; in acknowledging it was his Father’s doctrine he brought, and in seeking not his own, but his Father’s glory; in redeeming and saving the persons committed to him; in distributing his grace to them; and in bringing them safe to glory; and in taking care of things pertaining to God:

as also Moses was faithful in all his house;

the passage referred to is in (Numbers 12:7) and which seems not so much to intend the fidelity of Moses in managing the affairs of God’s house, as the largeness of the trust reposed in him, the dignity and honour conferred on him, and the power and authority he was invested with, in having the whole house of Israel committed to his care and charge, in which he exceeded all other prophets; and so the faithfulness of Christ is not so much to be understood of the discharge of his trust, as of the trust itself; and the sense is, that he was trusted much by God the Father, who constituted him Mediator, even as Moses was; and this sense best agrees with (Hebrews 3:5 Hebrews 3:6). And De Dieu has observed,

that the Hebrew word (Nman) , in Misnic writings F20, signifies, as it does, one that is trusted, or is fit to be trusted, as Christ and Moses were; though the former is much more worthy than the latter, as follows.

FOOTNOTES:

F20 Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 3. sect. 2.

Hebrews 3:3

For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses,

&c.] Moses was counted worthy of glory and honour, and had it given him, both by God and by men; by God, as appears from the work he called him to, to deliver his people Israel, to reveal his mind and will to them, and to rule and govern them; and from the favours he showed him, as the miracles he did by him, the near converse he admitted him to, and the view he gave him of his glory, which he made to pass before him, and his regard to him at his death and burial, as well as the testimony he gave of him; and he was counted worthy of honour by men, and who gave it him, as Pharaoh and his people, and the Israelites. The Jews give very great commendations of him; they call him a father in the law, a father in wisdom, and a father in prophecy F21; and say, that he is the father, master, head, and prince of all the prophets F23; yea, the great prophet expected in the last days, they say, will be but next to Moses, their master F24: they observe, that there were more miracles wrought by, and for him, than were wrought by, and for all the prophets that have been since the world began F25; so that he not only exceeded them in the excellency and sublimity of prophecy, but in the multitude of miracles; but Christ is worthy of more glory than Moses, and has it given him by God, angels, and men: he is a greater Saviour than Moses; Moses was but a temporal saviour, but he is the author of spiritual and eternal salvation: he is a greater prophet than Moses, being the only begotten Son of God, who lay in the bosom of the Father, and has declared him, his mind and will, his Gospel, grace, and truth, as Moses never did: he is a greater King than he, being made higher than the kings of the earth: he did more miracles than Moses, and had a greater testimony from God than he had, as that he was his beloved Son, and to be heard; he was also raised, from the dead, and is set down at the right hand of God, and is appointed Judge of all; he is ministered to, and worshipped by angels, is believed on by men, who ascribe the whole glory

of their salvation to him.

Inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house;

this “house”, or “temple”, as the Arabic version renders it, is the church, of which Christ is the builder; though not to the exclusion of the Father and the Spirit, who are coefficient builders with him, nor of ministers of the Gospel as instruments, nor of believers in a private capacity, who build up one another; but he has the chief concern in the building, which lies in the conversion of souls, and in the edification of them, and is carried on by his Spirit in the ministry of the word and ordinances, and from hence he has a glory; see (Zechariah 6:12 Zechariah 6:13) a greater glory than Moses, seeing he was but a part of this house, at most but a pillar in it; but Christ is the builder, foundation, and cornerstone.

FOOTNOTES:

F21 T. Bab. Megilia, fol. 12. 1.

F23 Shemot Rabba, sect. 21. fol. 106. 3. Maimon. Yeshode Hattorah, c. 7. sect. 6. Obede Cochabim, c. 1. sect. 3. & in Misn Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 18. 3.

F24 Maimon. Teshubah, c. 9. sect. 2.

F25 Menasseh ben Israel, Conciliat. in Deut. qu. 11.

Hebrews 3:4

For every house is built by some man

Or by some one; for a house does not build itself: this is true of houses properly taken, or improperly, as nations, tribes, families, and kindred, of the whole church in general, of particular congregations, and of individual believers; the greatest saints, even apostles and prophets, such an one as Moses, are built by and upon Christ; their persons are built on him; they receive all their gifts for edification from him, and their success is owing to him; though they are to be esteemed of in their proper places: the apostle’s design is to bring down the high esteem the Jews had of Moses, that they might rightly value Christ.

But he that built all things is God;

Christ has built all things, and therefore he is God, and must be infinitely above Moses; for this is not to be understood of God and of the creation of the world, and of all things in it by him; but of Christ, and of his building the church, and of his ordering and managing of

that, and all affairs relating to it; such as the constitution of it, settling the worship of God, and the ordinances in it, the redemption and salvation of the members of it, and its rule and government; all which prove him to be God, and above Moses.

Hebrews 3:5

And Moses verily was faithful in all his house as a servant,

&c.] Moses was not only a servant to the Israelites, but he was also the Lord’s servant, a servant of his choosing, sending, and approving; he was a servant in holy things, and served the Lord heartily, sincerely, and ingenuously, with all becoming fear and reverence, respect, and honour, and with all ready and cheerful obedience; the house in which he was a servant, was not his own, but belonged to God, even the Son of God, as appears from the following verse; he was not a servant in the world, and with respect to civil things, and the affairs of Providence, but in the church of God, and in divine things; and he was faithful here, and that in all things; he did all things exactly according to the pattern showed him in the Mount; and the apostle strongly affirms all this, as well he might, since there was full proof of it, and God himself had bore a testimony to it: and the end of his being a servant here was,

for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after;

these words may regard his faithful testification of God’s will to the people of Israel, after he was fixed as a servant in God’s house; or what he said afterwards concerning the Messiah, of whom he spake and wrote, and of whom he bore an honourable testimony, (Deuteronomy 18:1 Deuteronomy 18:5) or they may have respect to the things spoken after Moses’s time, by the prophets, Christ, and his apostles, which agreed with the testimony of Moses; or to the things afterwards spoken of in this epistle; to which may be added, that Moses in his office was typical of things to be spoken and done by the Messiah, when he came; as his deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt; his leading them through the Red sea and wilderness, to Canaan’s land; his giving them the law from Mount Sinai; the erection of the tabernacle, with all its furniture, and the institution of sacrifices and the like.

Hebrews 3:6

But Christ as a Son over his own house

As Moses was not, though the Jews say that he was (tybd hyram) F1 and (tybh leb) {b}, “lord and master of the house”; yea, and (tyb Nb) , “the Son of the house” F3; but this he was not: Christ is the Son and heir, the Lord and master; he is a Son, not by creation, or by adoption, or by office, but by nature: hence it appears that he is God, and is equal with God; and this his sonship is the foundation of his office, and he becomes the heir of all things: and when he is said to be “as a Son”, it does not intend mere resemblance; but is expressive of his right to heirship and government, and of the esteem and reverence he had in his house, and of his fidelity as a Son there; and though he was a servant, as man and Mediator, and had a great piece of service to perform, and which he has performed with diligence and faithfulness, yet he was also a Son, Lord and heir, as Moses was not; and he is over the house of God, as King, priest, and prophet in it, and as the firstborn, Son and heir, and as the master and governor of it; and which is called his own, because given him by the Father, purchased by himself, and which he has built, and in which he dwells:

whose house are we;

believers in Christ, whether Jews or Gentiles; who, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, in whom Christ dwells by faith, and over whom he presides and reigns:

if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

These words are not to be understood as a condition of the former assertion; nor is a final falling away from grace to be inferred from hence, for the supposition proves not such an inference, but the contrary; namely, that they that have true faith, hope, and confidence, shall keep them to the end; and therefore are the house of Christ: besides, the doctrine of apostasy is quite repugnant to the apostle’s argument; according to which, Christ might have no house, and can have none till men have persevered: but the apostle’s design is to give a word of exhortation to himself and others, to hold fast the confidence; and so the words are rather descriptive of the persons, who are the house of Christ; such who have a good hope, through grace, wrought in them, and can rejoice in hope of the glory of God; and can use freedom of speech and boldness at the throne of grace; and have an holy confidence of interest in the love of

God, and salvation by Christ, and go on in the exercise of these graces to the end of their days.

FOOTNOTES:

F1 Zohar in Lev. fol. 2. 2.

F2 Tzeror Hammor, fol. 35. 2.

F3 Lexic. Cabalist. p. 203.

Hebrews 3:7

Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith

In (Psalms 95:7)

today if you will hear his voice;

either the precepts of Christ, to hear which is to obey them; and this is an acknowledgment to Christ as King of saints, and is a testimony of love to him, and is wellpleasing in his sight; and in which the saints find pleasure themselves, and profit also: or the Gospel of Christ, which is a voice of love, grace, and mercy; of peace and reconciliation; of pardon and righteousness; of liberty, redemption, and salvation by Christ; and to hear it, is not only to hear it externally, but internally, so as to understand it, and distinguish it from the voice of a stranger, and to approve of it, and believe it, and put in practice what is heard: and “today” may intend some festival day in David’s time, when, and on account of which, this psalm was penned; as the feast of tabernacles, which was a type of Christ tabernacling in human nature; or it may regard the time of man’s life, while it is day, or the present instant of life: or rather the whole Gospel dispensation. The psalm from whence these and some following words are taken, belongs to the Messiah; for the person the subject of it, is called the rock of our salvation; and every thing in it is applicable to him; as the ascription of deity, and divine worship; the creation and preservation of the universe; yea, he is represented as a shepherd, and the saints as his sheep; which plainly points at the office of Christ; and these very words are often made use of by the Jews, and applied to the Messiah, showing that if the Jews would repent but one day, or keep the sabbath but one day, the son of David, the Messiah, would come; since it is said, “today if you will hear his voice” F4; which the Chaldee paraphrase renders (hyrmym) , “his Word”, his essential Word, the Lord Jesus Christ.

FOOTNOTES:

F4 T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 1. Shemot Rabba, sect. 25. fol. 109. 3. & Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 19. 3.

Hebrews 3:8

Harden not you hearts

There is a natural hardness of the heart; the heart of man is like a stone, destitute of spiritual life, motion, and activity; it is senseless, stupid, impenitent, stubborn, and inflexible, on which no impressions can be made, but by powerful grace: and there is an acquired, habitual, and voluntary hardness of heart, to which men arrive by various steps; as entertaining pleasing thoughts of sin; an actual commission of it, with frequency, till it becomes customary, and so habitual; an extenuation or justification of it, and so they become hardened against all reproofs and sermons, and to all afflictions and judgments; are insensible and past feeling, and openly declare for sin, and glory in it: and there is a hardness which God's people are liable to, and should guard against; and which is brought on by a neglect of private and public worship, and by keeping bad company, and through the ill examples of others, and by giving way to lesser sins; for all sin is of an hardening nature:

as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness;

the Jews provoked God in the wilderness by their unbelief, murmurings, ingratitude, and idolatry; and they tempted him there by distrusting his power and goodness; hence one of the places in which they murmured against him was called Massah and Meribah, (Exodus 17:7) and it is an aggravation of their sin, that it was in the wilderness, after they had been just brought out of bondage into liberty, and had lately had such an instance of the power and goodness of God, in bringing them through the Red sea; and where they could have no human supplies, and therefore should have been entirely dependent on God, and trust in him.

Hebrews 3:9

When your fathers tempted me

This the apostle cites and repeats, to expose the glorying of the Jews in their ancestors; to dissuade them from following their sinful practices; to deter them from

the same by observing both their sin and punishment; and to heighten their regards to the voice and Gospel of Christ:

proved me;

this is either an explication of the former phrase; or it may design the experience this people had of the power and goodness of God, notwithstanding their tempting and provoking the Lord by a distrust of them; which is an aggravation of their sin and ingratitude, and shows the forbearance of God, and that wicked men may partake of outward favours:

and saw my works forty years;

that is, God's works of providence, in furnishing them with the necessaries of life, in guiding, protecting, and supporting them for the space of forty years, in the wilderness; and his miracles, and the punishment of their enemies; yet they saw and perceived not, but all this time sinned against the Lord, see (Deuteronomy 29:2-8) the space of time, forty years, is in the psalm placed to the beginning of the next verse, and is joined with God's grief and indignation at the people, as it is also by the apostle, in (Hebrews 3:17) but the people's sin, and God's grief at it, being of equal duration, it matters not to which it is placed, and therefore to both; perhaps, one reason of its being repeated, and so much notice taken of it is, because there was just this number of years from Christ's sufferings, to the destruction of Jerusalem; which the apostle might have in view.

Hebrews 3:10

Wherefore I was grieved with that generation

(rbdmh rwd) , "the generation of the wilderness", as the Jews often call them; and which they say was more beloved than any generation F5; and yet they will not allow them a part in the world to come; (See Gill on Hebrews 3:11). When God is said to be grieved with them, it is to be considered as an anthropopathy, as speaking after the manner of men, as in (Genesis 6:5 Genesis 6:6) . The word signifies, that he was wearied by them, and weary of them; that he loathed them, and was displeased with them; it shows the notice God took of their sin; the heinousness of it, his displicency at it, and determination to punish it: the cause of his grief and indignation were their unbelief, ingratitude, and idolatry:

and said, they do alway err in their heart;

all sins are errors, or aberrations from the law of

God; all men err in this sense: these people erred in their hearts, for there is error in the understanding, and will, and affections, as well as in life and actions; and they may be said to err in their hearts, because their sins not only sprung from the heart, but they were done heartily, or with their hearts, and that continually; which shows the sottishness of this people: their stubbornness and rebellion; their want of integrity, and their constancy in sinning: heart sins, as well as others, are taken notice of by God:

and they have not known my ways;

they did not take notice of God's ways of providence towards them; nor did they approve of, and delight in his ways of worship and duty, or in his commands.

FOOTNOTES:

F5 T. Hieros. Avoda Zara, fol. 39. 2.

Hebrews 3:11

So I sware in my wrath

Swearing is ascribed to God, to show the certainty of the thing spoken of; as of mercies, when he swears in love, and by his holiness; so here, of punishment, when he swears in wrath, in indignation, in sore displeasure, and the threatened evil is irrevocable and inevitable:

they shall not enter into my rest;

into the land of Canaan, called God's rest, because he promised it, and gave it to the Israelites as their rest; and where he himself had a place of rest; and where he gave the Messiah, the author of peace and rest; and which was a type of heaven, that rest from toil and labour, which remains for the people of God; and into which it is said this generation did not enter; for the Jews say F6,

“the generation of the wilderness have no part in the world to come.”

but this seems too harsh, for doubtless there were many who died in the wilderness, that went safe to heaven, notwithstanding all their sins and provocations.

FOOTNOTES:

F6 Tzeror Hammor, fol. 118. 1.

Hebrews 3:12

Take heed, brethren

This exhortation is grounded upon the state and case of their ancestors before given, as a warning and caution to the then present Hebrews; and whom the apostle styles “brethren”, to show that he had no hard thoughts of them, and that his jealousy was a godly one, and not an evil suspicion; and may teach us that all exhortations, admonitions, and reproofs should be given in love:

lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief;

or such an evil heart, in which unbelief prevails, and is predominant: there is in every man, whether a profane sinner, or an hypocritical professor, an evil heart, and an unbelieving one; and there is unbelief in regenerate persons, which when cherished and encouraged by them is a great evil, and should be avoided; and this sin is aggravated by the many instances of God's grace, and by the many declarations of it, and by the exceeding great and precious promises God has made, and by the great discoveries of his love to their souls in times past: and this sin, when it gets ahead, has a very great influence on the heart, to make it evil; and unbelief was the first sin of man, at least it very early appeared; it is the mother sin, and puts persons upon every sin; it defiles the conscience, hardens the heart, renders the word unprofitable, unfit for duty and makes men unstable, and therefore to be shunned; and especially because of the dreadful effect following:

in departing from the living God;

that is, from Christ, who is the Son over his own house, and whose voice is to be heard; for of no other is the apostle speaking in the context; and who is not only the Son of the living God, but he is himself the living God; he is life in himself, and is the fountain and author of life, natural, spiritual, and eternal. This is mentioned to exalt the person of Christ, the apostle and high priest of our profession; and to discover the greatness and heinousness of the sin of such as depart from him and his Gospel, and to deter men from it: there is a final and total departure from Christ, from his Gospel and ordinances, from his people, and from a former profession of faith, which is never to be found in true believers; for they are as Mount Zion, which can never be removed; but there is a partial departure, and for a while, which they are liable to, and is attended with bad effects to

them, and should be guarded against: saints should take heed of themselves, and of their hearts, and of the unbelief of them, that they do not in the least depart from Christ, by letting go their hold of him, or by a non-exercise of faith upon him; and this should be the care and concern of every individual member of the church, and at all times; unbelief is very dishonourable to God and Christ; contradicts the word and promises of God; is uncomfortable to the saints; it is a sin that very easily besets, and is very provoking to God, and is highly resented by him.

Hebrews 3:13

But exhort one another daily

In order to prevent unbelief and apostasy. The phrase is sometimes rendered, “comfort one another”, or, “yourselves together”, as in (1 Thessalonians 5:11) which the saints may do, by discoursing together about divine things; by praying together; by instructing one another in the doctrines of the Gospel; by putting one another in mind of the covenant of grace, and its promises; and by observing the near approach of everlasting happiness with Christ. And though the business of exhortation greatly belongs to ministers of the word, yet it ought not to be neglected by private believers; who ought, when it becomes necessary, to exhort one another to prayer; to an attendance on the word and ordinances; to a regard to their conversations; to a close adherence to their profession; and to a believing view and consideration of Christ, the apostle and high priest of it; and to a due concern for his truth and interest: and this should be done in love, with good and consolatory words, and in things, in which the saints are concerned, and do themselves regard; and it is an affair which requires prudence and faithfulness; and supposes that God’s own people may be dull, heavy, and sluggish; and this is to be done “daily”, every day, as often as there is an occasion, and an opportunity for it; and

while it is called today;

while the Gospel dispensation continues; or while the time of life lasts. This shows that the phrase “today”, in (Psalms 95:7) did not respect David’s time only. The Syriac version renders it, “until that day which is called today”: until the everlasting day appears, when there will be no need of such exhortations, nor any danger of what follows:

lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin;

actual sin, which is a transgression of the law; every sin is of an hardening nature, and by being often committed, an habit is contracted, and a callousness brought upon the heart and conscience; or the corruption of nature, indwelling sin, may be meant; an evil and a corrupt heart, which deceives through promises of pleasure, or profit to a man’s self, or of secrecy and impunity; it suggests the power a man has to repent at pleasure, and the mercy of God, by which means the man is drawn in to it, and by frequent repeating it, grows hardened in it.

Hebrews 3:14

For we are made partakers of Christ

Being loved by him, given to him, and chosen in him before the foundation of the world; and so participate of all spiritual blessings in him; for this respects something past, and may be rendered, “we have been made”. The phrase is expressive of union to Christ, which is not by faith on man’s part, and by the Spirit on Christ’s part, but by his everlasting love, taking his people into an oneness with himself; thereby becoming their head, surety, and representative, which is the ground and foundation of all the blessings of grace being imparted to them: hence arises communion; as this is a conjugal union, there is communion of names, of persons, of goods, of honour and dignity, and of everlasting glory; as it is a federal or representative union, hence a non-imputation of sin, justification, and freedom from condemnation; and as it is an union of head and members; hence a communication of life, and the security of it, and of all grace and strength; hence holiness, fruitfulness, and perseverance, and everlasting happiness both of soul and body:

if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end;

by “confidence” is meant faith, which is an hypostasis, or subsistence, which is the word here used; and is so called, because it gives a kind of subsistence, substance, or being, to things it is concerned with, (Hebrews 11:1) and because it is a great support to believers, under their various exercises; and is that by which they have an open, spiritual, and comfortable subsistence, and abiding in Christ: the “beginning” of it, which is to be held fast, is either Christ himself, who is the (arch), “the beginning”, the author, and finisher of faith; and so this shows from whom, and in what way, this grace is dis-

tributed; and is expressive of communion with Christ, and is an evidence of the participation of him: or else the Gospel, which is the means of implanting faith, and directs to that which is the ground and foundation of it; and this is to be held fast, and never to be departed from: or else the grace of faith itself, which is a grace but begun, not yet finished, but shall continue, and is to be held fast, and constantly exercised; and perseverance in believing on Christ is an evidence of union to him.

Hebrews 3:15

While it is said today

Exhort one another, and hold fast Christ and his Gospel, and faith and confidence therein; what follows is a repetition of the citation in (Hebrews 3:7 Hebrews 3:8) in order to make a further improvement of it; which shows, that the words belong to the present times of the Gospel, and contain in them matter of moment, and great concern; and that Scripture instructions and exhortations are of perpetual use.

Hebrews 3:16

For some, when, they had heard

The Arabic version adds, "his voice"; the law on Mount Sinai; the voice of words, with the voices and thunderings that attended it; the book of the covenant read; the whole system of laws and ordinances delivered to Moses, and by him to them; and also the Gospel, for that was preached to the Israelites in the wilderness, and heard by them; as appears from (Hebrews 4:2) and which seems chiefly intended: and yet some of the hearers of it

did provoke;

not only Moses, to speak unadvisedly with his lips; but they provoked Jehovah himself, and the angel of his presence, and his Holy Spirit, by their idolatry, ingratitude, and unbelief: and the aggravation of their sin is, that they did it when they had heard the Gospel, and while they were hearing it; which shows that the Gospel may be heard to no advantage; as when it is heard in a careless and indifferent manner; when it makes no impression, takes no place, and has no root; when the world and the things of it are the great concern of the mind, while hearing it; when it is not attended with the power and Spirit of God; when it is not received in love, nor mixed with faith, nor put in practice: and hence the Gospel heard, comes to be an aggravation of men's con-

demnation:

howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses;

that is, they did not all provoke, but some did; which is another aggravation of their sin; they were just come out of Egyptian bondage; brought out of it by the Lord, with the mighty and outstretched arm of his power; and yet they provoked him: and this was done by Moses; by the hand of Moses, as the Syriac version renders it; by his means, by him as an instrument; and yet they provoked him: but however all did not, yet these were but few; it seems only Caleb and Joshua, out of six hundred thousand; God will have a few to serve him in the worst of times.

Hebrews 3:17

But with whom was he grieved forty years?

&c.] As is said in (Psalms 95:10) , (See Gill on Hebrews 3:10),

was it not with them that had sinned;

not merely by committing personal iniquities, and particular provocations, which all men are guilty of, but by committing public sins; they sinned as a body of men; they joined together in the commission of sin; every sin is grieving to God, because it is contrary to his nature, is an act of enmity to him, is a transgression of his righteous law, and a contempt of his authority; but especially public sins, or the sins of a multitude, and when they are persisted in, which was the case of the Israelites; they sinned against him during the forty years they were in the wilderness; and so long was he grieved with them: the Alexandrian copy reads, "with them that believed not"; which points out the particular sin these men were guilty of, and which was so grieving to God, and suits well with the apostle's design:

whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?

and so never entered into the land of Canaan. They died in the wilderness; and they did not die common and natural deaths, at least not all of them; their deaths were by way of punishment; in a way of wrath; in a judicial way: the Syriac version renders it, "their bones fell in the wilderness"; they lay scattered and unburied, and exposed to view, as an example of divine vengeance, see (Numbers 14:29) .

Hebrews 3:18

And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest

As in (Psalms 95:11) (See Gill on Hebrews 3:11),

but to them that believed not?

the Lord; notwithstanding the signs and wonders he showed among them, they would not be persuaded by Moses and Aaron, by Joshua and Caleb, to be still and quiet, to cease murmuring, and submit to the will of God, and believe in him; they were disobedient, stubborn, and rebellious, and would go up, when they were bid not to go up; for which reason God swore in his wrath that they should not enter into the good land. Unbelief is a source of sin, and cause of judgment, being greatly provoking to God.

Hebrews 3:19

So we see that they could not enter in

To God's rest, the land of Canaan, for they died by the plague before the Lord, and their carcasses fell in the wilderness, before they came to it, (Numbers 14:37 Numbers 14:45) and the reason was,

because of unbelief;

their distrust of God, his power, and his providence; this instance is produced by the apostle, to show the evil nature of unbelief, and the sad effects of it; to deter persons from it, and that they might take heed of encouraging it; and which instance he further improves in the following chapter.

INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS 4

From the punishment inflicted on the unbelieving Hebrews, who died in the wilderness, and entered not into the land of rest made mention of in the preceding chapter, the apostle proceeds to caution the present Hebrews of his time, and who professed faith in Christ, lest seeing there was a rest, and a promise of entering into it, they should seem to come short of it, Heb 4:1, and the rather, since they that fell in the wilderness had the Gospel preached to them as well as they; and the reason why it did not profit was, because it was not received by faith, Heb 4:2 as also seeing it is by faith that believers now enter into rest, Heb 4:3 which rest is not the rest of the seventh day, on which God rested; nor, the rest of the land of Canaan, which Joshua led the Israelites into; for if he had entered them into the rest the apostle means, David, so many hundred years after him, would not have made mention of another rest,

Heb 4:4-8 wherefore it follows that there is another rest for the people of God, which he that enters into ceases from his own works, as God did from his, Heb 4:9,10 and this is the rest that everyone that professes faith in Christ, should be solicitous and diligent to enter into, lest he should fall short of it through unbelief; as the unbelieving Israelites did of their rest, Heb 4:11 and the arguments engaging to such a concern are taken from the properties and perfections of Christ, the essential Word of God; particularly from his omnipotence and his omniscience, Heb 4:12,13. And seeing he is by nature the Son of God, and by office a great high priest that is entered into heaven for his people, the encouragement is great to hold fast the profession of faith in him they have made, Heb 4:14 and the rather since he is a sympathizing high priest, as he must needs be, since he has been tempted, afflicted, and has suffered every way as his people, and is in all respects like them, excepting that he has no sin, Heb 4:15 and this consideration should engage believers to come to the throne of grace with all boldness, and in expectation of having grace and mercy bestowed on them for the supply of their daily wants, Heb 4:16.

Hebrews 4:1

1 Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

3 For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

4 For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.

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

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

7 Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

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

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

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

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

12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS IV

Hebrews 4:1

Let us therefore fear

Not with a fear of wrath and damnation; nor with a fear of diffidence and distrust of the power, grace, and goodness of God; but with a cautious fear, a godly jealousy, a careful circumspection, and watchfulness:

lest a promise being left [us] of entering into his

rest;

not the land of Canaan, the type of heaven, but rather heaven itself, the ultimate glory: there is a rest of the body in the grave, from work, service, and labour, and from distempers and diseases, where it rests under the guardianship of the Spirit, until the resurrection morn; and there is a rest of the soul before the resurrection, in the arms of Christ, with whom it immediately is, upon its departure from the body; and there is a rest both of soul and body after the resurrection, from sin, from afflictions, from Satan's temptations, from unbelief, doubts, and fears, and from all enemies: and this may be called the rest of God, because he is the author and giver of it; and it will lie much in communion with him; and besides, heaven is the place of God's rest, (Isaiah 66:1 Isaiah 66:2) and the possession and enjoyment of the heavenly glory is often signified by an entering into it: and there is a promise of this, which is left in Christ's hands, and shall never fail; though some who have hoped for it may come short of it, or at least seem to do so: but rather a rest under the Gospel dispensation is here intended, since it is a rest believers enter into now, (Hebrews 4:3) and since the Gospel church is represented as a state of peace and rest, (Isaiah 11:6-10) and which lies in a more clear and comfortable application of the blood and righteousness of Christ to the saints; in a freedom from a spirit of bondage to fear, and from the yoke of carnal ordinances, and in the enjoyment of Gospel privileges and ordinances; and this is God's rest, which he has provided for New Testament saints, and into which they enter by faith, and a profession of it; and the Gospel is the promise or declaration which was left among these Hebrews, and in the world, to encourage them so to do: lest

any of you should seem to come short of it;

either of the promise, or the rest promised; which if understood of the heavenly glory, the sense is, that though true believers shall not come short of that, yet they may "seem" to others to do so; and therefore should be careful of their lives and conversations, that they might not seem to come short; and this they should do, for the glory of God, the honour of Christ and his Gospel, and the good of others; but if the rest, and the promise of it, intend the Gospel and its dispensation, the meaning is, that saints should be concerned so to behave, that they might not seem to fail of the doctrine of the grace of God, and to be disappointed of that rest and peace promised in it. One of Stephens's copies read,

lest “any of us”; which seems most agreeable both to what goes before, and follows.

Hebrews 4:2

For unto us was the Gospel preached

The Gospel is the good news and glad tidings of salvation by Christ; and this may be said to be preached, when men preach not themselves, nor read lectures of morality, nor mix law and Gospel together, nor make justification and salvation to be by works, nor set persons to make their peace with God, or get an interest in Christ; but when they preach Christ and salvation alone by him; and so it was preached to the Hebrews, and that more fully, and with more clearness, power, and success than formerly; and which is a privilege and blessing; and is sometimes blessed for the conviction of sinners, for regeneration, for the implanting of faith, and the comfort of believers. The words may be rendered, we were evangelized; as such may be said to be, who have a spirit of liberty, in opposition to a spirit of bondage; who live by faith on Christ alone; who derive their peace and comfort, not from their works, but from him; whose repentance and obedience are influenced by the love of God; and who desire to perform all duties aright, and depend on none: now though this was true of the apostle and others, yet is not the sense here, because of what follows,

as well as unto them,

or “even as they”; for though the Gospel was preached to the Israelites in the wilderness, in the ministry of Moses, and by types and sacrifices; yet they were not evangelized by it, or cast into a Gospel mould, or brought into a Gospel spirit: however, it was preached unto them; which shows the antiquity of it; the sameness of the method of salvation in all ages; the necessity of salvation by Christ, and the unity of Christ’s church under different dispensations:

but the word preached did not profit them;

that is, the Gospel, which is here called the word of hearing, as it may be rendered; because it is and may be heard; and there is a necessity of hearing, in order to faith in Christ: the word signifies a rumour, or report: the Gospel is a report of Christ, his person and offices; of his great love to sinners, and of what he has done for them; but though it is a word of hearing, a report made,

and the word preached, yet to some it is unprofitable; it has no good effect upon them; yea, it is the savour of death unto death to them, and the aggravation of condemnation; and the reason of the inefficacy and unprofitableness of the word to the Israelites was, its

not being mixed with faith in them that heard it;

the Gospel is as food, and faith is the hand that receives it, and takes it, and tastes of it, and eats it, and concocts and digests it; and when this is the case, it is profitable and nourishing; but when it is otherwise, it is not. The Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, and five of Beza’s ancient copies, and as many of Stephens’s, with others, read, “they were not mixed” referring it not to the word, but to persons; and so read the Arabic and Ethiopic versions: and the sense is, that the generality of the Israelites did not join themselves in faith, in believing in God, to Caleb and Joshua; who hearkened to the Lord, and received and obeyed his word; and so the word became useless to them: there ought to be an union or conjunction of the saints, and the bond of this union is love; and the thing in which they unite is faith, believing in Christ, and the doctrine of faith, which is but one; and though the word may be profitable to others who are not in the communion of the saints; yet forsaking the assembly of the saints, and not constantly attending with them, or not mixing with them continually in public worship, is one reason of the unprofitable hearing of the word when it is preached to them.

Hebrews 4:3

For we which have believed do enter into rest

Not eternal rest; all believers shall enjoy this, and they only; but this is not now, or at present enjoyed, unless things future may be said to be present, because of faith in them, and the certainty of them but spiritual rest in Christ under the Gospel dispensation, which is a rest from the burden of the law of Moses, and from all toil and labour for life, and salvation by works, and lies in an enjoyment of much inward peace of soul, notwithstanding the world’s troubles and Satan’s temptations; and such who believe the word or Gospel preached, and Christ in it, not with a general and historical high, or only in profession, but with the heart, and in truth, these enjoy this rest; they are kept in perfect peace, and have much spiritual ease and comfort: this character distinguishes them from the unbelieving Israelites of

old, and from present hypocrites and formal professors:

as he said, as I have sworn in wrath, if they shall enter into my rest;

the words are in (Psalms 95:11) , and are before cited in (Hebrews 3:11) (See Gill on Hebrews 3:11): they entered not in because of unbelief; none but believers enter into spiritual rest. The apostle applies this proof to his design, by removing all other rests, and particularly by showing that does not mean God's rest from the works of creation:

although the works were finished from the foundation of the world;

that is, though the works of creation, that God designed to make, were finished and perfected within the first six days of the world, and then God rested, or ceased to work in a creative way; yet this is not the rest designed in the passage of Scripture cited, nor is it that rest which believers enter into.

Hebrews 4:4

For he spake in a certain place

(Genesis 2:2) that is, Moses, the penman of that book spoke, or God by him:

of the seventh day on this wise;

of the seventh day of the world, or from the creation of the heavens and the earth:

and God did rest the seventh day from all his works:

of creation, but not of providence; for in them he works hitherto; nor does this rest suppose labour with fatigue and weariness, and ease and refreshment from it; only cessation from working in a creative way, and the utmost delight, complacency and satisfaction in what he had done. The Alexandrian copy leaves out the phrase, "the seventh day".

Hebrews 4:5

And in this place again

In (Psalms 95:11) he speaks again of another rest distinct from that on the seventh day; which, and not the latter, is what believers under the Gospel dispensation enter into:

if they shall enter into my rest:

that is, unbelievers shall not enter into it; as the unbelieving Israelites did not enter into the typical rest, so neither shall any unbeliever enter into the Gospel rest, the antitype of the former.

Hebrews 4:6

Seeing therefore it remaineth

It follows by just consequence,

that some must enter therein;

for God's swearing concerning some, that they should not enter into his rest, supposes that others should: and

they to whom it was first preached;

to whom the Gospel was first preached, namely, the Israelites in the wilderness: entered not in because of unbelief; See (Hebrews 3:19) .

Hebrews 4:7

Again he limiteth a certain day

Since the seventh day of the creation was a day of rest which God entered into, and not man; and since the land of Canaan was a typical rest, which the unbelieving Israelites did not enter into, because of unbelief; and yet there must be persons, and there must be a time for them to enter into the true rest which God has left a promise of; therefore he has limited, fixed, and appointed a certain day, the Gospel dispensation, for believers to enter into it:

saying in David;

or by David, who was the penman of the 95th psalm, as may be learned from hence; and this is agreeably to, and confirms a rule which the Jews give, that those psalms which are without a title were written by David F7; the Spirit of God spake in him and by him, and plainly pointed out another day of rest from the above mentioned:

today, after so long a time;

as two thousand five hundred years from the first seventh day to the time of Moses, and five hundred years from the times of Moses and Joshua, to his:

as it is said;

the Alexandrian copy reads, "as it is before said", or, "above said", as the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions; that is, in (Psalms 95:7 Psalms 95:8) before cited, (Hebrews 3:7 Hebrews 3:8)

today if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts;

(See Gill on Hebrews 3:7), (See Gill on Hebrews 3:8).

FOOTNOTES:

F7 Aben Ezra & Kimchi Praefat. in Tillim.

Hebrews 4:8

For if Jesus had given them rest

That is, Joshua; for Hosheah, Joshua, and Jesus, are one and the same name; or Jesus himself, as two of Stephens's copies read; and so Joshua is called Jesus by the Septuagint interpreters on (Exodus 17:10) (24:13) and other places where he is mentioned; and also, by Josephus F8, and Philo F9 the Jew. The Syriac version, lest any should mistake this for Jesus Christ, adds, "the son of Nun": who is certainly the person designed, as the apostle's reasoning shows; who was an eminent type of Jesus Christ: there is an agreement in their names, both signify a saviour, Joshua was a temporal saviour, Christ a spiritual one; and in their office they were both servants; and in their qualifications for their office, such as wisdom, courage, faithfulness, and integrity. Joshua was a type of Christ in many actions of his life; in the miracles he wrought, or were wrought for him; in the battles he fought, and the victories he obtained; in saving Rahab and her family; in receiving the Gibeonites, who came submissively to him; and in leading the children of Israel into Canaan's land, which he divided to them by lot: but though he brought them into a land of rest, into the typical rest, where they had rest for a while from their temporal enemies, yet he did not give them the true spiritual rest: had he,

then would he not afterward have spoken of another day;

that is, God, in David's time, and by him, would not have so long after appointed another day of rest; meaning, not any particular day of the week, but the whole Gospel dispensation, in the times of the Messiah; wherefore the apostle concludes as follows.

FOOTNOTES:

F8 Antiqu. Jud. l. 4. c. 7. sect. 2. c. 8. sect. 46, 47, 48.

& l. 5. c. 1. sect. 1. & passim.

F9 De Charitate, p. 698, 699, 700.

Hebrews 4:9

There remaineth therefore a rest for the people of God.]

Not all mankind; nor the people of the Jews only; rather the people of God, both Jews and Gentiles, under the New Testament; the people whom God has loved with a special love, has chose in Christ, and given to him, with whom he has made a covenant in him, and whom Christ saves from their sins, and calls by his grace; and the rest which remains for them is not a new sabbath day, but a sabbatism: and this does not so much design eternal rest in heaven; though the Jews often call that a sabbath; the 92nd psalm they say is a psalm for the time to come, (tbv wlkv) , "which is all sabbath", and the rest of eternal life F11: but rather this intends the spiritual rest believers have in Christ under the Gospel dispensation, which they now enter into, and of which the apostle had been treating; and as for the word "remaineth", this does not denote the futurity of it, but the apostle's inference or consequence from what he had said; and the sense is, it remains therefore, and is a certain fact, a clear consequence from what has been observed, that there is another rest distinct from God's rest on the seventh day, and from the rest in the land of Canaan; which were both typical ones of the present rest the saints now enjoy: so the Jews call the world to come the times of the Messiah, (lwdgh tbv) , "the great sabbath" F12.

FOOTNOTES:

F11 Misn. Tamid, c. 7. sect. 4. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 97. 1, Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 16. 3. Massecheth Sopherim, c. 18. sect. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 3. 1.

F12 Zohar in Gen. fol. 31. 4. Shaare Orn, fol. 17. 1. Caphtor, fol. 64. 1.

Hebrews 4:10

For he that is entered into his rest,

&c] This is to be understood not of believers, nor of their entrance into the Gospel rest, or into eternal rest, but of the Lord Jesus Christ; for a single person is only spoken of, and not many, as in (Hebrews 4:3) and the rest entered into is his own, which cannot be said of any

other; and besides, a comparison is run between his entrance into rest, and ceasing from his works, and God's resting the seventh day, and ceasing from his, which can only agree with him; and besides, Christ is immediately spoken of, and at large described in (Hebrews 4:12-14). Now he entered into his rest, not when he was laid in the grave, but when he rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God, as having done his work; and this is the ground and foundation of the saints' rest under the Gospel dispensation; for these words are a reason of the former, as appears by the causal particle "for": and now being at rest,

he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his;

Christ had works to do, as preaching the Gospel, performing miracles, and obtaining the redemption and salvation of his people: these were given him to do, and he undertook them, and he has finished them; and so ceases from them, as never to repeat them more; they being done effectually, stand in no need of it; and so as to take delight and complacency in them; the pleasure of the Lord prospering in, his hand, the effects of his labour answering his designs; just as God ceased from the works of creation, when he had finished them.

Hebrews 4:11

Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest

Not eternal rest; this is not to be entered into now; nor is an entrance into it to be obtained by labour; salvation is not by works; eternal life is a free gift; good works do not go before to prepare heaven for the saints, but follow after: nor is the saints' entrance into it a precarious thing; God has promised it, and provided it for his people; Christ is in the possession of it, and is preparing it for them; and the Spirit of God is working them up for the self same thing, and Christ will give them an abundant entrance into it: but the Gospel rest is here meant, that rest which believers now enter into, and is at this present time for them, (Hebrews 4:3 Hebrews 4:10) and though true believers are entered into it, yet their rest, peace, and joy in Christ, is not full; they enter by degrees into it, and by believing enjoy more of it: and this is to be laboured for by prayer, hearing the word, and attendance on ordinances; and this requires

strength, diligence, and industry; and supposes difficulties and discouragements, through the corruptions of the heart, and the temptations of Satan; and this is designed to quicken and awaken a godly jealousy in God's people, over themselves:

lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief;

into the sin of unbelief, and into punishment through it, as the Israelites did; who sinning, their carcasses fell in the wilderness, and they entered not into God's rest, as he swore they should not: true believers may fall into sin, and from a degree of the exercise of grace, and of the steadfastness of the Gospel; but they cannot finally and totally fall away, because they are kept by the power of God; yet they may so fall, as to come short, or at least seem to come short of enjoying the rest and peace of the Gospel state: external professors may fall from the Gospel, and the religion they have professed, and come short of the glory they expected; and fall into just and deserved punishment, in like manner as the unbelieving Israelites did.

Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is quick and powerful

This is to be understood of Christ, the essential Word of God; for the Word of God was a known name of the Messiah among the Jews; (See Gill on John 1:1) and therefore the apostle makes use of it when writing to them: and the words are introduced as a reason why care should be taken, that men fall not off from the Gospel, because Christ, the author, sum, and substance of it, is the living God, omnipotent and omniscient; for not a thing, but a person is spoken of, who is a Judge, and a critical discernor of the secrets of men's hearts: and certain it is, that this Word is spoken of as a person, and is said to be a priest in the following verses; to which may be added, that the several things said of the Word exactly agree with Christ: he is "the Word of God"; as the word is the birth of the mind, he is the only begotten of the Father; he is the Word that spoke for the elect in the council and covenant of grace, and that spoke all things out of nothing in creation; he is the Word that has been promised, and spoken of by the prophets from the beginning of the world; and is the interpreter of his Father's mind, and our Advocate with the Father: he is

quick,

or, as it may be better rendered, “living”; he has life in himself as God, he is the living God; he is the living Redeemer and Mediator, and he lives for ever as man; he is the author and giver of life, natural, spiritual, and eternal: and he is powerful, as he appears to be in the creation and sustaining of all things; in his miracles and ministrations; in the work of man’s redemption; in the preservation of his people, and in his advocacy and intercession:

and sharper than any twoedged sword;

or “more cutting than one”, by the words of his mouth, by the power of his Spirit, and the efficacy of his grace; for his mouth itself is as a sharp sword, and out of it comes forth one, (Isaiah 49:2) (Revelation 19:13 Revelation 19:15) by which he pierces the hearts of men, cuts them to the quick, and lays them open. Jehovah is called a twoedged sword with the Jews F13; and Philo the Jew speaks of the flaming sword of the Logos F14.

Piercing even to the dividing asunder soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow;

the like property Philo the Jew ascribes to the “Logos”, or Word; he calls him (tomeuv), “a cutter”, and says he cuts and divides all things, even all sensible things, yea, atoms, and things indivisible F15; the apostle seems here to have respect to the several names with which the soul of man is called by the Jews, (hmvnw xwr vqn), “soul, spirit, and breath” F16; the latter of these, they say, dwells between the other two. Some by the soul understand the natural and unregenerate part in man, and by the spirit the renewed and regenerate part, which though sometimes are not so easily distinguished by men, yet they are by Christ; others think the soul designs the inferior faculties, the affections; and the spirit the superior ones, the mind and understanding; but the apostle’s meaning seems to be this, that whereas the soul and spirit are invisible, and the joints and marrow are covered and hid; so sharp and quick sighted, and so penetrating is the divine Word, that it reaches the most secret and hidden things of men: and this sense is confirmed by what follows,

and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart;

Christ knows what is in man; he is the searcher of the hearts, and the trier of the reins of the children

of men; and this will be more apparent at the last day, when he will make manifest the counsels of the heart, and will critically inquire, and accurately judge of them.

FOOTNOTES:

F13 Zohar in Cab. Lex. p. 364.

F14 De Cherubim, p. 112.

F15 Onis rerum divin. Haeres, p. 499, 500, 510, 511, 513.

F16 Zohar in Gen. fol. 55. 2. & 113. 1, 2. & is Exod. fol. 58. 3, 4. & in Lev. fol. 29. 2. T. Hieros. Celaim, fol. 31. 3. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 2. 1.

Hebrews 4:13**Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight**

Christ is the Lord God omniscient; there is no creature, in general, rational, or irrational, animate or inanimate, but what are known to him, and seen by him; for all creatures are made, and upheld by him, and he is omnipresent; and in particular, there is no man but is manifest to him; so (hyrb), “creature”, is often used by the Rabbins for “man”; all men, openly profane men, who are enemies to Christ, and his people, are under his eye and notice; he knows their persons, he sees their actions, even those that are most secretly devised and performed against him, and his saints; and he takes such notice of them, as to bring them into judgment for them; he knows formal professors of religion, and upon what foot they have taken up their profession, and how they keep their lusts with their profession; he can distinguish between profession and grace; and he knows and observes the springs and progress of their apostasy: and as for true believers, he knows their persons, and knows them to be his; he sees their sins and their weaknesses; he takes notice of their graces, and observes their wants; and there is nothing in them, or belongs to them, but what is before him, even the secret desires of their souls. So Philo the Jew says F17 the divine Word reaches to, and comprehends all things, nothing escapes him: and this phrase is very commonly used of the divine Being by the Jews, (wynpl ywlg lkh), “all things are manifest before him” F18; and this being used of Christ, is no inconsiderable proof of his proper deity:

but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

The words are an allusion to wrestlers, who exercised naked, and took each other by their necks and collars; and when one was thrown upon his back, as the word rendered “opened” is by some translated, he was publicly exposed and known: or to the putting of a creature in such a posture when sacrificed; or rather to the cutting of it up, and laying open its entrails: and especially to the manner of doing it among the Jews, with which these persons, the apostle writes to, were acquainted: and it was this; when the lamb for the daily sacrifice was slain, the priest hung it up by the foot, and skinned it; and when he came to the breast, he cut off the head; and having finished the skinning of it, he divided the heart, and took out the blood; then he cut off the shoulders; and when he came to the right leg, he cut it off, and then cut it down through the chine bone, and (wynpl ywlg wlwk) , “all of it was manifest before him” F19. The very phrase before used. The word here used seems to answer to (Pre) , which, with the Arabians, signifies, “to know”, or make known; and (Pyrem) , with the Rabbins; is used for a companion, a familiar one that is well known; the theme in the Hebrew, is, (Prwe) , the “neck”. The last clause, “with whom we have to do”, manifestly points at the person here spoken of, Jesus Christ: saints have a concern with him now, as their way to the Father, as their Saviour and Redeemer; they have to do with his blood for pardon and cleansing, and with his righteousness for justification, and with his fulness for every supply of grace; and with him as their King to rule over them, protect and defend them, and as their prophet to teach them, and their high priest to intercede for them. Moreover, the words may be rendered, “to whom we must give an account”; and so the Syriac version renders them, “to whom they give an account”; as all men must at the great day: and all this that is said of the Word of God should engage to care, watchfulness, and circumspection in the course of a profession of religion.

FOOTNOTES:

F17 De Sacrif. Abel, p. 140.

F18 Tzeror Hammor, fol. 122. 2. Vid. Seder Tephillot, fol. 281. 1. Ed. Basil.

F19 Misna Tamid, c. 4. sect. 2.

Hebrews 4:14

Seeing then that we have a great high priest

That Christ is a priest, and a high priest, has been observed already, in (Hebrews 2:1-7) but here he is

called a great one, because of the dignity of his person, as follows, and the virtue of his sacrifice; and because of the place where he now officiates as a priest, heaven and with respect to the continuation of his priesthood; and likewise because he makes others priests unto God; and this great high priest is no other than the Word of God before spoken of: so the divine Logos, or Word, is often called a priest, and an high priest, by Philo the Jew F20. This great high priest believers “have”, and have an interest in him; he is called to this office, and invested with it; he has been sent to do his work as a priest; and he has done the greatest part of it, and is now doing the rest; and saints receive Christ as such, and the blessings of grace from him, through his sacrifice and intercession:

that is passed into the heavens;

he came down from thence, and offered himself a sacrifice for the sins of his people; and having done this, he ascended thither again, to appear for them, and to make intercession for them; whereby he fully answers to his character as the great high priest: and what makes him more fully to appear so is what follows,

Jesus, the Son of God:

the former of these names signifies a Saviour, and respects his office; the latter is expressive of his dignity, and respects his person; who is the Son of God in such sense as angels and men are not; not by creation, nor adoption; but by nature; not as man and Mediator, but as God, being of the same nature with his Father, and equal to him; and it is this which makes him a great high priest, and gives virtue and efficacy to all he does as such: wherefore,

let us hold fast our profession:

of faith, of the grace and doctrine of faith, and of Christ, and salvation by him, and of the hope of eternal life and happiness; which being made both by words and deeds, publicly and sincerely, should be held fast; which supposes something valuable in it, and that there is danger of dropping it; and that it requires strength, courage, and greatness of mind, and an use of all proper means; and it should be held without wavering; for it is good and profitable, it recommends the Gospel; and it has been made publicly before witnesses; and not to hold it fast is displeasing to God, and resented by him: and the priesthood of Christ is an argument to enforce this duty, for he is the high priest of our profession; he has espoused our cause, and abode by it; he has bore

witness to the truth of the Gospel himself; he prays for the support of our faith; he pities and succours; and he is passed into the heavens, where he appears for us, owns us, and will own us.

FOOTNOTES:

F20 Alleg. 1. 2. p. 76. De Profugis, p. 466. & de Somniis, p. 597.

Hebrews 4:15

For we have not an high priest

That is cruel and unmerciful; the saints have an high priest, but not such an one:

which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities;

such as bodily diseases and wants, persecutions from men, and the temptations of Satan; under all which Christ sympathizes with his people; and which sympathy of his arises from his knowledge and experience of these things, and the share he has had of them, and from that union there is between him and his people: and it is not a bare sympathy, but is attended with his assistance, support, and deliverance; and the consideration of it is of great comfort to the saints:

but was in all points tempted like as we are:

of the temptations of Christ, and of the saints, (See Gill on Hebrews 2:18)

yet without sin;

there was no sin in his nature; though he was encompassed about with infirmities, yet not with sinful infirmities, only sinless ones; nor was there any sin in his temptations; though he was solicited to sin by Satan, yet he could find none in him to work upon; nor could he draw him into the commission of any sin.

Hebrews 4:16

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace

Either to Christ, who is before spoken of as an high priest, and who was typified by the mercy seat, to which there seems to be an allusion; and coming to him as a priest upon his throne is very proper: to him saints come for pardon and cleansing, and for a justifying righteousness, for the acceptance of their persons, and the presentation of their services, and for every supply

of grace; and to him they may come “boldly”, since he stands in the relations of a Father, husband, and brother, and from him they may expect receive mercy, since it is kept for him, and with him, and is only dispensed through him; and in him they may hope to find grace, since all fulness of it dwells in him; and help in every time of need, since their help is laid on him. Or else to God the Father, since Christ, the high priest, is the way of access to God, and it is by him the saints come unto the Father; who is represented as on a “throne”, to show his majesty, and to command reverence; and as on a “throne of grace”, to encourage distressed souls to come unto him; and to express his sovereignty in the distribution of his grace: and this coming to him is a sacerdotal act, for every believer is a priest; and is not local, but spiritual, and with the heart, and by faith; and chiefly regards the duty of prayer, and a drawing nigh to God in that ordinance with spiritual sacrifices to offer unto him: and this may be done “boldly”; or “with freedom of speech”; speaking out plainly all that is in the heart, using an holy courage and intrepidity of mind, free from servile fear, and a bashful spirit; all which requires an heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, faith, in the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ, a view of God, as a God of peace, grace, and mercy, and a holy confidence of being heard by him; and such a spirit and behaviour at the throne of grace are very consistent with reverence of the divine Majesty, with submission to his will, and with that humility which becomes saints. The Jews often speak of (Nydh aok) , “a throne of judgment”, and (Mymxr aok) , “a throne of mercy” F21; and represent God as sitting upon one or other of these, when he is dispensing justice or mercy F23; and the latter they sometimes call, as here, (Mymxrw dox aok) , “a throne of grace and mercy” F24: and so they make the first man Adam to pray to God after this manner F25;

“let my prayer come before the throne of thy glory, and let my cry come before (Kymxr aok) , “the throne of thy mercy””

The end of coming hither is,

that we may obtain mercy;

the sure mercies of David, the blessings of the everlasting covenant; particularly pardoning mercy, and the fresh application of it, and every other blessing of grace that is needful: and there is reason to expect it, since

there is mercy with God; and it is with Christ, as the head of the covenant; and it is ready for those that ask it; and it has been obtained by many, and is everlasting.

And find grace to help in time of need;

the Syriac version renders it, “in time of affliction”; which is a time of need, as every time of distress is, whether from the immediate hand of God, or through the persecutions of men, or the temptations of Satan: and help at such times may be expected; since not only God is able to help, but he has promised it; and he has laid help on Christ; and gives it seasonably, and at the best time; and it springs from grace, yea, it is grace that does help; by which may be meant, the discoveries of God’s love, and the supplies of grace from Christ: which may be hoped for, seeing God is the God of all grace; and he is seated on a throne of grace; and all fulness of grace dwells in Christ: to find grace often, signifies to find favour with God, to be accepted by him, as well as to receive grace from him.

FOOTNOTES:

F21 Targum in Psal. xxix. 10. T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 3. 2. Zohar in Gen. fol. 38. 3. & in Numb. fol. 91. 2. & 93. 2.

F23 Megillat Esther, fol. 95. 1.

F24 Raziel, fol. 32. 1.

F25 lbid. fol. 3. 1.

INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS 5

The apostle having made mention of Christ as an high priest, in the preceding chapter, proceeds in this to give an account of an high priest, and applies the character of him to Christ; and shows that he is of another order of priesthood than that of Aaron, even of the order of Melchisedec; of whom he could say many things, but the Hebrews were dull of hearing them; which leads him to blame them for their rudeness, and non-proficiency. The description of the high priest is taken from his relation to men, separation from them, and ordination for them; from his oblation of their gifts and sacrifices; from his sympathy with them, and from his call of God, Heb 5:1-4 all which are accommodated to Christ; as his vocation of God, Heb 5:5,6 confirmed by two testimonies out of Ps 2:7 110:4 his being a man, and having infirmities, though sinless ones, and his sympathy with men, and compassion on them, Heb 5:7 his obedience and sufferings, and the oblation of

himself, whereby he became the author of salvation to his people, which is the main thing in his priesthood, Heb 5:8,9 and which was not of the order of Aaron, though in some things there was an agreement with it, but of the order of Melchizedek, Heb 5:10 of whom the apostle could say many surprising things; but these Hebrews were dull of apprehension, and incapable of receiving them, Heb 5:11 . And then he proceeds to blame them for their dulness, which he aggravates by the time they had been in the school of Christ, when it might have been expected they would have been teachers of others; by their being yet scholars, and of the lowest class, who had need to be taught the first rudiments of the Christian religion; yea, by their being as babes that stood in need of milk, and could not bear meat, Heb 5:12 . And then follows a description both of babes, and of adult persons; such as are unskilful in the word of righteousness are babes, and use milk; but those who exercise their spiritual senses, to discern between good and bad doctrine, are adult, and can digest strong meat, Heb 5:13,14 .

Hebrews 5:1

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

2 Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.

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

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

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

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

7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;

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

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

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

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

12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

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

14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS V

Hebrews 5:1

For every high priest taken from among men

Every one that was an high priest under the law was a man, and not an angel; and it was proper he should be so, that he might be a priest for men, have compassion on them, and offer for them; and he was among the number of common men, and was taken out from them, and chosen and separated from the rest of men, as Aaron and his sons were from the children of Israel, (Exodus 28:1) . And such an one

is ordained for men;

in their room and stead, and for their good; and above them, as the word sometimes signifies; he was exalted unto, and invested with a superior office, to which he was ordained according to the law of a carnal commandment, by anointing with oil, and without an oath.

In things pertaining to God;

in things in which God had to do with men; and so he presided over them in the name of God, and declared the will of God unto them, and blessed them; and in

things in which men had to do with God; and so he appeared in their name, and represented their persons, and presented their sacrifices to God, as follows:

that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; freewill offerings, peace offerings, burnt offerings, sin and trespass offerings, all kind of sacrifice.

Hebrews 5:2

Who can have compassion on the ignorant

Who have committed sins of ignorance, and bring their sacrifices for them; these he does not insult and upbraid, nor break out into anger and indignation against; but pities them, and sympathizes with them; has a just measure of compassion suitable to their condition, and bears with them with great moderation and temper:

and on them that are out of the way;

of God's commandments; who are like sheep going astray, and turn to their own way; who transgress the law of God, and err from it; perhaps such who sin knowingly and wilfully, and through infirmity, are meant:

for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity;

not of body only, but of mind, sinful infirmity; he had much of it, it beset him all around; he was "clothed" with it, as the Syriac version renders it; as Joshua the high priest was with filthy garments, (Zechariah 3:3) .

Hebrews 5:3

And by reason hereof

Because of his sinful infirmity:

he ought, as for the people, so also for himself to offer for sins;

as he offered sacrifice for the sins of the people, so he was obliged to offer for his own sins; in this Christ differed from the high priest, for he had no sin of his own to offer for, (Hebrews 7:27) but he had, and therefore offered for them, (Leviticus 16:11) and made a confession of them: the form of which, as used on the day of atonement, was this;

``he put both his hands upon the bull-

ock, and confessed, and thus he said: I beseech thee, O Lord, I have done wickedly, I have transgressed, I have sinned before thee, I and my house; I beseech thee, O Lord, pardon the iniquities, transgressions, and sins, which I have done wickedly, transgressed, and sinned before thee, I and my house.”

And this he did a second time on that day F26.

FOOTNOTES:

F26 Misna Yoma, c. 3. sect. 8. & c. 4. sect. 2.

Hebrews 5:4

And no man taketh this honour to himself

That is, the honour of the priesthood: the office of the high priest was a very honourable one; it was a peculiar honour to Aaron, and his sons, to be separated unto it; their instalment into it was very grand and solemn; at that time they were anointed with oil, and clothed with glorious garments, and sacrifices were offered for them; they had an honourable maintenance assigned them, and a large retinue of priests and Levites to attend them; great respect and reverence were shown them: but their principal honour lay in the work they performed; in representing the whole body of the people; in offering gifts and sacrifices for them; in blessing them; and in the resolution of difficult cases brought unto them; in all which they were types of Christ, the high priest. Now no man might take this honourable office upon himself, or intrude himself into it, or obtain it by any unjust method, or in any other way than by a call from God; nor did any man dare to do it, until of late, when some got into it of themselves, and were put in by the Roman governors, and even purchased it of them F1: so Joshua ben Gamla became an high priest {b}; and some have thought the apostle has some respect to these wicked practices, and tacitly reproveth them, as what ought not to be: for no one ought to be in this office,

but he that is called of God, as [was Aaron];

whose call was immediately from the Lord, and was unquestionable: Moses was ordered to separate him, and his sons, from the children of Israel, and install them into this office; they were destroyed by fire, or swallowed up by the earth, that disputed his call; and this was confirmed by a miracle, by his dry rod budding, blooming, and bringing forth almonds: and the apostle

instances in him, because his call was so remarkable and authentic; and because he was the first high priest of the Jews, and from whence the rest descended, who were lawful ones.

FOOTNOTES:

F1 T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 8. 2. Bartenora in Misn. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 1. & Maimon. in ib. sect. 3.

F2 Misn. Yebamot, c. 6. sect. 4. & Gloss. in T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 18. 1.

Hebrews 5:5

So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest

It was a glorifying of Christ, to make him an high priest; not as God, for as such no addition can be made to his glory; yea, it was a condescension in him to become a priest: but as man; it was an honour to the human nature to be united to the Son of God; and to be separated from others to this office; and to be called unto it, qualified for it, and invested with it; and to be of the order he was, and to do the work; and the very assistance he had in it, for the accomplishment of it, was a glorifying of him, for which he prayed; and the work being done, he had glory given him by his Father; and an ascription of glory is made to him by angels and saints: but Christ did not take this high and honourable office to himself, nor the glory of it; indeed, he did not receive it from man, nor was he made a priest according to the ceremonial law; yet he did not intrude himself into this office:

but he that said unto him, thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee;

he appointed him to this office; he sent him to execute it; he anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows; he consecrated and established him in it with an oath; and prescribed to him what he should do, suffer, and offer; and declared to him what he might expect as the reward thereof. These words are taken out of (Psalms 2:7) , (See Gill on Hebrews 1:5), and they are not to be considered as constitutive of Christ's priesthood, as if that was intended by the begetting of him as a Son; but as descriptive of the person, who called him to it, who stood in the relation of a Father to Christ, and Christ in the relation of a Son to him; therefore the one was very proper to call, and the other a very fit person to be called to this office, being every way capable of ex-

cuting it, to the glory of God, and to the good of men.

Hebrews 5:6

As he saith also in another place

Or psalm; namely, in (Psalms 110:4) that is, the same person, even God the Father; who spake the words before cited, also expressed the following:

thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec;

that the psalm, from whence these words are taken, belongs to the Messiah, (See Gill on Matthew 22:44) and this very passage is applied unto him by the Jewish writers F3; and had not this been the general sense of the Jewish church at this time, the apostle writing to Hebrews would not have produced it; and it very clearly expresses the priesthood of Christ, the eternity of it, and the order according to which it was; and it being not according to the order of Aaron, but of another, shows the change of the priesthood, and so of the law; of Melchizedek, (See Gill on Hebrews 7:1)

FOOTNOTES:

F3 Moses Hadarsan apud Galatin. l. 10. c. 6. Abot R. Nathan, c. 34.

Hebrews 5:7

Who in the days of his flesh

Or “of his humanity”, as the Arabic version renders it; or “when he was clothed with flesh”, as the Syriac version; in the time of his humiliation, when he was attended with the sinless infirmities of the flesh, or human nature; it may take in the whole course of his life on earth, especially the latter part of it: it is not to be concluded from hence, that he has not flesh now, or is not in the flesh; for it is certain that he had flesh after his resurrection; only now he is free from all the infirmities of the flesh, the pains, and sorrows, and griefs of it, which he endured when here on earth:

when he had offered up prayers and supplications;

as he often did in many parts of his life, particularly in the garden, and upon the cross, when he offered up himself: and as the days of Christ’s flesh were filled up with prayers and supplications, so should ours be also: the word for “supplications” signifies branches of

olive trees, covered with wool F4; which such as sued for peace carried in their hands, and so came to signify supplications for peace: the manner in which these were offered up by Christ was

with strong crying and tears;

with a most vehement outcry, with a loud voice, as when on the cross; and though there is no mention of his tears at that time, or when in the garden, no doubt but he shed them: all that Christ did, and said, are not written; some things were received by tradition, and by inspiration; Christ wept at other times, and why not at these? and there are some circumstances in his prayers which intimate as much, (Matthew 26:38) (27:46) (Luke 22:44) which shows the weight of sin, of sorrow, and of punishment, that lay upon him, and the weakness of the human nature, considered in itself: and it may be observed to our comfort, that as Christ’s crying and tears were confined to the days of his flesh, or to the time of his life here on earth, so shall ours be also. Mention is made of (twqzx twlpt) , “strong prayers” F5, in Jewish writings. The person to whom Christ offered his prayers is described in the following words,

unto him that was able to save him from death;

from a corporeal death, as he could, but that it was otherwise determined; or rather to raise him from the dead, to deliver him from the state of the dead, from the power of death, and the grave, as he did; and so the Syriac version renders it, “to quicken him from death”; to restore him from death to life:

and was heard in that he feared;

or “by fear”; by God, who was the object of his fear, and who is called the fear of Isaac, (Genesis 31:42) he was always heard by him, and so he was in the garden, and on the cross; and was carried through his sufferings, and was delivered from the fear of death, and was saved from the dominion and power of it, being raised from the dead by his Father: or “he was heard because of his fear”, or “reverence”; either because of the dignity and reverence of his person, in which he was had by God; or because of his reverence of his Father.

FOOTNOTES:

F4 Harpocraton. Lex. p. 152. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. sect. 5. c. 3.

F5 Tzeror Hammor, fol. 37. 4.

Hebrews 5:8

Though he were a Son

The Son of God, as the Vulgate Latin version reads; not by creation, nor by adoption, nor by office, but by nature, being the only begotten of the Father, having the same nature and perfections with him:

yet learned he obedience;

not to his parents, or civil magistrates, though that is true; nor merely to the precepts of the law, which he did; but unto death: through sufferings he became obedient to death, even the death of the cross: and this he learnt; not that he was ignorant of the nature of it; nor was he destitute of an obedient disposition to it; but the meaning is, he had an experience of it, and effected it; and which was voluntary, and done in our room and stead; and is the rule and the measure of our righteousness before God: and this he learned,

by the things which he suffered;

from men, from devils, and from the justice of God. Christ's sonship did not exempt him from obedience and sufferings; this shows the dignity of Christ's person, that he is the Son of God, not as Mediator, for as such he is a servant; and it would be no wonder that he should learn obedience as a servant; and this shows also the great humility and condescension of Christ in obeying and suffering for us; though so great a person; and likewise the vile nature of sin, and the strictness of divine justice: and we may learn from hence, not to expect to be exempted from sufferings on account of sonship; nor to conclude we are not sons, because we suffer; and that afflictions are instructive, and by them experience is learned.

Hebrews 5:9

And being made perfect

In his obedience, through sufferings; having completed his obedience, gone through his sufferings, and finished his sacrifice, and being perfectly glorified in heaven:

he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

the salvation Christ is the author of is "eternal"; it was resolved upon from eternity, and contrived in it; it was secured in the everlasting covenant, in which not only a Saviour was provided, but blessings both of grace

and glory: and it is to eternity; and stands distinguished from a temporal salvation, and is opposed to eternal damnation; it is the salvation of the soul, which is immortal; and it takes in both grace and glory, which are of a durable nature; and the continuance of it is owing to the abiding and lasting virtue of Christ's person, blood, and righteousness: and Christ is the cause or author of this salvation, by his obedience and sufferings; by obeying the precept, and bearing the penalty of the law; by the price of his blood, and by the power of his arm; by his death and by his life; by his sacrifice on the cross, and by his intercession in heaven; by bestowing grace here, and glory hereafter: this shows that salvation is done, and that Christ is the sole author of it, and that all the glory of it should be given to him; and those to whom he is the author of salvation, are such as hearken to the voice of his Gospel, and obey him in his ordinances. Christ is not the author of salvation to all men; all men do not obey him; all those whom Christ saves, he brings them to an obedience to himself; for his obedience for them does not exempt them from obedience to him, though their obedience is no cause of their salvation; Christ himself is the alone author of that.

Hebrews 5:10

Called of God an high priest, after the order of Melchisedec.

] (ytrbdle), according to what is said of him, (Psalms 110:4) there is a resemblance between Melchizedek and Christ; many things that are said of the one, agree with the other: there is a likeness in Melchizedek to Christ; in his person, and what is said of him, that he was without father and mother; and in his office as a priest, and in the manner of his instalment into it; and in the antiquity, dignity, and perpetuity of it: and this is repeated for the further confirmation of Christ's priesthood, and is a conclusion of the truth of it from sufficient evidence: this does not so much design the constitution of Christ as priest, nor the call of him to that office, as the denomination or surnaming of him a priest of Melchizedek's order, because of the agreement between them; and contains a reason of Christ's being the author of eternal salvation, because he is a priest for ever; and prevents any objections against Christ's priesthood, and opens a way to discourse more largely concerning it.

Hebrews 5:11

Of whom we have many things to say

Either of Melchizedek, or of Christ, or of his priesthood or of all of these; since the apostle does largely treat of them in the following chapters: he says many things concerning Melchizedek in the seventh chapter, and many things of Christ, and his priesthood, in those that follow; Christ is a large and inexhaustible subject in the Gospel ministry, and what a Gospel minister delights to dwell on; and it is a fund and stock from whence he is furnished with things of the greatest usefulness, and of the utmost importance:

and hard to be uttered;

as were many things respecting Melchizedek, mentioned in (Hebrews 7:3) and also concerning Christ, and his priesthood: abstruse and difficult things are to be looked into, considered, searched after, and insisted on: the whole Scripture is profitable, and the whole counsel of God is to be declared, and things hard to be explained should be attempted; this is the way to an increase of light and knowledge; though it becomes ministers to consult their own abilities, and the capacity of their hearers, that they do not go beyond them:

seeing ye are dull of hearing;

this dulness of hearing is thought by some to arise from their afflictions; or from their attachment to the law of Moses; or rather from their sluggishness, indolence, and want of industry; and often times this arises from pride and prejudice, and irreverence of the word of God; and frequently from the deceitfulness of riches, and the cares of this life.

Hebrews 5:12

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers

These Hebrews had had great advantages; they were not only descended from Abraham, and had the law of Moses, and the writings of the Old Testament, but some of them had enjoyed the ministry of Christ, and however of his apostles; and it was now about thirty years from the day of Pentecost, in which the gifts of the Holy Ghost were bestowed in such an extraordinary manner, and a large number were converted, and a church state settled among them; and therefore considering the length of time, the opportunities and advantages they had enjoyed, it might have been expected, and indeed it is what should have been, that they would have been teachers of others, some in a private, and some in a public way: from whence it may be observed, that to

have time for learning, and yet make no proficiency, is an aggravation of dulness; moreover, that men ought to be hearers, and make some good proficiency in hearing, before they are fit to be teachers of others; also, that persons are not only to hear for their own edification, but for the instruction of others, though all hearers are not designed for public teachers; for to be teachers of others, requires a considerable share of knowledge: to which may be added, that the churches of Christ are the proper seminaries of Gospel ministers. But this was so far from being the case of these Hebrews, that the apostle says of them,

ye have need that one teach on again which be the first principles of the oracles of God;

by the oracles of God are meant the Scriptures, not the law of Moses only, but all the writings of the Old Testament, which were given by the respiration of God, and are authoritative and infallible; and by the "first principles" of them are intended, either the first promises in them, concerning the Messiah; or the institutions, rites, and ceremonies of the law, which are sometimes called (stoiceia) , elements, (Galatians 4:3 Galatians 4:9) where the same word is used as here; and which were the alphabet and rudiments of the Gospel to the Jews: or else the apostle designs the plain doctrines of the Gospel, which were at first preached unto them, in which they needed to be again instructed, as they were at first; so that instead of going forward, they had rather gone back:

and are become such as have need of milk;

of the types, shadows, and figures of the law, which were suited to the infant state of the church, who by sensible objects were directed to the view of Gospel grace; or of the plain and easier parts of the Gospel, comparable to milk for their purity, sweetness, nourishing nature, and being easy of digestion:

and not of strong meat:

such as the deep things of God, the mysteries of the Gospel; those which are more hard to be understood, received, and digested; such as the doctrines of the Trinity, of God's everlasting love, of eternal election and reprobation, of the person of Christ, the abrogation of the law

Hebrews 5:13

For everyone that useth milk

And sits down contented with the first principles of the Gospel, such as are easily taken in and digested; or makes use of the ceremonial law, as a schoolmaster to teach him the Gospel:

is unskilful in the word of righteousness;

the Gospel, which is a doctrine of righteousness; not of works of righteousness done by men, and of justification by them, or of a man's own righteousness; but of the pure, perfect, and everlasting righteousness of Christ: and it is called so, because it is the means of stripping a man of his own righteousness; and of revealing the righteousness of Christ unto him; and of working faith in him to lay hold upon it; and of discovering the agreement there is between the righteousness of Christ, and the justice of God; and of teaching men to live soberly, righteously, and godly: and such are unskilful in it, who either have no knowledge of the doctrine of justification; of the matter of it, Christ's righteousness; of the form of it, by imputation; and of the date of it, before faith: or have a very confused notion of it, joining their own works with Christ's righteousness, for justification, as many judaizing professors did; or who, if they have a notional knowledge of it, have no practical concern in it; do not believe with the heart unto righteousness; have not the experience, sweetness, and power of this doctrine upon them; and do not live lives agreeable to it:

for he is a babe.

This word is used sometimes by way of commendation, and is expressive of some good characters of the saints; such as harmlessness and inoffensiveness, humility, and meekness, a desire after the sincere milk of the word, freedom from rancour and malice, hypocrisy and guile; but here it is used by way of reproach, and denotes levity and inconstancy, ignorance and non-proficiency, want of digestion of strong meat, and incapacity to take care of themselves, as standing in need of tutors and governors.

Hebrews 5:14

But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age,

&c.] Or perfect; see (1 Corinthians 2:6) . This does not intend a perfection of justification; for though some have a greater degree of faith than others, and a clearer discovery of their justification, yet babes in Christ are

as perfectly justified as more grown and experienced believers; nor a perfection of sanctification, for there is no perfection of holiness but in Christ; and though the work of sanctification may be in greater perfection in one saint than in another, yet all are imperfect in this life; and as to a perfection of parts, babes have this as well as adult persons: but it designs a perfection of knowledge; for though none are entirely perfect, yet some have arrived to a greater degree of the knowledge of Gospel mysteries than others, and to these the strong meat of the Gospel belongs; they are capable of understanding the more mysterious parts of the Gospel; of searching into the deep things of God; and of receiving and digesting the more sublime truths of the Christian religion: even those who by reason of use, have their senses exercised to

discern both good and evil;

that is, their spiritual senses, the internal senses of the understanding and judgment, signified by external ones; as by seeing the Son; hearing the voice of Christ; savouring or smelling a sweet odour in the things of God, and Christ; tasting that the Lord is gracious; feeling and handling the word of life, as these are held forth in the everlasting Gospel: and these being exercised on their proper object, by use, an habit is contracted; and such are qualified for discerning, as between moral good and evil, and the worse and better state of the church, and between law and Gospel, so between the doctrines of Christ, and the doctrines of men; who find they differ: the doctrines of Christ such experienced persons find to be good, wholesome, nourishing, and salutary; and the doctrines of men to be evil, to eat, as does a canker, and to be pernicious, poisonous, and damnable; and the discernment they make, and the judgment they form, are not according to the dictates of carnal reason, but according to the Scriptures of truth, and their own experience.

INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS 6

In this chapter the apostle exhorts the believing Hebrews not to rest in the rudiments of the Christian religion they had learned; and much less to lay them again in the foundation after the Jewish manner, of which he instances in six particulars; but to seek after a perfect knowledge of evangelic truths, which, under a divine permission, was his determination to do, Heb 6:1-3 which was the best method to prevent apostasy, he dissuades from; by giving the characters of apostates, showing how far they may go in the knowledge

of divine things, and yet fall away; by asserting the impossibility of their repentance and recovery, with the reason of it, taken from the blackness of their crimes, Heb 6:4-6 and the difference between them, and true believers, he illustrates by two sorts of earth, the one takes in the rain that comes down from heaven, and brings forth herbs for the use of its dresser, and is blessed of God: such are true believers in Christ, Heb 6:7 the other bears thorns and briers, and is rejected and cursed, and in the issue burned; and to such earth the above apostates may be compared, Heb 6:8 but lest the believing Hebrews, such as were truly gracious among them, should conclude that this was their case, and that it was desperate; and lest they should think the apostle had an ill opinion of them, he declares he was otherwise persuaded of them, and hoped and believed they were interested in the things of salvation, Heb 6:9 the reasons of which persuasion are taken from the work of grace, which was wrought in them; from their laborious love they showed to the name of God, and to his people, and which they continued to show: and from the righteousness of God in not forgetting all this, Heb 6:10. And then he proceeds to exhort them to diligence in the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty, that so they might arrive to a full assurance of hope, Heb 6:11 and not to indulge slothfulness, but to be followers of the saints that were gone before them; whose character is, that through faith, and patience, they had inherited the promises, things the apostle would have those believers imitate them in, Heb 6:12 and particularly instances in Abraham, the father of this people, and of all believers; who having a promise from God, to which an oath was annexed, patiently waited for it, and obtained it, Heb 6:13-15 and having made mention of an oath, the apostle takes notice of the nature and use of one among men, Heb 6:16 and of the design of God in making use of one himself, which was to confirm his promise, and show its immutability to the heirs of it; and that by observing these two immutable things, which could never fail, they might have solid and abiding comfort: even all such, who, under a sense of danger, flee to Christ for refuge, who is the ground of hope proposed to them in the Gospel, to lay hold upon, Heb 6:17,18 and because of the firmness of the grace of hope, as it is conversant with Christ, and is cast on him, the good ground of it, it is compared to an anchor; and is said to be sure and steadfast, and to enter within the vail, where Christ is gone as a forerunner; and which is an encouragement to that grace to enter in after him; who is further de-

scribed by his name Jesus, by his office as an high priest, and by the order of which he is, that of Melchizedek, Heb 6:19,20 which is mentioned, to lead on to what the apostle had to say concerning him, in the next chapter.

Hebrews 6:1

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

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

3 And this will we do, if God permit.

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

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

6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

7 For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

18 That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:

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

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

COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS VI

Hebrews 6:1

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ,

&c.] The Gospel is the doctrine of Christ, and is so called, because Christ, as God, is the author of it; as Mediator, he received it from his Father; as man, he was the preacher of it; and he is also the sum and substance of it: the principles of this doctrine are either the easier parts of the Gospel, called milk in the latter part of the preceding chapter; which are not to be left with dislike and contempt, nor so as to be forgotten, nor so as not to be recurred to at proper times; but so as not to abide in and stick here, without going further: or rather the ceremonies of the law, which were the ele-

ments of the Jews' religion, and the beginning, as the word may be here rendered, of the doctrine of Christ; which were shadowy and typical of Christ, and taught the Jews the truths of the Gospel concerning Christ: in these the believing Jews were very desirous of sticking, and of abiding by them, and of continuing them in the Gospel church; whereas they were to be left, since they had had their use, and had answered what they were designed for, and were now abolished by Christ. Let us go on to perfection: in a comparative sense, to a more perfect knowledge of things, which the clear revelation and ministry of the Gospel lead unto; and which the rites and ceremonies, types and figures of the law, never could: not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works; the Syriac version reads this by way of interrogation, "do ye lay again, &c." and makes the third verse to be an answer to it: the phrase, "not laying again the foundation", is to be read in connection, not only with this article of repentance, but with each of the other five articles, the foundation of which is no more to be laid again than this: and not laying it again, either means not teaching it, and so refers to the apostle, and other ministers of the word, who should not insist upon the following things, at least not stick there, but go on to deliver things more sublime and grand; or not hearing it, and so refers to the Hebrews, who should seek after a more perfect knowledge of evangelic truths than the following articles exhibited to them: and the several parts of this foundation, which; are not to be laid again ministerially, by preachers, or attended to by hearers, design either the first things, with which the Gospel dispensation was ushered in; or rather, and which I take to be the true sense, the general principles and practices of the Jews under the former dispensation; for these are not the six principles of the Christian religion, as they are commonly called, but so many articles of the Jewish creed; some of which were peculiar to the Jews, and others common to them, with us Christians: thus, repentance from dead works, does not intend evangelical repentance, the doctrine of which is to be ministerially laid, and the grace itself to be exercised over and over again; but a repentance which arose from, and was signified by the sacrifices of slain beasts; for by them the Jews were taught the doctrine of repentance, as well as remission of sin; and in and over them did they confess their iniquities; yea, every beast that was slain for sacrifice carried in it a conviction of sin, an acknowledgment of guilt; and it was tacitly owning, that they, for whom the creature was slain, deserved to be treated as that

was, and die as that did. So the Jews F6 say,

“when a man sacrifices a beast, he thinks in his own heart, I am rather a beast than this; for I am he that hath sinned, and for the sin which I have committed I bring this; and it is more fitting that the man should be sacrificed rather than the beast; and so it appears that, (jrxy awh wnbrq ydy le) , “by the means of his offering he repents””

But now, under the Gospel dispensation, believing Jews, as these were to whom the apostle writes, were not to learn the doctrine of repentance from slain beasts, or to signify it in this way; since repentance and remission of sins were preached most clearly to them in the name of Christ: nor were they to lay again another part of this foundation, or a second article of the Jewish creed, and of faith towards God; which article is expressed in language agreeable to the Jewish dispensation; whereas evangelical faith is usually called the faith of Christ, or faith in Christ, or towards our Lord Jesus Christ; but this respects faith in God, as the God of Israel: hence says our Lord to his disciples, who were all Jews, “ye believe in God”: ye have been taught, and used to believe in God, as the God of Israel; “believe also in me”, as his Son and the Messiah, and the Mediator between God and man, (John 14:1) , so that now they were not only to have faith towards God, as the God of Israel, and to teach and receive that doctrine; but to have faith in Christ as the Saviour of lost sinners, without the intermediate use of sacrifices.

FOOTNOTES:

F6 Nizzachon Vet. p. 11. Ed. Wagenseil.

Hebrews 6:2

Of the doctrine of baptisms

Some read this divisively, “baptism and doctrine”, as the Ethiopic version; as if the one respected the ordinance of baptism, and the other the ministry of the word; but it is best to read them conjunctively: and by which most understand the Gospel ordinance of water baptism, so called by a change of number, the plural for the singular, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, who render it baptism; or because of the different persons baptized, and times of baptizing, as some; or because of

the trine immersion, as others; or because of the three-fold baptism of spirit, blood, and water, which have some agreement with each other; or because of the baptism of John, and Christ, though they are one and the same; or because of the inward and outward baptism, the one fitting and qualifying for the other; and so the doctrine of it is thought to respect the necessity, use, and end of it; but since there is but one baptism, and the above reasons for the plural expression are not solid, and sufficiently satisfying, it is best to interpret this of the divers baptisms among the Jews, spoken of in (Hebrews 9:10) which had a doctrine in them, to that people; teaching them the cleansing virtue of the blood of Christ, and leading them to it, to wash in for sin, and for uncleanness; but now, since this blood was shed, they were no more to teach nor learn the doctrine of cleansing by the blood of Christ this way; nor any more to be led unto it through these divers baptisms, ablutions, and purifications. And of laying on of hands;

the foundation of this was to be no more laid, nor the doctrine of it to be any longer taught and learned in the way it had been; for not the rite, but the doctrine of laying on of hands is here intended; and it has no reference to the right of laying on of hands by the apostles, either in private persons, or officers of churches; for what was the doctrine of such a rite, is not easy to say; but to the rite of laying on of hands of the priests, and of the people, upon the head of sacrifices; which had a doctrine in it, even the doctrine of the imputation of sin to Christ, the great sacrifice. It was usual with the Jews F7 to call the imposition of hands upon the sacrifice, simply, (hkymo) , “laying on of hands”; and they understood by it the transferring of sin from the persons that laid on hands, to the sacrifice, on which they were laid; and that hereby, as they express it, sins were separated from them, and, as it were, put upon the sacrifice F8; but now believers were no longer to be taught and learn the great doctrine of the imputation of sin, by this rite and ceremony, since Christ has been made sin for them, and has had sins imputed to him, and has bore them in his own body on the tree: and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment: articles of faith, which distinguished the Jews from the Gentiles, who were greatly strangers to a future state, the resurrection of the dead, and judgment to come: these are doctrines of pure revelation, and were taught under the Old Testament, and were believed by the generality of the Jews, and are articles which they hold in common with us Christians; yet the believing Hebrews were not to rest in the knowl-

edge of these things, and in the smaller degrees of light they had in them, under the former dispensation; but were to go on to perfection, and bear forward towards a greater share of knowledge of these, and other more sublime doctrines of grace; since life and immortality are more clearly brought to light by Christ through the Gospel.

FOOTNOTES:

F7 Misn. Kiddushin, c. 2. sect. 8. & Bartenora in ib.

F8 R. Levi ben Gersom in Exod. fol. 109. 1. & in Lev. fol. 117. 2.

Hebrews 6:3

And this will we do, if God permit.

] That is, leave the rites and ceremonies of the law, which were the rudiments, or first principles of the Gospel, and go on to a more perfect knowledge of Gospel truths; and, not lay again as the foundation of the ministry, or insist upon them as if they were the main things, even the above articles of the Jewish creed, especially in the way and manner in which they had been taught and learnt: the sense is, that the apostle and his brethren, in the ministry were determined to insist upon the more solid and substantial parts of the Gospel, and which tended to bring on their hearers to perfection; and that it became the believing Hebrews to seek after a greater degree of knowledge under the ministry of the word. It is, or at least should be, the determination of a Gospel minister, to preach Christ, and the great truths of the Gospel; and wheresoever God has called him to it, though there may be many adversaries, and though he may be reproached, calumniated, and deserted: resolution in preaching the Gospel, and adhering to it, is very commendable in a minister; and it is very laudable in hearers to attend to it, stand by it, and search further into it; and which both should determine upon with a regard to the will of God, "if God permit": God's permission is much to be observed in the ministry of the word, in giving gifts to men, in placing them out here and there, where they shall exercise them, in directing them to subjects, and in making their ministry useful and successful: and it may be observed in general, that nothing can be done, or come to pass, good or bad, but what God permits or wills to be done; no good things, no actions, civil, natural, moral, or spiritual; no evil things, the evil of punishment, afflictions, the persecutions of wicked men, the temptations of Satan, heresies,

and even immoralities.

Hebrews 6:5

And have tasted the good word of God

Not the Lord Jesus Christ, the essential Word of God, who seems to be intended before by the heavenly gift; but rather, either the Scriptures of truth in general, which are the word of God, edited by him, and contain his mind and will; which he makes use of for conviction, conversion, instruction, and comfort; and which are preserved by him: and these are a good word; they come from him who is good; they are a revelation of good things; they make known things true, pleasant, and profitable: or else the Gospel in particular, of which God is the author; and in which is a wonderful display of his wisdom and grace; and which he owns and blesses for his own glory, and the good of others: and this is a "good word", the same with (bwj rbd), "good matter", or "word", in (Psalms 45:1) (ybwj Mgtp), "my good word", or "the word of my goodness", in the Targum on (Isaiah 55:11) for it is the word of righteousness, reconciliation, peace, pardon, life, and salvation. And there is a special and spiritual taste of this good, word, which is delightful, relishing, and nourishing; and such who have it can never totally and finally fall away; because they who taste it, so as to eat and digest it, and be nourished by it, to them it becomes the ingrafted word, which is able to save them: but there is such a taste of this word as is disrelishing, as in profane sinners, and open opposers and persecutors of the word, or as in hypocrites and formal professors; which is only an assent to the Scriptures, as the revelation of God, or a superficial knowledge of the doctrines of the Gospel without the experience of them, and a temporal faith in them, and a natural affection for them, and pleasure with them for a time; as the Jews, and Herod with John's ministry, and the stony ground hearers. And the powers of the world to come;

meaning either the state of the church, and the glorious things relating to it, after the first resurrection, which they might have some notional apprehensions of; or the ultimate state of glory and happiness, the powers of which are the immortality, incorruption, and glory of the body, the perfect holiness and knowledge of the soul, entire freedom from all evils of every kind, full communion with Father, Son, and Spirit, and a complete enjoyment of all happiness for ever; which hypocrites may have a notional knowledge of, a natural desire after, and delight in the contemplation and hope of,

as Balaam had; or rather the (dunameiv), miracles and mighty works in the former part of the Gospel dispensation, or times of the Messiah, the Jews' world to come, (See Gill on Hebrews 2:5), are intended; which many, as Judas and others, were able to perform, who were not sincere Christians, or true believers.

Hebrews 6:6

If they shall fall away

This is not supposed of true believers, as appears from (Hebrews 6:9) nor is it to be supposed of them that they may fall totally and finally; they may indeed fall, not only into afflictions and temptations, but into sin; and from a lively and comfortable exercise of grace, and from a degree of steadfastness in the Gospel; but not irrecoverably: for they are held and secured by a threefold cord, which can never be broken; by God the Father, who has loved them with an everlasting love, has chosen them in Christ, secured them in the covenant of grace, keeps them by his power, has given them grace, and will give them glory; and by the Son, who has undertaken for them, redeemed and purchased them, prays and makes preparations in heaven for them, they are built on him, united to him, and are his jewels, whom he will preserve; and by the Holy Ghost, whose grace is incorruptible, whose personal indwelling is for ever, who himself is the earnest and seal of the heavenly inheritance, and who having begun, will finish the good work of grace: but falling away, so as to perish, may be supposed, and is true of many professors of religion; who may fall from the profession of the Gospel they have made, and from the truth of it, and into an open denial of it; yea, into an hatred and persecution of what they once received the external knowledge of; and so shall fall short of heaven, and into condemnation: for, to renew them again unto repentance, is a thing impossible: by "repentance" is meant, not baptism of repentance; nor admission to a solemn form of public repentance in the church; nor a legal repentance, but an evangelical one: and so to be "renewed" unto it is not to be baptized again, or to be restored anew to the church by repentance, and absolution; but must be understood either of renovation of the soul, in order to repentance; or of the reforming of the outward conversation, as an evidence of it; or of a renewing of the exercise of the grace of repentance and to be renewed "again" to repentance does not suppose that persons may have true repentance and lose it; for though truly penitent persons may lose the exercise of this grace for a time, yet the grace

itself can never be lost: moreover, these apostates before described had only a show of repentance, a counterfeit one; such as Cain, Pharaoh, and Judas had; and consequently, the renewing of them again to repentance, is to that which they only seemed to have, and to make pretensions unto; now to renew them to a true repentance, which they once made a profession of, the apostle says is a thing "impossible": the meaning of which is not only that it is difficult; or that it is rare and unusual; or that it is unsuitable and improper; but it is absolutely impossible: it is impossible to these men to renew themselves to repentance; renovation is the work of the Holy Ghost, and not of man; and repentance is God's gift, and not in man's power; and it is impossible for ministers to renew them, to restore and bring them back, by true repentance; yea, it is impossible to God himself, not through any impotence in him, but from the nature of the sin these men are guilty of; for by the high, though outward attainments they arrive unto, according to the description of them, their sin is the sin against the Holy Ghost, for which no sacrifice can be offered up, and of which there is no remission, and so no repentance; for these two go together, and for which prayer is not to be made; see (Matthew 12:32) (Hebrews 10:26 Hebrews 10:27) (1 John 4:16) and chiefly because to renew such persons to repentance, is repugnant to the determined will of God, who cannot go against his own purposes and resolutions; and so the Jews F12 speak of repentance being withheld by God from Pharaoh, and, from the people of Israel; of which they understand (Exodus 9:16) (Isaiah 6:10) (2 Chronicles 36:16) and say, that when the holy blessed God withholds repentance from a sinner, (bwvl lwky wnya), "he cannot repent"; but must die in his wickedness which he first committed of his own will; and they further observe F13, that he that profanes the name of God has it not in his power to depend on repentance, nor can his iniquity be expiated on the day of atonement, or be removed by chastisement: seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh; who is truly and properly God, begotten of the Father, and of the same nature with him, in whom he greatly delights; this is Christ's highest name and title; and it was for asserting himself to be the Son of God that he was crucified; and his being so puts an infinite virtue in his sufferings and death; and it heightens the sin of the Jews, and of these apostates, in crucifying him. He was once crucified, and it is both impossible and unnecessary that he should be, properly speaking, "crucified afresh", or "again"; it is impossible, because he is risen

from the dead, and will never die more; it is unnecessary, because he has finished and completed what he suffered the death of the cross for; but men may be said to crucify him again, when, by denying him to be the Son of God, they justify the crucifixion of him on that account; and when they lessen and vilify the virtue of his blood and sacrifice; and when both by errors and immoralities they cause him to be blasphemed, and evil spoken of; and when they persecute him in his members: and this may be said to be done “to themselves afresh”; not that Christ was crucified for them before, but that they now crucify him again, as much as in them lies; or “with themselves”, in their own breasts and minds, and to their own destruction. Now this being the case, it makes their renewal to repentance impossible; because, as before observed, the sin they commit is unpardonable; it is a denial of Christ, who gives repentance; and such who sin it must arrive to such hardness of heart as to admit of no repentance; and it is just with God to give up such to a final impenitence, as those, who knowingly and out of malice and envy crucified Christ, had neither pardon nor repentance; and besides, this sin of denying Christ to be the Son of God, and Saviour of men, after so much light and knowledge, precludes the way of salvation, unless Christ was to be crucified again, which is impossible; for so the Syriac version connects this clause with the word “impossible”, as well as a foregoing one, rendering it, “it is impossible to crucify the Son of God again, and to put him to shame”; and so the Arabic version. Christ was put to open shame at the time of his apprehension, prosecution, and crucifixion; and so he is by such apostates, who, was he on earth, would treat him in the same manner the Jews did; and who do traduce him as an impostor and a deceiver, and give the lie to his doctrines, and expose him by their lives, and persecute him in his saints.

FOOTNOTES:

F12 Maimon. Hilchot. Teshuba, c. 6. sect. 3.

F13 Vid. R. David Kimchi in Isa. xxii. 14.

Hebrews 6:7

For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft

upon it

Here the apostle illustrates what he had before been speaking of, by a simile taken from the earth, to which men in general answer, who are of the earth; earthy and

unregenerate men and carnal professors are of earthly minds; they are like the earth when it was rude and without form, and cursed by God; and are as insensible as the earth: but the earth is particularly distinguished into that which is fruitful, and which is unfruitful; and the former is spoken of in this verse, to which true believers in Christ agree; who are the good ground, into which the seed of God’s word is received, and brings forth fruit; these are God’s tillage or husbandry: and the “rain” that comes upon them may signify either the grace of Christ, which, like rain, is an instance of his sovereignty, and what he alone can give, and not the vanities of the Gentiles; and which he gives to persons undeserving of it; and which refreshes, revives, and makes fruitful: or else Christ himself, (Psalms 72:6) (Hosea 6:3) whose first coming was like rain much desired, and long expected; and so is his spiritual coming very desirable, delightful, refreshing, and fructifying: or rather his Gospel, (Deuteronomy 32:2) (Isaiah 55:9) which comes from above, and is the means of softening hard hearts, of reviving distressed and disconsolate minds, and of making barren souls fruitful; which is done by coming “oft” upon them, at first conversion, and afterwards, alluding to the former and latter rain; and may refer to the receiving of more grace, even grace for grace, out of Christ’s fulness, through the ministration of the word, which is drank in by faith, under the influence of the Spirit of God: and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed;

God the Father, who is the husbandman, and ministers of the Gospel, who are labourers under him; and where the Gospel comes in power, it brings forth the fruits of the Spirit, the fruits of righteousness, the fruits meet for repentance; and which are to the glory of God the Father, and are answerable to the means he makes use of, the ministry of the word and ordinances; and no man can bring forth fruit without Christ, his Spirit, and grace: and such earth, or those signified by it, receiveth blessing from God;

both antecedent to all this, and which is the cause of fruitfulness; and as consequent upon it, for such receive more grace, even all the blessings of grace, and at last the blessing of glory; and all this being in a way of receiving, shows it to be of gift, and of pure grace.

Hebrews 6:8

But that which beareth thorns and briers

To which wicked men answer; who are unfruitful and unprofitable, and are hurtful, pricking and griev-

ing, by their wicked lives and conversations, by their bitter and reproachful words, and by their violent and cruel persecutions; and particularly carnal professors, and especially apostates, such as before described; for to such earth, professors of religion may be compared, who are worldly, slothful, defrauding and overreaching, carnal and wanton; as also heretical men, and such as turn from the faith, deny it, and persecute the saints: and the things or actions produced by them are aptly expressed by “thorns and briars”; such as errors, heresies, and evil works of all kinds; and which show that the seed of the word was never sown in their hearts, and that that which they bear, or throw out, is natural to them: and such earth is rejected; as such men are, both by the church, and by God himself; or “reprobate”, as they are concerning the faith, and to every good work; and are given up by God to a reprobate mind: and is “nigh unto cursing”; and such men are cursed already by the law, being under its sentence of curse and condemnation; and are nigh to the execution of it; referring either to the destruction of Jerusalem, which was near at hand; or to the final judgment, when they shall hear, Go, ye cursed: whose end is to be burned; with everlasting and unquenchable fire, in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone.

Hebrews 6:9

But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you

The apostle addresses the believing Hebrews, as “beloved”; being beloved by the Lord, not as the descendants of Abraham, but as the elect of God, and so as loved with an everlasting love; and which might be known to themselves, by its being shed abroad in their hearts, and by their being called by grace, and by their love to him, and to his people: and from hence they might conclude they should not fall away, as the apostates before spoken of; since, in consequence of being beloved by God, they were chosen in Christ unto salvation; Christ was given to die for them; they had the Spirit sent down into their hearts; they were justified, pardoned, and adopted; nor could they be separated from the love of God: and the apostle also so calls them, because they were beloved by him, not merely as being his countrymen, but as saints: and this he says to testify his affection to them; to show that what he said was not from hatred of them, or prejudice to them; and that his exhortations, cautions, and reproofs, might be better taken; and particularly that they might credit what he here says, that he was “per-

sued better things” of them, than what he had said of others in (Hebrews 6:4-6) even such as are expressed in (Hebrews 6:10) he was persuaded they had the true grace of God; whereas the above mentioned persons had only gifts, when in the height of their profession; and the least degree of grace is better than the greatest gifts men can be possessed of: grace makes a man a good man, not gifts; a man may have great gifts and not be a good man; grace is useful to a man’s self, gifts are chiefly useful to others; grace makes men fruitful, when gifts leave them barren in the knowledge of Christ; grace is lasting, when gifts fail, and cease and vanish away; grace will abide the fire of persecution, when gifts will not; grace is saving, gifts are not: and things that accompany salvation; which enter into salvation; are ingredients in it, and parts of it, and with which salvation is connected; such as faith, love or which mutually touch or follow one another in the chain of salvation; as to be predestinated, justified, called, adopted, sanctified, and, at last, glorified: though we thus speak; concerning others, as in the preceding verses: the hard things spoken by him of some, were consistent with such persuasions in general; for there might be some among them to whom the aforesaid characters belonged; and saying such things might be a means to make others watchful and careful.

Hebrews 6:10

For God is not unrighteous

He is just and true, righteous in all his ways and works; there is no unrighteousness nor unfaithfulness in him; and this the apostle makes a reason of his strong persuasion of better things concerning the believing Hebrews; because he was well satisfied of the good work upon them, and he was assured that God was not unrighteous and unfaithful: to forget your work: which is not to be understood of any good work done by them, for these are generally expressed in the plural number; and besides, these, if at all, are designed in the next clause; moreover, external good works, or such as appear to men to be so, are performed by hypocrites; nor can they be said to be better things, at least, not such as men are saved by: men may fall from these; and supposing them intended, the merit of works cannot be established, as is attempted from hence by the Papists; for the apostle could only consider them as fruits, not as causes of salvation; they are imperfect, and cannot justify, and therefore cannot save; they do not go before to procure salvation, but follow after, and, at most,

but accompany; and though God does remember and not forget them, this is owing to his grace, and not to their merit; God's righteousness in remembering them regards not a debt of justice, but a point of faithfulness: but this is to be understood of the work of God upon them, called in Scripture a good work, and the work of faith; and is elsewhere joined, as here, with the labour of love; see (1 Thessalonians 1:3) and this might be called their work, not because wrought by them, but because it was wrought in them; and the grace that came along with it was exercised by them: now from hence the apostle might be persuaded of better things of them, even such as accompany salvation; since this work is a fruit of everlasting and unchangeable love, and is itself immortal, and the beginning of eternal life; and particularly faith is the effect of electing grace; shall never fail; is the means of the saints' preservation; and is connected with everlasting salvation: it follows, and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name; the word "labour" is omitted in the Alexandrian copy, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions: this may be understood either of love to God, the name of God being put for himself; who is to be loved for his own sake, on account of the perfections of his nature, as well as for the works of his hands; and which is to be showed for the sake of glorifying him: and this love is laborious; it sets a man to work for God; nor are any works to be regarded but what spring from love to God, and to his name; and from hence the apostle might entertain a good hope of these persons, since their love to God was an effect of God's love to them, is a part of the work of grace, and cannot be lost; all things work together for good to such as love God; and these have a crown of life promised unto them: or else it may be understood of love to the saints, as follows, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister; in seeking both their temporal and spiritual good; and though all men in general are to be loved, yet especially the saints, who are set apart by God, whose sins are expiated by Christ, and who are sanctified by the Spirit; and love to them being laborious, and appearing in many instances, and this shown for the Lord's sake, for his name's sake, might lead the apostle more strongly to conclude better things of them, even things of a saving nature; since charity or love to the saints is better than gifts, and is the evidence of grace, of passing from death to life, and of being the disciples of Christ; see (1 Corinthians 13:1-3).

Hebrews 6:11

And we desire that everyone of you do show the same diligence

In the constant exercise of the graces of faith and love, and in ministering to the necessities of the saints: there is a spiritual labour, diligence, and industry to be used by the saints; and former diligence is a motive to future; and is a means of attaining to full assurance, as appears by what follows; and this is to be shown for the glory of God, for the evidence of the above graces, and for an example and encouragement to other saints: and the persons addressed being "everyone", this shows the apostle's impartiality in his exhortations, and served to remove all groundless suspicions in particular persons; and the manner of his addressing them shows his hearty concern for their welfare, his mildness and gentleness towards them, and his design to encourage them to go forward; and that his exhortation might have the greater weight, he uses the plural "we"; and this exhortation, put in this form, moreover shows that what he had said before had no tendency in some things to encourage despair, or in others carelessness and indolence: and what he had in view in the whole was, that they might arrive to the full assurance of hope unto the end; not only that they might keep up an hope, but attain to the full assurance of it; as to interest in the love and grace of God; in the covenant of grace, its blessings and promises; in God, as a covenant God and Father; in Christ, as a Saviour and Redeemer; and as to the truth of the work of grace upon their souls, and their right and meetness for the possession of eternal glory and happiness: the phrase, "unto the end", may either respect the continuance of the grace of assurance; or refer to the showing forth of their diligence and industry in ministering to the saints, as they had done, to the end of their lives.

Hebrews 6:12

That ye be not slothful

With respect to hearing the word, and attendance on every ordinance; with respect to the use of means for the increase of knowledge, faith, and hope; and with respect to ministering to the saints; but on the contrary, should take every opportunity of improvement and doing good:

but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises;

or things promised; not the land of Canaan, nor the coming of the Messiah; but either grace and salvation by

Christ; or eternal Life, which is expressed by a promise, to show that it is not by any works, or merits of men; that it is wholly of grace, and shall certainly be enjoyed: and it is expressed in the plural number, “promises”, because it is the grand promise, which is inclusive of all others; and because it has been given out at various times, and in different manners: and the possession of it being signified by “inheriting”, it shows that this is their Father’s gift and legacy, which they have as children; and which comes to them through the death of Christ, and of which the Spirit is the seal; and comes not by works of righteousness done by them: and the means through which saints that are gone before are come to the enjoyment of this happiness, are “faith and patience”; not that “faith” is the cause of, or what gives right to the inheritance, but it designs a course and walk of believing, at the end of which, saints come to glory; and faith is connected with salvation, and salvation with that; and through faith believers are preserved unto it: and “patience” is joined with faith, as a fruit and evidence of it; and supposes troubles which are patiently endured before men come to the possession of the inheritance: now the apostle exhorts these Hebrews to be followers and imitators of such, in diligence, faith, and patience, when they need not doubt of inheriting the same promised blessedness they do.

Hebrews 6:13

For when God made promise to Abraham

The apostle proposes Abraham as a pattern, because he was the father of these Hebrews, and of all believers; and because they were interested in the promise made to him, and had a right to the same blessing with him; and because he was remarkable for his faith and patience: the promise made to him is not that in (Genesis 12:1-3) nor that in (Genesis 15:1 Genesis 15:4 Genesis 15:5 Genesis 15:13 Genesis 15:14) but that in (Genesis 22:16 Genesis 22:17) for that only had an oath annexed to it: and this was made by Jesus Christ, there called the Angel of the Lord, and here God; and who is truly and properly so; and than whom there is none greater; and who elsewhere, as here, is said to swear by himself, (Isaiah 45:23) as follows:

because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself;

swearing is ascribed to a divine person after the manner of men, and in condescension to them; and who

is never introduced swearing, but in matters of moment and of great importance; the note of Philo the Jew

FOOTNOTES:

F14 on the passage in (Genesis 22:16) from whence the following words are cited, is worthy of observation, being very near the apostle’s words;

“well does he (God) confirm the promise with an oath, and with an oath that becomes God; for you see that God does not swear by another, for nothing is better than himself, but by himself, who is the best of all; but some have suggested as if it was inconvenient to swear, for an oath is taken for the sake of faith; but God alone is faithful”

F14 Leg. Allegor. l. 2. p. 98.

Hebrews 6:14

Saying, surely blessing I will bless thee

Which is expressive of the certainty of the blessings; the reality and substantiality of them; the abundance of them, and the continuance of the same: and of this nature are all spiritual blessings; as to be chosen of God; to have God to be a covenant God and Father; to be justified, pardoned, adopted, and sanctified, and so have a right and title to eternal happiness:

and multiplying I will multiply thee;
meaning both in his natural and spiritual seed, which has had its accomplishment.

Hebrews 6:15

And so, after he had patiently endured

He waited long for a son, from whom the Messiah was to spring, after he had had the promise of one; and he endured many afflictions with patience, in his journeys from place to place, throughout his life to the end:

he obtained the promise;
he was greatly blessed in temporal things; he lived to see the son of the promise, and his sons; he saw the day

of Christ by faith, and now inherits the heavenly glory, which is the thing chiefly designed.

Hebrews 6:16

For men verily swear by the greater

These words contain a reason why God swore by himself, and why his promises, having an oath annexed to them, ought to be believed. Men when they swear, they swear by the greater; not by themselves, as God does, because there is one greater than they; not by any of the creatures on earth, nor by the angels in heaven, but by God; because he is the God of truth, the searcher of hearts, and who can take vengeance on perjurers: and an oath may lawfully be taken, when it is truth that is sworn to, and is just and good; and in cases of weight and moment; and in what is possible and right to perform; and when it is done with deliberation, in the fear of God, with a view to his glory, and the good of men: for an oath is of a moral nature, what God has commanded, and he himself has taken; it has been used by Christ, and by the saints of the Old and New Testament; and is prophesied of the New Testament saints, as what they should practise; and is a part of religious worship:

and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife;

it is used to confirm things that are doubtful, and in dispute; and to put an end to strife and contention; so Philo F15 the Jew says,

“by an oath things doubtful are determined, and things uncertain are confirmed, and what were not believed receive credit.”

The manner in which an oath was taken among the Jews, to which, the apostle writing to such, must be thought to have respect, was this;

“he that swore took the book of the law in his hand, and he stood and swore by the name (of God), or by his surnames; and the judges did not suffer anyone to swear but in the holy tongue; and thus he said, behold I swear by the God of Israel, by him whose name is merciful and gracious, that I do not owe this man anything F16.”

The Hebrew word (hebv) , used for an oath, is of the root (ebv) , which signifies to “fill, satiate, satisfy”: for an oath being taken about matters in controversy, not clear but doubtful give content unto and satisfy the minds of men; and the same word also signifies “seven”, a number of fulness and perfection; an oath being for the perfecting and finishing an affair in debate; agreeably, when covenants were made by oaths, seven witnesses were used, (Genesis 21:28-30) and Herodotus says F17 as Cocceius F18 observes, that the Arabians, when they swore at making covenants, anointed the stones with blood.

FOOTNOTES:

F15 De Somniis, p. 567.

F16 Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Torah, pr. Affirm. 123.

F17 Thalia, l. 3. c. 8.

F18 Lexic. Rad. (ebv) col. 848.

Hebrews 6:17

Wherein God, willing

Or “wherefore”, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it; that is, whereas an oath is used among men to confirm anything that might be doubted; therefore God, in condescension to the weakness of men, made use of one; being very desirous and determined,

more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel;

by which is meant, not the Gospel nor the ordinances of it, though these are sometimes called the counsel of God; but the decree of God, concerning the salvation of his people by Jesus Christ, which is immutable; as appears from the unchangeableness of his nature, the sovereignty of his will, the unsearchableness of his wisdom, the omnipotence of his arm, and the unconditionality of the thing decreed, and from that and the purpose of it being in Christ: and the immutability of this, God was willing to show “more abundantly” than in other purposes, though all God’s purposes are unchangeable; or than had been shown to the Old Testament saints; and more than was necessary, had it not been for man’s weakness: even to “the heirs of promise”; not any earthly temporal promise, but the promise of grace and glory; the promise of eternal life; the heirs of which are not only Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or God’s elect among

the Jews, but all that are Christ's; who are justified by his righteousness, believe in him, and are the children of God; for as many as are such are heirs of eternal glory, and of the promise of it: and that the unchangeableness of God's purpose in saving them by Christ might be manifest to them, and be out of all doubt, he "confirmed it by an oath"; his counsel and purpose; he not only determined in his mind that he would save them, and promised it in his covenant; but he also, to confirm it the more to the persons concerned in it, if possible, annexed his oath to it; or "he interposed or acted the part of a Mediator by an oath"; which some refer to Christ's mediation between God and Abraham, when he swore unto him, as before observed; but rather it expresses the interposition of the oath between God's purpose and promise, and man's weakness: God did as it were bind himself by his oath, or lay himself under obligation, or become a surety, for the fulfilment of his purpose and promise; which shows the super-abounding grace of God, the weakness of man, and what reason the heirs of promise have to believe.

Hebrews 6:18

That by two immutable things

God's counsel and oath, which never change and alter, and from which he never varies:

in which it was impossible for God to lie;

fail or deceive, nor, indeed, in anything else, besides his counsels, promises, and oath, see (Titus 1:2)

we might have a strong consolation;

the saints often stand in need of consolation, by reason of sin, Satan, and the world; and it is the will of God that they should be comforted; and he would have them have strong consolation; that which is solid and an abundance of it; and this much depends on the immutability of God's counsel and oath:

who have fled for refuge;

either in allusion to mariners, as some think; who make all the haste they can to their port and haven, and are glad when they arrive there, and there cast anchor; of which mention is made in the next verse: or to runners in a race, who make up to the mark, in order to lay hold on the prize; hence Christ is afterwards spoken of as a forerunner: or rather to such as fled to the cities of refuge, which were a type of Christ; the names of these cities were, Kedesh, Shechem, Hebron, Bezer, Romath,

and Golan; (Joshua 20:7 Joshua 20:8) and the situation of them, according to the Jews {s}, was like two rows in a vineyard. Hebron in Judah was over against Bezer in the wilderness; Shechem in Mount Ephraim was over against Ramoth in Gilead; Kedesh in Mount Naphtali was over against Golan in Bashan: the names of these several cities agree with Christ; Kedesh signifies "holy", as Christ is, both as God and man, and is made sanctification to his people; Shechem is "the shoulder", and Christ has not only bore the sins of his people in his own body, on the tree, but he bears and carries their persons, and has the government of them on his shoulders, where they are safe and secure; Hebron may be interpreted "fellowship", and the saints have not only fellowship with Christ; but with the Father through him; Bezer may be rendered a "fortified place"; Christ is a stronghold, a tower, a place of defence, whither the righteous run, and are safe; Ramoth signifies "exaltations"; and may fitly be applied to Christ, who is exalted at God's right hand, and who will exalt those that trust in him in due time: Golan may be translated "manifested"; Christ the Son of God has been manifest in the flesh, to destroy the works of the devil; and he will be revealed from heaven in a glorious manner at the last day: these cities were known to be such; and they were open to all Israelites and proselytes, that killed any person at unawares; and they were open at all times; and the way to them was made plain and large; every year care was taken to make the way good, to remove every hillock, or anything that hindered; if there was a river in the way, to make a bridge over it; and where more ways met, to set up pillars with a hand to them, and these words written on it, (jlqm jlqm) , "refuge, refuge"; nor was the road to be less in breadth than thirty two cubits F20; and there was always room in these cities; and whoever fled there was safe; but those that were found without died: thus Christ is known to be a refuge for distressed sinners; and he is open to all that come unto him, and at all times; the way of life and salvation by him is plainly pointed out in the Gospel, and by the ministers of it; who are appointed to direct unto him, and to remove all impediments and discouragements from such who are seeking to him; and though so many have been received and saved by him, still there is room for more; and whoever betake themselves to him are safe, but those that are without him die and perish: so Philo the Jew F21 makes the divine Word, or Logos, to be the chief and most profitable refuge to fly unto, of all the six which he takes notice of; and the Jews have a no-

tion that in the time to come, in the days of the Messiah, three other cities of refuge will be added F23. There is in some things a difference between Christ and these cities of refuge; there were six of these, but there is no other than Christ; the cities of refuge were only for such who shed blood ignorantly, but Christ is a refuge for all sorts of sinners; they were in a kind of exile who fled to them, but in Christ is complete liberty; it was possible that such might die in them, but those that are in Christ never die the second death; and at best those who fled thither were only saved from a temporal death, whereas those who betake themselves to Christ are saved with an everlasting salvation. Now “fleeing” to Christ, implies danger in the persons that flee, as such are in danger, in themselves, of the curse and condemnation of the law, of the wrath of God, and eternal death; it supposes a sense of this danger, which when right comes from the Spirit of God; it shows guilt of conscience, and a consciousness of the insufficiency of other refuges, and a knowledge of Christ; as a suitable one; and is expressive of haste and hearty desire to be there:

to lay hold on the hope set before us;

by which is meant, not the grace of hope, but either heaven hoped for, or rather Christ the object of hope; who is not only set down at God’s right hand, but is set forth in the Gospel and in the ordinances, both by the Spirit of God, and by the ministers of the word; that men may look and go to him, and trust and believe in him, to the saving of their souls; where he is in sight, near at hand, accessible to; the way to him is straightforward; and here he abides: and he is set before us to be laid hold upon, which intends an act of faith; which grace lays hold on the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ; and is done in a view of fulness and safety in him, and under a sense of danger otherwise; it supposes grace, and that in exercise and somewhat strong; and some degree of resolution and courage of faith, and the steadfastness and continuance of it; the soul determining, if it perishes it will perish here; and it shows that Christ and his grace are to be touched and laid hold upon by faith.

FOOTNOTES:

F19 T. Bab. Maccot, fol. 9. 2.

F20 T. Hieros. Maccot, fol. 31. 4. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 23. fol. 232, 3. 4. Maimon. Hilchot Rotzeach, c. 8. sect. 5. Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Torah, pr. Affirm, 76, Bartenora in Misn. Maccot, c. 2. sect. 6.

F21 De profugis, p. 464.

F23 T. Hieros. Maccot, fol. 32. 1. Maimon. ut supra, (Hilchot Rotzeach, c. 8.) sect. 4.

Hebrews 6:19

Which [hope] we have as an anchor of the soul

This world is as a sea; the church in it, and so every believer, is as a ship; the port that is bound unto is heaven; Christ is the pilot, and hope is the anchor: an anchor is cast on a bottom, out of sight; and when the ship is in a calm, or in danger of a rock, or near the shore; but is of no service without a cable: and when cast aright, keeps the ship steady: so hope is cast on Christ; whence he is often called hope itself, because he is the ground and foundation of it, and who is at present unseen to bodily eyes; and the anchor of hope without the cable of faith is of little service; but being cast aright on Christ, keeps the soul steady and immovable: in some things there is a difference between hope and an anchor; an anchor is not of so much use in tempests as in a calm, but hope is; the cable may be cut or broke, and so the anchor be useless, but so it cannot be with faith and hope; when the ship is at anchor, it does not move forward, but it is not so with the soul, when hope is in exercise; the anchor of hope is not cast on anything below, but above; and here it is called the anchor of the soul, to distinguish it from any other, and to show the peculiar benefit of it to the soul. Pythagoras makes use of the same metaphor F24;

“riches (he says) are a weak anchor, glory: is yet weaker; the body likewise; principalities, honours, all these are weak and without strength; what then are strong anchors? prudence, magnanimity, fortitude; these no tempest shakes.”

But these philosophical moral virtues are not to be compared with the Christian’s grace of hope, which is

both sure and steadfast;

it is in itself a grace firm and stable; it is permanent and can never be lost: and it is still more sure and steadfast, by virtue of what it is fixed upon, the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ; and by the immutability, faithfulness, and power of God it is concerned with; and through the aboundings and discoveries of divine love, grace, and mercy; and from the instances of grace to the vilest of sinners:

and which entereth into that within the veil;

the holy of holies, heaven itself; in allusion to the veil which divided between the holy and the holy of holies: the things within the veil, or in heaven, which hope entering into fixes upon, are the person of Christ, who is entered there, and appears in the presence of God for his people; his blood which he has carried along with him, and by which he is entered there; his justifying righteousness, by which the law is fulfilled, the two tables of stone in the ark of the testimony; the sweet incense of his mediation, which is continually offered up by him; the mercy seat, or throne of grace, on which Jehovah sits as the God of grace; and all the glories of heaven; all which hope is concerned with, and receives strength and rigour from: and their being within the veil, is expressive of their hiddenness and invisibility at present, and of their safety and security, as well as of their sacredness; and this shows a difference between the hope of believers and others, whose hope fixes upon things short of these; and likewise the great privilege of a believer, who being made a priest unto God, has liberty and boldness to enter into the holiest of all. The Jews F25 speak of a veil in the world to come, which some are worthy to enter into.

FOOTNOTES:

F24 Apud Stobaeum, Serm. I.

F25 Zohar in Gen. fol. 73. 3.

Hebrews 6:20**Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus**

Christ was a runner; he had a race to run, which lay in going about to heal diseases, in preaching the Gospel, in obeying the law, and in suffering death for his people; which race was run by him with great swiftness, strength, and courage, with patience, cheerfulness, and joy, and is now ended; as appears from the accomplishment of salvation, from his entrance into heaven, and session at the right hand of God; from the glorification of his human nature, and its everlasting freedom from the dominion of death: and this race is run out, as a "forerunner"; Christ is the most excellent runner; there is none like him; there is none that can come up to him; he has out ran and exceeded all others; he has performed in the best manner; he has run out his race first, and has entered into heaven first by his own blood;

and he has cleared the way thither, and opened the gates of heaven for his people; and is a guide and pattern for them to follow: and he is the forerunner for them, as well as entered for them; for he was born, and he lived, and died for them, for their good and service; and he is entered into heaven for them, as man and Mediator, and as their high priest; where he represents their persons, appears and intercedes for them, takes care of their affairs, and presents their services; prepares mansions of glory for them, and takes possession of heaven in their name, and opens the way for them to follow him thither; all which gives great encouragement to hope to enter now, where Jesus is: who is

made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec;

see (Hebrews 5:6 Hebrews 5:10) . This is repeated here, to lead on to what the apostle had to say concerning Melchizedek in the following chapter.

INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS 7

The apostle having made mention of Melchizedek in the latter part of the preceding chapter, proceeds in this to give some account of him, and of the excellency of his priesthood, and to show that Christ is a priest of his order, and is superior to Aaron and his sons. He first declares what Melchizedek was, that he was both king and priest; he names the place he was king of, and tells whose priest he was, even the priest of the most high God; and goes on to observe what he did, that he met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, that he blessed him, and took tithes of him, Heb 7:1,2 and then interprets his name, and royal title, the one signifying king of righteousness, the other king of peace; that for anything that can be learned from the Scriptures, it is not known who was his father or his mother; what his lineage and descent; when he was born, or when he died; and that he is like to the Son of God, and continues a priest, Heb 7:2,3 upon which the apostle calls upon the Hebrews to consider the greatness of his person; and as it appears from that single instance of his receiving tithes from the patriarch Abraham, Heb 7:4 by which it is evident, that he is greater than the Levites; and which is demonstrated in the following particulars: the Levites received tithes of their brethren that came out of Abraham's loins, as they did, but Melchizedek, whose descent was not from them, received tithes from Abraham himself, and besides blessed him; and it is a

clear case, that the lesser is blessed of the greater, Heb 7:5-7 the Levites were mortal men that received tithes, but a testimony is bore to Melchizedek, that he lives, Heb 6:8 yea, Levi himself paid tithes to Melchizedek, since he was in the loins of his father Abraham when Melchizedek met him, and took tithes of him; and therefore must be greater than Levi, Heb 7:9,10 . And next the apostle proves the imperfection of the Levitical priesthood from this consideration, that there is another priest risen up, not of the order of Aaron, but of the order of Melchizedek, of which there would have been no need, if the Levitical priesthood had been perfect; nor would it have been changed, as it is, and which has also made a change of the law, by which it is established, necessary, Heb 7:11,12 that the priest that is risen up is not of the order of Aaron, is clear, because he is of another tribe, even of the tribe of Judah, to which the priesthood did not belong, Heb 7:13,14 , and that he is of the order of Melchizedek, and so not according to the ceremonial law, but after the power of an endless life, is manifest from the testimony of the sacred Scripture, Heb 7:15-17 which lies in Ps 110:4 and that the ceremonial law, on which the Levitical priesthood stood, is changed and abrogated, is strongly asserted, and the reasons of it given, because it was weak and unprofitable, and made nothing perfect; and this was disannulled by Christ, the better hope brought in, who has made something perfect, and through whom we have access to God, Heb 7:18,19 . Moreover, the superior excellency of Christ's priesthood to the Levitical one is shown in several particulars; the priests of Aaron's order were made without an oath; Christ was made with one, as is evident from the above cited testimony, Heb 7:20-22 they were many, he but one; they were mortal, and did not continue, he continues ever, having an unchangeable priesthood, Heb 7:23,24 wherefore, as they were not suffered to continue by reason of death, their priesthood was ineffectual; they could not take away sin, and save sinners; but Christ is able to save to the uttermost all that draw nigh to God by him, as a priest, and that because he ever lives to complete his office by intercession, Heb 7:25 wherefore such an high priest as he is, must become men, and be suitable to them, especially since he is pure and holy, and in such an exalted state, Heb 7:26 and this is another difference between him and the priests under the law; they were men that had infirmity, and were guilty of sins themselves, and so had need to offer for their own sins, and then for the sins of others; but Christ, the Son of

God, who was consecrated a priest for evermore, by the word of the oath, had no sin of his own to offer sacrifice for, only the sins of his people, which he did once, when he offered himself, Heb 7:27,28 .

Hebrews 7:1

1 For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him;

2 To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace;

3 Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.

4 Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.

5 And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham:

6 But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises.

7 And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better.

8 And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.

9 And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham.

10 For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.

11 If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should

rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?

12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.

13 For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar.

14 For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.

15 And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest,

16 Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.

17 For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

18 For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.

19 For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.

20 And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest:

21 (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:)

22 By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.

23 And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death:

24 But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.

25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the

uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

26 For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;

27 Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.

28 For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.

COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS VII

Hebrews 7:1

For this Melchisedec, king of Salem

Various have been the opinions of writers concerning Melchizedek; some have thought him to be more than a man; some, that he was an angel; others, that he was the Holy Ghost; and others, that he was a divine person superior to Christ, which needs no refutation; others have supposed that he was the Son of God himself: but he is expressly said to be like unto him, and Christ is said to be of his order; which manifestly distinguish the one from the other; besides, there is nothing said of Melchizedek which proves him to be more than a man: accordingly others take him to have been a mere man; but these are divided; some say that he was Shem, the son of Noah, which is the constant opinion of the Jewish writers F26: but it is not true of him, that he was without father, and without mother, an account of his descent being given in Scripture; nor is it probable that he should be a king of a single city in Ham's country, and Abraham be a stranger there: others say, that he was a Canaanitish king, of the posterity of Ham; others affirm him to be a perfect sinless man, and that all that is said of him in Genesis, and in this context, is literally true of him; but that he should be immediately created by God, as Adam, and be without sin as he, are things entirely without any foundation: others take him to be a mere man, but an extraordinary one, eminently raised up by God to be a type of the Messiah; and think it most proper not to inquire curiously who he was, since the Scripture is silent concerning his genealogy and descent; and

that as it should seem on purpose, that he might be a more full and fit type of Christ; and this sense appears best and safest. Aben Ezra says, his name signifies what he was, the king of a righteous place: Salem, of which he was king, was not Shalem, a city of Shechem, in the land of Canaan, (Genesis 33:18) afterwards called Salim, near to which John was baptizing, (John 3:23) where is shown the palace of Melchizedek in its ruins, which cannot be, since that city was laid to the ground, and sowed with salt by Abimelech, (Judges 9:45) but Jerusalem is the place; which is the constant opinion of the Jews F1, and is called Salem in (Psalms 86:2) . The interpretation of this word is given in the next verse; some of the Jewish writers referred to say, that it was usual for the kings of Jerusalem to be called Melchizedek and Adonizedek, as in (Joshua 10:3) just as the kings of Egypt were called Pharaoh. This king was also

priest of the most high God,

as he is said to be, (Genesis 14:18) for he was both king and priest, in which he was an eminent type of Christ; and his being a king is no objection to his being a priest, since it was usual for kings to be priests; and though the Hebrew word “Cohen” sometimes signifies a prince, it cannot be so understood here, not only because the word is rendered “priest” by the Septuagint, and by the apostle, but because he is called the priest of God; and Christ is said to be of his order: and he is styled the priest of God, because he was called and invested by him with this office, and was employed in his service; who is said to be the most high God, from his dwelling on high, and from his superior power to all others, and to distinguish him from idol gods; this is a character of great honour given to Melchizedek;

who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings;

the four kings, whose names are mentioned in (Genesis 14:1) whom Abraham slew, and over whom he got an entire victory, with only three hundred and eighteen men of his own house, after they had conquered the kings of Sodom, Gomorrha, Admah, Zeboiim, and Bela: which shows that war is lawful; that enemies may be slain in war; that kings may fall as well as other men; and that those who have conquered others, may be conquered themselves: and as he was returning with his spoils, Melchizedek met him; not alone, which is not to be supposed of so great a person; nor empty, for he brought with him bread and wine, not for sacrifice, as

the Papists would have it; but as Jarchi, a Jewish interpreter on the place observes, they used to do so to such as were fatigued in war; for this is to be considered as a neighbourly action, done in point of interest and gratitude, and was a truly Christian one, and very laudable and commendable; and doubtless had something in it typical of Christ, who gives to hungry and weary saints the bread of life, and refreshes them with the wine of divine love and grace:

and blessed him;

Abraham, and the most high God also: the form of blessing both is recorded in (Genesis 14:19 Genesis 14:20) . This was not a mere civil salutation, nor only a congratulation upon his success, nor only a return of thanks for victory, though these things are included; nor did he do this as a private person, but as the priest of the most high God, and blessed him in his name authoritatively, as the high priest among the Jews afterwards did, (Numbers 6:23-27) and in this he was a type of Christ, who blesses his people with all spiritual blessings, with redemption, justification, pardon, peace, and all grace, and with eternal glory.

(Gill changed his mind on the location of Salam when he later wrote the Old Testament portion of the Expositor. (See Gill on Genesis 14:18). Ed.)

FOOTNOTES:

F26 Targum in Jon. & Jerus. Jarchi, Baal Hatturim, Levi ben Gersom & Abendana in Gen. xiv. 18. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 4. fol. 182. 4. Pirke Eliezer, c. 8. Juchasin, fol. 135. 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 16. 2. Shalshet Hakabala, fol. 1. 2. Peritzol. Itinera Mundi, p. 17.

F1 Targ. Onk. Jon. & Jerus. Levi ben Gersom, Aben Ezra & ben Melec in Gen. xiv. 18. Tosaphot T. Bab. Taniith, fol. 16. 1.

Hebrews 7:2

To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all

Or tithes, as in (Genesis 14:20) . Philo the Jew F2 renders the Hebrew phrase, (lkm rvem) , just as the apostle does (dekathn apo pantwn) , “a tenth part of all”, or “out of all”; not of all that he brought back, as Lot’s goods, or the king of Sodom’s, or any others; only of the spoils of the enemy, as in (Hebrews 7:4) which is no proof of any obligation on men to pay tithes now to any order of men; for this was a voluntary act, and

not what any law obliged to; it was done but once, and not constantly, or every year; it was out of the spoils of the enemy, and not out of his own substance, or of the increase of the earth; nor was it for the maintenance of Melchizedek, as a priest, who also was a king, and was richly provided for; but to testify his gratitude to God, for the victory obtained, and his reverence of, and subjection to the priest of God.

First being by interpretation king of righteousness; or a "righteous king", as Melchizedek was; not the king of a righteous place, as Aben Ezra thought, a place wherein dwelt righteousness, or righteous persons; but it was his proper name, which so signifies, and in which he was a type of Christ; who is righteous, not only as God, and as man, and as Mediator, but particularly in the administration of his kingly office: his kingdom lies in righteousness, as well as peace; the subjects of it are righteous persons, and all his ways are just and true; his Gospel, by which he rules, is a declaration of righteousness; and he himself is the author of righteousness to all his people:

and after that also king of Salem, which is king of peace;

and may respect his peaceable government; and is very applicable to Christ, the Prince of peace; whose kingdom is a kingdom of peace; his sceptre is a sceptre of peace; his royal proclamation is the Gospel of peace; and his subjects are the sons of peace; and he himself is the author of peace, not only between Jew and Gentile, but between God and his people; and he is the donor of peace, external, internal, and eternal. So Philo the Jew F3 interprets this name, "king of peace", just as the apostle does.

FOOTNOTES:

F2 De Congressu, p. 438.

F3 Leg. Alleg. l. 2. p. 75.

Hebrews 7:3

Without father, without mother, without descent

Which is to be understood not of his person, but of his priesthood; that his father was not a priest, nor did his mother descend from any in that office; nor had he either a predecessor or a successor in it, as appears from any authentic accounts: or this is to be interpreted,

not of his natural, but scriptural being; for no doubt, as he was a mere man, he had a father, and a mother, and a natural lineage and descent; but of these no mention is made in Scripture, and therefore said to be without them; and so the Syriac version renders it; "whose father and mother are not written in the genealogies"; or there is no genealogical account of them. The Arabic writers tell us who his father and his mother were; some of them say that Peleg was his father: so Elmacinus {d}, his words are these; Peleg lived after he begat Rehu two hundred and nine years; afterwards he begat Melchizedek, the priest whom we have now made mention of. Patricides F5, another of their writers, expresses himself after this manner

``they who say Melchizedek had neither beginning of days, nor end of life, and argue from the words of the Apostle Paul, asserting the same, do not rightly understand the saying of the Apostle Paul; for Shem, the son of Noah, after he had taken Melchizedek, and withdrew him from his parents, did not set down in writing how old he was, when he went into the east, nor what was his age when he died; but Melchizedek was the son of Peleg, the son of Eber, the son of Salah, the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah; and yet none of those patriarchs is called his father. This only the Apostle Paul means, that none of his family served in the temple, nor were children and tribes assigned to him. Matthew and Luke the evangelists only relate the heads of tribes: hence the Apostle Paul does not write the name of his father, nor the name of his mother."

And with these writers Sahid Aben Batric F6 agrees, who expressly affirms that Melchizedek was (glap Nba), "the son of Peleg": though others of them make him to be the son of Peleg's son, whose name was Heraclim. The Arabic Catena F7 on (Genesis 10:25), "the name of one was Peleg", has this note in the margin;

``and this (Peleg) was the father of Heraclim, the father of Melchizedek;"

and in a preceding chapter, his pedigree is more particularly set forth:

and Valentinians. It follows,

“Melchizedek was the son of Heraclim, the son of Peleg, the son of Eber; and his mother’s name was Salathiel, the daughter of Gomer, the son of Japheth, the son of Noah; and Heraclim, the son of Eber, married his wife Salathiel, and she was with child, and brought forth a son, and called his name Melchizedek, called also king of Salem: after this the genealogy is set down at length. Melchizedek, son of Heraclim, which was the son of Peleg, which was the son of Eber, which was the son of Arphaxad till you come to, which was the son of Adam, on whom be peace.”

It is very probable Epiphanius has regard to this tradition, when he observes F8, that some say that the father of Melchizedek was called Eracla, and his mother Astaroth, the same with Asteria. Some Greek F9 writers say he was of the lineage of Sidus, the son of Aegyptus, a king of Lybia, from whence the Egyptians are called: this Sidus, they say, came out of Egypt into the country of the Canaanitish nations, now called Palestine, and subdued it, and dwelled in it, and built a city, which he called Sidon, after his own name: but all this is on purpose concealed, that he might be a more apparent of Christ, who, as man, is “without father”; for though, as God, he has a Father, and was never without one, being begotten by him, and was always with him, and in him; by whom he was sent, from whom he came, and whither he is gone; to whom he is the way, and with whom he is an advocate: yet, as man, he had no father; Joseph was his reputed father only; nor was the Holy Ghost his Father; nor is he ever said to be begotten as man, but was born of a virgin. Some of the Jewish writers themselves say, that the Redeemer, whom God will raise up, shall be without father F10. And he is without mother, though not in a spiritual sense, every believer being so to him as such; nor in a natural sense, as man, for the Virgin Mary was his mother; but in a divine sense, as God: and he is “without descent or genealogy”; not as man, for there is a genealogical account of him as such, in (Matthew 1:1-17) (Luke 3:23-38) and his pedigree and kindred were well known to the Jews; but as God; and this distinguishes him from the gods of the Heathens, who were genealogized by them, as may be seen in Hesiod, Apollodorus, Hyginus, and other writers; and this condemns the blasphemous genealogies of the Gnostics

having neither beginning of days, nor end of life;

that is, there is no account which shows when he was born, or when he died; and in this he was a type of Christ, who has no beginning of days, was from the beginning, and in the beginning, and is the beginning, and was from everlasting; as appears from his nature as God, from his names, from his office as Mediator, and from his concern in the council and covenant of peace, and in the election of his people; and he has no end of life, both as God and man; he is the living God; and though as man he died once, he will die no more, but lives for ever. It is further said of Melchizedek,

but made like unto the Son of God:

in the above things; from whence it appears, that he is not the Son of God; and that Christ, as the Son of God, existed before him, and therefore could not take this character from his incarnation or resurrection:

abideth a priest continually;

not in person, but in his antitype Christ Jesus; for there never will be any change of Christ’s priesthood; nor will it ever be transferred to another; the virtue and efficacy of it will continue for ever; and he will ever live to make intercession; and will always bear the glory of his being both priest and King upon his throne: the Syriac version renders it, “his priesthood abides for ever”; which is true both of Melchizedek and of Christ.

FOOTNOTES:

F4 In Hottinger. Smegma Orientale, l. 1. c. 8. p. 269, 254.

F5 In ib. p. 305, 306, 254.

F6 In Mr. Gregory’s Preface to his Works.

F7 In ib.

F8 Contra Haeres. Haeres. 55.

F9 Suidas in voce Melchisedec, Malala, l. 3. Glycas, Cedrenus, & alii.

F10 R. Moses Hadarsan apud Galatin. l. 3. c. 17. & l. 8. c. 2.

Hebrews 7:4

Now consider how great this man was

Melchizedek, of whom so many great and wonder-

ful things are said in the preceding verses: and as follows,

unto whom the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils;

of Abraham's giving tithes to him, (See Gill on Hebrews 7:2) and Melchizedek's greatness is aggravated, not only from this act of Abraham's, but from Abraham's being a "patriarch", who did it; he was the patriarch of patriarchs, as the sons of Jacob are called, (Acts 7:8 Acts 7:9) he is the patriarch of the whole Jewish nation, and of many nations, and of all believers, the friend of God, and heir of the world; how great then must Melchizedek be, to whom he paid tithes? and how much greater must Christ, the antitype of Melchizedek, be?

Hebrews 7:5

And verily they that are of the sons of Levi

Or Levites; who are of the tribe of Levi, whose descent is from him:

who receive the office of the priesthood;

as some of them were priests, though not all; and the Levites therefore are sometimes called priests. R. Joshua ben Levi says, that in twenty four places the priests are called Levites; and this is one of them, (Ezekiel 44:15) "and the priests and Levites" F11

these have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law;

the ceremonial law, (Numbers 18:20-26) , these they took of all the people of Israel in the rest of the tribes, by the commandment of God, on account of their service in the tabernacle; and because they had no inheritance in the land; and to show that the Israelites held their land of God himself:

that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham;

who are their brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh, though of different tribes; and from these they receive, notwithstanding they are the sons of Abraham: but here a difficulty arises, how the Levites that were priests can be said to receive tithes from the people, when they received the tenth part of the tithes, or the tithe of tithes from the Levites, (Numbers 18:26) (Nehemiah 10:38) , but it should be observed, that it was not necessary that the Levites should give these tithes to

the priests themselves; an Israelite might do it, and so give the Levites the less; on which account the priests may be said to receive from the people; besides, Ezra in his time ordered, that the first tithe should not be given to the Levites, but to the priests, because they would not go up with him to Jerusalem F12.

FOOTNOTES:

F11 T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 86. 2. & Becorot, fol. 4. 1.

F12 Maimon. Hilchot Maaser, c. 1. sect. 4.

Hebrews 7:6

But he whose descent is not counted from them,

&c] That is, Melchizedek, whose genealogy or pedigree is not reckoned from the Levites, nor from any from whom they descend; his lineal descent is not the same with theirs; and so did not receive tithes by any law, as they did, but by virtue of his superiority: received tithes of Abraham; not from the people, or his brethren, but from Abraham, the father of the people of Israel, and of Levi himself:

and blessed him that had the promises;

of a Son, and of the Messiah, that should spring from him, in whom all nations should be blessed, and of the land of Canaan, and of the blessings of grace and glory. This shows that Melchizedek had a descent, though it was not known; and that, since his descent was not the same with the Levites, he was a more proper type of Christ, who belonged not to that, but another tribe.

Hebrews 7:7

And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the greater.

] This is a self-evident truth, and is undeniable; it admits of no controversy, and cannot be gainsaid, that he that blesseth is greater in that respect than he that is blessed by him; as the priests were greater in their office than the people who were blessed by them; and so Melchizedek, as a priest of the most high God, and as blessing Abraham, was greater than he; and so must be greater than the Levites, who sprung from him; and his priesthood be more excellent than theirs; and consequently Christ, his antitype, and who was of his order, must be greater too; which is the design of the apostle

throughout the whole of his reasoning.

Hebrews 7:8

And here men that die receive tithes,

&c.] The priests and Levites were not only men, and mortal men, subject to death, but they did die, and so did not continue, by reason of death, (Hebrews 7:24)

but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth;

which is to be understood of Melchizedek; who is not opposed to men, as if he was not a man, nor to mortal men, but to men that die; nor is he said to be immortal, but to live: and this may respect the silence of the Scripture concerning him, which gives no account of his death; and may be interpreted of the perpetuity of his priesthood, and of his living in his antitype Christ; and the testimony concerning him is in (Psalms 110:4) .

Hebrews 7:9

And as I may so say

With truth, and with great propriety and pertinence:

Levi also who receiveth tithes;

or the Levites, who receive tithes according to the law of Moses from the people of Israel:

paid tithes in Abraham;

that is, to Melchizedek; and therefore Melchizedek must be greater than they, and his priesthood a more excellent one than theirs; since they who receive tithes from others gave tithes to him.

Hebrews 7:10

For he was yet in the loins of his father

Abraham; namely, Levi and his whole posterity; which is to be understood seminally, just as all mankind were in the loins of Adam, when he sinned and fell, and so they sinned and fell in him; and so Levi was in Abraham's loins,

when Melchisedec met him;

which, as it proves Melchizedek to be greater than Levi, and much more Jesus Christ, who is a priest of his order, which is the grand thing the apostle has in view; so it serves to illustrate several points of doctrine,

in which either of the public heads, Adam and Christ, are concerned, with respect to their seed and offspring; such as personal election in Christ, an eternal donation of all blessings of grace to the elect in him, eternal justification in him, the doctrine of original sin, and the saints' crucifixion, burial, resurrection, and session in Christ, and together with him.

Hebrews 7:11

If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood,

&c.] The priesthood which was established in the tribe of Levi; so called, to distinguish it from that which was before this institution, from the times of Adam, as well as from the priesthood of Melchizedek, and from the priesthood of Christ, and from that of his people under the Gospel, who are all priests; as well as to restrain it to the subject of the apostle's discourse: the design of which is to show, that there is no perfection by it; as is clear from the priests themselves, who were but men, mortal men, sinful men, and so imperfect, and consequently their priesthood; and from their offerings, between which, and sin, there is no proportion; and at best were but typical of the sacrifice of Christ; and could neither make the priests nor the worshippers perfect, neither in their own consciences, nor in the sight of God: moral actions are preferred before them, and yet by these there is no perfection, justification, and salvation; to which may be added, that the sacrifices the priests offered did not extend to all kind of sins, only to sins of ignorance, not to presumptuous ones; and there were many under that dispensation punished with death; and at most they only delivered from temporal, not eternal punishment, and only entitled to a temporal life, not an eternal one.

For under it the people received the law:

not the moral law, which was given to Adam in innocence, and as it came by Moses, it was before the Levitical priesthood took place; but the ceremonial law, and which was carnal, mutable, and made nothing perfect: the Syriac version renders it, "by which a law was imposed upon the people"; to regard the office of priesthood, and the priests in it, and bring their sacrifices to them; and the Arabic version reads, "the law of a the priest's office"; which office was after the law of a carnal commandment, and so imperfect, as is manifest from

what follows: for had perfection been by it,

what further need was there that another priest should arise

after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?

that there was another priest promised and expected, and that he should arise after the order of Melchizedek, and who was to make his soul an offering for sin, is certain, (Ezra 2:63) (Psalms 110:4) (Isaiah 53:10) and such an one is risen, even Jesus of Nazareth; and yet there would have been no need of him, and especially that he should be of a different order from Aaron's, had there been perfection by the Levitical priesthood.

Hebrews 7:12

For the priesthood being changed

Not translated from one tribe, family, or order, to another, but utterly abolished; for though it is called an everlasting priesthood, yet that is to be understood with a limitation, as the word "everlasting" often is, as relating to things under that dispensation; for nothing is more certain than that it is done away: it was of right abrogated at the death of Christ, and it is now in fact; since the destruction of Jerusalem, the daily sacrifice has ceased, and the children of Israel have been many days without one, and without an ephod. And the Jews themselves own, that the high priesthood was to cease in time to come F13, and which they say Azariah the son of Oded prophesied of in (2 Chronicles 15:3).

There is made of necessity a change also of the law;

not the moral law, that was in being before the priesthood of Aaron, nor do they stand and fall together; besides, this still remains, for it is perfect, and cannot be made void by any other; nor is it set aside by Christ's priesthood: though there is a sense in which it is abolished; as it is in the hands of Moses; as it is a covenant of works; as to justification by it; and as to its curse and condemnation to them that are Christ's; yet it still remains in the hands of Christ, and as a rule of walk and conversation; and is useful, and continues so on many accounts: but either the judicial law; not that part of it which is founded on justice and equity, and was a means of guarding the moral law, for that still subsists; but that which was given to the Jews as Jews, and some parts of which depended on the priesthood, and so ceased with it; as the laws concerning the cities of refuge, raising up

seed to a deceased brother, preserving inheritances in families, and judging and determining controversies: or rather the ceremonial law, which was but a shadow of good things to come, and was given but for a time; and this concerned the priesthood, and was made void by the priesthood of Christ; for that putting an end to the Levitical priesthood, the law which related to it must unavoidably cease, and become of no effect. This the Jews most strongly deny; God, they F14 say, will not change nor alter the law of Moses for ever. The ninth article of their creed, as drawn up by Maimonides, runs thus F15;

``I believe with a perfect faith that this law (tplxwm aht al) "shall not be changed", nor shall there be another law from the Creator, blessed be his name."

But the reasoning of the apostle is strong and unanswerable.

FOOTNOTES:

F13 Vajikra Rabba, sect. 19. fol. 160. 4.

F14 Seder Tephillot, Ed. Amsterd. fol. 2. 1.

F15 Apud Seder Tephillot, Ed. Basil. fol. 86. 2.

Hebrews 7:13

For he of whom these things are spoken

In (Psalms 110:4) and in the type of him Melchizedek, in the preceding verses; for not Melchizedek is here meant, but the Lord Jesus Christ, as appears by what follows; the antitype of Melchizedek, the Lord our righteousness, the Prince of peace, the priest of God, that lives for ever, without father, without mother

pertaineth to another tribe;

the tribe of Judah, and not the tribe of Levi:

of which no man gave attendance at the altar;

either of burnt offering or of incense; that is, no man waited there, or took upon him and exercised the priest's office that was of the tribe of Judah: no man might lawfully do it; Uzziah, indeed, thrust himself into the priest's office, who was of that tribe, and went into the temple and burnt incense upon the altar of incense;

but then he had no right to do it, and was punished for it.

Hebrews 7:14

For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah

Out of the tribe of Judah; it is certain that the Messiah was to spring from that tribe, (Genesis 49:10) (1 Chronicles 5:2) he was to be of the family of Jesse, and of the house of David; and hence he is sometimes called David himself; and so the Jews expect that he will come from the tribe of Judah, and not from any other F16; and it is evident that Jesus, who is our Lord by creation, redemption, and the conquest of his grace, sprung from this tribe: this is clear from the place of his birth, Bethlehem of Judah; and from his reputed father Joseph, and real mother Mary, being both of the house of David; and this was known to the Jews, and it is owned by them that he was near to the kingdom F17, which he could not be if he was not of that tribe; and hence he is called the lion of the tribe of Judah;

of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning the priesthood:

he said many things of it in (Deuteronomy 33:8) and relates many things concerning it as spoken by Jacob, but nothing about the priesthood, as if it belonged to that, or that any that should spring from it should exercise that office, The Alexandrian copy, the Claromontane manuscript, and the Vulgate Latin version, read, "concerning the priests"; whence it follows that there is a change of the priesthood, and that the Messiah, as he was not to be, so he is not a priest of Aaron's order, not being of the same tribe.

FOOTNOTES:

F16 Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Exod. fol. 49. 3. Tze-
ror Hammor, fol. 62. 2.

F17 T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 43. 1.

Hebrews 7:15

And it is yet far more evident

From a fact which cannot be denied;

for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest;

or another has risen, even Jesus the son of David, of

the tribe of Judah; another from Aaron, one that is not of his family or tribe, but one like to Melchizedek: hence we learn that Melchizedek and Christ are not the same person; and that the order and similitude of Melchizedek are the same; and that Christ's being of his order only imports that there is a resemblance and likeness between him and Melchizedek, in many things, which are observed in the beginning of this chapter: and this "arising" does not intend Christ's setting up himself, only his appearance in this form; and being expressed in the present tense, denotes the continual being, and virtue of his priesthood.

Hebrews 7:16

Who was made

Not as man, much less as God; but as a priest, constituted and appointed one:

not after the law of a carnal commandment:

either the ceremonial law in general, which was a carnal one, if we consider the persons to whom it belonged, the Israelites according to the flesh; it was incumbent upon, and might be performed by such who were only carnal; and it was performed by and for men that were in the flesh, or mortal; and if we consider the matter of it, the subject on which various of its rites were exercised was the flesh or body, and which were performed by manual operation; and the sacrifices of it were the flesh of beasts; and these were for the sins of the flesh, and for the removing the ceremonial uncleanness of it; and the virtue of them reached only to the purifying of the flesh; and the whole of it is distinct from the moral law, which is spiritual, and reaches to the spirit or soul of man; whereas this only was concerned about temporal and external things: or else the law of the priesthood is particularly intended; or that commandment which respected the priesthood of Aaron; which law regarded the carnal descent of his sons; enjoined a carnal inauguration of them, and provided for their succession and continuance in a carnal way; after which, Christ the great high priest did not become one:

but after the power of an endless life;

this may be understood either of the Gospel, according to which Christ is a priest; and which is called "life", in opposition to the law which is the ministrations of death; and because it is the means of quicken-

ing dead sinners, and of reviving drooping saints; and points out Christ the way of life, and has brought life and immortality to light: and may be said to be “endless”, in distinction from the law, which is temporary; and because it is itself permanent and everlasting; contains in it the promise of eternal life, and is the means of bringing souls unto it: and there is a “power” goes along with it; which distinguishes it from the weak and beggarly elements of the ceremonial law, which is abolished, because of the weakness of it; for it is attended with the power of the Spirit of God, and is the power of God unto salvation: or else this intends the endless life which Christ has, in and of himself; and which qualifies him for a priest; and stands opposed to the mortality of the priests, and to that law which could not secure them from it: the priests died, and the law by which they were priests could not prevent their death; Christ is the living God, the Prince of life, he had power to lay down his life as man, and power to take it up again; and his life, as man, is an endless one, which qualifies him for that part of his priestly office, his intercession and advocacy: or it may design that power, which his Father has given him as Mediator, of an endless life, both for himself and for all his people; and regards his ever living as a priest, and the perpetuity of and the continual virtue and efficacy of it.

Hebrews 7:17

For he testifieth

That is, either David, the penman of the psalm, or rather the Holy Ghost, the enditer of it, or God in the Scripture, in (Psalms 110:4) of this form of citing Scripture, (See Gill on Hebrews 2:6).

thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec;

see (Hebrews 5:6 Hebrews 5:10) (6:20) .

Hebrews 7:18

For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment

Not the moral law; though what is here said of the commandment may be applied to that; that is sometimes called the commandment, (Romans 7:12 Romans 7:13) it went before the promise of the Messiah, and the Gospel of Christ, and the dispensation of it; it is in some respects weak; it cannot justify from the guilt of sin, nor free from the power of it, nor secure from death, the

punishment of it, nor give eternal life; though it has a power to command, accuse, convince, and condemn: and it is also unprofitable in the business of justification and salvation; though otherwise it is profitable to convince of sin, to show what righteousness is, and to be a rule of conversation to the saints in the hand of Christ; yet not this, but the ceremonial law is meant, which is the commandment that respected the Levitical priesthood, and is called a carnal one, and is inclusive of many others, and, which distinguishes that dispensation from the Gospel one: and this may be said to be

going before;

with respect to time, being before the Gospel state, or the exhibition of the new covenant of grace; and with respect to use, as a type or shadow of good things to come; and as it was a schoolmaster going before, and leading on to the knowledge of evangelical truths: and this is now disannulled, abrogated, and made void; the middle wall of partition is broken down, and the law of commandments contained in ordinances is abolished:

for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof;

the ceremonial law was weak; it could not expiate or atone for sin, in the sight of God; it could not remove the guilt of sin from the conscience, but there was still a remembrance of it; nor could it cleanse from the filth of sin; all it could do was, to expiate sin typically, and sanctify externally to the purifying of the flesh; and all the virtue it had was owing to Christ, whom it prefigured; and therefore, being fulfilled in him, it ceased: and it was “unprofitable”; not before the coming of Christ, for then it was a shadow, a type, a schoolmaster, and had its usefulness; but since his coming, who is the body and substance of it, it is unprofitable to be joined to him; and is of no service in the affair of salvation; and is no other than a grievous yoke of bondage; yea, is what renders Christ unprofitable and of no effect, when submitted to as in force, and as necessary to salvation; and because of these things, it is abolished and made null and void. The Jews, though they are strenuous assertors of the unalterableness of the law of Moses, yet sometimes are obliged to acknowledge the abrogation of the ceremonial law in the times of the Messiah; the commandment, they say F18, meaning this, shall cease in the time to come; and again,

“all sacrifices shall cease in the future

state, or time to come, (i.e. the times of the Messiah,) but the sacrifice of praise F19.”

FOOTNOTES:

F18 T. Bab. Nidda, fol. 61. 2.

F19 Vajikra Rabba, scct. 9. fol. 153. 1. & sect. 27. fol. 168. 4.

Hebrews 7:19

For the law made nothing perfect

Or no man; neither any of the priests that offered sacrifices, nor any of the people for whom they were offered: it could not perfectly make atonement for sin; nor make men perfectly holy or righteous; it could neither justify nor sanctify; neither bring in a perfect righteousness, nor bring men to perfect holiness, and so to eternal life and salvation:

but the bringing in of a better hope did;

not the grace of hope; that is not something newly brought in, the saints under the Old Testament had it; nor is it better now than then, though it has greater advantages and more encouragement to the exercise of it: nor heaven and eternal glory, the thing hoped for; the saints under the legal dispensation hoped for this, as well as believers under the present dispensation; nor is what the latter hope for better than that the former did: nor is God the author and object of hope intended; the phrase of bringing in will not suit with him; besides, he is distinguished from it, in the next clause: to understand it of the Gospel, the means of hope, and of encouraging it, is no ill sense; that standing in direct contradistinction to the law: but the priesthood of Christ, of which the apostle is treating in the context, is generally understood, which is the ground of hope; for all promises respecting eternal life are confirmed by it, and all blessings connected with it procured; and it is better than the Aaronic priesthood, under the law; and a better ground of hope than the sacrifices of that law were: Christ himself may be designed, who is often called hope, being the object, ground, and foundation of it; and is a better one than Moses, or his law, Aaron, or his priesthood; and it is by him men draw nigh to God; and the bringing in of him or his priesthood shows that Christ's priesthood was not upon the foot of the law, and that he existed as a priest, before brought in, and as a better hope, though not so fully revealed; and it may have respect to his coming in the flesh, be-

ing sent, or brought in by his father: now the bringing in of him and his priesthood did make something perfect; it brought to perfection all the types, promises, and prophecies of the Old Testament, the whole law, moral and ceremonial; it brought in perfect atonement, reconciliation, pardon, righteousness, and redemption; it perfected the persons of all God's elect; and perfectly provided for their holiness, peace, comfort, and eternal happiness: some read the words "but it", the law, "was the bringing in of a better hope": the law led unto, made way for, and introduced. Christ, the better hope; and so the Arabic version, "seeing it should be an entrance to a more noble hope"; the Syriac version renders it, "but in the room of it entered a hope more excellent than that"; than the law:

by the which we draw nigh unto God;

the Father, as the Father of Christ, and of his people in him, and as the Father of mercies, and the God of all grace and this drawing nigh to him is to be understood not locally but spiritually; it includes the whole worship of God, but chiefly designs prayer: and ought to be done with a true heart, in opposition to hypocrisy; and in faith, in opposition to doubting; and with reverence and humility, in opposition to rashness; and with freedom, boldness, and thankfulness: and it is through Christ and his priesthood that souls have encouragement to draw nigh to God; for Christ has paid all their debts, satisfied law and justice, procured the pardon of their sins, atonement and reconciliation for them; he is the way of their access to God; he gives them audience and acceptance; he presents their prayers, and intercedes for them himself.

Hebrews 7:20

And inasmuch as not without an oath

Our version supplies as follows,

he was made priest;

which well agrees with what is said in the next verse; the Syriac version renders it, "and which he confirmed to us by an oath"; that is, the better hope, Christ and his priesthood, said to be brought in, and by which men draw nigh to God; this is established by the oath of God himself referring to (Psalms 110:4) afterwards cited in proof of it.

Hebrews 7:21**For these priests were made without an oath**

The priests of the tribe of Levi, and of the order of Aaron, were installed into their office, and invested with it, without an oath; no mention is made of any when Aaron and his sons were put into it in Moses's time; nor was any used afterwards, neither by God, nor by the priests, nor by the people; it is true indeed that after the sect of the Sadducees arose, the high priest on the day of atonement, was obliged to take an oath that he would not change any of the customs of the day F20; but then this regarded not his investiture, but the execution of his office; and was an oath of his and not of the Lord's, which is here designed:

but this with an oath;

that is, Christ was made an high priest with an oath, even with an oath of God; which gives his priesthood the preference to the Levitical priesthood, which was without one: and this oath was made,

by him that said unto him:

the Syriac version reads, "as he said to him by David"; that is, in (Psalms 110:4) . David being the penman of that psalm, in which stand the following words of the Father to Christ:

the Lord sware and will not repent, thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec;

which proves that Jehovah swore that Christ should be a priest, and continue so: swearing, when ascribed to God, is after the manner of men, and is always by himself, and never upon any trivial account; but either to confirm his love to his people, or his covenant with them, or the mission of his Son to be the Redeemer, or, as here, his priestly office: and this oath was made not so much on Christ's account, as on account of the heirs of promise, for their consolation; and shows the dignity, validity, importance, and singularity of Christ's priesthood, as well as the durableness of it; and of this oath God will never repent: repentance cannot properly fall upon God, on any account; for it is contrary to his holiness and righteousness, and to his happiness, to his unchangeableness, omniscience, and omnipotence; it is indeed sometimes ascribed to him improperly, and after the manner of men; and only regards a change of his outward conduct according to his immutable will; and

the change that is made is in the creature, and not in God himself: but God will not repent in any sense of the priesthood of Christ, nor of his oath, that it should continue for ever according to the order of Melchizedek; for he was every way qualified for it, and has faithfully performed it, not his investiture, but the execution of his office; and was an oath of his and not of the Lord's, which is here designed:

but this with an oath;

that is, Christ was made an high priest with an oath, even with an oath of God; which gives his priesthood the preference to the Levitical priesthood, which was without one: and this oath was made,

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FOOTNOTES:

F20 Misn. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 5.

Hebrews 7:22

By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.

Or “covenant”, for the word signifies both; and what is intended may be called both a testament and a covenant; a testament, because it is founded in the good will and pleasure of God, and respects an inheritance bequeathed by God the Father to his children, which was confirmed and comes to them by the death of Christ the testator; and a covenant, it being a compact or agreement made by the Father with Christ, as the representative of all the elect; in which promises and blessings of all sorts are provided and secured for them in him; and is called in Scripture a covenant of life and peace, because these are things concerned in it; and is commonly by men called the covenant of grace, because it springs from the grace of God, the subject matter of it is grace, and the end of it is the glory of God’s grace: now this is better than the covenant of works broken by man, and which exposes him to the curse and condemnation of the law; or than the covenant of the Levitical priesthood, by which was no perfection; and the form of administration of it under the Gospel dispensation is better than that under the law, for it is now revealed more clearly, and administered without types, shadows, and sacrifices; and the extent of its administration is larger, reaching to Gentiles as well as Jews; and besides, it is now actually ratified and confirmed by the blood of Christ, which is therefore called the blood of the everlasting covenant: and of this testament or covenant Christ is the “surety”; the word signifies one that draws nigh: Christ drew nigh to his Father in the council of peace, and undertook to be the Saviour and Redeemer of his people he substituted himself in their place and stead; he interposed between the creditor and the debtor, and became surety for the payment of the debts of the latter, and so stood engaged for them, and in their room: Christ is not the surety for the Father to his people, but for them to the Father; as to satisfy for their sins, to work out a righteousness for them, to preserve and keep them, and make them happy; which is an instance of matchless love.

Hebrews 7:23

And they truly were many priests

There were many common priests at a time; and though there was but one high priest at a time, yet there were many of them in a line of succession from Aaron down to the apostle’s time. The Jews say F21, that under the first temple eighteen high priests ministered, and under the second temple more than three hundred: this shows the imperfection of this priesthood, since it was in many hands; no one continuing and being sufficient to execute it; but Christ is the one and only high priest; there is no other, nor is there any need of any other: the reason why there were so many under the law was,

because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death;

death has a power to forbid a long continuance in this world, and no man does continue long here: death puts a stop to men’s works, and to the exercise of their several callings; no office, even the most sacred, exempts from it; no, not the office of high priests: these were but men, sinful men, and so died; and their discontinuance by reason of death shows the imperfection of their priesthood: there was another reason besides this which the apostle gives, why the high priests were so many, and especially about this time; and that is, the office was bought for money, and men that would give most were put into it: hence there were frequent changes; the Jews themselves say, they changed every twelve months F23.

FOOTNOTES:

F21 T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 9. 1. Piske Tosephot Zebachim, Art. 72.

Hebrews 7:24

But this man, because he continueth ever

Though he died, death did not forbid him to continue, as it does other men; he was not forced to die, he died voluntarily; and he continued but for a small time under the power of death; besides, his death was a branch of his priestly office: so that he not only continued in his divine nature, which still had the human nature in union with it, but he continued in his office as a priest, and quickly rose from the dead; and the virtue of his sacrifice always remains, and he himself ever lives as an intercessor: wherefore he

hath an unchangeable priesthood;

which will never be antiquated, and give place to another; nor does it, or ever will it pass from him to

another, for it is needless, seeing he lives, and no other is sufficient for it; and it would be injustice to pass it to another; the glory of it is due to him; and this is matter of comfort to the saints, that he sits a priest upon his throne, and that his priesthood always continues.

Hebrews 7:25

Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost,

&c.] Because he continues ever, and has an unchangeable priesthood. This is to be understood not of temporal salvation, nor of providential favours, but of spiritual and eternal salvation; and includes a deliverance from all evil, here and hereafter, and an enjoyment of all good in this world, and in that to come: Christ was called to this work by his Father; he was promised by him to do it, and was sent by him to effect it, and has accomplished it; and this is the reason of his name Jesus, and was the end of his coming into this world, and which the Gospel always represents as such: this work required ability; here was a law to be fulfilled; justice to be satisfied; sin to be bore, removed, and atoned for; many enemies to engage with, and a cursed death to undergo: it was a work no creature, angels, or men, were able to undertake and perform; the priests under the law could not; men cannot save themselves, nor can any creature work out salvation for them: but Christ is able; as appears from the help his Father laid on him, who knew him to be mighty; from his own undertaking it, being mighty to save; and from his having completely effected it; and he must needs be able to do it, since he is the mighty God: and he is able to save to the uttermost; “to the utmost perfection”, as the Arabic version renders it; so as nothing can be wanting in the salvation he is the author of, nor anything added to it; or “for ever”, as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions render it; to the utmost of time, even to eternity, as well as to the utmost of men’s wants: the persons he is able to save, are such

that come to God by him;

Christ is able to save all the world, were it his will; but not his absolute power is designed by his ability, but that power which by his will is put into act; and reaches not to all men, for all are not saved; and those that are, are described by special characters, as here; they are such who come to God, not essentially considered, but personally, or in the person of the Father; and not as

an absolute God, but as in Christ; not as on a throne of justice, but as on a throne of grace and mercy; not only as Christ’s Father, but as theirs; and not only as the God of nature and providence, but as the God of grace: and this act of coming to him is a fruit of his everlasting love; an effect of Christ’s death; is peculiar to regenerate persons; takes in the whole service of God, especially prayer; is not local but spiritual, it is by faith; and supposes spiritual life, and implies a sense of need, and of God’s ability and willingness to help: the medium, or mean, by which such come to God, is Christ. Man had access to God in his state of innocence, but sinning, was not admitted; there is no approaching now unto him without a middle person; Christ is the Mediator, who having made peace, atoned for sin, satisfied justice, and brought in an everlasting righteousness, introduces his people into God’s presence; in whom their persons and services are accepted, and through whom all blessings are communicated to them:

seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them;

Christ ever lives as God, he is the living God; and though he died as man, he is risen from the dead, and will not die again, but live for evermore; and he lives as Mediator and Redeemer, and particularly as a priest; one branch of whose office it is to intercede for his people: this he does now in heaven; not by vocal prayer and supplication, at least not as in the days of his flesh; or as if he was supplicating an angry Judge; nor as controverting, or litigating, a point the court of heaven; but by the appearance of his person for them; by the presentation of his sacrifice, blood, and righteousness; by declaring his will, that such and such blessings be bestowed on such and such persons; and by recommending the prayers of his people, and removing the charges and accusations of Satan: the things he intercedes for are, the conversion of his that are in a state of nature; the consolation of distressed ones; fresh discoveries of pardoning grace to fallen believers; renewed strength to oppose sin, exercise grace, discharge duty, and bear up under temptations, and deliverance out of them; perseverance in faith and holiness, and eternal glorification; and he intercedes for these things; not for all the world, but for all the elect, even though transgressors; and he is very fit for this work, as the following verse shows; he is the one and only Mediator; and he is a very prevalent intercessor, he always succeeds; and he does this work readily, willingly, cheerfully, and freely; and all

this proves him to be able to save; for though the imputation of salvation is by his death, the application of it is owing to his interceding life; had he died and not lived again, he could not have saved to the uttermost; his life is the security of his people's, and he lives for them, and as their representative; the blessed, effects of which they constantly enjoy.

Hebrews 7:26

For such an high priest became us

Is suitable to us, answers to our cases and necessities, is every way such an one as is wanted:

[who] is holy;

by nature, originally and underivatively, perfectly and completely, internally as well as externally; he was typified by the high priest, who had holiness to the Lord written on his forehead, and far exceeds any of the priests in holiness; and such an one becomes us, for had he not been holy he could not have entered into the holy place for us, or have appeared there on our account, or have been our sanctification; so Philo the Jew speaks of the true priest as being not man, but the divine Word, and as free from all sin voluntary and involuntary F24

harmless;

without any vitiosity in his nature, without guile in his mouth, or malice in his heart; doing no injury to any man's person or property: the character chiefly regards the innocence and holiness of his life and conversation; and in which he exceeded the priests under the law; and is a suitable one for us, for hereby he was fit to be made sin, and to take it away:

undefiled;

with the sin of Adam, with which all mankind are defiled; with the blood of slain beasts, with which the priests under the law were sprinkled; with the filthy conversation of the wicked, which affects good men: hence he was more excellent than the priests under the law; and one that becomes us, since his blood is the blood of a lamb, without spot and blemish: the high priests under the law, according to the Jews F25, were to excel their brethren in knowledge, beauty, and riches; but the distinguishing character of our high priest is purity and holiness:

separate from sinners;

not but that he took the nature of sinners, though not a sinful nature; and he was often in the company of sinners, when on earth, and was reckoned among them, and as one of them; but he was separated from them in Adam; he was not among the individuals of human nature that sinned in him; and he was brought into the world in a different manner from them, not descending from Adam by ordinary generation; and he had no communion with them in sin; nor did he encourage them to it in the days of his flesh; and now he is removed far from them; and herein he exceeds the priests under the law, and is suitable to us: the Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, "separate from sins"; the allusion seems to be, to the separating of the high priest from his own house to one of the courts of the temple seven days before the day of atonement F26, and so before the burning of the heifers F1:

and made higher than the heavens;

than the visible heavens, the airy and starry heavens, and than the angels in heaven; and so preferable to the high priests, and exceedingly agreeable to us, (Hebrews 4:14) the allusion may be to the carrying of the high priest on the day of atonement to an upper chamber in the temple, called the chamber of Abtines F2: this may be understood either of Christ's exaltation in heaven, where angels are subject to him, and his priesthood is completed; or of his excelling the angels in the holiness of his nature, which agrees with the other characters in the text, and stands opposed to the infirmities of the priests.

FOOTNOTES:

F24 De Profugis, p. 466, 467. & de Victimis, p. 843.

F25 Maimon, & Bartenora in Misn, Yoma, c. 1. sect.

3.

F26 Misn. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 1.

F1 Misn. Parah, c. 3. sect. 1.

F2 Misn. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 5.

Hebrews 7:27

Who needeth not daily, as those high priests

They being sinners, and he not:

to offer up sacrifice first for his own sins and then for the people's;

as they did on the day of atonement; see (Leviticus 16:6 Leviticus 16:11 Leviticus 16:15 Leviticus 16:16

) upon which place the Jews F3 make the same remark the apostle does here;

“he (the high priest, they say) offers sacrifices for the sins of the people, for his own (atymdqb) , “first”, (rtblw) , “and afterwards for the sins of the people”:

which was one reason of the imperfection and insufficiency of their sacrifices; but Christ needed not to offer for his own, nor could he, for he had none of his own; what he had was by imputation; wherefore he only needed to offer, and he only did offer, for the sins of the people; not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also, even of all God's covenant people; nor did he need to do this daily, as they did; they offered sacrifice daily, the common priests every day, morning and evening, and the high priest on a stated day once a year, on the day of atonement:

for this he did once, when he offered up himself;

and in this also he differed from them; they offered not themselves, but what was inferior to themselves, and what could not take away sin, and, therefore, was repeated; but Christ offered himself, his whole human nature, soul and body, and both as in union with his divine nature; and this being offered to God freely and voluntarily, in the room and stead of his people, was acceptable to God: hereby justice was satisfied; the law fulfilled; sin taken away, and complete salvation obtained; so that there never was since any need of his offering again, nor never will be; which shows the perfection and fulness of his priesthood, and the preference of it to the Levitical one.

FOOTNOTES:

F3 Zohar in Lev. fol. 26. 4.

Hebrews 7:28

For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity,

&c.] Every word has an emphasis on it, and shows the difference between Christ and these priests: they were many; they were made priests by the law, the law of a carnal commandment, which made nothing perfect, and was disannulled; they were men that were

made priests by it, and could not really draw nigh to God, and mediate with him for themselves, or others, nor atone either for their own or others' sins; and they were men that had infirmity, not natural and corporeal, for they were to have no bodily blemishes and deficiencies in them, but sinful ones; and especially such were they who bore this office under the second temple, and particularly in the times of Christ and his apostles F4:

but the word of the oath, which was since the law;

that word which had an oath annexed to it, which declared Christ an high priest after the order of Melchizedek, was since the law of the priesthood of Aaron; for though Christ was made a priest from eternity, yet the promise which declared it, and had an oath joined to it, was afterwards in David's time, (Psalms 110:4) and this word of the oath maketh the son; not a son, but a priest; publishes and declares him to be so: Christ, though a man, yet he is not mere man; he is the Son of God, and as such opposed to men; and therefore is not the Son of God as man; and this shows that he was a son before he was a priest, and therefore is not so called on account of his office; and it is his being the Son of God which gives lustre and glory to his priestly office, and virtue and efficacy to his sacrifice and intercession, and gives him the preference to all other priests:

who is consecrated for evermore;

or “perfected”, or “perfect”; he is perfect in his obedience and sufferings, in his sacrifice, and as he is now in heaven, in complete glory; the law made men priests that did not continue, but Christ is a priest for evermore, and absolutely, perfect.

FOOTNOTES:

F4 Vid. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 8. 2. & 9. 1.

INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS 8

The apostle observing that the priesthood of Christ is the sum of what he had treated of in the preceding chapter, proceeds to show the superior excellency of it in other instances, particularly in the place where Christ now officiates, which is in heaven; he being set down at the right hand of God there, and so was a minister of the sanctuary, and true tabernacle pitched by God, and not man; whereas the priests of Aaron's line only ministered on earth, and in the typical sanctuary and tabernacle,

Heb 8:1,2 and after he had observed that Christ must have something to offer, meaning his body, to answer to the gifts and sacrifices priests were ordained to offer, Heb 8:3 he proves the necessity of his ministering in heaven, because if he was on earth he would not be a priest, a complete one, and would have been useless and needless, Heb 8:4 and besides, it was proper that he should go up to heaven, and minister there, as the antitype of the priests, who, to the example and shadow of heavenly things, served in the tabernacle which was made by Moses, by the order of God, and according to the pattern showed him in the Mount, Heb 8:5 and that the ministry of Christ in the true sanctuary is much more excellent than the ministry of the priests in the shadowy one, is evident from his being the Mediator of a better covenant, Heb 8:6 and that the covenant he is the Mediator of is the better covenant, appears from the better promises of which it consists, and from the faultiness of the former covenant, Heb 8:6,7 and that that was faulty, and succeeded by another, he proves from a passage in Jer 31:31-34 in which mention is made of a new covenant, and as distinct from that made with the Jewish fathers, and violated by them; and several of the promises of this new and second covenant are rehearsed, and which manifestly appear to be better than what were in the former, Heb 8:8-12 from all which the apostle concludes, that a new covenant being made, the old one must be antiquated; and that whereas it was decaying and waxing old, it was just ready to vanish away, Heb 8:13 .

Hebrews 8:1

1 Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;

2 A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

3 For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer.

4 For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law:

5 Who serve unto the example and shadow of heav-

enly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.

6 But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.

8 For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:

9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:

11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.

12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

13 In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.

COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS VIII

Hebrews 8:1

Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum

The scope and drift, the compendium and substance; or the principal of what has been said in or from (Psalms 110:4) and has been discoursed of in the three preceding chapters, is the priesthood of Christ:

we have such an high priest;

as is described in the foregoing discourse, and in the following words: Christ is a priest, an high priest, and the saints' high priest; they are not without one under the Gospel dispensation; and Christ is he, and always continues, in whose sacrifice and intercession they have a share:

who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;

he is "set", whereas the Levitical priests stood; which shows that he has done his work, and that with acceptance; and is in a state of ease and rest; and is possessed of honour, glory, majesty, and authority, and which continue: the place where he is set is, "on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty"; the same with the right hand of God; for by the throne of the Majesty is meant God the Father, in his royal glory and dignity; so Tiphereth, one of the ten numbers in the Jews' Cabalistic tree, whose name is Jehovah, is called (dwbkh aok) , "the throne of glory" F3; so angels are called thrones, (Colossians 1:16) but God is a throne of majesty superior to them; and at his right hand sits Christ the great high priest; which is expressive of his high honour, glory, and power, and even of his equality with God: the phrase, "in the heavens", may refer both to God the throne of majesty, who is there, and to Christ the high priest, who is passed into them, and received by them, and sits there.

FOOTNOTES:

F3 Lex. Cabal. p. 483.

Hebrews 8:2**A minister of the sanctuary**

The heavenly one, so called, in allusion to the holy of holies, the type of it; and because it is truly an holy place; and which Christ sanctifies and prepares for his people by his presence and intercession: or "of the Holy Ones", or "saints"; who are sanctified or set apart by God, the Father, to whom Christ is made sanctification, and who are made holy by the Spirit of God; to these Christ is a minister; he was so in his prophetic office, to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; and in his priestly office, to all the chosen ones, when on earth, offering himself a sacrifice for them, and now he is a minister to them in heaven, interceding for them; and in his kingly office, governing, protecting, and defending them: or

"of holy things"; to his people, such as the gifts of his Spirit, grace, and all supplies of it, and at last glory; and for them, presenting their sacrifices of prayer and praise to God, which become acceptable to him through his powerful mediation:

and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man;

by which is meant, not heaven, the same with the sanctuary, for this would be an unnecessary tautology, and an explanation of a word by another more obscure; nor is there any reason why it should be added, "which the Lord pitched, and not man"; since everyone must believe that heaven is made by God alone; but rather the church of Christ, which is sometimes called a tabernacle, and is a true one, of which the tabernacle of Moses was a type, and is of God's building, and where Christ ministers, being the high priest over the house of God; though it is best to interpret it of the human nature of Christ, in which he tabernacled among men, and which was typified by the tabernacle of Moses, and therefore is called the "true" one, in distinction from that; for as there God dwelt, and his glory was seen, and he granted his presence to his people, and the sacrifices were brought and offered up there, and to this the people looked when at a distance, and this appeared very coarse without, but within full of holy things; so in Christ's human nature the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily; here the glory of God is seen, even in the face of Jesus; and through him God vouchsafes communion with his people; and by him the sacrifices of prayer and praise are offered up; and to him do the saints look for the acceptance of them; and though in the days of his flesh he looked very mean and despicable, yet was full of grace and truth, and of all the gifts of the Spirit: and the human nature of Christ was not of man; it was not propagated by human generation, but was produced through the power of the Holy Ghost; and in this tabernacle Christ ministered when on earth, and now ministers in heaven.

Hebrews 8:3

For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices (See Gill on Hebrews 5:1)

wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer;

or this person; for the word "man" is not in the

text, and seems not so proper a word to be supplied, since it was his human nature that it was necessary he should have to offer; he was a person, and existed as a divine person antecedent to his assumption of human nature: as God, he had nothing to offer, or that was capable of being offered; something to offer as a sacrifice was necessary to him as a priest, but not any thing was proper to him; Levitical sacrifices would not do, these could not take away sin; besides, the great high priest was not of the tribe of Levi, nor of the order of Aaron, and therefore could not offer these. An angelic nature would have been improper, that is not capable of dying; and the offering up of such an one would have been of no service to men, for whom priests are ordained; but an human nature is meant, and which it was necessary Christ should have, and offer, for it is for men that he became an high priest; it was human nature that had offended God, and satisfaction must be made in that nature; and this was capable of suffering and dying; yet not human nature under any consideration was necessary for him to have and offer; not merely as in a state of innocence, without any infirmity, nor as sinful, yet as perfect as to parts and qualities; and a nature, and not a person, was necessary to be had, and to be taken into close and inseparable union to his divine person; and of this there was a necessity, not absolute, or a necessity of coercion and force: Christ was not forced unto it; but on the foot of his suretyship engagements, and because of making satisfaction for the sin of man, it was necessary; otherwise Christ voluntarily engaged to be a priest, and willingly became man, and freely offered himself, soul and body, in the room and stead of his people.

Hebrews 8:4

For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest

The Socinians from hence attempt to prove that Christ was not a priest, and did not offer sacrifice on earth; whereas his coming into the world, and his appearance in human nature, was in the character of a priest, and to qualify himself for one; his death was his sacrifice, which was on earth; and he never offered but one sacrifice; and it was after he had offered himself that he went to heaven; so the sacrifices under the law were first offered, before their blood was carried within: but the meaning is, either if "that" was on earth, namely, what it was necessary he should have to offer; if his human nature had been earthly, had been of men, had come by ordinary generation, he had not been properly, only typically a priest, at most; and had been no better

than the typical ones; yea, he would have been needless, nay, might not have offered, not being of Levi's tribe, and could not have existed as a priest with the sons of Aaron; but he had his human nature in another way, through the power of the Holy Ghost from above, and therefore is said to come from above, from heaven, and to be the Lord from heaven: or the sense is, if he was on earth, and had not died, he had not been a priest; and if he had died and remained under the power of death, he had been a priest of no account and use; and had he rose again and remained on earth, without going to heaven, with his blood and sacrifice, he had not been a perfect priest; if Christ had remained on earth, the Levitical priesthood had remained, and so he would have been no priest, since two priesthoods could not have subsisted together. The Levitical priesthood was in force while Christ was on earth; Christ's priesthood was not perfected on earth; the Levitical priesthood remaining while he was on earth, proves he was not then a perfect priest, or had not completed his priesthood; had he been so, that would not have subsisted; it was necessary therefore that Christ should enter into the holy place, to put an end to the Levitical priesthood: moreover, if he had remained on earth, he had been needless;

seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law;

there were priests when Christ was upon earth; their work was to offer gifts the people brought, and sacrifices for sin, and that according to the law of Moses, which till the death of Christ was in full force.

Hebrews 8:5

Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things,

&c.] Things respecting the person, office, and grace of Christ; the priests themselves were types of him; the places they ministered in were an exemplar of the heavenly places, as the word may be rendered, where Christ is; and the things they ministered were shadows of the good things which are by Christ; and the shadows were mere representations; dark, obscure, glimmering ones, and were fleeting and transitory:

as Moses was admonished of God;

by an oracle; he was a peculiar favourite of God, and was the mediator between God and the people of Israel, and what he received was oracle wise; what he delivered

to the people was what he received from God; and what was thus delivered ought to be received as from God: and this admonition or oracle was given him

when he was about to make the tabernacle;

the Levitical one, with everything appertaining to the worship of God in it: this is ascribed to Moses, though it was made by others, because it was by his direction, and under his care and oversight; and he had this admonition at the beginning of it; and at the finishing of it he looked upon it, and saw that it was all done as the Lord had commanded; (Exodus 25:40) (39:43) ,

for see, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the Mount;

Moses was taken up into a mountain with God, even Mount Sinai; and while he was there, a pattern was given him of the tabernacle and all its utensils; this was not a device of his own, but was shown him by God; and this pattern reached to every particular thing; and great care and circumspection were used that the most minute thing answered to it. The Jews think this pattern was given him by the ministry of angels; Gabriel, they say F6, girt himself with a girdle, and showed to Moses the work of the candlestick; and they further say, that an ark of fire, and a table of fire; and a candlestick of fire, descended from heaven, and Moses saw them, and made according to them: from whence it may be observed that the tabernacle, and tabernacle worship, were of divine institution; the ceremonious rites of the Jews were not, as some have affirmed, borrowed from the Egyptians; nor were they given as diversions to that people, nor only to preserve them from idolatry, and keep them separate from others, but were designed to lead them to Christ, whom they were typical of; wherefore the abuse, and not the use of them, were condemned under the former dispensation; though they were to continue no longer than till Christ came, and suffered and died; and now they are abolished: moreover, it may be gathered from hence, that whatever is done in a way of religious worship, should be according to a divine rule; a church of Christ ought to be formed according to the primitive pattern, and should consist, not of all that are born in a nation, province, or parish; nor should all that are born of believing parents be admitted into it; no unholy, unbelieving, and unconverted persons, only such as are true believers in Christ, and who are baptized according as the word of God directs; the officers of a church should be only of two sorts, bishops, elders, pastors or

overseers, and deacons; the ordinances are baptism, which should only be administered to believers, and by immersion, and the Lord's supper, of which none should partake, but those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious; and this should be performed as Christ performed it, and as the Apostle Paul received it from him; the discipline of Christ's house should be regarded, and all the laws of it carefully and punctually in execution; and a conversation becoming the Gospel should be attended to.

FOOTNOTES:

F6 T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 29. 1.

Hebrews 8:6

But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry

Christ has a ministry, he is the minister of the sanctuary, (Hebrews 8:2) he has "obtained" this ministry of his Father; he was called unto it and engaged in it by him; and he has "now" obtained it; for though he was called to it from eternity, it was in time he came an high priest of good things, to come; and his ministry is

a more excellent

one than that of the priests, who offered gifts according to the law and served to the example and shadow of heavenly things; as abundantly appears from the preceding chapter, and from this, as well, as from what follows:

by how much also he is the Mediator of a better covenant;

the covenant of grace, as administered under the Gospel dispensation; which is not only better than the covenant of works, that being conditional, this absolute; that stood on the foot of works, this on the foot of grace, and is established in Christ; that being broken and made void, this continues; and not only better than the covenant of the Levitical priesthood, which was but a typical one, and is now ceased, but also than the covenant of grace, as administered under the legal dispensation; being better than that, as to the manner of its manifestation, which is more full and clear; and as to the extent of its administration, reaching to Gentiles as well as Jews; and as to the ratification of it by the blood of Christ, called from thence the blood of the everlasting covenant; and as to the promises of it, here said to

be better:

which was established upon better promises;

which are not now delivered out as before, under the figure of earthly and temporal things; nor under a condition to be performed nor confined to a particular people and nation; and which are attended with a greater measure of the Spirit, to open and apply them; and are all secured in Christ Jesus, and confirmed by his blood: and now of this covenant Christ is the “Mediator”; a mediator is of more persons than one, and of these at variance; and he is a middle person between both; and his business is to bring both parties together, and make peace between them: the two parties in this case are God and man, set at a distance from each other by the sin of man, whereby man is become enmity to God; Christ is the Mediator between God and man, a middle person between both, being both God and man, the daysman, who lays his hands on both; who brings men to God that were afar off, and makes peace for them by the blood of his cross, and satisfies the justice of God, which he has done by the sacrifice of himself; and now appears in the presence of God for them, and intercedes for them, and applies the blessings of the covenant to them by his Spirit, and keeps and preserves them safe to his everlasting kingdom; and for this office he is every way fit, and in this he excels the Levitical priests, and has a ministry superior to theirs, since he is such a Mediator, and a Mediator of such a covenant,

Hebrews 8:7

For if that first covenant had been faultless

Not the covenant of works; that was made in paradise, this on Mount Sinai; that was made with Adam and his posterity, this with the Jews only; that had no mediator, this had one, Moses; that was not dedicated with blood, this was; that had no forgiveness of sin in it, this had; under that saints are not, but they were under this; to be under that was no privilege, but to be under this it was, as to the Israelites, who on this account were preferable to all other nations: nor is the pure covenant of grace as administered under the Gospel, meant; for though that was first made, yet is the second in administration; that includes the elect of God among the Gentiles, this only the Jews; that is made only with them, and is made known to them whom God calls by his grace in time, this was made with good and bad; that was of pure grace, this required works in order to life and the enjoy-

ment of its blessings; that is an everlasting covenant, this is done away; and the one is manifestly distinguished from the other in this chapter: but the covenant here designed is the covenant of grace, as administered under the legal dispensation, and which was a typical one; the people with whom it was made were typical of the true Israel of God; the blessings promised in it were shadows of good things to come; the works it required were typical of Christ's obedience to the law, in the room and stead of his people, by which he fulfilled it; the sacrifices on which it was established were types of the sacrifice and death of Christ; the mediator of it. Moses, was a type of Christ, the Mediator of the new covenant; and it was confirmed by the blood of beasts, which was typical of the blood of Christ: this covenant was not “faultless”, but was faulty or blameworthy; not that there was anything sinful and criminal in it, but it was deficient; there was a weakness in it; its sacrifices could not make men perfect, nor take away sin; there wanted a larger supply of the grace of the Spirit to write the law of God upon the heart, and to enable men to keep it; there was not in it so full a revelation of the mind and will of God, and of his love and grace, as has since been made; nor did it exhibit a free and full pardon for all sins, unclogged of every condition; the persons that were under it were faulty; hence it follows, that God found fault with them, they could not answer the requirements and end of it: had it been faultless,

then should no place have been sought for the second;

the covenant of grace unveiled in the Gospel dispensation, called the better testament, the better covenant, and the new covenant; in order to, introduce which, the first was removed, that this might succeed it; just as because there was no perfection by the Levitical priesthood, it became necessary that another priest should arise, of another order.

Hebrews 8:8

For finding fault with them

Both with the covenant, which had its faults, and with the people who continued not in it, and were therefore disregarded by the Lord, (Hebrews 8:9)

he saith, behold, the days come (saith the Lord) when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah;

the words are cited from (Jeremiah 31:31 Jeremiah 31:32) in which God promises a “new covenant”; so called, not because newly made; for with respect to its original constitution, it was made from eternity; Christ the Mediator of it, and with whom it was made, was set up from everlasting; and promises and blessings of grace were put into his hands before the world began: nor is it newly revealed, for it was made known to Adam, and in some measure to all the Old Testament saints, though it is more clearly revealed than it was; but it is so called in distinction from the former administration of it, which is waxen old, and vanished away; and with respect to the order of succession, it taking place upon the former being removed; and on account of the time of its more clear revelation and establishment being in the last days; and because of its mode of administration, which is different from the former, in a new way, and by the use of new ordinances; and because it is always new, its vigour and efficacy are perpetual; it will never be antiquated, or give place to another; and it provides for, and promises new things, a new heart, a new spirit to which may be added, that it is a famous, excellent covenant, there is none like it; just as an excellent song is called a new song. The persons with whom this covenant is promised to be made, are the houses of Israel and Judah; which being literally taken, had its fulfilment in the first times of the Gospel, through the ministry of John the Baptist, Christ, and his apostles, by whom this covenant was made known to God’s elect among the twelve tribes; but being mystically understood, includes both Jews and Gentiles, the whole Israel of God; Israel not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; such as were Jews inwardly; God’s elect of every nation: the word (suntelesw) , rendered, “I will make”, signifies, I will consummate, or finish, or end, or fulfil it; which shows the perfection of this covenant, and the imperfection of the former; and that what was typified in the first is fulfilled in this; and that it is now established and ratified by Christ; and is so finished, as to the manifestation and administration of it, that there will be no alteration made in it, nor any addition to it: the time of doing all this is called “the days to come”; the last days, the days of the Messiah, which were future in Jeremiah’s time: and a “behold” is prefixed to the whole, as a note of attention, this being an affair of great moment and importance; and as a note of demonstration, or as pointing to something that was desired and expected; and as a note of admiration, it containing things wonderful and marvellous.

Hebrews 8:9

Not according to the covenant that I made with them fathers

The ancestors of the Jews at Mount Sinai:

in the day when I took them, by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt;

which is mentioned, not only to observe the time when the former covenant was made with the Israelites, which was just upon their deliverance out of Egypt; but also to show their weakness and inability to have delivered themselves, and the tenderness of God towards them; they were like children, they could not help themselves when God took them by the hand, and brought them forth with an outstretched arm; and likewise to expose their ingratitude, and vindicate his conduct towards them:

because they continued not in my covenant;

though they promised, at the reading of it, that all that the Lord had said, they would hear and do; but their hearts were not right with God, and they were not steadfast in his covenant, and therefore their carcasses fell in the wilderness:

and I regarded them not, saith the Lord;

the words in (Jeremiah 31:32) are very differently rendered in our translation, “although I was an husband unto them”: and so it becomes an aggravation of their sin of ingratitude, in not continuing in his covenant: in the margin it is rendered interrogatively, “should I have continued an husband unto them?” that is, after they had so treated him, no; as if he should say, I will not behave towards them as such; I will reject them, and disregard them. The Chaldee paraphrase is just the reverse of the apostle’s translation, “and I was well pleased with them”: some render them, “I ruled over them”, as a lord over his servants, in a very severe manner. Others, observing the great difference there is between the Hebrew text, and the apostle’s version, have supposed a different Hebrew copy from the present, used by the Septuagint, or the apostle, in which, instead of (ytleb) , it was read either (ytlxb) , or (ytleg) ; but there is no need of such a supposition, since Dr. Pocock F7 has shown, that (leb) , in the Arabic language, signifies to loath and abhor, and so to disregard; and Kimchi F8 relates it as a rule laid down by his father, that wherever this word is used in construction with (b) , it is to be taken in an ill part,

and signifies the same as (ytlxb) , “I have loathed”; in which sense that word is used in (Zechariah 11:8) and so here, I have loathed them, I abhorred them, I rejected them, I took no care of them, disregarded them, left their house desolate, and suffered wrath to come upon them to the uttermost.

FOOTNOTES:

F7 Not. Miscell. in Port. Mesis, p. 9.

F8 In Jer. xxxi. 32. & Sepher Shorashim, rad. (leb)

Hebrews 8:10

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel

That is, this is the sum and substance of the covenant, which God promised to make with, or to make manifest and known to his chosen people, the true Israelites, under the Gospel dispensation; or the following are the several articles of that covenant, he proposed to consummate or finish, as before:

after those days, saith the Lord;

after the times of the Old Testament, when the Messiah shall be come, and the Gospel day shall take place. So the Jews F9 apply these days, when they represent the Israelites saying to Moses, O that he (God) would reveal (himself or will) to us a second time! O that he would kiss us with the kisses of his mouth, and that the doctrine of the law was fixed in our hearts; when he (Moses) said to them, this is not to be done now, but (abl dytel) , in the time to come, (i.e. in the times of the Messiah,) as it is said, (Jeremiah 31:33) .

I will put my law

and so F11 they are elsewhere applied to the same times. And the first article in it is,

I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts;

by the laws of God are meant not the precepts of the ceremonial law, which were now abrogated, but either the moral law, and its commands; which is a transcript of the divine nature, was inscribed on Adam's heart in innocence, and some remains of it are even in the Gentiles, but greatly obliterated through the sin of man; and there is in men naturally a contrary disposition to it; in regeneration it is reinscribed by the Spirit of God;

and great respect is had to it by regenerate persons, in which lies one part of their conformity to Christ: or else, since the word “law” signifies sometimes no other than a doctrine, an instruction, the doctrines of grace, of repentance towards God, of faith in Christ, and love to him, and every other doctrine may be intended; and the tables where, according to the tenor of this covenant, these are put and written, are two tables, as before, the “mind” and “heart”; but not two tables of stone, on which the law of Moses was written, partly that it might not be lost, through defect of memory, and partly to denote the firmness and stability of it, as also to point at the hardness of man's heart; but the fleshly tables of the heart; not that part of our flesh that is called the heart; but the souls of men, such hearts as are regenerated and sanctified by the Spirit of God, and such minds as are renewed by him: and the “putting” of them into the mind, designs the knowledge of them, which God gives; as of the moral law, of its spirituality and perfection, showing that there is no life and righteousness by it, that it is fulfilled by Christ, and is a rule of conversation to the saints; and of all other laws, ordinances, and doctrines of Christ: and the “writing” them in, or on the heart, intends a filling the soul with love and affection to them, so that it regards them singly and heartily; and a powerful inclination of the heart to be subject to them, through the efficacious grace of God; and which is done not with the ink of nature's power, but with the Spirit of the living God, (2 Corinthians 3:3) .

And I will be to them a God;

not in such sense as he is the God of all mankind, or as he was the God of Israel in a distinguishing manner, but as he is the God of Christ, and of all the elect in him; and he is their God, not merely as the God of nature and providence, but as the God of all grace; he is so in a covenant way, and as in Christ, and by virtue of electing grace, and which is made manifest in the effectual calling; and as such, he has set his heart on them, and set them apart for himself; he saves them by his Son, adopts and regenerates them, justifies and sanctifies them, provides for them, protects and preserves them; and happy are they that are interested in this blessing of the covenant, which is preferable to everything else; they have everything, and can want no good thing; they need fear no enemy; all things work together for their good; and God continues to be their God in life and in death; so that they may depend on his love, be secure of his power, expect every needful supply of grace, and

to be carried through every duty and trial, and to share in the first resurrection, and to enjoy eternal happiness:

and they shall be to me a people;

not in such sense as all mankind are, or the Jews were in a more peculiar respect, but as all God's elect are, whether Jews or Gentiles; and who are such whom God has loved with a special love, has chose in Christ, and given to him, and with whom he has made a covenant in him; whom Christ saves from their sins by his blood, and calls them by his grace and Spirit, and who give up themselves to him; these are a distinct and peculiar people, a people near unto the Lord, and who are all righteous in Christ, and are made willing in the day of his power on their souls.

FOOTNOTES:

F9 Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 3. 2.

F11 Midrash Kohelet, fol. 64. 3.

Hebrews 8:11

And they shall not teach every man his neighbour

The Alexandrian copy reads, "citizen"; that is, fellow citizen; and so the Syriac and Arabic versions: "and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord": this is not to be understood, so as to set aside the external and public ministry of the word, which is a standing ordinance of God under the Gospel dispensation; or even the, private instructions of saints one to another, in Christian conversation, whereby they may build up one another in their most holy faith; but the sense is, that men should not only teach, but the Spirit of God should teach with them, and by them; and it stands opposed to particular and pretended revelations, and especially to magisterial dictates; and denotes the abundance of knowledge that should be in Gospel times, which should not be restrained to particular persons, and sets of men, but should be shared by all believers, more or less:

for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest;

from babes to fathers in Christ; not with a natural, but with a spiritual knowledge; not with general knowledge of him, that he is, but with a special knowledge of him, that he is theirs; not with a legal, but with an evangelical knowledge; not with the knowledge of him in, and through the creatures, but in Christ; and that not speculative, but experimental; such as is attended with faith in him, fear of him, love to him, and a cheerful

obedience to his will: the knowledge of the Lord, under the New Testament dispensation, is greater than under the former dispensation; the subject matter of it is more distinct; God is more known in the persons of the Father, Son, and Spirit, in the perfections of his nature, in his titles and characters, and in his Son; the manner of it is more clear, open, and perspicuous; the persons to whom it is communicated are more numerous; it is not restrained to Jews, but is given to the Gentiles; and all this owing to a greater effusion of the Spirit; see (1 John 2:27).

Hebrews 8:12

For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness

That is, sin; for all unrighteousness is sin, being contrary to the justice of God, and his righteous law: and the phrase is expressive of God's forgiveness of it, which is a very considerable article of the covenant of grace; mercy is the spring and original of pardon; it is what God delights in, and therefore he pardons freely; it is large and abundant, and hence he pardons fully; and this lays a foundation for hope in sensible sinners: and the way and means, in and by which God pardons, is the propitiatory sacrifice of his Son; and the word here rendered "merciful", signifies "propitious"; God pardons none but those to whom he is pacified, or rendered propitious by Christ; there is no mercy, nor pardon, but through him; he pardons on the foot of reconciliation and satisfaction for sin by Christ; so that forgiveness of sin is an act of justice, as well as of mercy; or it is an act of mercy streaming through the blood and sacrifice of Christ.

And their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more;

by which are meant all kind of sin, original and actual; sins before and after conversion; every sin but that against the Holy Ghost, and that God's covenant people are never guilty of; these God remembers no more; he casts them behind his back, and into the depths of the sea, so that when they are sought for, they shall not be found; God will never charge them with them, or punish them for them: this is another phrase to express the forgiveness of sins, and distinguishes the new covenant from the old one, or the former dispensation; in which, though there were many typical sacrifices, and a typical removal of sin, yet there was a remembrance of it every year.

Hebrews 8:13**In that he saith a new covenant**

In the above prophecy, (Hebrews 8:8)

he hath made the first old;

this naturally follows from hence; if the second is new, the first must be old; which is called so, not on account of its date and duration; for the covenant of grace itself is older than this mode of administration of it, and the manifestation of that to the patriarchs was before this covenant, and so was the covenant of works before it; but on the account of its faultiness and deficiency, its weakness, and unprofitableness, and especially its being antiquated, and made to give way to another.

Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away;

the apostle argues from the first covenant, being old, to its being near to dissolution, or a disappearance; and the dissolution or disappearance of this covenant was gradual; it began when the Chaldeans seized the land of Canaan; and the ark, an eminent type of Christ, being wanting in the second temple, gave a hint of its waxing old; and both the civil and ecclesiastical government of the Jews were in great confusion under the second temple, at least towards the close of it; and even before the times of Christ, John the Baptist came, and proclaimed the near approach of the Messiah, and his kingdom: this covenant was of right abolished at the time of Christ's death; upon his ascension the Spirit was given, and the Gospel published among all nations, by which it more and more disappeared; and in fact it quite vanished away, when the city and temple of Jerusalem were destroyed, which was in a little time after the writing of this epistle; so that the apostle, with great propriety, says, it is "ready to vanish away".

INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS 9

The apostle having, in the former chapter, taken notice of the first covenant, in this proceeds to show what belonged to it, that it had service performed under it, and a place in which it was performed, Heb 9:1 and he begins with the latter, which he distinguishes into two parts, and shows what was in each of them; in the first, which was the holy place, were a candlestick, table, and shewbread; in the second, which was the holiest of all, were a golden censer, the ark of the covenant, the golden pot of manna, Aaron's rod, the tables of the covenant, and the cherubim of glory overshadowing

the mercy seat, Heb 9:2-5. And next he speaks of the service performed in these places; in the first, the holy place, the common priests entered every day, doing service, as offering sacrifice Heb 9:6 and in the second, the holy of holies, only the high priest entered into, and that but once a year, with blood of slain beasts, which he offered for his own sins, and the sins of the people, Heb 9:7 and this being shut up, and entered into but once a year, was an indication from the Holy Ghost, that the way into the holiest of all, which this was then a figure of, was not yet made manifest, while the tabernacle or temple was standing, in which sacrifices were offered, which could not perfect the offerer of them, or remove guilt from his conscience, Heb 9:8,9 which shows the imperfection of that priesthood, it consisting of meats, drinks, baptisms, and carnal ordinances imposed on the Jewish nation until the times of the Messiah, Heb 9:10 which are now come, and in which there is an accomplishment of all those types and figures; Christ was typified by the high priest; and he is come as such, and the good things, the law was a shadow of, are come by him; who came into the world by the assumption of human nature, a more perfect tabernacle than the type of it was; and now having obtained eternal redemption for his people, he is gone into heaven, the most holy place, not as the high priest, with the blood of slain beasts, but with his own blood, Heb 9:11,12 the efficacy of which blood is argued from the lesser to the greater, that if the blood of beasts, and water of separation, sanctified and purified externally, then much more must the blood of Christ purge the conscience from sin, that it may serve God, since Christ offered himself to God without spot, through the eternal Spirit, Heb 9:13,14. The necessity of Christ's shedding his blood, or of his death, is proved from his being the Mediator of the new covenant, which required the redemption of transgressions under the first testament, that called ones might have the promise of the eternal inheritance, Heb 9:15 . And this is reasoned from the nature of testaments or wills among men, which make the death of the testator necessary, they being of no force while he lives, only after his death, Heb 9:16,17 . And this is further illustrated by the first testament being dedicated by blood, and everything belonging to it purged by it, the book, the people, the tabernacle, and all the vessels of it; nor is there any remission of sin, whether typical or real, without shedding of blood, Heb 9:18-22 wherefore, as it was necessary that the patterns and types of heavenly things should be purified in this manner; it must be more so,

that the antitypes should be purified with better sacrifices, even with the sacrifice of Christ, Heb 9:23 and accordingly Christ is entered into heaven itself, of which the holy places in the tabernacle were figures, there to present and plead his sacrifice on account of his people, Heb 9:24 not that it was necessary that he should offer up himself again, or often, as the high priest, his type, went every year into the holy place with the blood of others; for then he must have often suffered since the world began, of which there was no need, since his appearing once in the end of the world, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, is sufficient, Heb 9:25,26 for as it is the appointment of God, that men should die but once, and then come to judgment, so it was only necessary that Christ should be offered once to bear the sins of all his people, and then appear a second time without any sin at all upon him, to the salvation of those that look for him, Heb 9:27,28.

Hebrews 9:1

1 Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.

2 For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary.

3 And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all;

4 Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant;

5 And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.

6 Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God.

7 But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people:

8 The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the

first tabernacle was yet standing:

9 Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;

10 Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.

11 But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;

12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:

14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

15 And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

16 For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.

17 For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.

18 Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood.

19 For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people,

20 Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you.

21 Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry.

22 And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

23 It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;

26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS IX

Hebrews 9:1

Then verily the first covenant had ordinances of divine service

The design of the apostle in this chapter, as it stands in connection with what goes before, is to show the pre-eminence of Christ, from the tabernacle, and the things in it; as well as from the priesthood and covenant; and as also the abrogation of the Levitical ceremonies in particular, as well as the first covenant in general; and that they were all types and figures of Christ, and had their fulfilment in him: the word “first”, here used,

designs not the tabernacle, but the covenant; therefore it is rightly thus supplied in our version, as it is in the Arabic and Ethiopic versions: which is said to have “ordinances of divine service”; belonging to the service of God, which was performed both by the priests, and by the people; and these ordinances were no other than the carnal ordinances, or rites of the ceremonial law: the word used signifies “righteousnesses”; and they are so called, because they were appointed by a righteous God; and were imposed on the people of the Jews in a righteous way; and by them men became externally and typically righteous; for they were figures and types of justification by the righteousness of Christ, though no complete, perfect, real righteousness, came by them.

And a worldly sanctuary.

Philo the Jew says F12, it was a type of the world, and of the various things in it; though it was rather either a type of the church, or of heaven, or of Christ's human nature: the better reason of its being so called is, because it consisted of earthly matter, and worldly things; it was in the world, and only had its use in the world, and so is opposed to the heavenly sanctuary; for the Jews often speak of (hlemlv vdqm) , “a sanctuary above”, and (hjmlv vdqm) , “a sanctuary below” F13, and of (alyeld ankvm) , “a tabernacle above”, and (atld ankvm) , “a tabernacle below” F14; which answered to one another: the words may be rendered “a beautiful sanctuary”, a well adorned one; and such especially was the temple, or sanctuary built by Solomon, rebuilt by Zerubbabel, and repaired and adorned by Herod, (Luke 21:5) . And the Jews say, that he that never saw Herod's building, meaning the temple, never saw a beautiful building; see (Luke 21:5) .

FOOTNOTES:

F12 De Vita Mosis, p. 667.

F13 Jarchi in Gen. xxviii. 17.

F14 Zohar in Exod. fol. 65. 4. & 94. 4. & 96. 2. & in Lev. fol. 1. 3.

Hebrews 9:2

For there was a tabernacle made

By the direction of Moses, according to the pattern showed him in the Mount:

the first;

that is, the first part of the tabernacle, called the holy

place, in distinction from the holy of holies, which was the second part of the tabernacle; for otherwise there were not a first and a second tabernacle; there never was but one tabernacle:

wherein was the candlestick;

that this was in the tabernacle, and on the south side of it, and without the vail, where the apostle has placed it, is plain from (Exodus 26:35) (40:24) . This was wanting in the second temple F15: it was a type of Christ mystical, or the church; in the general use of it, to hold forth light, so the church holds forth the light of the Gospel, being put into it by Christ; in the matter of it, which was pure gold, denoting the purity, worth, splendour, glory, and duration of the church; in the parts of it, it had one shaft in the middle of it, in which all the parts met and cemented, typical of Christ the principal, and head of the church, whose situation is in the midst of the church, and who unites all together, and is but one: the six branches of it may intend all the members of the church, and especially the ministers of the word; the seven lamps with oil in them, may have a respect to the seven spirits of God, or the Spirit of God with his gifts and graces, and a profession of religion with grace along with it: and it was typical of the church in its ornaments and decorations; its bowls, knops, and flowers, may signify the various gifts of the Spirit, beautifying ministers, and fitting them for usefulness; and in the appurtenances of it, the tongs and snuff dishes may signify church discipline, censures, and excommunications.

And the table and the shewbread;

the table, with the shewbread on it, was also in the tabernacle, on the north side of it, and without the vail, (Exodus 26:35) (40:22) . This was also wanting in the second temple F16: the table was typical of Christ, and of communion with him; of the person of Christ; in the matter of it, which was Shittim wood overlaid with gold, whereby were signified the two natures of Christ in one person; the human nature by the Shittim wood, which is incorruptible, for though he died he saw no corruption, and is risen again, and lives for ever; and the divine nature by the gold, all the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him; and in the decorations of it, as the border, golden crown which may respect the fulness of his grace, and the honour and glory he is crowned with, which render him exceeding valuable and precious: and it may be typical of communion with him, either hereafter, when the saints shall sit with him as at a table, and

eat and drink with him in the kingdom of his Father; or here, to which Christ admits them, and than which nothing is more honourable, comfortable, and desirable; and it may be significative of the ministration of the word and ordinances, of which Christ is the sum and substance, and in which he grants his people fellowship with him: to this table belonged rings and bars to carry it from place to place, which was done by the priests; where the church is, there Christ is, and there is the ministration of his word and ordinances; and which are sometimes moved from one place to another, by the ministers of the word, according to divine direction. The “shewbread”, on the table, was typical either of the church of Christ, the saints, who may be signified by the unleavened cakes, being true and sincere, and without the leaven of malice and hypocrisy; and by twelve of them, which may represent the twelve tribes of Israel, the whole spiritual Israel of God; and by bread of faces, as the word for shewbread may be rendered, since they are always before the Lord, and his eyes are continually upon them; they are set upon the pure table, Christ, on whom they are safe, and by whom they are accepted with God: and the shewbread being set in rows, may denote their order and harmony; and their being removed every sabbath day, may signify the succession of saints in the church, as one is removed, another is brought in; and the frankincense put upon each row, shows them to be a sweet savour to God: or else the shewbread was typical of Christ himself, who is the bread of life, the food of his people; and may be signified by the shewbread for its fineness and purity, being made of fine flour, Christ is the finest of the wheat, bread from heaven, and angels’ food; for its quantity, twelve cakes, with Christ, is bread enough, and to spare, for all the elect; for its continuance, Christ always abides, and such as feed upon him live for ever; for its gratefulness, Christ’s flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed; and for its being only for the priests, as only such who are made priests to God, live by faith on Christ; see (Leviticus 25:5-9) . Moreover, the intercession of Christ may be prefigured by the shewbread, or bread of faces, he being the angel of God’s presence or face, who appears in the presence of God for his people; and this consisting of twelve loaves, according to the number of the tribes of Israel, shows that Christ represents the whole Israel of God in heaven, and intercedes for them; and whereas the shewbread always continued, no sooner was one set of loaves removed, but another was put in their room; this may point at the continual intercession of Christ for

his people; and the frankincense may denote the acceptableness of it to God.

Which is called the sanctuary;

or “holy”; this refers either to the first part of the tabernacle, which was called the holy place, in which the priests in common ministered; or else to the things which were in it, now mentioned, the candlestick table, and shewbread; to which the Ethiopic version adds, and the golden censer, which it leaves out in the fourth verse; which version renders these words, “and these they call holy”; and so the Arabic version, “which are called holy things”, as they were, as well as the place in which they were; so the candlestick is called the holy candlestick in the Apocrypha,

“As the clear light is upon the holy candlestick; so is the beauty of the face in ripe age.”
(Sirach 26:17)

and the ark, candlestick, table, censer, and altar, are called (skeuh) (iera) , “holy vessels”, by Philo the Jew F17; but the former sense seems best, when compared with the following verse.

FOOTNOTES:

F15 T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 4. 1.

F16 Menasseh ben Israel Conciliat. in Gen. qu. 41.

F17 De Vita Mosis, l. 3. p. 668.

Hebrews 9:3

And after the second veil

Were there more veils than one? the Scripture speaks but of one, (Exodus 26:31) there was indeed an hanging for the door of the tent, but that is not called a veil; nor was there more than one veil in the tabernacle, nor in the temple of Solomon; but in the second temple, under which the apostle lived, there were two veils, which divided between the holy place, and the holy of holies; and the innermost of these the apostle means: and so the Jewish writers F18 constantly affirm, that there were two veils between the said places, and that two new ones were made every year {s}. So on the day of atonement, when the high priest went into the most holy place, with the incense, it is said F20, that

between (twkwrph ytv) , “the two veils”, which divide between the holy, and holy of holies, and there was the space of a cubit between them.”

The reason of these two veils may be seen in the account Maimonides gives of this matter F21:

“in the first temple there was a wall which divided between the holy, and holy of holies, the thickness of a cubit; but when they built the second temple, it was doubted by them, whether the thickness of the wall was of the measure of the holy place, or of the measure of the holy of holies; wherefore they made the holy of holies twenty cubits complete, and the holy place forty cubits complete, and they left the space of a cubit between the holy, and the holy of holies; and they did not build a wall in the second temple, but they made (twkwrp ytv) , “two veils”, one on the side of the holy of holies, and the other on the side of the holy place, and between them a cubit answerable to the thickness of the wall, which was in the first temple; but in the first temple there was but one veil only, as it is said, (Exodus 26:33) and the veil shall divide unto you”

And to this account other Jewish writers F23 agree; and the space between the two veils is called by them (Nyoqrj) F24, (taraxiv) , from the trouble and perplexity this affair gave them. This veil, or veils, might represent the sin of man, which separates between God and men, excludes from heaven; but is removed by the death of Christ, when the veil was rent in twain; so that now there is an open way to heaven; Christ has entered into it by his own blood; and saints have boldness to enter there by faith and hope now, and shall hereafter personally enter into it: or else this veil may signify the ceremonial law, which separated between Jew and Gentile, and is abolished by the death of Christ: or rather it was typical of the flesh, or human nature of Christ, called the veil of his flesh, (Hebrews 10:20) (See Gill on Hebrews 10:20). Now within this second veil was

the tabernacle,

or that part of it, the second part,

“he walked in the temple till he came

which is called the holiest of all;

which was either typical of Christ, who is called the most Holy, (Daniel 9:24) he being so in both natures, divine and human; or of heaven, for the holy places, made with hands, were figures of heaven, (Hebrews 9:24) for its holiness, it being the habitation of the holy God, holy angels, and spirits of just men made perfect; and for its invisibility, and the unseen things which faith and hope, which enter within the vail, are the evidence of; and for the things that are in it, typified by the following ones.

FOOTNOTES:

F18 T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 54. 1. & Cetubot, fol. 106. 1. Vid. Philo de Vita Mosis, l. 3. p. 667.

F19 Misn. Shekalim, c. 8. sect. 5. Maimon. Cele Hamikdash, c. 7. sect. 16.

F20 Misna Yoma, c. 5. sect. 1. Vid. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 10. fol. 8. 3.

F21 Hilchot Beth Habbechira, c. 4. sect. 2.

F23 Gloss. & Tosephot in T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 51. 2. & Bartenora in Misn. Yoma, c. 5. sect. 1. & in Middot, c. 4. sect. 7.

F24 Misn. Middot ib. & T. Bab. Yoma ib. & Gloss. in T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 106. 1.

Hebrews 9:5**And over it the cherubim of glory**

Or "glorious cherubim", where the Shechinah, or divine glory, dwelt, (Psalms 80:1) . These were over the ark, and were in number two, as were the cherubim which God placed at the garden of Eden, (Genesis 3:24) according to the opinion of the ancient Jews F21; and very likely these were made after the form of them. Some have thought them to be birds of a very terrible aspect, which were set there to deter Adam and Eve from coming to the tree of life; and both Philo F23 and Josephus F24 say, they were winged fowls; but the generality of the Jewish writers take them for angels F25; and some of them say they were destroying angels, or noxious spirits F26, which is not probable; but why angels should be so called, and what was their appearance, there are different opinions. Jerom says F1 the word signifies a multitude of knowledge; and indeed Philo the Jew F2 observes, that the Greeks would interpret the Hebrew word, much knowledge and understanding; and another Jewish writer F3 affirms, that the word "cherubim" is a name for separate intelligences, as if angels were so

called from their great knowledge, and that the word is the same as "cerabbim", as "Rabbins", doctors, or teachers; but for the most part they interpret it, "as young men" F4, because that angels have appeared in the form of young men. So in the Talmud F5 it is asked,

``what does cherub signify?" says R. Abhu, (aybrk) , "as a young man", for so in Babylon they call a young man (aybr) ."

Some think that the word "cherub" is the same with (bwkr) , "Recub", the letters transposed, which signifies "a chariot", because God is said to ride upon a "cherub" and the angels are called the chariots of the Lord, (Psalms 18:10) (68:17) (Zechariah 6:1 Zechariah 6:5) to which may be added, that Ezekiel's vision of the "cherubim" is frequently, by the Jews F6, called (hbkrm) , "Mercabah", or "the chariot"; and mention is made of the chariot of the cherubim, in (1 Chronicles 28:18) to which reference may be had in (Habakkuk 3:8) though I rather think, with others, that the word is derived from (brk) , "Carab", which in the Syriac and Arabic languages signifies "to plough", and so in the Talmud F7; and a cherub took its name from hence, because of the ox, whose face it had, that being a creature made use of in ploughing; and that the face of an ox, and the face of a cherub, is the same, may easily be concluded from (Ezekiel 1:10) (10:14) . And now because that Ezekiel's cherubim had four faces, the face of a man, the face of a lion, the face of an ox, and the face of an eagle; and the "cherubim" in the temple were in the same form, as may be gathered from (Ezekiel 41:18 Ezekiel 41:19) those that were placed at the garden of Eden may be thought to be in the same form also: and some of late have fancied, that they were an hieroglyphic of the trinity of persons in the Godhead, signified by the ox, the lion, and eagle; and of the incarnation of the Son of God, the face of a man being added to them; to support which notion it is further observed, that the word (Mybwkr) should be pronounced "ce-rubbim", and interpreted, "as the mighty ones". But it should be known, that the word is also used in the singular number, (Psalms 18:10) (Ezekiel 10:4) and every single cherub had these four faces, so that each of them must be a representative of the Trinity, and of the incarnate Saviour, of which only the word in the singular number can be used; and then it can only be said of it, "cerub", as "the mighty one" which observation greatly weakens what is brought to support

the fancy: besides, if the cherubim were an emblem of a plurality of persons in the Godhead, they would rather be an emblem of a quaternity, and not of a trinity of persons, since each had four faces, and those distinct from each other; for the face of a man is as much a distinct face as any of the rest. Now the human nature of Christ is no distinct person, much less one in the Godhead; and besides is the inferior nature of Christ, whereas the face of the man, in the “cherubim”, is superior to the rest, which are the faces of irrational animals. Moreover, this would give us a similitude of the divine Being, and of that in him which is most incomprehensible by us, the trinity of persons in the Godhead; and so an answer may be given to such questions, the sense of which suggests, that no answer can be returned to them, (Isaiah 40:18 Isaiah 40:25) (46:5) and though the second Person often appeared in human form, and in the fulness of time became incarnate, and the Holy Ghost once descended as a dove, yet the Father’s shape was never seen at any time, (John 5:37) to which may be added, that this notion seems contrary to the second command, “thou shalt not make unto thee any likeness of anything that is in heaven above”, (Exodus 20:4) for allowing that the cherubim at the garden of Eden were figures made by the Lord himself, it is not credible he should make such, he afterwards forbid others to make; besides, the “cherubim” in the tabernacle and temple were the same figures with those in Eden, as is owned; and these were ordered of God to be made by men, and therefore surely cannot be thought to be figures, emblems, and representations of God himself in his three divine persons; likewise the cherubim are not only distinguished from him, but instead of being figures of him, they are always represented as vehicles on which he sits or rides, (Exodus 25:22) (Psalms 80:1) (18:10) . Once more, it may deserve some little consideration, that the prince of Tyre, a type of antichrist, the man of sin, is called a “cherub”, (Ezekiel 28:14 Ezekiel 28:16) which surely cannot be in allusion to the divine Being, and the persons in the Godhead, but very well in allusion to angels, the sons of God, as civil magistrates, good and bad, are sometimes called. No doubt there was something signified by the “cherubim” in the tabernacle and temple; but that this should be the mystery of them, is not easy of belief. Philo the Jew makes the “cherubim” to signify the two powers of God, his creative and governing powers F8; and the Jews frequently speak of (Mybwrkd azr) , “the mystery of the cherubim” F9: the “cherubim” over the ark, here spoken of, are sometimes allegorized

of the two Testaments, the Old and New; the matter of them being of gold may denote the excellency, purity, simplicity, and duration of them; their number is two, as were the “cherubim”; and as they were alike, and of one measure and size, this may intend the agreement between them; the doctrines, promises, prophecies, types, and figures of the Old Testament agree with the New; and the account that the one gives of the person and offices, and grace of Christ, agrees with the other; their situation and position, being placed at the two ends of the mercy seat, and looking towards it, may denote their being full of Christ, from one end to the other, and their pointing at him, and bearing witness to him; here God also reveals himself, as he did between the “cherubim”; and these are glorious as they were, full of glory, containing the glorious Gospel of the blessed God: though rather the “cherubim” on the mercy seat were symbols and representations of angels, since to these the Apostle Peter seems to allude, in (1 Peter 1:12) , their being made of gold may denote their excellency, purity, and simplicity; their being on the mercy seat shows their dependence on Christ, their confirmation by him, and ministration to him; their having wings, expresses their readiness to do his will; and their looking one to another, signifies their unity and concord among themselves; and their looking to the mercy seat, their inspection into the mysteries of grace; and their being over the ark, and God being in the midst of them, declares the presence of God with them, whose face they always behold; and as these “cherubim” of glory, they are very glorious creatures, and in the glory of them will Christ come a second time:

shadowing the mercy seat;

that is, with their wings, as in (Exodus 25:20) which was typical of Christ; its name agrees with him, a mercy seat; for in him God shows himself merciful to his people; all the stores of mercy are laid up in him; the mission of him into this world is owing to the mercy of God; and the mercy of God was glorified by him in the redemption of his people; and he himself is the way through which they obtain and receive mercy; and he is also a merciful high priest to them: the Hebrew word for the mercy seat, (trwpk) , signifies “a covering”: nor is our English word in sound very different from it; and it was so called, as Kimchi F11 observes, because it covered the ark: Christ is a covering to his people; their persons are clothed with his righteousness, and all their sins are covered by it; and they are secured from the

curse and condemnation of the law, and wrath to come: the Septuagint interpreters render it by (ilasthron) , the word used here by the Apostle Paul, in (Romans 3:25) , there rendered “propitiation”, and applied to Christ, who has made reconciliation for sin, and through whom God is propitious to his people. The matter, of which the mercy seat was made, was pure gold, denoting the excellency and preciousness of Christ; the make of it, in its length and breadth, was just the same with the ark, in which the two tables were, (Exodus 25:10 Exodus 25:17) . Christ is the fulfilling end of the law, and exactly answers to all its requirements; his nature, to the holiness and spirituality of it; his righteousness, to all the obedience it commands; and his sufferings and death, to the penalty it enjoins: its situation above the ark shows that there is no mercy but in a way of righteousness, and that Christ stands between God and the law, and, by fulfilling it, covers all the transgressions of it; and being above it, is able to suppress all its accusations and charges: from off the mercy seat, God communed with his people; the way to communion with God is by Christ; the encouragement to go to God is from him; and the enjoyment of him is through him: on the day of atonement the mercy seat was sprinkled with blood, typical of the blood of Christ, whereby peace is made, and a way opened into the holiest of all:

of which we cannot now speak particularly;

not only of the mercy seat, but of all the things before mentioned; for the word “which” is in the plural number, and refers to all the preceding things; to discourse of which, largely and particularly, required more time than the apostle had, and must have exceeded the bounds of an epistle. The Ethiopic version renders it in the singular number; “of this”.

FOOTNOTES:

F21 Targum Jon. & Hieros. in Gen. iii. 24.

F23 De Vita Mosis, l. 3. p. 668.

F24 Antiqu. l. 3. c. 6. sect. 5.

F25 Bereshit Rabba, sect. 21. fol. 19. 1. & Mattanot Cehunah in ib. Aben Ezra in Gen iii. 24.

F26 Jarchi & Baal Hatturim in loc.

F1 Ep. Paulino, Tom. III. fol. 3. F.

F2 Ut supra. (De Vita Mosis, l. 3. p. 668.)

F3 R. Samuel Tzartzah, Sepher Meker Chayim, fol. 8. 3.

F4 Zohar in Gen. fol. 122. 3. & Imre Binah in ib. Aben Ezra in Gen. iii. 24. Kimchi Sepher Shorash. in

rad. (bwrb) , & R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 58. 2.

F5 T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 13. 2. & Succa, fol. 5. 2.

F6 T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 14. 2.

F7 T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 32. 2. Bava Kama, fol. 96. 2.

F8 De Cherubim, p. 112. de Profugis, p. 465. & de Vita Mosis, l. 3. p. 669.

F9 Zohar in Gen. fol. 99. 1. & 122. 4.

F11 Sopher Shorash. rad. (rpk) .

Hebrews 9:6

Now when these things were thus ordained

Or prepared and got ready; that is, when the tabernacle was finished, and set up, and provided with all its vessels and furniture:

the priests went always into the first tabernacle;

the first part of the tabernacle, which was called the holy place, (Hebrews 9:2) here the common priests went continually every day, morning and evening; the Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, “the outward tabernacle”, in distinction from the innermost part of the tabernacle, or the most holy place:

accomplishing the service of God;

by offering sacrifices, burning incense, and trimming the lamps, which they did every day: the priests entered into the holy place every day for service; but they might not go in at any other time but the time of service F12 the phrase, “of God”, is not in the text, but is a supplement; and it was usual with the Jews to call the worship of the temple, and especially that part of it which lay in sacrifices, (hdwbe) , “the service”: Simeon the just used to say, the world stands upon three things; upon the law, (hdwbeh lew) , “and upon the service”, and upon beneficence F13; by “the service”, the commentators F14 on the passage understand sacrifices; and again it is said F15, no man enters into the court (hdwbel) , “for service”, though he is clean, until he has dipped himself: the word here used in the Greek text is in the plural number, and may be rendered the services, because there were several sorts of services performed every day, as before observed, and several sacrifices offered; and the Vulgate Latin version renders it, “the offices of sacrifices”; and the Ethiopic version, “their offerings”; and the Arabic version, “offices”: and the service which the high priest performed in the holiest of all once a year, was divers, which is mentioned in the following verses, and is called “service”, (Hebrews

9:8) it is said, that on the day of atonement there were five (twdwbe) , “services” of the morning daily sacrifice F16, in which the high priest ministered in his golden garments: but here the service of the common priests is meant, which was every day; and it becomes such who are employed in sacred service; both to be constant in it, and to do it fully and completely.

FOOTNOTES:

F12 Maimon. Biath Hamikdash, c. 2. sect. 1, 2.

F13 Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 2.

F14 Maimon & Bartenora in ib.

F15 Misn. Yoma, c. 3. sect. 3.

F16 T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 32. 1.

Hebrews 9:7

But into the second went the high priest alone, once every year

Though this is not expressed in so many words in (Leviticus 16:2) only it is said that “Aaron came not at all times into the holy place within the veil”; yet it is the constant and generally received sense of the Jewish writers, in agreement with the apostle here, that the high priest went into the holy of holies but once a year F17, on the day of atonement, which was on the tenth of the month Tisri, and answers to part of September; not but that he went in more than once on that day, for he went in no less than four times {r}; the first time he went in to offer incense; the second time with the blood of the bullock, to sprinkle it; the third time with the blood of the goat; and the fourth time to bring out the censer F19; and if he entered a fifth time, they say he was worthy of death; wherefore Philo the Jew F20 seems to be mistaken when he affirms that, if he went in three or four times on the same day, he suffered death, nor was there any pardon for him; and as it was but one day in a year he might enter, so when he did, no other man, either Israelite or priest, might go in along with him; he went in alone without any attendance: the Jews say F21, that a cord or thong was bound to the feet of the high priest when he went into the holy of holies, that if he died there, the rest might be able to draw him out; for it was not lawful for another priest to go in, no, not an high priest, none besides him on the day of atonement. Pausanias F23 makes mention of a temple of Minerva into which the priests entered once every year; which very likely was observed in imitation of this custom of the Jewish high priest; who in it was a type of Christ,

and of his entrance into heaven, and of his constant and continued intercession there:

not without blood;

for he went in with the blood of the bullock and the blood of the goat; which was typical of the blood of Christ, by which he entered in once into the holy place, into heaven, when he had obtained eternal redemption by it, (Hebrews 9:12) which he offered for himself and for the errors of the people; the bullock was offered by the high priest for himself and his family; and the goat for the sins of the people of Israel, even all their iniquities, transgressions, and sins, (Leviticus 16:11 Leviticus 16:15 Leviticus 16:16 Leviticus 16:21) , but Christ the antitype having no sin, had no need to offer for himself, only for the sins of the people; (See Gill on Hebrews 7:27).

FOOTNOTES:

F17 T. Hieros. Yoma, fol. 42. 4. & 43. 1. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 86. 1.

F18 Bemidbar Rabba, sect 7. fol. 188. 4. Maimon. Biath Hamikdash, c. 2. sect. 3. Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora, pr. neg. 303.

F19 Maimon. & Bartenora in Misna Celim, c. 1. sect. 9.

F20 De Legatione ad Caium, p. 1035.

F21 Zohar in Lev. fol. 43. 3. & Imre Binah in ib.

F23 Arcadica, sive l. 8. p. 531.

Hebrews 9:9

Which was a figure for the time then present

The tabernacle in general was a figure of Christ’s human nature, (Hebrews 8:2) and the most holy part of it was a figure of heaven itself, (Hebrews 9:24) the whole service of it was typical and shadowy; but it was but a temporary figure; it was for that present time only; the things of it were suited to that dispensation, and are now abolished, and ought not to be revived, the ordinances of the Gospel being greatly preferable to them; and while it did continue, it was only a parable, as the word here used signifies; it was like a dark saying; it had much obscurity and darkness in it; or as the Vulgate Latin version renders it, it was a “figure of the present time”; that is, of the Gospel dispensation; it was a shadow of good things to come under that; it prefigured what is now accomplished; or rather it was a “figure unto, or until the

present time"; till Christ came, when all figures, types, and shadows fled away, and were of no more real use and service:

in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices;

that is, in which tabernacle, or at which then present time, or (kay' hn) , "according to which figure or parable", as the Alexandrian copy and Vulgate Latin version read, gifts and sacrifices were offered by the priests; see (Hebrews 5:1) (8:3) ,

that could not make him that did the service perfect;

neither the priest that offered them, nor the people whom he represented, and for whom he did the service; they could not make real and perfect expiation for sin, nor justify from it, nor cleanse and sanctify; the spiritual worshippers had their sins expiated by the sacrifice of Christ; and their persons were justified by his righteousness, and they were cleansed by his blood: the particular instance in which, legal sacrifices did not make perfect is, "pertaining to the conscience"; there is in every man a conscience, and when sin is charged home upon it, that is filled with a sense of divine wrath; nor can it be pacified with anything short of what will answer the law and justice of God, and which is only done by the blood and righteousness of Christ.

Hebrews 9:10

[Which stood] only in meats and drinks

That is, along with the gifts and sacrifices offered, there only were meat offerings and drink offerings; things which only respect the body, and cannot therefore make perfect, as to the conscience; to which may be added, that while the tabernacle was standing, and typical service was in being, there was a prohibition of certain meats, as unclean, and an allowance of others, as clean, (Leviticus 11:2-31) and there were certain drinks which were unlawful to certain persons, at certain times, as to the priests and Nazarites, (Leviticus 10:9) (Numbers 6:3) and which, for the above reason, could make no man perfect:

and divers washings

or "baptisms": the doctrine of which, the apostle would not have laid again, (Hebrews 6:2) these were the washings of the priests and of the Israelites, and

of sacrifices, and of garments, and of vessels and other things; and which, because they were performed by immersion, they are called "baptisms": and now since these only sanctified to the purifying of the flesh, or what was outward, they could not reach the conscience, or make perfect with respect to that: and

carnal ordinances:

which belonged to the flesh, and not the spirit or soul, and therefore could not affect that; besides, these were only

imposed on them until the time of reformation;

they were enjoined the Jews only, though by God himself; and were put upon them as a burden, or a yoke, and which was on some accounts intolerable, but were not to continue any longer than the time of the Gospel, here called "the time of reformation", or of "correction", and emendation; in which, things that were faulty and deficient are amended and perfected, and in which burdensome rites and ceremonies are removed, and better ordinances introduced: or rather of direction: in which saints are directed to Christ, the sum and substance of all types, shadows, and sacrifices, and in whom alone perfection is.

Hebrews 9:11

But Christ being come an high priest

Christ is come, as appears from the cessation of civil government among the Jews, which was not to be till Shiloh came; from the destruction of the second temple, into which the Messiah was to come, and did; from the expiration of Daniel's weeks, at which he was to appear, and be cut off; from the coming of John the Baptist, his forerunner, and from the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles, and the calling and conversion of them, and the effusion of the Spirit upon them: and he is come an high priest; he was called to be one, and was constituted as such in the council and covenant of peace; and he agreed to do the work of one; he was typified by the high priest under the law; and he came as such into this world, and has done the work of an high priest, by offering himself a sacrifice for sin, and by his entrance into the holiest of all, with his own blood: and he is come an high priest of good things to come; such as peace, reconciliation, and atonement, a justifying righteousness, pardon of sin, eternal life and salvation, which the law was a shadow and figure of; and which under the for-

mer dispensation were to come, as to the actual impenetration of them by Christ; who is called the high priest of them, to distinguish him from the high priests under the law, who could not bring in these good things, nor make the comers to them and to their offerings perfect; but Christ is the author and administrator of them; and these things are owing to the performance of his priestly office; and such rob Christ of his glory, as a priest, who ascribe these good things to their own merits, or the merits of others: and the way in which he is come is,

by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;

meaning the human body of Christ, which was greater than tabernacle of Moses; not in bulk and quantity, but in value, worth, and dignity; and was more perfect than that, that being only an example, figure, shadow, and type, this being the antitype, the sum and substance of that; and by it things and persons are brought to perfection, which could not be, in and by that; and this is a tabernacle which God pitched, and not man; which was reared up without the help, of man: Christ was not begotten by man, but was conceived in the womb of a virgin, under the power of the Holy Ghost; he came not into the world in the way of ordinary generation, but in a supernatural manner; and so his human body is a tabernacle, not of the common building, or creation, as the word may be rendered, as other human bodies are.

Hebrews 9:12

Neither by the blood of goats and calves

With which the high priest entered into the holy place, within the veil, on the day of atonement, (Leviticus 16:14 Leviticus 16:15) for Christ was not an high priest of the order of Aaron, nor could the blood of these creatures take away sin, nor would God accept of such sacrifices any longer:

but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place;

which shows the truth of his human nature, and the virtue of its blood, as in union with his divine Person; by which he opened the way into the holiest of all, as the surety of his people, and gives them boldness and liberty to follow him there; he carried his blood not in a basin, as the high priest carried the blood of goats and calves, but in his veins; and by it, having been shed by him, he entered not into the holy place made with

hands, but into heaven itself; and that not every year, as the high priest, but “once” for all, having done his work; or as follows,

having obtained eternal redemption;

for us, from sin, Satan, the law, and death, to which his people were in bondage, and which he obtained by paying a ransom price for them; which was not corruptible things, as silver and gold but his precious, blood: in the original text it is, “having found eternal redemption”; there seems to be an allusion to (Job 33:24) . This was what was sought for long ago by the, Old Testament saints, who were wishing, waiting, and longing for this salvation; it is a thing very precious and difficult to find; it is to be had nowhere but in Christ, and when found in him, is matter of great joy to sensible sinners; God found it in him, and found him to be a proper person to effect it; and Christ has found it by being the author of it: this is called an eternal redemption, because it extends to the saints in all ages; backwards and forwards; it includes eternal life and happiness; and such as are sharers in it shall never perish, but shall be saved with an everlasting salvation; it is so called in opposition to the carnal expiations of the high priests, and in distinction from temporal redemptions, deliverances, and salvations. Remarkable is the paraphrase of Jonathan ben Uzziel on (Genesis 49:18) .

“Jacob said, when he saw Gideon the son of Joash, and Samson the son of Manoah, who should be redeemers; not for the redemption of Gideon am I waiting, nor for the redemption of Samson am I looking, for their redemption is a temporal redemption; but for thy redemption am I waiting and looking, O Lord, because thy redemption is (Nymle) (Nqrwp) , “an everlasting redemption”.”

another copy reads, for the redemption of Messiah the son of David; and to the same purpose is the Jerusalem paraphrase on the place; in Talmudic language it would be called (tymlwe hyydp) F24

FOOTNOTES:

F24 T. Shebuot, fol. 11. 2.

Hebrews 9:13

For if the blood of bulls and of goats

Shed either on the day of atonement, or at any other time: the former of thee, Pausanias F25 relates, was drank by certain priestesses among the Grecians, whereby they were tried, whether they spoke truth or no if not, they were immediately punished; and the latter, he says F26, will dissolve an adamant stone; but neither of them can purge from sin:

and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean;

the apostle refers to the red heifer, (Numbers 19:1-22) which being burnt, its ashes were gathered up and put into a vessel, and water poured upon them, which was sprinkled with a bunch of hyssop on unclean persons; the ashes and the water mixed together made the water of separation, or of sprinkling; for so it is called by the Septuagint, (udwr) (rantismou) , “the water of sprinkling”, and in the Targum in a following citation: this was the purification for sin, though it only

sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh;

the body, or only in an external and typical way, but did not really sanctify the heart, or purify and cleanse the soul from sin. The Jews say, that the waters of purification for sin were not waters of purification for sin, without the ashes F1; and to this the Targumist, on (Ezekiel 36:25) and on (Zechariah 13:1) refers, paraphrasing both texts thus;

“I will forgive their sins as they are cleansed with the water of sprinkling, and with the ashes of the heifer, which is a purification for sin.”

FOOTNOTES:

F25 Achaica, sive l. 7. p. 450.

F26 Arcadica, sive l. 8. p. 485.

F1 Misn. Temura, c. 1. sect. 5. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

Hebrews 9:14**How much more shall the blood of Christ**

Which is not the blood of a mere man, but the blood of the Son of God; and the argument is from the lesser to the greater; that if the ashes of the burnt heifer, which was a type of Christ in his sufferings, mixed with water, typically sanctified to the purifying of men externally,

in a ceremonial way, then much more virtue must there be in the blood of Christ, to cleanse the soul inwardly:

who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God;

Christ is a priest, and the sacrifice he has offered up is “himself”; not his divine nature, but his human nature, soul and body, as in union with his divine person; which gives his sacrifice the preference to all others; and is the reason of its virtue and efficacy, and is expressive of his great love to man: and this sacrifice was offered up “to God”, against whom his people had sinned, and whose justice must be satisfied, and which is of a sweet smelling savour to him; besides, he called him to this work, and engaged him in it, and is well pleased with this offering, as he must needs be, since it is offered up “without spot”; which expresses the purity of Christ’s nature and sacrifice, and the perfection of it, which is such, that no fault can be found in it by the justice of God; and hence, the saints, for whom it is offered, are unblamable and irreprovable, There is an allusion in the clause, both to the priests and to their sacrifices, which were neither of them to have any spot or blemish on them; and this unblemished sacrifice was offered unto God by Christ,

through the eternal Spirit;

not the human soul of Christ; for though that is a spirit, yet not eternal, and besides, was a part of the sacrifice; but rather the divine nature of Christ, which is a spirit, and may be so called in distinction from the flesh, or human nature, as it sometimes is, and this is eternal; it was from everlasting, as well as is to everlasting; and this supported him under all his sufferings, and carried him through them, and put virtue unto them; and Christ was a priest, in the divine, as well as human nature: though by it may be better understood “the Holy Ghost”; and so the Vulgate Latin version reads, and also several copies; since the divine nature rather acts by the human nature, than the human nature by the divine; and Christ is often said to do such and such things by the Holy Spirit; and as the Holy Ghost formed and filled the human nature of Christ, so he assisted and supported it under sufferings. This whole clause is inserted by way of parenthesis, showing the efficacy of Christ’s blood, and from whence it is:

to purge your conscience from dead works;

that is, “from the works of sin”, as the Ethiopic ver-

sion renders it; which are performed by dead men, separate and alienated from the life of God, are the cause of the death of the soul, and expose to eternal death, and are like dead carcasses, nauseous and infectious; and even duties themselves, performed without faith and love, are dead works; nor can they procure life, and being depended on, issue in death; and even the works of believers themselves are sometimes performed in a very lifeless manner, and are attended with sin and pollution, and need purging: the allusion is to the pollution by the touch of dead bodies; and there may be some respect to the sacrifices of slain beasts, after the sacrifice and death of Christ, by believing Jews, who were sticklers for the ceremonies of the law, and thereby contracted guilt; but immoralities are chiefly designed, and with these the conscience of man is defiled; and nothing short of the blood of Christ can remove the pollution of sin; as that being shed procures atonement, and so purges away the guilt of sin, or makes reconciliation for it, so being sprinkled on the conscience by the Spirit of God, it speaks peace and pardon, and pacifies and purges it, and removes every incumbrance from it: the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions, read, "our conscience". The end and use of such purgation is, "to serve the living God"; so called to distinguish him from the idols of the Gentiles, and in opposition to dead works; and because he has life in himself, essentially and independently, and is the author and giver of life to others; and it is but the reasonable service of his people, to present their souls and bodies as a living sacrifice to him; and who ought to serve him in a lively manner, in faith, and with fervency, and not with a slavish, but a godly filial fear; and one that has his conscience purged by the blood of Christ, and is sensibly impressed with a discovery of pardoning grace, is in the best capacity for such service. The Alexandrian copy reads, "the living and true God".

Hebrews 9:15

And for this cause he is the Mediator of the New Testament,

&c.] (See Gill on Hebrews 7:22), (See Gill on Hebrews 8:6), (See Gill on Hebrews 8:8). This may refer both to what goes before, and what follows after; for Christ, that he might offer himself to God, and by his blood purge the consciences of his people from dead works, that so they might serve the living God, became the Mediator of the New Testament, or covenant; and also he took upon him this character and office,

that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions

that were under the first testament, they which are called might

receive the promise of eternal inheritance;

Christ became the Mediator of the New Testament, and assumed human nature that he might die, and by dying might obtain redemption for his people; not only for those that were then in the world, or should be in it, but also for all those that had been in it. "The first testament" is the first dispensation of the covenant of grace, reaching from the first promulgation of it to Adam after the fall, to the death of Christ; "the transgressions" that were under it are the sins of the saints who lived under that dispensation, froth Adam to Moses, and from Moses to Christ, and takes in all their iniquities of every kind: and the "redemption" of these, or from these, by Christ, at and through his death, does not suppose that there was no remission of sins, or justification from them, under that dispensation; or that the Old Testament saints did not go to heaven, but were detained in a prison, till redeemed by the death of Christ; or that their sins were only redeemed, not their persons; for transgressions may stand for transgressors; and so the Syriac version renders it, "that by his death he might be a redemption for them who transgressed the first testament"; so the Jews say, that the Messiah must die (twba ta twdpl) "to redeem the fathers" F2: but the sense is, that though legal sacrifices could not atone for sin, nor ceremonial ablutions cleanse from them; yet the sins of Old Testament saints were expiated, their iniquities pardoned, and they justified and saved, through the blood of Christ, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; whose death is a redemption from transgressions past, present, and to come; whose blood is the ransom price for them, and was shed for the remission of them, even of sins that are past through the forbearance of God; who took the surety's word for the performance of all this, which in the fulness of time he strictly fulfilled, to the satisfaction of law and justice; see (Romans 3:25) and the ultimate end of Christ's being a Mediator, and dying for such purposes, was, that called ones might receive the promised inheritance: by the "eternal inheritance", is meant heaven, which is by gift and bequest, belongs to children only, and comes through the death of Christ; and is a very substantial, plentiful, and glorious one; it is incorruptible and undefiled, and that fades not away, and as here, "eternal"; it was prepared from

the foundation of the world, and will continue for ever; and it may be so called, to distinguish it from the inheritance of the land of Canaan, or any temporal one: “the promise” of this was made before the world began, and was put into the hands of Christ, the surety of the better testament, by whose death the heirs of it come to enjoy both the promise, and the thing promised; and they are such who are “called”, not merely externally, but internally and effectually; by whom were meant, not Abraham and his natural seed, nor the Old Testament saints only, but all that are called with an holy calling, whether Jews or Gentiles, and who will enjoy both the promise of the inheritance, and that itself, in a way of “receiving”: every word shows this affair to be all of grace; it is an “inheritance”, and therefore the Father’s gift; it is by “promise”, and so of grace; and it is “received”, and so freely given, and not merited; and only such who are “called” by grace possess it; and yet it is through the death of Christ, that so it might be received in a way consistent with the justice of God.

FOOTNOTES:

F2 R. Moses Haddarsan apud Galatin. l. 8. c. 20.

Hebrews 9:16

For where a testament is

The covenant of grace, as administered under the Gospel dispensation, is a testament or will. The Jews have adopted the Greek word, here used, into their language, and pronounce it (yqytyyd) , and by it understand a dying man’s last will and testament F4. Some of them make it to be of Hebrew derivation; as if it was said, (Mqymlyht ad) , “this shall be to confirm” F5, or this shall be stable and firm; though others own it to be the same with this Greek word (diayhkh) F6. The covenant of grace, is properly a covenant to Christ, and a testament or will to his people: it is his and their Father’s will, concerning giving them both grace and glory; it consists of many gifts and legacies; in it Christ is made heir of all things, and his people are made joint heirs with him; they are given to him as his portion; and they have all things pertaining to life and godliness bequeathed to them, even all spiritual blessings; the witnesses of it are Father, Son, and Spirit; and the seals of it are the blood of Christ, and the grace of the Spirit; and this is registered in the Scriptures by holy men as notaries; and is unalterable and immutable: and this being made,

there must also of necessity be the death of the testator;

who is Christ; he has various parts in this will or testament; he is the surety and Mediator of it; and he is the executor of it; what is given in it, is first given to him, in order to be given to others; all things are put into his hands, and he has a power to give them to as many as the Father has given him; and here he is called the “testator”: Christ, as God, has an equal right to dispose of the inheritance, both of grace and glory; and as Mediator, nothing is given without his consent; and whatever is given, is given with a view to his “death”, and comes through it, and by virtue of it: hence there is a “necessity” of that, and that on the account of the divine perfections; particularly for the declaration of God’s righteousness, or by reason of his justice; and also because of his purposes and decrees, which have fixed it, and of his promises, which are yea and amen in Christ, and are ratified by his blood, called therefore the blood of the covenant; and likewise on account of the engagements of Christ to suffer and die; as well as for the accomplishment of Scripture prophecies concerning it; and moreover, on account of the blessings which were to come to the saints through it, as a justifying righteousness, pardon of sin, peace and reconciliation, adoption and eternal life.

FOOTNOTES:

F4 T. Hieros. Peah, fol. 17. 4. & T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 152. 2.

F5 T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 19. 1. Maimon & Bartemora in Misn. Moed Katon, c. 3. sect. 3. & in Bava Metzia, c. 1. sect. 7. & in Bava Bathra, c. 8. sect. 6.

F6 Cohen de Lara Ir David, p. 30.

Hebrews 9:17

For a testament is of force after men are dead

The necessity of Christ’s death is here urged, from the nature and force of a testament or will, among men, which does not take place, and cannot be executed, till a man is dead.

Otherwise it is of no strength at all whilst the testator liveth;

no claim can be made by the legatees for the part they have in it, nor can any disposition be made by the

executor of it; not that hereby is suggested, that the testament or will of God was uncertain and precarious till the death of Christ, and subject to change and alteration as men's wills are till they die; nor that the inheritance could not be enjoyed by the Old Testament saints; for it is certain, it was entered upon by them before the death of Christ; but the sense is, that there was a necessity of it, that the saints right unto it, upon the foot of justice, might be evident by it.

Hebrews 9:18

Whereupon neither the first testament

Or the first administration of the covenant of grace under the law:

was dedicated without blood;

or "confirmed" without it, that dispensation being a typical one; and that blood was typical of the blood of Christ, by which the new covenant or testament is ratified; see (Exodus 24:7 Exodus 24:8).

Hebrews 9:19

For when Moses had spoken every precept

Contained in the decalogue, in the book of the covenant, everyone of the precepts in (Exodus 22:1-23:33) for this is to be understood of the written law, and not of the oral law the Jews talk of, which they say Moses first delivered by word of mouth to Aaron, then to his two sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, then to the seventy elders of Israel, and then to the whole congregation; so that Aaron heard it four times, his sons thrice, the seventy elders twice, and all Israel once F7: but this is the written law which he spoke audibly, and in a known language,

to all the people according to the law;

which God gave him on the Mount: this may instruct persons concerned in the public ministry, to speak out plainly and clearly the whole counsel of God, to all to whom they are sent, according to the word of God, which is the rule of faith and practice:

he took the blood of calves, and of goats;

in the relation of this affair in (Exodus 24:5) which is referred to, only mention is made of oxen, bullocks, or heifers, here called calves, which were sacrificed for peace offerings, and not of goats; though perhaps they may be intended by the burnt offerings there spoken of, since they were sometimes used for burnt offerings,

(Leviticus 1:10) . The Syriac version only reads, "he took the blood of an heifer"; and the Arabic version, "he took the blood of calves"; but all the copies, and other versions, read both. "With water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop"; neither of these are mentioned in (Exodus 24:1-18) , but since sprinkling is there said to be used, and blood and water mixed together, and scarlet and hyssop were used in sprinkling, as in sprinkling the leper, and the unclean house, (Leviticus 14:5-7 Leviticus 14:49-51) the apostle justly concludes the use of them here; the blood, with water, was typical of the blood and water which sprung from the side of Christ pierced on the cross, the one signifying justification by him, the other sanctification; the scarlet wool, which is originally white, but becomes scarlet by being dyed, may denote the native purity of Christ, and his bloody sufferings and death; the hyssop may signify his humility, and the purging virtue of his blood, and the sweet smelling savour of his person, righteousness, and sacrifice. The apostle calls scarlet, scarlet wool; though whenever the word is used in the Jewish laws of the Old Testament, wool is not expressed, but it is always intended; for it is a rule with the Jews F8, that

`` the blue, which is spoken of in every place, is wool dyed of a sky colour; purple is wool dyed red, and scarlet is wool dyed in scarlet."

And sprinkled both the book, and all the people.

In (Exodus 24:8) no mention is made of the sprinkling of the former, only of the latter, which the apostle either concludes from the sprinkling of the blood upon the altar, upon which the book might lie, or from tradition, or from divine revelation: some think it does not necessarily follow from the text, that the book was sprinkled; and repeating the word (labwn) , "he took", read the words, "and he took the book and sprinkled all the people"; but this seems not natural, but forced; and besides, all the Oriental versions are express for the sprinkling of the book: the book of the law was sprinkled, not because of any impurity in it, but to show the imperfection of it, and its insufficiency to justify men; or rather the imperfection of man's obedience to it, and to point out what the law requires in case of disobedience, even the blood and life of men; and what it would be, was it not sprinkled with blood, or satisfied by the blood of Christ, namely, an accusing, cursing, and con-

demning law: the people, all of them, being sprinkled with the blood, were typical of God's peculiar people, even all the elect of God, being sprinkled with the blood of Christ, called the blood of sprinkling, by which they are redeemed, and which speaks peace and pardon to them. Some have thought only the seventy elders were sprinkled, as representing the whole congregation; and others, that the twelve pillars were only sprinkled, as representing the twelve tribes of Israel; but Moses and the apostle agree, that they were the people that were sprinkled.

FOOTNOTES:

F7 Maimon. Praefat. ad Yad Chazaka.

F8 lb. Hilchot Cele Hamikdash, c. 8. sect. 13.

Hebrews 9:20

Saying, this is the blood of the testament

The first testament or covenant; this proves what the apostle had asserted in (Hebrews 9:18) that it was dedicated with blood, or confirmed by it; compare with this (Matthew 26:28)

which God hath enjoined unto you;
the people of Israel, to observe, and which they promised to do; see (Exodus 24:7 Exodus 24:8) .

Hebrews 9:21

Moreover, he sprinkled likewise both the tabernacle
Not at the same time that he sprinkled the book and the people, for then there was no tabernacle; but afterwards, at the time that it was set up, when it was anointed with oil, (Exodus 40:9) and though no mention is there made of blood, yet Josephus, in agreement with the apostle, asserts F9, that the tabernacle, and its vessels, were not only anointed with oil, but sprinkled with the blood of bulls and goats, as well as the garments of Aaron, and his sons: the tabernacle was typical of the church, in which God dwells, being purified and cleansed by the blood of Christ; and this shows, that there is no coming into the presence of God, the place where he dwells, without blood.

And all the vessels of the ministry;

which were used in the service of the tabernacle these may denote the vessels of grace and mercy, the elect of God, whose hearts are sprinkled by the blood of

Christ from an evil conscience, and whose garments are washed in it, and made white by it.

FOOTNOTES:

F9 Antiq. l. 3. c. 8. sect. 6.

Hebrews 9:22

And almost all things are by the law purged with blood,

&c.] All "except a few things", as the Arabic version renders it; for some things were cleansed by water, and others purged by fire, (Numbers 31:23) . Some join the word almost with the word purged, as if the sense was, that all things were purged by blood, but not perfectly, only almost; but the former sense is best.

And without shedding of blood is no remission;

that is, of sin; there was no typical remission without it; and there can be no real remission but by, the blood of Christ; no instance can be given of pardon without it; if it could have been otherwise, the blood of Christ had not been shed; for so it would seem to be shed in vain, and his satisfaction to be unnecessary; nor is it agreeable to the justice of God to forgive sin without satisfaction; nor is it consistent with his veracity, and faithfulness to his word, (Genesis 2:17) . It is a common saying with the Jews, and often to be met with in their writings, (Mdb ala hrpk Nya) , "there is no atonement but by blood" F11; by the shedding of blood; not by the shedding of it, as it flows out of the body of the sacrifice, but as it is poured out on the altar; for the pouring of the blood at the four corners, and at the bottom of the altar, were the chief rites required in sacrifices; nor did they reckon expiation to be expiation, unless the altar was moistened by the blood of the sacrifice F12.

FOOTNOTES:

F11 T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 5. 1. Zebachim, fol. 6. 1. & Menachot, fol. 93. 2.

F12 Reland. Heb. Antiqu. par. 3. c. 2. sect. 8.

Hebrews 9:23

It was therefore necessary

On account of the divine appointment, and that types and antitypes might correspond; and especially it was necessary with respect to the Messiah, the sub-

stance and body of all types. So Jonathan ben Uzziel paraphrases the text in (Exodus 40:9) :

“and thou shalt take the anointing oil, and thou shalt anoint the tabernacle, and all that is in it; and thou shalt sanctify it, (lwjm) , because of the crown of the kingdom of the house of Judah, and the King Messiah, who shall redeem Israel in the latter days.”

Upon his account it was necessary,

that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these;

that is, that all the people, and the book of the covenant, and the tabernacle, and its vessels, which were types and patterns of persons and things in Gospel churches, should be purified with blood and water, and with scarlet wool and hyssop.

But the heavenly things themselves, with better sacrifices than these;

the sum and substance of the above patterns, shadows, and examples, such as heaven itself; which though not impure in itself, yet some think it, may be said to be purified, because saints are made meet for it, by being purged with the blood of Christ; others observe, that sin reaches to heaven, and provokes God that dwells there; hence atonement for it may be called a purification of heaven: but rather this may be said of it, inasmuch as by the blood of Christ an entrance and preparation is made for the saints into it. Likewise, the human nature of Christ is among these heavenly things; not that it is heavenly, as to the matter and substance of it, but may be so called, because of its wonderful formation; and which has been purified, not from any real internal pollution that was in it, but from what was imputed to it, the sin of his people. Also the whole church, triumphant and militant, may be intended by heavenly things: the Old Testament saints went to heaven before Christ came; and though they were not impure, but were the spirits of just men made perfect, yet their iniquities were purged by the blood and sacrifice of Christ, after they were gone to heaven; see (Hebrews 9:15) (Romans 3:25) . The church militant, or believers on earth, may be said to be heavenly, since they are partakers of an heavenly birth and calling; their head is in heaven, and their conversation is there; and they have a right unto it,

and are making meet for it; and they are in themselves defiled with sin, and are purified by the blood of Christ, and sanctified by the offering up of his body once for all: to which may be added, that spiritual blessings are heavenly things; they are from heaven, and saints are blessed with them in heavenly places and these come to them through the blood and sacrifice of Christ; yea, the Gospel, which is from heaven, and the doctrines of it, are sealed and confirmed by the blood of Christ: his sacrifice is expressed in the plural number; not that there has been a repetition of it, for it is but one sacrifice, and but once offered up, and will never be reiterated; but to show the excellency of it, being usual with the Jews to use the plural number of things the most excellent; so Christ is called “Wisdoms”, (Proverbs 1:20) besides, respect may be had to the many sacrifices under the law, which were types of it, and were answered and fulfilled by it; and to the many persons on whose account it was offered; and to the parts of it, the soul and body of Christ: and this is a better sacrifice than the legal ones, in its own nature and in its use and efficacy to take away sin, and make perfect, which they could not.

Hebrews 9:24

For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands

The most holy place in the tabernacle of Moses, or in the temple built by Solomon, and rebuilt by Zerubbabel, and repaired by Herod,

which are the figures of the true;

that is, the most holy place in the tabernacle and temple, was a figure of the truth of that type; see (Hebrews 9:9) as follows. Josephus F13 suggests the same, when speaking of the most holy place; he says, that it was inaccessible to the priests, that it might be as heaven to God.

But into heaven itself;

not the visible heavens, the airy and starry ones, through which he passed, but the third heaven, the habitation of God, angels, and glorified saints: this shows that heaven is a place; that Christ, as man, was out of it when on earth; and that at his ascension he entered into it, having done the work he came about, and that with acceptance: the end of his entrance was

now to appear in the presence of God for us;

Christ, as God, was always in his presence, from everlasting; as Mediator, he was with him in the council of peace; while he was here on earth his Father was with him, he was not alone; but now in his human nature he is at his right hand, where he appears before him, as a favourite before his Prince, on the behalf of another, or as an advocate on the behalf of his client: Christ appears in the court of heaven for his elect, by representing their persons; by presenting himself, his blood, sacrifice, and righteousness, before God on their account; by introducing them into the presence of God, and offering up their prayers with the incense of his mediation; by presenting them to himself, and to his Father, and obtaining every blessing for them. And this he does “now”, since his entrance; not that he did not appear before God for the saints of the Old Testament, for he was the angel of God’s presence then, though he did not appear then in the manner he does now, as the Lamb in the midst of the throne, as if it had been slain; but it denotes the continuance and perpetuity of his appearance for his people; he is ever interceding for them.

FOOTNOTES:

F13 Antiqu. l. 3. c. 5. sect. 4. & c. 7. sect. 8.

Hebrews 9:25

Nor yet that he should offer himself often

Or at all again; which shows the perfection of his sacrifice, for justice was satisfied, the law fulfilled, sin done away, and complete salvation obtained at once; which lies against the errors of the Socinians, who say he offers himself now in heaven; and of the Papists, who pretend to offer the body of Christ daily in their mass:

as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;

not his own, nor other men’s, but the blood of goats and calves; but Christ entered into heaven with his own blood, he having been altar, priest, and sacrifice: the high priest went into the most holy place every year, but Christ has entered into heaven once for all, where he sits down and continues, having done his work effectually.

Hebrews 9:26

For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world

For if it was necessary that he should often offer up

himself now, which is the same as to suffer, since the sacrifice of himself, the same was necessary before; seeing sin was in the world from the beginning, and the saints from the foundation of the world had their sins expiated by the sacrifice of Christ; but the truth is, Christ’s sufferings were but once, though the virtue of them is always, both before and after; nor can he suffer more, or again, because of his power over death and the grave, and because he has effectually obtained what he suffered for:

but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;

this is to be understood, not of his appearance in heaven, of which mention is made in (Hebrews 9:24) but of his incarnation on earth, called an appearance; not as though his human nature was a mere phantom or apparition, for it was a real thing; or as if he was then manifested to be what he really was before; for before his incarnation he was not truly and actually man; but this is said with respect to the manifestation of his invisible deity; or of him as the Son of God in human nature; and in regard to the types of the old law, under which he was hid; and with respect to the prophecies of his coming; and it designs the same thing with his descent from heaven, and coming into this world, in which he appeared in fashion as a man, as a mean man, as an afflicted one; yea, he looked like a sinful man, bearing the infirmities and sins of his people; his appearance was but to a very few, and for a little time; and the time of it was, “in the end of the world”; the same with the last days; the last age of the world; the end of the Jewish economy; at the close of their civil and ecclesiastical state, according to (Habakkuk 2:3) & so the Jews expect their Messiah (Mymyh Uql) , “at the end of days” F14: and this appearance was but “once”; there were many appearances of him in an human form, under the Old Testament dispensation; and there were many after his resurrection; but this is said to be but once, in opposition to the many types and sacrifices under the law, and agrees with his one oblation, and once suffering; the end of his appearance was, to put away sin; the filth of it, by his blood; the guilt of it, by his atoning sacrifice; and the punishment of it, by his sufferings and death, the penalty of the law; and in consequence of all this, the dominion of it by the power of his grace, and the very being of it hereafter: and this putting it away is signified by his bearing, carrying, and taking it away; by removing it as far as the east is from the west; by finishing and making an end of it; by crucifying the old man, destroying the

body of sin, and by an utter disannulling and abolishing it, as a debt, and as a law; and all this is done by the sacrifice of himself; by the offering up of his body and soul an offering for sin; as in (Hebrews 9:14).

FOOTNOTES:

F14 Seder Tephillot, Ed. Amstelod. fol. 2. 1.

Hebrews 9:27

And as it is appointed unto men once to die

Not a moral, or what is commonly called a spiritual death, nor an eternal one, but a corporeal one; which does not arise from the constitution of nature, but from the sin of man, and God's decree on account of it; by which it is fixed that men shall die, and how long they shall live, and when they shall die; so that they cannot die sooner nor later; all things antecedent to death, which lead on to it, and issue in it, are appointed by God, and so is death itself, with all its circumstances; men's days can neither be lengthened nor shortened, either by Christ himself, or others: and this statute and appointment of God concerns men, not angels, and reaches to all men, wicked and righteous; and though there have been some exceptions, as Enoch and Elijah; and all will not sleep, or die, some will be found alive at Christ's appearing; yet such will undergo a change which is equivalent to death, as Enoch and Elijah have done: and generally speaking men die but once; it is not usual for men to die, and live again, and then die again; there have been some extraordinary instances of this kind, but they are rare; it is the statute law of heaven in common for men to die and that but once; so Cicero F15 the Heathen says, "omnibus definitam esse mortem": Christ died once, he will die no more; and it is the comfort of the saints, that though they die the first death, they shall not be hurt of the second death; and the consideration of this decree should excite to diligence and industry: death is certain to God, but uncertain to us, as to the time, nor should we curiously inquire into it, but patiently wait for it, and quietly submit unto it:

but after this the judgment;

the last and general judgment, which will reach to all men, quick and dead, righteous and wicked, and in which Christ will be Judge. There is a particular judgment which is immediately after death; by virtue of which, the souls of men are condemned to their proper state of happiness or woe; and there is an universal

judgment, which will be after the resurrection of the dead, and is called eternal judgment, and to come; this is appointed by God, though the time when is unknown to men; yet nothing is more certain, and it will be a righteous one.

FOOTNOTES:

F15 Pro Sextio

Hebrews 9:28

So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many

As man dies but once, Christ was offered but once, or he suffered and died but once; and that was not on his own account, or for his own sins, "but to bear the sins of many": not of angels but of men, and these not a few, but "many"; which is said to magnify the grace of God, to exalt the satisfaction and righteousness of Christ, and to encourage souls to hope in him: hence many are brought to believe in him, and many are justified by him, have their sins forgiven them, and are glorified; though Christ bore not the sins of all men; for as all men have not faith, all are not justified, pardoned, and saved: what he bore were "sins"; all kind of sin, every act of sin, and all that belongs to it; its filth, guilt, and punishment, even the iniquity of all his people; which must be a prodigious weight, and than which nothing could be more nauseous: his bearing them supposes they were upon him, though not in him, imputed, though not inherent; that he did not sink under them; that he made an entire satisfaction for them, and bore them wholly away, both from the persons of his people, and from the sight of justice. The way in which he came to bear them was this; he became a surety for all the elect; his Father imputed to him all their sins, and he voluntarily took them upon himself; where justice found them, and demanded satisfaction of him for them, and he gave it; which is an instance both of his great love, and of his great strength:

and unto them that look for him:

with affection, faith and patience:

shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation;

this is to be understood of Christ's visible and personal appearance on earth, which will be a glorious one; he will appear in his own glory, and in his Father's glory, and in the glory of the holy angels, and in the glory of his power, to the joy of saints, and to the terror of the

wicked; for every eye shall see him: and this is said to be “the second time”; that is, that he appears on earth, and personally; for though he often appears to his people, it is in a spiritual way; and though he appeared to Stephen and to Paul, yet not on earth, but in heaven; and this is called the second time, with reference to his first appearance in human nature at his incarnation, and after that he ascended to heaven; and as this will be the second, it will be the last: the manner in which he will appear, will be, “without sin”; without sin itself; without any thing like it: without any infirmities, which though not sinful are the effects of sin; without sin imputed to him, with which he appeared before; without being a sacrifice for sin; and without sin upon his people that come with him, or he shall meet whom he shall raise, or change, and take to himself: and the end of his appearance with respect to them, will be “unto salvation”; the end of his first appearance was to obtain salvation for his people, and he has obtained it, and there is a comfortable application of it made unto them by the Spirit of God; but the full possession of it will be hereafter, and into this will Christ put them, when he shall appear: the Alexandrian copy adds, “by faith”, and also some other copies.

INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS 10

In this chapter the apostle pursues his argument, showing the weakness and imperfection of the Levitical priesthood, and the superior excellency of Christ's, which he closes with suitable exhortations to faith on Christ, as the alone high priest, and to a constant profession of him. The imperfection of the Levitical priesthood is proved, from the law by which it was established, being only a shadow of good things to come; from the insufficiency of annual sacrifices to perfect the comers to them, or to purge the consciences of the worshippers from sin; and from the non-cessation of these sacrifices which would have been, if the above ends could have been answered by them, Heb 10:1,2, but on the contrary, by the annual return of these sacrifices, sins are afresh remembered, and very good reason there is for it, since it is an impossible thing that the blood of slain beasts should take away sin, Heb 10:3,4 moreover, the apostle proves the insufficiency of such sacrifices, by a divine testimony, out of Ps 40:6-8 by which it appears, that they are not agreeable to the will of God, and are rejected by him as useless, Heb 10:5-8 and this leads the apostle to discourse of the excellency of

Christ's sacrifice above them; that they are taken away, and his is substituted in their room; that as they are not agreeable to the will of God, his is a fulfilment of it; that though they could not expiate sin, yet by the offering up of the body of Christ, once for all, his people are sanctified, or their sins are expiated, Heb 10:9,10 and this is further illustrated by a comparison between the priests under the law, and Christ; they were many, he but one; they daily offered the same sacrifices, he offered but one sacrifice; theirs could not take away sin, by his offering he has perfectly expiated the sins of his people; they stood daily ministering, their work being never at an end; he is set down at the right hand of God, expecting his enemies to be made his footstool, having done his work to perfection, Heb 10:11-14 and that legal sacrifices are ceased, and no more to be used, is proved by a testimony of the Holy Ghost, out of Jer 31:33,34 relating to the covenant of grace, among the promises of which stands that of the forgiveness of sin; from whence the apostle justly concludes, that where remission of sin is, there is, and there needs no more offering for it, Heb 10:15-18 and from hence, the apostle passes to exhortations to the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty, which he strongly urges from the consideration of Christ's priesthood, and the efficacy of it: and first, he presses them to the duty of prayer, to draw nigh to God to the throne of his grace. The manner in which he would have them approach to God, is in the sincerity of their hearts, in a plerophory of faith, an high and full exercise of it, and impurity of soul and body: the motives or encouragements to it are taken from their having boldness and liberty to enter by faith into heaven itself with their prayers, through the blood of Jesus; from there being a new and living way opened for them through, the flesh of Christ; and from their having such an high priest over the house of God as he is, Heb 10:19-22, and next he exhorts them to a constant and steadfast profession of their faith, to which he animates them by the faithfulness of a promising God, who will never leave nor forsake his people, Heb 10:23 and then to consider one another in their church relation, and to stir up one another to the exercise of the grace of love, and to the performance of good works, Heb 10:24, and also not to forsake their public assemblies, as was the custom of some, but to exhort each other to greater diligence in attending there, especially since they might observe that a time of great tribulation was at hand, Heb 10:25 and in order to deter from apostasy, which is expressed by a sinning wilfully, after a man

has received and professed the knowledge of the truth, the apostle observes that the destruction of such is inevitable; since there never will be another propitiatory sacrifice offered up, and therefore there can be no other than a dreadful expectation of an awful judgment, and of the wrath of God, which, like a consuming fire, will destroy such adversaries of Christ, Heb 10:26,27 the justice of which is argued from the less to the greater; that if the transgressors of the law of Moses had no mercy shown them, but died when there were proper and sufficient witnesses of their crimes, then such must be deserving of a far greater punishment, who treat with the greatest rudeness the person of the Son of God, and his precious blood, and with the greatest contempt the person and grace of the Holy Spirit, Heb 10:28,29, and such persons have reason to expect the vengeance of God will fall on them, since it is threatened them in the word of God, De 32:35,36 and a dreadful thing it is to fall into his hands, Heb 10:30,31. But in order to encourage these believing Hebrews to hold on and out unto the end, the apostle puts them in mind of their good beginning, how well they set out, and how bravely they behaved, by bearing afflictions and reproaches themselves; by being the companions of those that were afflicted and reproached; by having compassion on the apostle when in bonds; and by cheerfully suffering the loss of their goods upon this consideration, that they had in heaven a better and a more enduring substance, Heb 10:32-34 wherefore it would be exceeding wrong and very unbecoming, after all this, to drop their faith and a profession of it, which otherwise would issue in the enjoyment of the great recompense of reward, Heb 10:35 and as patience is necessary, it is right to exercise it under sufferings for Christ's sake, partly because it is doing the will of God, and partly because that after that is done, such shall receive the promised happiness; and what may serve the more to engage to the exercise of it is, it is but a little while and Christ will come and put an end to all the sufferings of his people, Heb 10:36,37 and that faith should be in exercise, is proved from a divine testimony, Hab 2:4 and so must be pleasing to God, when the contrary is highly resented by him, Heb 10:38 and now, lest the believing Hebrews should conclude from all this that the apostle suspected them as going into apostasy, he declares his belief, that he and they were not in the number of apostates, but of believers, whose souls would be saved, Heb 10:39

Hebrews 10

1 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.

3 But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.

4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:

6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure.

7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.

8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law;

9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever

them that are sanctified.

15 Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before,

16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;

17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

18 Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.

19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,

20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;

21 And having an high priest over the house of God;

22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)

24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,

27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

28 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:

29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under

foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.

31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

32 But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions;

33 Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used.

34 For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.

35 Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.

36 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

37 For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS X

Hebrews 10:1

For the law having a shadow of good things to come

By which is meant not the moral law, for that is not a shadow of future blessings, but a system of precepts; the things it commands are not figuratively, but really good and honest; and are not obscure, but plain and

easy to be understood; nor are they fleeting and passing away, as a shadow, but lasting and durable: but the ceremonial law is intended; this was a “shadow”, a figure, a representation of something true, real, and substantial; was dark and obscure, yet had in it, and gave, some glimmering light; and was like a shadow, fleeting and transitory: and it was a shadow of good things; of Christ himself, who is the body, the sum and substance of it, and of the good things to come by him; as the expiation of sin, peace and reconciliation, a justifying righteousness, pardon of sin, and eternal life; these are said to be “to come”, as they were under the former dispensation, while the ceremonial law was in force, and that shadow was in being, and the substance not as yet.

And not the very image of the things;

as it had not neither the things themselves, nor Christ, the substance of them, so it did not give a clear revelation of them, as is made in the Gospel, nor exhibit a distinct delineation of them, such as an image expresses; it only gave some short and dark hints of future good things, but did not exactly describe them: and therefore

can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually:

namely, the sacrifices of bullocks and goats, which were offered on the day of atonement, year after year, in successive generations, from the first appointment of that day, to the writing of this epistle: sacrifices of such a kind, and so often repeated, could never

make the comers thereunto perfect;

either the people that came to the temple, and brought them to the priests to offer them for them, or the priests that offered them; so the Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it, “perfect them that offer”; and if not one, then not the other: legal sacrifices could not make perfect expiation of sin; there is no proportion between them and sin: nor did they extend to all sin, and at most only typically expiated; nor could they justify and cleanse from sin. Contrary to this, the Jews F16 say,

“when Israel was in the holy land, there was no iniquity found in them, for the sacrifices which they offered every day stoned for them;”

but spiritual sacrificers and worshippers were expiated, justified, and cleansed another way, even by the

blood of Christ, slain from the foundation of the world in purpose, promise, and type, and to which their faith had respect in every sacrifice.

FOOTNOTES:

F16 Zohar in Gen. fol. 107. 1.

Hebrews 10:2

For then would they not have ceased to be offered

The Complutensian edition, and the Syriac and Vulgate Latin versions, leave out the word “not”; and the sense requires it should be omitted, for the meaning is, that if perfection had been by the legal sacrifices, they would have ceased to have been offered; for if the former ones had made perfect, there would have been no need of others, or of the repetition of the same; but because they did not make perfect, therefore they were yearly renewed; unless the words are read with an interrogation, as they are in the Arabic version, “for then would they not have ceased to be offered?” yes, they would; they are indeed ceased now, but this is owing to Christ and his sacrifice, and not to the efficacy of these sacrifices; for yearly sacrifices were offered for former sins, as well as for fresh ones, as appears from the following verse.

Because the worshippers, once purged, would have had no more conscience of sins;

there are external and internal worshippers; the latter are such who worship God in Spirit and in truth: but here ceremonial worshippers are meant, who, if they had been really purged from sin by legal sacrifices, and purifications, would have had no more conscience of sins, and so have had no need to have repeated them; as such spiritual worshippers, who are once purged from sin by the blood and sacrifice of Christ; not that they have no sin, or no sense of sin, or that their consciences are seared, or that they never accuse for sin, or that they are to make no confession and acknowledgment of sin; but that they are discharged from the guilt of sin, and are not liable to condemnation for it; and through the application of the blood of Christ to them, have peace with God, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Hebrews 10:3

But in those sacrifices

The Arabic version reads, “but in it”; that is, in the law; but the Syriac version reads, and supplies, as we do, (Nwhb axbdb) , “in those sacrifices”, which were offered every year on the day of atonement:

there is a remembrance of sins made again every year;

of all the sins that were committed the year past, and even of those that were expiated typically by the daily sacrifice, and others that had been offered; which proves the imperfection and insufficiency of such sacrifices: there was a remembrance of sins by God, before whom the goats were presented, their blood was sprinkled, and the people cleansed, (Leviticus 16:7 Leviticus 16:14 Leviticus 16:15 Leviticus 16:30) and there was a remembrance of them by the people, who, on that day, afflicted their souls for them, (Leviticus 16:29 Leviticus 16:31) and there was a remembrance of them by the high priest, who confessed them over, and put them upon the head of the goat, (Leviticus 16:21) by which it was owned, that these sins were committed; that they deserved death, the curse of the law; that the expiation of them was undertook by another, typified by the goat; that this was not yet done, and therefore there was no remission, but a typical one, by these sacrifices; but that sins remained, and required a more perfect sacrifice, which was yet to be offered up. Legal sacrifices were so far from inducing an oblivion of sins, that they themselves brought them to remembrance, and were so many acknowledgments of them. Though Philo the Jew thinks the contrary, and gives this as a reason why the heart and brain were not offered in sacrifice, because

“it would be foolish, that the sacrifices should cause, not a forgetfulness of sins, but a remembrance of them F17.”

FOOTNOTES:

F17 De Victimis, p. 841.

Hebrews 10:4

For it is not possible

There is a necessity of sin being taken away, otherwise it will be remembered; and there will be a conscience of it, and it must be answered for, or it will remain marked, and the curse and penalty of the law must take place: but it is impossible

that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins;

which was shed on the day of atonement: sin is a breach of the moral law, but these sacrifices belong to, the ceremonial law, which are less acceptable to God than moral duties; sin is committed against God, and has an objective infiniteness in it, and therefore can never be atoned for by the blood of such creatures; it leaves a stain on the mind and conscience, which this blood cannot reach; besides, this is not the same blood, nor of the same kind with the person that has sinned; yea, if this could take away sin, it would do more than the blood of the man himself could do; such blood shed can never answer the penalty of the law, satisfy divine justice, or secure the honour of divine holiness: but what the blood of these creatures could not do, the blood of Christ has done, and does: that takes away sin from the sight of justice, and from the consciences of the saints. Compare with this the Septuagint version of (Jeremiah 11:15) .

“what, has the beloved committed abomination in my house? shall prayers, and the holy flesh take away thy wickednesses from thee, or by these shall thou escape?”

Hebrews 10:5

Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith

In (Psalms 40:7 Psalms 40:8) . This was said by David, not of himself, and his own times, for sacrifice and offering were desired and required in his times; nor was he able to do the will of God; so as to fulfil the law, and make void legal sacrifices; nor did he engage as a surety to do this; nor was it written of him in the volume of the book that he should: besides, he speaks of one that was not yet come, though ready to come, when the fullness of time should be up; and who is here spoken of as coming into the world, and who is no other than Jesus Christ; and this is to be understood, not of his coming into Judea, or the temple at Jerusalem; or out of a private, into a public life; nor of his entrance into the world to come, into heaven, into life eternal, as the Targum on (Psalms 40:7) paraphrases it, after he had done his work on earth, for the other world is never expressed by the world only; nor did Christ go into that to do the

will of God, but to sit down there, after he had done it; besides, Christ's entrance into heaven was a going out of the world, and not into it. To which may be added, that this phrase always signifies coming into this terrene world, and intends men's coming into it at their birth; (See Gill on John 1:9) and must be understood of Christ's incarnation, which was an instance of great love, condescension, and grace; and the reason of it was to do what the law, and the blood of bulls and goats, could not do. For it follows,

sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not;

or didst not desire and delight in, as the word (Upx) , used in (Psalms 40:6) signifies; meaning not the sacrifices of wicked men, or such as were offered up without faith in Christ; but the ceremonial sacrifices God himself had instituted, and which were offered in the best manner; and that not merely in a comparative sense, as in (Hosea 6:6) (1 Samuel 15:22) but the meaning is, that God would not have these continue any longer, they being only imposed for a time, and this time being come; nor would he accept of them, as terms, conditions, and causes of righteousness, pardon, peace, and reconciliation; but he willed that his Son should offer himself an offering, and a sacrifice for a sweet smelting savour to him.

[But a] body hast thou prepared me;

or "fitted for me"; a real natural body, which stands for the whole human nature; and is carefully expressed, to show that the human nature is not a person. This was prepared, in the book of God's purposes and decrees, and in the council and covenant of grace; and was curiously formed by the Holy Ghost in time, for the second Person, the Son of God, to clothe himself with, as the Syriac version renders it, "thou hast clothed me with a body"; and that he might dwell in, and in it do the will of God, and perform the work of man's redemption: in (Psalms 40:6) it is, "mine ears thou hast opened"; digged or bored, the ear being put for the whole body; for if he had not had a body prepared, he could not have had ears opened: besides; the phrase is expressive of Christ's assuming the form of a servant, which was done by his being found in fashion as a man, (Philippians 2:7) and of his being a voluntary servant, and of his cheerful obedience as such, the opening, or boring of the ear, was a sign, (Exodus 21:5 Exodus 21:6) . And thus by having a true body prepared for him, and a willing mind to offer it up, he became fit for sacrifice.

Hebrews 10:7

Then said I, lo, I come

Christ observing that legal sacrifices were not acceptable to God; that there was a body prepared for him; and that it was written of him in the book of God, that he should come; and the time being now come, with a note of attention and admiration, the matter being of great moment and concern, he cheerfully expresses his readiness to come, immediately, without any compulsion, even he himself, and not another.

In the volume of the book it is written of me;

in the book of the law, as the, Targum and Kimchi on (Psalms 40:7) (8) interpret it; and which may design the Bible in general, the whole book of the Scriptures of the Old Testament: so (rpo) , "the book", is used for the whole Bible F18, and it is said F19, all the whole law, that is, all Scripture, is called (hlygm) , "a volume"; accordingly there are things written of Christ in all the writings of the Old Testament, in the law, and in the prophets, and in the psalms. Jarchi interprets it of the law of Moses, and so it may design the pentateuch, or the five books of Moses; and there are several places therein, in which it is written of Christ, and particularly in Genesis, the first of these books, and in the head, the beginning, the frontal piece, the first part of that book; namely, (Genesis 3:15) which may be principally designed. Books were formerly written in rolls of parchment, and hence called volumes; (See Gill on Luke 4:17), (See Gill on Luke 4:20). The end of his coming is next expressed by him,

to do thy will, O God;

which, when he came, he set about with the utmost delight, diligence, and faithfulness, in preaching the Gospel, performing miracles, doing good to the bodies and souls of men, and in finishing the great work of man's redemption, which was the main part of his Father's will he came to do; and which he did, by fulfilling the law in its precept and penalty; by offering himself a sacrifice to God; by suffering death, the death of the cross; by destroying all his and our enemies, and so working out everlasting salvation.

FOOTNOTES:

F18 T. Hieros, Megilla, fol. 73. 4.

F19 T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 60. 1.

Hebrews 10:8**Above when he said,**

&c.] In the afore cited place, (Psalms 40:7 Psalms 40:8)

Sacrifice and offering, and burnt offerings, and offering for sin thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure therein;

this is a recapitulation of what is before said; and all kind of sacrifices are mentioned, to show that they are all imperfect, and insufficient, and are abolished; and the abrogation of them is expressed in the strongest terms, as that God would not have them, and that he took no pleasure in them:

which are offered by the law;

according as that directs and enjoins: this clause is added, to distinguish these sacrifices from spiritual ones, under the Gospel dispensation, and which are well pleasing to God; and to prevent an objection against the abolition of them, taken from hence, that they are according to the law; and yet, notwithstanding this, God will not have them, nor accept of them.

Hebrews 10:9**Then said he, [lo], I come to do thy will, O God**

(See Gill on Hebrews 10:7)

he taketh away the first, that he may establish the second;

the sense is, either that God has taken away, and abolished the law, that he might establish the Gospel; or he has caused the first covenant to vanish away, that place might be found for the second, or new covenant; or he has changed and abrogated the priesthood of Aaron, that he might confirm the unchangeable priesthood of Christ; or rather he has taken away that which was first spoken of in the above citation, namely, sacrifice, offering, burnt offerings, and sin offerings; these he has removed and rejected as insignificant and useless, that he might establish what is mentioned in the second place; namely, the will of God, which is no other than the sacrifice of Christ, offered up according to the will of God, and by which his will is done.

Hebrews 10:10**By the which will we are sanctified**

That is, by the sacrifice of Christ, which was willingly offered up by himself, and was according to the will of God; it was his will of purpose that Christ should be crucified and slain; and it was his will of command, that he should lay down his life for his people; and it was grateful and well pleasing to him, that his soul should be made an offering for sin; and that for this reason, because hereby the people of God are sanctified, their sins are perfectly expiated, the full pardon of them is procured, their persons are completely justified from sin, and their consciences purged from it: even

through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all;

this is said, not to the exclusion of his soul; it designs his whole human nature, and that as in union with his divine person; and is particularly mentioned, in allusion to the legal sacrifices, the bodies of slain beasts, which were types of him, and with a reference to his Father's preparation of a body for him, for this purpose, (Hebrews 10:5) . Moreover, his obedience to his Father's will was chiefly seen in his body; this was offered upon the cross; and his blood, which atones for sin, and cleanses from it, was shed out of it: and this oblation was "once for all"; which gives it the preference to Levitical sacrifices; destroys the Socinian notion of Christ's continual offering himself in heaven; and confutes the error of the Popish mass, or of the offering of Christ's body in it.

Hebrews 10:11**And every priest standeth daily ministering**

The Alexandrian copy, one of Stephens's, the Complutensian edition, the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, read, "every high priest"; who might minister daily, if he would; but since the daily sacrifice was generally offered by the common priests, these are rather designed. The apostle passes from the anniversary sacrifices offered by the high priest on the day of atonement, having shown the insufficiency and imperfection of them, to the lambs of the daily sacrifice, which were offered morning and evening, and whatsoever else might be daily offered on other accounts; and which he also shows are equally ineffectual to take away sin; almost every word he uses shows the imperfection of the priesthood of Aaron, and serves to illustrate the priesthood of Christ. When he says "every priest", it supposes there were more than one, as indeed there were many, not only in succession

to one another, but together, having different parts of service to perform; and everyone of them “standeth” at the altar, showing that his work was not done; and the present tense is used, because sacrifice in fact had not ceased at the writing of this epistle, though of right it ought to have done; and he stood “daily ministering”; every day, and sometimes often in a day, and always morning and night, (Exodus 29:38 Exodus 29:39) The priest always stood to minister, (Deuteronomy 18:5) . Hence the Jews say F20, there is no ministration or service, (dmwem ala) , “but standing”; and perhaps some reference may be had to (twdmem) , the “stations” F21, or stationary men, who were always upon the spot at Jerusalem, to offer for such as were at a distance.

And offering oftentimes the same sacrifices;

as a lamb in the morning, and another at evening; and if it was a burnt offering, or a sin offering, or an offering for the purification of a woman, or for the cleansing of the leper, they were always the same: and this frequent offering, and the offering of the same things, show that they were such

which can never take away sins;

for notwithstanding these many and repeated offerings, even the sins of Old Testament saints remained to be atoned for by Christ; see (Romans 3:25) (Hebrews 9:15) .

FOOTNOTES:

F20 Jarchi in Deut. xviii. 5. Maimon. Biath Hamikdash, c. 5. sect. 16.

F21 Misn. Taanith, c. 4. sect. 2.

Hebrews 10:12

But this man

Jesus Christ, for he is a man, though not a mere man; or this great high priest, who came to do the will of God, and whose body was offered once for all:

after he had offered one sacrifice for sins;

the sacrifice of himself, body and soul, and this but once:

for ever sat down on the right hand of God;

as having done his work effectually, and that with acceptance; and therefore is placed as a token of honour at the right hand of God, where he sits enjoying rest,

ease, and pleasure, and that for ever; all which is opposed to the priests under the law; they were many, he but one; they offered many sacrifices, he but one; they offered theirs often, every day, he but once; they stood ministering, he sat down; his sacrifice being effectual to take away sin, when theirs was not.

Hebrews 10:13

From henceforth expecting

According to God’s promise and declaration to him, (Psalms 110:1) .

Till his enemies be made his footstool, (See Gill on Hebrews 1:13).

Hebrews 10:14

For by one offering

The same as before; himself, body and soul; this is a reason why he is set down, and will continue so for ever, and why he expects his enemies to be made his footstool; because by one sacrifice for sin, which he has once offered,

he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified;

that is, who are sanctified by God the Father, (Jude 1:1) or, who are set apart by him in eternal election, from the rest of the world, for his own use, service, and glory, to a state of grace and holiness here, and happiness hereafter; for this is not to be understood either of their being sanctified in Christ, though the Syriac version reads, “that are sanctified” in him, or by his Spirit, though both are true of the same persons; these Christ, by his sacrifice, has perfected, and has perfectly fulfilled the law for them; he has perfectly expiated their sins; he has obtained the full pardon of all their sins, and complete redemption; he has perfectly justified them from all things, and that for ever; which shows the continued virtue of Christ’s sacrifice, in all generations, to all the elect of God, and the fulness and duration of their salvation; and so Christ by his one sacrifice did what the law, and all its sacrifices, could not do, (Hebrews 10:1) .

Hebrews 10:15

Wherefore the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us

In (Jeremiah 31:33 Jeremiah 31:34) . This preface

to the following citation shows that the books of the Old Testament are of divine original and authority; that the penmen of them were inspired by the Holy Ghost; that he existed in the times of the Old Testament; that he is truly and properly God, the Lord, or Jehovah, that speaks in the following verses; and that he is a distinct divine Person, and the author of the covenant of grace; and in what he says in that covenant, he bears testimony to the truths before delivered, concerning the insufficiency and abolition of legal sacrifices, and of full and perfect remission of sin, by the blood and sacrifice of Christ:

for after that he had said before;

what is expressed in the following verse.

Hebrews 10:16

This is the covenant that I will make with them (See Gill on Hebrews 8:10).

Hebrews 10:17

And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

] (See Gill on Hebrews 8:10). The words are cited to a different purpose here than there; the principal thing for which they are cited here, is to observe God's promise of non-remembrance of sin; which is no other than remission of sin, and which is not consistent with legal sacrifices, in which there is a remembrance of sin every year, (Hebrews 10:3) and consequently, since this new covenant has taken place, legal sacrifices must be abolished, as the apostle argues in the next verse. In one of Beza's copies are inserted, at the, beginning of this verse, these words, "then he said", which seem necessary to answer to the last clause of (Hebrews 10:15).

Hebrews 10:18

Now where remission of these is

That is, of these sins; and that there is remission of them, is evident from this promise of the covenant, just now produced; from God's gracious proclamation of it; from the shedding of Christ's blood for it; from his exaltation at the Father's right hand to give it; from the Gospel declaration of it; and from the several instances of persons favoured with it:

there is no more offering for sin;

there may be other offerings, as of praise and thanks-

giving, but none for sin; "there is no need", as the Syriac version; or there is not required, as the Arabic version; there is no need of the reiteration of Christ's sacrifice, nor will he be offered up any more, nor of the repetition of legal sacrifices, nor ought they to continue any longer. The Jews themselves say F23, that

``in the time to come (i.e. in the times of the Messiah) all offerings shall cease, but the sacrifice of praise."

And one of their writers says F24, when

``the King Messiah, the son of David, shall reign, there will be no need of (hrpk) , "an atonement", nor of deliverance, or prosperity, for all these things will be had;"

FOOTNOTES:

F23 Vajikra Rabba, sect. 9. fol. 153. 1.

F24 R. Abendana Not. in Miclol Yophi in Psal. lxxii. 20.

Hebrews 10:19

Having therefore, brethren

As they were to the apostle, in a natural and civil sense, being Hebrews, as well as in a spiritual relation, being believers in Christ; which is observed, to testify his affection to them, and to engage their regard to the duties hereafter urged, particularly brotherly love, and to signify their common and equal right to the privilege next mentioned, which is

boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus:

the place saints have boldness to enter into is heaven, called "the holiest", in reference to the holy of holies, in the tabernacle; which was a type of it, for the sacredness and invisibility of it, and for what was in it, went into it, or was brought thither; as the Shechinah, or divine Majesty, which resided there; the high priest who went into it once a year; the blood of sacrifices which was carried into it; the sweet incense; the ark of the testimony, in which was the law; and the mercy seat; all which were typical of Christ, his person, blood, sacrifice, righteousness, intercession, and the grace and mercy which come through him. Heaven was symbolically

shut by the sin of man, when he was drove out of the garden of Eden; it was typically opened by the entrance of the high priest into the holy of holies, on the day of atonement; Christ has in person entered into it by his blood, and opened the way for his people; and believers in him may “enter” now, and they do, when they exercise grace on him, who is there, and when they come and present their prayers and praises to God by him; and they have now an actual right to enter into the place itself, and will hereafter enter in person: and the manner of their present entrance is, “with boldness”; which signifies their right unto it, the liberty granted them by God, and the liberty which they sometimes have in their own souls, and great courage and intrepidity of mind; which arises from a sense of remission of sins, as may be concluded from the connection of these words with the preceding; and is found to be true by experience; and such boldness is consistent with reverence, humility, and submission. The way of entrance is “by the blood of Jesus”; and which gives both entrance and boldness; for hereby sin is removed both from the sight of God, and the conscience of the believer; peace is made with God, and spoken to him; pardon is procured, law and justice satisfied, and neither to be feared, and the everlasting covenant confirmed.

Hebrews 10:20

By a new and living way

Which is Christ, the God-man and Mediator; who is called the “new” way, not as to contrivance, revelation, or use; for it was contrived before the world was, and was revealed to our first parents, immediately after the fall, and was made use of by all the Old Testament saints; but in distinction to the old way of life, by the covenant of works; and because newly revealed with greater clearness and evidence; see (Hebrews 10:8) and because it is always new, it never will be old, nor otherwise, there never will be another way: some render it, “a new slain way”; because Jesus was but newly slain, and his blood lately shed, by which the way is, and entrance is with boldness: and Christ is a “living way”; in opposition to the dead carcasses of slain beasts, and to the dead and killing letter of the law; Christ gives life to all his people; and all that walk in him, the way, live; and none in this way ever die; it leads to eternal life, and infallibly brings them thither:

which he hath consecrated for us;

either God the Father, and so it intends the designa-

tion of Christ to be the way to life and happiness, and the qualification of him for it, by preparing a body, an human nature for him, and anointing it with the Holy Spirit, and the instalment of him into his priestly office, called a consecration, (Hebrews 10:28) or else Christ himself, and so designs his compliance with his Father’s will, and his devoting of himself to this service; his preparation of himself to be the way, by the shedding of his blood, and by his entrance into heaven, and by giving a clearer discovery of this way in the Gospel, by which life and immortality are brought to light: and this is

done through the vail, that is to say, his flesh;

the human nature of Christ, through which the way to heaven is opened, renewed, and consecrated, is compared to the vail of the tabernacle, (Exodus 26:31-33) the matter of which that was made, was fine twined linen, which the Jews F25 say was of thread six times doubled; which may denote the holiness of Christ’s human nature; the strength, courage, and steadfastness of it, under all its sorrows and sufferings; and the purity and duration of his righteousness; the colours of it were blue, purple, and scarlet, which may signify the sufferings of the human nature; the preciousness of Christ’s blood, and the dignity of his person, and his royalty; purple and scarlet being wore by kings: the vail was of cunning work, which may intend the curious workmanship of Christ’s human nature, and the graces of the Spirit, with which it is adorned; and it was made with “cherubim”, pointing to the ministration of angels, both to Christ, and to his people. The pillars of it may signify the deity of Christ, the support of his human nature, in which it has its personal subsistence; and being of Shittim wood, may denote his eternity: and being covered with gold, his glory: its hooks and sockets may be symbolical of the union of the two natures in him.

FOOTNOTES:

F25 Maimon. Cele Hamikdash, c. 8. sect. 14. Jarchi in Exod. xxvi. 1. Kimchi in Sepher Shorash. rad. (rzv) .

Hebrews 10:21

And [having an] high priest over the house of God.
] The church of God, over which Christ is as prophet, priest, and King, and as the Son and owner of it; (See Gill on Hebrews 3:6); (See Gill on Hebrews 4:14). In the Greek text it is, “a great priest”; so the Messiah is called

by the Targum on (Zechariah 6:12) (br Nhk) , “a great priest”, as he is; even a great high priest, as in (Hebrews 4:14) , and greater than Aaron, and any of his sons.

Hebrews 10:22

Let us draw near with a true heart

Either to the holiest of all, into which the saints have boldness to enter; or to Christ the high priest, who is entered there; or to the house of God, over which he is an high priest; or rather to God himself, as on a throne of grace, on the mercy seat in heaven, the most holy place: to “draw near” to him is a sacerdotal act, common to all the saints, who are made priests to God; and includes the whole of divine worship, but more especially designs prayer; to which believers are encouraged from the liberty and boldness they may have and use, of entering into the holiest by the blood of Jesus; from Christ’s being the new and living way into it, and from his being an high priest over the house of God: the manner of drawing near is, “with a true heart”; not with the body only, but with the heart principally; with a renewed one, one that is right with God, and is single and sincere, is hearty in its desires, and upright in its ends.

In full assurance of faith;

in God, Father, Son, and Spirit; without faith, drawing near to God can neither be acceptable to him, nor of service to men; and a full assurance of faith, with respect to the object drawn nigh unto, and of the way unto him, and of acceptance with him through Christ, and of having the petitions put up to him granted, is very comfortable to believers, greatly becomes them, and is well pleasing to God:

having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience;

which is blind, inactive, partial, stupid, or guilty; and it is the blood of Christ, which being sprinkled on it by the Spirit of God, purges it from dead works, cleanses it from all sin, and speaks peace and pardon to it; and such may draw near with freedom and boldness, with readiness and cheerfulness, and with reverence and godly fear:

and our bodies washed with pure water;

not baptismal water, but the grace of the Spirit, which is often compared to water, in Scripture: the body, as well as soul, needs washing, and renewing; in-

ternal grace influences outward, actions, which adorn religion, and without which bodies cannot be presented holy to God. The allusion is to a custom of the Jews, who were obliged to wash their bodies, and make them clean, when they prayed. So Aben Ezra observes on (Genesis 35:2)

“that every Israelite, when he went to pray at a fixed place, was obliged to have (yqn wpgw), “his body pure”, and his garments pure.”

So a priest might not enter into the court for service, though clean, until he had washed himself all over F26; and it is to sacerdotal acts that the reference is here.

FOOTNOTES:

F26 Misn. Yoma, c. 3. sect. 3. Vid. Philo de Victimis Offerent. p. 848.

Hebrews 10:23

Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering

Either in the grace or doctrine of faith, or in the profession of both; (See Gill on Hebrews 4:14).

For he [is] faithful that promised;

that is God; and it is true of Father, Son, and Spirit; but God the Father may be more especially designed: he is a promising God, and is known to be so by his people; he is eminently and emphatically the Promiser; and all other promisers, and the promises made by them, signify little; but the promises of God are exceeding great and precious, very ancient, free, and unconditional, irrevocable and immutable, and are admirably suited to the cases of his people, and will be fulfilled everyone of them: they include in them things temporal, spiritual, and eternal; things temporal, as that his people shall not want, that their afflictions shall work for good, and that he will support them under all their troubles; things spiritual, as that he will be their God, which takes in his everlasting love to them, and his gracious presence with them, and his protection of them; and that all grace shall be wrought in them, and every blessing of grace bestowed on them: and things eternal; as everlasting glory and happiness; the promise of eternal life was in God’s heart, made in the covenant, and put into Christ’s hands before the world began, and is declared in the

Gospel: now God is faithful to all his promises, nor can he fail, or deceive; he is all wise and foreknowing of everything that comes to pass; he never changes his mind, nor forgets his word; and he is able to perform, and is the God of truth, and cannot lie; nor has he ever failed in anyone of his promises, nor will he suffer his faithfulness to fail; and this is a strong argument to hold fast a profession of faith.

Hebrews 10:24

And let us consider one another

Saints should consider one another as men, that they are but men, of like passions and infirmities; they should consider their different tempers, and make allowance for them, and their outward state and condition in the world: they should consider one another as saints, partakers of the same grace; as that they are all loved with the same love, all conceived and brought forth in the womb of God's eternal electing grace, interested in the same covenant, redeemed by the same blood, and have the same graces and privileges, and an equal right to glory; having one and the same Spirit, the same grace of faith, the same righteousness, the same fountain to wash in, the same fulness to partake of, the same throne of grace to go to, and the same inheritance to enjoy: they should consider one another as church members, the grace and gifts of the another, their different age and standing in the church, their relation to each other as brethren; they should consider them under suffering or sorrowful circumstances, under afflictions, temptations, desertions, declensions, and as attended with infirmities and sins: and the end of such consideration should be,

to provoke unto love;

to brotherly love, to stir it up, and stir up to it, which is apt to wax cold, that so it may be rekindled, and give a most vehement flame; for this is Christ's new commandment, the bond of perfection, the evidence of regeneration, that which makes the saints' communion comfortable and delightful, and without which a profession of religion is in vain.

And to good works;

not for justification before God, and in order to procure salvation; but that God may be glorified, the Gospel adorned, the mouths of gainsayers stopped, faith evidenced to the world, and gratitude to God for his

benefits shown, and for the profit and advantage of fellow creatures, and fellow Christians.

Hebrews 10:25

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together

Or the episynagogue of one another; which word is used to distinguish Christian assemblies from Jewish synagogues, and to denote the coalition of Jews and Gentiles in one church state, and to express the saints' gathering together to Christ; see (2 Thessalonians 2:1) and their act of meeting together in some one place to attend his worship, word, and ordinances. Now to "forsake" such assembling, signifies a great infrequency in attending with the saints, a rambling from place to place, and takes in an entire apostasy. It is the duty of saints to assemble together for public worship, on the account of God, who has appointed it, who approves of it, and whose glory is concerned in it; and on the account of the saints themselves, that they may be delighted, refreshed, comforted, instructed, edified, and perfected; and on account of others, that they may be convinced, converted, and brought to the knowledge and faith of Christ; and in imitation of the primitive saints. And an assembling together ought not to be forsaken; for it is a forsaking God, and their own mercies, and such are like to be forsaken of God; nor is it known what is lost hereby; and it is the first outward visible step to apostasy, and often issues in it.

As the manner of some is;

or custom; and this prevailing custom among these Jews might arise from contempt of the Gentiles, or from fear of reproach and persecution: and in our day, this evil practice arises sometimes from a vain conceit of being in no need of ordinances, and from an over love of the world, and from a great declension in the exercise of grace; the consequence of it is very bad. The Jews F1 reckon among those that go down to hell, and perish, and have no part in the world to come, (rwbu ykrdm Myvrwph) , "who separate from the ways of the congregation"; that is, who do not do the duties thereof, attend with it, and fast when that does, and the like:

but exhorting one another;

to prayer, to attend public worship, to regard all the duties of religion, to adhere to Christ, and a profession of him, and to consider him, and walk on in him: or

“comforting one another”; by meeting privately together, and conferring about experience, and the doctrines of grace; and by observing to one another the promises of God, relating to public worship; and by putting each other in mind of the bright day of the Lord, that is coming on:

and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching;

either of death, or the last judgment, or rather of Jerusalem’s destruction; which at the writing of this epistle was near at hand; and was an affair that greatly concerned these Hebrews; and by various symptoms might be observed by them, as approaching; and which was no inconsiderable argument to engage them to a diligent discharge of their duty; unless the day of darkness, infidelity, and blasphemy in the last days of the world, should be intended, after which will succeed the latter day glory.

FOOTNOTES:

F1 T. Bab. Roshhashanah, fol. 17. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Teshuba, c. 3. sect. 6, 11.

Hebrews 10:26

For if we sin wilfully

] Which is not to be understood of a single act of sin, but rather of a course of sinning; nor of sins of infirmity through temptation, or even of grosser acts of sin, but of voluntary ones; and not of all voluntary ones, or in which the will is engaged and concerned, but of such which are done on set purpose, resolutely and obstinately; and not of immoral practices, but of corrupt principles, and acting according to them; it intends a total apostasy from the truth, against light and evidence, joined with obstinacy.

After that we have received the knowledge of the truth;

either of Jesus Christ, or of the Scriptures, or of the Gospel, or of some particular doctrine, especially the principal one, salvation by Christ; of which there may be a notional knowledge, when there is no experimental knowledge; and which is received not into the heart, but into the head: and whereas the apostle speaks in the first person plural, we, this is used not so much with regard to himself, but others; that so what he delivered might come with greater weight upon them, and

be more readily received by them; when they observed he entertained no hard thoughts or jealousies of them, which would greatly distress the minds of those that were truly gracious. Moreover, the apostles use this way of speaking, when they do not design themselves at all, but others, under the same visible profession of religion, and who belonged to the same community of believers; see (1 Peter 4:3) (Titus 3:3) (Ephesians 2:3) compared with (Acts 22:3) (26:5) (Philippians 3:6) . Besides, these words are only hypothetical, and do not prove that true believers could, or should, or do sin in this manner: to which may be added, that true believers are manifestly distinguished from these persons, (Hebrews 10:38 Hebrews 10:39) ,

there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins;

meaning, not typical sacrifice; for though the daily sacrifice ought to have ceased at the death of Christ, yet it did not in fact until the destruction of Jerusalem; but the sacrifice of Christ, which will never be repeated; Christ will die no more; his blood will not be shed again, nor his sacrifice reiterated; nor will any other sacrifice be offered; there will be no other Saviour; there is no salvation in any other, nor any other name whereby we must be saved. These words have been wrongly made use of to prove that persons sinning after baptism are not to be restored to communion again upon repentance; and being understood of immoral actions wilfully committed, have given great distress to consciences burdened with the guilt of sin, committed after a profession of religion; but the true sense of the whole is this, that after men have embraced and professed the truths of the Gospel, and particularly this great truth of it, that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour of men by his blood and sacrifice; and yet after this, against all evidence, all the light and convictions of their own consciences, they wilfully deny this truth, and obstinately persist in the denial of it; seeing there is no more, no other sacrifice for sin, no other Saviour, nor any salvation in any other way, the case of these men must be desperate; there is no help for them, nor hope of them; for by this their sin they shut up against themselves, in principle and practice, the way of salvation, as follows.

Hebrews 10:27

But a certain fearful looking for of judgment

Either of some outward visible judgment in this life, which sometimes falls on such persons; or of the partic-

ular judgment which immediately follows after death; or of the universal judgment, after the resurrection, and the dreadful sentence of condemnation which will then pass, and be immediately executed; and which will be done by Christ, and according to truth, and in strict justice; it is certain, and there will be no escaping it, for it will be general. Now there is in this life an expectation in men of a future judgment, and in wicked men it is a fearful one; it is dreaded by them, and more especially in such men before described, when their consciences are awakened; it is a very dreadful one, inexpressibly so:

and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries;

which is to be understood, not of the fire of purgatory, for this is after judgment, that is pretended to be before it; this devours, that only purges, according to the Papists; this is for adversaries, that, as is supposed, is for friends: but perhaps some fiery judgment, expressive of the wrath and indignation of God, such as befell Sodom and Gomorrah, the two sons of Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and the men that rose up with Korah against Moses and Aaron: or rather the fire of hell, which is not corporeal and material, but is the wrath of God let down into the conscience; which shows the vile nature of sin, the strictness of God's justice, and the intolerableness of future punishment: and this is said to "devour the adversaries"; not only open ones, but secret, underhanded enemies, as the word here signifies; as such apostates are, before described, to God, and Christ, and the Spirit; to the Gospel, its doctrine, discipline, and ordinances; and to the children of God, and to the power of godliness in them: and with the fire of God's wrath they shall be devoured; not so as to be annihilated, but shall be eternally destroyed, both soul and body; that is, everlastingly punished, or punished with everlasting destruction.

Hebrews 10:28

He that despised Moses' law

By breaking it wilfully, and presumptuously, for which there was no sacrifice; meaning the law which Moses was the minister of not the author; and it respects the whole body of laws given by him, from God; and is instanced in for the sake of the comparison between him and Christ, and between the law and the Gospel, and for the illustration of the case in hand. Now one that transgressed that law, either in whole, or in part, by denying it entirely, or by breaking any particular pre-

cept of it presumptuously,

died without mercy;

a corporeal death; there was no atonement nor sacrifice for him, nor pity to be shown him, (Deuteronomy 13:8) (19:13) .

Under two or three witnesses;

who "stood by", or were present, as the Arabic version renders it, when the transgression was committed; or that "accused him", as the Ethiopic version; that were witnesses against him, and plainly and fully proved the fact, (Deuteronomy 17:6) (19:15) .

Hebrews 10:29

Of how much sorer punishment

Than a mere corporeal death, which was the punishment inflicted on the transgressors of the law of Moses.

Suppose ye;

the apostle appeals to the Hebrews themselves, and makes them judges of what punishment

shall he be thought worthy;

who is described as follows:

who hath trodden under foot the Son of God:

this seems to be a stronger expression than crucifying him again, (Hebrews 6:6) and is to be understood, not of what was in fact committed, but in will by persons; who, could they have had their will of him, would have pulled him from his throne, and trampled upon him: it is a phrase expressive of the utmost scorn, contempt, and ill usage; and which such are guilty of, who deny his deity, and eternal sonship; who render him useless in his offices, undervalue his sacrifice, despise his righteousness, and strip him of the glory of his person, office, and grace. And this is aggravated by his being the Son of God who is thus used, who became the son of man for the sake of men, is superior to men, and equal with God:

and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing;

or "common thing"; putting it upon a level with the blood of a bullock, or at most counting it (vnlkd Kya) , "as that of another man"; as the Syriac version renders

it; yea, reckoning it as unclean and abominable, as the blood of a very wicked man: this is aggravated by its being “the blood of the covenant”; of the covenant of grace, because that is ratified and confirmed by it, and the blessings of it come through it; and from sanctification by it: either of the person, the apostate himself, who was sanctified or separated from others by a visible profession of religion; having given himself up to a church, to walk with it in the ordinances of the Gospel; and having submitted to baptism, and partook of the Lord’s supper, and drank of the cup, “the blood of the New Testament”, or “covenant”: though he did not spiritually discern the body and blood of Christ in the ordinance, but counted the bread and wine, the symbols of them, as common things; or who professed himself, and was looked upon by others, to be truly sanctified by the Spirit, and to be justified by the blood of Christ, though he was not really so: or rather the Son of God himself is meant, who was sanctified, set apart, hallowed, and consecrated, as Aaron and his sons were sanctified by the sacrifices of slain beasts, to minister in the priest’s office: so Christ, when he had offered himself, and shed his precious blood, by which the covenant of grace was ratified, by the same blood he was brought again from the dead, and declared to be the Son of God with power; and being set down at God’s right hand, he ever lives to make intercession, which is the other part of his priestly office he is sanctified by his own blood to accomplish. This clause, “wherewith he was sanctified”, is left out in the Alexandrian copy:

and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace;

by denying his being, deity, and personality; despising his powerful operations as enthusiasm; treating his extraordinary gifts as illusions; and ascribing his miracles to Satan, and representing the Gospel dictated by him as a fable, or a lie: and this is aggravated by his being “the spirit of grace”; the author, giver, and applier of all grace to the saints; and who therefore ought not to be in the least slighted, but highly esteemed and honoured; nor will such affronts go unpunished.

Hebrews 10:30

For we know him that hath said

That is, God, whom the apostle and the Hebrews knew; not merely by the works of creation and providence, but by the Scriptures, which they were favoured with, and by which they were distinguished from the

Gentiles, and by which they knew his being, nature, and perfections; particularly, that what he said he was able to perform, and that he was true and faithful to every word of his, and to what he has said, (Deuteronomy 32:35)

vengeance [belongeth] unto me, I will recompence, saith the Lord.

Vengeance belongs to God, not as to the affection, as if there was any such passion in him; but as to the effect, there being that produced by him, which answers to the effect of such a passion among men, namely punishment: and punishment for sin belongs to God, against whom it is committed; and not to Heathen deities, one of which goes by the name of Vengeance, (Acts 28:4) nor to Satan, and his spiteful angels; nor to men, to exercise it in a private and personal way; though civil magistrates, being in God’s stead, are allowed to exercise it in a public way, according to the laws of God: and there is good reason to believe, that what the Lord here says, “I will recompence”, or revenge sin, shall be done; which may be concluded from his hatred of sin; from his purity, holiness, and justice; from his faithfulness to his word; from his omnipotence; from the notice he takes of sin, in his own people, in a way of chastisement, and correction; and from the vengeance he has poured on his own Son, as their surety.

And again,

in (Deuteronomy 32:36) the Lord shall judge his people; such as are truly so, his chosen and covenant people, his redeemed and called ones; these he judges by chastising them in a fatherly way, that they may not be condemned with the world; and by governing and protecting them; and by vindicating and pleading their cause, and avenging them on their enemies: or else such as are only his people by profession; on these he will write a “Lo-ammi”; he distinguishes them from his own, and judges between them and his people, and will condemn them; nor will their profession screen them from his wrath and vengeance.

Hebrews 10:31

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

] For this is to be understood not in a good sense; so in general all mankind may be said to fall into, or be in the hands of God, as they are the work of his hands,

the care of his providence, and are subject to his sovereignty; and in especial manner, believers, whose times and persons are in God's hand, which bespeaks his great affection for them, their nearness to him, the support they have by him, and protection from him; and they choose to fall into the hands of him as a chastising Father, rather than into the hands of men, and at death commend themselves into his hands: but here it is taken in a bad sense, and signifies to be arrested by justice as a criminal, and be brought to the bar of God, and receive the sentence of condemnation; when such will feel the weight of his hand, and the fierceness of his wrath; and this is "a fearful thing": it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of men, injured and affronted, and that have power, and will show no mercy; it is very tremendous to fall into the hands of God, in the way of his judgments in this world; the apprehensions of a future judgment are terrible before hand; and the apparatus of the judgment, when it comes, will be very striking and surprising; but to stand before the Judge, charged with sin, naked, and without righteousness, speechless, and no one to speak in favour of them; to hear the dreadful sentence pronounced, and feel the wrath of God to the uttermost, how horrible must this be! the aggravations of this are, that it is into the hands "of God" that such fall, and not into the hands of men, or mere creatures; but of God, who is omniscient, and sees through all pretences; omnipotent, and none can rescue out of his hands by force; omnipresent, and so no escaping from him; just and faithful, and not to be bribed, inexorable, immutable, and unalterable: and that he is "the living God"; in opposition to the lifeless deities of the Gentiles, and to mortal men; and is expressive of his eternity, and so of the duration of the sinner's punishment, that falls into his hands.

Hebrews 10:32

But call to remembrance the former days

The words may be considered either as a declaration of what they had done, and be read, "but ye do call to remembrance" or as an exhortation to remember the days of their espousals, the times of their first conversion: and the apostle's design in this is, to mitigate the terror the preceding words might strike them with; and to aggravate the disgrace of turning back, when they had behaved so bravely in former times; and to encourage their faith and trust in God:

in which after ye were illuminated,

by the Spirit of God, to see their impurity, impotence, and unrighteousness, and their lost and miserable state by nature; and to behold Christ and salvation by him; and to have some light into the doctrines of the Gospel; and some glimmering of the glories of another world. The Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it "baptized"; now such as are converted, and are brought to make a public profession of their faith, and submit to the ordinances of Christ, are, in common, immediately called to suffer reproach and persecution of one kind or another; so Christ, after his baptism, was led into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil: Satan is spiteful and malicious, and God suffers afflictions to befall his people to try their graces, and to inure them to troubles early, as follows;

ye endured a great fight of afflictions;

meaning some violent persecution from their own countrymen, either at the death of Stephen, in which the apostle, being then unconverted; was concerned himself; or rather some other time of trouble, after the apostle was converted, to which he seems to have respect in (1 Thessalonians 2:14 1 Thessalonians 2:15), these Hebrews, being enlisted as soldiers under Christ, the Captain of their salvation, were quickly engaged in a warfare, and were called forth to fight a fight of afflictions, and a very great one; and which they endured with patience, courage, and intrepidity.

Hebrews 10:33

Partly whilst ye were made a gazing stock

Brought upon the stage or theatre, and made a spectacle to the world, angels, and men, (1 Corinthians 4:9)

both by reproaches and afflictions;

suffering both in their characters and reputations, and in their persons and substance:

and partly whilst ye became companions of them that were so used;

they maintained their communion with them, relieved them in distress, and sympathized with them.

Hebrews 10:34

For ye had compassion of me in my bonds

When he was bound at Jerusalem, by the chief cap-

tain Lysias, with two chains, (Acts 21:33) or when he was in bonds elsewhere; which they did by sympathizing with him in their hearts; by their prayers for him, and in their letters to him; and by sending presents to him for his relief and support. The Alexandrian copy, and two of Stephens's, the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions, read, "had compassion on the prisoners"; or "them that were bound"; meaning prisoners in general, remembering them that were in bonds, as bound with them; or particularly such as were prisoners for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel; and it may be some of them, which the apostle himself committed to prison, in his state of unregeneracy:

and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods;

the furniture of their houses, their worldly substance, of which they were stripped by their persecutors; and this they took quietly and patiently, yea, joyfully; rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer the confiscation of their goods for the sake of Christ: the reason of which joy was,

knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance:

that which is laid up for the saints in heaven is "substance"; it is signified by an house, a city, a kingdom; and so it is rendered here in the Ethiopic version; and by riches, true, glorious, and durable; and by a treasure and an inheritance: and this is "better" than anything in this world; as to the quality of it, it being celestial; and as to the quantity of it, it being all things; and as to the place where it is, "in heaven"; though this clause is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions; and as to the company with whom it is enjoyed, saints in light; yea, God himself is the portion of his people: and this is an "enduring" substance; it cannot be wasted by the saints themselves; nor taken away from them by others; nor can it decay in its own nature; and the saints will always endure to enjoy it: and this they may be said to "have": it is promised to them, and prepared for them; they have a right unto it, and the earnest of it; and they have it already in Christ, their head and representative; so that it is, upon all accounts, sure unto them: and this they know in themselves; from what they find and feel in their own hearts; from the sealing testimony and earnest of the Spirit, and from the promise of Christ, (Matthew 5:10) .

Cast not away therefore your confidence

The same word is used here, as in (Hebrews 10:19) where it is translated "boldness"; and may design here, as there, an holy boldness in prayer, free from a servile and bashful spirit; and which appears in a liberty of speaking to God, and in a confidence of being heard; prayer itself should not be left off, nor should freedom, boldness, and confidence in it be slackened, or laid aside: or else a profession of faith is intended, which ought to be free and open, bold and courageous, firm and constant; and which ought by no means to be let go and dropped: or the grace of faith in its full assurance, with respect to interest in God, as a covenant God and Father, and in his love; and with respect to interest in Christ, and in his grace, and a right to the glorious inheritance, the better and enduring substance: and this shield of faith is by no means to be cast away; it was reckoned infamous and scandalous in soldiers to lose or cast away their shield; with the Grecians it was a capital crime, and punished with death F2; to which the apostle may here allude. There are two sorts of believers, nominal and real; and there are two sorts of faith; an historical one, which may be in persons destitute of the grace of God, and is in devils; and a true and unfeigned one, which has salvation connected with it; the former may be cast away and lost; the latter, though it may be remiss and weak in its exercise, yet it cannot be wholly and finally lost; and this exhortation may be designed as a means of continuing it, and of perseverance in it: the reason urging it follows,

which hath great recompence of reward;

freedom and boldness in prayer has its reward, for such that ask in faith shall have; and so has a firm and constant profession of religion, for he that endures to the end shall be saved; and so has a true and strong faith in Christ; everlasting salvation is connected with it; the reward of the inheritance follows upon it; and this reward is the recompense of God's own grace: and it is a very great one; it is the fruit of great love and grace; yea, it is no other than God himself, who is the exceeding great reward of his people; it is Christ and his glory, and the riches of it; it is a reward exceeding, and beyond all deserts of men, and beyond all thought and expression.

FOOTNOTES:

F2 Alex. ab. Alexand. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 13.

Hebrews 10:36**For ye have need of patience**

Not that they were destitute of the grace of patience; for where God is the God of all grace, he is the God of patience; and such, who are called by grace, are conformed to the image of Christ, and, among other things, are like him in this; and those who are born of the Spirit, have the fruits of the Spirit, and this, among the rest; to whom the word of God is effectual, this fruit is produced in them, that being the word of patience; and such who are brought into the kingdom of Christ, are also in the patience of Jesus; where there is one grace, there is every grace; saints are immediately called to sufferings and trials, which require patience; and, without this, there can be no enjoyment of a man's self: but the meaning is, that they needed the continuance, exercise, and increase of it; in general, to run the race set before them; to bear afflictions from the hand of God, and reproaches and persecutions from men; to wait for God, when he hides his face, and for answers of prayer, when they are deferred; and to bear up, and not to sink under temptations; and to live in the constant expectation of heaven and happiness: and, in particular, it is necessary for the following,

that after ye have done the will of God:

there is the purposing will of God, which is done by himself; and there is his revealed will, touching the salvation of men, which is done by his Son; and there is his will of precept to be done by men; and which, when done aright, is done according to the rule of his word, in faith, from love, through the strength of Christ, and by the assistance of his Spirit and grace, with a view to his glory, and without any dependence on what is done: and the will of God regards suffering, as well as doing; for to that the saints are also called, to which patience is necessary:

ye might receive the promise;

that is, of eternal life; not the promise itself, which they had received already, but the thing promised; which is the sense, in which this word is often used in this book, (Hebrews 6:12 Hebrews 6:17) (Hebrews 11:13 Hebrews 11:39) which is so called, to show that it is not of works, for promise and merit do not agree together; but that it is of grace, and will certainly be enjoyed, but must be patiently waited for.

Hebrews 10:37**For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come,**

&c.] That the person spoken of is the Lord Jesus Christ, is evident from the prophecy in (Habakkuk 2:3) here referred to, and from the character of him that is to come, (Matthew 11:3) and from parallel places, (James 5:7-9) and this is to be understood, not of his coming in the flesh, for he was come in the flesh already; though Habakkuk indeed refers to his first coming, yet not to that only, but including his second coming also; but of his coming in his kingdom and power to destroy Jerusalem, and take vengeance on the Jews, for their rejection of him: the kingdom of Christ was at hand, when he began to preach; upon his ascension to heaven, it began to appear more visible; but still the temple was standing, and that worship continued, which stood in the way of the glory of his kingdom; during which time the saints suffered much: but in a little while from the writing of this epistle, he, who was to come, did come, even within about ten years after this, and showed his power and his glory, in delivering his people, and destroying his enemies; see (Matthew 16:28) (Mark 9:1) . It may be applied to his coming to help his people in time of need; the afflictions of the saints are many; they are all for an appointed time, and but for a while; and Christ has promised to come, and visit them; and which he does often, and speedily, and seasonably: it may also be accommodated to Christ coming to take his people to himself by death; Christ may be said to come in this sense, and he will certainly come; and this will be in a little while; man is but of few days; death is certain, and should be patiently expected: and it may likewise be suitably improved, with respect to Christ's coming to judgment; that he will come is certain, from prophecies, particularly from the prophecy of Enoch, from his own words, from the testimony of angels, from the institution of the Lord's supper, till he comes, and from the general expectation of the saints; and this coming of his is desirable, because it will be the marriage of the Lamb, and the redemption of the saints, and because of the grace and glory that will be brought unto them, and because they shall then be for ever with him; and this will be quickly, in a little time, in comparison of the time that went before his first coming, and of the eternity that will follow after this; and though it may seem long, yet with God it is but a little while, with whom a thousand years are as one day; and however, since it is certain that he will come,

and will not tarry,

beyond the appointed time, patience should be exercised.

Hebrews 10:38**Now the just shall live by faith**

The “just” man is one not in appearance only, but in reality; not by his obedience to the law, but by the obedience of Christ; and he is evidently so by the Spirit, and by faith: and he is one, who lives soberly and righteously; and the life he lives, and shall live, at present, is, not eternal life; for though he shall live that life, yet this is not intended; for it is a living by faith that is spoken of, and as antecedent to the coming of Christ; but a spiritual life is meant, a life of justification in Christ, a life of communion with Christ, and a life of holiness from Christ, with peace, joy, and comfort through him: and the manner of this just man’s living is “by faith”; not upon his faith, but upon Christ, the object of it; and by “his faith”, as in (Habakkuk 2:4) his own, and not another’s; or by the faith of Christ: the Syriac version here renders it, “by the faith of myself”; that is, by the faith of Christ, who speaks, and who is the author and object of faith: the Alexandrian copy and the Vulgate Latin version read, “my just man shall live by faith”; and this life is to be now, in the mean while, until Christ comes, and because he will certainly come:

but if [any man] draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

The Hebrew word (hlpe) , used in (Habakkuk 2:4) and which, by the Septuagint there, and by the apostle here, is translated by (uposteilhtai) , and rendered “draw back”, according to R. David Kimchi F3 signifies, pride and haughtiness of heart; and, according to R. Sol. Jarchi F4 it signifies impudence; R. Moses Kimchi F5 takes it to be the same with (lpe) , which is used for a tower, or fortified place; and thinks it designs one who betakes himself to such a place for safety from the enemy, and seeks not to God for deliverance: so that such a person seems to be designed, who swells with pride and confidence in his own righteousness; who betakes himself to some fortress of his own for safety; who withdraws from the assembly of the saints, through fear of reproach and persecution; who withholds the truth, shuns to declare it, or maintain a profession of it; plays the hypocrite, and deals deceitfully in religious things; and, in short, it

may intend one, who finally and totally apostatizes from the doctrine of faith, and the profession of it: and in such persons God has no pleasure, never had, nor never will have; but, on the contrary, they are abominable to him, and will lie under his sore displeasure, and feel the keen resentments of it; such stand opposed to the just man, that lives by faith, walks humbly with God, in a dependence, not on his own righteousness, but on the righteousness of Christ, in which he is safe from condemnation, and secure of the divine favour; for drawing back is not supposed of the just man, but of any man, as we, with the Ethiopic version, rightly supply; and is to be understood of anyone of the external professors of religion, who forsake the assembling of the saints, (Hebrews 10:25) and is denied of the truly righteous in the following words.

FOOTNOTES:

F3 In Hab. ii. 4.

F4 In ib.

F5 Apud R. David Kimchi in ibid. & in Sepher Shorashim, rad. (lpe) .

Hebrews 10:39**But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition**

There is a drawing back which is not unto perdition; persons may be attended with much unbelief, may be very cold and indifferent to Gospel ordinances, may fall into great sins, and may greatly backslide, and yet be recovered, as David, Peter, and others: and there is a drawing back to perdition; when Christ is rejected as the alone Saviour; when he is not held to as the head; when false doctrines and damnable heresies are given into; and when men draw back, and never return, nor are they, nor can they be returned, and their apostasy is total, and final: but true believers do not, and cannot draw back in this sense; because they are held fast in the arms, and with the cords of everlasting love, are chosen of God unto salvation, are given unto Christ, and secured in him; they are redeemed and purchased by him; they are united to him, and built upon him; they are interested in his prayers and preparations, and are his jewels, and his portion; they are regenerated, sanctified, inhabited, and sealed by the Spirit of God, and have the promises and power of God, on their side.

But of them that believe to the saving of the soul; or “of faith, to the salvation of the soul”; not of faith of miracles, nor of an historical faith; but of that faith, which is the faith of God’s elect, is the gift of God, and the operation of his Spirit; by which a soul sees Christ, goes to him, lays holds on him, commits all to him, and expects all from him: this stands opposed to drawing back; for by faith a man lives, walks, and stands; and with this is connected the salvation of the soul, as opposed to perdition; not as though it is a cause of salvation, but as a means of God’s appointing to receive the blessings of salvation, and which is entirely consistent with the grace of God; and since salvation and faith are inseparably connected together, so that he that has the one shall have the other, it follows, that true believers can never perish. The nature and excellency of this grace is largely treated of in the following chapter.

INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS 11

The apostle having, in the preceding chapter, spoken in commendation of the grace, and life of faith, and of its usefulness to preserve from apostasy, proceeds in this to give some account of the nature and actings of it; and which he illustrates by the examples of many of the Old Testament saints: he begins with a definition of it, which consists of two parts, Heb 11:1 and with an account of the usefulness of it to the elders in general, who by it obtained a good report, Heb 11:2 and of the service it is of in understanding the creation of the worlds, the author and original of them, Heb 11:3 and then goes on to give particular instances and examples of faith among the elders, or ancient believers, which are reduced into several classes; and the first is of the saints before the flood, Abel, Enoch, and Noah. Abel’s faith lay in offering a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, in obtaining a testimony from God that he was righteous, and in yet speaking, though dead, Heb 11:4 . Enoch’s faith is evidenced by his translation of God, that he should not see death, and by the testimony he received from him before it, that he was acceptable to him; by which it is clear he had faith, since, without it, it is impossible to please God; nor can any come aright unto him, without believing that he is, and has a gracious respect to all that diligently seek him, Heb 11:5,6 . Noah’s faith was seen in preparing an ark, by the order of God, for the saving of his family, and in condemning the world by so doing, and by becoming an heir of righteousness through faith, Heb 11:7 . The next class is that of the saints from the flood, to the times of Moses, in which are Abraham

and Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. Abraham’s faith is celebrated for his obedience to the divine call, quitting the country where he was, and going he knew not where; and for his sojourning in the promised land, as in a strange one, in which Isaac and Jacob dwelt with him in tents; and for looking by faith for the heavenly city built by the Lord; and for his offering up his son at the command of God, who was the son of promise, believing God was able to raise him from the dead, from whence he received him by faith, Heb 11:8-10,17-19 . Sarah’s faith lay in receiving strength through it to conceive, bear, and bring forth a child when past age, which was, founded upon the faithfulness of a promising God; hence from Abraham, by her, sprung a large posterity, like the stars of the sky, and the sand on the sea shore, Heb 11:11,12 . Now all these patriarchs, both before and after the flood, as they lived by faith, they died in it; who, though they had not received the things promised, yet by faith saw them at a distance, were very well persuaded they would come to pass, and so, in some sense, enjoyed them; hence, while they lived, they lived like pilgrims and strangers, showing that they had no regard to the country they came from, and had no mind to return thither, but sought another, a better, and an heavenly one; so that God is not ashamed to be called their God, he having prepared a city for them, Heb 11:13-16 . Isaac’s faith is commended in blessing his two sons with respect to things future, Heb 11:20 and Jacob’s faith is well spoken of for blessing both the sons of Joseph in his last moments, worshipping on the top of his staff, Heb 11:21 and Joseph’s faith is instanced in two things; in making mention of the departure of the Israelites out of Egypt, as a certain thing; and in giving them strict orders to carry his bones along with them, when they went from thence, Heb 11:22 the third class of men, famous for faith, is that of such from the times of Moses to the judges, in which are the parents of Moses, Moses himself, the Israelites in general, and the harlot Rahab. The parents of Moses showed their faith in hiding him three months, seeing him to be a lovely child, contrary to the king’s edict, Heb 11:23 . Moses’s faith lay in refusing to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; in preferring afflictions to the pleasures of sin, and the reproach of Christ to the riches of Egypt; he having, by faith, a respect to the heavenly glory, another instance of it; and by forsaking Egypt, without fear of the king’s displeasure, by faith seeing a King who is invisible; and by keeping the passover, with the sprinkling of blood, that so the destroyer of the firstborn of Egypt might not

touch the Israelites, Heb 11:24-28 . The instances of the faith of the Israelites are their passage through the Red sea, as on dry land, when the Egyptians, who attempted it, were drowned; and their compassing the walls of Jericho seven days, believing they would fall, as accordingly they did, Heb 11:29,30 . The faith of Rahab, the harlot, is commended for two things; for peaceably receiving the spies that came to her; and for the salvation she believed she should have, and had, when the unbelieving inhabitants of Jericho perished, Heb 11:31 . And the last class of heroes for faith, includes the times of the judges, kings, prophets, and the Maccabees; the judges, kings, and prophets, are lumped together, and only a few of their names are observed as a specimen of the rest, the apostle not having time to mention particular one, Heb 11:32 and various instances of without reference to particular persons to whom they belong, are recorded; some which lay in doing things greatly heroic, and even miraculous, Heb 11:33-35 and others in suffering things the most cruel and torturing, and death itself in divers shapes, Heb 11:35-38 . And thus, by an induction of particulars, the apostle proves both his definition of faith, Heb 11:1 and the usefulness of it to the elders, Heb 11:2 they by it obtaining a good report, though they did not receive the thing promised, Heb 11:39 wherefore New Testament saints have great encouragement, and much more reason, to exercise this grace; since God has provided for them the better thing he promised to others, that the one without the other might not be perfect, Heb 11:40 .

Hebrews 11:1

1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

2 For by it the elders obtained a good report.

3 Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

4 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

5 By faith Enoch was translated that he should not

see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

7 By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

11 Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.

12 Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.

13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

14 For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.

15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.

16 But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called

their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

17 By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,

18 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:

19 Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

21 By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.

22 By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

24 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

28 Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.

29 By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry

land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.

30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.

31 By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.

32 And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets:

33 Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions.

34 Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

35 Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:

36 And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment:

37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;

38 (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

39 And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS XI

Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for

The “faith” here spoken of is not a mere moral virtue, which is a branch of the law; nor a bare assent to anything revealed, declared, and affirmed in the Gospel; nor a faith of doing miracles; nor an implicit one; nor a mere profession of faith, which sometimes is but temporary; nor the word or doctrine of faith; but that which is made mention of in the preceding chapter, by which the just man lives, and which has the salvation of the soul annexed to it: and it does not so much design any particular branch, or act of faith, but as that in general respects the various promises, and blessings of grace; and it chiefly regards the faith of Old Testament saints, though that, as to its nature, object, and acts, is the same with the faith of New Testament ones; and is a firm persuasion of the power, faithfulness, and love of God in Christ, and of interest therein, and in all special blessings: it is described as “the substance of things hoped for”; and which, in general, are things unseen, and as yet not enjoyed; future, and yet to come; difficult to be obtained, though possible, otherwise there would be no hope of them; and which are promised and laid up; and in particular, the things hoped for by Old Testament saints were Christ, and eternal glory and happiness; and by New Testament ones, more grace, perseverance in it, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal life. Now faith is the “substance” of these things; it is the ground and foundation of them, in which there is some standing hope; in which sense the word (υποστασιω) is used by Septuagint in (Psalms 69:2) . The word of promise is principal ground and foundation of hope; and faith, as leaning on the word, is a less principal ground; it is a confident persuasion, expectation, and assurance of them. The Syriac version renders it, the “certainty” of them; it is the subsistence of them, and what gives them an existence, at least a mental one; so with respect to the faith and hope of the Old Testament saints, the incarnation, sufferings, and death of Christ, his resurrection, ascension, and session at God’s right hand, are spoken of, as if they then were; and so are heaven, and glory, and everlasting salvation, with regard to the faith and hope of New Testament saints: yea, faith gives a kind of possession of those things before hand, (John 6:47) . Philo the Jew F5 says much the same thing of faith;

“the only infallible and certain good thing (says he) is, that faith which is faith towards God; it is the solace of life, (plhrwma crhstwn elpidwn) , “the fulness of good hopes””

It follows here,

the evidence of things not seen;

of things past, of what was done in eternity, in the council and covenant of grace and peace; of what has been in time, in creation, and providence; of the birth, miracles, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ; of things present, the being, perfections, love of God; of the session of Christ at God’s right hand, and his continual intercession; and of the various blessings of grace revealed in the Gospel; and of future ones, as the invisible realities of another world: faith has both certainty and evidence in it.

FOOTNOTES:

F5 De Abrahamo, p. 387.

Hebrews 11:2

For by it the elders obtained a good report.

] By whom are meant, not merely old men, or elders in age, but such who lived in ancient times; some before the flood, and to a great age, and others who were in office, civil or ecclesiastical, and were the ancestors and predecessors of the Hebrews; who in general obtained or received a good report from God; that they were the chosen of God, and were justified and accepted with him; that they were the children and friends of God, and should be glorified; and from men, from good men, for their faith and holiness; and from evil men, for their good works: and these also believed the report of the Gospel, and gave a good report of God, and of the good land, and adorned their profession; particularly, Abel received a good report, that he was righteous; and Enoch, that he pleased God, and walked with him; and Noah, that he was a just man, perfect in his generation, and also walked with God; and Abraham, that he was a believer, a friend of God, and one that feared and obeyed him; and Job, that he was a man that feared God, and shunned evil; and Moses, that he was a meek man, and a faithful one; and David, that he was a man after God’s own heart, and fulfilled his will; and so others: and they received this report by faith, and as a fruit of it; which shows that faith is no new thing, and that the character of a believer is an old and honourable one. The apostle mentions this, to take off the Hebrews from any esteem of their traditionary elders, who had got a name, not by their faith, but by their traditions; and to engage their

imitation of men of antiquity, authority, and wisdom superior to them; and to let them know, unless they had the same faith with their ancestors, it would be a vain thing to boast of descent from them.

Hebrews 11:3

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God

The celestial world, with its inhabitants, the angels; the starry and ethereal worlds, with all that is in them, the sun, moon, stars, and fowls of the air; the terrestrial world, with all upon it, men, beasts and the watery world, the sea, and all that is therein: perhaps some respect may be had to the distinction of worlds among the Jews; (See Gill on Hebrews 1:2), though the apostle can scarce be thought to have any regard to their extravagant notions of vast numbers of worlds being created: they often speak of three hundred and ten worlds, in all which, they say, there are heavens, earth, stars, planets F6; and sometimes of eighteen thousand F7; but these notions are rightly charged by Philo F8 with ignorance and folly. However, as many worlds as there are, they are made “by the Word of God”; by Christ, the essential Word of God, to whom the creation of all things is ascribed in (John 1:1-3) . And this agrees with the sentiments of the Jews, who ascribe the creation of all things to the Word of God, as do the Targumists F9, and Philo the Jew F11. And these are “framed” by the Word, in a very beautiful and convenient order; the heavens before the earth; things less perfect, before those that were more so in the visible world, or terraqueous globe; and things for men, before men, for whom they were; and it is by divine revelation and faith that men form right notions of the creation, and of the author of it, and particularly of the origin of it, as follows:

so that things which are seen:

as the heaven, earth, and sea, and in which the invisible things of God, the perfections of his nature, are discerned:

were not made of things which do appear;

they were not made from pre-existent matter, but out of nothing, out of which the rude and undigested chaos was formed; and from that invisible mass, covered with darkness, were all visible things brought into a beautiful order; and all from secret and hidden ideas

in the divine minds; and this also is the faith of the Jews, that the creation of all things is (Nyam) , “out of nothing” F12. There seems to be an allusion to the word (arb) , used for creation, which signifies to make appear a thing unseen; and is rendered in the Septuagint version by (deiknumi) , (Numbers 16:30) and (kata-deiknumi) , (Isaiah 40:26) (41:20) to show, or make appear; and thus God created, or made to appear, the heavens and earth, which before were not in being, and unseen, (Genesis 1:1 Genesis 1:2) and created to make, as in (Genesis 2:3) that is, made them to appear, that he might put them into the form and order they now are.

FOOTNOTES:

F6 Misn. Oketzim, c. 3. sect. 12. Targum Jon. in Exod. xxviii. 30. Kettoreth Hassamim in Targum Jon. in Gen. fol. 4. 4. Lex. Cabel. p. 60, 61.

F7 T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 3. 2. Yalkut, par. 2. fol. 50. 4.

F8 De Opificio, p. 39.

F9 Targum Oak. in Deut. xxxiii. 27. & Ben Uzziel in Isa. xlviii. 13.

F11 De Opificio, p. 4. & Leg. Alleg. l. 1. p. 44.

F12 Tzeror Hammor, fol. 1. 1. Kettoreth Hassamim in Targ. Jon in Gen. fol. 5. 1, 2.

Hebrews 11:4

By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain

The apostle proceeds to examples of faith, and begins with Abel: it may seem strange that Adam and Eve are not mentioned; this omission is not because they were not believers; but either because of the fall and ruin of mankind by them; or because the apostle speaks only of such who had received some eminent testimony by faith, and therefore passes by many believers, and hastens to Abraham, the father of the Jews. The superior excellency of Abel’s sacrifice to Cain’s, lay both in the matter, and in the manner of it; the one was offered heartily to the Lord, the other only in show; the one was offered in faith, the other not; Abel looked through his sacrifice to the sacrifice of Christ, not so Cain. Abel’s sacrifice was a lamb, a type of Christ, the Lamb of God; a firstling, a figure of him who is the firstborn of every creature; one of the fattest of his flock, expressive of the excellency of Christ; and this was offered up at the end of days, as Christ at the end of the world; and

the superior excellency of the sacrifice of the one to that of the other, appears from God's regard to the one, and not to the other, (Genesis 4:3-5) from whence it may be observed, that sacrifices were of divine institution, and were very early types of Christ; and that there always were two sorts of worshippers, spiritual and carnal ones, whom God can distinguish, for he seeth not as man seeth; that the acceptance of persons is in Christ, and is previous to their offerings; that whatsoever works do not spring from faith are unacceptable to God; that no dependence is to be had on birth privileges, or outward actions; and that electing and distinguishing grace very early took place, and appeared.

By which he obtained witness that he was righteous;

not righteous by his offering, nor by his faith, but by the righteousness of Christ, which his faith in his sacrifice looked unto; though it was by his faith that he obtained, or received a witness in his own conscience, from the Spirit of God, testifying that he was a justified person; and in consequence of this, he had an outward testimony bore to him in the Scriptures, that he was a righteous person hence he is called righteous Abel, (Matthew 23:35) .

God testifying of his gifts:

not of his own gifts, temporal or spiritual, but of Abel's gifts, which he offered to the Lord; that is, his sacrifices; of these he testified, when he showed respect either by an audible voice, declaring his acceptance of them; or by sending down fire from heaven, upon his sacrifice, which in later times was a symbol of acceptance.

And by it, he being dead, yet speaketh;

good men die, and some of them die a violent death, as did Abel, yet he speaks in the Scriptures, which have a voice in them, (Luke 16:29) or by his blood, which calls for vengeance; or rather by, or because of his faith, though he is dead, "he is yet spoken of", as the word may be rendered.

Hebrews 11:5

By faith Enoch was translated

Which is to be understood, not of a spiritual translation from the power of darkness, into the kingdom of Christ, as all converted, persons are translated, and

doubtless Enoch was; nor of a rapture, or removal from one part of the earth to another, or from one part of a country to another, as Philip was caught away by the Spirit, after the baptism of the eunuch; but of a translation from earth to heaven; and not for a while only, as Paul was caught up to the third heaven; but as Elijah was, there to continue, and as the living saints will be at the last day; and this was a translation of him, soul and body, to heaven, to eternal glory and happiness, by a change from mortality to immortality, which passed upon him; and which is a pledge of the resurrection of the dead, and a proof of the Old Testament saints knowing, expecting, and enjoying eternal life. And with this agrees the sense of some of the Jewish writers concerning this affair. Jonathan ben Uzziel, in his paraphrase on (Genesis 5:24) has these words:

``and Enoch worshipped in truth before the Lord; and behold he was not with the inhabitants of the earth, (dygnta) , "he was translated", and ascended to the firmament (or heaven), by the Word before the Lord."

And the Jerusalem Targum to the same purpose;

``and Enoch worshipped in truth before the Lord; and lo, he was not, for he was translated by the Word from before the Lord;"

or by the Word of the Lord, which went out from him; for this translation was of God, as our apostle afterwards asserts. R. Eleazar says F13:

``the holy blessed God took Enoch, and caused him to ascend to the highest heavens, and delivered into his hands all the superior treasures, &c"

He is said F14 to be one of the seven which entered into paradise in their life; and some of them say F15, that God took him, (vpngw Pwgb) , body and soul; see the Apocrypha:

``He pleased God, and was beloved of him: so that living among sinners he was trans-

lated.” (Wisdom 4:10)

“Enoch pleased the Lord, and was translated, being an example of repentance to all generations.” (Sirach 44:16)

And this translation is said to be “by faith”; not through any virtue and efficacy in that grace to procure it; nor through faith, in that particular point; but God put an honour upon the faith of Enoch, and on him as a believer, this way.

That he should not see death;

meaning not a spiritual or moral death; nor an eternal one, though some have suggested this to be the sense; and which is favoured by the character some of the Jewish writers give of Enoch, which will be hereafter taken notice of; but a corporeal death, which he died not; to which agrees the Targum of Oukelos on (Genesis 5:24),

“and Enoch walked in the fear of the Lord, and he was not, for the Lord, (tymh al) , “did not kill him”, or cause, or suffer him to die:”

though an exemplar of that paraphrase is cited F16, without the negative particle, thus,

“and he was not, for the Lord killed him,”

or inflicted death on him: and it is the sense of several of the Jewish commentators, that he did die a common death, as Jarchi, Eben Ezra, and others; who by the phrase, “God took him”, understand death, for which they cite the following places, (1 Kings 19:4) (Ezekiel 24:16 Ezekiel 24:18) .

and was not found, because God had translated him;

that is, he was not found among men, in the land of the living; he appeared no more there, for God had removed him from earth to heaven; so Elijah, after his rapture and translation, was sought for, but could not be found, (2 Kings 2:16 2 Kings 2:17)

for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God:

he did those things which pleased him; he walked with God before, (Genesis 5:22 Genesis 5:24) which the Targumists explain by worshipping in truth, and walking in the fear of the Lord, which are things well pleasing to God; he walked with God by faith in the ways of his worship and service; and he was acceptable to him in Christ; the same phrase is used in the Apocrypha:

“He pleased God, and was beloved of him: so that living among sinners he was translated.” (Wisdom 4:10)

“Enoch pleased the Lord, and was translated, being an example of repentance to all generations.” (Sirach 44:16)

This testimony he received from God, from men, and in his own conscience, and which now stands in the sacred Scriptures, (Genesis 5:24) . Some of the Jewish writers very wickedly, and without any ground and foundation, give a different character of him; some of them say that he was a hypocrite, sometimes righteous, and sometimes wicked, and that the holy blessed God removed him, while he was righteous F17; and others F18, that allow him to be a righteous and worthy man, yet represent him as fickle and inconstant; and, therefore, God, foreseeing that he would do wickedly, and to prevent it, made haste, and took him away, by death, before his time: and which is not only contrary to what the apostle here says, but to the account of Moses, concerning him; from whence it appears, that he was a walker with God; that the course of his conversation was holy and upright; and which was the reason of his being taken, or translated; and which was an high honour bestowed upon him: and upon the whole, he has obtained a better testimony than those men give him.

FOOTNOTES:

F13 Zohar in Gen. fol. 44. 3.

F14 Derech Eretz Zuta, c. 1. fol. 19. 1.

F15 Juchasin, fol. 134. 2.

F16 In Tosaphta in T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 16. 2. & in not. ad triplex Targum in Gen. v. 24. Ed. Hanov.

F17 Bereshit Rabba, sect. 25. fol. 21. 3.

F18 Zohar in Gen. fol. 44. 2. 3. Jarchi in Gen. v. 24. Wisd. c. iv. 11, 12, 13, 14.

Hebrews 11:6

But without faith it is impossible to please him

Or do things well pleasing in his sight; or any of the duties of religion, in an acceptable way; as prayer, praise, attendance on the word and ordinances, or any good works whatever; because such are without Christ, and without his Spirit; and have neither right principles, nor right ends: for this is not to be understood of the persons of God's elect, as considered in Christ; in whom they are well pleasing to him before faith; being loved by him with an everlasting love; and chosen in Christ, before the foundation of the world; (See Gill on Romans 8:8).

for he that cometh to God;

to the throne of, his grace, to pray unto him, to implore his grace and mercy, help and assistance; to the house of God, to worship, and serve him, and in order to enjoy his presence, and have communion with him; which coming ought to be spiritual and with the heart; and supposes spiritual life; and must be through Christ, and by faith: wherefore such a comer to God,

must believe that he is;

or exists, as the Arabic version; and he must not barely believe his existence, but that, as it is revealed in the word: he must believe in the three Persons in the Godhead; that the first Person is the Father of Christ; that the second Person is both the Son of God, and Mediator; and that the third Person is the Spirit of them both, and the applier of all grace; for God the Father is to be approached unto, through Christ the Mediator, by the guidance and assistance of the Spirit: and he must believe in the perfections of God; that he is omniscient, and knows his person and wants; is omnipotent, and can do for him, beyond his thoughts and petitions; is all sufficient, and that his grace is sufficient for him; that he is immutable, in his purposes and covenant; that he is true and faithful to his promises; and is the God of grace, love, and mercy: and he must believe in him, not only as the God of nature and providence, but as his covenant God and Father in Christ:

and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him;

who are such, as are first sought out by him; and who seek him in Christ, where he is only to be found; and that with their whole hearts, and above all things else: and, of such, God is a rewarder, in a way of grace; with himself, who is their exceeding great reward; and with his Son, and all things with him; with more grace; and, at last, with eternal glory, the reward of the inheritance.

Hebrews 11:7

By faith Noah, being warned of God

In the Greek text, Noah is called "Noe", and so the Septuagint interpreters of the Old Testament call him; but Josephus calls him "Noeos": or "having received an oracle from God"; in which he was admonished, how to make an ark, as Moses was, in like manner, how to make a tabernacle, (Hebrews 8:5) . This oracle or warning is extant, in (Genesis 6:13-22) and it was

of things not seen as yet;

as the universal deluge; the building of an ark or ship, which was the first that ever was in the world; the entrance of all creatures into it; their preservation in it, and the destruction of all without it: and this divine warning, or oracle, concerning things of such a nature, delivered to Noah, and received by him, shows that he was a favourite of God; that his faith rested in the word of God; and that it agreed with the apostle's definition of faith, (Hebrews 11:1) ,

moved with fear;

not with a fear of his own damnation; nor with a distrust of the salvation of himself and his family in the ark; but with an awful sense of the judgments of God upon the wicked; and with reverence of God, from whom he received the oracle; and with a religious fear, with which he worshipped God, and which he discovered by a regard to his word and ordinances; and which fear does not arise from nature, but from grace; and is increased by the discoveries of divine love; and is consistent with faith, goes along with it, and is a fruit of it: hence he

prepared an ark for the saving of his house.

Immediately, and without delay, he set about the building of the ark, and made it exactly according to the pattern which was given him; and his end in it was to secure his family, himself and his wife, his three

sons and their wives, from the flood, which he believed would shortly come upon the world, according to the word of God; and in this his faith was seen: and from hence it may be observed, that, though God can save without means, yet, generally speaking, it is his will to save by them; and that as God saved Noah and his family in the waters, so he can, and does, save his people in afflictions; and also, that true faith is attended with obedience:

by the which he condemned the world:

the inhabitants of the world, the world of the ungodly: as a preacher, he declared they would be condemned, in case of impenitence and unbelief; and his words heard, and his actions seen by them, were aggravations of their condemnation; for by his works, as well as by his words, he reprov'd, and condemned them; by building the ark, as he declared his own faith, so he condemned their unbelief; (See Gill on Matthew 12:41)

and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith:

not of the law, but of the righteousness of Christ, and of eternal life through that; for he was not only heir of this world, as Abraham, but of that which is to come; and not through works of righteousness done by him, but through the righteousness of Christ received by faith, or through faith in Christ, the antitype of the ark.

Hebrews 11:8

By faith, Abraham, when he was called

The Alexandrian copy and the Vulgate Latin version read, "by faith he who was called Abraham"; but this call is not to be understood of his name; for though his first name Abram might be given him, in the faith of his being a great man, and his second name Abraham, when he himself was a believer; yet this change was made some years after the call referred to; which is that in (Genesis 12:1) when he was called out of his own country, kindred, and father's house; which was an emblem of the call of God's people out from among the men of the world, and from their friends, relations, and acquaintance, and even out of themselves; and as Abraham was called from "Ur" of the Chaldees, so they from darkness, bondage, idolatry, and communion with wicked men; that, as he, they might not perish with idolaters, being chosen vessels, and for whom God has pe-

culiar blessings in store: and so the grace of God is seen in calling them, without any respect to their deserts, as in calling Abraham: and the care and goodness of God may be observed, in raising up fit instruments to propagate his cause and interest. Now Abraham, being called

to go out into a place;

from Ur of the Chaldees, to the land of Canaan;

which he should afterwards receive for an inheritance;

not in his own person, but in his seed and posterity, unless after the resurrection, in the New Jerusalem church state, and which inheritance was typical of heaven;

obeyed

the divine call; and which was a fruit and evidence of his faith, and may he called the obedience of faith:

and he went out, not knowing whither he went:

for though he went forth to go into the land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan he came, (Genesis 12:5) , yet, when God called him to go forth, and he prepared to obey his call, he knew not what land he was to go into; for it is only said, (Genesis 12:1) ,

unto a land that I will show thee:

upon which words a Jewish commentator F18 has this note;

"he (God) did not immediately make known the land unto him, that so it might be lovely in his eyes;"

and it is, elsewhere, said by the Jews F19, that Abraham

"came from Aspamia (i.e. Mesopotamia), and its companions, (Nkyh edwy hyh alw) , "and he knew not where" he was, as a man that is in the dark;"

all which agrees with our apostle: and, from hence, it may be observed, that God sometimes leads his people in ways they have not known, though they are known to him, and are always right; and that it is the property

of faith to follow God, when it cannot see its way; and a great mercy it is to have God for a guide. This also shows, that Abraham's faith agrees with the apostle's definition of it, (Hebrews 11:1).

FOOTNOTES:

F18 Jarchi in Gen. xii. 1.

F19 Bereshit Rabba, sect. 60. fol. 52. 3.

Hebrews 11:9

By faith he sojourned in the land of promise

The land of Canaan, so called, because it was promised to Abraham and his seed; and is typical of heaven, which is not by the works of the law, but by the free promise and grace of God: here Abraham sojourned for a while,

as in a strange country;

which was not his native place, and not his own, but another's; see (Acts 7:5) and an idolatrous one; here he sojourned by faith, believing that as it was promised, it would be given to him, and his seed: so all God's people are sojourners in this world, strangers and pilgrims in it; this is not their dwelling place; they do not belong to it, but to another; their stay in it is but for a while; and, while they are in it, do not look upon themselves at home, but are looking out for another, and better country; they are unknown to the men of the world, and the men of the world are strangers to them; though they have a civil conversation with them, they separate from them, both as to profaneness and superstition, and live by faith, in the expectation of the heavenly country, as Abraham also did:

dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise;

the same promised land, the same promised blessings, and the same promised seed, the Messiah; see (Genesis 12:3) (Genesis 26:3 Genesis 26:4) (Genesis 28:13 Genesis 28:14) with these Abraham dwelt, for he lived until Isaac was seventy five years of age, and Jacob fifteen; he was an hundred years old when Isaac was born, (Genesis 21:5) and he lived one hundred and seventy five years, (Genesis 25:7) and Isaac was sixty years old when Jacob was born, (Genesis 25:26) and Abraham dwelt with them in tabernacles, or tents, which they pitched at pleasure, and moved from place

to place. So true believers, as they are Abraham's seed, they are heirs with him, according to the promise; and are heirs together of the grace of life; and dwell in earthly tabernacles, in houses of clay, which are erected for a while, and then taken down.

Hebrews 11:10

For he looked for a city which hath foundations

Not the city of Jerusalem, nor the Gospel church state; but either the city of the new Jerusalem, said to have twelve foundations, (Revelation 21:14) and in which glorious state, Abraham, with the rest of the saints, being raised from the dead, will in person possess the promised land; or else the ultimate glory of the saints in heaven, where God dwells, and keeps his palace; and which will be the dwelling place of the saints, and will have in it many habitations; and which will be both peaceable and safe, and full of glory, riches, joy, and pleasure; and into which none but holy and righteous persons will enter; the "foundations" of which are the everlasting love of God, eternal election, the covenant of grace, the promise and preparation of it by God, from the foundation of the world, and the Lord Jesus Christ, his blood and righteousness; which show the immovableness of it, it being opposed to the tabernacles Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob dwelt in, and to the transitory enjoyments of this world: and for this sure, immovable, and comfortable state of things, Abraham was "looking" by faith; he looked through, and above temporal things, to spiritual things; he went through difficulties with cheerfulness, did not greedily covet earthly things, but looked with disdain upon them, and to heaven with faith, affection, and earnest desire; and this proves his faith to be, as that is defined, (Hebrews 11:1)

whose builder and maker is God:

God the Father has prepared this glory from the foundation of the world, and has promised before the world began, and has chosen his people to it; the Spirit of God makes it known, and prepares them for it; and the Lord Jesus Christ is the forerunner entered, who is gone to get it ready for them, and will put them into the possession of it: this shows the superior excellency of this city, or glorious state; and that God has the sole right to dispose of it.

Hebrews 11.12

Therefore sprang there even of one

That is, Abraham: the Arabic version has here a strange interpolation;

“this faith Isaac and Rebecca conceived in mind, and so there were born of one, Esau and Jacob.”

And him as good as dead;

being an hundred years of age; (See Gill on Romans 4:19). The Ethiopic version reads, “the bodies of both were like a dead carcass”; both of Abraham and Sarah:

so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable;

as was promised to Abraham, (Genesis 15:5) (22:17) which has been fulfilled, (Isaiah 10:22) and will still have a further fulfilment, (Hosea 1:10) .

Hebrews 11:13**These all died in faith**

Not all the seed of Abraham, but all the believers in the preceding verses, excepting Enoch, particularly the three patriarchs, with Sarah; these died a corporeal death, which is common to all, to the righteous, and to the wicked; and yet saints die not as other men; they die in faith, having the grace itself, which being once implanted, can never be lost; and sometimes in the exercise of it, as these believers did: they died in the faith of their posterity inheriting the land of Canaan, and in the faith of the promised Messiah, and in the believing views of the heavenly glory; and so to die is comfortable to themselves, and a confirmation of the truth of religion to others, and is very precious, desirable, and gainful. It may be rendered, “according to faith”; they died according to the life of faith they lived, and the doctrine of faith they professed, being the Lord’s both living and dying.

Not having received the promises;

the things promised, the land of Canaan, the Messiah, and the blessings of the Gospel dispensation; they had the promises of these things, and though they were not fulfilled in their days, they believed they would be fulfilled, and died in the faith of them:

having seen them afar off;

the things themselves in the promise; as Abraham saw the going forth of his posterity out of Egypt, after they had been afflicted four hundred years, and saw the day of Christ at a greater distance still, (Genesis 15:13 Genesis 15:14) (John 8:56) .

And were persuaded of [them], and embraced [them];

they had a full assurance of faith, that what was promised would be fulfilled; and they took a kind of possession of them before hand, as Abraham did of the land of Canaan, by sojourning in it; as did also Isaac and Jacob; and all of them by faith embraced the Messiah, and dealt with, and laid hold upon his blood, righteousness, sacrifice, and grace, by which they were saved, as New Testament saints are.

And confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth;

for they sojourned in the land of Canaan, as in a strange land, as the saints do in this world; see (Hebrews 11:9) . And they were pilgrims, travelling through this world to the heavenly country, and they confessed themselves to be such, (Genesis 47:9) nor are believers ashamed to own and confess their mean estate in this world; for it is only with respect to earth, and earthly things, that they are strangers and pilgrims, and only while they are on earth; and it is therefore but for a little time that they are so, ere long they will be at home, and know as they are known.

Hebrews 11:14**For they that say such things**

That they are strangers and pilgrims on earth:

declare plainly that they seek a country;

heaven, so called, for the largeness of it; it is a good land, a land of uprightness; a pleasant land, a land of rest, though a land afar off; here the Father of Christ, and Christ himself, and all his people dwell: the Syriac version renders it, “their own city”; the place of their nativity, of which they were citizens: the act of “seeking” it supposes some things, with respect to the place where they were, as that they were in a strange land, had no settlement there, nor satisfaction in it, and that they sat loose to the world, and the things of it; and some things respecting the country sought after, as that they were

not in it; that it was at a distance from them; that they had some knowledge of it, and of the way to it; that their desires were after it, and that they had a strong affection and value for it: the right way to this country is not mere civility and morality, nor legal righteousness, nor birth privileges, nor submission to outward ordinances, nor a mere profession of religion, but the Lord Jesus Christ; he is the true way to eternal life; it is his righteousness which gives a title to it, and on account of which believers expect it, though not without holiness, nor without trouble. The right manner of seeking it is, in the first place, above all things else, with the whole heart, by faith, and by patient continuance in well doing. Many are the reasons which may induce believers to seek it; it is their own, and their Father's country; it is a better one than that in which they are; and because of the company they shall there enjoy, and the work they shall be employed in; and because of the happiness they will be possessed of; and because their inheritance, riches, and treasures, lie here.

Hebrews 11:15

And truly if they had been mindful of that country

Chaldea, which was Abraham's country:

from whence they came out;

as Abraham and Sarah did, in person, and their posterity in them:

they might have had opportunity to have returned:

for the way from Canaan or Egypt, where they so-journed, was short and easy: and though Abraham sent his servant thither to take a wife for his son Isaac, yet he would not go thither himself, nor suffer his son; nay, made his servant swear that he would not bring him thither, if even the woman should refuse to come; so unmindful was he of that country; so little did he regard it; yea, so much did he despise it: so when men are called by grace, and converted, they come out of a country, this world, which is a land of sin and iniquity, of great folly and ignorance, of darkness, and of the shadow of death; a desert, a mere wilderness; a country where Satan reigns, full of wicked and ungodly men; and which is the land of their nativity, as to their first birth: and they may be said to come out of it, not in a natural and civil sense, but in a spiritual one; and it is

the character of a converted man, or one that is come out of the world, and is separated from it, to be unmindful of it; not so as not to consider from whence he came out, as owing to rich grace; nor so as not to lament the iniquities of it; nor so as not to pray for the conversion of the inhabitants of it; but he is unmindful of it, so as to be desirous of the company of the men of it, or to have the affections set upon it, and the heart tickled with the pleasures of it, or so as to desire to return to it, for which there is a great deal of reason: for this country is not worth minding; and there is much in it to set a gracious mind against it; a good man has better things to mind; and it is below, and unworthy of a Christian, to mind the world; and besides, worldly mindedness is attended with bad consequences. Moreover, though the saints have opportunities of returning, yet they do not; they are near it, and the country they are seeking is afar off: many things in it are alluring and ensnaring; a corrupt and deceitful heart often lingers after them, and Satan is not wanting to tempt unto, and by them. And yet they do not return; some that bear the name of Christians, but are not truly such, may wholly return, and never come back more; and true believers may strangely go back again in some instances; but they shall not return finally and totally: for they are held and drawn with the cords of love; they are in the hands of Christ, and are secured in the covenant of grace; they are returned to Christ, in the effectual calling, who will keep them; they are of the household of God, and shall be no more foreigners; should they return in such sense, they would be condemned with the world, which cannot be.

Hebrews 11:16

But now they desire a better country

Which is not to be understood of the then present time, in which the apostle wrote; for the patriarchs, of whom he speaks, were not then on earth, nor in any third place between heaven and earth; they were then in heaven; and though there are indeed in heaven desires after perfect happiness, in soul and body; yet this intends the desires of these saints when on earth, and which are common to all believers in the present state of things; who, as the patriarchs desired a better country than Chaldea, or even Canaan itself, so they desire a better country than this world; and such is heaven: it is on high; here are no noxious and pestilential vapours, no mists or fogs beclouding, no storms and tempests, but it is full of light and glory; having the delightful breezes of divine love, and the comfortable gales of the blessed

Spirit; here is no heat of persecution, nor coldness, nor chills of affection; here is plenty of most delicious fruits, no hunger nor thirst; and here are riches, which are solid, satisfying, durable, safe and sure: many are the liberties and privileges here enjoyed; here is a freedom from a body subject to diseases and death, from a body of sin and death, from Satan's temptations, from all doubts, fears, and unbelief, and from all sorrows and afflictions; the inhabitants of it are the spirits of just men made perfect, angels, God, Father, Son, and Spirit, and Christ in human nature; upon all which accounts it is abundantly the better country, and as it is explained,

that is, an heavenly;

an inheritance in heaven, an house eternal in the heavens, the kingdom of heaven; and it is no wonder that it should be desired by such who know it, and the nature of it: the word denotes a vehement desire; and it is such, that the saints desire to depart from this world, and go unto it; which shows that they are weaned from this, and have seen something glorious in another. Remarkable is the saying of Anaxagoras F21 who, when one said to him, hast thou no regard to thy country? answered, I have, and that the greatest, pointing with his fingers towards heaven; and, says Philo the Jew F23, the soul of every wise man has heaven for his country, and the earth as a strange place:

wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God;

their covenant God and Father; (See Gill on Hebrews 8:10), even though he is the God of the whole earth;

for he hath prepared for them a city;

in his council and covenant, and by his Son; (See Gill on Hebrews 11:10). This proves that he is not ashamed of the relation he stands in to them, since he has made a provision for them to dwell with him to all eternity.

FOOTNOTES:

F21 Laert. in Vit. Anaxag. p. 92.

F23 De Agricultura, p. 196. Vid. ib. de Confus. Ling. p. 331.

Hebrews 11:17

By faith Abraham, when he was tried,

&c.] Or tempted; that is, by God, (Genesis 22:1) . This temptation or trial respects the command given by God to Abraham, to offer up his son Isaac; which lays no foundation for a charge against God, either of sin or cruelty; for God's will is the rule of justice and goodness, and whatever he requires is just and good; and though his creatures are bound by the laws he prescribes them, he himself is not: besides, he is the Lord of life, the giver and preserver of it; and he has a right to dispose of it, and to take it away, when, and by what means, and instruments, he thinks fit; to which may be added, that the secret will of God was not that Isaac should die, but a command was given to Abraham to offer him up, for the trial of his faith and love; this was a temptation of probation, not of seduction, or to sin, as are the temptations of Satan; for God tempts no man with sin. The Jews speak F24 of ten temptations, with which Abraham was tried, and in all which he stood; and say, that this of the binding of Isaac was the tenth and last.

Offered up Isaac;

he showed great readiness to do it; as soon as he had the command given him, he travelled three days' journey in order to it; took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it on his son; took fire, and a knife in his hand, with the one to burn the wood, with the other to slay his son; he built an altar, laid the wood in order on it; and bound his son, and laid him on that; and took the knife, and stretched forth his hand to slay him, and fully intended to do it, had he not been prevented: and all this he did by faith; he believed the equity, justice, and wisdom of the divine command; he was fully assured of the truth and faithfulness of God in his promises, however contrary this might seem thereunto; and he was strongly persuaded of the power of accomplishing them in some way or another. This was great faith, and it was greatly tried, as follows:

and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son;

he had a promise made him that he should have a son, and that a numerous issue should spring from him, which should inherit the land of Canaan; yea, that the Messiah himself should be of his seed: and he had received these promises; given credit to them, and firmly believed them, and fully expected the performance of them; as he had reason to do, since the first was fulfilled, the son was born; and yet now he is called to offer him up, on whom his expectation was placed; everything

was trying; it was an human creature he was called to offer, whose blood is not to be shed by man; a child of his own, a part of himself; a son, an own son; an only begotten son; a son whom he loved; an Isaac, a son of joy; a son of promise; and his heir, the son of his old age, and who was now a grown up person. The Jews are divided about the age of Isaac at his binding: Josephus

FOOTNOTES:

F25 says he was twenty five years of age; others say twenty six F26; some say F1 thirty six: but the more prevailing opinion is F2, that he was thirty seven years of age; only Aben F3 Ezra makes him to be about thirteen; rejecting the more commonly received account, as well as that he was but five years old, that being an age unfit to carry wood. Some Christian writers have thought he might be about three and thirty years of age, the age of Christ when he suffered, of whom he was a type.

F24 Targum in Cant. vii. 8. Pirke Eliezer, c. 26. & c. 31. Maimon. Jarchi & Bartenora in Misn. Abot, c. 5. sect. 3.

F25 Antiqu. l. 1. c. 13. sect. 2.

F26 Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 6. 1.

F1 Targum Jon. in Gen. xxii. 1.

F2 Zohar in Gen. fol. 68. 2. & 74. 4. & 76. 2. Targ. Hieros. in Ex. xii. 42. Pirke Eliezer, c. 31, Juchasin, fol. 9. 1. Prefat. Echa Rabbati, fol. 40. 2. Seder Olam Rabba, c. 1. p. 3. Shalshet Hakabala, fol. 3. 1.

F3 In Gen. xxii. 4.

Hebrews 11:18

Of whom it is said

That is, of Isaac, Abraham's own son, whom he offered up; or rather, "to whom it was said", as the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions render it; that is, to Abraham, for to him was this said, (Genesis 21:12)

that in Isaac shall thy seed be called;

that numerous natural seed of his, which should inherit the land of Canaan; and his special famous seed, the Messiah, to whom the promises were made; (See Gill on Romans 9:7).

Hebrews 11:19

Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead

Abraham did not go about this affair without thought; and yet he did not consult with flesh and blood; his reasoning was the reasoning of faith; and the conclusion of it was, not that he believed that God would raise his son from the dead, but that he was able to do it. He knew that he had received him at first, as it were, from the dead; he sprung from his own dead body, and out of Sarah's dead womb; and though his faith did not prescribe to God, yet as he believed the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, he might believe that God would raise his son from the dead, rather than that his promise should fail; and this conclusion proceeded upon the power and faithfulness of God:

from whence also he received him in a figure;

or for an "example" of faith and obedience; or for a "parable or proverb", that such a proverbial expression might be made use of, for the comfort and encouragement of saints in distressed and difficult circumstances, as is in (Genesis 22:14) or as a type of the death and resurrection of Christ, whose type he was in other things, as well as in this; as in his birth, and the circumstances of it; he was long promised and expected, as Christ, was; his birth was beyond the ordinary course of nature, and attended with great joy; he was circumcised the eighth day; at his weaning a great feast was made, typical of the Gospel feast; and as he was persecuted by Ishmael, so was Christ by Herod, in his infancy: and he was a figure of him in his oblation; they were both sons of Abraham; both only begotten and beloved sons; both heirs; both carried the wood on which they were offered; both were offered on a Mount, and by their father, by whom neither of them were spared; and both by the command of God, and alone, none were with them: and Isaac prefigured him in his deliverance; Abraham stretched out his hand, but was restrained, and not a bone of Christ must be broken; not Isaac, but the ram was slain, not the divine, but the human nature suffered; both were delivered on the third day, the one as from death, the other really from death; and both returned to their father's house. Moreover, Abraham received his son in the similitude of a resurrection; it was as life from the dead; it was like the return of the prodigal, (Luke 15:32) . Abraham, looked upon him as dead to him, and Isaac thought himself a dead man; so that he that was accounted as one dead, was received alive. The Jews

speak of this matter agreeably to the apostle; they say, a man has two breaths or souls, one in this world, and another in the world to come; and of Isaac they say F4, that

“in the time that he was offered upon the altar, his soul (or “breath”), which he had in this world, “went out”; and when it was said to Abraham (or by him) blessed be he that quickeneth the dead, his soul (or breath), which he had in the world to come, returned to him--for (tmk bvxta) , “he was accounted as dead””

They speak of him as if he was just dead; they say F5,

“when he saw the sword over his neck, his breath fled from him, and came to the place of the soul, (hyh wlyak) , “as if he was at the point of giving up the ghost””

So that a Jew cannot find fault with the apostle for expressing himself in this manner.

FOOTNOTES:

F4 Tosaphta in Zohar in Gen. fol. 46. 21.

F5 Tzeror Hammor, fol. 58. 2. Pirke Eliezer, c. 31.

Hebrews 11:20

By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau

The history of this is in (Genesis 27:33-39) . The former of these was a good man, and, though the youngest son, he is set before, and was blessed before the eldest; and the latter was a wicked man, and yet had a blessing; for temporal blessings are enjoyed in common: and this blessing was prophetic, it was concerning things to come. Jacob's blessing was plenty of temporal things, and under which may be signified the dews of divine grace, the fatness of God's house, the bread of life, and wine of divine love, which true Israelites partake of; also dominion over his brother, and government over nations, which had their accomplishment in his posterity; and may be expressive of the spiritual reign of the saints, and their dominion, by grace; and of the kingdom that shall hereafter be put to their hands; and of the extensiveness of Christ's kingdom in the latter day, who was to spring from him. Esau's blessings were merely temporal ones,

and respected things future, which were fulfilled in his posterity; and these several blessings Isaac pronounced upon them by faith, believing they would be bestowed upon them; and so his faith answered to the account of faith in (Hebrews 11:1) . It may be asked, how Isaac can be said to have blessed Jacob by faith, when he was deceived by him? It is certain he took him to be Esau, when he blessed him, wherefore it was not the design of Isaac, though it was the will of God that he should bless him, (Genesis 27:18-30) , but yet notwithstanding this, Isaac might do it in faith, believing that the person he blessed would be blessed, though he was mistaken in him; and which he confirmed when he did know him, (Genesis 27:33 Genesis 27:37) to which the apostle may have respect; and besides, he blessed him after this, (Genesis 28:1-3) .

Hebrews 11:21

By faith Jacob, when he was a dying

Which was the usual time of blessing with the patriarchs; and the reason of it was, that what was said might be more attended to and regarded, and more strongly impressed upon the mind; and this is a proof that it was done in faith by Jacob, when there was no appearance of the fulfilment of these things, and it was not likely that he should see them; and this shows the truth of what the apostle says in (Hebrews 11:1 Hebrews 11:13) , blessed both the sons of Joseph; whose names were Ephraim and Manasseh; the form of blessing them is recorded in (Genesis 48:15 Genesis 48:16) and which was done in faith, and under the direction and inspiration of the Spirit of God, as appears by his setting Ephraim before Manasseh, (Genesis 48:13 Genesis 48:14 Genesis 48:17-19) and when he delivered the blessing he firmly believed it would be fulfilled, though they were then in a strange land:

and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff;

not that he “worshipped the top of his staff”, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it, either his own, or Joseph's, or any little image upon the top of it; which would be an instance of idolatry, and not faith, contrary to the scope of the apostle; nor is there any need to interpret this of civil worship and respect paid to Joseph, as a fulfilment of his dream, and with a peculiar regard to Christ, of whom Joseph was a type; whereas, on the contrary, Joseph at this time bowed to his father, as was most natural and proper, (Genesis 48:12) nor is there

any necessity of supposing a different punctuation of (Genesis 47:31) and that the true reading is not “mittah”, a bed, but “matteh”; a staff, contrary to all the Targums F6, and the Talmud {g}, which read “mittah”, a bed, seeing it is not that place the apostle cites or refers to; for that was before the blessing of the sons of Joseph, but this was at the same time; and the apostle relates what is nowhere recorded in Genesis, but what he had either from tradition, or immediate revelation; or else he concludes it from the general account in (Genesis 48:1-12) and the sense is, that Jacob, having blessed the two sons of Joseph, being sat upon his bed, and weak, he leaned upon the top of his staff, and worshipped God, and gave praise and glory to him, that he had lived to see not only his son Joseph, but his seed also, see (Genesis 48:2 Genesis 48:11 Genesis 48:20) .

FOOTNOTES:

F6 Onkelos, Jonathan & Jerusalem in Gen. xlvii. 31.
F7 T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 16. 2.

Hebrews 11:22

By faith Joseph, when he died

The riches and honours of Joseph, as they could not secure him from death, so they did not make him unmindful of it; nor was he afraid of dying, or uneasy about it; nor did his prosperity make him proud, or above speaking to his brethren, nor revengeful to them, nor unthoughtful of their future afflictions; nor did his affluence of temporal things take off his regards to divine promises, nor weaken his faith in them, which is here commended in the following instances; as that at the time of his death,

he made mention of the departing of the children of Israel;

that is, out of the land of Egypt: he remembered it himself, and put his brethren in mind of it, by speaking of it to their comfort, with great assurance; he knew they were well situated in the land of Egypt, and yet speaks of their departure out of it; he foresaw, and firmly believed they would be greatly afflicted in it, and that God would look upon them, and visit them, and bring them out of it, into the land of Canaan; all which shows the strength of his faith, and that it was about things not seen.

And gave commandment concerning his bones;

and the command was a very strict one when he gave it; he took an oath of his brethren to fulfil it; it was concerning his bones, not his body, which shows that he believed their departure out of Egypt was at a great distance, when his flesh would be consumed, and only his bones left, as it was about two hundred years after his death; it respects the carrying them out of Egypt with them, and burying them in the land of Canaan, when they came there; and this is an instance of his humility, in choosing to lie with his fathers, rather than with the kings, and great men in Egypt, and of his care to prevent idolatry, which he might observe the Egyptians would be prone unto: and this command was a great instance of Joseph's faith, that the children of Israel would return to Canaan, and which might serve greatly to confirm their faith in it; it also shows his belief of the resurrection of the dead, and of his enjoying the heavenly inheritance, signified by the land of Canaan; See (Genesis 50:24 Genesis 50:25) , the Papists, from hence, plead for the relics of saints; but it should be observed, that it was at the request, and by the command of Joseph, that his bones were preserved, which is not the case of the saints, whose relics are pleaded for; besides, these were the true and real bones of Joseph, whereas the relics of the saints are only pretended; to which may be added, that the bones of Joseph, were ordered to be buried, not to be showed for a sight, much less worshipped, as Popish relics are. Joseph's coffin, the Jews say F8, was put into the river Nile; and so says Patricides F9, an Arabic writer: others say it was in the buryingplace of the kings, until it was taken up and removed by Moses.

FOOTNOTES:

F8 T. Bab. Sota, fol. 13. 1.
F9 Apud Hottinger. Smegma Oriental. l. 1. c. 8. p. 379.

Hebrews 11:23

By faith Moses, when he was born

Which is to be understood, not of the faith of Moses, but of the faith of his parents, at the time of his birth; which was when Pharaoh had published an edict, ordering every male child to be cast into the river; but instead of obeying this order, Moses was hid three months of his parents; that is, in his father's house, as it is said

in (Acts 7:20) and is here expressed in the Ethiopic version. According to the Targumist F11, his mother went with him but six months, at the end of which he was born, and that she hid him three months, which made up the nine, the time in which a woman usually goes with child; and after that she could conceal him no longer: the hiding of him is here ascribed to both his parents, though in (Exodus 2:2) it is represented as the act of his mother; which, no doubt, was done, with the knowledge, advice, and consent of his father; and the Septuagint there renders it, (eskepasan) , “they hid him”; though the order of the history makes it necessary that it should be read in the singular. Parents ought to take care of their children; and persons may lawfully hide themselves, or others, from the cruelty of tyrants, and that as long as they can, for their safety; and this was so far from being wrong in the parents of Moses, that it is commended, as an instance of faith: they believed the promise in general, that God would deliver the people of Israel; they believed this to be about the time of their deliverance, and had some intimation, that this child in particular would be the deliverer, because they saw he was a proper child; not only of a goodly and beautiful countenance, but that he was peculiarly grateful and acceptable to God; they perceived something remarkable in him, which to them was a token that he would be the deliverer of God’s people, and therefore they hid him; (See Gill on Acts 7:20).

And they were not afraid of the king’s commandment;

nor did they observe it, for it was contrary to nature, and to the laws of God, and to the promise of God’s multiplying of that people, and to their hopes of deliverance: there is a great deal of courage and boldness in faith; and though faith may be weakened, it cannot be lost; and a weak faith is taken notice of, as here; for though they feared not at first, they seem to be afraid afterwards; but when God designs to work deliverance, nothing shall prevent.

FOOTNOTES:

F11 Jonathan ben Uzziel in Exod. ii. 2.

Hebrews 11:24

By faith Moses, when he was come to years

Or “was great”; a nobleman in Pharaoh’s court; or

when he was arrived to great knowledge, being learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians; or rather when he was well advanced in years, being full forty years of age, (Acts 7:22 Acts 7:23)

refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter;

by whom Moses was taken up out of the water; by whom he was named, and provided for; she reckoned him as her own son, and designed him for Pharaoh’s successor, as Josephus reports F12: he refused all this honour, both in words, and by facts; he denied that he was the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, as the words will bear to be rendered; for to be “called”, often signifies only to “be”; and by taking part with the Israelites, and against the Egyptians, he plainly declared that his descent was from the former, and not the latter: and this discovered great faith; and showed that he preferred being called an Israelite to any earthly adoption, and the care of the church, and people of God, to his own worldly honour and interest; and that he believed the promises of God, before the flatteries of a court; and esteemed afflictions and reproaches, with the people of God, and for his sake, better than sinful pleasures, and earthly riches, as in the following words. Of Pharaoh’s daughter, (See Gill on Acts 7:21).

FOOTNOTES:

F12 Antiqu. l. 2. c. 9. sect. 7.

Hebrews 11:25

Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God

The Israelites, who were God’s chosen and peculiar people, and were the true worshippers of him; Moses chose to be with those: the company and conversation of such is most eligible to every good man, because God is with them; his word and ordinances are with them; there are large provisions of grace in the midst of them; so that it is profitable, delightful, and honourable, to be among them, and is attended with comfort, peace, and satisfaction: but then those are a poor, and an afflicted people; affliction is with them, for the sake of God, and Christ, and the truths which they profess, and the worship and service they are engaged in; and their afflictions are many and grievous: and now Moses chose to suffer these with them, to suffer the same afflictions they did, and to sympathize with them: and this was

more eligible to him,

than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season:

meaning, either the pleasures, honours, and riches in Pharaoh's court, attended with sin; as indulging himself in the luxury of a court, when his brethren were in distress; approving Pharaoh's cruelty and persecution, at least conniving at it, and not opposing it, which could not be without sin; carrying himself as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, when he was an Hebrew; and preferring his own ease to the deliverance of his people; and now these, had he continued at court, would have been but for a short season: or else sinful lusts in general are intended, in which men promise themselves much pleasure, when it is only imaginary, and lasts but for a while neither; and both may be intended, and are what the Jews call F13 (egr ygwnet) , "pleasures for a moment", or momentary ones. And the reasons which might induce Moses, and so every good man, to such a choice, may be taken partly from the nature of afflictions themselves, which are such that God has chosen for them, and appointed them unto, and which he gives them to suffer for his name, and which are an honour to them, and issue in their good, and in the glory of God; and partly from the nature of sinful pleasures; there is no solidity, nor satisfaction, in the best of worldly enjoyments; there can be no true pleasure in sin; there is always bitterness in the end, and it issues in death, if grace prevent not: now it was by faith Moses made this choice, for it is manifestly contrary to flesh and blood: it showed him to be a man thoroughly acquainted with the nature of sin; and that he looked beyond the things of sense and time, to those of eternity.

FOOTNOTES:

F13 Aben Ezra in Psal. xxiii. 4.

Hebrews 11:26

Esteeming the reproach of Christ

That is, either Christ personal; meaning not any reproach that lay upon Christ, as the immediate object of it; nor upon the people of Israel for the delay of his coming; but rather for the sake of Christ: Christ was made known to the Old Testament saints, and they believed in him; he was typified by sacrifices which they offered; and they were reproached for his sake, for the sacrifices they offered, and for the worship they performed,

for their faith in the Messiah, and their expectation of him: or this may be understood of Christ mystical, the church; called Christ, because of the union, communion, sympathy, and likeness there is between them, insomuch that what is done to the one, is done to the other: when the saints are reproached, Christ himself is reproached; and therefore all reproaches of this nature should be bore willingly, cheerfully, courageously, patiently, and constantly: and such Moses reckoned

greater riches than the treasures in Egypt;

he counted reproach itself riches; that is, he esteemed that riches for which he was reproached, as Christ, his word, and ordinances, and communion with the saints in them; all which are comparable to gold, silver, and precious stones; yea, are more valuable and desirable than thousands of gold and silver, or than the treasures in Egypt, which were very large; money, cattle, and lands coming into the hands of the king, through the seven years' famine in it, (Genesis 47:14 Genesis 47:17 Genesis 47:20) and for which immense treasure, treasure cities were built, (Exodus 1:11) which would have become Moses's, had he been Pharaoh's successor, to which he bid fair, before he discovered himself.

For he had respect unto the recompence of the reward;

by which is meant, either the deliverance of the Israelites from their bondage, which he judged a sufficient recompence for all his afflictions and reproaches he endured, as the Apostle Paul did for the elect's sake, for the sake of Christ's body the church, (Colossians 1:24) (2 Timothy 2:10) or the enjoyment of the land of Canaan, promised for an inheritance to the seed of Abraham; or the enjoyment of God's presence among his people, who is their shield, and exceeding great reward; or rather eternal glory, which is the reward of the inheritance, and is a reward of grace, and not of debt; this he had respect unto, looked for, and believed he should enjoy; so that his faith was of things unseen; and this caused him to prefer even afflictions with the saints, and reproaches for Christ, to all worldly riches and grandeur.

Hebrews 11:27

By faith he forsook Egypt

Either when he fled to Midian; this was before the eating of the passover, and so it stands in its proper order; whereas, his going out of Egypt with the chil-

dren of Israel was after it, and mentioned in (Hebrews 11:29) . The word “forsook” implies fleeing; and then it was when Pharaoh’s wrath was kindled against him: but it may be said, that Moses seemed then to be afraid of it, seeing he fled: to which it may be answered, that he showed great courage and intrepidity in slaying the Egyptian; and he took no methods to gain the king’s favour, when the thing was known; his fleeing was consistent with courage, and was a point of prudence, and in obedience to the will of God: his departure shows, that he would not desist from the work he was called unto; but that he waited God’s time, when he should be again employed; wherefore he endured affliction and meanness in Midian, and waited, patiently, till God should call him again to service: or this is to be understood of the time when he led the children of Israel out of Egypt; when he had many difficulties on the part of that people: they were seated and settled in the land of Egypt; they knew nothing of Canaan, nor of the way to it; and, besides, that was in the possession of others; they were a very morose, impatient, stiffnecked, and an ungovernable people, whom he led into a wilderness, without food or arms; and their number was very large; and he had many difficulties, on the part of Pharaoh and the Egyptians. The Israelites were in the midst of them; he brought them out from among them, with the spoil of them in their hands; he knew the changeableness and fury of Pharaoh’s mind, and yet he led them out, and left Egypt,

not fearing the wrath of the king;

of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; though it was as the roaring of a lion: so such as are called by grace, from a state of darkness and bondage, and out of a strange land, forsake this world, and leave their situation in it, their sinful lusts and pleasures, the company of wicked men, and everything that is near and dear, when it is in competition with Christ; not fearing the wrath of any temporal king or prince; nor of Satan, the prince of this world:

for he endured;

afflictions, reproach, and menaces, with patience and courage; his mind was not broken with them, nor overborne by them; he expected divine help, and persevered; and so do such, who are called by the grace of God:

as seeing him who is invisible;

that is God, as the Syriac version expresses it; who

is not to be seen corporeally, though intellectually; not in his essence, though in his works of creation and providence; not immediately, though mediately in and through Christ; not perfectly now, though face to face hereafter. Moses saw him visionally, and symbolically in the bush; he saw him by faith, and with the eyes of his understanding; and so believing in his power, faithfulness did what he did.

Hebrews 11:28

Through faith he kept the passover

Which Moses made, or appointed by divine direction; he kept it, with all its rites and ceremonies, and caused the people of Israel to observe it; and which he did, in faith of the speedy deliverance of the children of Israel, from the house of bondage; and in the faith of the Messiah, of whom the passover was a type; (See Gill on 1 Corinthians 5:7). The Syriac version reads, “through faith they kept the passover”; that is, the Israelites:

and the sprinkling of blood;

of the paschal lamb; which was received into a basin, and was sprinkled upon the lintel, and two side posts of the doors of the houses, in which the Israelites dwelt; which was done with a bunch of hyssop dipped into it:

lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them;

for the Lord, seeing the blood sprinkled, as above, when he smote the firstborn of Egypt, passed by the houses of the Israelites, so distinguished; and they were all safe within, and not one of them touched: this was typical of the blood of Christ being sprinkled upon the hearts and consciences of his people; whereby they are purified through faith; which blood is looked upon by Jehovah, so that justice passes by them; and they are all safe and secure, and will be, when others are destroyed; nor can they be hurt by the second death.

Hebrews 11:29

By faith they passed through the Red sea, as by dry land,

&c.] Not through a river, but through the sea, the Red sea, the sea of Suph, or weeds; (See Gill on Acts 7:36). Some say they came out on the same side they went in; but it should seem rather, by the phrase here used, that they passed through it, from one side to the other; and that all one as if it had been on dry ground;

even Moses, and all the children of Israel: and this they did by faith, believing, that God would make a passage quite through it for them, and deliver them out of the hands of their enemies, who were closely pursuing them:

which the Egyptians assaying to do, were drowned.

These were Pharaoh, and his numerous army; who, observing the Israelites march on through the sea, as on dry land, thought they could do the same; and so made an attempt, but were everyone of them drowned; in just retaliation for the cruel edict for drowning the male infants of the Israelites, as soon as they were born.

Hebrews 11:30

By faith the walls of Jericho fell down

Of themselves, not from any natural cause: the Jews say F14 they sunk right down into the ground, and were swallowed up; even the whole wall fell round about, as the Septuagint version in (Joshua 6:20) expresses it: or, it may be, only that which was over against the camp of Israel, as Kimchi observes; since Rahab's house was built upon the wall, and yet fell not. And this was by the faith of Joshua, and the Israelites, who believed the walls would fall, at the sound of the rams' horns, as God said they should: after they were compassed about seven days; which was a trial of their faith and patience: the Jews say F15 it was on the sabbath day that they fell: this was a preternatural act, and cannot be ascribed to any second cause; nothing is impossible with God; no defences, ever so strong, are anything against him; unlikely means are sometimes made use of by him; faith stops at nothing, when it has the word of God to rest upon; and what God does, he does in his own time, and in his own way. This may be an emblem of the fall of the walls of the hearts of unregenerate men; of their unbelief, hardness, enmity, and vain confidence; and of the conversion and subjection of them unto Christ, through the preaching of the Gospel; which, in the eyes of men, is as mean and despicable, and as unlikely to bring about such an event, as the sounding of the rams' horns might be to the inhabitants of Jericho: and it may be also an emblem of the fall of Babylon, and other antichristian cities, (Revelation 16:19) .

FOOTNOTES:

F14 Targum Jon. Jarchi & Kimchi in Josh. vi. 5.

F15 Jarchi & Kimchi in ver. 15.

Hebrews 11:31

By faith the harlot Rahab

The Targum on (Joshua 2:1) calls her (atyqdnwppatta) , "a woman, that kept a victualling house": this paraphrase is taken notice of by Jarchi and Kimchi on the place, who interpret it, "a seller of food": and even the Hebrew word (hnwz) , is so explained by a considerable Jewish writer F16; and this may rather seem to be the sense of the word, and to be her proper business, from the spies going to her house, as being an house of entertainment; and from Salmon's marrying her, which might be thought strange that a prince of Israel would, had she been a person of ill fame; to which may be added, the encomiums of her for her faith and works, both by our apostle, and by James: but yet, the constant use of the word, in this form, the testimonies of two apostles, and her making no mention of her husband and children, when she agreed with the spies, confirm the generally received character of her, that she was an harlot. Some Jewish writers say

FOOTNOTES:

F17 that she was ten years of age when the Israelites came out of Egypt; and that all the forty years they were in the wilderness, (htnz) , "she played the harlot"; and was one and fifty years of age when she was proselyted. She is called an harlot; not with respect to her present, but past life. In the Greek text, she is here called Raab, as also in (James 2:25) and so in the Septuagint in (Joshua 2:1 Joshua 2:3) . Rachab, which exactly answers to the Hebrew word (bxr) , (Joshua 2:1) and by Josephus F18 "Rachabe". This woman was a wonderful and singular instance of the free, sovereign, distinguishing, powerful, and efficacious grace of God; being one that sprung from Canaan, and was of the nations that were abhorred; but, being called by grace, became an eminent believer: she believed that the God of the Israelites was God in heaven and on earth; that he had given the land of Canaan to them; she received the spies, and hid them through that faith; she caused them to swear by the Lord, that they would show mercy to her, and her family; and gave credit to them; and observed their instructions: and so she

perished not with them that believed not;

the inhabitants of Jericho, who were unbelievers, and disobedient, and all perished by the sword: but Ra-

hab perished not, neither temporally, nor eternally; her temporal salvation was an emblem and type of her spiritual salvation; her receiving the spies was an emblem of a soul's receiving the Gospel, and the ministers of it; the scarlet thread, that was hung out, was an emblem of the blood of Christ, by which sins, though as scarlet, are made white as wool; and the saving of her whole family is an emblem of the complete salvation of all the elect, soul and body, by Christ:

when she had received the spies with peace;

and had hid them, for some time, in her house, and then let them down by the wall; and who, at the taking of the city, saved her, and hers, according to their promise and oath: the number of these spies were two, according to (Joshua 2:1) . The Jews F19 say one of them was Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the high priest; and others F20 of them say they were Phinehas and Caleb.

F16 R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 24. 1.

F17 T. Bab. Zebachin. fol. 116. 2. Shalshalet Haka-bala, fol. 7. 2.

F18 Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 2.

F19 Laniado in Josh. ii. 1.

F20 Tanchuma apud Masum in ib.

Hebrews 11:32

And what shall I more say

Intimating he had said enough to prove the definition of faith he had given; and that the elders, by it, had obtained a good report; and yet he had not said all he could; and that he had so much to say, that he could not say all:

for the time would fail me;

either the time of life, and so it is an hyperbolic expression; or the time convenient for the writing this epistle; to enumerate all the instances of faith, and enlarge upon them, would take up too much of his time, and make the epistle prolix and tedious: this form of speech is often used by Philo the Jew F21, and by Julian the emperor F23. It may be observed, that many, who are not mentioned by name, do not stand excluded from being believers; and that the number of believers, under the Old Testament, was very large:

to tell of Gedeon;

so Gideon is called in the Septuagint version of (Judges 6:11) and other places; and by Josephus F24, and Philo F25 the Jew, as here: he was a man, but of a mean extract, and had his infirmities; and even in the exercise of that particular grace, for which he is mentioned; but was, no doubt, a good man, and is commended for his faith; which appeared in ascribing former mercies and present afflictions to the Lord; in destroying the altar of Baal; in crediting the word of the Lord, that Israel should be saved by him; which he showed by the preparation he made, and in marching against a numerous army, with only three hundred men, and they but weak: all which may be seen in the book of Judges, (Judges 6:1-8:35) and

of Barak;

who was before Gideon, as Jephthah was before Samson, and Samuel before David; for the apostle does not observe strict order, reciting these in haste. Barak, when the word of the Lord came to him, showed some diffidence, yet acted in obedience to it, under the sole direction and counsel of a woman; he engaged Sisera's vast army with a small number, and gave the glory of the victory to the Lord, (Judges 4:1-5:31) .

and of Samson:

who was a child of promise, and devoted to the Lord; he was famous for his great strength; he had his infirmities, but was, without doubt, a good man: the last act of his life seems to be a great instance of faith; he did it with calling upon the Lord; he was strengthened for it by the Lord; he acted, not as a private person, but as the judge of Israel; nor did he act from private revenge, but from zeal for God, and love to his country; and his intention was not to destroy himself, but his enemies; in which he acted as a type of Christ:

and of Jephthah;

the Syriac version calls him "Nepthe", and the Arabic version "Naphtah"; he was base born; and, for a time, joined himself to vain men, but became a believer; and is marked for his faith, in ascribing the conquests of Israel in the wilderness to the Lord; in fighting with the Ammonites, whom he conquered; and in his conscientiousness, in observing his vow, (Judges 11:30-40) .

of David also;

a man after God's own heart, raised up to fulfil his will; whose faith appeared in his dependence on God,

when he fought with Goliath; in encouraging himself in the Lord his God, when in exile and distress; and in believing his interest in the covenant of grace, when his house and family were in a disagreeable situation, and he just going out of the world:

and Samuel;

a child of prayer, and early devoted to the Lord, who ministered to him, when a child; was always ready to hearken to his voice; was used very familiarly by him, and behaved with great uprightness, all his days; and had a good report of God and man:

and of the prophets;

from Samuel to John the Baptist, who were famous for their trust in God, their faith in the Messiah, and for their honourable walk and conversation.

FOOTNOTES:

F21 De Creat. Princip. p. 735. Merced. Meret. p. 863. De Legat. ad Caium, p. 1037. De Somniis, p. 1116.

F23 Orat l. p. 50, 62, 75.

F24 Antiqu. Jud. l. 5. c. 6. sect. 2. &c.

F25 De Confusione Ling. p. 339.

Hebrews 11:33

Who through faith subdued kingdoms

As David did particularly; who subdued Syria, Moab, Ammon, Amalek, Edom, and the Philistines, (2 Samuel 8:12 2 Samuel 8:14) . War, in some cases, is lawful; and kingdoms may be subdued; and faith makes use of means to do it: these kingdoms, though subdued by faith, yet not without fighting. Believers have no reason to be afraid of kings, or kingdoms; and this should encourage the saints, in their combats with the powers of darkness.

Wrought righteousness;

exercised vindictive justice, in taking vengeance on the enemies of God, and his people; civil righteousness, in the discharge of their offices; and moral righteousness, in their conversation before God and men; which, being imperfect, was not justifying: wherefore they stood in need of another, and better righteousness, which is perfect and durable; and, in consequence of which being known, embraced, and received, men work righteousness: it may be observed, that to do works of righteousness in faith, and by it, is something very considerable;

it is reckoned here among actions of the greatest fame; and that true faith is an operative grace, it works by love, and is always attended with works of righteousness; and that righteousness is a fruit and evidence of faith; and that faith is not the believer's righteousness; and that the righteousness of faith is not that which faith works, but which it receives.

Obtained promises;

the promise of the land of Canaan; particular promises of victory over their enemies; promises concerning the Messiah, and of everlasting life and happiness: their faith was not the cause of promises being made, nor of their being fulfilled; but was the grace by which these believers received them, believed them, and waited for the accomplishment of them; and, in some sense, enjoyed the things promised before hand; their faith realizing things future and invisible to them: to obtain a promise from God is a great and marvellous thing; it is an instance of rich grace; and there is never a promise, but what is great in itself, and precious to the saints: all God's promises are obtained; they are sure, and are certainly fulfilled; and it is the work and business of faith to receive, and enjoy them.

Stopped the mouths of lions:

a lion was slain by Samson, and another by David; but the most remarkable instance of stopping the mouths of lions, was in the den, into which Daniel was cast; and this may encourage the faith of God's people, when they are in the midst of men, comparable to lions; and may animate them not to fear the devouring lion, Satan.

Hebrews 11:34

Quenched the violence of fire

Which may be said to be done, when a believer, or a righteous man, is delivered out of it, as Lot from Sodom, when God rained fire and brimstone on it; when, by prayer, it is stopped, as by Moses, at Taberah, (Numbers 11:1 Numbers 11:2) when persons are not hurt by it, as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, when cast into Nebuchadrezzar's fiery furnace; and many of the martyrs have triumphed in the flames: so believers are delivered out of the fire of afflictions, and are not consumed thereby; and quench the fiery darts of Satan, thrown at them; and are untouched by the fire of God's wrath, in every state and case; and shall not be hurt of the second

death, which is a lake of fire, burning with brimstone.

Escaped the edge of the sword;

and were not destroyed by it; as Lot, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, the Judges, David, Elijah, Elisha, and others.

Out of weakness were made strong;

being recovered from bodily diseases, as David, Hezekiah by an increase of bodily strength, as Samson; by being filled with courage, and strength of mind; when before timorous, as Barak so believers, when they have been weak in the exercise of grace, have been made strong:

waxed valiant in fight;

as Barak, Gideon, David so believers, in the spiritual fight of faith, have waxed valiant; being engaged in a good cause, and under a good Captain; being well provided with armour, and assured of victory, and a crown.

Turned to fight the armies of the aliens:

such as the Canaanites, the Moabites, Ammonites, Philistines, and others; who were put to flight by Joshua, the Judges, David, and others.

Hebrews 11.35

Women received their dead raised to life again

As the widow of Zarephath, and the Shunammite, (1 Kings 17:22) (2 Kings 4:34 2 Kings 4:35) . Their sons were really dead, and they received them alive gain, from the hands of the prophets, Elijah and Elisha, in the way of a resurrection, and by faith; by the faith of the prophets:

and others were tortured;

racked, or tympanized; referring to the sufferings of seven brethren, and their mother, in the times of Antiochus, recorded in 2 Maccabees 7 as appears from the kind of torment endured by them; from the offer of deliverance rejected by them; and from their hope of the resurrection: for it follows,

not accepting deliverance;

when offered them by the king, see the Apocrypha:

speech, whilst the youngest was yet alive, did not only exhort him by words, but also assured him with oaths, that he would make him both a rich and a happy man, if he would turn from the laws of his fathers; and that also he would take him for his friend, and trust him with affairs. 25 But when the young man would in no case hearken unto him, the king called his mother, and exhorted her that she would counsel the young man to save his life." (2 Maccabees 7)

that they might obtain a better resurrection;

which they died in the faith of, see the Apocrypha:

``7 And him he sent with that wicked Alcimus, whom he made high priest, and commanded that he should take vengeance of the children of Israel. 11 And said courageously, These I had from heaven; and for his laws I despise them; and from him I hope to receive them again. 14 So when he was ready to die he said thus, It is good, being put to death by men, to look for hope from God to be raised up again by him: as for thee, thou shalt have no resurrection to life. (2 Maccabees)

The resurrection of the saints, which is unto everlasting life, is a better resurrection than mere metaphorical, and figurative ones, as deliverances from great afflictions, which are called deaths; or real ones, which were only to a mortal state, and in order to die again, as those under the Old Testament, and under the New, before the resurrection of Christ; or than the resurrection of the wicked: for the resurrection the saints will obtain will be first, at the beginning of the thousand years; the wicked will not live till after they are ended; it will be by virtue of union to Christ, whereas the wicked will be raised merely by virtue of his power; the saints will rise with bodies glorious, powerful, and spiritual, the wicked with base, vile, and ignoble ones; the righteous will come forth to the resurrection of life, the wicked to the resurrection of damnation. The consideration of the better resurrection is of great use to strengthen faith, under sufferings, for righteousness sake, and this is obtained by suffering; not that suffering is the meritorious cause of it, but saints in this way come to it; it is promised to such, and it will be attained unto, and enjoyed by

``24 Now Antiochus, thinking himself despised, and suspecting it to be a reproachful

such; for all that live godly, do, and must suffer persecution in one way or another.

Hebrews 11:36

And others had trial of cruel mockings

As Samson by the Philistines; Elisha by the children, whom the bears devoured; Jeremiah by Pashur, and others; the Jews by Sanballat and Tobiah, when building the temple; the prophets, whom God sent to the Jews, as his messengers, (Judges 16:25-28) (2 Kings 2:23 2 Kings 2:24) (Jeremiah 20:7 Jeremiah 20:8) (4:1-6) (2 Chronicles 36:15 2 Chronicles 36:16) .

and scourgings;

or smitings, as Jeremiah and Micaiah, (Jeremiah 20:22) (2 Chronicles 18:23 2 Chronicles 18:24) .

yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment;

as Joseph, Samson, and Jeremiah, (Genesis 39:20) (Judges 16:21) (Jeremiah 20:2) (37:15) . Now of these things they had trial, or experience; their graces were tried by them, and they patiently endured them.

Hebrews 11:37

They were stoned

As Naboth, by the order of Ahab, (1 Kings 21:13-19) , Zachariah in the court of the Lord's house; (2 Chronicles 24:21) and the character of Jerusalem is, that she stoned the prophets that were sent unto her, (Matthew 23:37) .

They were sawn asunder;

to which there seems to be an allusion in (Matthew 24:51) . There is no instance of any good men being so used in Scripture: perhaps reference is had to some that suffered thus in the time of Antiochus. The Jews have a tradition, that the Prophet Isaiah was sawn asunder in the times of Manasseh, and by his order; which some think the apostle refers unto; though it seems to be all fictitious, and ill put together. The tradition is in both Talmuds: in the one, the account is this: F26 that

``Manasseh sought to kill Isaiah, and he fled from him, and fled to a cedar, and the cedar swallowed him up, all but the fringe of his garment; they came and told him (Manasseh), he said unto them, go and saw the cedar, (wronw) , "and they sawed the cedar", and blood was seen

to come out."

And in the other F1 thus,

``says R. Simeon ben Azzai, I found a book of genealogies in Jerusalem, and in it was written that Manasseh slew Isaiah."

And after relating the occasion of it, being some passages in Isaiah Manasseh was displeased with and objected to; and the prophet not thinking it worth his while to return an answer, or attempt to reconcile them with other passages, objected, knowing that the king would use him contemptuously; he is made to say,

``I will swallow (or put myself into) a cedar, they brought the cedar, (wronw) , "and sawed it asunder", and when it (the saw) came to his mouth, he expired."

Another Jewish writer F2 out of the Midrash, reports it thus;

``Manasseh sought to slay him, and Isaiah fled, and the Lord remembered him, and he was swallowed up in the middle of a tree; but there remained without the tree the fringe of his garment; and then Manasseh ordered the tree to be cut down, and Isaiah died."

And it is become a generally received opinion of the ancient Christian writers, that Isaiah was sawn asunder; as of Justin Martyr {c}, Origen F4, Tertullian F5, Lactantius F6, Athanasius F7, Hilary F8, Cyril of Jerusalem F9, Gregory Nyssene F11, Jerom F12, Isidorus Pelusiota F13, Gregentius F14, Procopius Gazaeus F15, and others; but more persons seem to be designed:

were tempted;

either by God, as Abraham, and Job; or by the devil, as all the saints are; or rather by cruel tyrants, to deny the faith, and renounce the worship of God, as Eleazar, and the seven brethren with their mother; at least some of them were, 2 Maccabees 6,7. Some think the true reading is (eprhyhsan) , "were burned"; as one of the

seven brethren were in the Apocrytha,

“Now when he was thus maimed in all his members, he commanded him being yet alive to be brought to the fire, and to be fried in the pan: and as the vapour of the pan was for a good space dispersed, they exhorted one another with the mother to die manfully, saying thus,” (2 Maccabees 7:5)

and as Zedekiah and Ahab were roasted in the fire, by the king of Babylon, (Jeremiah 29:22) though they were lying prophets, and cannot be referred to here; see (Daniel 11:33) . This clause is wanting in the Syriac version:

were slain with the sword;

as the priests at Nob, by the order of Saul; (1 Samuel 22:18 1 Samuel 22:19) . The prophets of the Lord by Jezebel, (1 Kings 18:22) (19:10) and many in the times of the Maccabees; (Daniel 11:33) and in the Apocrypha:

“And there were destroyed within the space of three whole days fourscore thousand, whereof forty thousand were slain in the conflict; and no fewer sold than slain.” (2 Maccabees 5:14)

they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins;

with the wool or hair upon them; and with such Elijah and Elisha might be arrayed; since the former is said to be a hairy man, or covered with a hairy garment, as John the Baptist was, who came in his spirit and power, and also in his form; and the latter, wore the mantle of the other; (2 Kings 1:8) (2 Kings 2:8 2 Kings 2:14) and to these reference may be had, who were obliged to wander about, because of those who sought their lives; and was the case of others who were forced, by reason of persecution, to quit their habitations, and wander abroad; and some clothed themselves in this manner, to show their contempt of the world, and their contentment with mean apparel; and others, because they could get no other raiment:

[being] destitute;

of bodily food, as Elijah, who was fed by ravens, and

by the widow of Zarephath; (1 Kings 17:6-15) ,

afflicted;

pressed, drove to the greatest straits, despairing of life, and weary of it, as the same prophet, (1 Kings 19:4-10) ,

tormented;

or evilly treated, reproached, vilified, persecuted, and made the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things.

FOOTNOTES:

F26 T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 28. 3.

F1 T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 49. 2.

F2 Shalsholet Hakabala, fol. 12. 2.

F3 Dialog. cum Tryph. p. 249.

F4 In Jer. Homil. 19. p. 197. in Isa. Homil. 1. fol. 101. & in Matt. Homil. 26. fol. 51.

F5 De Patientia, c. 14. Scorpiace, c. 8.

F6 De vera sapientia, l. 4. c. 11.

F7 Vol. I. de Incarnat. p. 55, 65. Vol. II. dicta & Interpret. Parab. p. 325, 353.

F8 Contr. Constant, p. 199. & enarrat. in Psal. cxviii. p. 465.

F9 Cateches. 2. sect. 9. p. 29. & Cateches. 13. sect. 3. p. 169.

F11 Vol. II. de Castigat. p. 749.

F12 In Isa. lvii. 2.

F13 L. 4. Ep. 205.

F14 Disputat. cum Heribano Judaeo, p. 19.

F15 In Reg. l. 4. c. 21. 16.

Hebrews 11:38

Of whom the world was not worthy

These words are inserted in a parenthesis, to remove or prevent such objections as these; that they were restless and unquiet persons, that made disturbance in the world, and so unfit to live in it; and that they were deservedly punished for crimes they were guilty of; and to show the great worth and inestimable value of the people of God, which exceeds that of the whole world; and to intimate the removal of them out of the world, or from dwelling among the men of it, is by way of punishment to it:

they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth;

as Elijah did; (1 Kings 18:4) (1 Kings 19:9 1 Kings 19:10) , and many in the times of the Maccabees;

“And they kept the eight days with gladness, as in the feast of the tabernacles, remembering that not long afore they had held the feast of the tabernacles, when as they wandered in the mountains and dens like beasts.” (2 Maccabees 10:6)

Hebrews 11:39

And these all having obtained a good report through faith,

&c.] This may either be limited to the sufferers in the preceding verses, who were martyred, or suffered martyrdom for the faith, as the words may be rendered; and who are called martyrs or witnesses, in (Hebrews 12:1) and so the Ethiopic version renders the clause, “and all these were witnesses concerning the faith”: or it may be extended to all the instances of faith throughout the chapter; and so the apostle reasserts what he had said, (Hebrews 11:2) , having proved it by a variety of examples; (See Gill on Hebrews 11:2).

received not the promise;

not that they did not receive the promise of the land of Canaan, for so did Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses nor that they did not receive the promise of deliverance and victory, for so did Joshua, the Judges, and others; or that they did not receive the promise of eternal life, for that they all did; but the promise of the Messiah, that is, the Messiah promised: for they had the promise, but not the thing; who is called “the Promise”, emphatically, because he is the first and grand promise; and because in him all the promises centre, and are yea, and amen: him the Old Testament saints received not; they, greatly desired to see him in the flesh; they saw him by faith; they believed in him, and rejoiced in the expectation of his coming; but he was not exhibited to them incarnate. Now since these saints so strongly believed, and so cheerfully suffered before Christ came; the apostle’s argument is, that much more should the saints now, since Christ is come, and the promises received, go on believing in him, and readily suffering for

his sake; see (Hebrews 12:1-4) .

Hebrews 11:40

God having provided some better thing for us

Not a better state of the church, in such respect, as to be free from suffering reproach and persecutions; for this is the case of saints under the New Testament as under the Old; nor the felicity of the soul after death; nor any greater degree of happiness in the other world; nor the perfection of blessedness in soul and body; things common to all believers; but Christ, as now exhibited in the flesh: Jesus Christ was the same in the yesterday of the Old Testament, as he is in the present day of the Gospel dispensation; he was slain from the foundation of the world; and the saints then were saved as now, by his grace and righteousness: only with this difference between them and us; they had Christ in the promise, we have him himself that was promised; they had him in type and shadow, we have him in reality and truth; they believed in, and were saved by Christ, who was to come; we believe in him, and are saved by him, as being come. Hence our case is, with respect to these circumstances, better than theirs; we have a better covenant, or a better administration of the covenant of grace; we have a better priesthood, and a better sacrifice; the Gospel is dispensed in a better manner, more dearly and fully: our condition is better than theirs; they were as children under tutors and governors, and were under a spirit of bondage; but we are redeemed from under the law, and are clear of its burdensome rites, as well as of its curse and condemnation; and have the spirit of liberty and adoption. And this God has provided for us in his council and covenant: for this denotes God’s determination, designation, and appointment of Christ, to be the propitiatory sacrifice for sin; and has respect to the nature and circumstances of his death, which were fixed in the purposes of God; as well as the time of his coming into the world, and the season of his death; and in all this God has shown his great goodness, his amazing love, and the riches of his grace: and his end herein is,

that they without us should not be made perfect;

the Old Testament saints are perfectly justified, perfectly sanctified, and perfectly glorified; but their perfection was not by the law, which made nothing perfect, but by Christ, and through his sacrifice, blood, and righteousness; and so were not made perfect without us; since their sins and ours are expiated together

by the same sacrifice; their persons and ours justified together by the same righteousness; they and we make up but one church, and general assembly; and as yet all the elect of God among the Jews are not called, and so are not perfect in themselves, or without us. Jews and Gentiles will incorporate together in the latter day; and besides, they and we shall be glorified together, in soul and body, to all eternity.

INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS 12

In this chapter the apostle presses to a constant exercise of faith and patience, amidst the various afflictions the saints are exercised with; delivers out several exhortations useful in the Christian life; and shows the difference between the legal and Gospel dispensations. Having in the preceding chapter given many illustrious instances and examples of faith, he makes use of this cloud of witnesses, as he calls them, to engage the Hebrews to drop their unbelief, and run with faith and patience the race set before them, Heb 12:1, and which he further urges from the example of Christ; from his concern in faith, being the author and finisher of it; from what he suffered when here on earth, both the contradiction of sinners, and the death of the cross, for the joy of having his people with him in heaven; and from his glorious state, being set down at the right hand of God. Whereas, as yet, they had not been called to shed their blood in their warfare against sin, Heb 12:2-4. And that they must expect chastisement, and should bear it patiently, he cites a passage of Scripture out of Pr 3:11,12 which suggests, that those who are the children of God, and are loved and received by him, are chastened and scourged, Heb 12:5,6. Wherefore this was no other than dealing with them as children; and should they not be thus dealt with, it would be an argument that they were bastards, and not sons, Heb 12:7,8. And next the apostle argues from the right of parents to chastise their children, and the subjection that is yielded to them; that if the corrections of them, who were the fathers of their bodies, were quietly submitted to; then much more should those of the Father of their souls; and the rather, since the chastenings of the former are only for temporal good, and according to their fallible judgments; whereas the latter are for spiritual profit, and an increase of holiness, Heb 12:9,10. And though it must be allowed, that no chastening, for the present time, is matter of joy, but of grief; yet the effects of them are the peaceable fruits of righteousness, to them that are exercised by them, Heb 12:11. Wherefore the apostle exhorts the believing

Hebrews to encourage themselves and others under afflictions; and to behave in such manner, and carry it so evenly, that they might not be an occasion of stumbling to weak believers, Heb 12:12,13. He exhorts them in general to follow peace with all men, and particularly holiness; which is absolutely necessary to the beatific vision of God, Heb 12:14, and to take care that no heresy or immorality spring up among them, and be connived at, and cherished by them, to the troubling of some, and defiling of others, Heb 12:15, and particularly, lest the sin of uncleanness, or any sort of profaneness, should be found among them; of which Esau, the brother of Jacob, from whence they sprung, was guilty; whose profaneness lay in selling his birthright for a morsel of meat, and whose punishment was, that he should be deprived of the blessing; which decree was irrevocable, notwithstanding his tears, Heb 12:16,17 and to enforce these exhortations, the apostle observes to these believers, that they were not now under the law, but in a Gospel church state. The terror of the legal dispensation they were delivered from is described by the place where the law was given, a mount burning with fire; by circumstances attending it, blackness, darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet; by the matter of it, a voice of words, which they that heard, entreated they might hear no more; and by the effect the whole had upon. Moses himself, who quaked and trembled at what he saw and heard, Heb 12:18-21. The happiness of the Gospel dispensation, or of the Gospel church state, is expressed by the names of it, called Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the new Jerusalem; and by the company the saints have there, and their fellowship with them; angels innumerable; elect men, whose names are written in heaven, and whose spirits are made perfectly just; God the Judge of all, and Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant; whose blood being sprinkled on their consciences, spoke peace and pardon to them; such as neither Abel's blood nor sacrifice could speak, Heb 12:22-24. From whence the apostle argues, that care should be taken not to neglect and despise the voice of Christ, who is now in heaven, and speaks from thence in his Gospel and ordinances; seeing they escaped not who rejected him that spoke on earth, at Mount Sinai, which was shaken by his voice; and the rather, since it appears from a prophecy in Hag 2:6,7, that under the Gospel dispensation, not only the earth but the heavens would be shaken, Heb 12:25,26 which is an emblem of the shaking and removing the ordinances of the ceremonial law, that Gospel ordinances might take place, and remain for ever, Heb

12:27. Upon the whole, the apostle exhorts the believing Hebrews, that seeing they had received the immovable kingdom of grace, and were admitted into the Gospel dispensation, or church state; that they would hold fast the Gospel of the grace of God, and serve the Lord, according to his revealed will, with reverence and godly fear, which would be acceptable to him; or otherwise he would be a consuming fire; as he is to all the despisers and neglecters of his Gospel and ordinances, Heb 12:28,29.

Hebrews 12:1

1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:

6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;

13 And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;

16 Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.

17 For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

18 For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest,

19 And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more:

20 (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart:

21 And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:)

22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an

innumerable company of angels,

23 To the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

25 See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:

26 Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.

27 And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:

29 For our God is a consuming fire.

COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS XII

Hebrews 12:1

Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about

, As the Israelites were encompassed with the pillar of cloud, or with the clouds of glory in the wilderness, as the Jews say; (See Gill on 1 Corinthians 10:1), to which there may be an allusion, here, since it follows,

with so great a cloud of witnesses;

or “martyrs”, as the Old Testament saints, the instances of whose faith and patience are produced in the preceding chapter: these, some of them, were martyrs in the sense in which that word is commonly used; they suffered in the cause, and for the sake of true religion; and they all bore a noble testimony of God, and for him; and they received a testimony from him; and

will be hereafter witnesses for, or against us, to whom they are examples of the above graces: and these may be compared to a “cloud”, for the comfortable and reviving doctrines which they dropped; and for their refreshing examples in the heat of persecution; and for their guidance and direction in the ways of God; and more especially for their number, being like a thick cloud, and so many, that they compass about on every side, and are instructive every way. Hence the following things are inferred and urged,

let us lay aside every weight;

or burden; every sin, which is a weight and burden to a sensible sinner, and is an hinderance in running the Christian race; not only indwelling sin, but every actual transgression, and therefore to be laid aside; as a burden, it should be laid on Christ; as a sin, it should be abstained from, and put off, with respect to the former conversation: also worldly cares, riches, and honours, when immoderately pursued, are a weight depressing the mind to the earth, and a great hinderance in the work and service of God, and therefore to be laid aside; not that they are to be entirely rejected, and not cared for and used, but the heart should not be set upon them, or be over anxious about them: likewise the rites and ceremonies of Moses’s law were a weight and burden, a yoke of bondage, and an intolerable one, and with which many believing Jews were entangled and pressed, and which were a great hinderance in the performance of evangelical worship; wherefore the exhortation to these Hebrews, to lay them aside, was very proper and pertinent, since they were useless and incommodious, and there had been a disannulling of them by Christ, because of their weakness and unprofitableness. Some observe, that the word here used signifies a tumour or swelling; and so may design the tumour of pride and vain glory, in outward privileges, and in a man’s own righteousness, to which the Hebrews were much inclined; and which appears in an unwillingness to stoop to the cross, and bear afflictions for the sake of the Gospel; all which is a great enemy to powerful godliness, and therefore should be brought down, and laid aside. The Arabic version renders it, “every weight of luxury”: all luxurious living, being prejudicial to real religion:

and the sin which doth so easily beset us;

the Arabic version renders it, “easy to be committed”; meaning either the corruption of nature in general, which is always present, and puts upon doing evil,

and hinders all the good it can; or rather some particular sin, as what is commonly called a man's constitution sin, or what he is most inclined to, and is most easily drawn into the commission of; or it may be the sin of unbelief is intended, that being opposite to the grace of faith, the apostle had been commending, in the preceding chapter, and he here exhorts to; and is a sin which easily insinuates itself, and prevails, and that sometimes under the notion of a virtue, as if it would be immodest, or presumptuous to believe; the arguments for it are apt to be readily and quickly embraced; but as every weight, so every sin may be designed: some reference may be had to (Lamentations 1:14) where the church says, that her transgressions were "wreathed", (wgrtvy) , "wreathed themselves", or wrapped themselves about her. The allusion seems to be to runners in a race, who throw off everything that encumbers, drop whatsoever is ponderous and weighty, run in light garments, and lay aside long ones, which entangle and hinder in running, as appears from the next clause, or inference.

And let us run with patience the race that is set before us.

The stadium, or race plot, in which the Christian race is run, is this world; the prize run for is the heavenly glory; the mark to direct in it, is Christ; many are the runners, yet none but the overcomers have the prize; which being held by Christ, is given to them: this race is "set before" the saints; that is, by God; the way in which they are to run is marked out by him in his word; the troubles they shall meet with in it are appointed for them by him, in his counsels and purposes; the mark to direct them is set before them in the Gospel, even Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, whom they are to look unto; the length of their race is fixed for them, or how far, and how long they shall run; and the prize is determined for them, and will be given them, and which is held out for their encouragement, to have respect unto; and it becomes all the saints, and belongs to each, and everyone of them, to "run" this race; which includes both doing and suffering for Christ; it is a motion forward, a pressing towards the mark for the prize, a going from strength to strength, from one degree of grace to another; and to its swiftness and agility are necessary; and when it is performed aright, it is with readiness, willingness, and cheerfulness: it requires strength and courage, and a removal of all impediments, and should be done "with patience"; which is very necessary, because of the many exercises in the way; and because

of the length of the race; and on account of the prize to be enjoyed, which is very desirable: the examples of the saints, and especially Christ, the forerunner, should move and animate unto it.

Hebrews 12:2

Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith,

&c.] Not with bodily eyes, for at present he is not to be looked upon in this manner, but with the eye of the understanding, or with the eye of faith; for faith is a seeing of the Son; it is a spiritual sight of Christ, which is at first but glimmering, afterwards it increases, and is of a soul humbling nature; it is marvellous and surprising; it transforms into the image of Christ, and fills with joy unspeakable, and full of glory: a believer should be always looking to Christ, and off of every object, as the word here used signifies. Christ is to be looked unto as "Jesus", a Saviour, who being appointed and sent by God to be a Saviour, came, and is become the author of eternal salvation; and to him only should we look for it: he is able and willing to save; he is a suitable, complete, and only Saviour; and whoever look to him by faith shall be saved; and he is to be considered, and looked unto, as "the author and finisher of faith": he is the author or efficient cause of it; all men are by nature without it; it is not in the power of man to believe of himself; it is a work of omnipotence; it is an instance of the exceeding greatness of the power of God; and it is the operation of Christ, by his Spirit; and the increase of it is from him, (Luke 17:5) and he is the finisher of it; he gives himself, and the blessings of his grace, to his people, to maintain and strengthen it; he prays for it, that it fail not; he carries on the work of faith, and will perform it with power; and brings to, and gives that which is the end of it, eternal life, or the salvation of the soul.

Who for the joy that was set before him;

the word (anti) , rendered "for"; sometimes signifies, in the room, or stead of, as in (Matthew 2:22) (20:28) and is so rendered here in the Syriac and Arabic versions; and then the sense is, that Christ instead of being in the bosom of the Father, came into this world; instead of being in the form of God, he appeared in the form of a servant; instead of the glory which he had with his Father from eternity, he suffered shame and disgrace; instead of living a joyful and comfortable life on earth, he suffered a shameful and an accursed death; and instead of the temporal joy and glory the Jews pro-

posed to him, he endured the shame and pain of the cross: sometimes it signifies the end for which a thing is, as in (Ephesians 5:31) and may intend that, for the sake of which Christ underwent so much disgrace, and such sufferings; namely, for the sake of having a spiritual seed, a numerous offspring with him in heaven, who are his joy, and crown of rejoicing; for the sake of the salvation of all the elect, on which his heart was set; and for the glorifying of the divine perfections, which was no small delight and pleasure to him. And to this agrees the Chaldee paraphrase of (Psalms 21:1) .

“O Lord, in thy power shall the King Messiah (ydx) , “rejoice”, and in thy redemption how greatly will he exult!”

And also because of his own glory as Mediator, which was to follow his sufferings, and which includes his resurrection from the dead, his exaltation at the right hand of God, and the whole honour and glory Christ has in his human nature; see (Psalms 16:8-11) and with a view to all this, he endured the cross; which is to be taken not properly for that frame of wood, on which he was crucified; but, improperly, for all his sufferings, from his cradle to his cross; and particularly the tortures of the cross, being extended on it, and nailed unto it; and especially the death of the cross, which kind of death he endured to verify the predictions of it, (Psalms 22:16) (Zechariah 12:10) and to show that he was made a curse for his people; and this being a Roman punishment, shows that the sceptre was taken from Judah, and therefore the Messiah must be come; and that Christ suffered for the Gentiles, as well as Jews: and this death he endured with great courage and intrepidity, with much patience and constancy, and in obedience to the will of his Father: despising the shame; of the cross; for it was an ignominious death, as well as a painful one; and as he endured the pain of it with patience, he treated the shame of it with contempt; throughout the whole of his life, he despised the shame and reproach that was cast upon him; and so he did at the time of his apprehension, and when upon his trial, and at his death, under all the ignominious circumstances that attended it; which should teach us not to be ashamed of the reproach of Christ, but count it an honour to be worthy to suffer shame for his name.

And is set down at the right hand of the throne of

God;

Which is in heaven; and is expressive of the majesty and glory of God; and of the honour done to Christ in human nature, which is not granted to any of the angels: here Christ sits as God’s fellow, as equal to him, as God, and as having done his work as man, and Mediator; and this may assure us, that when we have run out our race, we shall sit down too, with Christ upon his throne, and be at rest.

Hebrews 12:3

For consider him

In the greatness of his person, as God, the Son of God, the heir of all things; and in his offices of prophet, priest, and King, as the Saviour of lost sinners, the Leader and Commander of the people, as the apostle and high priest of our profession: consider him in his human nature, his conversation on earth, and what he did and suffered for men; how that in his nature he was pure and holy, in his conversation harmless and innocent, in his deportment meek and lowly; who went about doing good to the souls of men, and at last suffered and died, and is now glorified: consider the analogy between him and us, and how great is the disproportion; and therefore if he was ill treated, no wonder we should consider him under all his reproaches and sufferings:

that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself;

against his person, they denying his deity, and speaking against his sonship, and against his offices; mocking him as a King, deriding him as a prophet, and treating him with the utmost contempt as a priest and Saviour; and against his actions, his works of mercy to the bodies of men, when done on the sabbath day; his conversing with sinners for the good of their souls, as if he was an encourager of them in sin, and a partner with them; his miracles, as if they were done by the help of the devil; and against the whole series of his life, as if it was criminal. Now we should analogize this contradiction, and see what proportion there is between this, and what is endured by us: we should consider the aggravations of it, that it was “against himself”; sometimes it was against his disciples, and him through them, as it is now against his members, and him in them; but here it was immediately and directly against himself: and this he endured “from sinners”; some more secret, as the Scribes, Sadducees, and Pharisees; some more open,

as the common people; some of them the vilest of sinners, the most abandoned of creatures, as the Roman soldiers, and Herod's men of war: and this should be considered, that we cannot be contradicted by viler or meaner persons; and it is worthy of notice, with what courage and bravery of mind, with what patience and invincible constancy he endured it: this should be recollected for imitation and encouragement,

lest ye be wearied, and faint in your minds;

contradiction is apt to make persons weary and faint, as Rebekah was, because of the daughters of Heth, and as Jeremiah was, because of the derision of the Jews, (Genesis 27:46) (Jeremiah 20:8 Jeremiah 20:9) but a consideration of Jesus, and of what he has endured, tends to relieve the saints in such a condition; See (Matthew 10:25) (Luke 23:31) .

Hebrews 12:4

Ye have not yet resisted unto blood

They had resisted sin, and Satan, and the world, the men of it, and the lusts of it, and its frowns and flatteries, and also false teachers, even every adversary of Christ, and their souls; but they had not, as yet, resisted unto blood, or to the shedding of their blood, as some of the Old Testament saints had done; as some in the times of the Maccabees, and as James the apostle of Christ, and as Christ himself: wherefore the apostle suggests, that they ought to consider, that they had been indulged; and what they had been engaged in, were only some light skirmishes; and that they must expect to suffer as long as they were in the world, and had blood in them; and that their blood, when called for, should be spilled for the sake of Christ:

striving against sin;

which is the principal antagonist the believer has, and is here particular pointed out: sin is here, by some, thought to be put for sinful men; or it may design the sin of those men, who solicited the saints to a defection from the truth; or the sin of apostasy itself; or that of unbelief; or rather indwelling sin, and the lusts of the flesh, which war against the soul. Now this is said, to sharpen and increase the saints resentment and indignation against it, as being their antagonist, with whom they strive and combat, and which is the cause of all the evils in the world, exposes to wrath to come, and separates from communion with God; and to encour-

age them to bear their sufferings patiently, since they are not without sin, as Christ was; and since their afflictions and sufferings are for the subduing of sin, and the increase of holiness.

Hebrews 12:5

And ye have forgotten the exhortation

Or consolation, the consolatory word or doctrine, in (Proverbs 3:11) . This, by their conduct, the apostle feared they had forgotten, and therefore puts them in mind of it; or it may be read by way of question, "and have ye forgotten?" do not ye remember? it would be right to call it to mind:

which speaketh unto you as unto children;

not as the children of Solomon, but as the children of God, or of Christ, the wisdom of God: here, by a prosopopeia, the word of exhortation is introduced as a person speaking,

my son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord;

by which is meant, not vindictive punishment; this would not be speaking to them, nor dealing with them as children, and would be contrary to the love of God towards them; besides, chastisement in this sense has been upon Christ for them, and it would be unjust to lay it on them again; but a fatherly correction is designed, and which is given in love by God, as a Father, and for the instruction of his children, as the word used signifies: and it is called not the chastening of men, but of the Lord; every chastening, or afflictive providence, is appointed by God, and is looked upon by believers, when grace is in exercise, as coming from him; and it is directed, and governed, and limited by him, and is overruled by him for his own glory, and their good: and this is not to be despised, as something nauseous and loathsome, or as not useful and unprofitable, or as insignificant and unworthy of notice, but should be esteemed for the good ends, which are sometimes answered, by it:

nor faint when thou art rebuked of him;

God has various ways of rebuking, reproving, and convincing, sometimes by his Spirit, sometimes by his word and ministers, and sometimes by afflictive providences; by these he rebukes his people for their sins, convinces them of them, and brings them to acknowledgment and confession; he makes them hereby sensi-

ble of their duty, in which they have been remiss, and brings them to a more constant and fervent discharge of it; he reproveth them for, and convinces of their folly in trusting in the creature, or loving it too much, and of every wrong way they have been walking in; and these rebukes are not in a way of wrath, but love, and therefore saints should not faint at them: there are two extremes they are apt to run into, under such a dispensation; either to take no notice, and make light of an affliction, or else to be overwhelmed by it, and sink under it; both are guarded against in this exhortation.

Hebrews 12:6

For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth

All men are not the objects of God's love, only a special people, whom he has chosen in Christ; for whom he has given his Son, when they were sinners and enemies; whom he quickens and calls by his grace, justifies, pardons, and accepts in Christ; and whom he causes to love him; these he loves with an everlasting and unchangeable love, and in a free and sovereign way, without any regard to any motive or condition in them. Now these are chastened by him, and loved while they are chastened; their chastening is in love, as appears from the nature of God's love to them, which changes not; from the nature of chastening itself; which is that of a father; from the divine supports granted under it; from the ends of it, which are, among others, that they might be more and more partakers of holiness, and not be condemned with the world; and from the issue of it, which is a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. So the Jews F16 often speak of (hbha lv Nyrwoy), "chastisements of love", in distinction from evil "chastisement", or vindictive ones:

and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth;

by whom are meant, not any of the angels, nor all the sons of men, but such whom God has predestinated to the adoption of children, and in the covenant of his grace has declared himself a father to; for whom Christ has a special regard, as children, and therefore partook of human nature, and died to gather them together, and redeemed them, that they might receive the adoption of children; and who appear to be the children of God by faith in Christ; and who have the spirit of adoption, witnessing their sonship to them; this is a valuable blessing of grace, and springs from love: and such are received by God into his heart's love and affection, with compla-

cy and delight; and into the covenant of his grace, to share all the blessings and promises of it; and into his family, to enjoy all the privileges of his house, and into communion with himself; and they will be hereafter received by him into glory: now these he scourges; he suffers them sometimes to be scourged by men, and to be buffeted by Satan; and sometimes he scourges them himself with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men, but always in love.

FOOTNOTES:

F16 Zohar in Gen. fol. 39. 3. & 102. 4. & in Exod. fol. 98. 2. & 102. 2. & in Lev. fol. 19. 3.

Hebrews 12:7

If ye endure chastening

In faith, with patience, with courage and constancy, with humility and reverence: there are many things which may encourage and animate the saints to endure it in such a manner; as that it is but a chastening, and the chastening of a father; it should be considered from whence it comes, and for what ends; that it comes from the Lord, and is for his glory, and their good; the example of Christ, and of other saints, should excite unto it. The Jews have a saying F17, that

``the doctrine of chastisements is silence;"

that is, they are to be patiently bore, and not murmured at. The Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, read the words as an exhortation; the former of these renders it, "persevere in discipline"; the Syriac version, "endure correction"; the Arabic version, "be ye patient in chastisement"; and the Ethiopic version, "endure your chastening": but then the word, "for", should be supplied in the next clause, as it is in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, making that to be a reason, enforcing this,

for God dealeth with you as with sons:

chastening is owning of them for his children, and it discovers them to be so, and shows that they continue such; he does not chasten them but when it is necessary; and whenever he does, it is in love and mercy, and for good, and in the best time, seasonably, and in measure:

for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

no one can be named, not the Son of God himself; he had the chastisement of our peace upon him; nor the more eminent among the children of God, as Abraham, David, and others; nor any in any catalogue, or list of them, such as in the preceding chapter; not one in any age or period of time whatever, in any bodies, societies, or communities of them, either under the Old or New Testament.

FOOTNOTES:

F17 T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 62. 1.

Hebrews 12:8

But if ye be without chastisement

Or have no affliction:

whereof all are partakers;

that is, all the children of God; they are all alike children; they are all in a state of imperfection, and prone to sin; God has an impartial respect unto them: and though they are not all alike chastened, nor chastened at all times, yet none are exempted from chastisement, but have it in some way or another, and at some time or another.

Then are ye bastards, and not sons;

all are not sons that are under a profession of religion; all that are under a profession of religion are not chastised; but then those are not the children of God, but the children of the world, of Satan, and of the anti-christian harlot; for though all that are chastised are not children, yet all that are children are chastised: hence we learn, that outward peace and prosperity is not a note of a true church; and that such have reason to distrust their state, who know not what it is to have the chastising rod of God upon them; and that afflictions are rather arguments for than against sonship.

Hebrews 12:9

Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh

Earthly parents; who are so called, because they are the immediate causes and instruments of the generation of their children, and of their fleshly bodies and worldly beings; and to distinguish them from the Father of spirits: and this shows, that they have not the spirit

or soul from them, only the flesh or body, and which is frail and corrupt; and therefore goes by this name.

Which corrected us;

early, and at proper seasons, in love, and for instruction, and to prevent ruin, and death:

and we gave them reverence;

by submitting to their correction, and hearkening to it; by taking shame to themselves, and acknowledging the offence committed; by retaining the same affection for them; and, by a carefulness not to offend for the future.

Shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live?

that is, to God, who is so called; not because he is the Creator of angels, who are spirits; but because he is the Creator of the souls of men; the soul is the more noble and excellent part of man: it bears a resemblance to God; it is, the life of man, and is immortal; it is exceeding precious, and the redemption of it; this was at first immediately created by God; and he still continues to create souls, which he preserves in their being, and has the power of saving and destroying them. Besides, God may be so called, because he is the author and donor of all spiritual gifts, and particularly of regenerating grace; it is he who renews a right spirit in them, and puts a new spirit into them: now such ought to be in "subjection" to him; not only as creatures to a Creator, and as subjects to their prince: but as children to a father, and particularly to him, as and when correcting; they should bow to his sovereignty, resign to his will, be humble under his mighty hand, be still and quiet, and bear all patiently; the advantage arising from such a subjection is life: "and live"; or "that ye may live"; or "and ye shall live": more comfortably, and more to the glory of God, in communion and fellowship with him here, and in heaven to all eternity.

Hebrews 12:10

For they verily for a few days chastened us

Which respects not the minority of children, during which time they are under the correction of parents, and which is but a few days; nor the short life of parents; but rather the end which parents have in chastening their children, which is their temporal good, and which lasts but for a few days; which sense the opposition in the

latter part of the text requires: and this they do

after their own pleasure:

not to please and delight themselves in the pains and cries of their children, which would be brutish and inhuman; though corrections are too often given to gratify the passions; nor merely in an arbitrary way, and when they please; but the sense is, they correct as seems good unto them; in the best way and manner; to the best of their judgments, which are fallible:

but he for our profit;

saints are no losers by afflictions; they lose nothing but their dross and tin; they do not lose the love of God; nor their interest in the covenant of grace; nor the presence of God; nor grace in their own hearts; nor spiritual peace and comfort: on the contrary, they are real gainers by them; their graces gain by them fresh lustre and glory; they obtain a greater degree of spiritual knowledge; and a larger stock of experience; and are hereby restored to their former state, duty, and zeal; and become more conformable to Christ; yea, their afflictions conduce to their future glory; many are the profits arising from them. The Alexandrian copy reads in the plural number, "profits": particularly God's end in chastening of his children is,

that we might be partakers of his holiness;

not the essential holiness of God, which is incommunicable; but a communicative holiness of his, which it is his determining will his people should have: it comes from him, from whom every good and perfect gift does; it is in Christ for them, and is received out of his fulness; and is wrought in them by the Spirit; and it bears a resemblance to the divine nature: now men are naturally destitute of this holiness; they have it not by nature, but by participation; as God's gift; and they first partake of it in regeneration; and here an increase of it is designed, a gradual participation of it; and it may include perfect holiness in heaven: afflictions are designed as means to bring persons to this end; to bring them to a sense of sin, an acknowledgment of it, an aversion to it, and to a view of pardon of it; to purge it away; to wean the saints from this world; to increase their grace, and lead them on to a perfect state of glory, where there will be no more sin, and no more sorrow.

Hebrews 12:11

Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous,

&c.] These words anticipate an objection, taken from the grief and sorrow that comes by afflictions; and therefore how should they be for profit and advantage? The apostle answers, by granting that no affliction "seemeth" to be joyous, in outward appearance to flesh and blood, and according to the judgment of carnal sense and reason; in this view of afflictions, it must be owned, they do not appear to be matter, cause, or occasion of joy; though they really are, when viewed by faith, and judged of by sanctified reason; for they are tokens of the love of God and Christ; are evidences of sonship; and work together either for the temporal, or spiritual, or eternal good of the saints: and so likewise indeed "for the present time", either while under them, or in the present state of things, they seem so; but hereafter, either now when they are over; or however in the world to come, when the grace, goodness, wisdom, and power of God in them, in supporting under them, bringing out of them, and the blessed effects, and fruits of them, will be discerned, they will be looked upon with pleasure: but for the present, and when carnal sense and reason prevail, it must be allowed, that they are not matter of joy,

but grievous;

or matter, cause, and occasion of grief; they cause pain and grief to the afflicted, and to their friends and relations about them; and especially, they are very grieving, and occasion heaviness, and are grievous to be borne, when soul troubles attend them; when God hides his face, and the soul is filled with a sense of wrath, looking upon the chastening, as being in wrath and hot displeasure; when Satan is let loose, and casts his fiery darts thick and fast; and when the soul has lost its views of interest in the love of God, and in the grace of Christ, and in eternal glory and happiness.

Nevertheless, afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby:

who are used unto afflictions; "trained" up and instructed in the school of afflictions, as the word may signify; in which many useful lessons of faith and hope, patience and experience, humility, self-denial; and resignation of will, are learned: and to such afflictions yield "the fruit of peace"; external peace and prosperity sometimes follow upon them; and oftentimes internal peace is enjoyed in them; and they always issue to

such in eternal peace and everlasting happiness; and this peace arises from the “righteousness” of Christ, laid hold upon by faith, which produces a true conscience peace, and entitles to that everlasting joy and rest which remains for the people of God. Moreover, the fruit of holiness may be designed, which saints by afflictions are made partakers of, and the peace enjoyed in that; for there is a peace, which though it does not spring from, yet is found in the ways of righteousness; and though this peace may not be had for the present, or while the affliction lasts, yet it is experienced “afterwards”; either after the affliction is over in the present life, or however in eternity, when the saints enter into peace; for the end of such dispensations, and of the persons exercised by them, is peace,

Hebrews 12.12

Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down

These words may be considered as spoken to the Hebrews, with respect to themselves; accordingly, the Syriac version reads, “your hands”, and “your knees”; who were sluggish, and inactive in prayer, in hearing the word, in attendance on ordinances, in holding fast their profession, and in the performance of those things which adorn it; they were weary and fatigued with weights and burdens of sins and afflictions; and were faint, fearful, and timorous, through distrust of the promised good, because of their persecutions, being in present distress, and in a view of approaching danger, with which they might be surprised, as well as affected with their present afflictions: and then the exhortation to “lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees”, is to be active in every duty; to be courageous against every enemy: to bear patiently every burden; to take heart, and be of good cheer under every afflictive providence: or else they may be considered as an exhortation to them with respect to others, which seems to be most agreeable to (Isaiah 35:3) from whence they are taken; and then what is signified in them is done by sympathizing with persons in distress; by speaking comfortably to them, and by bearing their burdens.

Hebrews 12:13

And make straight paths for your feet

By “feet” are meant the walk and conversation of the saints, both in the church, and in the world, (Song of Solomon 7:1) and there are paths made ready for these feet to walk in; as the good old paths of truth, of the

word and worship of God, of faith and holiness: and to make these paths “straight”, is to make the word of God the rule of walking; to avoid carefully joining anything with it as a rule; to attend constantly on the ordinances of Christ; to go on evenly in a way of believing on him; to walk in some measure worthy of the calling where-with we are called, and by way of example to others.

Lest that which is lame be turned out of the way;

a lame member, as the Syriac version, a lame member of the body of Christ, the church; or a lame person, as the Arabic version, a weak believer; one that is ready to halt, either through the corruption of nature, or through the weakness of grace, or through want of light and judgment, and through instability and inconstancy; lest such an one should, through the irregular walk and conversation of others, be stumbled and offended, and go out of the way, and leave the paths of righteousness and truth. God takes care of, and has a regard to such, and he would have others also, (Micah 4:6) (Zephaniah 3:19). The Ethiopic version reads, “that your halting may be healed, and not offended”: that you yourselves may not halt and stumble.

But let it rather be healed;

the fallen believer be restored, the weak brother be confirmed, the halting professor be strengthened, and everyone be built up and established upon the most holy faith, and in the pure ways of the Gospel.

Hebrews 12:14

Follow peace with all men

That are in a natural and domestic relation to one another, being of the same family; and that are in a civil and political one, being of the same nation, city, or society; and that are in a spiritual one, being members of the same church; or, if not, yet being saints, and though in some things different in judgment; yea, even peace is to be followed with enemies, as much as in us lies: and perhaps by “all men”, the Gentiles may be more especially designed, whose peace the Hebrews thought they were not to seek, (Deuteronomy 23:6) mistaking the sense of the text, by applying it to the Gentiles in general: to “follow peace”, signifies an eager pursuit after it, in the use of proper means; exerting the utmost of a man’s power to attain it, in all things possible: many things serve to enforce this upon the saints; this is most agreeable to all the three divine Persons; to God, who is the

God of peace; to Christ, the Prince of peace; and to the Spirit, one of whose fruits is peace; and to the characters of the saints, who are sons of peace, and who are called to peace, and who make a profession of the Gospel of peace; and to the privileges they enjoy, being interested in the covenant of peace, partaking of spiritual peace now, and being entitled to eternal peace hereafter: and this agrees with the sayings and counsels of the ancient Jews. It was a saying of Hillel F18, who lived about the times of Christ;

“be thou one of the disciples of Aaron, who loved peace, (Mwlv Pdwrw) , “and followed peace””

This is said of Aaron in the Talmud F19, that

“he loved peace, and followed peace, and made peace between a man and his neighbour, as is said, (Malachi 2:6) .”

They recommend peace on many accounts, and say, great is peace, and among the rest, because it is one of the names of God F20:

and holiness:

this being added to peace, shows that peace is no further to be followed than is consistent with holiness; and holiness here does not design any particular branch of holiness, as chastity of the body and mind, but the whole of holiness, inward and outward; and intends true holiness, in opposition to ceremonial holiness, which the Hebrews were fond of, and pursued after: it means even perfect holiness; for though holiness is not perfect in this life, yet it will be in heaven; and there is a perfection of it in Christ; and it is to be followed after, by going to Christ for more grace, and exercising faith upon him, as our sanctification; and by eager desires that the Spirit of God would sanctify us more and more, and enable us, by his grace and strength, to walk in the way of holiness, till we get safe to heaven:

without which no man shall see the Lord;

or “God”, as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read; that is, with the beatific vision in heaven: or the Lord Jesus Christ, “our Lord”, as the Syriac version reads; even in this life, so as to have communion with

him; and hereafter, so as to behold his glory, both intellectually and corporeally: to such a sight holiness is necessary; for God is holy, and Christ is holy, and so is heaven, and so are the angels, and the souls of men in it.

FOOTNOTES:

F18 Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 12.

F19 T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 6. 2. & Gloss. in T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 71. 2.

F20 Vajikra Rabba, sect. 9. fol. 153. 1, 2.

Hebrews 12:15

Looking diligently

Acting the part of bishops, or overseers, as the word signifies; and so this exhortation either respects officers of the church of the Hebrews, whose business it was more especially to inspect into the principles and practices of the members of it, and take care that they did not imbibe false doctrines, or live immoral lives; or rather the several members of the church, whose business it is to watch over one another, since this epistle seems to be written to the whole church.

Lest any man fail of the grace of God;

not the free favour and love of God in Christ, which is everlasting, unchangeable, and from whence there is no separation; nor the grace of God implanted in the heart in regeneration, which is incorruptible, never failing, but always remains, as do faith, hope, and love; but either the whole doctrine of the Gospel, which is a declaration of the grace of God; or particularly the doctrine of free justification by the righteousness of Christ, which men may receive in vain, and fall from, (2 Corinthians 6:1) (Galatians 5:4) to which these Hebrews might be prone: and such “fail” of it, who either come short of it, do not come up to it, receive and embrace it; or who having professed it, drop it and deny it: now such should be looked after, and such a case should be diligently looked into; because the glory of God, the honour of Christ, the good of souls, and the well being, and even the continuance of the church state are concerned:

lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, [and] thereby many be defiled;

the Alexandrian copy reads (oi polloi) , “the many”, the common people, the private members of the church;

though it may intend either things or persons: it may design things; and these either the corruption of nature in general, which is a root that lies hidden in a man's heart; and is a root or gall of bitterness; and is apt to spring up, and bring forth bitter fruit, and gives trouble both to a man's self and others; and is of a defiling nature, in particular sins; such as malice, strife, and contention, covetousness, lust, pride, oppression, idleness which make bitter work, and occasion great trouble in churches, oftentimes: or errors and heresies, which sometimes, like roots, lie under ground, secret and undiscovered; and are bitter ones in their effects, bringing ruin and swift destruction on the souls of men; and these sometimes spring up in churches, while ministers and members are asleep, or not so diligent and watchful as they should be; and occasion great trouble, and are very infectious, and defiling: moreover, persons may be designed; which agrees well with (Deuteronomy 29:18) from whence this phrase is taken; and with the instance in the following verse, such as all immoral persons, and false teachers, particularly self-justiciaries, that preach the doctrine of justification by the works of the law: this was the capital mistake, and rooted error of the Jewish nation; and a bitter one it was; it produced many bitter fruits of pride and vain glory; and this sprung up in the church, and troubled and defiled many there and elsewhere, being spread by the abettors of it; see (Acts 15:24) (Galatians 1:6) (Galatians 5:9 Galatians 5:10) . Now, care should be taken, that no such person be in churches, holding such an error; because of the glory of God, Father, Son, and Spirit; the comfort of souls; the peace of the church, and the growth and increase of it, which must be hurt by such men and doctrines; so (riza amartwlov) , "a sinful root", is used for a "wicked man", in the Apocrypha:

``In those days went there out of Israel wicked men, who persuaded many, saying, Let us go and make a covenant with the heathen that are round about us: for since we departed from them we have had much sorrow." (1 Mac-cabees 1:11)

and (yrmh vrwv) , "a root of bitterness", signifies, in Jewish writings F21, an error, or heresy, in opposition to a root of faith, or a fundamental doctrine.

F21 Cosri, Orat. 1. fol. 35. 1.

Hebrews 12:16

Lest there be any fornicator or profane person

The first of these is guilty of a sin against the second table of the law, as well as against his own body; and which is opposed to the holiness the apostle had before exhorted to; such who are guilty of it, are not to be continued in the communion of the church; and it is a sin, which, lived in not repented of, excludes from the kingdom of heaven: the latter is one who is a transgressor of the first table of the law; who is an idolater, a swearer, a despiser of public worship and ordinances, and who behaves irreverently in divine service, and mocks at the future state, as Esau; to whom both these characters seem to belong: and this agrees with what the Jews say concerning him: they have a tradition F23, that he committed five transgressions on the day he came out of the field weary.

``He committed idolatry: he shed innocent blood; and lay with a virgin betrothed; and denied the life of the world to come (or a future state); and despised his birthright."

It is elsewhere F24 a little differently expressed.

``Esau, the wicked, committed five transgressions on that day: he lay with a virgin betrothed; and killed a person; and denied the resurrection of the dead; and denied the root, or foundation, (i.e. that there is a God,) and despised his birthright; and besides, he desired his father's death, and sought to slay his brother."

It is common for them to say of him, that he was an ungodly man; and particularly, that he was a murderer, a robber, (Pawnw) , "and an adulterer" F25; and that he has no part in the world to come F26: who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright; the account of which is in (Genesis 25:29-34) this includes all the privileges which he had a right unto by being the firstborn; as a peculiar blessing from his father; a double portion of goods; and dominion over his brethren: and it is commonly said by the Jews, that the priesthood belonged to the firstborn, before the Levitical dispensation; and that for this reason, Jacob coveted the birthright F1, Esau

FOOTNOTES:

being a wicked man, and unfit for it. The birthright was reckoned sacred; it was typical of the primogeniture of Christ; of the adoption of saints, and of the heavenly inheritance belonging thereunto; all which were despised by Esau: and so the Jewish paraphrases F2 interpret the contempt of his birthright, a despising of his part in the world to come, and a denial of the resurrection of the dead: and his contempt of it was shown in his selling it; and this was aggravated by his selling it for “one morsel of meat”; which was bread, and pottage of lentiles, (Genesis 25:34) . The Jewish writers speak of this bargain and sale much in the same language as the apostle here does; they say FOOTNOTES:

F3 of him, this is the man that sold his birthright (Mhl rkk deb) , “for a morsel of bread”; and apply to him the passage in (Proverbs 28:21) “for a piece of bread that man will transgress”.

F23 Targum Jon. ben Uzziel in Gen. xxv. 29.

F24 Shemot Rabba, sect. I. fol. 89. 3. T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 16. 2.

F25 Tzeror Hammor, fol. 27. 1.

F26 Tzeror Hammor, fol. 26. 3.

F1 Bereshit Rabba, sect. 63. fol. 56. 2.

F2 Targum Hieros. & Jon. in Gen. 25. 34. Bereshit Rabba, ib.

F3 Tzeror Hammor, fol. 26. 4. & 27. 1.

Hebrews 12:17

For ye know how that afterwards

After he had had his pottage; after he had sold his birthright for it, and the blessing with it; after his father had blessed Jacob: this the apostle relates to the Hebrews, as a thing well known to them; they having read the books of Moses, and being conversant with them, in which the whole history of this affair is recorded:

how that when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected;

by his father, who refused to give him the blessing, but confirmed what he had given to Jacob; and also by God, he being the object of his hatred; concerning whom he had said, even before his birth, the elder shall serve the younger, (Romans 9:11-13) ,

for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears,

(Genesis 27:34 Genesis 27:38) though he was very solicitous for the blessing, and shed many tears to obtain it, yet he had no true repentance for his sin in soiling the birthright. Tears are not an infallible sign of repentance: men may be more concerned for the loss and mischief that come by sin, than for the evil that is in it; and such repentance is not sincere; it does not spring from love to God, or a concern for his glory; nor does it bring forth proper fruits: or rather, the sense of the words is, that notwithstanding all his solicitude, importunity, and tears, he found no place of repentance in his father Isaac; he could not prevail upon him to change his mind; to revoke the blessing he had bestowed on Jacob, and confer it on him, (Genesis 27:33) for he plainly saw it was the mind of God, that the blessing should be where it was; whose counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure. This latter seems to be the better interpretation of the words, though the former agrees with the Targum on (Job 15:20)

“all the days of Esau the ungodly, they expected that he would have repented, but he repented not.”

Hebrews 12:18

For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched,

&c.] The design of the apostle in the following words is, in general, to engage the Hebrews to adhere closely to the Gospel, from the consideration of the superior excellency of it to the law; and in particular, to enforce his former exhortations to cheerfulness under afflictions; to an upright walk in the ways of God; to follow peace with all men, even with the Gentiles, and holiness both of heart and life; and to value the doctrine of the Gospel; and to take heed that none fail of it, or act unbecoming it: and here the apostle observes, what the believing Hebrews were not come to, being delivered from it, namely, the legal dispensation, which was their privilege; the happiness of which as expressed by a detail of particular circumstances, which attended the giving of the law to the Jews: it was given on a “mount which might be touched”; that is, by God, who descended on it, and by, touching it caused it to smoke, quake, and move, (Exodus 19:18) . Compare with, (Psalms 68:8) (104:32) (144:5) for it was not to be touched by

the Israelites, nor by their cattle, (Exodus 19:12 Exodus 19:13) , that is, at the time that the law was given, and Jehovah was upon it, otherwise it might be touched; and the meaning is, that it was an earthly mountain, that might be approached to, and be seen and felt, and not of a spiritual nature, as Sion, or the church of God; and so may be expressive of the carnality of the law, and also of the movableness of it:

and that burned with fire;

as Mount Sinai did, (Exodus 19:18) (Deuteronomy 4:11) (5:23) which set forth the majesty of God, when upon it, at whose feet went forth burning coals; and also the wrath of God, as an avenging lawgiver and Judge; and the terror of that law, which strikes the minds of the transgressors of it with an expectation of fiery indignation; and so points out the end of such transgressors, which is, to be burnt:

nor unto blackness and darkness;

which covered the mount when God was upon it, (Exodus 19:16 Exodus 19:18) (Deuteronomy 4:11) and which also may express the majesty of God, round about whom are clouds and darkness; and also the horror of the legal dispensation, and the obscurity of it; little being known by the Jews of the spirituality of the law, of the strict justice of God, and of the righteousness which the law requires, and of the end and use of it; and especially of the way of salvation by Christ; and so dark were they at last, as to prefer their own traditions before this law: it is added,

and tempest;

there being thunderings and lightnings, which were very terrible, (Exodus 19:16) (20:18) and though there is no express mention made of a tempest by Moses, yet Josephus F4 speaks not only of very terrible thunderings and lightnings, but of violent storms of wind, which produced exceeding great rains: and the Septuagint on (Deuteronomy 4:11) (5:22) use the same words as the apostle does here, "blackness, darkness, and tempest". This also may denote the majesty of God, who was then present; the terror of that dispensation; the horrible curses of the law; and the great confusion and disquietude raised by it in the conscience of a sinner.

FOOTNOTES:

F4 Antiqu. l. 3. c. 5. sect. 2.

Hebrews 12:19

And the sound of a trumpet

(Exodus 19:16 Exodus 19:19) (20:18) , which made it still more awful, as the sound of the trumpet will at the last day:

and the voice of words;

of the ten words, or decalogue; which was as an articulate voice, formed by angels; and, therefore, the law is called the word spoken by angels, (Hebrews 2:2) and is represented, as the voice of God himself, (Exodus 20:1) who made use of the ministry of angels to deliver the law to Moses; "which" voice is called (Myrbd lwq) , "the voice of words", in (Deuteronomy 4:12) , and this voice,

they that heard, entreated that the word should not be spoken to

them any more:

fearing that they should die; wherefore they desired Moses to be their mediator, and draw nigh to God, and hear his words, and speak them to them, from him, (Exodus 20:19) (Deuteronomy 5:24-27) .

Hebrews 12:20

For they could not endure that which was commanded

In the law; not that they disliked and despised the law, as unregenerate men do; but they could not endure it, or bear it, as a yoke, it being a yoke of bondage; nor as a covenant of works, it requiring perfect obedience, but giving no strength to perform; and as it showed them their sins, but did not direct them to a Saviour; as it was an accusing, cursing, and condemning law; and, as a fiery one, revealing wrath, and filling the conscience with it; unless this should have any respect to the following edict, more particularly:

and if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned or thrust through with a dart;

and, if a beast, much more a man: and, how easily, through inadvertence, might this be done? and how terrible was the punishment? nothing less than death, by stoning, or being shot: and this they could not bear to hear, or think of: the last clause, "or thrust through with a dart", is wanting in the Alexandrian and Beza's Claramontane copies, in the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions; and yet is necessary to be retained, being in

the original text, in (Exodus 19:12 Exodus 19:13).

Hebrews 12:21

And so terrible was the sight

Of the smoke, fire, and lightnings; or of God himself, who descended on the mount; with which agrees the Arabic version, which renders the words, "and so terrible was he who vouchsafed himself to be seen"; not in the bush burning with fire; at which time Moses was afraid to look upon God, (Exodus 3:6) but on Mount Sinai, when the law was given:

[that] Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:

perhaps he might say this, when he spake, and God answered him, (Exodus 19:19) . These words are nowhere recorded in Scripture; wherefore the apostle had them either by divine revelation, or from tradition, confirmed by the former: for the Jews have a notion that Moses did quake and tremble, and when upon the mount; and that he expressed his fear and dread. They have such a tradition as this F5;

``when Moses ascended on high, the ministering angels said before the holy blessed God, Lord of the world, what has this man, born of a woman, to do among us? he said unto them, to receive the law he is come; they replied before him, that desirable treasure, which is treasured up with thee, nine hundred, and seventy, and four generations, before the world was created, dost thou seek to give to flesh and blood? "What is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that thou visitest him? who hast set thy glory above the heavens!" The holy blessed God said to Moses, return them an answer; he said, before him, Lord of the world, (ane aryytm) , "I am afraid", lest they should burn, (or consume) me, with the breath of their mouth."

Compare this last clause with (2 Thessalonians 2:8) and elsewhere F6 those words being cited, he called unto Moses, (Exodus 25:16) it is observed:

``this Scripture comes not, but (wyle Myyal) "to terrify him"; that so the law might be given with fear, fervour, and trembling; as it is said, (Psalms 2:11) "

Once more F7,

``at the time that the holy blessed God said to Moses, "go, get thee down, for thy people have corrupted themselves", (Exodus 32:7) (hvm ezedza) , "Moses trembled"; and he could not speak"

And again, it is said F8, that when Moses was on Mount Sinai, supplicating for the people of Israel, five destroying angels appeared, and immediately (hvm aryytn) , "Moses was afraid". Now this circumstance is mentioned by the apostle, to aggravate the terror of that dispensation; that Moses, a great and good man; and who had much familiarity with God; the general of the people of Israel; their leader and commander; a man of great courage and presence of mind; and was their mediator between God and them; and yet feared, and quaked: the best of men are not without sin; and the most holy man on earth cannot stand before a holy God, and his holy law, upon the foot of his own righteousness, without trembling: it is an awful thing to draw nigh to God; and there is no such thing as doing it without a Mediator; and that Mediator must be more than a creature: and it is our happiness that we have such a Mediator, who never feared, nor quaked; who failed not, nor was he discouraged.

FOOTNOTES:

F5 T. Bab. Sabbath, fol. 88. 2. Yalkut, 2. par. 2. fol. 92.

F6 T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 4. 2.

F7 Zohar in Exod. fol. 84. 4.

F8 Midrash Kohelet, fol. 69. 4.

Hebrews 12:22

But ye are come unto Mount Sion

The Alexandrian copy reads, as in (Hebrews 12:18) "for ye are not come"; which may seem to favour that interpretation of this passage, which refers it to the heavenly state; to which saints, in this present life, are not, as yet, come: but, by "Mount Sion", and the other names here given, is meant the church of God, under the Gospel dispensation, to which the believing Hebrews were come; in distinction from the legal dispensation, signified by Mount Sinai, from which they were delivered:

and this is called Mount Sion, because, like that, it is beloved of God; chosen by him; and is the place of his habitation; here his worship is, and his word and ordinances are administered; here he communes with his people, and distributes his blessings and this, as Mount Sion, is a perfection of beauty the joy of the whole earth; is strongly fortified by divine power, and is immovable; and is comparable to that mountain, for its height and holiness: and to come to Sion is to become a member of a Gospel church, and partake of the ordinances, enjoy the privileges, and perform the duties belonging to it:

and unto the city of the living God;

the Gospel church is a city, built on Christ, the foundation; and is full of habitants, true believers, at least it will be, in the latter day; it is pleasantly situated by the river of God's love, and by the still waters of Gospel ordinances; it is governed by wholesome laws, of Christ's enacting, and is under proper officers, of his appointing; and is well guarded by watchmen, which he has set upon the walls of it; and it is endowed with many privileges, as access to God, freedom from the arrests of justice, and from condemnation, adoption, and a right to the heavenly inheritance: and this may be called "the city of God", because it is of his building, and here he dwells, and protects, and defends it; and who is styled "the living God", to distinguish him from the idols of the Gentiles, which are lifeless and inanimate, no other than sticks and stones.

The heavenly Jerusalem:

the church of God goes by the name of Jerusalem often, both in the Old and in the New Testament; with which it agrees in its name, which signifies the vision of peace, or they shall see peace: Christ, the King of it, is the Prince of peace; the members of it are sons of peace, who enjoy a spiritual peace now, and an everlasting one hereafter: like that, it is compact together, consisting of saints, cemented together in love, in the order and fellowship of the Gospel; and is well fortified, God himself, and his power, being all around it, and having salvation, for walls and bulwarks, and being encamped about by angels; and it is a free city, being made so by Christ, and, through him, enjoying the liberty of grace now, and having a title to the liberty of glory in the world to come; as Jerusalem was, it is the object of God's choice, the palace of the great King, and the place of divine worship: it is called "heavenly", to distinguish it from the earthly Jerusalem; and to express the excellency of it, as well as to

point out its original: the members of it are from heaven, being born from above; their conversation is now in heaven; and they are designed for that place; and its doctrines and ordinances are all from thence.

And to an innumerable company of angels;

which are created spirits, immaterial and immortal; very knowing, and very powerful; and swift to do the will of God; they are holy, and immutably so, being the elect of God, and confirmed by Christ: and saints now are brought into a state of friendship with them; and into the same family; and are social worshippers with them; and they have access into heaven, where angels are; and with whom they shall dwell for ever: and, in the present state of things, they share the benefit and advantages of their kind offices; who have, sometimes, provided food for their bodies; healed their diseases; directed and preserved them on journeys; prevented outward calamities; delivered them out of them, when in danger; restrained things hurtful, and cut off their enemies: and, with regard to things spiritual they have, sometimes, made known the mind and will of God unto the saints; have comforted them under their distresses; helped them against Satan's temptations; are present at their death, and carry their souls to glory; and will gather the saints together, at the last day: and, as to the number of them, they are innumerable; they are the armies of heaven; and there is a multitude of the heavenly host; there are more than twelve legions of angels; their number is ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands: and this makes both for the glory and majesty of God, whose attendants they are; and for the comfort and safety of saints, to whom they minister, and about whom they encamp: a like phrase is used in the Apocrypha:

``Before the fair flowers were seen, or ever the moveable powers were established, before the innumerable multitude of angels were gathered together;" (2 Esdras 6:3)

Hebrews 12:23

To the general assembly

A "panegyris", the word here used, was a public and solemn assembly of the Greeks, either at their games, or feasts, or fairs, or on religious accounts; and signifies a large collection and convention of men; and sometimes the place where they met together; and is here used,

by the apostle, for the church of God, consisting of all his elect, both Jews and Gentiles, and the meeting of them together: they met together, in the infinite mind of God, from all eternity; and in Christ, their head and representative, both then and in time; and at the last day, when they are all gathered in, they will meet together personally; and a joyful meeting it will be; and a very general one, more so than the assembly of the Jews, at any of their solemn feasts, to which the apostle may have some respect; since this will consist of some of all nations, that have lived in all places, and in all ages of time:

and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven;

by the “church”, is not meant any particular, or congregational church, nor any national one; but the church catholic, or universal, which consists only of God’s elect, and of all of them, in all times and places; and reaches even to the saints in heaven: this church is invisible at present, and will never fail; of which Christ is the head, and for which he has given himself: now the persons, that belong to this church, are styled the “firstborn”; who are not the apostles only, who received the first fruits of the Spirit; nor the first converts among the Jews, who first trusted in Christ; but also the chosen of God, who are equally the sons of God, and born of him; are equally loved by him, and equally united to Christ, and interested in him: they have the same privileges, honours, and dignity, and shall enjoy the same inheritance; they are all firstborn, and are so called, with respect to the angels, the sons of God, as Christ is with respect to the saints, the many brethren of his: and these are said to be “written in heaven”; not in the earth, (Jeremiah 17:13) , such writing abides not; nor in the book of the Scriptures, for the names of all are not written there; nor in the general book of God’s decrees, which relate to all mankind; but in the Lamb’s book of life, kept in heaven; and is no other than their election of God: and this way of speaking, concerning it, shows it to be personal and particular; that it is firm, sure, and constant; that it is out of the reach of men and devils to erase it; it denotes the exact knowledge God has of them, and expresses their right to heaven, and the certainty of their coming there: now all such, who are truly come to Sion, are openly come to this assembly and church, and appear to be a part thereof, and are among the firstborn, and have their names written in heaven:

and to God the Judge of all:

the Ethiopic version reads, “the Judge of righteousness”, or the righteous Judge: some think that Christ is here meant; who is truly and properly God, and is the Judge: all judgment is committed to him; he is Judge of all; he is ordained Judge of quick and dead; for which he would not have been fit, had he not been God: true believers come to him by faith, and that, as their Judge, King, and Governor; and it is their privilege, that Christ is and will be the Judge of all at the last day and hence is his coming to judgment desirable to them. But since Christ is spoken of in the next verse, as a distinct person, to whom the saints come, God the Father seems rather to be designed here: and it is one of the privileges of the saints, in the present life, that they have access to God: all men are at a distance from him, in a state of nature; and they naturally run further and further from him, and have no desire after him; and, when they are made sensible of sin, they are afraid and ashamed to come to him; nor is there any coming to God, but through Christ; and this is a fruit of God’s everlasting love, what follows upon electing grace, is an effect of Christ’s death, and owing to the quickening grace of the Spirit; it is performed in a spiritual way, and is by faith; it is a coming to the throne of God, even to his seat, to communion with him, and to a participation of his grace: and it is their privilege that they have access to him as the Judge of all; not only as a Father, and as the God of all grace, but as a Judge, and a righteous one, to whom they can come without terror; for though he is just, yet he is a Saviour, and the justifier of his people, on account of the righteousness of his Son; whose sins he pardons in a way of justice, through the blood of Christ; and is their patron, protector, and defender, who will right their wrongs, and avenge their cause:

and to the spirits of just men made perfect;

which may be understood of the saints on earth, who are “just men”; not naturally, for so no man is, but the reverse; nor in opinion only, or merely externally, as the Scribes and Pharisees were; nor by the deeds of the law; nor by obedience to the Gospel; nor by faith, either as wrought in them, or done by them, though by the object of it; nor by an infusion of righteousness into them; but by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ unto them: and these are “made perfect”; not as to sanctification, unless in Christ, or in a comparative sense, and with respect to the parts of the new man, but not as to degrees; for no man is without sin, and the best

stand in need of fresh supplies of grace; but as to justification, Christ has perfectly fulfilled the law for them, and has perfectly expiated their sins, and perfectly redeemed them from all sin, and has procured a full pardon of them; and they are completely righteous through his righteousness; and the “spirits”, or souls of these are only mentioned, because the communion of saints in a Gospel church state lies chiefly in the souls and spirits of each other, or in spiritual things relating to their souls; and their souls are greatly affected, and knit to each other: though the saints in heaven may be here intended, at least included; whose spirits or souls are separate from their bodies; and they are the souls of just men, for none but such enter into the kingdom of heaven; where they are made perfect in knowledge and holiness, in peace and joy; though they have not their bodies, nor as yet all the saints with them. Now, believers, in the present state of things, may be said to be come to them, being come to the Church below, which is a part of that above; as also in hope, expectation, and desire. The apostle seems to have respect to some distinctions among the Jews: they divide mankind into three sorts; some are perfectly wicked; and some are perfectly righteous; and there are others that are between both F11: they often speak of (Myrwmg Myqydu) , “just men perfect” F12; and distinguish between a just man perfect, and a just man that is not perfect F13; as they do also between penitents and just men perfect; (See Gill on Luke 15:7).

FOOTNOTES:

F9 Vid. Philostrat. Vita Apollon. l. 8. c. 7.

F11 T. Hieros. Roshhashanah, fol. 57. 1. & T. Bab. Roshhashanah, fol. 16. 2. Derech Eretz, fol. 19. 4.

F12 Zohar in Gen. fol. 28. 2. & 29. 1. & 39. 3. T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 18. 2. & Roshbahanah, fol. 4. 1. Pesachim, fol. 8. 1. 2.

F13 T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 6. 2. & Avoda Zora, fol. 4. 1.

Hebrews 12:24

And to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant

Of the new covenant, and, of Christ's being the Mediator of it, (See Gill on Hebrews 8:6). (See Gill on Hebrews 8:8). Coming to Christ is by faith; and is different from a corporeal coming to him in the days of his flesh; and from an outward attendance on ordinances; it is a coming to him under a sense of want, and upon a sight of fulness; and is the produce of God's efficacious grace;

and souls must come to Christ as naked sinners; and without a Mediator, without anything of their own to ingratiate them; and it is free to all sensible sinners to come to him, and is the great privilege of saints: it is the blessing of blessings; such are safe, and settled, and at peace, who are come to Jesus; they can want no good thing, for all are theirs; they have free access to God through him, and a right to all privileges:

and to the blood of sprinkling:

that is, the blood of Christ; so called, either in allusion to the blood of the passover, which was received in a basin, and with a bunch of hyssop was sprinkled upon the lintel and two side posts of the doors of the houses, in which the Israelites were; which being looked upon by Jehovah, he passed over them, and all were safe within, so that the destroyer did not touch them, when the firstborn in Egypt were destroyed, (Exodus 12:1-49) which is the case of all such as are sprinkled with the blood of Jesus: or else to the blood of the covenant, sprinkled by Moses on the book, and on all the people, (Exodus 24:8) or to the several sprinklings of blood in the legal sacrifices: and the phrase may denote the application of Christ's blood to his people, for justification, pardon, and cleansing, which is their great mercy and privilege:

that speaketh better things than that of Abel;

either “than Abel”, as the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions render it, who being dead, yet speaks; and who was a type of Christ in his death, and the punishment of it; for as he was slain by his own brother, who was punished for it, so Christ was put to death by his own nation and people, the Jews, for which wrath is come upon them to the uttermost: but the efficacy of Christ's blood for the procuring pardon, peace, reconciliation, and the redemption and purchase of his church and people, shows him to be greater than Abel; and it speaks better things than he did, or does: or else, “than the blood of Abel”, as the Arabic version renders it; Abel's blood cried for vengeance; Christ's blood cries for peace and pardon, both in the court of heaven, where it is pleaded by Christ, and in the court of conscience, where it is sprinkled by his spirit: or than the sprinkling of the blood of Abel's sacrifice, or than Abel's sacrifice; which was the first blood that was sprinkled in that way, and the first sacrifice mentioned that was offered up by faith, and was typical of Christ's; but then Christ's sacrifice itself is better than that; and the sprinkling of his blood,

to which believers may continually apply for their justification, remission, and purgation, and by which they have entrance into the holiest of all, is of greater efficacy than the sprinkling of blood in Abel's sacrifice; and calls for and procures better things than that did; which sense may the rather be chosen, since the apostle's view, in this epistle, is to show the superior excellency of Christ's sacrifice to all others, even to the more excellent of them, as Abel's was, (Hebrews 11:4).

Hebrews 12:25

See that ye refuse not him that speaketh

Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, whose blood speaks better things than Abel, or than his blood and sacrifice: he was the speaker in the council and covenant of grace, that spoke for the elect; in the creation of all things out of nothing, that said, and it was done; in giving the law to the Israelites, in the wilderness, for he is the angel which spake to Moses in Mount Sinai, he spoke to God for the Old Testament saints, and was the angel of God's presence to them; he spoke in his own person, as the prophet of the church, in the days of his flesh; and he now speaks in heaven, by appearing in the presence of God for his people, and by presenting his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; he speaks by his Spirit, in and to the hearts of his saints; and by his ministers in the Gospel, and the ordinances of it: nor should he be refused, as he is, when his Gospel is made light of, and neglected; when men excuse themselves from an attendance on it; when they will not hear it; or, when they do, and contradict and blaspheme, despise and reproach it, or leave off hearing it. Care should be taken that Christ is not refused in the ministry of the word; which may be enforced from the greatness and excellency of the person speaking, who is God, and not a mere man; from the excellency of the matter spoken, the great salvation: and the rather diligent heed should be had unto him, since there is a backwardness to everything that is spiritual and heavenly; and since Satan is vigilant and industrious to put off persons from hearing the Gospel, or to steal the word from them:

for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth:

the Ethiopic version renders it, "who appeared to them on the mount"; that is, on Mount Sinai; meaning either God himself, who descended on the mount, and spoke the ten commandments to the children of Israel;

or Christ, the Angel that spoke to Moses in it; or rather Moses himself, who was on the earth, and of the earth, earthly; who spake from God to the people, being their mediator; him the Jews refused, would not obey him, but thrust him away, (Acts 7:39), though they promised to hear and do all that was said to them; wherefore they did not escape divine vengeance and punishment; their carcasses fell in the wilderness at several times, in great numbers, and were not suffered to enter into Canaan's land: much more

shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven;

that is, Christ, who came from heaven originally; is the Lord from heaven; whose doctrine is from heaven; and who, having done his work, is gone to heaven; where he now is, and from whence he speaks; and from hence he will come a second time, as Judge of all. There have been, and are some, that turn away from him; from a profession of him, and his Gospel and ordinances, and draw back unto perdition; such shall not escape divine wrath and vengeance; the sorest punishment shall be inflicted on them; see (Hebrews 10:29).

Hebrews 12:26

Whose voice then shook the earth

That is, at the giving of the law on Mount Sinai: Christ was then present; his voice was then heard; which was either the voice of thunder, or the voice of the trumpet, or rather the voice of words: this shook the earth, Sinai, and the land about it, and the people on it; which made them quake and tremble, even Moses himself; see (Exodus 19:18) (Psalms 68:8)

but now he hath promised, saying

in (Haggai 2:6)

yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven;

not only the land of Judea, and particularly Jerusalem, and the inhabitants of it, who were all shaken, and moved, and troubled at the news of the birth of the Messiah, the desire of all nations, the prophet Haggai speaks of, (Matthew 2:2 Matthew 2:3) but the heaven also; by prodigies in it, as the appearance of a wonderful star, which guided the wise men from the east; and by the motions of the heavenly inhabitants, the angels, who

descended in great numbers, and made the heavens resound with their songs of praise, on account of Christ's incarnation, (Matthew 2:2) (Luke 2:10 Luke 2:13 Luke 2:14) . How the apostle explains and applies this, may be seen in the next verse.

Hebrews 12:27

And this word yet once more

Or as it is in (Haggai 2:6) “yet once it is a little while”; which suggests, that as something had been done already, so in a very little time, and at once, something very marvellous and surprising would be effected: and it

signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made;

which some understand of what will be done at Christ's coming to judgment; as the passing away of the heavens and the earth, which are things that are made, or created, by the power of God; when there will be a shaking of them, so as that they shall be removed, and pass away with a great noise; and so they interpret the next clause, of the permanency of the new heavens and the new earth, and of the immovable kingdom of glory, and the never fading inheritance of the saints; and of their fixed, unalterable, and unshaken state: but rather this is to be understood of Christ's coming to the destruction of Jerusalem; when there was an entire removal of the Jewish state, both political and ecclesiastical; and of the whole Mosaic economy; and of things appertaining to divine worship, which were made with hands, as the temple, and the things in it; and which were made to be removed; for they were to continue no longer than the time of reformation: and this removing of them designs the abolition of them, and entire putting an end to them; at which time, not only their civil government was wholly put down, but their ecclesiastic state also; for the place of their worship was destroyed, the daily sacrifice ceased, and the old covenant, and the manner of administering it, vanished away; and all the legal institutions and ordinances, which were abolished by the death of Christ, were no more performed in Jerusalem; the temple and temple service perishing together:

that those things which cannot be shaken may remain:

the kingdom and priesthood of Christ, which are everlasting; and the good things which come by him,

as remission of sins, justification, adoption, sanctification, and the heavenly inheritance; as also the Gospel, and the doctrines and ordinances of it, baptism, and the Lord's supper, and the mode of Gospel worship; all which are to continue until Christ's second coming.

Hebrews 12:28

Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved,

&c.] Not the kingdom of glory; eternal glory is a kingdom, and it is an immovable one; and is a free gift of God, and may be said to be now received; God's people are called unto it, and are made meet for it, and have a right unto it, and have it in faith and hope, and in Christ their head and representative: but the kingdom of grace, under the Gospel dispensation, is meant: there are several things in this dispensation which are called a kingdom; as a Gospel church, the Gospel itself, and the privileges and blessings of grace bestowed, especially spiritual and internal ones, (Matthew 25:1) (Luke 16:16) (Romans 14:17) and the whole dispensation is called the kingdom of heaven, (Matthew 3:2) (4:17) . Christ he is King, believers are his subjects, the Gospel is his sceptre, and the ordinances are his laws and appointments, and all are immovable; and a man may be said to receive this kingdom, when he is delivered from the power of darkness, is regenerated, and has the blessings of grace actually bestowed on him, and is brought to Zion:

let us have grace;

by which is meant, not thankfulness for so great a blessing, though this is highly requisite and necessary; nor the favour of God, though, as the reception of the kingdom springs from hence, a sense of it ought to abide; nor the habit or principle of grace in the heart, unless particularly the grace of faith, and the exercise of it, should be designed; but rather the doctrine of grace, the Gospel, is intended; and the sense is, (ecwmen) , “let us hold it”, as the Ethiopic version renders it; let us hold the Gospel fast, and a profession of it: the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions read, “we have grace”; this goes along with the immovable kingdom; all that have truly received the one, have the other:

whereby we may serve God;

God is to be served, and not a creature, nor the elements of this world, the ceremonial law, and its rites:

nor is he to be served in any form, only in a spiritual way; and without holding to the Gospel, there is no serving him in an evangelic manner; the true and right way of serving him is as follows:

acceptably;

in Christ, in the Gospel of his Son, and by faith in him, without which it is impossible to please God:

with reverence;

of the majesty of God, with shame for sin, and with a sense of unworthiness:

and godly fear;

which has God for its author and object, and which springs from his grace, and is increased by discoveries of his goodness; and which is consistent with faith, and spiritual joy; see (Psalms 2:11) (5:7) .

Hebrews 12:29

For our God is a consuming fire.

] Either God personally considered, God in the person of Christ; so the Shechinah, with the Jews, is called a consuming fire F14. Christ is truly God, and he is our God and Lord; and though he is full of grace and mercy, yet he will appear in great wrath to his enemies, who will not have him to reign over them: or rather God essentially considered; whose God he is, and in what sense, and how he comes to be so, (See Gill on Hebrews 8:10), what is here said of him, that he is a consuming fire, may be understood of his jealousy in matters of worship, (Deuteronomy 4:23 Deuteronomy 4:24) , and so carries in it a reason why he is to be served acceptably, with reverence and godly fear. God, and he only, is to be worshipped; and he is to be worshipped in a way suitable to himself; and he has the sole right of fixing the manner of worship, both as to the external and internal parts of it: under the legal dispensation, he was worshipped in a way he then pitched upon, and suitable to it; and under the Gospel dispensation he is to be worshipped in an evangelic way; and he is to have all the glory in every part of worship; and the ordinances of Gospel worship are immovable; nor are they to be altered, or others put in their room, without recurring his displeasure. Moreover, this phrase may be expressive of the preservation of his people, and of the destruction of their enemies, (Deuteronomy 9:1-3) . We commonly say, that God out

of Christ is a consuming fire; meaning, that God, as an absolute God, is full of wrath and vengeance; and it is a truth, but not the truth of this text; for here it is our God, our covenant God, our God in Christ; not that he is so to the saints, or to them that are in Christ: he is indeed as a wall of fire in his providences, to protect and defend them, and as fire in his word to enlighten and warm them, to guide and direct them, but not a consuming fire to them; this he is to their enemies, who are as thorns, and briers, and stubble before him: and so the Jews interpret (Deuteronomy 4:24) of a fire consuming fire F15; and observe, that Moses says, thy God, and not our God F16; but the apostle here uses the latter phrase.

FOOTNOTES:

F14 Tzeror Hammor, fol. 21. 4.

F15 Zohar in Gen. fol. 35. 3. & 51. 1. & in Exod. fol. 91. 1. & in Lev. fol. 11. 1.

F16 Lexic. Cabalist, p. 111.

INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS 13

The apostle having finished the doctrinal part of this epistle, closes it with practical exhortations to these Hebrews, puts up prayers for them, and sends salutations to them. The exhortations are to brotherly love, and the continuance of it, Heb 13:1 to hospitality, by which some have entertained angels unawares, Heb 13:2 to sympathy with those that are in bonds, and in, afflictions, Heb 12:3 to purity and chastity in the honourable state of marriage, urged by the judgment of God on unclean persons, Heb 13:4 to avoid covetousness, and to be content with present things, enforced by the promises of God, which give boldness and strength to faith, Heb 13:5,6 to remember their spiritual guides and governors, the preachers of the Gospel to them; to follow their faith, and consider the end of their conversation, which is Christ Jesus, the same yesterday, today, and for ever, Heb 13:7,8 . And then he cautions them from being carried about with the doctrines of men, which are divers and strange; which he urges from the profitable effect of the Gospel to establish the heart, and from the unprofitableness of meats to legal worshippers, and from the Christians having an altar, which is Christ, which those who are seeking life by the service of the law have nothing to do with, Heb 13:9,10 . And this he illustrates in the type of burnt offerings, which were

burnt without the camp, and there was nothing left for the priests to eat of, Heb 13:11 . In like manner Christ, the antitype, suffered without the gates of Jerusalem, for the sanctification of his people, by his blood; and who only, and not those who seek for righteousness by the law, have an interest in, Heb 13:12 . However, it becomes the saints to quit everything, and all dependence on themselves, and fellowship with others, and go forth to Jesus, believing in him, whatsoever reproach they suffer on his account; for here is nothing permanent and durable in this world; but there is a state of happiness to come, which will last for ever, Heb 13:13,14 . And since Christ has offered himself for his people, they ought to offer up the sacrifices of praise to God by him, and to do acts of beneficence and goodness, which are sacrifices well pleasing to God through him, Heb 13:15,16 . And to these exhortations apostle adds others; as to obey their spiritual rulers and governors, and submit unto them; since they watch for their souls, and must give an account, which to do with joy, and not with grief, is best and profitable, Heb 13:17 and to pray for the apostle, and other ministers, since they had a good conscience, and were willing to live honestly; and the rather, that he might be restored to them the sooner, Heb 13:18,19 and to engage them to this their duty, he sets them an example, by putting up prayers for them, Heb 13:20,21 and desires them to take in good part the letter he had wrote unto them, Heb 13:22 and acquaints them that Timothy was set at liberty, with whom he hoped to see them in a short time, Heb 13:23 and then closes the epistle with his own, and the salutations of others, and with his usual benediction, Heb 13:24,25.

Hebrews 13:1

1 Let brotherly love continue.

2 Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

3 Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.

4 Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath

said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

7 Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.

8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

9 Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.

10 We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.

11 For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.

12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

13 Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

14 For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

18 Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.

19 But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may

be restored to you the sooner.

20 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

21 Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

22 And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words.

23 Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.

24 Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you.

25 Grace be with you all. Amen.

COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS XIII

Hebrews 13:1

Let brotherly love continue.

] The Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions add, "in you"; or among you, as a church and society of Christians; for this is not to be understood of love to all mankind, or to those of the same nation, or who are in a strict natural relation brethren, though they are all in a sense brethren, and to be loved; but of love to those who are in the same spiritual relation to God, as their Father, to Christ, as the firstborn among many brethren; and are in the same church state, at least partakers of the same grace: and which love ought to be universal, and reach to all the saints, and be fervent and unfeigned, and as Christ hath loved us; and when it is genuine, it is active and laborious; and shows itself in praying with and for one another; in bearing one another's burdens; in forbearing and forgiving one another; in admonishing one another in love; in building up each other in the most holy faith; and in stirring up one another to the several duties of religion: and without this excellent and useful grace, a profession of religion is in vain; this is an evidence of regeneration; it is the bond of perfectness, and what renders the saints' communion delightful and edifying:

many are the arguments moving to the exercise of it; as the love of God, and Christ; the new commandment of Christ; the relation saints stand in to one another; the comfort and joy of Gospel ministers, and our own peace and edification: and this should continue; for the love of God and Christ continues; the relation between the saints continues; and without this, churches cannot continue long: the apostle means, not the grace itself, the internal principle, for that, where it once is, always continues, and can never be lost; but the exercise and increase of it, an abounding in it yet more and more. One of the Jewish prayers is to this purpose F17;

``he that dwells in this house, let him plant among you (hbhaw hwxa) , "brotherhood and love", (or brotherly love,) peace and friendship."

FOOTNOTES:

F17 T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 3. 3.

Hebrews 13:2

Be not forgetful to entertain strangers

By whom are meant, not unconverted men, who are strangers to God and Christ, and the covenants of promise; nor saints, who are as pilgrims and strangers in this world; but such as are of another country, and are unknown; and even though wicked men, they are not excluded; though such as are obliged to quit their own country for righteousness sake are chiefly designed; all strangers in distress are meant, and hospitality is to be exercised towards them; which lies negatively in doing nothing to distress them, and positively in providing food, raiment, lodging for them, and in comforting, counselling, and directing them in all matters in which they may stand in need thereof: and that this is a duty, appears from the light of nature, and practices of the Heathens, (Acts 28:2 Acts 28:7) , from the express law of God, (Deuteronomy 10:19) and many others made in favour of strangers, binding on the Jews; from the sundry exhortations to it in the New Testament, (Romans 12:13) (1 Peter 4:9) and from the exhortation here not to forget it; and from the great regard which Christ will show to such as mind it, and his disregard to others at the last day: the persons who are to exercise it are not only the ministers of the Gospel, who should be given to hospitality; but all the saints, even the meaner

sort are not exempted, but should use it according to their ability; though it is chiefly binding on those that are rich. And this should not be forgot, but pursued and followed after; it should be frequently performed; men should be given, and used to it; it should be done without grudging, and in a friendly and loving manner:

for thereby some have entertained angels un-awares;

as Abraham, (Genesis 18:1-8) , he knew them not to be angels at first; they appeared as men, and he treated them as such; but they were angels, yea, one of them was Jehovah himself; and hereby he received many favours, (Genesis 18:10 Genesis 18:17 Genesis 18:23 Genesis 18:33) , and Lot, (Genesis 19:1-3) who knew not that they were angels he took into his house; but they were, and he was delivered by them from the burning of Sodom; yea, some have unawares, this way, entertained Christ himself, (Luke 24:15-31) and indeed, entertaining of his members is entertaining him, (Matthew 25:38 Matthew 25:40) . It is an observation of a Jewish writer F18 upon the first of these instances;

``from hence we learn (says he) how great is the strength (or virtue) of the reception of travellers (or hospitality), as the Rabbins of blessed memory say, greater is (Myxrwa tonkh) , “hospitality”, than the reception of the face of the Shechinah.”

And this is said to be one of the six things which a man enjoys the fruit of in this world, and for which there remains a reward in the world to come F19.

FOOTNOTES:

F18 R. Abraham Seba in Tzeror Hammor, fol. 18, 4.
F19 T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 127. 1.

Hebrews 13:3

Remember them that are in bonds

Not for criminal actions, or for debt, though such should be remembered, and pity showed them, especially the latter; but such as are in bonds for the sake of Christ, and the Gospel. This has been often the lot of God's people, who should be remembered, by praying

for them, sending comfortable letters to them, personally visiting them, and relieving them under their distresses:

as bound with them;

as if it were so, as if in the same condition, and circumstances; by sympathizing with them; by considering themselves liable to the same bonds; by dealing with them as it would be desirable to be dealt with in the same case: and

them which suffer adversity;

outward afflictions of body, distress for want of temporal mercies, food and raiment, and persecution by enemies; or spiritual adversity, as the prevailings of corruptions, and particularly unbelief, the hidings of God's face, and the temptations of Satan.

As being yourselves also in the body;

as if in their bodies, enduring the same things; or as being afflicted in the body with diseases, necessities, and persecutions; or as being in the body, the church, of which these afflicted ones are a part, and therefore should have a fellow feeling with them; or rather as being in this world, in the flesh, or in a body and state subject to the like adversities, temporal and spiritual.

Hebrews 13:4

Marriage is honourable in all

Some read these words as an exhortation, “let” it “be so”; others as an assertion, it is so. “Marriage” is the union of one man and one woman in wedlock, whereby they become one flesh; it is a joining together of male and female in this relation, and of two only, and of such as are not within the degrees of blood forbid by the law, (Leviticus 18:6-18) and of such as are fit for marriage: and this is “honourable”, as it was instituted by God, and has been honoured with the presence of Christ, (Genesis 2:22 Genesis 2:24) (John 2:1-11) . And it is so in the ends of it, being to procreate children, multiply the earth, build up families, preserve a legitimate offspring, and prevent fornication and all uncleanness; and it is so, when the duties of the relation are performed on both sides: and it is honourable “in all”; in all things, in all respects, upon all accounts; “every way”, as the Arabic version renders it; or as the Ethiopic version, “everywhere”; it has been honourably esteemed of among all

nations; it becomes persons of all ranks and degrees, quality, and order; and it is honourable in all that are lawfully married, and do not violate the marriage contract, or defile the marriage bed: hereby are condemned such who despise marriage, that they may give a loose to their wandering and insatiable lusts; and such who, under a pretence of greater sanctity and perfection, reject it as unlawful; and the Papists, who deny it to men employed in sacred work:

and the bed undefiled:

the Arabic version reads, “his bed”; and the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, “their bed”; the bed of such whose marriage is honourable; which is not polluted by admitting others into it, or by acts of fornication and adultery: “but”, or “for”, as the Alexandrian copy reads,

whoremongers and adulterers God will judge;

the former of these may be rendered “fornicators”, as it is by the Vulgate Latin version: fornication is a sin committed by single persons, unmarried ones; and though it was reckoned among the Gentiles a thing indifferent, yet is contrary to the law of God, and is a work of the flesh, and makes unfit for the kingdom of God, and brings down the judgments of God both here and hereafter. And this is in opposition to marriage, which is appointed to prevent it. The sin “adulterers” are guilty of, is a sin committed by persons, who are either one or both in a married state, and so is directly a pollution of the marriage bed: this was punishable with death by the law of God, and light of nature; and though men may make light of it, God will judge and punish such as commit it, both in this life, with diseases, poverty, and disgrace, and in the world to come, at the great day of account; for however secretly it may be committed, God, who is omniscient, sees it, and will bring it into judgment; nor shall any be able to escape the righteous judgment of God, for he is omnipotent, as well as omniscient. The Jews say,

“whoever lies with another man’s wife, shall not escape (hnyd) , “the judgment”, or damnation of hell F20”

FOOTNOTES:

F20 T. Bab. Sota. fol. 4. 2.

Hebrews 13:5

Let your conversation be without covetousness

Which is an immoderate desire, of riches, an over anxious care for worldly things, attended with dissatisfaction, and discontent with their present state: it discovers itself many ways; in preferring the world to religion; in laying up treasure for a man’s own self, without being any ways useful to others; in withholding from himself the necessaries of life, and in making no use of his substance for the glory of God, and the interest of religion: this is a very great evil; it is called idolatry, and is said to be the root of all evil; and is very pernicious to true religion: a believer’s conversation should be without it; in his family, for whom he should provide things convenient and honest; and in the world, where he should deal uprightly, and not defraud and overreach; and in the church, where he should be liberal, and generously communicate, upon all occasions; and such a conversation is becoming the Gospel, which is a declaration of things freely given to us of God. The reason of the apostle’s mentioning this sin of covetousness is, because the Jews were prone to it, and these believing Hebrews might be inclined to it, and be dissatisfied with their present condition, in which they suffered the spoiling of their goods; and besides, unless this was avoided, the above mentioned duties could not be performed aright, as brotherly love, hospitality, remembering and relieving persons in bonds, and adversity.

And be content with such things as ye have;

or with present things; with present riches, or with present poverty; with present losses and crosses; with present reproaches and afflictions; and contentment with these things shows itself by thankfulness for every mercy, and by submission to the will and providence of God in every state of life: and there are many things which may move and engage unto it; as the consideration of the state and condition men are in, when they come into the world, and will be when they go out of it; the will of God, and the disposition of his providence according to it, which is unalterable; a sense of: their own unworthiness; a view of interest in God and Christ; and an eye to the recompense of reward; as well as the many promises of God to support and supply his: and among the rest, what follows,

for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee;

which is a promise made to Joshua, and belongs

to all believers, (Joshua 1:5) which may regard things temporal, as that God will not leave his people in the hands of their enemies, nor forsake them in distress, nor withhold any good thing from them needful for them, but will supply them with the necessaries of life, with which they should be content: and this passage is very pertinently cited for this purpose, and could be easily understood in this sense by the Hebrews; for the Jews explain such places as speak of God's not forsaking men, of the sustenance of them, as (Psalms 37:25) and observe that the word (hbyze) , "forsaking", is never used but with respect to (honrp) , "sustenance" F21; though the words may also relate to things spiritual, as that God will not leave them to themselves, to their own corruptions, which would overpower them; nor to their own strength, which is but weakness; nor to their own wisdom, which is folly; nor to Satan, and his temptations, who is an over match for them; nor to the world, the frowns and flatteries of it, by which they might be drawn aside; nor will he leave them destitute of his presence; for though he sometimes hides his face, and withdraws himself, yet not wholly, nor finally; nor will he forsake the work of his own hands, in them, but will perform it until the day of Christ; he will not leave or forsake them, so as that they shall perish; he will not forsake them in life, nor at death, nor at judgment.

of the pit of sin and misery; out of the hands of all their enemies; out of all their afflictions, and "out" of all the dangers they are exposed unto by Satan and his temptations, by reason of a body of sin and death, and no account of the world, and the men of it: he helps them "in" the exercise of grace, and in the discharge of duty; in bearing the cross; in fighting the Lord's battles; and in their journeying through the wilderness: he helps them "to" temporal blessings, and spiritual ones; to spiritual food and raiment, and to all needful supplies of grace, and, at last, to eternal glory and happiness: and the help he now affords is quick and present, suitable and seasonable, and is what is sufficient; and is sometimes with, and sometimes without means.

And I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

There is a becoming fear and reverence which is due to men that are our superiors, whether in civil or religious affairs; but men are not to be feared, when opposed to God; not a single man only is not to be feared, but even all men; and not they only, but all that they can do; the utmost of which is to kill the body; the ground of this fearlessness in believers are the infinite power, grace, and goodness of God. The words seem to be taken out of (Psalms 54:4) (56:4) (118:6) .

FOOTNOTES:

F21 Bereshit Rabba, sect. 69. fol. 61. 4. Vajikra Rabba, sect. 35. fol. 175. 2. Yalkut, par. 2. fol. 103. 2.

Hebrews 13:6

So that we may boldly say

Or confidently assert; for nothing is more true than this,

the Lord is my helper;

he is able to help, and does help, when none else can; he has promised to be the helper of his people; he has laid help for them on Christ, who is mighty; and he has helped him as man, that he might help them; he has set up a throne of grace for them to come to, where they may find help; and experience confirms the truth of this assertion; every believer can set up an Ebenezer, and say, hitherto hath the Lord helped me: the people of God are of themselves helpless ones; there is no help for them in man; their help is only in the Lord; who helps them out

Hebrews 13:7

Remember them which have the rule over you

Christ's church is a kingdom, and he is King in it; pastors of churches are subordinate governors; who rule well when they rule not in an arbitrary way, according to their own wills, but according to the laws of Christ, with all faithfulness, prudence, and diligence. The word may be rendered "guides" or "leaders"; for such point out the way of peace, life, and salvation to men, and direct them to Christ; and guide them into the understanding of the Scriptures, and the truths of the Gospel; and lead them in the paths of faith and holiness, and are examples to them. The Greek word, here used, is what the Jews call Christian bishops by; and (hgemonia) , is, by Maimonides F23, said to be the same as (twdyqp) , "a bishopric": to "remember" them is to know, own, acknowledge, and respect them as their governors; to obey them, and submit to them; to treasure up in memory their doctrines and exhortations; to be mindful of them at the throne of grace, to pray for them; and to take care of their maintenance and outward supply of life:

who have spoken unto you the word of God;

of which God is the author, being agreeably to the Scriptures, given by inspiration of God; the subject of which is the love and grace of God in Christ; and which God makes useful for conversion and comfort; and which, when spoken aright, is spoken freely, boldly, and faithfully:

whose faith follow;

or “imitate”; meaning either their faithfulness, by owning the truths and ordinances of the Gospel before men; by reproofing fellow Christians in love; by discharging the several duties of their place in the church; and by performing the private duties of life: or the grace of faith, their strong exercise of it, together with its fruits and effects, love, and good works; also the profession of their faith, which they hold fast unto the end; and the doctrine of faith, by embracing the same, as it appears agreeably to the word; by abiding by it, standing fast in it, striving for it, and persevering in it to the end.

Considering the end of their conversation;

which may intend the whole of their conduct in the discharge of the several duties of their office; the end of which designs either the manner of it, as De Dieu explains it, agreeably to the sense of the Hebrew word, (twauwt) in (Psalms 68:20) or the drift and scope of it, which was Christ, his honour and glory, as in connection with the following verse; or the event of it in life, being for the glory of God, and the good of men; or rather the issue of it in death, or what a comfortable end they made; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, “considering” their “last manner of living, in their exit out of the world”; and this is to be considered for imitation and encouragement.

FOOTNOTES:

F23 In Misn. Gittin, c. 1. sect. 1.

Hebrews 13:8

Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.

] Who is the substance of the word spoken by the above mentioned rulers, the author and object of their

faith, and the end in which their conversation terminated. These words may be expressive of the duration of Christ: he was “yesterday”, which does not design the day immediately foregoing, nor some little time past, but ancient times, formerly, of old; and though it does not extend to eternity, which is true of Christ, yet may be carried further than to the days of his flesh here on earth, even to the whole Old Testament dispensation; yea, to the beginning of the world, when he existed not only as the eternal Word, the everlasting “I am”, but as the Saviour and Redeemer of his people; during which dispensation he frequently appeared in an human form, and was the sum of all promises and prophecies, and the substance of all types and shadows, and the spiritual food of his people: and he is “today” under the Gospel dispensation; in his person as God-man, and in his offices as prophet, priest, and King: and will be so “for ever”: he will never die more; his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his priesthood an unchangeable one. Moreover, these words may regard the immutability of Christ; who is unchangeable in his person, perfections, and essence, as God; and in his love to his people; and in the fulness of his grace, and in the efficacy of his blood, and in the virtue of his sacrifice and righteousness: it may be observed, that (o autov) , translated “the same”, answers to (awh) , “he”, a name of God, (Psalms 102:27) (Isaiah 48:12) and which is used in Jewish writings F24 for a name of God; and so it is among the Turks F25: and it is expressive of his eternity, immutability, and independence; and well agrees with Christ, who is God over all, blessed for ever.

FOOTNOTES:

F24 Seder Tephillot, fol. 2. 1. & 4. 1. Ed. Basil. fol. 6. 2. & 7. 1. Ed. Amstelod. Zehar in Exod. fol. 35. 4. Maimonides in Misn. Succa, c. 4. sect. 5.

F25 Smith de Moribus Turc. p. 40.

Hebrews 13:9

Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines

The word “divers” may denote the variety and multitude of other doctrines; referring either to the various rites and ceremonies of the law, or to the traditions of the elders, or to the several doctrines of men, whether Jews or Gentiles; whereas the doctrine of the Scrip-

tures, of Christ, and his apostles, is but one; it is uniform, and all of a piece; and so may likewise denote the disagreement of other doctrines with the perfections of God, the person and offices of Christ, the Scriptures of truth, the analogy of faith, and even with themselves: and “strange” doctrines may design such as were never taught by God, nor are agreeable to the voice of Christ, nor to be found in the word of God; and which are new, and unheard of, by the apostles and churches of Christ; and appear in a foreign dress and habit: wherefore the apostle exhorts the believing Hebrews not to be “carried about with them”; as light clouds and meteors in the air, by every wind: for so to be, is to be like children; and discovers great ignorance, credulity, levity, inconstancy, uncertainty, fluctuation, and inconsistency:

for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace;

with the doctrine of grace, which is food for faith, and does not leave men at uncertainties about things; but establishes the heart, with respect to the love and favour of God, and builds souls upon the foundation, Christ; so that they are not at a loss about the expiation of sin, justification, and salvation; but firmly look for, and expect eternal happiness by Christ, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God:

not with meats;

referring to the distinction of meats among the Jews; or the sacrifices ate both by the priests and by the people; or the whole ceremonial law which stood in divers meats and drinks:

which have not profited them that have been occupied therein;

they were only profitable to the body; and could be of no other use to the soul, when they were in force, than as they led to Christ, and were regarded by believers; for they were of no advantage to hypocrites and carnal men; they could not sanctify, nor justify, nor cheer the spirits, nor establish the heart; and are of no manner of service at all, since the death of Christ, whereby the whole ceremonial law is abolished.

Hebrews 13:10

We have an altar

By which is meant, not the cross of Christ, on which he was crucified; nor the Lord’s table, where his flesh

and blood are presented to faith, as food, though not offered; but Christ himself, who is altar, sacrifice, and priest; he was typified by the altar of the burnt offering, and the sacrifice that was offered upon it; the altar was made of Shittim wood, and covered with brass, denoting the incorruptibleness, duration, and strength of Christ: the horns of it, at the four corners, were for refuge; whoever fled to it, and laid hold on them, were safe; so Christ is a refuge to his people, that come from the four corners of the earth; and who believe in him, and lay hold on him, are preserved and protected by his power and grace: the use of it was for sacrifice to be offered upon it; which being a male, without blemish, and wholly burnt with fire, was a sweet savour to God; and which was typical of Christ’s human nature, offered on the altar of his divine nature; which was pure and holy, suffered the fire of divine wrath, and was for a sweet smelling savour to God: this altar was but one, and most holy, and sanctified what was put upon it; all which is true of Christ: now this altar the saints have, and have a right to eat of it; even all Christ’s friends and beloved ones; all that are made priests unto God by him; all that know him, believe in him, have a spiritual discerning of him, and hunger and thirst after him:

whereof they have no right to eat that serve the tabernacle:

there is something of this altar, or that was offered up upon this altar, that is to be eaten, even the flesh and blood of Christ; and to “eat” of it is to believe that Christ is come in the flesh, and is become an offering for sin, and for us that eat; it is to receive, embrace, and possess the blessings procured by it; which is done by faith, with spiritual joy and gladness, and with sincerity and singleness of heart: now those, who served the tabernacle, or adhered to the service of the ceremonial law, they had no right to eat of this altar: the allusion is to the priests’ eating of the sacrifices, and to some sacrifices, of which they might not eat, (Leviticus 2:10) (Leviticus 6:16 Leviticus 6:18 Leviticus 6:26 Leviticus 6:29) (7:9) (16:27) and this is not to be understood of believers, before the coming of Christ, who did attend tabernacle service; for they ate the same spiritual meat, and drank the same spiritual drink, as believers do now; but of such, who obstinately persisted in the ceremonies of the law, when they were abolished; and so cut off themselves from all right to the substance of these shadows. See (Galatians 5:2-4) .

Hebrews 13:11**For the bodies of those beasts**

Not the red heifer, (Numbers 19:1-22) nor the sin offering in general, (Leviticus 6:30) nor those for the priest and people, (Leviticus 4:11 Leviticus 4:12) (Leviticus 21:6 Leviticus 21:7 Leviticus 21:18) but the bullock and goat, on the day of atonement, (Leviticus 16:11-18 Leviticus 16:27) which were typical of Christ, in the bringing of their blood into the most holy place, by the high priest, for sin; and in the burning of them, without the camp: these beasts were slain, their blood was shed, and was brought into the most holy place, by the high priest; and was sprinkled on the mercy seat, and the horns of the altar of incense; and, by it, atonement was made for the priest, his house, and all Israel; which was a type of the death of Christ; the shedding of his blood; the carrying of it into heaven; the sprinkling it upon the throne of grace and mercy; by which reconciliation is made for the sins of all God's people:

whose blood is brought into the sanctuary:

that is, into the holy of holies, as the Ethiopic version renders it:

by the high priest for sin;

to make atonement for it, for his own, and for the sins of his family, and of all Israel:

are burnt without the camp,

(Leviticus 16:27) even their skins, flesh, and dung; and the men that burnt them were unclean, though, upon being washed, were received: which was typical of the dolorous sufferings of Christ without Jerusalem, as the next verse shows; and points out the extent of his sufferings, reaching to all parts of his body, and even to his soul; and expresses not only the pains, but the shame and reproach he endured, signified by the burning of the dung; and hints at the pardon of the wicked Jews, who were concerned in his sufferings; which was applied unto them upon their repentance.

Hebrews 13:12**Wherefore Jesus also**

In order to answer the type of him;

that he might sanctify the people with his own blood:

by "the people" are meant the people who are the objects of divine love and favour; a chosen and covenant people; a distinct and peculiar people; Christ's own special people, by the gift of his Father to him: and the sanctification of them does not design the internal sanctification of them, though this is from Christ, and in consequence of his blood; nor does it so much regard the cleansing of the filth of sin, though Christ's blood sanctifies, in this sense; but rather the expiation of the guilt of sin, which Christ has fully took away; complete pardon being procured, and a perfect righteousness brought in: and this by "his own blood"; the priests sanctified, to the purifying of the flesh, with the blood of others, with the blood of bulls and goats; but Christ with his own blood, which he was, really, a partaker of; and his human nature, being in union with his divine person, as the Son of God, it had a virtue in it, to sanctify and cleanse from all sin, and to make full expiation of it; in shedding of which, and sanctifying with it, he has shown great love to his people: and, that he might do this agreeably to the types of him on the day of atonement, he

suffered without the gate;

that is, of Jerusalem: the Syriac version reads, "without the city"; meaning Jerusalem; which answered to the camp of Israel, in the wilderness; without which, the bodies of beasts were burnt, on the day of atonement: for so say F26 the Jews;

``as was the camp in the wilderness, so was the camp in Jerusalem; from Jerusalem to the mountain of the house, was the camp of Israel; from the mountain of the house to the gate of Nicanor, was the camp of the Levites; and from thence forward, the camp of the Shechinah, or the divine Majesty:"

and so Josephus F1 renders the phrase, without the camp, in (Leviticus 16:27) by (en toiv proasteioiv) ; "in the suburbs"; that is, of Jerusalem, where Christ suffered,

FOOTNOTES:

F26 T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 116. 2. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 7. fol. 188. 3. 4. Maimon. Beth Habbechira, c. 7. sect. 11.

F1 Antiqu. l. 3. c. 10. sect. 3.

Hebrews 13:13

Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp

Either of legal ceremonies, which are to be quitted; or of this world, which may be compared to a “camp”; for its instability, a camp not being always in one place; and for its hostility, the world being full of enemies to Christ and his people; and for the noise and fatigue of it, it being a troublesome and wearisome place to the saints, abounding with sins and wickedness; as also camps usually do; and for multitude, the men of the world being very numerous: and a man may be said to “go forth” from hence, when he professes not to belong to the world; when his affections are weaned from it; when the allurements of it do not draw him aside; when he forsakes, and suffers the loss of all, for Christ; when he withdraws from the conversation of the men of it, and breathes after another world; and to go forth from hence, “unto him”, unto Christ, shows, that Christ is not to be found in the camp, in the world: he is above, in heaven, at the right hand of God; and that going out of the camp externally, or leaving the world only in a way of profession, is or no avail, without going to Christ: yet there must be a quitting of the world, in some sense, or there is no true coming to Christ, and enjoyment of him; and Christ is a full recompence for what of the world may be lost by coming to him; wherefore there is great encouragement to quit the world, and follow Christ: now to go forth to him is to believe in him; to hope in him; to love him; to make a profession of him, and follow him:

bearing his reproach;

or reproach for his sake: the reproach, which saints meet with, for the sake of Christ, and a profession of him, is called “his”, because of the union there is between them, and the sympathy and fellow feeling he has with them in it; he reckons what is said and done to them as said and done to himself; and besides, there is a likeness between the reproach which Christ personally bore, and that which is cast upon his followers; and this is to be bore by them willingly, cheerfully, courageously, and patiently.

Hebrews 13:14

For here have we no continuing city

Neither for religious worship, the city of Jerusalem being quickly to be destroyed, nor for civil life to dwell in; and so may have a peculiar regard to the Hebrews, whose temple and city would, in a short time, become desolate; though it was the general case of the saints, in those times, to be obliged to flee from one city to another, having no certain dwelling place: and it may respect the common instability of this world, and of the state of the saints in it: this world, and all things in it, are unstable and transitory, the riches, honours, pleasures, and profits of it, and the persons in it, and even the world itself; the fashion of it passes away: the saints have no settlement and abiding here; they are not of it, though in it; and though they are in it, it is but for a time; and, when they have done the will of God, they are taken out of it; another place is prepared for them: they are but sojourners, and strangers, and pilgrims; and this they are sensible of, and own, and acknowledge: and it is their mercy, that they are not to continue here; since, while in it, they are exposed to a great many sorrows and afflictions, both of soul and body; are often disturbed with Satan’s temptations; and are liable to the snares, insults, and reproaches of the world; and, seeing they have no continuance here, they will be the sooner at home: and they have that to support them, under the instability of worldly things, which others have not; they are interested in an unchangeable God, and in his love; and in an unchangeable Saviour; and in an unchangeable covenant; and have a right to eternal glory and happiness, a city which has foundations, as follows:

but we seek one to come;

heaven; which is compared to a city; is future, yet to come; though certain, being built and prepared by God; and is continuing, will abide, being well founded: hence the saints seek for it; (See Gill on Hebrews 11:10).

Hebrews 13:15

By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise

For temporal and spiritual mercies; particularly for sanctification, or expiation of sin, by the blood of Christ; and for heaven, the continuing city, that is to come: this sacrifice is not a proper, nor a propitiatory one, but spiritual and evangelical; it is enjoined by God, is well pleasing to him, and glorifies him; and is our reasonable service, that believe in Christ; for being made priests by him to God, and having faith in him, such are capable of offering it aright; to do which, they are under the

greatest obligations: and it is to be offered up by Christ, who is the same yesterday, today, and for ever; and who has suffered without the gate, that he might sanctify the people by his blood; it is to be done in imitation of him, and by his assistance; and for him, and blessings in him; and on him, as the altar, which sanctifies the gift; and through him, as the high priest and Mediator; for, as there is no coming to God but by Christ, and all our mercies come to us through him, and our thanksgivings are only acceptable to God on his account, it must be right to offer them up by him: and that,

to God continually:

as the Creator and Preserver of us, in our beings; as the Father of mercies; as the Father of Christ; and as our covenant God and Father in him; since he is always bestowing mercies on us, of one kind or another; and, therefore, should be continually praised, even in times of adversity, affliction, and temptation; in the midst of reproach and persecution; even when unsettled in mind, body, and estate; since there is a continuing city to come; nor can a believer be in any state of life but he has something to be thankful for:

that is, the fruit of our lips;

the sacrifice of praise is so called, in allusion to the offering of the firstfruits under the law; and to distinguish it from legal sacrifices; and to show in what way and manner we are to praise God, namely, with our lips: in (Hosea 14:2) which is thought to be referred to here, it is, “the calves of our lips”; sacrifices of praise being instead of calves: and the apostle interprets it in great agreement with the Jewish writers; the Chaldee paraphrase explains it by (antwpo ylm) , “the words of their lips”: and so Jarchi, (wnytpv yrbd) , “the words of our lips”; and Kimchi, (wnytpv ywdyw) , “the confession of our lips”: and it may be observed, that there is a great nearness in (Myrp) , “calves”, and (yrp) , “fruit”; though perhaps rather the phrase is borrowed from (Isaiah 57:19) where it is expressly had; the Septuagint indeed have it in (Hosea 14:2) & the apostle adds, for further explanation,

giving thanks to his name;

to the name of God; to the glory of his name; to the honour of his divine perfections; for mercies of every kind: the word signifies “a speaking together”; and may design not only the conjunction of the heart and tongue together in praise, but a social giving thanks to God by

the saints, as a body together: the phrase (yusia aine-sewv) , “the sacrifice of praise”, is used by the Septuagint in (2 Chronicles 29:31) (33:16) . The apostle having shown that legal sacrifices were all superseded and abolished by the sacrifice of Christ, which is the design of this epistle, points out what sacrifice believers should offer up to God, under the Gospel dispensation; and the Jews themselves say, that

“in future time (i.e. in the days of the Messiah) all sacrifices shall cease, but (hdwt Nbrq) , “the sacrifice of praise” shall not cease F2.”

FOOTNOTES:

F2 Vajikra Rabba, sect. 9. fol. 153. 1. & sect 27. fol. 168. 4.

Hebrews 13:16

But to do good and to communicate forget not

Which is to be understood, not of doing good works in general, but of acts of beneficence, or communicating to “the poor”, as the Syriac version renders it: the apostle proceeds to take notice of another sort of sacrifice, which continues under the Gospel dispensation; and that is, alms; which should be attended to: alms should be given, or beneficence be exercised to all men in need, even to our enemies, as well as to our friends and relations; and especially to poor saints, and ministers of the Gospel: and this believers should not “forget”; which shows that it is a duty of importance; and that men are too apt to neglect it, and should be stirred up unto it:

for with such sacrifices God is well pleased;

not that they are meritorious of the favour of God and of eternal life; for what a man gives in a way of charity is but what God has given him, and cannot be profitable to God, though it is to a fellow creature; nor is there any proportion between what is given, and grace and glory which the saints receive; yet doing good in this way, when it is done in faith, springs from love, and is directed to the glory of God, is well pleasing to him; yea, these sacrifices are preferred by him to legal ones, (Hosea 6:6) and the Jews also say, that

“greater is he who does alms than (if he offered) all sacrifices F3.”

FOOTNOTES:

F3 T. Bab. Succa, fol. 49. 2.

Hebrews 13:17**Obey them that have the rule over you**

Not the ecclesiastical rulers among the Jews, for to these they were no longer obliged, they being no longer under such tutors and governors; nor civil magistrates, though it was their duty to obey them, even Heathen ones; for as for Christian magistrates, as yet there were none; but their spiritual guides and governors, the same that are mentioned (Hebrews 13:7) these the apostle exhorts them to “obey”: by constantly tending upon the word preached by them, and hearkening to it; by receiving it with faith and love, as it appears agreeable to the Scriptures; for a contrary behaviour is pernicious to souls, and highly resented by God; and by being present at, and joining with them in the ordinances of Christ, as administered by them; and by regarding their admonitions, counsels, and advice:

and submit yourselves;

to the laws of Christ’s house, as put in execution by them; and to their censures and reproofs, as delivered by the authority of the church; for they are spiritual fathers, and children should obey their parents, and submit to them; they are the ambassadors of Christ, stand in his stead, and represent him, wherefore their authority is great; and they are pastors or shepherds of the flock, whom the sheep should follow:

for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account:

they watch not for themselves, for their worldly gain and advantage, and for the estates of men; but for the souls of men, to do them good, to comfort and edify them, to feed them with knowledge and understanding, and for the salvation of them; as such that must give an account to their own consciences, that they discharge their work aright, or they cannot be satisfied; and to the church, to whom they minister, to whom they are accountable, if they are dilatory and negligent; and especially as such as must stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and give an account to him of their ministry, of their use of talents committed to them, and of souls that are put under their care and charge; how they have discharged their duty to the souls of men, and how these

have behaved towards them under the ministry of the word: the Alexandrian copy and the Vulgate Latin version read, “for they watch, as those that must give an account for your souls”: the sense is much the same:

that they may do it with joy, and not with grief;

either do their work with joy, cheerfully; which they do, when they are obeyed and submitted to; when men attend upon the word and ordinances administered by them, and receive advantage, and grow in grace and spiritual knowledge; when they abide by the Gospel, and walk worthy of it; otherwise they do their work heavily, and with sorrow: or else give up their account with joy, and not with grief; either at the throne of grace, where they either rejoice or complain; or at the great day, when they will be witnesses, either for or against those that have been committed to them:

for that is unprofitable unto you;

for whose souls they watch; that is, the latter would be so, either to do their work sorrowing, or to give up their account by way of complaint; either of them must be to the disadvantage of such persons that occasion grief and sorrow.

Hebrews 13:18**Pray for us**

Who are in the ministry; your guides and governors; since the work is of so much moment, and so arduous and awful, and you have such a concern in it; (See Gill on 2 Thessalonians 3:1).

for we trust we have a good conscience;

there is a conscience in every man, but it is naturally evil: a good conscience is a conscience sanctified by the Spirit of God, and sprinkled by the blood of Jesus; here it chiefly respects the upright discharge of it in the ministerial work: this the apostle often asserts, and appeals to, and which he here expresses with modesty, and yet with confidence; and which he uses as an argument for prayer for them:

in all things willing to live honestly;

not only as men, but as ministers; faithfully dispensing the word of truth, without any regard to the favour or frowns of men, as good stewards of the mysteries of God; which contains in it another reason for prayer: the

phrase, "in all things", is so placed, that it may be read in connection with either clause; and the sense is either that they exercised a good conscience in all things, in which they were concerned with God, or man, and among all persons, Jews and Gentiles; or that they were willing to live honestly in every respect, as men, Christians, and ministers.

Hebrews 13:19

But I beseech you the rather to do this

To pray earnestly; to strive together in their prayers for them, (Romans 15:30-32)

that I may be restored to you the sooner:

Christ's ministers are sometimes hindered from being with their people, through Satan, or his emissaries, creating troubles, or casting them into prison; which might be the apostle's case now; but God can make their way through all; and for this he should be prayed unto.

Hebrews 13:20

Now the God of peace

This is the concluding part of the epistle, which is ended with a prayer, made up of very suitable petitions for the Hebrews; and as the apostle desires them to pray for him and other ministers, he, in turn, and by way of example, prays for them: and he addresses God, as "the God of peace"; who is so called, because of his concern in the peace and reconciliation of his people; because he is the giver of conscience peace to them; because he is the author of all felicity and prosperity, temporal and spiritual; the promoter of peace and concord among saints, and at last brings them to eternal peace; (See Gill on Romans 15:33), a consideration of this gives boldness at the throne of grace; furnishes out a reason why blessings asked for may be expected; has a tendency to promote peace among brethren; may bear up saints under a sense of infirmity and imperfection, in prayer and other duties; and be an encouragement to them under Satan's temptations, and all afflictions. The Arabic version makes the God of peace to be Christ himself; whereas Christ is manifestly distinguished from him in the next verse; and even in that version, reading the words thus, "now; the God of peace raised from the dead Jesus the Shepherd of the sheep, magnified by the blood of the everlasting covenant; Jesus, I say, our Lord confirm you through Jesus Christ"; for which version there is no foundation in the original text. The God of

peace is manifestly God the Father, who is distinguished from Christ his Son:

that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus;

who died for the sins of his people; was buried, and lay under the power of death for some time; but was raised from the dead by his Father; though not exclusive of himself, and the Spirit of holiness; in the same body in which he suffered and died; as the firstfruits of his people, and as their Lord and Saviour, head and surety, for their justification, and as a pledge of their resurrection. The apostle addresses the God and Father of Christ in prayer, under this consideration, to observe his power and ability to help in the greatest distress, and in the most difficult and desperate case; to encourage faith and hope in him, when things are at the worst, and most discouraging; to comfort the saints under afflictions, in a view of their resurrection; to engage them to regard a risen Christ, and things above, and to expect life and immortality by him:

that great Shepherd of the sheep:

the people of God, whom the Father has chosen, and given to Christ; for whom he has laid down his life; and whom the Spirit calls by his grace, and sanctifies; to whom Christ has a right, by his Father's gift, his own purchase, and the power of grace: these being partakers of his grace, are called "sheep", because they are harmless and inoffensive in their lives and conversations; and yet are exposed to danger; but meek and patient under sufferings; are weak and timorous of themselves; are clean, being washed in the blood of Christ; are sociable in their communion with one another; are profitable, though not to God, yet to men; are apt to go astray, and are liable to diseases: they are also called sheep, and are Christ's sheep before conversion; see (John 10:16) and Christ, he is the Shepherd of them, who in all respects discharges the office of a shepherd to them, diligently and faithfully; (See Gill on John 10:16), here he is called, "that great Shepherd"; being the man, God's fellow, equal to him, the great God and our Saviour; and having a flock which, though comparatively is a little one, is a flock of souls, of immortal souls, and is such a flock as no other shepherd has; hence he is called the Shepherd and Bishop of souls: and his abilities to feed them are exceeding great; he has a perfect knowledge of them; all power to protect and defend them; a fulness of grace to supply them; and he takes a diligent care of them: and this great Person so described was raised from the dead,

through the blood of the everlasting covenant:

for the sense is not, that God is the God of peace, through that blood, though it is true that peace is made by it; nor that Christ becomes the Shepherd of the sheep by it, though he has with it purchased the flock of God; nor that the chosen people become his sheep through it, though they are redeemed by it, and are delivered out of a pit wherein is no water, by the blood of this covenant; but that Christ was brought again from the dead through it; and it denotes the particular influence that it had upon his resurrection, and the continued virtue of it since. The "covenant" spoken of is not the covenant of works made with Adam, as the federal head of his natural seed; there was no mediator or shepherd of the sheep that had any concern therein; there was no blood in that covenant; nor was it an everlasting one: nor the covenant of circumcision given to Abraham; though possibly there may be some reference to it; or this may be opposed to that, since the blood of circumcision is often called by the Jews (tyrb Md) , "the blood of the covenant" F4: nor the covenant on Mount Sinai, though there may be an allusion to it; since the blood which was then shed, and sprinkled on the people, is called the blood of the covenant, (Exodus 24:8) but that was not an everlasting covenant, that has waxed old, and vanished away; but the covenant of grace is meant, before called the new and better covenant, of which Christ is the surety and Mediator; see (Hebrews 7:22) (8:6) . This is an "everlasting one"; it commenced from everlasting, as appears from the everlasting love of God, which is the rise and foundation of it; from the counsels of God of old, which issued in it; from Christ's being set up from everlasting, as the Mediator of it; from the promises of it which were made before the world began; and from the spiritual blessings of grace in it, which were given to God's elect in Christ before the foundation of it: moreover, it will endure for ever; nor will it be succeeded by any other covenant: and the blood of Christ may be called the blood of it, because the shedding of it is a principal article in it; by it the covenant is ratified and confirmed; and all the blessings of it come through it, as redemption, peace, pardon, justification, and even admission into heaven itself; and Christ, through it, was brought again from the dead, because by it he fulfilled his covenant engagements, satisfied divine justice, and abolished sin, yea, death itself.

FOOTNOTES:

F4 T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 135. 1. & T. Hieros. Yebamot, fol. 9. 1.

Hebrews 13:21**Make you perfect in every good work to do his will**

The Alexandrian copy reads, "in every good work and word"; as in (2 Thessalonians 2:17) every good work is to be done: a good work is what is done in obedience to the command of God, and in faith, and from a principle of love, in the name and strength of Christ, and with a view to the glory of God; and every such work should be diligently attended to; such as concern God, and are of a moral nature, or of positive institution; and such as concern each other, whether as men or Christians: and the will of God is the rule of every good work, both as to matter and manner; whatever is not agreeably to the revealed will of God, let it have ever such a show of religion and holiness in it, it is not a good work; continuance in the performance of good works, and the perfection of them, are things to be desired of God; it requires grace to perform good works, and more grace to abound in them, and to keep men from being weary of well doing; and though the best of works are imperfect, yet perfection in them is desirable, and it is God alone that can make the saints perfect in any sense; see (1 Peter 5:10) . The Arabic and Ethiopic versions render it, "strengthen you", or "confirm you"; saints need to be strengthened with spiritual strength, to perform good works; for they are weak and feeble, and unable of themselves to do anything spiritually good; without Christ they can do nothing, but through him strengthening them, they can do all things; and they have need to be confirmed in them, that they are the will of God, and that it is their duty to regard them. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "fit you": men are naturally unfit for good works; in order to do them aright, it is necessary that they should have knowledge of the will of God; that they be regenerated and created in Christ; that they be sanctified and cleansed, and so meet for the master's use; that they have the Spirit of God, and strength from Christ; and that they be believers in him: nor is there always a fitness in saints themselves, or a readiness to good works, only when God gives both will and power to do them; wherefore such a petition as this is very proper and pertinent; another follows, or the same carried on, and more largely expressed; though it rather seems to be a distinct one, and that in order to the former:

working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ;

the good work of grace being necessary to the performance of good works; nor can any man do a good work well, unless he has the good work of grace wrought in him: grace is a work not of man, but of God; it is an internal work, something in a man's heart, and not anything without him, or done by him; and it is a gradual and progressive work; it is carried on by degrees, and is not yet perfect, though it will be. God is continually working in his people, carrying on his work, and will at length perform it; (See Gill on Philippians 1:6), and this is "well pleasing in his sight"; it is in his sight; it is obvious to his view, when it is not to others, nor to themselves, being the hidden man of the heart; and it is very agreeable to him; it makes men like unto him; hereby they become a suitable habitation for him, and are put into a capacity of serving him; to such he gives more grace, and on that grace he entails glory: and all this is

through Jesus Christ;

all the grace necessary for the beginning and carrying on, and finishing of the good work of grace, and for the performance of every good work, comes through the hands of Christ, in whom all fulness of it dwells; and through the blood and intercession of Christ, by virtue of which it is communicated; and all become acceptable to God through him, as the persons of the Lord's people, so the grace that is wrought in them, and the works that are done by them:

to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen;

either to God the Father of Christ, and the Father of mercies, and God of salvation; and as he is the God of peace, and the bringer of Christ from the dead; the appointer, provider, and giver of the great Shepherd; the author and finisher of all good in his people: or to Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd of the sheep, through whom all grace and good things come; to him does this doxology of right belong; he has a glory both as God, and as Mediator; and the glory of both is to be given to him: the glory of his deity, by asserting it; by attributing all divine perfections and works unto him; by worshipping of him, and by ascribing the efficacy of his mediatorial actions to it: and the glory of salvation and redemption is to be given to him, who alone has obtained it; by discarding all other Saviours; by trusting alone in him; by looking to him alone for peace, pardon, justification, sanctification, and eternal life: and this glory should

be ascribed continually, for ever and ever, as it will be by angels, and saints to all eternity, The word "Amen" is added, to show that the apostle assented to it, and wished it might be, and that he firmly believed it, and so asserted that it would be; for it is expressive of assent, asseveration, and prayer.

Hebrews 13:22

And I beseech you, brethren

The apostle closes his epistle to the Hebrews in a very tender and affectionate manner, calling them "brethren", as he often does; and speaking to them, not in an authoritative way, nor by way of advice, but by entreaty: the reason may be, because he was the apostle of the Gentiles, and because the Jews were not so well pleased with him, on account of his preaching down the ceremonies of the law; though such language is used by him in other epistles; he became all things to all, that he might gain some. The subject matter of his entreaty is, that they would

suffer the word of exhortation;

either from one another, as to prayer, to attendance on the word and ordinances, to a regard to their lives and conversations, and to a close adherence to the Gospel, and the profession of it; or from their ministers, their guides, and governors, whose business it was to exhort them to the several duties of religion; or rather from himself; and it designs either the particular exhortation in (Hebrews 12:5) or the continued exhortation to various duties in this chapter; or any, and everyone throughout the epistle: and this shows that the children of God are sometimes heavy and sluggish, and need stirring up; and that there are some things often in exhortations and reproofs which are not so agreeable to the flesh, and yet ought to be taken kindly, and patiently endured: the word may be rendered "consolation", or "solace", as it is by the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions; and may refer to the whole of this epistle, which is of a consolatory nature: this may suggest that these Hebrews were under afflictions, and needed comfort; and yet through unbelief might be tempted to refuse the comfort administered to them; which is too often the case with God's people:

for I have written a letter unto you in few words;

or, "I have sent, or, wrote to you in brief"; meaning either the exhortatory part of the epistle, which lay in

few words, and chiefly in this chapter; or the whole of the epistle, which was but short in comparison of the length he might have carried it, and as the subject matter of it might seem to require; it treating on the great doctrines of the Gospel, and mysteries of grace; things of the greatest moment and importance, and which might have been largely insisted on; but he had contracted things, and had wrote much in a little; and this he makes a reason why they should suffer or bear with the exhortation given, since it was not pressed with a multitude of words, wearing out their patience.

Hebrews 13:23

Know ye that [our] brother Timothy is set at liberty

This is the same person to whom the Apostle Paul wrote two epistles, and whom he often calls his son, though sometimes his brother, as here, (Colossians 1:1) (1 Thessalonians 3:2) of him he says, that he was set at liberty, or “dismissed”; either by the apostle, by whom he was sent into some parts, upon some business; or rather was loosed from his bonds, having been a prisoner for the sake of Christ and the Gospel; and, it may be; a fellow prisoner with the apostle, at Rome, as Aristarchus and others were; and this very great and useful person being known, very likely, to the Hebrews, since his mother was a Jewess, and he himself was well reported of by the brethren at Lystra and Iconium, (Acts 16:1 Acts 16:2) it was a piece of good news to them to hear of his release:

with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you;

by which it seems that Timothy was now absent from the apostle, but that he expected him to come in a short time; when, if he should, they would both come together, and visit the Hebrews; which looks as if the apostle was at liberty himself, or at least had some hopes of his deliverance from prison; but whether he ever had his liberty after this, and saw the Hebrews any more, cannot be said; the contrary seems most probable.

Hebrews 13:24

Salute all them that have the rule over you

The pastors and officers of the church of the Hebrews, the same with those in (Hebrews 13:7 Hebrews 13:17) and all the saints; the several members of the church, who were set apart to holiness by God; whose sins were expiated by Christ; to whom Christ was made

sanctification; and who were internally sanctified by the Spirit of God, and lived holy lives and conversations; to these the apostle wished all prosperity, inward and outward, spiritual and temporal; and he uses the word “all” in both clauses; and, including every officer and member, expresses his universal love to them, whether high or low, rich or poor, greater or lesser believers:

they of Italy salute you;

that is, the brethren, as the Vulgate Latin version reads; the Italian brethren; such as were at Puteoli, and other places, in that country; see (Acts 28:13 Acts 28:14) . Italy is a famous and well known country in Europe; a very fruitful and delightful one; of which Rome, where the apostle very likely now was, is the chief city: it has been called by different names, as Saturnia from Saturn; and Ausonia, Aenotria, and Hesperia Magna; and it had its name Italy, some say, from Italus, the son of Penelope and Telegonus; others, from Italus, a king of the Arcadians, or, as some say, the Sicilians; but, according to Timsaeus and Varro F5, it was so called from the multitude of oxen in it, which in the old Greek language were called (italoi) , “Italoi”, to which comes near in sound the Latin word “vituli”, used for “calves”; and Italy is frequently, by Jewish writers F6 called (Nwy lv ayljya) , “Italy of Greece”; and formerly it was inhabited by Greeks, and was called Great Greece F7: it is bounded on the east with the Adriatic sea; and on the west by the river Var, with the Alps, which separate France from Italy; and on the south with the Tyrrhene, or Tuscan sea, called the lower, and on the north, partly with the Alps, which are on the borders of Germany, and partly with the Adriatic sea, called the higher. There were Christians in this country before the Apostle Paul came to Rome, both at Rome, and other places, as before observed. It is said F8, that Barnabas was first at Rome, and planted the church there; that he went round Lombardy, and lived at Milain; that in the “first” century, Apollinaris preached at Ravenna, and Hermagoras at Aquileia; and there were Christian churches in the “second” century, not only at Rome, but in many other cities and places; and so likewise in the “third” century, as at Verona, Spoleto, Benevento and in the “fourth” century, there were great numbers of churches in this country; as at Verona, and Capua, in Calabria, Campania, and Apulia; and which might be traced in following centuries.

FOOTNOTES:

F5 Apud Aul. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 11. c. 1. Vid. Apol-

Iodor. de Orig. Deorum, l. 2. p. 101.

F6 Bereshit Rabba, sect. 67. fol. 59. 4. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 56. 2. R. Sol. Jarchi in Gen. xxvii. 39.

F7 Isidor. Hispal. Origin. l. 14. c. 4.

F8 Hist. Eccl. Magdeburg. cent. 1. l. 2. c. 2. p. 17. cent. 2. c. 2. p. 4. cent. 3. c. 2. p. 4. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 6.

Hebrews 13:25

Grace be with you all, Amen.

] Which is the apostle's usual salutation in all his epistles, (2 Thessalonians 3:17 2 Thessalonians 3:18) in which he wishes renewed discoveries of the love and favour of God; fresh communications of grace from Christ; an abundant supply of the spirit of grace; an increase of internal grace and external gifts; and a continuance of the Gospel of the grace of God. Of "Amen", (See Gill on Hebrews 13:21). The subscription of this epistle is,

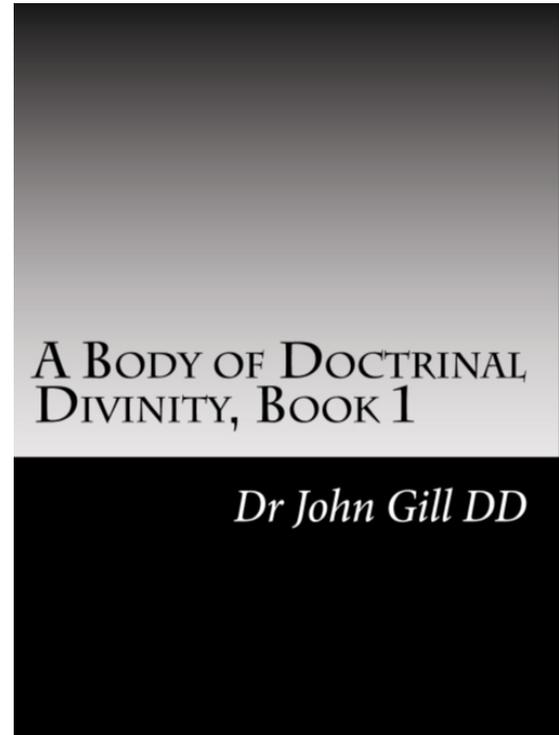
written to the Hebrews from Italy by Timothy;

in the Alexandrian copy it is, "written to the Hebrews from Rome"; which is very probable, since the Italian brethren send their salutations in it; and the words, "by Timothy", are left out; nor is it likely that it should, since it is clear, from (Hebrews 13:23) that he was absent from the apostle; and if he had sent it by him, what need was there to inform them that he was set at liberty?

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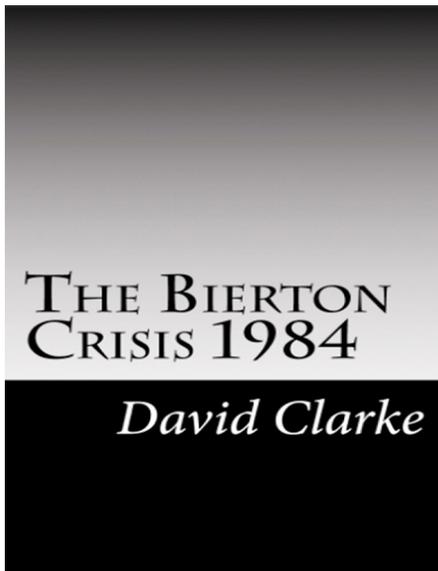
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THE BIERTON CRISIS

The Bierton Crisis is the personal story of David Clarke a member of the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist church. He was also the church secretary and minister sent by the church to preach the gospel in 1982.

The Bierton Church was formed in 1832 and was a Gospel Standard cause who's rules of membership are such that only the church can terminate ones membership.

This tells of a crisis that took place in the church in 1984, which led to some members withdrawing support. David, the author, was one of the members who withdrew but the church did not terminate his membership as they wished him return.

This story tells in detail about those errors in doctrine and practices that had crept into the Bierton church and of the lengths taken to put matters right. David maintained and taught Particular Redemption and that the gospel was the rule of life for the believer and not the law of Moses as some church members maintained.

This story tells of the closure of the Bierton chapel when David was on mission work in the Philippines in December 2002 and when the remaining church members died. It tells how David was encouraged by the

church overseer to return to Bierton and re-open the chapel.

On David's return to the UK he learned a newly unelected set of trustees had take over the responsibility for the chapel and were seeking to sell it. The story tells how he was refused permission to re open or use the chapel and they sold it as a domestic dwelling, in 2006.

These trustees held doctrinal views that opposed the Bierton church and they denied David's continued membership of the church in order to lay claim too and sell the chapel, using the money from the sale of the chapel for their own purposes.

David hopes that his testimony will promote the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, as set out in the doctrines of grace, especially Particular Redemption and the rule of life for the believer being the gospel of Christ, the royal law of liberty, and not the law of Moses as some reformed Calvinists teach, will be realized by the reader.

His desire is that any who are called to preach the gospel should examine their own standing and ensure that they can derive from scripture the doctrines and practices they teach and advance and that they can derived the truths they teach from scripture alone and not from the traditions of men or their opinions however well they may be thought of.

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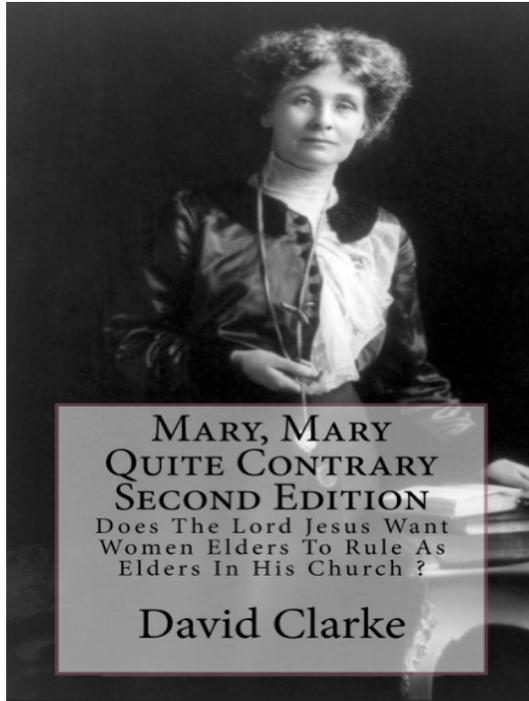
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BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / Apologetics

MARY, MARY QUITE CONTRARY

Second Edition: Does The Lord Jesus Want Women To Rule As Elders In His Church ??

Authored by Mr David Clarke Cert E

ISBN-13: 978-1514206812

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BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / General

When treating the subject of women elders in the church we are not dealing with the affairs of a secular society and so it has nothing to do with women's rights, equality of sex or race in the world. This matter only relates to men and women in a Christian church. It is about the rules of the house of God, which is the church of the living God and rules for those who are members of the body of Christ and members of an heavenly county.

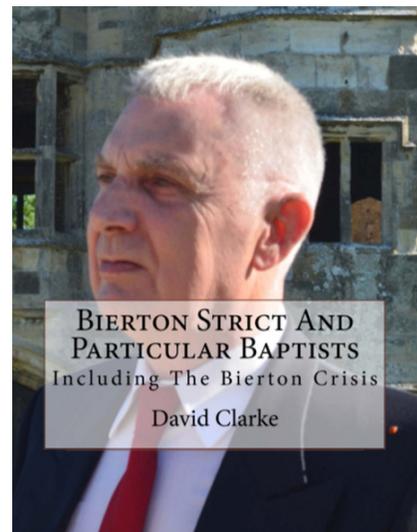
The Suffragettes

Emmeline Pankhurst 1858 -1928) was a Suffragette and worked very hard to bring equal rights for women to vote as men. In the year of her death all women over 21 gained the right to vote. The Suffragette movement brought about many changes for the better in a secular society but not so for women seeking to follow Christian principles. One of her famous quotes was, "Trust in God She shall provide". Terms which do not reflect Christian beliefs. We know God will provide and He is not a she.

In the USA and the UK, women's political rights were brought into general political consciousness by the

suffragettes and since then there have been legal rights granted to the Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender groups, same sex marriages, along with the development of the feminist movement and the appointment of persons from the LBGT community to responsible positions in the Church of England. All of this has caused conflict in the Christian community due to differences beliefs of right and wrong.

This book seeks to show what the bible has to say about the role of women in the church and family. Since these rules are taught by the Apostles of Christ they are the word of God to us and we should obey. The secular world may differ and turn from the narrow path taught in scripture but we should follow the word of God, this is our wisdom.

BIERTON STRICT AND PARTICULAR BAPTISTS 2ND EDITION

This book tells the story and life of David Clarke in the form of an autobiography. It is no ordinary book in that David and his brother were both notorious criminals in the 60's, living in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire. David was converted from crime to follow Christ on 16th January 1970 but his brother Michael was untouched till 30 year later.

This story tells how David became a Christian, over night, and how he learned to read in order to come gain a fuller knowledge of the gospel. He learned to read through reading the bible and classical Christian literature. David tells of the events that led to him making a confession to the police about 24 crimes he had committed since leaving Dover Borstal in 1968 and of the court case where he was not sentenced. It tells how David's educated himself and went on to Higher educa-

tion, and graduated with a Certificate in Education and how he went on to teach Electronics, for over 20 years, in colleges of Higher and Further Education.

It tells of his life as a member of the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist church, which was a Gospel Standard cause, and how he was called by the Lord and sent by the church to preach the gospel.

David tells of the various difficulties that he faced once he discovered the many doctrinal errors amongst the various Christian groups he met and of the opposition that he experience when he sought to correct them.

David records his experience and findings in his book "The Bierton Crisis" 1984, written to help others.

David's tells how his brother Michael was untouched by his conversion in 1970 and continued his flamboyant lifestyle ending up doing a 16 year prison sentence, in the Philippines, in 1996. David tells how Michael too was converted to Christianity through reading C.S. Lewis's book, "Mere Christianity", and him being convinced that Jesus was the Christ the Son of the living God. David then tells of his mission to the Philippines, to bring help and assistance to Michael, in 2001 and of their joint venture in helping in the rehabilitation of many former convicted criminals, not only in New Bilibid Prison but other Jails in the Philippines.

David tells how he felt compelled to write this story once he got news of his brothers arrest, in the Philippines, via ITN Television news broadcast, in 1995. This book was published when he got news of his brothers conversion from crime to Christ in 1999, which was after serving 5 years of his 16 year sentence.

This story is told in their joint book, "Trojan Warriors", that contains the testimonies of 66 notorious criminals who too had turned there lives around, from crime to Christ, 22 of which testimonies are men on Death Row. David say he believes his story could be of great help to any one seeking to follow the Lord Jesus Christ but sadly Michael died in New Bilibid Prison of tuberculosis, in 2005 before their vision of bringing help to many was realized.

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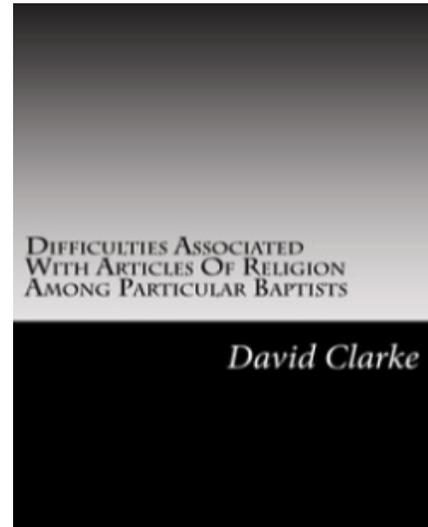
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DIFFICULTIES ASSOCIATED WITH ARTICLES

OF RELIGION AMONG PARTICULAR BAPTIST



Articles of Religion are important when dealing with matters of the Christian Religion, however problems occur when churches fail to recognize there is a growth in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ in any believer. When a person first believes in the Lord Jesus Christ they cannot possibly have a comprehensive knowledge of a churches constitution or its articles of religion, before solemnly subscribing to them. The author David Clarke has introduced the Doctrines of Grace to Bierton Particular Baptists Pakistan, situated in Rahim Yar Khan, Pakistan and bearing in mind his own experience with articles of religion he has compiled Bierton Particular Baptists Pakistan articles of religion from the first Bierton Particular Baptists of 1831, of which he is the sole surviving member, the First London Baptist Confession, 2nd edition 1646, and those of Dr John Gill, in order to avoid some of the difficulties encounter by Particular Baptist during the later part of the 19 century and since. This booklet highlights the problem and suggests the Bierton Particular Baptists Pakistan is as step in the right direction.

Isaiah 52:8 Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion.

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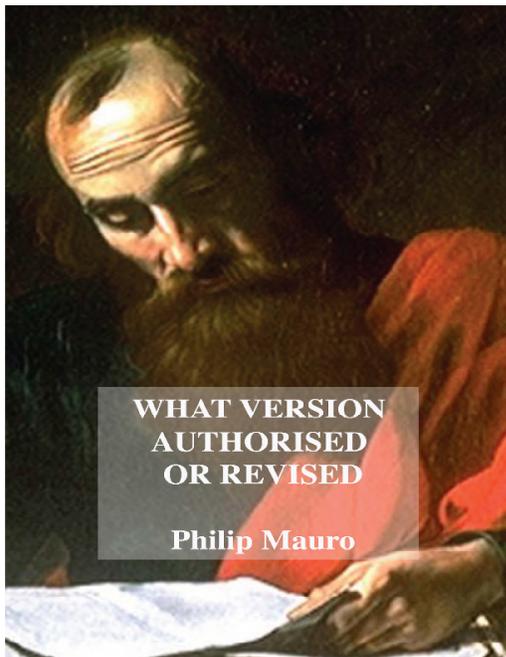
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Contents

Introduction

Articles of Religion Important

- Authors Testimony
 Bierton Particular Baptist Church
 A Difficulty Over Articles Of Religion
 Written From Experience
 Bierton Particular Baptists History
 1 First London Particular Baptists Confession
 1646, 2nd Edition
 The Development of Articles Of Religion
 Act of Toleration 14 Additions That Are Wrong
 2 London Baptist Confession 1689
 Notes on The London Baptists Confession 1689
 3 Bierton Particular Baptists Articles of Religion,
 1831
 Difficulties Over Articles of Religion
 Notes on Bierton Particular Baptists 1831
 4 The Gospel Standard Articles of Religion 1878
 Observations of the Gospel Standard
 Articles of religion
 Letter to Mr Role's of Luton
 Added Articles
 My comments Article 32
 The Difficulties Of these Articles Proved
 Serious Doctrinal Errors Held
 Recommendation for Serious Minded
 5 Bierton Particular Baptists Pakistan 2016
 6 Appendix 60 Gospel Standard 31 Articles
WHAT VERSION AUTHORISED OR REVISED



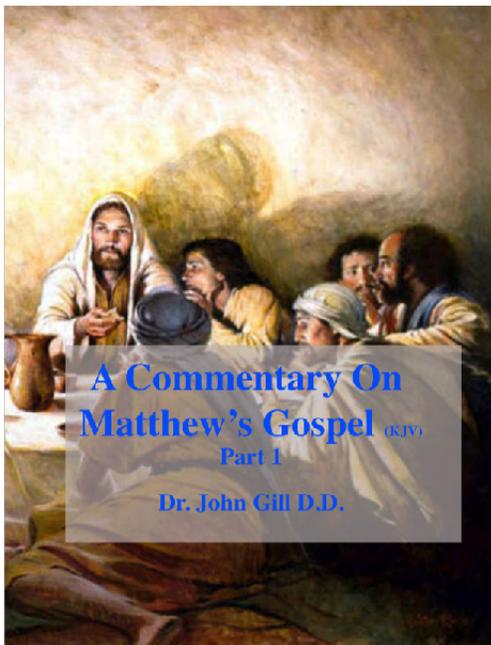
Philip Mauro

The book discusses the issues relating to the reliability of the Authorised Version of the Bible and the failings

of the so-called Revised Versions. It reminds the reader the greek printed text, produced by Erasmus in 1516, was derived from a broad set of 8 extant Greek manuscripts available to him in his day and in constant use by Christians to that day and not Latin bibles. Since 1861 there has arisen those who claim the Authorised Version is not accurate and Wescott and Hort produced a new compiled Greek Printed text manuscript, derived from, and based upon, two 4th C handwritten extant manuscripts. Codex Sinaiticus, written in Greek and Codex's Vaticanus, written in Latin. They claimed that since these manuscripts were the oldest extant manuscripts in the world (400 years after the original writing of the new testament scriptures) they were far superior and more reliable than the text underlying the Authorised version of the bible. And since 1945 all Bible translations are based upon the New Greek manuscript text of Wescott and Hort published in 1861.

This is an eclectic text and not the Received Text used by the translator of the Authorised Version of the Bible and known by Christians, throughout the Christian age, as the Word of God. It has been republished by Bierton Particular Baptist to educate serious minded people about the subject of Bible translations and support the Authorised version of the Bible. Philip Mauro was a lawyer in America, who practiced before the Supreme Court. He prepared briefs NOTES for the Scopes Trial WHICH was an American legal case in July 1925 THAT had made it unlawful to teach human evolution in any state-funded school.[1] The trial publicized the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy, which set Modernists, who said evolution was not inconsistent with religion,[4] against Fundamentalists, who said the word of God as revealed in the Bible took priority over all human knowledge. The case was thus seen as both a theological contest and a trial on whether "modern science" should be taught in schools. Mauro was ALSO a passenger on the British ocean liner RMS Carpathia when it rescued the passengers of the Titanic in April 1912. It is hoped that this book will rescue any that are sinking in the sea of the natural Modern man's opinion as to the reliability of the Authorised Version the bible.

A COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW WHAT HAPPENED IN A.D. 70



By John Gill

The Gospel According to Matthew was the first written gospel and published sometime between (AD 31-38). It was written before Mark's (AD 38-44) and Luke's Gospel (AD-61).

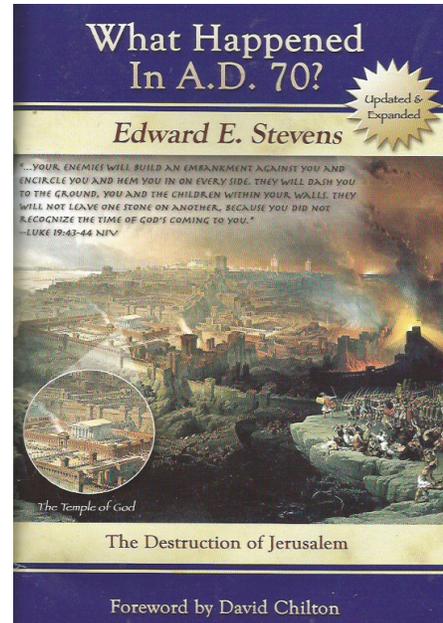
Matthew was a Jew and one of the 12 Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ and named Levi. He was a tax collector for the Romans. There are two strong traditions that Matthew made a personal copy of his gospel and gave it to Barnabas, a companion of the Apostle Paul.

Matthew tells of the birth and lineage of Jesus. The life death, resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and the final words of Jesus before his ascension into heaven.

This publication is presented knowing that Matthew penned his gospel that contains all those things the Lord Jesus wanted him to publish.

Matthew records the Olivet prophesy of Jesus concerning those fearful things that were to come to pass within the period of that generation and after his ascension.

It is the intention of the publisher that this will assist in making the gospel known to all people and is published in two parts PART 1 chapter 1 to 16. And PART 2 chapter 17 to 28.



Ed. Stevens

This book introduces a view of Bible prophecy which many have found extremely helpful in their Bible study. It explains the end time riddles which have always bothered students of Bible prophecy. It is a consistent view which makes the book of Revelation much easier to understand. It establishes when the New Testament canon of scripture was completed, demolishes the liberal attack on the inspiration of the New Testament, and is more conservative on most other issues than traditional views. And there is no compromise of any essential Biblical doctrine of the Christian faith.

The key to understand any passage of scripture has always been a good grasp of the historical setting in which it was originally written {audience relevance}. Two thousand years from now our history, culture, politics and language will have changed dramatically. Imagine someone then having to learn the ancient language of "American English" to read our USA newspapers! If they saw one of our political cartoons with a donkey and elephant, what would they think? How would they go about understanding it? Not only would they have to study the language, but also our culture, history, politics and economics. The same applies to Bible study. If we are really going to understand what all the "donkeys and elephants" (beasts, harlots, dragons, etc.) Symbolize in the book of Revelation, we will have to seriously and carefully study the language, history, culture and politics of the First Century. Of course, the truths essential for salvation are couched in simple language that everyone can grasp. But there are numerous scriptures in the

Bible which are “hard to understand” (cf. 2 Pet 3:16), and Bible prophecy is one of those things which must be approached with much more focus on the original historical art cultural context (audience relevance)

One of the main purposes of this book is to provide a closer look at the historical framework behind the New Testament. Many have found it helpful to lay aside (at least temporarily) the legion of speculative opinions about the book of Revelation, and look at a more historical alternative, which is that the book of Revelation was written to the first century church and had primary relevance to them. It warned of events that were about to happen in their lifetime, and prepared them for the tribulation and other events associated with the End of the Jewish Age.

Atheists, skeptics, Jew, Muslims, and liberal critics of the bible use the supposed failure of those end times events to occur in the First Century to undermine the integrity of Christ and the inspired NT writings.

Non-Christian Jews laugh at this supposed non-occurrence, and use it as evidence that Jesus is not the Messiah. Their forefathers in the flesh rejected Jesus in His first coming because He did not fulfill the Old Testament prophecies in the materialistic and nationalistic way that they were expecting, even though Jesus told them that His Kingdom was not of this world, and that it would be within them instead. Yet it seems that many futurists today are expecting that same kind of materialistic and nationalistic kingdom to arrive at a future return of Christ. Are they making the same mistake about the Second Coming that the Jews made about His first coming? Jesus repeatedly said His Kingdom is “not of this world” and that it would “not come with observation.” It is a spiritual entity, and it has arrived. We live in it. Both futurist Christians and non-Christian Jews need to realize this.

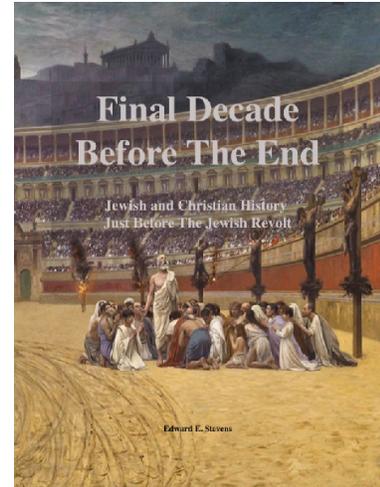
Christians are finally beginning to seek alternatives to the fatally flawed futurist interpretation. This book introduces the Preterist view.

“Preterist” simply means past in fulfillment. It means that Christ has already fulfilled His promise to return and consummate redemption in Himself and His ongoing spiritual kingdom (the church). We should be like the noble-minded Bereans and “search the scriptures daily to see whether these things are true” You might want to have your Bible open alongside as you read.

Edward E. Stevens 17, 2017

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THE FINAL DECADE BEFORE THE END



Ed. Stevens

Ever since the booklet, **What Happened In AD 70?** was published in 1980, there have been constant requests for more detailed information about the Destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish, Roman, and Christian history associated with it. Over the years since then I have studied Josephus, Yosephus, Hegeisippus, Tacitus, Suetonius, Eusebius, the Talmud, Midrash, Zohar, Pseudepigrapha, Church Fathers, Apocrypha, Dead Sea Scrolls and other Jewish/Christian writings, trying to determine exactly what happened, when it happened, and the effect it had upon the Church.

Then in 2002, after I began to promote J. S. Russell's view of a literal rapture, the demand for historical documentation of the fulfillment of all eschatological events dramatically increased. That forced me to dig much deeper. So in 2007 I put together a 21-page chronology of first century events. Two years later in 2009, we published a more substantial 73-page manuscript entitled, *First Century Events in Chronological Order*. That helped fill the void, but it did not go far enough. It only increased the appetite for a more detailed and documented historical reconstruction of first century events.

The book of Acts does not give a lot of details about the other Roman and Jewish events that were happening while Paul was on his various missionary journeys. For those events, we have to go to the other contemporary Jewish and Roman historians such as Josephus and Tacitus. The closer we get to AD 70, the more important all of those Jewish and Roman events become. They form an important backdrop behind the Christian events, and show how all the predictions made by Jesus were literally fulfilled. Every High Priest and Zealot leader that we encounter from AD 52 onwards are directly

connected with the events of the Last Days. Things are heating up, not only for the Christians, but also for the Jews and the Romans.

Paul on his missionary journeys was clearly following a plan which was providentially arranged for him by Christ: (1) to plant new churches among all nations and not just Jews, (2) appoint elders and deacons in every church (Acts 14:23; 1 Cor. 4:17), (3) write inspired epistles to guide them, (4) instruct his fellow workers to “teach these things to faithful men who would be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2), and (5) establish the Gentiles in the Church and make them one united body with the Jews (Eph 4). Everywhere Paul went, he followed this pattern. We see this clearly as we study the historical narrative in Acts and Paul’s other epistles that were written during this time. These are essential patterns that the apostles evidently bound upon both Gentile and Jewish Christians, and which were intended to be the pattern for all future generations of the eternal Church (Eph 3:21; 2Tim 2:2).

We begin our study by looking at the most likely dates for Matthew (AD 31-38) and Mark (AD 38- 44), and then proceed to the first three epistles of Paul (Galatians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians), which were written on his second missionary journey (AD 51-53). Including these five books in our study allows us to date all twenty-seven books of our New Testament, and show how the NT canon was formed and completed before the outbreak of the Jewish War in AD 66. The study of New Testament canonization in itself is a good reason for reading this work, without even looking at the historical fulfillment of all of the endtime prophecies that we document here.

After looking at the dates for those first five books, we then move on into the third missionary journey of Apostle Paul which began in AD 54. It was during this final dozen years (from AD 54 until AD 66) when the birth pangs and signs of the end started increasing in both intensity and frequency, along with a quickening pace of NT books being written. We show how 19 of our 27 NT books (70 percent) were written during those last five years just before the Neronian persecution (AD 60-64). The Great Commission was finished, and the rest of the endtime events predicted in the Olivet Discourse were fulfilled during that time of “tribulation” upon the church and the “days of vengeance” upon the unbelieving Jews (Luke 21:22).

Edward E. Stevens

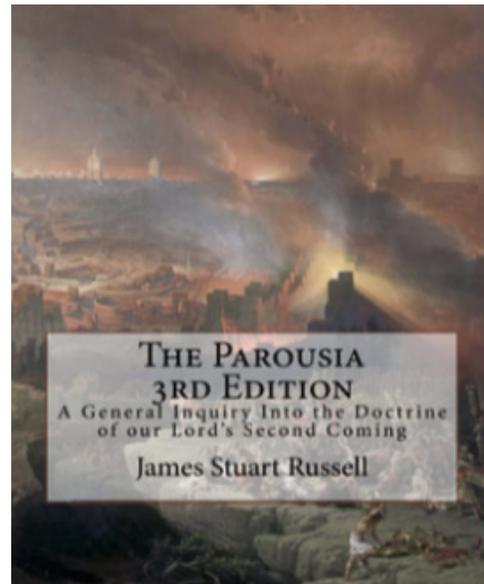
INTERNATIONAL PRETERIST ASSOCIATION

<https://www.preterist.org>

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THE PAROUSIA 2ND EDITION



The Second Coming Of Christ

Authored by James Stuart Russell, Preface by Mr David Clarke, Preface by Dr Don K Preston DD

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Black & White on White paper

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BISAC: Religion / Theology

A reformation – indeed – a revolution of sorts is taking place in modern evangelical Christianity. And while many who are joining in and helping promote this movement are not even aware of it, the book you hold in your hand has contributed greatly to initiating this new reformation. This “new” movement is sometimes called full preterism, (Also, and preferably by this writer, Covenant Eschatology). It is the belief that all Bible prophecy is fulfilled.

The famous evangelist Charles H. Spurgeon was deeply impressed with the scholarly, solid research in the book, although he did not accept the “final” conclusions reached by Russell. In modern times, this work has, and continues to impress those who read it. The reason is simple, the New Testament is emphatic and unambiguous in positing Christ’s coming and the end of the age for the first century generation. To say this has troubled both scholars and laymen alike is an understatement of massive proportions.

This book first appeared in 1878 (anonymously),

and again in 1887 with author attribution. The book was well known in scholarly circles primarily and attracted a good bit of attention, both positive and negative. The public, however, seemed almost unaware of the stunning conclusions and the research supporting those conclusions, until or unless they read of Russell's work in the footnotes of the commentaries.

Scholars have recognized and grappled with this imminence element, that is the stated nearness of the day of the Lord, seldom finding satisfactory answers. Scholars such as David Strauss accused Jesus of failure. Later, Bultmann said that every school boy knows that Jesus predicted his coming and the end of the world for his generation, and every school boy knows it did not happen. C.S. Lewis also could not resolve the apparent failed eschatology. Bertrand Russell rejected Christianity due to the failed eschatology - as he perceived it - of Jesus and the Bible writers. As a result of these "skeptical" authors, modern Bible scholarship has followed in their path and Bible commentaries today almost casually assert the failure of the Bible writers - and Jesus - in their eschatological predictions.

This is where Russell's work is of such importance. While Russell was not totally consistent with his own arguments and conclusions, nonetheless, his work is of tremendous importance and laid the groundwork for the modern revolution known as the preterist movement.

Russell systematically addressed virtually every New Testament prediction of the eschaton. With incisive clarity and logical acumen, he sweeps aside the almost trite objections to the objective nature of the Biblical language of imminence. With excellent linguistic analysis, solid hermeneutic and powerful exegetical skills, Russell shows that there is no way to deny that Jesus and his followers not only believed in a first century, end of the age parousia, but, they taught it as divine truth claiming the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as their authority.

Russell not only fully established the undeniable reality of the first century imminence of "the end," he powerfully and carefully shares with the reader that "the end" that Jesus and the N.T. writers were anticipating was not the end of the time space continuum (end of the world). It was in fact, the end of the Old Covenant Age of Israel that arrived with the cataclysmic destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in AD 70. Russell properly shows how the traditional church has so badly missed the incredible significance of the end of that Old Cove-

nant Age.

Russell's work is a stunning rejection - and corrective -- of what the "Orthodox" historical "Creedal" church has and continues to affirm. The reader may well find themselves wondering how the "divines" missed it so badly! Further, the reader will discover that Russell's main arguments are an effective, valid and true assessment of Biblical eschatology. And make no mistake, eschatology matters.

